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America's Generational Workplace Impact

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America's Generational Workplace Impact

Bachelor's of Integrated Studies Program: Healthcare Administration

BIS 437 Senior Project

Murray State University

Savannah Umland

Abstract

In the paper that lies before us, we will address a complex yet ever-growing need for resolution and perplexing reality; critical events in the U.S shape and change a generation, and a generation shapes and changes the future. The cycle of generational influence is ever-evolving and influences the future that lies before ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren. In contrast, personal influences have a substantial impact on the future outlook of America; workplace influences are arguable as equally impactful in value and influence.

We will dive deep into evaluating and dissecting the weaknesses and strengths of each generation, what historical or cultural events shaped these influences and how we can balance a work environment to be both impactful and positively successful. It would not only be naive and negligent to ignore the reality of generational influences, especially within the workplace, but a successful employer works to acknowledge those diversities. We live in a society heavily divided emotionally and psychologically; individuals within the workplace will inevitably form biases and perspectives about another coworker or employee that is harmful to the company and the workplace environment. It is of dire essence that we recognize these 'invisible' barriers within the workplace and address them head-on with accountability, constructive criticism, and open-minded perspectives. Close-minded leadership- performed through biases, favoritism, or 'invisible' discrimination at its core, will frequently be seen to have high turnaround employment, poor satisfaction ratings from clients, patients, and employees, and overall poor performance and workplace reputation. The following paper hits these critical issues head-on and gives us an informative layout on the how, why, and what caused generational perspectives, beliefs, and workplace environments and cultures. Ultimately, we can utilize these differences not as obstacles but as strengths to progress.

Contents

Abstract.....	3
Generational Differences.....	4
Traditionalists.....	4
Baby Boomers.....	5
Generation X.....	6
Millennials.....	8
Generation Z.....	10
Workplace Environments.....	12
Work Culture.....	14
Leadership Preferences.....	16
Generational Preferences.....	19
Digital Impacts.....	22
Chapter 2: Moving Forward.....	31
Wage Stagnation.....	31
Work-Life Balance.....	33
Utilizing Generational Differences.....	38
Seniority vs. Performance in Promotion.....	45
Conclusion.....	47
Sources.....	50

America's Generational Workplace Impact

The American culture is facing a never-before phenomenon: the workforce consists of five generations; this dynamic is mixing in different perspectives, ways of life, experiences, leadership styles, desires, flaws, and faults. How do we balance the weighted scale of five generations from traditionalists or the 'silent generation' (born between 1927 and 1945) up to Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2015)? Cultural and worldwide events have molded one's individuality, pouring into professional dynamics and interactions. We have one generation whose concepts and realities were plagued with grave poverty from the great depression to chaos and instability during world war outbreaks. Current younger generations were born into the hands of social media and technology, from civil rights movements to terrorist attacks. "Over the years, the diversity of the global populations has been transformed by socioeconomic geopolitical, environmental, and technological factors. These dynamics have consequently changed the compositions of many societies and influenced how human beings interact, work, or cohabitate with one another" (Cletus et al., 2018). Intercepting into the overarching dynamic of generational differences within the workforce brings various challenges from mental health, technological, leadership, and environmental influences. "Similar to what happened with gender and racial diversity in the workforce, generational variation of workers raises questions about the nature, characteristics, and, most importantly, the consequences of supposed generational differences" (Costanza et al., 2012). We will first evaluate the generational differences and their cultural events. From there, we will assess their strengths and weaknesses within the workforce, preferences, and dislikes. Lastly, we will wrap up with an evaluation of the current society and

workplace environment, how each generation fits in, and how management guides moving forward in modern-day society.

Traditionalists (1928-1945)

This generation makes up a minor portion of the workforce but is still prevalent in its role in American culture, community, and workplace environments.

The defining moments for many Traditionalists were the Great Depression and World War II. Those two colossal events shaped the world outlook and lifestyle of what many call "The Greatest Generation." Some other shared experiences of the Traditionalist Generation include people like Joe DiMaggio, John Wayne, FDR, and The Rat Pack. Places such as Normandy, Hiroshima, Pearl Harbor, and victory gardens also have a special meaning for this generation; values and beliefs a person develops during their formal years have been shown to influence behavior more than race, religion, or gender (Martin, 2006). "Therefore, it is no surprise that misunderstandings, conflict, and in some cases, open hostility occurs" (Martin, 2006).

Traditionalists are known to have strong loyalty, dedication, and commitment and are typically obedient to faith and family traditions. Traditionalists are known to have endured some of the most significant times in American history, heavily influencing their beliefs, morals, and virtues. Traditionalists survived complicated, rough, foreign, and dangerous cultural and world events; both the great depression and World Wars created consistent unforeseeable and worrisome times; these events molded traditionalists to be known as one of the hardest working and financially minded. "Since over 50% of Traditionalist men served in the armed forces, they are used to a "top-down" approach to management. They carried this style to the workplace, where they dealt almost exclusively with members of their generation until the Baby Boomers and their desire to create change came along. This collision inevitably led to the conflict"

(Martin, 2006). To best understand workplace diversity and generational conflicts, we must remain open-minded and take a trip back to evaluate generational events and influential moments.

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Baby boomers are known as the generation of change; from 1946-1964, the American culture experienced some of the first significant technology, catastrophic wars, cultural changes, and protests. Baby boomers are advocates, highly competitive, idealists, and creative. Something worth significantly notifying is the cultural differences between the World Wars and the catastrophic Vietnam War. Unlike World War II, Vietnam did not unite but divided a generation. The Vietnam War's effect on a person depended mainly on how that person experienced it. Those who supported or protested the war were all affected differently by the war but were involved. A quick look back to the presidential election of 2004 and the ads attacking John Kerry's Vietnam service and George Bush's lack of service remains a solid reminder of how a war that ended over 30 years ago could still affect the nation" (Martin, 2006).

We can look into the detrimental effects of the Vietnam war, also known as the most controversial war in American history. Roughly 2.7 million American men and women served in the Vietnam war (Martin, 2006).

Additionally, it was the first war in U.S. history for the military to fail to meet its objectives, with 58,220 soldiers dying during the conflict in Vietnam. One psychological study looked into two significant factors of the Vietnam war. PTSD and the effects of individual characteristics are known as 'intellectual baggage.' At the same time, the other evaluates the path paved for foreign policy in future decades. A generation who mainly experienced the effects of the Vietnam war in

their young adult years contributed to the powerhouse generation of foreign policy and political strengths (DiCicco & Fordham, 2018).

Another dramatic and influential event for the baby boomers was the Cold War and the assassination of JFK. The Cold War brought a great deal of worry and anxiety surrounding the spread of communism and the possible effects on American culture and economic influences. The conflict arose after WWII, and hostility occurred between America and the Soviet Union, each of which had very different visions for the future decades. "The Cold War had solidified by 1947–48 when U.S. aid provided under the Marshall Plan to western Europe had brought those countries under American influence, and the Soviets had installed openly communist regimes in eastern Europe" (Britannica, Inc., 2022).

Baby Boomers experienced times of uncertainty, foreign policy, and controversial engagements; wars from both Vietnam and the Cold War greatly impacted their thinking, perspectives, and adaptation, known as the generation of change. The Civil Rights Movement caused great controversy within the American borders as well. The Baby Boomers and Traditionalists had dramatic decades of change; many experts argue yet to pour over the American nation ever since. The post-baby-boomers and current American generations have yet to experience times of grave significance like the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers era.

Generation X (1965-1980)

The generation sandwiched between two very influential generations, baby boomers and millennials, generation x is a generation often overlooked or not discussed much, often described as the 'neglected generation. In American history courses, generation x is among the least talked about generations, primarily due to the limited amount of worldwide cultural events that impacted American society at that time. Some events that did unfold during this generation were

the Jonestown mass suicide, the Exxon Valdez oil tanker spill, the stock market decline, and corporate layoffs. “Gen Xers have also gotten the short end of basic generational arithmetic. Due partly to their parents’ relatively low fertility rates, there are fewer of them (65 million) than Boomers (77 million) or Millennials (an estimated 83 million)” (Taylor & Gao, 2020).

Generation x is often seen as the ‘forgotten’ or ‘neglected generation’ in both a parable and literal sense. “Members of Generation X grew up in a time when there were more dual-income families, single-parent households, and children of divorce than when boomers were growing up. Consequently, many Gen Xers were latchkey kids, spending part of the day without adult supervision, as when they got home from school while their parents were still working. Gen Xers were the first generation to grow up with personal computers to some extent, thus becoming tech-savvy. They also experienced shaky economic times as children and young adults in the 1980s and '90s. Gen Xers are typically resourceful, independent, and keen on maintaining a work-life balance. They tend to be more liberal on social issues and ethnically diverse than boomers” (Mckenna, 2022).

Despite living in the shadows of their predecessors, Generation X is known for many creative skills such as being innovative, independent, work-life balance maintenance, informal and laid back, resilient, direct, and overall a generation that has been visualized as ‘easy to work with.’ A generation that often grew up in a cultural time of relatively quiet historical events has molded and impacted them to be not only laid back but, through the years, as the first generation with an influx of divorced parents and two-parent working households came to the experience of independence at a young age.

As the baby boomers begin to leave the workforce scene, we see Generation X rising in percentage numbers as the next leaders within the American workplace. We can expect a

dramatic cultural shift in the workplace with the different perspectives, cultural influences, and engagement processes between baby boomers and generation x.

Millennials (Generation Y)

The most talked about generation is a generation that sits at the start of a new era and the closing out of the 20th century. Millennials were the first generation to be introduced to technology, media, and intelligent devices, marking the beginning of historical transitions into what we know today as the 'digital age.' Since the baby boomers, there has yet to be such a generation as impactful as the millennial generation, but every aspect of a generational makeup partakes in the overarching management and workforce environment each generation requires; let us look at a sociological perspective into the upcoming generations.

“Sociology is challenged by the new generation of students and scholars with another view of society. Some Millennial/Gen Zs believe, especially in academia, that social scientists are tied to old theories and ideologies about race and gender, among other inconsistencies. These old ideas do not resonate with their views regarding equity. Millennials are not afraid to challenge the status quo. They do so already by supporting multiple gender and race identities. Several questions come to mind. How do we, as sociologists, with our sense of history and other issues, such as racial and gender inequality, help them along the way? Are we ready for this generation? Are they ready for us?” (Kaplan, 2020)

The current generations have a stronghold over American culture and workplace dynamics. There has been a significant shift in workplace culture while simultaneously recognizing that the exact change is also causing a significant 'drift' between generations and individuals, both personally and professionally; we live in a current state of society where personal beliefs and politics can no longer remain at home but are integrated into our

professional workplace. Millennials are known above all other generations for their curiosity. They are a generation known to 'ask the hard questions and eager to learn, leading as the generation with the highest academic portfolio. Some other broad characteristics that tend to be an overarching theme for the millennials are compassion, being proactive, adapting to change well, enjoying training and teamwork engagement, and feeling confident in their workplace and current place of position. Some major historical events that have shaped our Millennial generation are the Columbine shooting, the attack on the World Trade Centers and Pentagon(9/11), Iraq War, the Virginia Tech shooting, the Sandy Hook shooting, Orlando Club Mass shooting. The Millennial generation was the first generation to experience an influx in school and mass public shootings, directly linked to the release of video games and technology during the mid-90's-early 2000s.

A quote from the Odyssey directs the shadowing reality of the Millennial generation, "But crime, more specifically the presence of mass shootings, has never been as prominent as it has been in the past 20 years -- the lifetime of Millennials." Over 90 mass shootings plagued the millennial generational span, and numerous studies have linked violent behavior to the consumption of violence in video games. Recently, researchers at Ohio State University conducted an investigation and concluded, "People who have a steady diet of playing these violent video games may come to see the world as a hostile and violent place." Brad Bushman, professor of communication and psychology at OSU, continues, "These results suggest there could be a cumulative effect" in making video game players more aggressive and violent over the long and short term. (Bushman, 2022)

Generation Z

The most recent generation, the generation of social media and influence, and the rising generation are slowly creeping behind the millennials as the most controversial generation. Over ninety-five percent of Generation Z are active on social media at least once a week, while the average time spent on social media by Gen Z is nearly 3.5 hours per day. A generation marked by technological engagement and advancements, they are certainly making headway in the current American society and culture. As the age continues to unfold and carry on, some influential events range from diverse movements, such as the rise of LBGTQ+, political warfare, influences, and rioting. However, on top of it all, generation z is the first generation to have a comprehensive global perspective. Some workplace characteristics and desires of Gen Z are flexibility, remote work, and more email-based and text-based communication styles. Gen Z prefers higher communication standards, personal work relations, constant feedback, and a comfortable work environment. "Gen Z seems to have different requirements and motivating factors than the earlier generations. This generation will blend its unique needs in the workplace as they enter the organization. The organization needs to realize what is important to Gen Z before boosting attraction within and outside the industry to establish a corporate culture and workplace to gain a distinctive advantage in the hunt for top-talent employees from Gen Z, which in turn will sustain the organizational growth and remain a winning organization throughout" (Gaidhani et al., 2019).

Some additional generation characteristics of Gen Z that contribute to their body language are more casual and more realistic about their work expectations and prospects. They often are non-negotiable on work-life balance, especially those with children and young families who tend to focus more on 'family freedom' and self-reliance; they are not a generation that

Idealizes micro-management. “Gen Z tends to be more impatient, instant minded, lacking the ambitions of previous generations, have acquired attention deficit disorder with a high dependency on technology and a very less attention span, individualistic, self-directed, more demanding, acquisitive, materialistic and entitled generation so till now” (Gaidhani et al., 2019).

Types of Workplace Environments

We have evaluated all the generational eras, their history, characteristics, and how they flow directly and indirectly into the workforce; now it is time to gather this information and how it intertwines with the American healthcare culture and work environment.

First, we must evaluate the workplace's difference between 'environment' and 'culture.' An appealing and attractive environment only sometimes aligns with healthy workplace culture, and culture can grow from the environment. The workplace environment is your surroundings, influences, and interests, such as office layout, team engagements, and conference room interactions.

In contrast, workplace culture is attitudes, customs, habits, etc. One can have a healthy and relaxed 'work environment' such as the feel of the space and layout, but the workplace culture is toxic and of negative influence. We must identify, recognize and balance both work environment and culture. We will be looking at five workplace environments and what generation these environments would work well with, realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional; each of these environments also comprise leadership roles and characteristics displayed and desired by each individual and generation.

Realistic Environment

A realistic work environment emphasizes actions over contemplation, meaning the office space is typically quiet and free from distractions; there are often clear boundaries and expectations; in other words, known as a more 'serious' workplace environment. Realistic work environments typically hold more employees and employers with suitable personality types, often with higher micromanagement observations and hands-on settings.

Social Work Environment,

This type of work environment is known as constantly moving; typically, business traveling and traveling from location to location. Additionally, as the name goes, these environments are typically more chit-chatty and involve many work environment events such as potlucks and holiday gift exchanges. Communication is also more casual and laid back, and employees within this type of work environment need to feel comfortable presenting presentations, consulting with clients, and leading team events.

Enterprising Work Environment

The enterprising work environment focuses on financial success and growth opportunities as their main priority. These types of work environments frequently focus more on sales and distribution; characteristics that individuals within this type of work environment often display are ambitious, assertive, and outgoing. Managers of a department may have more of an enterprising workplace mentality, as they are focused on maintaining the financial aspects of a department or company.

Artistic Work Environment

The artistic work environment is very expressive, open, welcoming, and inclusive; this work environment emphasizes freedom and different levels of engagement and expression. We

see the younger generation, such as Millennials and Generation Z, often preferring to work for a company with a more artistic work environment. Within the healthcare field, specific departments that tend to have more of a creative work environment are HR and administrative departments; this is primarily due to their work and responsibilities ordaining around all other departments and facilities within a hospital or hospital organization.

Investigative Work Environment

The investigative work environment revolves around scientific evidence, data, and mathematical concepts. This type of environment is known for more problem-solving and abstraction thinking; within the healthcare field, we will see doctors, surgeons, and specialists, as well as nurses, hold more of an investigative work environment. In this context, there is more critical thinking and then responding with quick action, and this is more of a quick-moving and fast-paced environment.

Conventional Work Environment

This work environment is exceptionally organized and involves systematic numbers and data, such as the IT department. They go off of routine, stability, and repetitive actions or solutions. Individuals who do well within a conventional work environment tend to be more organized, step-by-step structural thinkers and followers and enjoy well-defined rules and procedures or protocols.

Environmental Overview

There are many moving patterns, departments, responsibilities, and systems in a hospital setting, each with a unique workplace environment suitable for job responsibilities and positional roles. The IT department will not have the same workplace environment that Cardiac Surgical Unit has. However, they are both under the same hospital facility but hold two very different

sub-group workplace environments. We just went through the five primary hospital environments we tend to see as an overarching theme from department to department; HR is known for more of an artistic workplace environment, whereas providers and nurses are known to have more of an investigative workplace environment. Although each department has its departmental background, one is sometimes better than the other. A department can have a functioning workplace environment but a negative workplace culture. In the hospital setting, we hope our facilities will have an overarching positive cultural and moral compass trickle down into all the departments. They branch into their departmental environments while maintaining the facilities' cultural theme. "Organizations involve individuals with diverse backgrounds, skills, and experience; they work together as a supportive entity to attain definite goals and objectives. The major responsibility of healthcare owners is to generate and sustain a positive organizational culture and trust free of respect and workplace bullying" (Elewa et al., 2019).

Work Culture

Outside the environmental scope of the workplace, environments remain the organization's culture; many different types of cultures can exist. Two of the most apparent cultures are a positive work culture and a hostile work culture. Positive work culture attributes include flexibility, family orientation, rewards, recognition, accountability, teamwork, and honesty. On the opposite end, some drawbacks within a negative culture would be administrative control, micromanagement, low family-life balance, limited flexibility, no accountability, and deception. In addition to gossip, cliques and job promotions are predominately based upon friendship or relationships versus actual qualifications and skill sets.

Negative workplace cultures tend to contribute to more excellent employee turnover rates, higher employee stress, and poor client or patient satisfaction; a department or company's culture affects more than just the internal aspects but pours outward and externally. Politics inevitability creates division, hatred, and negativity among coworkers with different beliefs and political preferences. A most recent study and investigation into the influences of American workplace culture by Pew Research found that politics is the number one cause of division and adverse workplace environments. "As Americans spend a large amount of their time working, whether in person or from home, it is important to recognize that political identity and political beliefs are going to become more common topics openly expressed in the workplace. The dichotomous beliefs individuals hold regarding politics are likely to lead to disagreement, conflict, and perhaps even maltreatment, which can threaten employee psychological safety and lead to various negative outcomes. For these reasons, organizations should take a vested interest in developing policies and procedures regarding political diversity in their workplaces" (Mendelson et al., 2022). Due to generational upbringing, preferences, and leadership styles, we often see generations preferring one workplace culture over another.

Generational Leadership

Each generation holds its generational leadership styles and perspectives. Next, we will dive into different leadership styles, their flaws and attributes, the success and downfall of each class, and how each generation has its preference for one type over the other. Suitable leadership styles help build a culture and environment of reliability, safety, transparency, and unity that works well. Ultimately, leadership directs and influences not only the workplace staff but also the patients and client experiences within a healthcare facility; adequate oversight could lead to

patient satisfaction, high turnaround employment rates, low approval rates, and little client interaction or engagement.

The healthcare sector is an exciting and ever-constant moving field with an overarching monetization by public eyes, donors, taxpayers, and community members to uphold quality care and keep up with the pace of healthcare technology and innovative science. Leadership in this position is under keen pressure to keep the ball rolling at a steady, if not inclining speed; healthcare administrators are responsible for upholding the quality aspect of every corner and concern within a facility. We can gauge that each generation has a leadership style they cling to and obtain more skill and knowledge. However, first, we must observe some key areas we can idealize and recognize as moving areas of importance from Mr. AlaDeen Mah'd Alloubani, R.N, MSc, Dr. Mohammad Almatari, Ph.D. and Prof. Mohammad Musa Almkhtar, Ph.D. in their literature review are as follows:

1. Healthcare internationally is facing new challenges and has unique goals. Healthcare leadership used to react to change but now must anticipate and shape new goals linking ideas with practice in the current workplace. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
2. New healthcare techniques and technologies require different and new leadership approaches to work efficiently with healthcare teams. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
3. Healthcare organizations are dynamic, constantly changing structurally, culturally, and in work practices. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
4. New and widely acknowledged information about healthcare has raised the expectations of patients, practitioners, and communities. (Alloubani et al., 2014)

Short-term reaches to continuous improvement in health sectors rely on highly developed “people management.” New thinking about leadership is helping to change and shift thinking about a range of contemporary leadership approaches and methods. (Alloubani et al., 2014)

Transformational Vs. Transactional Leadership

Transformational leadership is a model that focuses more on inspiring and motivating staff and coworkers. In contrast, Transactional Leadership is more reinforcement, favors, and exchanges. Within our transformational leadership style, we can easily find higher growth and employee engagement, higher acts of team building, and team training for individual independence and confidence within job tasks and responsibility; this leadership can be seen more as one which accommodates 'raising' their employees someday to obtain more extensive opportunities of employment growth or position. Transformational leaders often refrain from corporate punishment or financial disciplines such as holding out on a raise or adjusting hours for an individual due to personal feelings towards that individual. Instead, recognize the essence of a 'work-life' balance attitude and the need for employee satisfaction within one's position. The 'downward' trickle can be known as a negative experience within one's workplace, which causes a decline in their performance, and an overall perspective of a department or leadership; this can often manifest in multiple individuals, and before long, an entire department is experiencing or suffering from harmful environmental factors within their workplace which reflect upon their perspective of leadership; we can often see this happen within politics and citizen reactions or approval-disapproval ratings. Transactional leadership is more focused on order and control, not always in a negative light, but more so that transactional leadership is focused on achieving goals or mile markers on a short-term basis and timeline. Some transactional leadership examples are

drill sergeants, first responders, and sales team leads; these positions require quick and efficient results. Transactional leadership is not necessarily a 'negative' form of leadership, but more that it is objective and has a specific plan and professional realm. The motivating factor within transactional leadership is exchange; transactional leaders will set proper guidelines for their employees to meet, evaluate their skill level, and judge them based on how well they meet the objectives.

It is generally agreed that healthcare service organizations continue to flourish under outstanding leadership and face considerable difficulty or even fail when it is poor. Moreover, transformational leadership factors are related to effectiveness and staff retention, and the presence of transformational leadership in any organization produces staff satisfaction.

(Alloubani et al., 2014) Some findings identified six transformational leadership competencies and values:

1. Mastering change: the capacity to help organizations view change as an opportunity for new alternatives and calculated risk-taking. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
2. Systems thinking: the capacity to understand interrelationships and patterns in solving complex problems. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
3. Shared vision: the capacity to craft a collective organizational vision of the future. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
4. Continuous quality improvement: the capacity to engender a 'never-satisfied' attitude that supports an ongoing process to improve clinical and service outcomes. (Alloubani et al., 2014)
5. Redefining healthcare: the capacity to focus on healing, changing lifestyles, and the holistic interplay of mind, body, and spirit. (Alloubani et al., 2014)

6. Serving public/community: the capacity to weld social mission to organizational goals, objectives, and actions. (Alloubani et al., 2014)

Generational Preferences

Before acknowledging leadership's generational preferences within workplace culture, we must first recognize the unfortunate reality of generational stereotypes. Stereotypes are labels we instill upon others, more so a group of individuals; stereotypes rarely accurately represent an entire class or group. Stereotypes often arise in individuals due to a few poor experiences with a class or a group of individuals, some common stereotypes within the work field may be older generations labeling the younger generation as lazy and entitled. While this persona is true for some individuals or a percentage of the younger generation, it surely does not apply to everyone, and this would be a stereotype. "Similar to a stereotype—a generalized belief about another group—a meta stereotype is also a belief, or in other words, a cognition. In the case of meta stereotypes, cognition is focused on what one believes another group thinks about their group. Stereotype threat has been conceptualized as a reaction to the awareness of a negative stereotype of one's group. One negative reaction that constitutes the bulk of the literature is the potential for performance decrements resulting from stereotype threat" (Finkelstein et al., 2015).

One of the critical factors to generational preferences within leadership is the gap in access to technology and technological knowledge; baby boomers are known as specialized immigrants, while Millennials are known as digital natives. "Older adults are often stereotyped as inflexible, frail, incompetent, out of touch, and slow; accumulated research suggests that older adults are susceptible to the performance-impairing effects of age-based stereotype threat" (Manzi et al., 2018).

Another area of generational differences is communication styles. When we have five different generations meshing together, communication can be a common ground of confusion and tension. Typically, your traditionalists and baby boomers prefer more in-person and face-to-face interactions, making remote work exceptionally difficult and isolating for older adults, who prefer more authentic connection and interaction. On the flip side, we have our millennials and younger generations who prefer more of an isolated and remote work field that will give them more work-life balance. Many of our younger generations vouch that remote work does not change their socialization. They have many friendships, relationships, and commitments outside the work field that substitute for the more isolating work days.

"Since every generational cohort has different experiences and is exposed to various dynamics, they reflect specific traits. The differentiation is seen in their work habits and characteristics, like in other areas. The youth of Generation Z have always been able to reach knowledge easily without much effort, and raising in an era where technology is fostered is the reason for this opportunity. They have had more access to get information through the internet, smartphones, and online networking at schools than previous generations, like Baby Boomers or Millennials. Individuals of Generation Z cannot tolerate anything that processes slowly; rather, they adore and appreciate the speed in each aspect of life, for instance, a video talking with a friend who lives on the other side of the world. Technological tools and easy access to information have molded the character, traits, and habits of the people in Generation Z"(Bulut & Maraba, 2021).

Nevertheless, with all these differences can come to both attributes and concerns; one of the most alarming concerns is the current rising generation (Generation Z) 's dependence on social media and approval, which is inevitably creeping into the workplace. "It is not surprising

that people of Generation Z tend to be more individualistic than any other generational cohort, and they look for personal benefit at work because of the dominant culture of capitalism that leads to individualism. In this regard, three major characteristics are observed, which are individualistic, entrepreneurial, and money-conscious of Generation Z in terms of work habits and characteristics in a job" (Bulut & Maraba, 2021). A majority of Generation Z have no commitment or desire to 'climb the corporate ladder with one specific company, especially if salary and benefits are not matching their work productivity and they are feeling undervalued and underappreciated; Generation Z prefers to work in an environment where provide flexibility, collaborative working, and personal autonomy. There are different opinions about the working efficiency of Generation Z regarding social media usage. Although Gen Z is very ambitious and multitaskers in the occupational fields, the quality of work performed during work is damaged because they often engage in social media. Generation Z shows less discipline at work than previous generations by taking breaks that have short duration but are more frequent, and they are not good at managing time effectively because of smartphones" (Bulut & Maraba, 2021).

Overall, it is well observed that the 'younger generation prefers more of a work-life balance and macro management style of leadership; that encourages both professional and personal life growth, while the 'older generation' has more of a black-and-white look on professionalism. They believe work is work and personal life is a personal life, and these two individualities have no room for intertwining. Next, we will dive deeper into how we take all we have observed, researched, and learned and how to bring together all the moving parts of a vast multi-generational workforce.

Digital Impacts in the Workplace

American culture and society have expanded significantly in diversity. One of those diverse impacts has been technology, which has dramatically increased in value and popularity with each passing year since its arrival. Matt Mullenweg, an American entrepreneur, once said, "technology is best when it brings people together." As much as this quote is a reality and hopeful truth, it can also point to technology's dark and complicated side, especially within managing work environments. We see a technological interruption in the workplace; technological overload, technological distraction, and technological disadvantage. Lastly, we will address the inappropriate use and abuse of technology within the workplace.

Technological Overload

Much of the healthcare field is shifting to a more prominent role within the technological realm, especially provider-patient communication, access, revenue cycle, hospital billing, and administration.

Many American healthcare workers who work remotely spend the vast majority of their day sitting, typing, and staring at a computer screen, but staring at a screen just scratches the surface of the obstacles that come with working remotely or, prominently, on a computer. One arising negative factor of the technological wave within the workplace environment has been digital eye strain. "Digital eye strain, an emerging public health issue, is a condition characterized by visual disturbance and ocular discomfort related to the use of digital devices resulting from a range of stresses on the ocular environment. As many as 90 percent of digital device users experience symptoms of digital eye strain. Many studies suggest that the following factors are associated with digital eye strain: uncorrected refractive error (including presbyopia), accommodative and

vergence anomalies, altered blinking pattern (reduced rate and incomplete blinking), excessive They were impacting to intense light, closer working distance, and smaller font size” (Coles-brennan et al., 2019).

While Covid-19 opened the doors to ‘remote work’ and increased work productivity in one sense, individual cognitive abilities have been reportedly impacted by routine screen time and 40-hour work weeks staring at a computer screen, which was once filled with intermittent face-to-face interactions. “Information and communication technology at the workplace is designed to help workers enhance their work productivity and increase collaboration among workers. However, studies showed that employees are becoming frustrated by the extensive use of technology in the workplace”(Rasool et al., 2022). Technology within the workplace was designed originally to lift a burden off employees and employers, in some cases even ‘remove the middle man, but as time has gone on and technology has advanced, many workers are finding themselves struggling with ‘technological overload’ within their jobs; what once designed for a more convenient way of life has ironically traded one set of burdens and obstacles for another. Some areas of technological overload within the workplace are communication forums, software systems, managing files, and networking; factors impacted by these overloads are sleep deprivation, personal life stress, work-life conflict, social media addiction, social overload, reduced productivity, and increased interruptions.

Americans have multiple forms of communication within their personal lives and work environments; some work environments can have up to five or more different forms of work communication, and each individual may choose to communicate differently. For instance, many remote employees will have a remote phone, email, messaging system, and Webex video; at least four different forms of communication; while one boss may prefer formal email, a coworker may

like more informal and use instant IM; this is one area of Technological overload Impacting workplace communication. "A massive amount of information in the workplace can cause stress. When too complex functions of ICT in the workplace are implemented and empower complicated multitasking, it may cause conflict between employees and ICT functions, increasing stress" (Rasool et al., 2022).

Complex technological work environments create both work and personal life stress for individuals. Individuals who felt consumed by the work hours trying to navigate through complex systems or in-depth lengths of communication frequently took on fear, worry, and anxiety about work productivity and completed tasks. "Communication overload diverts users' intention and interrupts their studies. Without constant communication and technological distractions, individuals can save time and energy to focus on the task. Interruption overload significantly affects employees' job satisfaction and ultimately decreases productivity (Rasool et al., 2022).

Poor training, management, leadership, and a work environment unwilling to teach and direct individuals, especially those less familiar with technology as a whole or more so a specific software system often, times set their department, coworker, or employee up for technological overload, leading to burnout and high turn around rates.

Additionally, technological overload leads to psychological and physical run-downs such as sleep deprivation, BMI increase, metabolism effects, and digital eye strain. As employers, leaders, and coworkers, it is each our responsibility to ensure that if one individual or an entire department is suffering from either acute or chronic technological overload, we address it head-on and become proactive to correct any damaging effects on the individual or individual's

personal and professional being. Managing technological overload is the starting point for tackling technology's negative implications on one's work environment.

Technological Distraction

Technological distractions within the workforce typically arise from an outside source, such as our devices or social media accounts; to be evaluated as a technological distraction from a negative influence standing point; the distraction has to be entirely removing you from being psychologically present at your job or on the task at hand, such as social media or personal life matters. Research has suggested that women are slightly more prone to social media usage while on the job than men, as well as Facebook is the leading platform for social media usage while; some studies revealed productivity increases when social media is used intermittently during working hours; but while research can suggest an increase or decrease in productivity, it can not pinpoint the quality of the productivity per individuals who were on social media intermittently during work verse those who were not present on social media during working hours.

"Participants believed that "social media usage in the workplace contributes to positive two-way communication" (80.4%). They supported "social media usage in the workplace improves employee-employee communication (65.7%). They stated that "social media usage in the workplace helps working efficiency" (52.7%). The participants disagreed that social media positively affects employee-employer communication (36.5%). Participant's work performance increased when social media frequency of usage increased in the workplace" (Celebi & Terkan, 2020).

Employers realize that social media is not going anywhere anytime soon; as the internet platform continues to escalate, many employers are looking for ways to incorporate social media into their internal and external marketing outlook, leading the generational headwaters in social

media usage. "Gen Z is the first generation to grow up with social media as an inherent part of their lives. Their love of social media has been coined a "digital opioid" by some experts, with one study suggesting that Gen Z teens spend an average of 9 hours on their phones each day, more time than eating or sleeping." (Joe, 2021) Let us look at the statistics below to understand better the upcoming generation's admiration for all things technological, especially social media. The researchers surveyed 1,500 Americans aged 16-24 to find out what impact social media has had on their lives. What they found was alarming. (Joe, 2021)

- 61% of Gen Z say the number of likes they receive directly affects their self-esteem. (Joe, 2021)
- 47% say they delete posts that do not get enough likes (Joe, 2021)
- 86% admitted that social media directly impacts their happiness (Joe, 2021)
- 20% said they would need more than 1 million dollars to delete social media (Joe, 2021).
- 36% said they would never date someone without a social media presence (Joe, 2021)
- 79% say that social media directly causes depressive episodes or impacts their depression (Joe, 2021)
- 85% said that social media dictates their self-esteem and self-worth (Joe, 2021)
- 61% of Generation Z individuals said they are concerned about their social media addiction (Joe, 2021)
- 50% said they are envious of those who do not have a social media presence or do not struggle with addiction (Joe, 2021)

When we consider the significant impact social media and technology have on our younger generation, we gather the overarching and problematic tidal wave arising, the significance of

social media and technology decreasing human independence and confidence, inevitably flowing over into our workplace culture and environments.

Technological Disadvantages

Social media has its ups and downs, interweaving itself intricately into the work field; one of those ways is through 'invisible' discrimination. "Predictably, this relationship expansion has led to uncharted adversarial scenarios between the respective parties. Unfortunately, employment law is struggling for deference and attention in this new, vibrant cyber world. Notwithstanding this apparent indifference, social network media heavily impacts each relationship phase. Applicant recruitment, information gathering, and applicant selection stand to be impacted by the social network communications made by employees or prospective employees" (Pate, 2013).

A smoothed-over cover letter, 30-minute interview, questions, and some small talk, don't paint enough of a picture to know about a potential candidate and their character traits and honesty; social media has played a big part in employment recruitment. Many employers find themselves looking up potential candidates. Although they could and would be an excellent fit for a position, the dangers of using personal platforms for professional screening create an unintentional realm of bias and discrimination within the hiring process. A quote from an interview with the U.S Equal Opportunity Commission followed as such, "The increasing use of social media in the 21st-century workplace presents new opportunities as well as questions and concerns, how social media is being used in the employment context and what impact it may have on the laws we enforce and on our mission to stop and remedy discriminatory practices in the workplace."

Social media presence heavily influences job opportunities within the hiring process; some of the top reasons individuals weren't hired directly correlated to social media interaction and posts. Over 70% of employers check the social media accounts and profiles of potential hiring candidates. Some of the specific reasons that influence their decision not to hire an individual are as follows:

- The candidate posted inappropriate information or photos.
- The candidate had discriminatory posts towards race, gender, religion, etc.
- Candidates bad-mouthed their previous employee or any other individual on social media.

Hiring managers and recruiters recommend that college students represent themselves on social media in the same context they would come within the professional field. "Students would be wise to know that their social media accounts are a reflection of their character, either for good or for bad, and it is something that hiring managers around the country and world use as a reference for representation of a particular hiring candidate. "Some students attest to the importance of careful social media use and its impact on their successes. BYU senior Rebecca Gordon was looking for an internship and said she ensures her social media image is representative of who she is. "I don't think that my social media is representative of me as an employee because I don't post about my academics often, but it does portray general characteristics that I have," Gordon said. "I make sure that I post clean, wholesome content that is in line with my general attributes." (Hollingshaus, 2019)

Technology has contributed to positivity, increased productivity, and advancements within the work culture, especially in the medical field. With all the attributes technology has

brought come various harmful influences. Technology has helped our workforce progress tremendously. You see the impact all across the board from technological advancements within our stores, banks, schools, and hospitals. The other side of the door can contain invisible discrimination, with political preference or affiliation being the number one discriminating factor within American work culture and the hiring process. Many employers will subconsciously discriminate against hiring candidates with opposing beliefs or political views to their own; managing a team with conflicting views can prove to be exceptionally challenging. Some employers will seek to avoid this potential conflict. Unfortunately, this thought process can come unconsciously; they are naturally drawn to individuals who think, act, and believe like them. Political and religious discrimination remain the top forms of discrimination that occur per social media reviews before a job offering or during a hiring process.

Generational Ties

We have discussed the five workforce generations, their history and culture during their era, and what events or factors have primarily influenced and molded them: their primary beliefs, character traits, and contributions within the workforce. We then moved on to just some of the more common workplace environments and their culture, distinguishing the difference between workplace environment and culture, what has shown to work and what has shown to be unsuccessful. From there, we addressed the different generations' preferences for specific workplace environments and cultures over others, as each generation has unique values and beliefs. Lastly, we carried those generational preferences into leadership and the leadership skills and qualities each generation prefers, as they are all vastly different. Wrapping up the generational preferences, we then carried on to the digital impacts within the American work culture and workforce, how each generation deals with and handles this ever-evolving societal

culture of politics and social media. It would be incredibly neglectful to ignore the impacts of social media within this digital age and its influences on corporate America. Taking all that we have absorbed and reviewed together, we will now tie this into how generational differences genuinely are the essence of all workplace foundations and how we can make the American workplace cycle appropriate, given all the different moving factors and puzzle pieces within a five-generation work culture.

Chapter 2: Moving Forward

As America progresses into the new generation, leadership and the attitude of corporate America are expected to get a facelift; as the incoming age has changed, they are adamant about seeing foreplay. These changes include living wages, yearly salary increases, plausible rewards for hard work and dedication, competitive benefits, and a work-life balance environment. As children growing up in a generation where their parents' work life was often not a greater priority over family life, the upcoming generation has strong feelings about the shift in that dynamic.

Additionally, a generation that grew up watching their parents see no real return in salary and beneficial promotions each year, often inflicting upon the financial strain of family life as the cost of living increased while the value of pay could not or would not match the influx in the economic growth; meanwhile, corporate America's profits skyrocketed with the cost of living, but their employee's wages lagged far behind.

Wage Stagnation

Employers are typically known to give their employees at least a 3% raise per year, a new trend within the workforce and frequently needs to align with the growth in the cost of living.

Purchasing power is the power an individual has to pay their bills, rent, mortgage, and daily living expenses; an individual could get a raise of 3%, but inflation has increased the cost of goods and transportation by 11%, an individual is still in the negative of purchasing power.

"When wages are stagnant or falling compared to inflation, employed people often find it challenging to meet their financial needs even though they have a job and have not taken a pay cut" (Contributor, 2022). Cost of living is a crucial factor for employers to deem the appropriate value in salary for their employees; a solid employer who values their employees will attempt all

measures to match the pay and hourly wages to a value that aligns with the current economic standings and cost of living. There are also additional values many employees will consider when deciding to stay or leave a position based upon salary stipulations, one of those being the end total for take-home pay, which is a consumer taking home at the end of the day. After taxes are taken out, benefits, and all other deductions, what is an employee taking home to contribute towards their cost of living and financial needs. An employee who is making \$15.50 an hour but then after taxes is making \$11.25, and after benefit, contributions are now at \$6.20 an hour; the individual's take-home pay to provide all other living expenses for both them and their family is now well below minimum wage, while benefits are a significant aspect to employment many of the younger generations are choosing to opt-out of health insurance benefits because they can not afford to live off of the take-home pay once those deductions are withdrawn. "7% more people this year are facing increased health insurance premium costs compared to last year (41% versus 34%). The numbers are even higher for copays and deductibles — with 5% more facing higher copay costs (27% this year versus 22% last year) and 4% more facing higher deductible costs (26% this year versus 22% last year)" (Guttentag, Ph.D., 2022).

Some of these staggering statistics give us insight into the dire importance of not only adequate employee benefits coverage and packages but additionally take home-pay, so individuals can afford the cost of living expenses so they don't have to sacrifice their health for the sake of affording the rent or gas to go to work.

- Forty-five percent skipped a recommended medical test or treatment (Eisenberg, 2018).
- Forty-three percent didn't go to a dentist when they needed treatment ((Eisenberg, 2018).
- Forty percent went without routine physicals or other preventive health care (Eisenberg, 2018).

- Thirty percent did not fill a prescription or took less than the prescribed dose of medicine (Eisenberg, 2018).

America lays as one of the wealthiest countries (ranking in as #8) in the world while additionally being the world's largest economy; yet nearly half of American citizens are forfeiting basic, minimal, and simple healthcare; how can we as healthcare employers take a step back, re-evaluate, and help alleviate this catastrophic problem, if not amongst the country, at least among our employees; it is our duty as healthcare employers to create a work-life environment that co-aligns with the mission statements and values we tell our patient's every day. It is time, as healthcare employers, that our internal values and environment align with our external values and background. It is time we care for and treat our employees in the same capacity we would work with our patients daily.

Work-Life Balance

Every generation has always valued work-life balance to some degree or another, but no other generation has hit its importance as hard as the upcoming Millennial and Generation Z; many indicate that a work-life balance is of higher essence to them than a meaningful and fulfilling job; a priority statistic that has been drastically reversed in the last few generational transitions. An excellent quote from an unknown source helps summarize the shifting priorities between generations within the workplace, "In the past, work was a location. Today, work has shifted from a place to a space. The technological shift from fixed communications to mobile communications has redefined how and where we work". In the past, individuals would drive to work, complete their 8-9 hour shift, clock out, and head home; work was not a responsibility until the following day; the desire for a work-life balance was not as prevalent in previous

generations primarily due to the temptation of work interfering with our personal lives was not a factor. "Today, 42 percent of employees feel obligated to check in with work while on vacation, according to Randstad's Employee Engagement Study. The study also found that Millennials were the generation "most inclined to remain 'on' during off hours." (Jenkins, 2022)

The environmental dynamic between generations has shifted beyond measures one could have imagined twenty years ago. In contrast, there have been numerous advantages to that shift within the work field. Ryan Jenkins sums up perfectly the daunting reality of technological interferences and temptations between our personal and work life.

"For Millennials, the never-offline and always-available workplace are all they know. To them, turning off work at 5:00 p.m. is an antiquated practice. Due to their always-on approach to life, Millennials see no problem with blending work and life. Checking email before they get out of bed in the morning, shopping online while at work, exchanging texts with their managers after 8:00 p.m., and then catching up on email on Sunday afternoon are native to them. Every generation seeks a healthy work-life balance, but Millennials most demand it from their employers. In today's employee market, creating a work-life balance for Millennials is a compelling competitive advantage" (Jenkins, 2022).

Millennials find it challenging to have a work-life balance and require it more than any generation before them due to the following:

- Millennials are a generation that predominantly does not view climbing the corporate ladder as a success in life as well as materialistic items.

- Millennials are the first generation to be born into a workforce flooded with technology, so the constant interference and work interruptions are something they have always known and, early on in their careers, accepted, but are now pushing back on the value of 'turning off' work responsibilities at a specific time every day.
- Millennials are at a time in their age and careers where they are simultaneously moving up in positions, and work responsibilities as many are getting married, starting families, moving, etc.
- Millennials are the first generation where most households are now dual income, compared to previous generations where the majority of families were single income households; statistically, it was found to be more accessible at the work-life balance between spouses and parental roles when one spouse was working versus when two spouses are working. The dual income also adds the factor of dual work schedules and responsibilities that can interfere with work-life balance.

As the corporate American generational leaderboard begins to shift with baby boomers and generation x being replaced by millennials, we have to wonder how the cultural work environment will also start to turn. Steve Harvey, a talk show host during a work culture televised clip, once responded to a younger individual within the millennial class who asked a question about how he could obtain the work-life balance he so deserves. Steve Harvey's response to this individual statement came with a firm reality; that to obtain work-life balance, you must work to that point. Many younger generations want promotions and luxuries at an almost immediate turnaround versus working to receive those benefits; most employers offer

more PTO time each year or quarter. This goes hand in hand with the reality that a work-life balance will require sacrifice within the early years of one's career to obtain those desires and benefits. On the flip side, most millennials argue that they are more efficient within their work, with work-life flexibility, such as working hours outside of your original 9:00–5:00 a.m. this is true, especially with younger adults with more minor children. Employees who are also parents and maybe do not have the option of family help or the convenience of living near family frequently have to do school drop-offs and pickups, which happen to fall in the line of the traditional working hours; these individuals often are more productive in their work (if the work is remote), having a flexible schedule that can allow them to start their workday earlier and work for a bit after their children are in bed or winding down for the night. It is not a convenient way of working. However, many millennials are vocal about the difficulties of desiring to be a present parent, involved in their child's life and daily activities while maintaining a career to support their family financially.

Here are some recent statistics that help us visualize the most motivating factor for employees and the most talked about desire within the workforce in 2022. These statistics come from the Pew Research Center and zoom in on how and why both mothers and fathers have difficulty managing their multiple responsibilities when they lack work flexibility (Pew Research Center, 2019).

- Forty-six percent of families have two full-time working parents.
- Seventeen percent of families have a full-time employed dad and a part-time employed mom.

- Twenty-six percent of families have a full-time employed dad, with the mom as a stay-at-home parent.
- When parents work full-time, most say neither career takes priority.
- Fifty-four percent of mothers report being responsible for their children's schedules and activities.
- Forty-seven percent of parents say they share care responsibilities when children are sick.
- Fifty-six percent of working parents report difficulty balancing work and family. This accounts for sixty percent of mothers saying it is difficult and fifty-two percent of fathers.
- Parents report finding more enjoyment in parenting when they balance work and life.
- Fifty-nine percent of working parents say that being a working parent has made no difference in their career advancement.
- However, forty-one percent of mothers and twenty percent of fathers report that being a working parent has made career advancement harder.
- Forty percent of full-time mothers, compared to twenty-nine percent of part-time or unemployed mothers, report feeling rushed all the time.
- As for spending time with their children, fifty percent of fathers and thirty-nine percent of mothers say they spend too little time with their children.

It is easy to conclude that work-life balance is of the essence for the upcoming leaders within our workplace culture; as one can expect, corporate America may see a drastic shift within the workplace dynamic in the years to come. Some individuals feel this shift is long overdue, while others think work-life balance is a benefit that is not given but earned within the career sector.

The University of Massachusetts provides an excellent overview of how everyone can slightly

achieve work-life balance from the beginning years of one's career, and that is through time management. "Values like possessing a strong work ethic, inspiring trustworthiness, and showing consideration to others can be brought out in all areas of your life to improve the balance. Managing your time is a great hurdle in achieving work/life balance" (MU Global, 2022).

Utilizing Generational Differences

As we dive deeper into chapter two and how we can move forward as a culture with a melting pot dynamics of generational preferences and influences, we have discussed the most important of wages stagnation and work-life balance, but at the end of the priorities lie work-life culture and environment. Three precious aspects of the work-life sector are pay, flexibility, and the environment.

Corporate America has a mix of cultural perspectives and how they value and perceive work culture; we see some companies loving growth, numbers, logistics, and financial representation, whereas we see some companies advertising and valuing their teamwork ethics, employee benefits, and work culture as their prime priority; as the upcoming generations leave behind the value of financial gain over work-life culture, we can expect the companies who value positive and individual work cultures to grow in popularity, as well as that type of work-culture dynamic to flourish. As times change, so will our work culture dynamics; it is often through change that either make or break a company and its employers; typically, the companies with solid leadership in place are the ones who succeed in times of significant cultural change and environmental shifting. "When we look at a random social media post by giant companies like *Walmart*, we find that the majority of the time, we do not see marketing or business. Rather we find posts dedicated to the team members, encouraging them, appraising them, and, most

importantly, acknowledging them. This small step might affect the entire work culture within the company, where the company simply acknowledges the contribution of its members"(BoDE Foundation, 2020).

The conclusion that the building foundation of a company's success lies within a company's work culture is evident, but how do we balance the generational preferences of work culture? How do we move forward as a country and project forward into the work culture while balancing and still respecting the 'old' way of workplace culture while also mixing in the new initiative ways of work culture and environmental aspects. Covid-19 has drastically influenced the remote element of education and work; many jobs turned remote due to Covid-19 that, before or without Covid-19, still, to this day, remain in-office positions. As we addressed earlier, we have different generations all trying to work hand in hand; in a world of technology and remote work increasing, we can plausibly conclude that some individuals are more comfortable working from home, working remotely, and utilizing technology from a distance than other individuals are.

Some initiative ways to improve or work with this dynamic include the following:

- Mixing remote and in-office roles according to individual character, work ethic, and preferences, such as having a few individuals (depending on the company's size) work from the office 2-3 days a week while having others work remotely. This melting pot workflow allows a company or department to have a few individuals on-site for company needs, references, and personal preferences. For example, an employer may have a department consisting of 10 individuals in total with 3 to 4 individuals on-site on various days throughout the week; these individuals would typically be the ones who live within

proximity to the on-site location, as well as prefer to be on-site a few times a week.

Additionally, having these individuals on-site allows remote employees to have access and reference to things that could only be handled on-site such as faxing in documents or collecting mail, which could be needed for the employment responsibilities of remote workers. Utilizing your individual preferences and the geographical dynamics of on-site and remote employees allows for a smooth workflow and open communication between employees, as they often have to work together and utilize teamwork.

- Enforcing teamwork and creating a work environment dynamic that is open communication and revolving around group projects or weekly team meetings; are also possible with remote positions and employment opportunities. Frequently remote work is viewed as a 'flexible but isolating job position,' which can be both true and untrue; this wholeheartedly depends upon your company and department work culture. A team leader or director focused on maintaining a positive and strong work culture within their department will often engage employees in group projects, weekly meetings, and daily communication.
- Keep politics out of the workplace at all times, as much as possible; a 'no politics policy' is often best in the midst of a society so invested and divided by politics. Compassion, kindness, respect, open communication, manners, devotion, and commitment are all qualities that should be a bare minimum requirement within the workplace and should have no affiliation with political nature but instead essential human compassion, kindness, and maturity.
- Keep cell phone usage distracting to a minimum, such as scrolling through social media or texting. Understandably, life happens, and there are seasons where one may need to be

closer to their phone, even during work hours, for personal reasons such as closing on a house, family dynamics, etc. Additionally, many individuals prefer to listen to music, podcasts, or radio stations while working, which often entails utilizing a smartphone. In a culture so heavily invested in our devices, predominantly our phones, it can often be difficult for employers to manage their employees' time with such distracting devices. However, ultimately, this will have to be a personal discipline area, and more times than not, when work still needs to be completed, it comes to light.

These four tips listed above are great ways for employers to utilize different generational perspectives and have the cultural differences from each generation balance out. Many times your baby boomers and traditionalists prefer on-site positions, more open communication within departmental roles, little political influence within the work environment, and phone use kept to a minimum. In contrast, your millennials and generation z is nearly the polar opposite in workplace desires and dynamics. When we abide by the four points listed above, we can often avoid workplace confrontation and tension due to the natural divide caused by generational differences. Avoiding stress and workplace negativity is an excellent way to create a trusting and relaxing work environment. Harvard professional development lays out six essential and valuable workplace aspects to help nurture a more stable work environment, especially when an employer or company is looking to spark company change.

- Define your values
 - Articulate your values explicitly and intentionally
 - Only some companies and work environments will be a flattering fit for everyone; it can be high, if not impossible, to create a work environment that suits the

desires and needs of all individuals, especially in a society so divided on perspectives, professional and personal.

- Be Authentic
 - Your values only hold weight when the leaders who set those values also lead and uphold those values by example.
 - Additionally, companies and employers earn respect and devotion from employees when their words align with their actions and hold themselves to the same accountability standard as everyone else.
- Create Listening Posts
 - Listening to your employees and organization is crucial; a company or employer who only demands without reciprocating listening ears is more than not doomed for failure.
 - Collect data and feedback from your company, departments, and overall work culture. Anonymous surveys are a great way for employers to receive honest employee feedback and can be utilized as an excellent tool for self-improvement from a company standpoint.
- Build Psychological Safety
 - As listed above, listening posts such as surveys and workshops are great ways to be aware of what dynamics, both healthy and unhealthy, are taking place within your workplace; leaders can't be everywhere and know every situation, especially if it is not brought to their attention. Psychological safety nets are a great way to receive feedback and act on them, correct them, and protect your employees and workplace culture.

- One of the most impactful contributing factors to quick turnaround times within a workplace is company and leadership silence; issues and toxic workplace problems are not being addressed, or favoritism exists within the workplace and negatively impacts environmental engagement and interaction.
- Accept and learn from mistakes.
 - Be open-minded and receptive to constructive criticism, and hold not only yourself accountable in a mature and open evaluation but hold others accountable as well. Accountability helps create an environment of equal opportunity, privilege, and quality amongst peers and coworkers.
 - Open acknowledgment that mistakes will and are going to happen; to be forward-minded on how to learn from our mistakes, train accordingly, and move forward optimistically.
 - Be receptive to the reality that generational groups have different strengths and weaknesses, especially regarding technology and software systems. Additionally, all software systems run differently and more complex, creating a work environment that values in-depth training initially and throughout one's career, especially as one takes on new tasks and responsibilities. A work environment where one is openly engaged and positively interacts with each other throughout training and task management.
- Watch Trends
 - One of the most detrimental mistakes a company can make is remaining stagnant throughout the workforce, especially regarding pay and benefit progression. As employers, one of the most significant contributions we can make to our

employees and staff is 'keeping up with the economy' and honoring the ever-growing cost of expenses and living.

- Keeping an eye on external trends is a huge asset, but interior trends are essential, and so are internal trends. Internal sensations refer to those psychological safety nets, surveys, and departmental trends. Any negative trends need to be immediately addressed, and it is an appropriate measure to honor and salute any positive departmental trends within a company.

Every work environment, facility, and company is different, so it is of the essence to reconcile that only some solutions will have the same outcome. However, it is of value to prioritize positive and motivating factors for building a solid departmental culture amid generational divides and cultures. For most companies and employers, abiding by and using the last ten points can serve as a dependable guideline for achieving a positive and progressive work culture. In the most recent concepts of this paper, we have addressed how to utilize these generational divides to the best of one's ability, but also to unite strengths and weaknesses from each generation to create a healthy balance and firm work culture and foundation. One of the most current and challenging factors within America's current workplace generation is the desire for work-life balance, both a necessity and priority of value while simultaneously being a benefit many employers feel must be earned and realistically obtained. "The conventional wisdom about Millennials and the younger generation declares that they all want to rise rapidly to leadership positions without working too hard or paying their dues. Again, according to conventional wisdom, they care more about work/life balance than the usual spoils of success: money and status' (Bresman, 2022). It is no foreign knowledge that each generation holds generational stereotypes about one another, preconceived ideas or biases we have conducted within ourselves

based on one or a few experiences or interpretations; millennials are no strangers to generational stereotypes either. We often see experts categorizing the generations into two different segments, older versus newer generations; this is simply a concept used to describe the ages with younger birthdates versus older birthdates, and with each birthdate comes to the cultural preconceived ideas, mentalities and cultural advances; as we have discussed in prior seasons of this paper. We often see our older generations valuing and perceiving job progression through seniority status; no matter the skill set, they tend to value seniority as the motivating and most applicable qualification for advancement and promotions. Whereas our younger generations have, more than not, 'thrown out that way of thinking and career advancement, our younger generations are focused on obtaining more skills, certifications, and relationships to obtain promotions and career advancement versus seniority; this is why we see our younger generations average time frame at an employer range from 18-22 months. The younger generation is known to be more 'firm' on yearly raises and career advancement as they obtain new skills and contribute more responsibilities to the company each year. They are known to expect quick turnaround times on achievement recognition and are not afraid to pick up and move jobs if they feel they are being underpaid or underappreciated. As you can see, we have two categories that view career advancement as opposites, frequently creating stereotypes against one another due to conflicting values and perspectives. There are many advantages and disadvantages to seniority promotion, as well as to performance-based advancement.

Seniority Vs. Performance in Promotion

Most companies use a mix of both seniority and performance base regarding promotions, although, unfortunately, some companies solely lean to one degree or the other. This can be deemed unfortunate because the cons outweigh the pros of a one-sided prone-sided motion

model; a wrong prone-sided model can create discouragement and burnout rates at a quicker reflux time versus companies that incorporate both promotion types. Indeed describes the seniority-based model as such, "a seniority-based promotion is where management promotes an employee because of their seniority within the company compared to other candidates.

Employees who are promoted due to seniority have been at the company longer than any other candidates, and may or may not have any other qualifications for the promotion". Indeed describes a performance-based model as such, "A performance-based promotion is where management promotes an employee due to their performance without considering the seniority of the candidates. In this method, an employee who has been performing exceptionally well but has been with the company for a year would be promoted over an employee who has been performing okay but has been with the company for five years '. When we take these two definitions into perspective, we can see both the cons and pros of each, but ultimately the best outcome remains within a company that prioritizes both promotion styles at equal face value.

Employers who use both the seniority and performance-based model not only encourage employees to stay with a company and continue to earn seniority but also encourage high performance; both attributes are honored within the promotion process. A promotion process that only keeps seniority as their primary factor could unintentionally welcome mediocre workflow and performance but long employment commitments. A promotion process that only keeps performance as their primary factor could unintentionally hinder away employees who are a joy to work with, pleasant, honest, and hardworking but may not be as quick or witty as the go-getter employees; therefore, they may not have high-speed performance but consistent and quality work performance. Thus, their quality of work, although of grade, may be overshadowed by those who come in with a quick performance turnaround.

Employers can avoid any surprises or unexpected disappointment from employees by laying out their promotion process, key areas they focus on, their expectations, performance points, task responsibilities, and time management protocols. Laying out the basic building blocks of an employee's promotion process can help create a tension-free and expectation-aware environment among peers and coworkers. There is no wrong or right way to promotions; each employer has their preference and what they feel is a priority contributing factor within the company. Some employers value long-term employment more than high-performing individuals, whereas others value quick task advancement and long-term work is not an objective of their priorities.

Conclusion

As the American nation has progressed over the past century, we have endured trial and tribulation. With each passing generation, cultural norms were embraced and sanctified with each passing generation. What one coworker has experienced in their lifetime could be of foreign understanding to another coworker, no two upbringings are alike, and no two generations are of similar historical influences and cultural adaptations. It is of vast importance and astronomical essence that we do not lose sight of the different cultural upbringings within each generation. No matter the presence of right or wrong within that upbringing, we may always hold the grace to walk alongside our coworkers of all different beliefs, races, ethnicity, gender, perspectives, political preference, and generational and cultural experiences. From the time we clock in until the time we clock out, our days and lives meshed together with a rally of to-do lists and tasks, but at the end of it all remains one impeccable aspect that can determine the environment we not only set for ourselves but additionally for others. That aspect is of our human character.

Many perceive the workplace as of little impact on not only our personal lives but the lives of others; the reality remains far from that deception and cultivates the reality of how influential our careers have on our overall lives and the lives around us. In a culture impacted by the cloud of mental health, very few employees receive the prompt and adequate care they need to put their health first. As employers, we can take steps and safeguards to ensure our employees engage, interact, and sustain healthy traits within the workplace and their personal lives. Creating a work environment that isn't toxic, overwhelming, understaffed, and overworked is a significant key point to avoiding employee burnout and negative psychological impacts.

We understand and have come to the realization of the in-depth layers to cultural and generational differences; it is evident that historical events and cultural norms during the developmental years of life heavily influence the outlook, perspectives, and character traits one may carry later in life; while this doesn't always serve as the case, statistics show heavy influence overall. As we have detailed throughout the text, critical events in history such as the Great Depression, World Wars, Holocaust, Pearl Harbor Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam War and Protests, 9/11, and even the most recent, Covid-19 will all play generational impacts on how individuals perceive the world before them; including the American work culture.

Throughout this context, we have dug deep and discovered deep generational roots, the causes, and the effects, both personal and professional. We have devoted our time and research to a progressive movement forward of positive work life within the five-generational mix. We addressed strategies and leadership concepts that accommodate one era or generational group but may cause tension and strife with another generational group. We addressed the weaknesses and strengths that stem from historical events and the influence generational experiences portray within the work culture. Lastly, we forwarded on to positive impacts and progressive action that

can be taken to create a more impactful and positively influential work culture while accommodating all generational pinpoints.

We live in a constantly moving society and are integrated into all employment opportunities. Not only has remote work increased drastically, but the perspective of employment has drastically changed from being a 'place' to a 'space.' The uprising perspective is that work can be productive at any location where the individual can produce a good job; some work better in an office setting, while others work better at home or a coffee shop. Regardless of one's opinion on how 'work life' should look, it would be naive and negligent not to acknowledge that we live in a society where 'work life' is perceived with many different objectives. In contrast, work opportunities have grown substantially to be more diverse and balanced. On top of the ever-growing and changing work setting, we also reside in a five-generational work culture, adding another layer of complexity and navigation. While the overarching view of a multi-generational workforce alongside a multi-generational work setting may seem complex, we hope this paper has relayed new and informative perspectives, statistics, and knowledge. At the end of it all, we expect the following report has provided informative opportunities, leadership directions, and informatics into employment success and failure, how to combine attributes and weaknesses and create a more comfortable, positive, and successful work-life culture and environment.

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