

# Generations in the Workplace

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## Objectives

- Learn how workplace attitudes, beliefs and behaviors are impacted by when we grew up.
- Use a generational lens to gain insight into interactions:
  - Among staff
  - Between staff and students
- Discover new choices for working with people from different generations.
- Make generational differences a source of strength for the Williams.

## Agenda

- Generations: Why do they matter?
- Generations at Williams
- Overview of current thinking about different generations.
- Discussion & Case Study

## Generational Differences: Why Do They Matter?

- Things that happen around us when we're growing up make a big difference
  - Example: People brought up during the depression don't like to spend money
- For centuries, our lives were pretty much the same.
- Now, dramatic changes are happening to our lives in just a few decades.
  - Examples?
- Four generations are working side by side with each other, with very different stories
- Those differences matter in how we work with each other

## Disclaimer

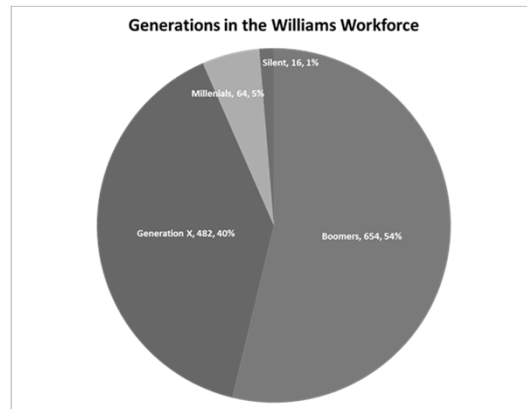
- There are vast differences between people we'll categorize as being part of the same generation.
- Good social science research on this topic is hard to come by ... blog entries by self-appointed "experts" abound.

- Four Generations
  - Silent Generation (born 1925 – 1942)
  - Baby Boomers (born 1943-1965)
  - Generation X (1966-1985)
  - Millenials (1986- 1996)

## Generations in the Williams Workforce

Includes faculty, admin,  
and support staff.

Does not include almost 2200  
students, 1400 of whom are  
student employees.



### Silent Generation (born 1925 – 1942)

- Sometimes called “The Lucky Few”
- Respect for employers
- Job security
- Loyal to employers

## A Few Famous Members of the Silent Generation (born 1925 – 1942)

- Lenny Bruce
- Malcolm X
- Andy Warhol
- Shirley Temple
- Warren Buffett
- Woody Allen
- Garrison Keillor

## Silent Generation: Memorable Events (born 1925 – 1942)

- Grew up in the shadow of the “Greatest Generation”
- Korean War
- Cold War
- Birth control

## Baby Boomers (born 1943-1965)

- Largest generational group in the workplace
- Driven for upward mobility, willing to work long hours
- Less comfortable with advances in tech.
- Providing care to both parents and children
- 2008 Financial Crisis postponed retirement for many

## A Few Famous Baby Boomers (born 1943-1965)

- Steve Jobs
- Bill Gates
- Sylvester Stallone
- Bill Clinton
- Donald Trump
- George W Bush
- Elton John

## Baby Boomers: Memorable Events (born 1943-1965)

- **Baby Boomer cohort #1** (born from 1946 to 1954)
  - Memorable events: assassinations of JFK, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, political unrest, walk on the moon, Vietnam War, anti-war protests, social experimentation, sexual freedom, civil rights movement, environmental movement, women's movement, protests and riots, experimentation with various intoxicating recreational substances
  - Key characteristics: experimental, individualism, free spirited, social cause oriented
- **Baby Boomer cohort #2** (born from 1955 to 1964)
  - Memorable events: Watergate, Nixon resigns, the cold war, the oil embargo, raging inflation, gasoline shortages
  - Key characteristics: less optimistic, distrust of government, general cynicism

## Generation X (1966-1985)

- Latchkey Kids
- Skeptical, ironic
- Values freedom and flexibility
- Comfortable hopping from job to job
- Values work/life balance
- Mission driven
- Breakfast Club, Ferris Bueller's Day Off

## A Few Famous Members of Generation X (1966-1985)

- Rand Paul
- Charlie Sheen
- Ben Stiller
- Sarah Jessica Parker
- Rand Paul
- Gordon Ramsay
- Ted Cruz
- Marco Rubio

## Generation X – Memorable Events (1966-1985)

- Threat of Nuclear Holocaust
- 9/11
- Dawn of the Internet
- .com Boom and Bust



## Millennials (1986-1996)

- Work and life merged with smartphones
- Self-esteem generation
- Impatient for recognition and increased responsibilities

## Famous Millennials (1986-1996)

- Mark Zuckerberg (well, ok, 1984)
- Malala Yousafzai
- Kim Kardashian
- Jessica Simpson
- Beyonce Knowles
- Britney Spears
- Justin Timberlake

## Millennials – Memorable Events (1986-1996)

- 2008 Recession and Occupy Wall Street
- Dawn of Social Media, Telecommuting, Paperless Office

## Case Study and Discussion

## Generational Empathy

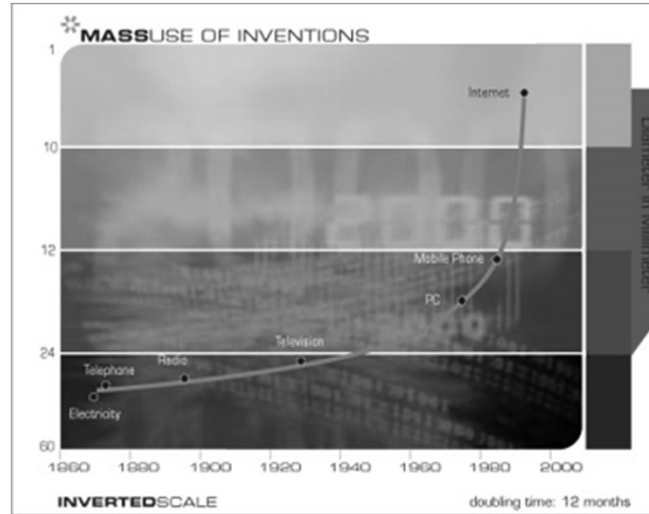
- What value is the person aiming for?
  - Stability or Innovation?
  - Discipline or Flexibility?
  - Live to work or work to live?
  - A wired world or face to face interactions?
- How can you communicate respect for that value?
- What are your common interests?
  - Getting the job done
  - Service
  - Creating a positive workplace

## What the Future May Hold



- In the next 5-10 years, Boomers will retire in droves. Gen-X will move into leadership positions. Younger workers will take their place.
- Technological change will keep accelerating, and will mold us as much as we mold it.

## Technological Acceleration



Within the Last Year, these technologies have made headlines ...

- 3-D Printing
- Wearable technology
  - Google Glass
  - Smartwatches
- Bitcoin
- Driverless cars
- Commercial drones

- Thanks! A program evaluation link will be sent to you today.

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