

Lawyering With Different Generations

By: Michael L. Goldblatt

Originally Published in Voice of Experience, March 2024. Reprinted with permission.

In 1965 Pete Townsend and the Who released My Generation, the title cut of their first album. The lyrics focused on Townsend's youthful fear of adult life and the music featured rhythm and blues. The song became an anthem for youth culture. It consistently makes the annual top song lists published by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Rolling Stone magazine. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the Who and the 60's in Michael Caine's fascinating documentary, My Generation. The documentary is available on Amazon, Peacock, and other streaming channels.

Generational differences motivate clients and lawyers. Marketing, recruiting, and supervising can be more effective when adjusted for these differences. See below for a list of generational differences and resources for accommodating them.

Generations

Silent Generation (ages 79 to 99; born 1925 to 1945)

Grew up during the depression and lived through World War II. Prefer paper and low tech. Hardworking, loyal, and respectful. May need legal assistance with legal aspects of elder care and elder abuse.

Baby Boomers (ages 60 to 78; born 1946 to 1964)

Born during the golden age of television. Veterans of Korean and Vietnam wars. Known for strong work ethic, loyalty to employers, and professionalism. May need estate planning for themselves and for family members with special needs Constitutes about 25% of the workforce.

Generation X (ages 43 to 59; born 1965 to 1980)

Declining birthrates and advent of personal computers. Lived during Watergate, Arab Oil Embargo, and Aids Crisis. Increasing exposure to daycare and divorce. Extremely independent and seek work-life balance. Represents approximately 31% of the workforce.

Generation Y (ages 27 to 42; born 1981 to 1996)

Also known as Millennials. Exposed to growing violence in schools. Lived through 9/11 and the Iraq War. Tech savvy, risk takers. Slow to leave home and marry. Prioritizes work-life balance and values diversity, praise, professionalism, and remote work. Makes up 35% of the workforce.

Generation Z (ages 13 to 26; born 1997 to 2010)

Also known as iGen. Proficient with social media, smartphones, and tablets at an early age. Greater exposure to violence. Indulged by parents more than other generations. Less loyalty and seeks others with similar beliefs. Values autonomy, health, honesty, and stability. Accustomed to using virtual assistants like Alexa, Cortana, and Siri. Represents about 5% of the workforce.

Generation Alpha (ages <13; born after 2010)

Saturated with digital devices and social media. Coronavirus shut-in adversely impacts socialization. Values skills training and dislikes risk. Texting prioritized over voice communication.

Conclusion

One's generation influences their preferences and priorities. Be more successful by recognizing generational values when collaborating with clients, co-workers, and staff. Read the articles and books listed below to learn strategies for bridging generational gaps.

Articles

April Davenport, [Communicating in a Multigenerational Workplace](#), ABA Journal, Jul. 16, 2019.

Virginia Grant and Marci Krufka, [Understanding Generational Differences](#), Altman & Weil, June 24, 2003.

Matt Reynolds, [How Young Attorneys are Shaking Up Law Firm Culture](#), ABA Journal, Mar. 6, 2023.

Fares Zoghلامي, [A List of Generational Slang Words and Phrases](#), Pangea Blog, Oct. 25, 2022.

Staff, [Why Attorneys Must Pay Attention When Marketing to Generation X](#), Reuters, Jan. 28, 2021.
Emma Waldman, [How to Manage a Multi-Generational Team](#), Harvard Business Review, Aug. 31, 2021.

Books

Bobby Duffy, [The Generation Myth: Why When You're Born Matters Less Than You Think](#), Basic Books, Nov. 9, 2021.

Phyllis Haserot, [Embrace GENgagement: How to Transform Generational Challenges into Opportunities for You and Your Firm](#), ABA Book Publishing, Aug 28, 2020.

Staff, [Multiple Generations in Law Firms](#), National Association of Law Placement, Mar. 1, 2020.
<https://www.nalp.org/generations>

Jean Twenge, [Generations: The Real Differences Between Gen Z, Millennials, Gen X, Boomers, and Silents—and What They Mean for America's Future](#), Atria Books, Apr. 25, 2023.

Staff, [Multiple Generations in Law Firms](#), National Association for Law Placement, Mar. 1, 2020.

About the Author

Mr. [Michael L. Goldblatt](#) is an author and consultant. He was Associate General Counsel of Tidewater Inc. until retiring after 35 years of service. Mr. Goldblatt has written numerous articles and books about marketing, management, and preventive law. Follow Mr. Goldblatt on X (f/k/a Twitter) and read his blogs at [LawPracticeTips.com](#) and [PlanningOrganizer.com](#).