

Knowledge Workers Across the Generations and Their Orientation to Work

	Work Meaning	Ethics	Culture/ Environment	Management	Collaboration/ Teamwork	Innovation	Rewards	Leadership Style
Generation Y (1980-1995) 69.7 Million <i>"What's in it for me?"</i> <i>"Building skills to do something great for the world"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn more to add value to their life Civic minded – do something for the greater good Thrilling, challenging work all the time Enough money to support their upscale lifestyles Highly integrated personal and work lives so are "living all the time" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confident Goal & achievement oriented Believe in "sustainability" Inclusiveness and equality – very tolerant, grew up in multicultural groups Smart workers – minimum effort for maximum results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Believe you can work from anywhere, anytime Fun and interesting, relaxed and informal Extra physical things to enhance environment, gyms, entertainment, skates Like travel substitutions – NOT traveling for business is a status symbol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grew up with structure and supervision – want you to lead but with great integrity and creativity Direct and uninhibited communication Like to multi-task, natural parallel processors Want respect for their ideas Co-workers as buddies, non-hierarchical meritocracies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group oriented – more to social networks Able to have high emotional literacy with virtual members Want challenging teamwork Want to work with friends Flexible schedules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like diverse ideas Embrace change Not afraid to fail – get up and start over Grasp new concepts quickly Learn from everything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time off Learning opportunities Respect for ideas/contributions Frequent small ones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive Direct Straightforward language Risk-takers – try things out
Generation X (1965-1979) 44 Million <i>"Work fast and go home early"</i> <i>"My job keeps me busy between weekends"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work is "just a job" Learn or leave Work to live– Get a Life Live for adventure outside of work Work adds value to your personal portfolio of skills Time over money Money-enough to live comfortably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reliant/independent Cynical lens on work/ life Outcomes not process oriented-efficiency Pragmatic Do not believe in loyalty to company and boss Gender equality Value time/convenience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like solitary work Like a fun, relaxed environment Informality Like extras in the workplace Thrive on change Abhor corporate politics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Do it your way" Hands off management – no micro-management, never manage by fear Work away from office Virtual relationships Challenge ideas and authority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Backlash against boomer style teamwork Like individual self-sufficiency over work Prefer team members they choose Set goals, no rules Achieve outcomes by going around rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prefer working alone first, then sharing with others in creative work Highly value efficiency – will focus many innovations on this 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meritocracy only on outcomes Time to pursue other interests Leading edge technology Concierge services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fair, competent, straightforward Brutally honest Lack high level people skills Use information powerfully Get it done on time with high quality
Boomers (1943-1964) 81 Million <i>"Live to work"</i> <i>"Do whatever it takes to get the job done"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good work serves the social good Money buys experiences and freedom Work is entertainment – work on vacation ok – expected – badge of honor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workaholics who live to work Get to the top by working long and hard – long hours = hard work Competition with co-workers is good Reactive entrepreneurs in response to downsizing Promote equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subversive, create counter-cultures within organization Face time in the office important Business travel a status symbol Don't need but appreciate special comfortable workspaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Your contribution is unique and important" Don't like to be "bossed" Vengeful and passive aggressive if managed poorly Promotions combine meritocracy and seniority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value teamwork because they know you have to have them, value most as a social experience Like everyone to win but they want to win the most Highly competitive with each other as well; self promote under illusion of "for the common good" Are learning to play nice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like new and change-oriented to innovation Like highly visible, rewarded innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wall of Fame – certificates, trophies, credentials, photos with famous people Money, money, money Visible promotions, like to beat out their colleagues Being visibly and publicly recognized, name recognition in company, name in a publication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk collaboration but default to hierarchy and seniority Value talking about what people should do – often in excess Benignly despotic Management by buzzword
Veterans (1922-1942) 52 Million <i>"Honest day's work for an honest day's pay"</i> <i>"Show up at work and do what you're told"</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money is important – it supports the family Stable life-long employment Intellectual challenges don't matter at work Personal life is separate from work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dedicated employees who don't take their job for granted Value lifetime loyalty to work colleagues, boss and company Respect and obey authority Dependable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Like hierarchy and large organizations Work hard at work but don't take work home Dress up for work Business travel came late in careers not liked Physical workspace not important, used to minimal enhancements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Your experience is respected here" Reluctant to buck the system Uncomfortable with ambiguity and change, ad hoc management Like personal touch, face to face not virtual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comfortable being assigned to a team, like a strong leader and rules to go by Most contacts local Formal demeanor between superiors and subordinates Strong sense of camaraderie within job level and category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pragmatic innovators Work on a team to innovate Not afraid to break the mold and invent if there is a compelling reason 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving up the ladder for hard work and longevity Being respected Traditional perks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know how to be "boss," know how to take charge Directive, straightforward, good, clear delegators Don't like conflict