

# **Blending the Generations at Work**

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From **Generations at Work:**

**Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers and Nexters in Your Workplace**

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Successful cross-generationally friendly companies have five common approaches to making their environments generationally comfortable and focusing their people's energies on the business of the business.

## **1. They accommodate employee differences.**

- They are learning all they can about employees.
- They are working to meet employees' specific needs.
- They are serving employees according to their unique preferences.

## **2. They create workplace choices.**

- They allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customers being served, and the people who work there.
- Dress policies tend to be casual.
- The height and width of the chain of command tend to be foreshortened, and decreased bureaucracy is taken on as a clear goal.
- They understand that leadership in an industry or a product area doesn't come with an insurance policy, nor does the accompanying organizational prosperity.
- There's an element of humor and playfulness about most of their endeavors.

## **3. They operate from a sophisticated management style.**

- They tend to be more direct.
- They give those who report to them the big picture, specific goals, and measures. Then they turn their people loose – giving them feedback, reward, and recognition as appropriate.

- Seven attributes characterize their flexibility:
  - Their supervisory style is not fixed.
  - Their leadership style is situationally varied.
  - They depend less on positional than personal power.
  - They know when and how to make personal policy exceptions without causing a team riot.
  - They are thoughtful when matching individuals to a team or a team or an individual to an assignment.
  - They balance concern for tasks and concern for people.
  - They understand the elements of trust and work to gain it from their employees. They are perceived as fair, inclusive, good communicators, and competent in their own right.

#### **4. They respect competence and initiative.**

- They assume the best of their people.
- They treat everyone, from the newest recruit to the most seasoned employee, as if they have great things to offer and are motivated to do their best.

#### **5. They nourish retention.**

- They know that keeping their people is every bit as important in today's economy as finding and retaining customers.
- They offer lots of training from one-on-one coaching opportunities to interactive computer-based training, to an extensive and varied menu of classroom courses.
- They encourage regular lateral movement within their organizations, but they have broadened assignments.