

CYNTHIA'S BOOK REVIEW FOR BUSINESS PROFESSIONALS

Take a look around your organization. Do you notice anything different? The times, they are a-changing! Four generations of people most likely make up your current workforce. In general, 5% of the workforce are Veterans (born 1922-1943), 45% are Baby Boomers (born 1943-1960), 40% are Generation Xers (born 1960-1980), and 10% are Generation Nexters (born 1980-2000). This makes for some interesting workplace interactions since each generation has its own set of values, aspirations, and preferences. As business professionals, it is imperative that we understand these generations. Failure to gain an understanding can impede our ability to recruit, lead, develop, and succeed.

Generations at Work by Rom Zemke, Claire Raines, and Bob Filipczak, offers a mix of sociological insights and practical solutions to the challenges that result from a multigenerational workforce.

Part I, Dynamics of the Multigenerational Workforce, gives an overview of how the generations differ from each other. Subsequent chapters provide deeper insight into a particular generation. For each generation, the authors outline some characteristics:

- Core Values (delayed reward for Veterans, balance for Xers)
- Assets (desire to please for Baby Boomers, technologically savvy for Nexters),
- Liabilities (self-centeredness for Baby Boomers, cynicism for Xers)
- Personality Traits (Veterans believe in law and order; Nexters are accustomed to busy, over-planned lives.)
- Messages that Motivate ("You'll be working with other bright, creative people" for Nexters"; "Do it your way" for Xers.)

Also included in these chapters are beliefs that the different generations maintain about each other; interesting facts and misconceptions; and tips on how to orient, develop, motivate, and mentor employees.

Part II, Case Studies in Generational Peace, explores companies that have successfully created environments where the different generations work well together. All of these companies use what the authors call "ACORN" imperatives.

Part III, Advice-o-Plenty, covers managing and motivating, job growth and enrichment, team-building, sales and service, training, and recruiting in a Q&A format. In one of the appendices, readers can complete a questionnaire to determine how "cross-generationally friendly" their work environment is.

This book is worth reading. It's interesting and useful. And that's a great combination!

"BRINGING RESOURCES TOGETHER TO
ACCOMPLISH BUSINESS GOALS."