

The workforce is changing...

...It's time to provide the right tools for success

By Gayle Smith, Content Writer at Computers Unlimited



Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and GenZ; are we all really as different as our own perceptions? Putting all of our 'so called' differences aside, each generation grew up with a different technology tool-set and a very different mind-set. It makes perfect sense then, that each generation learns in a dissimilar way. The challenge is to be mindful of these differences in order to successfully communicate daily business processes and the tools and objectives to effectively do so.

From static to mobile

When gas and welding distributorships were born of necessity, some having morphed into this industry from a similar one, no one gave a second thought to age differences.

You were happy to be hired, you learned your job and if you wanted to keep it, you got busy doing it. No one... absolutely no one, gave a thought to your 'needs.' Business was done in office and everything had a paper trail, literally.

But this industry, just like many others, has come a long way since their humble beginnings and as time

has progressed, so has machinery, productivity, and most recently, smart technology. This transformation has led to a tremendous growth via mobile devices. With a smartphone or tablet, delivery drivers can be equipped with tools that include advanced routing and logistics capabilities, price look-ups, onsite mobile payments, and delivery tracking. Plant workers can scan cylinders, attach tags, and verify, change, or transfer cylinders. In real-time, sales staff can check inventory availability and pricing, create orders, and accept payments in the field with access to their customers and prospects via a built-in CRM. They don't need to waste time at the office anymore.

Generation gap

The GenZer's don't consider technology in the workplace to be any different or less stellar than the day-to-day technology they use in their social lives. They expect it because they have a built in, high-tech mindset.

For Baby Boomers, the extension of television expanded their world. For Generation X, it was computers. Millennials saw the explosion of the internet, but for GenZ, their world was shaped by technology. They've been "connected" their whole lives. It doesn't make any of us wrong, spoiled, out of touch, or otherwise. But it does make a tremendous difference to your new hires. GenZer's phones tell them where to eat, what traffic areas to avoid, where their friends are, even their bank balance. They watch sports,

"GenY and GenZ, may be tempted to move to a company whose systems keep up with technology"

movies, and videos, listen to music and podcasts, order dinner and have it delivered... everything they need is in the palm of their hand, instantly. In a work environment, they assume the same. If your daily processes are antiquated, your employees, especially GenY and GenZ, may be tempted to move to a company whose systems keep up with technology.



Baby boomers
born between 1944-1964
Generation X
born between 1965-1979
Millennials
born between 1980-1994
GenZ
born between 1995-2015

Why it matters

Whether you are hiring for a new sales position, a delivery driver, or warehouse staff, with a new generation of job seekers also comes new rules for recruiting, training, and managing them. So how do you plan to hire, grow, and keep the next generation? These people are the future. Do you want to mentor them, give them the best tools available, and listen to their ideas or have them leave to go to a company that will?

In the aftermath, what has the impact of all the re-hiring had on your staff morale, your bottom line, your customers? Whatever notions you have about this generation, they are the next workforce and they don't

“Whatever notions you have about this generation, they are the next workforce”

expect that using the tool they grew up with 24/7, their phones, will go dark at work because your daily processes are antiquated.

As an example, company leaders, typically Baby Boomers, need to communicate business strategies to mid-management, most likely GenX and Millennials, who need to then convey those directives to millennials/GenZ. Those strategies have to be delivered in a way that is both understandable and executable as it goes down the chain of command. GenZ have different expectations, behaviors, and preferences. They believe in inclusion, purpose, and working as a team. Your language, methodology, and demeanor are important. Unlike previous generations, they 'need' to feel needed.

Back to the future

You wouldn't ask your driver to make his deliveries in a 30-year-old delivery truck and you certainly wouldn't expect your sales staff to sit down at

a typewriter at the end of the day to type out their daily orders. Don't expect your drivers to take the shortest route possible or keep track of piles of delivery tickets and checks from customers. Don't expect your sales staff to run back to the office every day to place customer orders when that can be done from their phones.

Technology not only makes your staff more productive, it gives you clarity and insight into your business because every business transaction is happening in real-time.

If your delivery driver is following a designated route saving time, gas, and maintenance costs, and delivering more orders per day, the added bonus is that his route is trackable. If a customer calls to ask the status of an order out for delivery, you have immediate real-time information, pinpointing exactly where that driver is on his route and giving your customer a clear answer of when their order will arrive. If the driver carries extra cylinders and hardgoods, those items can be quickly added to an existing order. The same goes for a sales person. They no longer have to waste time calling into the office for special pricing or inventory availability; it's all in the palm of their hand. Smart technology, as a work tool, is available to you and provides your staff with the means to do their job with much more efficiency than ever before.

For Baby Boomers, GenZ can seem perplexing. Take the differences of their generation into account and realize they are just like us but with an amazing aptitude for technology. Be a mentor and equip them with the knowledge, training, and technology they need to feel successful. Make them feel engaged and they will reward you with energy and dedication. This quote still rings true, “Necessity is the mother of invention.” Today's technology is a necessity. 

