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Managing and motivating a multi generational workforce

In the last decade, there has been a plethora of discussion, training, and documentation on diversity in the workplace — how to embrace it, manage it, and maintain productivity. Understanding the nuances, appreciating the differences, and effectively directing today's diverse workforce is further emphasized by its rightful protection under our discrimination laws. For example, the New Jersey Law Against Discrimination makes it unlawful to subject people to differential treatment based on race, creed, color, national origin, nationality, ancestry, age, sex (including pregnancy), familial status, marital status, domestic partnership status, affectional or sexual orientation, atypical hereditary cellular or blood trait, genetic information, liability for military service, and mental or physical disability, perceived disability, and AIDS and HIV status.

The previous stated law use to cover all the dimensions of diversity however today there is an added dimension and this new dimension is referred to as multigenerationalism.



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Members of every generation are shaped in depth by the economic, social, historical and political climates in which they mature. As a result, the individuals within each generation often share values, beliefs and behaviors that can differ from those of other generations.

For the first time in recent history, there are four generations of employees in the U.S workplace. It is the largest demographic shift since women and members of minority groups began entering the workplace en masse. Needless to say, this new element that folds under diversity has a profound impact on all businesses regardless of size and demography;



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real estate being no exception. As a result, this multigenerational workforce creates uncharted complexities recruiters, managers, mentors, and those charged with the responsibilities of keeping employees motivated and productive.

The four generations currently present in today's workplace are Traditionalist (born between 1922-1945); Baby Boomers (1946-1964); Generation X (1965-1980); and Generation Y (a.k.a. Millennials born between 1981-2002). With each generation, there are varying communication and work styles, and key motivators, as well as reactions and responses that make any line man-

ager or human resources professional's job a challenge.

In examining communication styles, the Traditionalist Generation is largely logical, linear in thinking and approach, and usually conservative. What usually turn them off is the use of profanity, slang, poor grammar and blatant disrespect. Baby Boomers are often personable and information driven and offended by abruptness and boasting; while Generation X is direct, straight-forward and results-oriented and frustrated by using time poorly and corporate-speak/bureaucracy. Gen Y, also called Millennials or Nexters, are typically positive, motivational, personal goal-oriented and demonstrate little tolerance for cynicism, sarcasm, and condescension.

To successfully manage, this multigenerational diversity, the following management strategies are worth considering: Provide opportunities for employees to introduce new ideas and be open to them, strive to be flexible, respect the different values held by different age

groups, maintain open and honest communication, encourage generational partnerships and collaboration, understand younger generations do not relate to workaholics. They want work/life balance, offer flexible working arrangements when possible, job sharing, flexible work weeks/hours, part-time arrangements, recognize the need for transferable skills, offer career advancement and developmental opportunities, manage talent, create and support leadership, mentoring, and succession programs, promote cross-disciplinary and generational teams, partner all generations, have strong on-boarding and mentoring programs, train all staff on diversity including generational differences, train all managers on situational leadership skills.

In 2020, some members of the next generation will be entering the workforce. While many of us may have retirement plans by then, it's important for us to examine today what diversity management and work environment legacies we will leave behind. ■