Generational Diversity
Session Objectives

- Define generational diversity
- Identify the different generations
- Understand differences among generations
- Appreciate the impact of generational diversity
- Use knowledge of generational diversity to improve supervision of all employees
Diversity and the Workplace

• The workforce is diverse in many ways

• Generational diversity focuses on differences based on the generation in which an employee grew up

• A generation is about 20 years

• There are four generations in today’s workforce
The Generations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generation</th>
<th>Birth Years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matures</td>
<td>born before 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby Boomers</td>
<td>born 1945-1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generation Xers</td>
<td>born 1961-1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millennials</td>
<td>born 1981-2000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caution

• Generation is only one factor
• Some people have more in common with the next generation
• Avoid stereotyping employees
Formative Influences: Matures

Radio
Depression and New Deal
World War II
Korean War
Formative Influences: Boomers

- Television
- Cold War and nuclear weapons
- Civil rights
- Kennedy and King assassinations
- Vietnam War
- Sexual revolution, music and drug culture
- Space travel and environmental concerns
Formative Influences: Xers

- Computers
- Women’s liberation
- Watergate, end of Vietnam War, and energy crisis
- Hostages in Iran, war and peace in the Middle East
- Reagan era
- Yuppies and the age of excess
Formative Influences: Millennials

- Internet, cell phones, computers at home
- Iraq wars and other military actions
- Fall of Communism in Europe and removal of Berlin Wall
- Terrorism (Oklahoma City and 9/11)
- School shootings
- Economic prosperity at home in the 90s and early 2000s
Attributes and Attitudes: Matures

- Work ethic, loyalty, and dedication
- Responsibility, duty, and sacrifice
- Respect for authority and rules
- Willing to “pay their dues” to get ahead
- Job for life
Attributes and Attitudes: Boomers

- Rights
- Believing in change and possibilities
- Career and personal growth
- Self-gratification and self-interest
- Teamwork and participation
Attributes and Attitudes: Xers

- Independence, self-reliance
- Pragmatism
- Growth oriented
- Comfortable with technology
- Need challenges
- Value flexibility
Attributes and Attitudes: Millennials

- Confidence
- Optimism
- Wired to technology
- Multitaskers
- Respectful of diversity
Current Concerns: Matures

- Keep working as long as possible
- Retirement
- Healthcare benefits
- Remaining active after retirement
- Earning extra money after retirement
Current Concerns: Boomers

- Healthcare benefits
- Saving for retirement
- Keeping up with workplace changes
- Maintaining status and position
- Enjoying more leisure time
Current Concerns: Xers

- Advancement and raises
- Achievement and recognition
- Job security
- Healthcare benefits for children and spouse
Current Concerns: Millennials

- Learning about the job and the organization
- Raises
- Career opportunities
- Recognition
- Respect
Who’s Who in the Generations: Match Game

- Baby Boomers: Pre-1945
- Generation Xers: 1945-1960
Who’s Who in the Generations

Do you understand:
• What generational diversity is about?
• Generational divisions in today’s workplace?
• Formative influences of each generation?
• Attributes and attitudes of the generations?
• Concerns of different generations in the workforce?
Age Discrimination and Generational Diversity

• Illegal to discriminate against employees 40 or older
• Older employees have the same rights as younger workers
• Avoid marginalizing or making assumptions
• Make employment decisions objectively
Communication

- Communicate with all employees regularly
- Understand generational differences
  - Use language and references you know
  - Listen carefully
  - Help employees communicate with one another
Feedback
Costs of Communication Failures

- Morale problems and conflict
- Higher turnover
- Increased recruitment, hiring, and training costs
- More complaints and grievances
- More disciplinary problems
Teamwork

- Reflect generational diversity in work teams
- Teach team members to value differences
- Support and encourage work relationships
- Teach conflict resolution methods
Motivation

• Employees respond to different motivators
• Maintain high standards for all workers
• Recognize and reward achievement
• Provide opportunities for all
• Emphasize performance goals
Training and Development

- Assess group and individual training needs
- Be sure all employees get training
- Use techniques that appeal to all
- Ask older workers to help train
- Help all employees learn, grow, and develop
Supervising Generational Diversity: True or False?

- **T** It’s illegal to discriminate against employees aged 40 or older
- **F** Employees of all generations respond to the same motivators
- **F** Only Generation Xers and Millennials need feedback
- **F** The most effective teams are composed of employees all from one generation
Supervising Generational Diversity

Do you understand:

• Effective communication requirements?
• Feedback needs of different generations?
• Teamwork and generational diversity?
• Motivating employees of all generations?
• Training and development for all employees?
Generational diversity has an impact on how you supervise employees

Generation is only one factor affecting employee attitudes and behavior

Avoid stereotyping employees based on generational affiliation

Take action to provide effective supervision for employees of all ages and abilities