

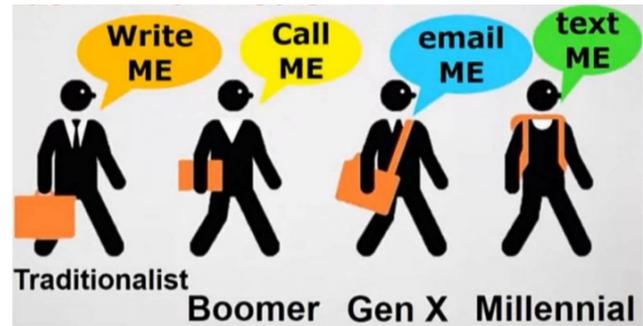
## An Introduction to *Working With Other Generations*

During the past 15 years, one of the major transformations within the modern workplace has been the scenario of having up to four distinct generations of employees working side-by-side. These generations are typically defined by the following approximate ranges\* of birth years:

- **Traditionalists** (or Silents) – born between 1925 and 1945.
- **Baby Boomers** – born between 1946 and 1964.
- **Generation X** – born between 1965 and 1981.
- **Millennials** (or Generation Y) – born between 1982 and 1999.

Based on the historical, cultural and technological trends that were prevalent during their formative years, persons from these generations often have different values, attitudes towards work, and preferred methods of communication . . .

In light of these differences, training programs aimed at “bridging the gaps” and working effectively with other generations have become increasingly popular in the realm of human resources management and workforce development.



### Generational Overview

The next page of this RON update provides a brief summary of trends with regard to generational outlook, work ethic, view of authority, relationships, work/life balance, etc.

While this information provides a good starting point for understanding the different generations, it's important to realize that each of us is a unique individual, and therefore we're not defined entirely by our generational affiliation. You might find that some of the trends commonly associated with your generation don't apply directly to you, or that you tend to identify more with some of the characteristics typically indicated for a different generation.

---

\* These ranges should be considered approximate (rather than rigidly defined), as they can vary by several years depending on the source or publication.

# Working With Other Generations

## *A Brief Summary of Generational Trends*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Traditionalists b. 1925 - 1945</b>	<b>Baby Boomers b. 1946 - 1964</b>	<b>Generation X b. 1965 - 1981</b>	<b>Millennials b. 1982 - 1999</b>
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Cautious
Work Ethic	Dedicated	Driven	Free agent	What's next?
View of Authority	Respectful	Challenge	Unimpressed	Seeks feedback
Relationships	Self-sacrifice	Personal gratification	Reluctance to commit	Inclusive
Work/Life Balance	Don't get it	Responsible for balancing others	Want it now	Wants flexibility
Turn-Offs	Vulgarity	Political Incorrectness	Cliché Hype	Promiscuity
Common Stereotypes	Have more accidents Get sick more often Can't learn technology Not as productive as younger employees	Always had it easy Going to retire comfortably Workaholics On their way out of the workplace	Materialistic Whiners "You owe me" attitude Not willing to work hard to achieve	"Going to hell in a handbasket" Kids need to spend more time reading Need more exercise / less videos Getting a great education
Possible Assets	Institutional knowledge & experience Stable Detail-oriented Thorough Loyal Hard-working	Service-oriented Driven Willing to go the extra mile Good at relationships Wants to please Good team players	Adaptable Tech. literate Independent Not intimidated by authority Creative	Collective action Tech-savvy Optimism Heroic spirit Multi-tasking (?)
Possible Liabilities	Inept with change Reluctant to buck the system Uncomfortable with conflict	Not budget-minded Reluctant to go against peers Sensitive to feedback Judgmental Self-centered	Impatient Poor people skills Inexperienced Cynical Skeptical	Need for structure/supervision Inexperienced, particularly with handling of difficult people Multi-tasking

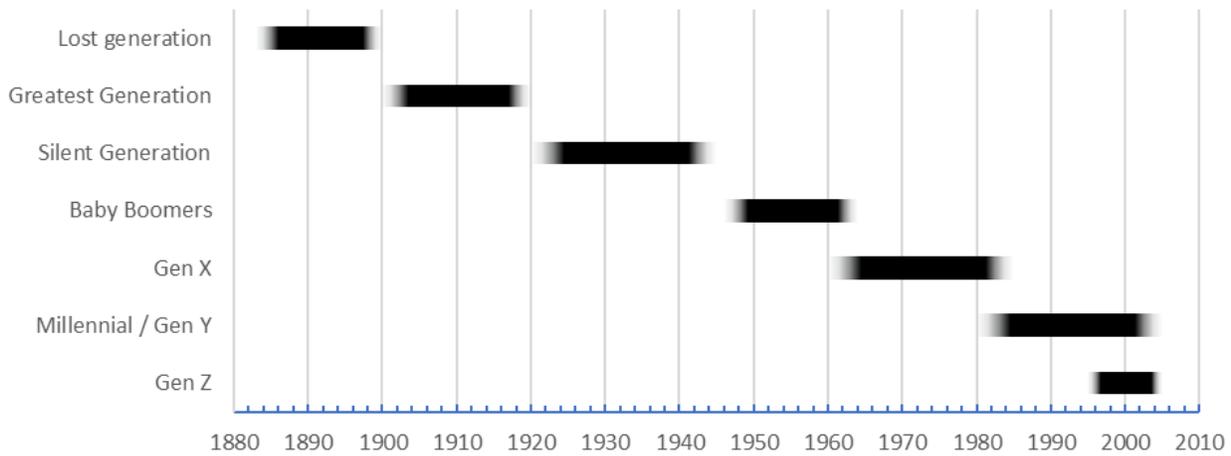


## Historical Context

The graph below shows a visual timeline of *Generations of the Western World*, with estimated ranges of birth years. The two generations before the Traditionalists (Silents) were:

- **The Greatest Generation** (or G.I. Generation) – born between 1901 and 1924.
- **The Lost Generation** – born between 1883 and 1900.

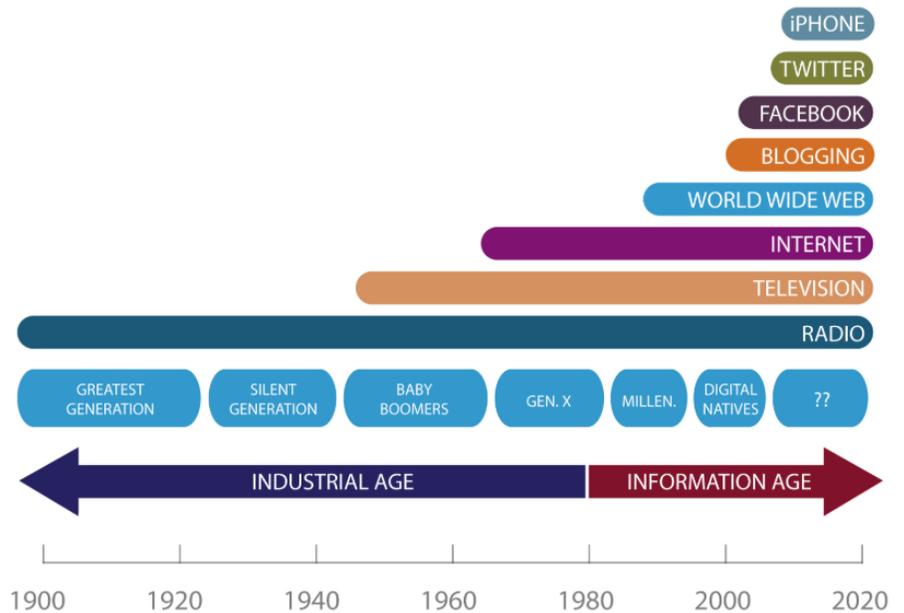
The next generation after the Millennials is **Generation Z** (also referred to as Post-Millennials or the iGeneration), which includes persons born from approximately the year 2000 onward.



## Changes in Technology and Communications

While manufacturing will always be essential, the 1980s onward have marked a gradual transition from the Industrial Age to the Information Age, with increasing emphasis placed on management of data and knowledge.

The younger generations tend to show significantly higher usage rates for the newer forms of communication, such as social media/networking platforms.



## Additional Information

Each generation brings important perspectives and strengths to the work environment. The upcoming publications for this new *Workforce Development* category of the RON educational series will provide a more in-depth look at the various factors that have influenced each generation. Suggestions for improving inter-generational communication and maximizing the benefits of generational diversity in the workplace will also be highlighted.



As a starting point, some of the general recommendations are to:

- Have a conversation about generations.
- Avoid stereotyping, or making negative references to a person's age.
- Recognize the knowledge, skills and abilities of each individual.
- Leverage generational strengths by cross-populating teams.
- Encourage a positive work environment based on mutual respect.
- Provide ongoing opportunities for training and employee development.



**DISCLAIMER:** This RON Technical Update is provided for purposes of general information only. Interested persons should refer to primary publications/resources as needed. Please note also that information contained in this document could become outdated or obsolete over time.