**Five Generations at a workplace: managing the differences**

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**Annotation.**

The attitude of different generations to work and management to their subordinates is particularly relevant in modern conditions, when for the first time in history in one place can work up to five generations: the Silent Generation, Baby-boomers, as well as generations X, Y and Z. Scientists who analyze these generations, note that it is necessary to apply different management methods and approaches to them.

The aim of this study is to analyze the attitude of different generations to work and methods of their management, in order to maximize the constructive adaptation of existing companies to modern market conditions.

The study analyzes the prevailing theoretical ideas about different generations and presents the results of empirical research that help to explain these differences. In addition, the aspects that motivate employers to find individual approaches to representatives of different generations which will provide the most effective outcome of their common work, considered.

**Key words:** Manager, five generations, managers, employees, management styles and methods, mentoring, research, employer.

Cultural diversity is defined as a set of visible characteristics (gender, age, origin) or invisible characteristics (level of education, experience). Here diversity is established as a social generation. The term “generation” can be explained using three approaches:

* ethnological (genealogical);
* demographic;
* sociological [1].

Based on the ethnological approach, the concept of generation refers to kinship, and then brings together individuals who are on the same level of the pedigree tree compared to a parent or a larger group.

Regarding the demographic approach, a generation is explained as a group of people confronted with a specific event at the same age and time span.

According to the sociological approach, generation refers to a period of about twenty years, which corresponds to the average period of puberty before entering the labor market in Western countries.

The topic of management of different generations is likely to be relevant all the time. This is due to the fact one team has always had, has and will have different age employees who somehow affect the dynamics of any single company. It is important to understand that the categories of generations are arbitrary social structures, so the approaches to their management, motivational models and methods of communication on the part of administration must constantly change, adapting to the trends of the time.

The “diversity of generations” matrix is a tool for analyzing and optimizing working relationships. It can be used in various directions:

* assessing the weight of each generation and simplifying the interpretation of the age pyramid in accordance with staffing needs;
* analyzing the structure of a human resource in order to reconstruct teams for mixing generations with the prospect of ensuring the transfer of experience;
* informing employees about the features of each generation, their values and behavior.

Today, thanks to major advances in health care, people are living much longer than ever before. Thus, if the average life expectancy of an adult in 1915 was an average of fifty years, today it is approaching eighty years and according to forecasts the life expectancy of a child born in 2015, will exceed one hundred years[1]. This means that today, for the first time in history, we are faced with the fact that employees of five different generations can work in one company. The development and formation of each of these generations was influenced by the period of time in which they were born and grew up. Their life orientations were formed under the influence of political, cultural and social events and phenomena. That is why they have a different attitude to work, family, friendship, technical innovations, finances and so on.

Of course, this situation has certain advantages, as in one place at the same time cooperate five different types of expert knowledge, experience, mentality and points of view. Thus, working side by side, using the professional knowledge and skills of each other, as well as the progressive ideas of colleagues, representatives of the five generations can improve their knowledge, develop new skills and abilities, which, in turn, will help in the process of generating new concepts and will contribute to the rapid achievement of their goals.

However, in a similar situation in the workplace, intergenerational conflicts are also possible. Different generations may not understand and accept each other's values and work styles. Working together and sharing power can also become problematic for them. As more and more people postpone their retirement [2], the younger generation may think that their career opportunities are limited. In addition, different age groups have their own life priorities: each of them speaks "their own language", has its own characteristics of behavior specific to their generation, their expectations, requirements and preferences, as well as their mentality. All this can be a challenge for employers and managers of different levels, who are forced to adapt to work with subordinates aged from 20 to 60+ years due to circumstances. However, it is possible. It just need to learn the art of leading different generations. The right approach to this issue almost always bring positive results, as it gives an opportunity of maximizing the benefits of the cooperation of wise experience and innovations, which come with different generations.

So, in order to successfully cope with the task of integrating diverse workforce and organize a harmonious, highly efficient environment in the team, it is necessary to have certain knowledge and skills. To do this, initially you need to understand who works next to you, what features each of the age groups has, what are their values and attitude to work, based on the life experience of each generation. Only taking into account the above-mentioned differences it is possible to effectively and efficiently manage a team of different ages.

What generations form currently labor? They are:

‒ Great or Silent Generation of traditionalists: born in the period of 1925 to 1945;

‒ Baby-boomers or Generation of a Population Explosion were born in years 1946 to 1964, inclusive;

‒ Generation X, or The Middle Children born in 1965 - 1979;

‒ Generation Y or Millennials were born in the period from 1980 to 1995 inclusive;

‒ Generation Z or Digital Natives: born in the 1995 - 2009.

There is another age group exist, including people born after 2010 and received the name – generation Alpha or Born With a Smartphone In Their Hands, but at this stage it is still a very young generation, so that we do not take them into account and will not consider.

Let's give small characteristics to the first three generations. The Great Generation or Silent Traditionalists are considered among the most loyal workers. Their values were shaped by the Great Depression, Second World War and by the post-war reconstruction period. This generation has a strong commitment to collaborative work and values the development of interpersonal skills. They prefer direct communication, a scheduled plan for the day, month, year and so on, as well as clear instructions for performing any task. Silent traditionalists are known for their commitment, loyalty to the company where they work. They also practice working in one place throughout their career.

The values of baby boomers or members of the Demographic Explosion Generation were determined by the growth of activity in the field of civil rights, various manifestations of inflation and the subsequent economic revival. They are more optimistic and open to changes than the previous generation. Although applying new technologies problematic for them, baby boomers, to the best of their ability, strive to master them. At the same time, they prefer personal communication denying conference connections, webinars and preferring direct meetings in the conference room.

Members of this generation may support flexible labor policies less, as they have not had the available technologies for remote work in their career. They prefer to improve their skills through traditional courses or self-learning tools. Due to various economic twists throughout the life of Baby-Boomers, differences in incomes are particularly noticeable by this group of workers, which causes their concern about their financial security. Consequently, they are not going to retire for a long time.

Generation X or Middle Children reached adulthood in the age of rising feminism, the number of divorces and unstable economy. As a result, they are independent, resourceful and self – sufficient; they value freedom and responsibility in the workplace. Many of them require a large physical and psychological space in the workplace for successful and productive activities. They are considered to be the most entrepreneurial generation compared to the previous ones. This was the first generation that actively began to use computers in their professional activities.

After experiencing a difficult global economic crisis in the eighties of the last century, representatives of Generation X are not loyal to one employer: they prefer to work where they will be provided with the most favorable and comfortable conditions. At the same time, Middle Children are well adapted to new conditions and tolerant to alternative lifestyles. They are also ambitious, constantly striving to acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities that would help them achieve their goals, but they like to work on their own terms.

Thus, having the above-mentioned or any other similar information, employers and managers at all levels can build relationships with their employees – representatives of the first three of the generations we consider we will not dwell on them in details, as it is already established practice. All approaches and methods for them have been known and studied for years. Let's call only general rules:

* do not look at the age of employees: work with a subordinate, focusing on what he specifically can do, not on how old he is and to what generation he belongs to;
* initiate an open dialogue: speak directly, honestly; provide support where necessary and pick up the problem before it causes complications;
* create cross-generational mentoring programs: young managers do not always know how to manage the older generation;
* “keep your finger on the pulse”: study your subordinates constantly, read articles, research, be interested what they live by;
* learn communication styles of your employees, their internal drives and needs: someone likes to talk face to face, someone publicly; it is easier to manage different generations if you have an understanding of their communication styles, needs and what they are really driven by.

Thereby, if managers at all levels understand the language of communicating with each member of their team, it will increase the involvement of subordinate staff and as a result - their productivity and effectiveness.

In addition to the already considered three generations, it is necessary to tell about the remaining two. We will dwell on them more thoroughly. This is because Generation Y or Millennials have joined the workforce recently, and Generation Z or digital natives now are just "coming on stage." Approaches and methods of work with them have not been fully formed yet, and what we will talk about next will be useful for a common understanding of the situation and will be useful in practice both for employers and managers at all levels.

So, Generation Y or Millennials, born between 1981 and 1994 inclusive, became the first generation of the informational society. While the technological transformation began in Generation X, Y-Generation grew up in a more hi-tech environment than all previous generations, and often knows much more about the digital world than their teachers and parents do. As a rule, Y-representatives are self-confident, independent and purposeful. They have higher self-assessment and are more educated than all their predecessors are. Thus, according to the micro-census of the population of the Russian Federation in 2015, among the representatives of generation Y more than 35% have high education, while among generation X this percentage is less than thirty [3].

At the moment, according to Rosstat, in Russia more than twenty five millions of employed people belong to generation Y, which is about 35% of the total number of our workers [4], and this proportion will only increase in the future. That is why it is very important now to apply a system of motivation that takes into account their characteristics of prioritizing and identifying key factors that will motivate employees to achieve better results and benefit the company.

Generation Y is often called "Jumpy" between employers. On average, they remain in one workplace for no more than three years. With networking, peer-to-peer comparison and the ability to find alternative jobs on the Internet it is easy to see how quickly Millennials are becoming bored with their previous responsibilities and are looking to perform new tasks in the new workplace. In order to avoid turnover in their team, employers need to offer Millennials clearly defined career paths with clearly defined terms of promotion. An effective introductory adaptation program will also be important for keeping generation Y in one workplace.

A relationship with an immediate supervisor is as important to Y-employees as a clear understanding of career opportunities. Consistent constructive feedback is necessary to motivate them, as it allows to this generation to evaluate their professional and personal progress. This leads to an increasing loyalty, as Millennials receive timely, honest and open correction. The retention of such Y-employees will be improved greatly when they learn that their contribution has a positive impact on the development of the company. Mentoring schemes also play a vital role in enabling Y-representatives better understand their place in the company, which can lead to increased internal career opportunities.

Millennials also consider the management style as the main motivational characteristic. At the same time, they want to trust their managers, and relations with direct managers considered particularly important for the regulation of the involvement level. Despite the fact that Y-representatives strive for considerable freedom and do not want to be micromanaged in performing immediate tasks, they regularly need the “leader hand” of the Manager.

Millennials ready to work hard, but they do not live for work. They look for purpose and meaning in work as well as rewards. During planning for challenging roles for Y-representatives, employers should be aware of size of the ambitions of these employees. For them it is vital to provide as wide as possible choice within the framework of the work. For example, they should be allowed to vary the schedule of implementation of certain tasks and provide a choice of priority of duties. This approach will provide a sense of greater individual control and this will lead to greater satisfaction from the work process.

Also Y-employees appreciate flexibility and want a real balance between work and personal life. They see work as a place where they can interact with their peers and they are less likely to leave an organization where active communication between team members is encouraged. They like to be part of a close-knit community connected by strong relationships, which is akin to a working family, so employers should avoid the opinion that socialization distracts from the labor process, and begin to cultivate it actively. One way to do this is to engage social media, encouraging employees to use it during the workday. For example, the use of Facebook-like platform for general purposes of a single company will not only facilitate working communication between employees, but also will allow them to communicate constantly, as well as stay in touch outside of work.

Remote work can be an important mechanism to facilitate work-life balance. Many Y-employees prefer to work at home to maintain this kind of balance. Employers and managers who are flexible and provide Millennials with this opportunity are more likely to get better results than authoritarian managers who require the mandatory presence of their subordinates in traditional workplaces. Companies that can offer a good work-life balance will be more effective in attracting and retaining Generation Y as their regular employees.

Millennials also have slightly different expectations of their work compared to previous generations. They see the above balance not as a luxury but as a necessity. At the same time, they value their relationships with friends and family and are interested in working in accordance with their family and personal interests and values, so employers should focus on meeting the social needs of Y-staff by ensuring an appropriate balance between their work and personal life, providing them with flexible working hours and similar activities.

It is worth noting that representatives of the Y-generation consider it necessary to make their workplace free from conventions, at least for a while. A number of the simplest things can contribute to this, such as: the days of everyday clothing, provision of food and water by the company, holding corporate sports and festive events, volunteer work and so on.

Training and the opportunity for personal development can play an important role in attracting and retaining Millennials in one workplace, which simply must become part of the organizational culture of a company that requires a long-term perspective. Generation Y appreciates the ability to continue learning and developing their skills. They are motivated by the desire to improve their professional level in order to remain demanded in the labor market. Companies that provide a wide range of opportunities for personal development through training, rotation in the workplace, mentoring, coaching and so on assuredly would be more successful in attracting and retaining Millennials as their subordinates.

As motivational characteristics of their work, Millennials want to have a high salary, good benefits and other types of rewards. Therefore, employers should use specific reward plans to provide incentives that motivate staff to grow into future leaders. In particular, the plan should encourage Y-employees to take on new responsibilities and develop them, manage the firm's strategy and demonstrate leadership skills. Compensation systems should be based on specific characteristics and include both objective and subjective factors to ensure maximum flexibility.

The strategy of alternative remuneration is also have a significant value for Y-employees, so it is important for companies to ensure the presence of both external and internal balance in their compensation system. External equality can be maintained by analyzing the level of wages compared to similar organizations. Internal capital refers to the perceived fairness of remuneration for work compared to other employees in the company.

Among the important non-monetary incentive programs for Millennials are: sightseeing trips, gifts in the form of unique goods, the provision of extraordinary days off and so on. It is well-known that the captured value of non-cash incentives has a better and longer impact on the motivation of Y-employees, providing a constant reminder of their special achievements. Since the Y-generation has a relatively short attention span, recognition and rewards should come quickly.

It should also be noted that generation Y is hopes more and more for gratitude for the small-scale successes that can usually be overlooked. Major project milestones tend to be noted, but Millennials also want to feel that their day-to-day efforts are noticed. Employers need to understand how to give a big “thank you” to such employees. It can be anything from encouraging senior team members to thank juniors for participating in a particular project, to holding a formal dinner to celebrate the efforts of each team member for the good work done.

Another factor with great importance for Generation Y is the feeling that they make a positive contribution to society and to the environment. It is also important for them to emphasize the role they can play in corporate social responsibility. In this regard, giving Y-employees the opportunity to participate in some voluntary work with the support of the company can be a powerful incentive. For example, volunteering can give a sense of purpose and improve social connections that are beneficial to their psychological state of the entire workforce. It can also help this generation to feel more integrated and connected to society as a whole. Thus, it can be argued that Millennials are looking for employers who are not only socially conscious but also socially responsible. In other words, they are attracted to employers who respect the environment, care for their employees, create products and/or services that are useful to society.

In addition, it should be noted that Generation Y is one of the most liberal generation and is aware of the fact that there is no absolute truth – everything is relative. Any ideology or belief is effective as long as they are tolerant of others and do not infringe on anyone's rights and interests. One of the main reasons for greater tolerance is to raise awareness of different cultures and beliefs. This is due to the fact that, thanks to the latest technology, the world has become closer and therefore more understandable.

Summing up, we can say that each of the above factors is manifested in certain types of behavior of Millennials, so employers and managers at all levels should be attentive to each representative of the Y-generation. It should be understood that it is the Millennials in the near future will make up the majority of the workforce and it is necessary to make their arrival in the corporate world as comfortable as possible. Only in this case we can talk about the further successful development of the company.

No sooner had the generation Y to infiltrate the ranks of workers, both to employers arose another problem: they need to adapt new employees, Generation Z or Digital Natives, that is the first generation of integrated global relationships. Until recently, they were referred to Generation Y. but sociologists dealing with the issues of generations began to realize the disorder of the" tree of generations " and came to the conclusion that it is incorrect to combine into a single group of today's thirty - and twenty-year-olds, because differences between them are obvious [5].

It is believed that the worldview of Generation Z (both philosophical and social) was influenced by the global economic crisis, the intensification of terrorism around the world and actively developing mobile technologies. As a result, they are smart, fast, confident, progressive, and extremely interested in privacy and security. Other epithets, in which can be characterized generation Z, are: connected, communicating, content-oriented, computerized, aimed at grouping and so on. For them, firstly is important to be surrounded by technological environment. They always have some technical device at hand, and they are always online. At the same time, other forms of socialization are very difficult for them. For example, to solve any domestic problem, they turn to the resources of the Internet, preferring to watch a video summarizing the resolution of the problem, rather than read the instructions or an article on this topic.

So, today employers have an important task – to enter into the social structure of their company representatives of generation Z. Why is it so important? The fact is that at present the first representatives of this group complete their professional training and enter the labor market. Generation Z is projected to be the largest working group in the world by 2025-2030. And since they will not be ordinary employees, but challenging the hierarchical structure of management and eager for feedback which they are used to receive in daily communication, employers need to be ready to help generation Z to start a career.

What do employers need to know in this case? During the Fourth industrial revolution or "Industry 4.0" [6] the new generation, being technically oriented and computer-dependent (in a good sense of the word), wants to work in companies with high technological development. To get their attention, employers should use social media to advertise their job openings and interact with young people who are looking for work. It should be remembered that generation Z is visual in nature. They do not need a long description of the proposed vacancy. Only a brief, but as informative as possible notification, which would be enough to apply for the position. Everything else can be explained later.

Paradoxically, for all their cynicism, digital aborigines are endowed with moral and ethical qualities. Multiculturalism for them is a common phenomenon that affects their decision – making and how they view society: racial and gender equality for them is the norm. In addition, they value and respect the environment, as they have grown up in a world where nature is seriously adversely affected by human activities. With this in mind, generation Z is looking for employers who are committed to environmental programs and also welcome racial and gender equality. This is because they want the goals of the company, their potential place of work, to be consistent with their personal goals, and in most cases are environmental, social and career guidelines and/or initiatives.

Another important feature of generation Z workers is ambition. Their average attention span is only eight seconds, so it is not surprising that the priority for them is interesting work that will keep them through enthusiasm. It is also important for digital natives to have a job description that fits them personally. At the same time, they will be happy to make changes to any activity entrusted to them to demonstrate that they are doing it with the greatest impact on which is only capable of.

Often, Z-generation members are ready to play multiple roles in the same workspace. They are ready to transform everything and everyone around them. And since they have an entrepreneurial spirit at their core, when they are given the opportunity to share their ideas, they work as productively as possible. Thus, it is clear that generation Z is also ambitious generation. And if employers are interested in developing and improving their business, they should cherish and nurture their new progressive employees, providing them with maximum opportunities to implement their ideas.

Unexpectedly, generation Z prefers personal contact in the office environment with both colleagues and managers to communication by e-mail or phone. At the same time, it is important for them that the team of like-minded people is small, and the office in which they work is compact. Perhaps this desire is due to the fact that they feel competitive and it is important for them that their individual achievements were immediately noted, and it is easier to achieve this in a small cohesive team. Representatives of this generation may even require constant feedback from managers and be indignant if they do not receive it in time. In this regard, it is necessary to go on about them, as their progressive, innovative approach to business is sure to have a positive impact on doing business. The main thing - time to send them in the right direction, which can be achieved only with the help of feedback.

Also, the Z-generation attaches great importance to mentoring, which is good in terms of rallying a team of different ages. Thus for them it is important to educate the people with influence in the company. Ideally, the employers themselves. This will give Z-employees importance in their eyes: they will feel that they are heard, and, therefore, will make every effort to be useful to the company.

Competent employers, having got digital natives as their employees, will certainly take advantage of their knowledge and create a program of "reverse mentoring", when young members of the team will act as a Navigator for their senior colleagues in the field of advanced technologies and modern trends. This will help mature employees easier to navigate in a huge amount of modern information, learn digital skills, as well as to form respect for the technological practical understanding of young colleagues.

It is important to note that mentoring should be implemented at the stage of vocational training, especially if we take into account that representatives of the Y-generation are also positive about this process. Such a positive experience already exists. Thus, the increased interest of the younger generation in this non-traditional knowledge acquisition, the feat of the teaching staff of PRUE named after G. V. Plekhanov (Moscow) to study and analyze the situation. The result of their activities showed that such cooperation is useful both in terms of transfer of successful practical skills and educational work: a positive personal example of a direct mentor is always an important motivational moment. After that, it was decided to introduce elements of mentoring directly at the University. The cooperation began to actively attract successful business representatives and knowledgeable practitioners who help to learn more about the chosen profession.

Especially productively developed mentoring at the faculty of Finance under the leadership of the Dean – O. L. Shemetkova. The faculty has been cooperating with JSC Gazprombank for almost a decade. As a result, in addition to holding various events within the walls of our educational institution, Gazprombank pays scholarships to the most talented students, provides an opportunity for internships, and invites the best to work. In 2018, together with the largest employers, students and representatives of public organizations, the faculty held a scientific and practical conference "mentoring Forum" for the first time, which is planned to be held annually. These and other similar events are guaranteed to increase the prestige of mentoring among the future working generation.

Returning directly to the characteristic of the Z-generation, it should be noted that its representatives respond well to constructive criticism and even need it, since it is constructive criticism that helps them to improve their performance. And as a generation that is more creative and more entrepreneurial than any previous generation, they understand the need for concrete proposals to address the shortcomings as well as the problems that arise. In this case, criticism from the employer is not considered as a statement of mistakes, but as an active help of the person interested in the final result.

The attitude of generation Z to the process of work is also interesting. They don't want to just "spend time from call to call." They need to understand that they have not wasted their working time, that is, it is necessary to constantly see (realize) the results of their work, as well as to feel interest in their activities on the part of the employer. To do this, it is necessary to apply various incentives, such as: wage increases, reimbursement of transport costs, the cost of visiting the fitness room, food and so on. The implementation of such initiatives proves to Z-employees that the employer cares about their well-being, while Z-employees themselves feel happy in such situations, and they are very comfortable working when they understand that their work is valued.

In order to confirm the above, we conducted our own study, which was attended by 306 respondents. All of them are students of Plekhanov Russian University of Economics (Moscow) which either combine study with work or in the very near future will join the ranks of workers. We asked them just one question: “What can attract/interest/stimulate you mostly in your current/future work?” and gave to respondents the opportunity to select several options from the proposed. Expectedly, most people, namely 267 (or 87.3%), said that the main thing for them – financial reward. Of course, it can be explained by the fact that generation Z is represented by people born during world economic crisis, so they are sensitive about financial independence and stability. 228 people (or 74,5%) said that it would be important for them to be satisfied with what they do. 213

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Of course, the results should be interpreted very carefully, as they may be due to the limited experience of students associated with their real work. Perhaps, at this stage, they do not quite correctly set their preferences and, entering the working reality, will reconsider the importance of priorities. Only time will tell whether the above preferences will remain in the same order or will change after the majority of generation Z members join the full-time workforce. In addition, despite the fact that 306 respondents took part in our study, the sample is quite small to talk about its 100% accuracy. Further verification is needed to confirm our findings from this study.

However, it is already becoming clear that there are many good reasons to actively recruit members of generation Z, giving them the opportunity to develop and improve. At the same time, it is important to understand that those who grew up in a world where everything is customizable, they expect the same flexibility in their work. And if employers can provide them with this condition, then, in turn, they will receive very dedicated, highly motivated, efficient and creative employees. And this is one of the meanings of management.

Summing up the overall results, we note that the management of the team, in which there are representatives of all five generations, is a very complex process, for which it is important to create such a harmonious environment for all, where each individual will understand, accept and respect the positions, foundations and values of others, even if they differ from the generally accepted norms and rules. If managers deny and ignore the age differences of their employees, it will create a negative atmosphere within the team. Therefore, it is necessary to recognize these differences and use them as tools to create a personalized communication strategy, which will consist of several management styles, taking into account the preferences of each group of employees.

Only far-sighted and professionally competent employers and managers, based on different mentalities and trends in the development of different generations, are able to communicate, understand, motivate, train and keep all five generations in one working group. Only they are able to direct employees of different ages in the right direction, so that the latter focus on the same goals and work effectively together, which will necessarily lead to the prosperity of the company.

Summary: as the world around us changes, any single company and its team change too. Therefore it is necessary to trace regularly these changes and to experiment with new approaches and methods of the management; the more employers and managers of all levels will know about different generations, approaches and methods of management of each of them, the simpler it will be to them to direct the subordinates and the more effective will be the end result of their General work.

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