SRA INTERNATIONAL
ANNUAL MEETING

SEATTLE 2023

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Bridging the Gaps

Working with All the Generations
in the Workforce

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Objectives

Identify the five generations in the workplace and their defining experiences and events.

Understand the values and potential outcomes of generational interactions in the workplace.

What is a generation?

a group of people born and living during the same time

"In addition to coincidence of birth year grouping, a generation is also defined by common tastes, attitudes, and experience....

Those times encompass a myriad of circumstances – economic, social, sociological, and, of course, demographic."

Zemke, R. Raines, C., & Filipczak, B. (2010) *Generations at work: Managing the clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in your workplace.* New York:Amacon.

What makes one generation different from another?

Traditionalist

Born 1900-1945

Great Depression
World War II
Disciplined
Workplace Loyalty
Move to the 'Burbs'
Vaccines

Baby Boomer

Born 1946-1964

Vietnam, Moon Landing
Civil/Women's Rights
Experimental
Innovators
Hard Working
Personal Computer

Gen X

Born 1965-1976

Fall of Berlin Wall
Gulf War
Independent
Free Agents
Internet, MTV, AIDS
Mobile Phone

Millennials

Born 1977-1997

9/11 Attacks
Community Service
Immediacy
Confident, Diversity
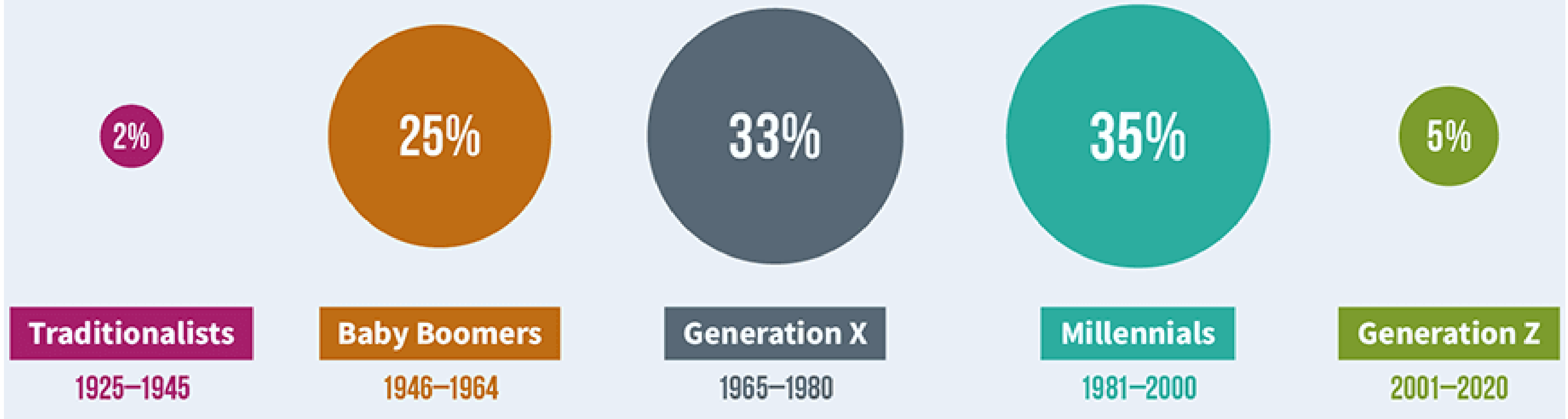Social Everything
Google, Facebook

Generation Z

After 1997

Age 15 and Younger
Optimistic
High Expectations
Apps
Social Games
Tablet Devices

Current U.S. workforce numbers[2]:

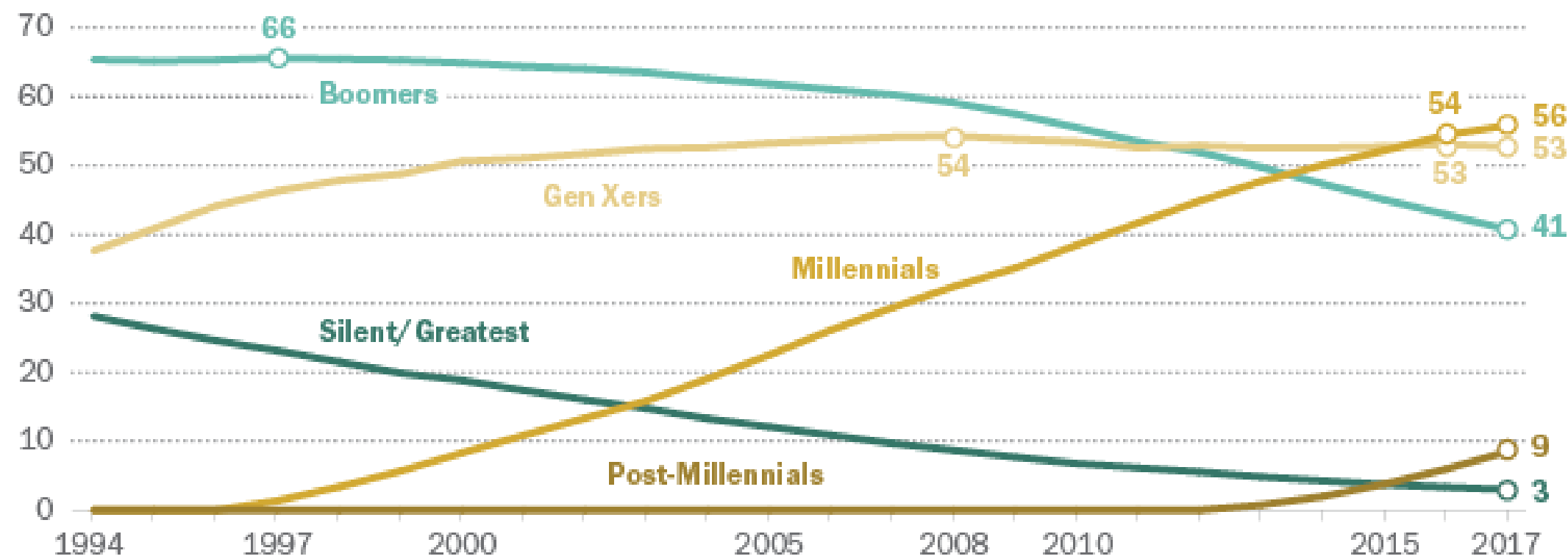|				
2%	25%	33%	35%	5%
Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
1925–1945	1946–1964	1965–1980	1981–2000	2001–2020

Generations

Generations in the workplace

Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

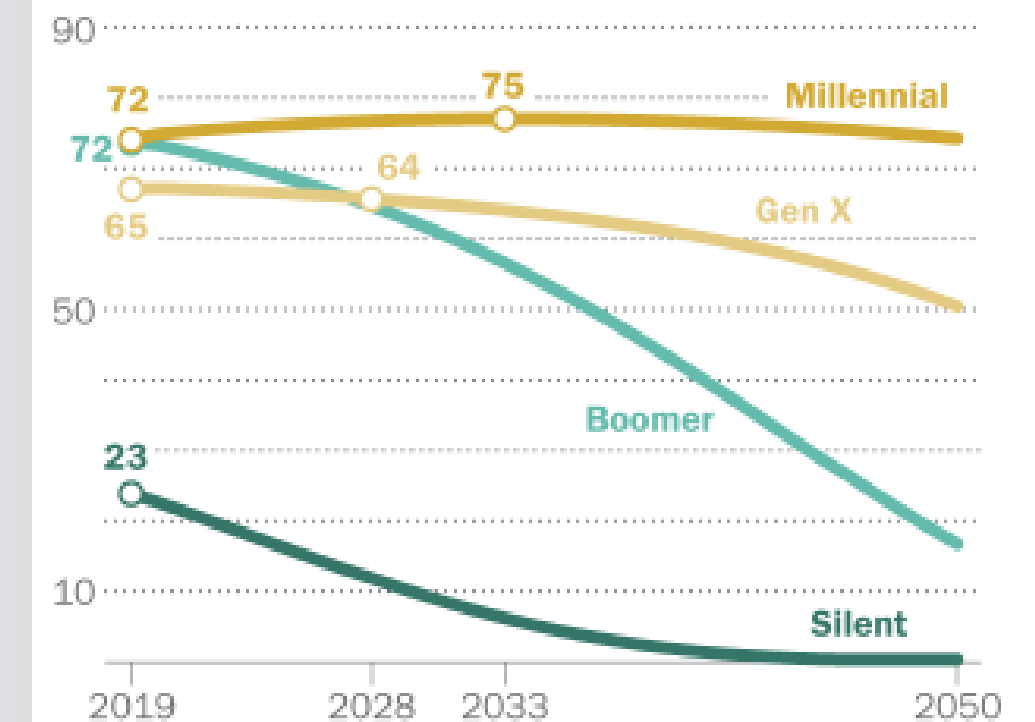*U.S. labor force, in millions*

Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

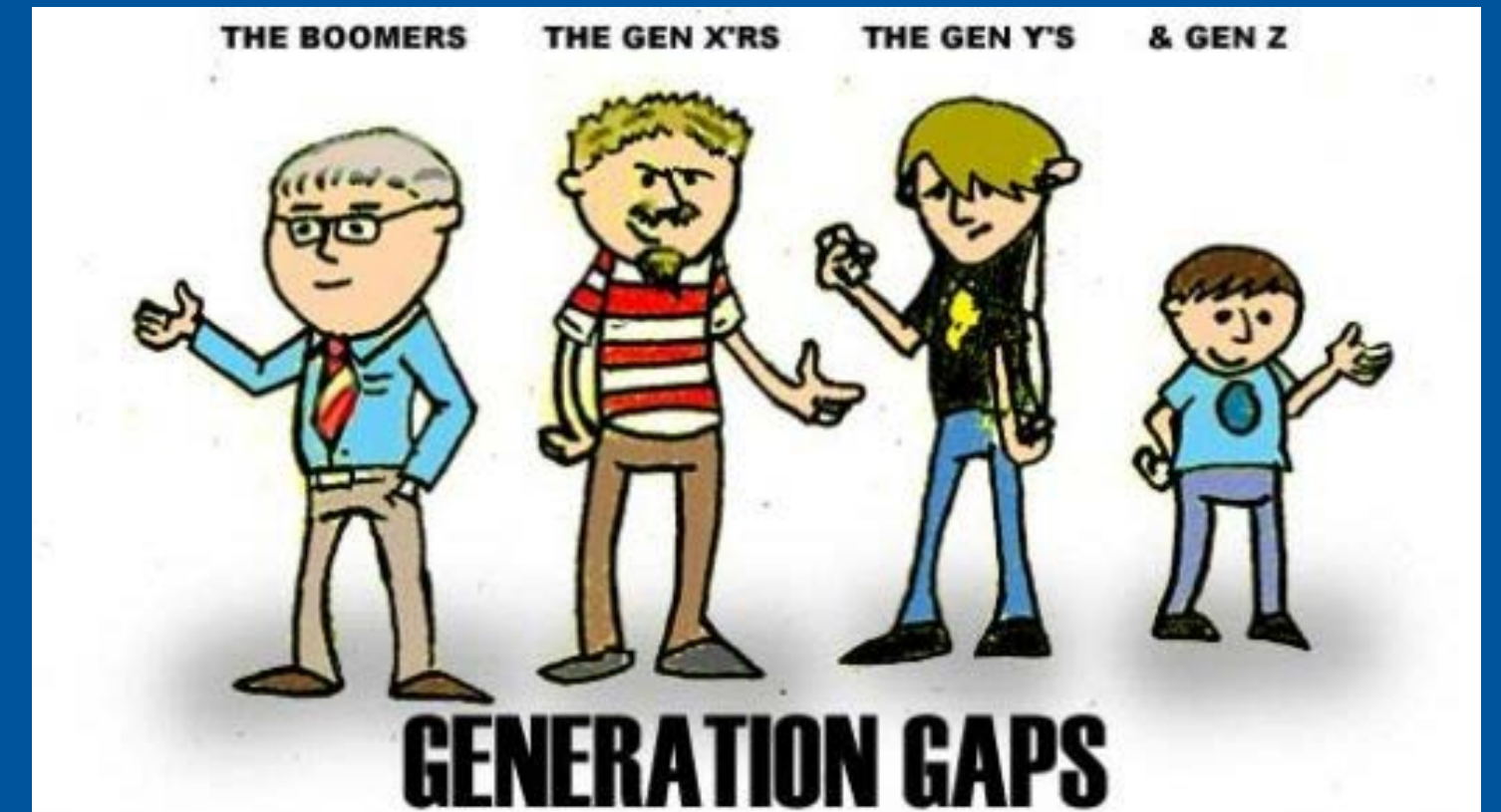**Projected population by generation**

In millions

Note: Millennials refer to the population ages 23 to 38 as of 2019.
Source: Pew Research Center tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau population estimates released April 2020 and population projections released December 2017.
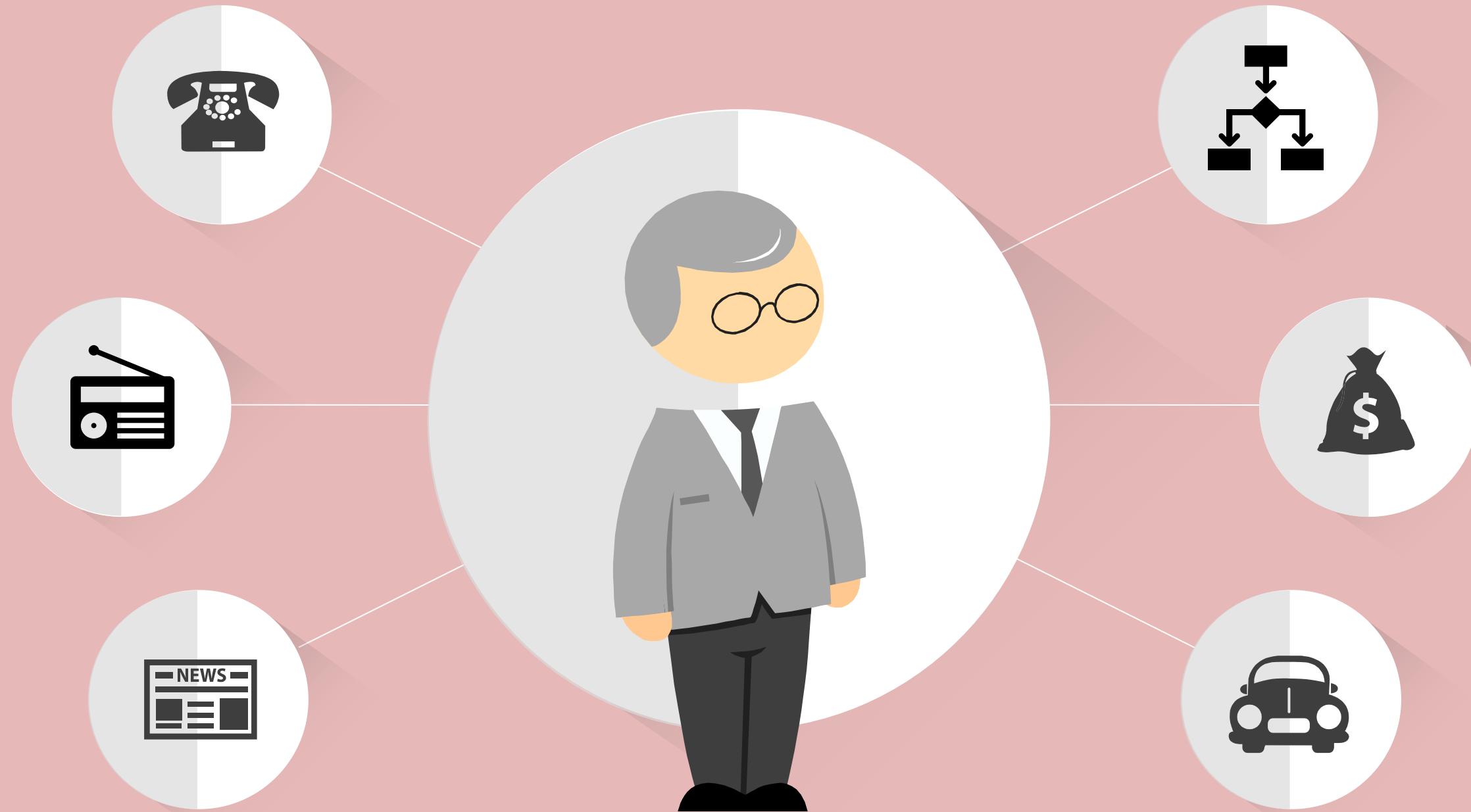
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Generations

Bridging the Gap

Generations Comparison

Traditionalist

Also known as: Radio Babies, The Silent
Generation, Veterans, GI Generation, Greatest
Generation

Traditionalists (born before 1945)

TRADITIONALISTS   BORN: 1925 – 1945

DEPENDABLE | STRAIGHTFORWARD | TACTFUL | LOYAL

Shaped by: The Great Depression, World War II, radio and movies

Motivated by: Respect, recognition, providing long-term value to the company

Communication style: Personal touch, handwritten notes instead of email

Worldview: Obedience over individualism; age equals seniority; advancing through the hierarchy

Employers should:

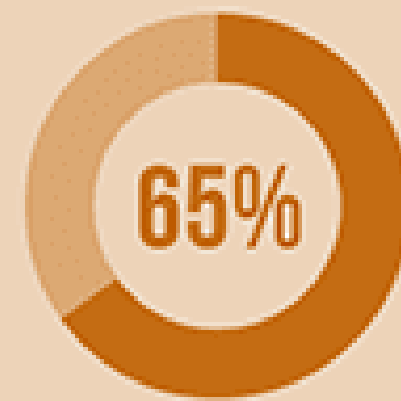Provide satisfying work and opportunities to contribute; emphasize stability

Generations Comparison

BABY BOOMERS

Also known as: The Sandwich
Generation, The Golden Generation

Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964

BABY BOOMERS | BORN: 1946 – 1964

OPTIMISTIC | COMPETITIVE | WORKAHOLIC | TEAM-ORIENTED

Shaped by: Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Watergate

Motivated by: Company loyalty, teamwork, duty

Communication style: Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face to face

Worldview: Achievement comes after paying one's dues; sacrifice for success

Employers should:

Provide them with specific goals and deadlines; put them in mentor roles; offer coaching-style feedback

65%

Baby Boomers who plan to work past age 65[3]

10,000

Baby Boomers reach retirement age every day[4]

Generations Comparison
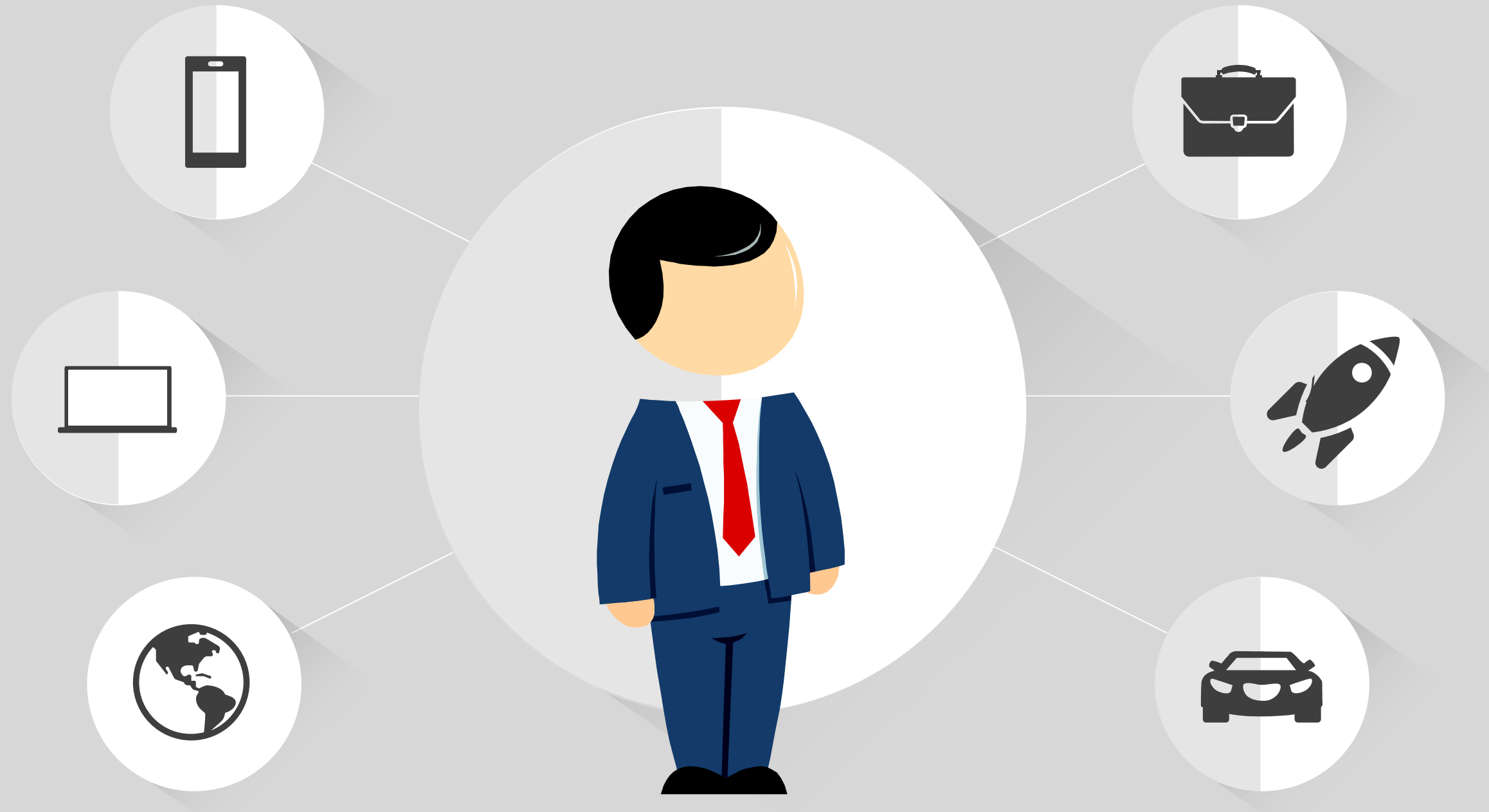
GEN X

Also known as: Baby Busters,
Latchkey Kids, Slackers

Generation X (born 1965-1976)

GENERATION X BORN: 1965 — 1980

FLEXIBLE | INFORMAL | SKEPTICAL | INDEPENDENT

Shaped by: The AIDs epidemic, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dot-com boom

Motivated by: Diversity, work-life balance, their personal-professional interests rather than the company's interests

Communication style: Whatever is most efficient, including phone calls and face to face

Worldview: Favoring diversity; quick to move on if their employer fails to meet their needs; resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives

Employers should:

Give them immediate feedback; provide flexible work arrangements and work-life balance; extend opportunities for personal development
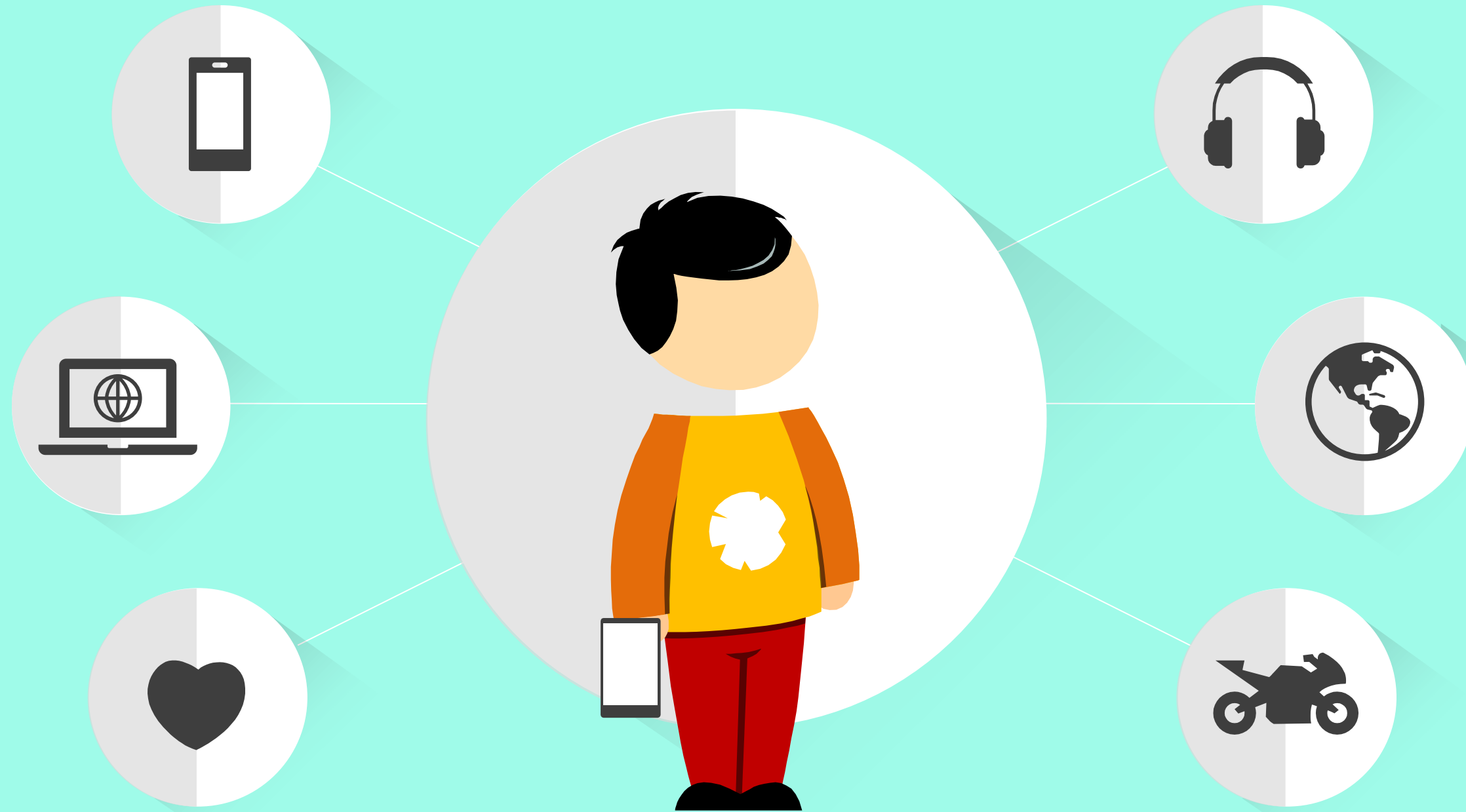
55%

Startup founders who are Gen Xers—the highest percentage[5]

BY 2028

Gen Xers will outnumber Baby Boomers[6]

Generations Comparison

Millennials

Also known as: Gen Y, Generation Why?, Net Generation, Echo Boomers

Millennials (born 1977-1998)

75%
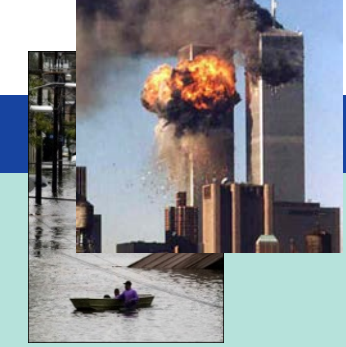
Percentage of global workforce to be made up of Millennials by 2025[7]

15%

Millennials ages 25–35 living at home with their parents[8]

MILLENNIALS BORN: 1981 – 2000

COMPETITIVE | CIVIC- AND OPEN-MINDED | ACHIEVEMENT-ORIENTED

Shaped by: Columbine, 9/11, the internet

Motivated by: Responsibility, the quality of their manager, unique work experiences

Communication style: IMs, texts, and email

Worldview: Seeking challenge, growth, and development; a fun work life and work-life balance; likely to leave an organization if they don't like change

Employers should:

Get to know them personally; manage by results; be flexible on their schedule and work assignments; provide immediate feedback

Generations Comparison

Generation Z

Also known as: Post Millennials,
iGen, Generation 9/11, Zoomers,
Centennials, Gen 2020

Generation Z (born after 1997)

GENERATION Z — BORN: 2001 – 2020

GLOBAL | ENTREPRENEURIAL | PROGRESSIVE | LESS FOCUSED

Shaped by: Life after 9/11, the Great Recession, access to technology from a young age

Motivated by: Diversity, personalization, individuality, creativity

Communication style: IMs, texts, social media

Worldview: Self-identify as digital device addicts; value independence and individuality; prefer to work with Millennial managers, innovative coworkers, and new technologies

Employers should:

Offer opportunities to work on multiple projects at the same time; provide work-life balance; allow them to be self-directed and independent

40%

Gen Zers who want to interact with their boss daily or several times each day[9]

84%

Gen Zers who expect their employer to provide formal training[10]

Sticking Points

Bridging the Gaps

- Communication
- Feedback
- Rewards
- Fun at Work
- Knowledge transfer
- Meetings
- Policies
- Respect
- Work Ethic
- Balance

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5-Steps for Leading Through Generational Differences

1) **Acknowledge:** Talk about generational differences
2) **Appreciate:** Focus on the 'why,' not the 'what,' and the common needs.
3) **Flex:** Agree on how to accommodate different approaches.
4) **Leverage:** Maximize the strengths of each generation.
5) **Resolve:** Determine which option will yield the best results (when flexing isn't enough).

Perceptions

Bridging the Gaps

- Job Strengths
- Outlook
- View of Authority
- Leadership
- Relationships
- Time on the Job
- Diversity
- Feedback
- Work/ Life Balance
- General Workplace Traits

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Perceptions

	Traditionalist	Boomers	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Job Strength					
Outlook					
View of Authority					
Leadership					
Relationships					

Perceptions

	Traditionalist	Boomers	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Job Strength	Stable	Service Oriented/ Team Players	Adaptable and Tech-Literate	Multitaskers and Tech-Savvy	Adjustable Tech-Savvy Loyal w/ Reward
Outlook	Practical	Optimistic	Skeptical	Hopeful	Realistic
View of Authority	Respectful	Love/Hate/ Follow Protocol	Unimpressed and Unintimidated	Polite	Respect if they care about me
Leadership	By Hierarchy	By Consensus	By Competence	By Pulling Together	Consensus/ experience decides
Relationships	Personal Sacrifice	Personal Gratification	Reluctant to Commit/ Independent	Inclusive	Inclusive – must be psychologically safe

Perceptions

	Traditionalist	Boomers	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Time on the job					
Diversity					
Feedback					
Work/Life Balance					
General Workplace Traits					

Perceptions

	Traditionalist	Boomers	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Time on the job	Punched the clock	Visibility is key "Face Time" Social	As long as I get the job done, who cares	It's quitting time – I have a real life to live	Don't waste my time
Diversity	Ethnically segregated	Integration began	Integrated	No majority race	Global
Feedback	No news is good news	Once a year with documentation	Interrupts and asks how they are doing	Wants feedback at the push of a button	Show me how to win and provide emotional support
Work/Life Balance	Needs help shifting	Balances everyone else and themselves	Wants balance now Values personal time	Need flexibility to balance activities	Know that now is the time to put career first
General Workplace Traits	Polite, reserved, obedient, conformers	Uncomfortable with conflict, Idealistic, Politically sensitive	Challenge the status quo Confident	Task oriented Want options and choices Expect attention	Want everyone to do their part Safe and Supportive

Clash points

Bridging the Gaps

Having A Good Relationship with Traditionalist

Chain of Command

Legacy

Experience

Dedication

One-on-One

Corporate History

Traditionalist

Working With…
- Face to face communication
- Formal/ respectful
- Task driven
- Everyone has a place

Managing…
- Focus on organizational goals
- Ask for their institutional knowledge
- Describe steps/tasks
- Reward with perks

Leadership lesson…
- Examine your attitudes about workplace accommodations
- More consultation
- Encourage and support innovation
- Create opportunities to share institutional knowledge

If you are a…
- Share your history
- Be flexible
- Adapt to new technologies
- Ask rather than tell

Having A Good Relationship with Baby Boomers

Respect	Face-to-Face	Full Attention	Corporate History

Baby Boomers

Working With…
- Friendly and welcoming
- Acknowledgement/ Recognition
- Allow for process time
- Inclusive
- Everyone has a fair shot

Managing…
- Emphasize team
- Give leadership opportunities
- "How are you feeling about…?" (consult)
- Reward with everything

Leadership lesson…
- Define the concept of team
- Make expectations clear and live up to them
- Don't take it so personally
- Manage meetings efficiently
- Engage the team in decision making

If you are a…
- Walk your talk
- Don't take it personally
- A little less process…

Having A Good Relationship with Gen X

Get to the point

Use email

Give them space

Get over the notion of dues paying

Lighten up

Army of one

Gen X

Working With...
- Get to the point
- Be sincere
- Use technology
- Show me the money
- Every (wo)man for (her)himself

Managing...
- Clear expectations and focus on results
- Reward with flexibility
- Manage your micro-management
- Keep it brief

Leadership lesson...
- Be available
- Monitor your impact
- Ask for others input and give feedback
- Coach and guide
- Celebrate milestones

If you are a...
- Engage with your team
- Ask for what you need
- Be patient
- Lighten up!

Having A Good Relationship with Millennials

Challenge them

Collaborate

Encourage finding a mentor

Provide timely feedback

Lighten up

Millennials

Working With…
- Cooperative Collaboration
- Upbeat
- Multiple tasks
- Pay attention to them
- Everyone wins

Managing…
- Be kind, be there
- Offer coaching
- Ask for their ideas
- Build mentor relationships
- Make them famous

Leadership lesson…
- Slow down and observe
- Practice listening
- Respect the knowledge around you
- Ask questions
- Find a mentor

If you are a…
- Strive for independence
- Listen more, talk less
- Acknowledge the institutional knowledge

Having A Good Relationship with Gen Z

Make it Mobile

Share information in stories

Honor Diversity

Don't Assume

Show them

Gen Z

Working With…
- Use best communication tools for the task at hand
- Show you are a team player
- Provide clear feedback
- Video or oral best way to teach

Managing…
- Provide a safe space
- Acknowledge successes
- Offer opportunities to work on multiple projects
- Abundant Coaching

Leadership lesson…
- Give propel a change
- Focus on situation
- Patience – the journey takes time

If you are a…
- Be clear on what you want
- Learn institutional knowledge
- Ask for help
- Continue to read the situations

Commonalities

Employees of all generations have one thing in common. They need one good reason they should put their full faith in any one company.

Trust is common, no matter the age.

Adapted from: K. Tyler, Neckties to Nose Rings (2002)

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Mind the Gap: Managing Five Generations in the Workplace

GENERATION Z
(Born 1997 onward)

05

- Accustomed to change and expects it in the workplace[3]
- Value in-person interactions[3]
- Look for feedback on a frequent, ongoing basis[4]

MILLENIALS
(Born 1977-1997)

04

- Looking to be coached or mentored[3]
- Prefer collaborative and technology-centric training[3]
- Aligning with company values is key[4]

GEN-X
(Born 1965-1976)

03

- View change as a vehicle for opportunity[3]
- Embrace a hands-off management policy[2]
- Entrepreneurial spirit and results-oriented[5]

BABY BOOMERS
(Born 1943-1964)

02

- More reserved in communication style[3]
- Value traditional instructor-led courses or self-learning tools[3]
- Top qualities for a manager are being ethical, fair, consistent[4]

TRADITIONALISTS
(Born before 1943)

01

- Believe in hierarchical management style[1]
- Strong work ethic and loyal to their company[2]
- Slow to adapt to new technology[2]

Action Plan

What changes will you make based on what you have learned today?

    Relationships

    Work environment

    Policies

RESOURCES

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Pew Research Center, Millennials

THANK YOU

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