

AT&T Executive Brief

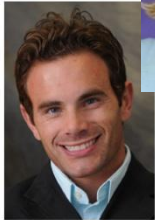


In September 2010 AT&T University hosted the Generations in Action Conference to explore trends and implications of the 21st century multigenerational workforce. **This is the second of three papers summarizing findings from that event.**

Conference Report No. 2

Commonalities across generations

When it comes to understanding what motivates the generations and the implications on business, the Bridgeworks team (*generations.com*) brought more than research (although there was a goldmine of that). They shared stories and real-life



situations and challenges that stimulated some truly insightful dialogue among conference participants.

Authors of the best-selling business book, *When Generations Collide* – a favorite among C-suite executives everywhere – the Bridgeworks team laid a firm foundation.

Key Takeaways

- ❑ Much has been published about our differences, but we have many common needs
 - Need to feel appreciated and valued
 - Desire for mentoring and engagement
 - Struggle for work-life balance
 - Search for clarity on negotiating careers
- ❑ Every generation has valid viewpoints derived from its own unique experiences
- ❑ Collaboration is valued across all generations; it's how we collaborate that requires us to differentiate work styles for effective teamwork. For example,
 - **Traditionalists:** Let's collaborate, then I'll decide.
 - **Boomers:** Let's collaborate in a politically correct way.
 - **Gen X:** Let's collaborate, then let me work alone.
 - **Gen Y:** let's collaborate, all the time with everyone

Conference Consensus: We need policies and practices that appeal to every generation

BEST PRACTICE GENERATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y
Implement open and easily accessible mentoring programs that allow for coaching and mentoring up, down and sideways.	Embrace a culture that nurtures work-life balance; encourage telecommuting, job sharing, work-anywhere programs and aging parent leaves of absence.	Offer critical management training on issues like conflict resolution, time management, and communications – and facilitate reverse mentoring.
Make flexible work really okay and acceptable – and revise benefit plans to address the scarcest commodity of all – time.	Implement “Be Healthy” programs that include rewards and incentives as goals are reached.	Set core hours when entire team works to foster collaboration and team-building. Start and end times can then be more flexible.
Develop generational toolkits that make it simple for boomers to stay current on emerging technologies and generational work preferences.	Encourage the creation of an employee resource group that promotes cross-generational understanding; support it, and help it grow.	Establish “dead zones” for technology (specific meetings, time of day, location) to help Gen Ys connect directly with co-workers (without distractions).

Next Briefing: *The impact of gaming and brain development*