Generational Differences

by Melissa K. Burrows, PhD

Differences

BOOMERS, X, Y & BEYOND

while many definitions of diversity exist, a common definition of diversity is “the mosaic of individuals and groups with varying backgrounds, experiences, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs” (Equality & Diversity e-Learning Workbook, 2010). Diversity includes but is not limited to “racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, national and international backgrounds, diversity in thought and philosophy, religious or spiritual orientation, gender identity/expressions, political affiliation, disability, age, immigrant status, and family structure” (Society for Human Resource Managers, 2008).

In recent years workforce diversity has included new forms of generational definitions. A generation is defined as “a cohort of people born within a specific era, who share a common life experience and life stage and who were shaped by a particular set of events (births, deaths, recessions, wars, etc.)” (Generations, WEDEP, 2000). While there slight variations in the names and years for each of the generations, the generational span is approximately the same for each generation. Today in our society, four generations exist. Of the four generations, four are currently working in the workforce. By 2020, the number of workers in the workforce will increase to five (FutureWorkplace, 2008). Although automation is expected to increase by more than 50 percent from its 1980 population size (Bay, 2008).

The five generations include:

• Traditions, Silent, Mature, Uptown, born between 1920 and 1945
• Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964
• Generation X, Boomerang, Gen X, born between 1965 and 1976
• Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964
• Gen 2020, born after 1997

as various age groups remain in the workforce, a wide span of life (15 years at the upper end) who share a comparable age group, life experience and life stage. While many definitions of diversity exist, a common definition of diversity is “the mosaic of individuals and groups with varying backgrounds, experiences, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs” (Equality & Diversity e-Learning Workbook, 2010). Diversity includes but is not limited to “racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, national and international backgrounds, diversity in thought and philosophy, religious or spiritual orientation, gender identity/expressions, political affiliation, disability, age, immigrant status, and family structure” (Society for Human Resource Managers, 2008).

While generational differences are an important aspect and a major focus for organizations, it’s imperative to learn the impact of generational differences in the areas of communication, team building, design, training, and overall workforce styles within the organization as a whole. More than ever, it’s important for organizations that move beyond diversity to an inclusive diversity as well as an inclusive excellence.

With multiple generations currently working in the workforce, the question becomes, “are you ready to manage these generations of workers?” While there is being so many in the society in one year or two years, it’s more people are changing retirement. Additionally, with the downturn in the economy, employees are potentially finding it more difficult to find themselves returning to the workforce to begin working in another capacity (Wiles, 2009). In fact, research indicates men and women in the workforce are currently capable of working until they are 74 (men) and 77 (women).

For example, Traditions are characterized as viewing

by Marilyn Sanders Mobley, PhD

In the lecture she delivered upon accepting the Nobel Prize for literature in 1993, Toni Morrison says, “Narrative is radical, creating us at the very moment of our creation.” When we look back on past academic years, we see that diversity has evolved in our culture as we’ve been collaborating with various offices, departments, and colleges to promote awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in our community. Now, as we look forward to the University’s 100th academic year, we expect capacity in our current academic year and subsequently ask that the diversity story at Case Western Reserve be told by our students, faculty, and staff. This is our call to action and our charge to continue to tell the diversity story at Case Western Reserve with integrity, equity, and genuine enthusiasm. We will continue our work in the months ahead and in the upcoming academic year.

I take this opportunity to thank the Diversity Leadership Council and all the students, faculty, and staff who support our inclusive workplace in their daily interactions. I also want to thank all the alumni, trustees, community and corporate partners who support the work we have been doing to tell the diversity story at Case Western Reserve with integrity, equity, and genuine enthusiasm. We will continue our work in the months ahead and in the upcoming academic year.

Finally, congratulations to all those who are graduating. You have my very best wishes for success and for many years to come. Your work as leaders will confront in their careers.

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Marilyn Sanders Mobley, PhD

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Diversity 360°

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March 15, 2010. “Diversity & Inclusion” is a 100% of Diversity within the context of the workforce to begin working in another capacity (Wiles, 2009). In fact, research indicates men and women in the workforce are currently capable of working until they are 74 (men) and 77 (women).

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On April 22, 2010, the Office of Inclusion, Diversity and Equal Opportunity held its Second Annual Inclusion and Diversity Achievement Awards Luncheon. Professor Jonathan Entin, staff member Latisha James and School of Medicine student Jason Balkman, MD, MED ’10 were recognized for their contributions to diversity at Case Western Reserve.

On Image of three people, facing each other, at a table. Text: "Reserve. build a partnership between John (MED ’10). He started the Robin’s public inquiries concerning university partners-Latisha James is the Director for the Center LAW ’54, whose clients included He has worked closely with Fred Gray Professor of Law and Political Science. Professor Jonathan Entin is attending the luncheon. and Professor Faye Gary Sue Nickel-Schindewolf Image to 193x685. Professors Barbara R. Snyder, and Professor Jonathan Entin. Barbara R. Snyder, and Professor Faye Gary Sue Nickel-Schindewolf at the Awards Luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon.

Did You Know?
A full list of student organizations can be found at http://www.studentaffairs.case.edu/activities/involve/resources.html

Professor Jonathan Entin is the Director of Case Western Reserve's Office in the Law School and he has been a member of the Case faculty for many years. He has worked closely with Fred Gray, who is a Professor of Law and Political Science. Professor Jonathan Entin is attending the luncheon. and Professor Faye Gary Sue Nickel-Schindewolf at the Awards Luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon. Professor Emily McKeown and Professor Fae Gary attending the luncheon.

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The Power of Diversity
A Speech by Jason Balkman, MD Case Western Reserve (MED ’10)

It is an honor to be asked to speak to you today about the value of diversity at Case Western Reserve University. I wouldn’t give you the benefit of the doubt and assume that you have already discovered in your own lives the value of diversity. For those of you who need only be reminded of the purpose of diversity, let me remind you that diversity is a natural law, a basis for evolution, and an important determinant for our academic environment. Given the self-evident value of diversity, today would be an ideal time to address the following question.

Before doing so, it is important to tell you that I am an engineer by training and I have a habit of using physics to explain things. In this paper, I will discuss certain aspects of diversity. In particular, I will start by defining diversity, and then I will discuss the role of diversity in our academic environment.

Diversity is an ideal that seeks to create a community that is composed of individuals who are different from each other. This diversity is based on the premise that differences in identity and culture provide a unique perspective that enriches the academic environment. Given this premise, it is important to recognize that diversity is a concept that is not limited to the academic environment. Diversity extends to all aspects of life, including the workplace, society, and even the natural world.

In the academic environment, diversity is a key component of a vibrant academic community. It is an essential ingredient for success in the academic environment. Diversity is a force that drives innovation and creativity. It is a force that drives the development of new ideas and new solutions to problems.

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