Millennial Leadership Model

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INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to this chapter and disclaimer, it's important to recognize discussions on generations include broad generalizations and stereotypes that have been observed in the behaviors of people within different generations. These have been studied and explained according to shared formative experiences and cultural trends that differ over the course of time. Most of the shared experiences used in defining these generations are specific to people living in the United States at the time, and may not translate to other countries. It is always preferable to get to know people as individuals, recognizing that each individual is unique and may differ greatly from their peer group. Rhea Turteltaub, as quoted in Joslyn's article (2010) stated, "anytime we generalize about a group of people, we're probably missing an understanding of who they are as individuals" (p. 9). However, when interacting with large groups we do not know well, it may be helpful to begin by tailoring our approach to some generational expectations. This may require different behaviors and actions from what is a natural tendency based on personal life experiences. Additionally, it's important to stress that individuals only have the power to control themselves in order to improve communication abilities, leaders must examine themselves and consider making positive changes that will help interaction with others.

Until recently, most of the research and observations about the millennial generation have been reserved for the school environment between teachers and students (Carlson, 2005; Fisler & Foubert, 2006; Oblinger, 2003; Roberts, 2005; Skiba & Barton, 2006). However, as individuals in the millennial generation enter the workforce; more attention has been given to leadership in the work environment. Recently, in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, a junior faculty member published her reflections on experiences during the first three years of being a faculty member (Schuh, 2010). This article spawned quite a discussion about the needs of the millennial generation at work at a specific southern college (Petrelli, H., personal communications, June, 2010). Schuh's (2010) reflections as a junior faculty member included concern that she was assigned a mentor, yet the mentor never scheduled time to meet with her. Discussions about this article among faculty revealed differing expectations between older faculty of the Generation X and Baby Boomer populations and junior faculty members of the millennial generation (Petrelli, H., personal communications, June, 2010).

For example, it is the expectation of older faculty that junior members should take the initiative to schedule appointments and seek guidance from their mentor when needed. Furthermore, older faculty have the expectation that junior members recognize the unique roles of life in academe including working autonomously with little to no supervision, handling multiple priorities simultaneously, and utilizing effective judgment and problem-solving skills. Conversely, it is the expectation of junior faculty that clear, ongoing guidance is provided every step of the way with strong training programs (Ferri-Reed, 2010; Phillips & Torres, 2008). To the older generations, this is likened to "spoon-feeding" and to the younger generation it is simply a lack of understanding of what is expected (Hollon, 2008; Warner, 2010). Ultimately, there is a choice when working with individuals of different generations: one can choose to continue to complain and expect others to automatically conform to expectations without guidance,

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or one can learn about the needs of others and implement strategies that will eliminate confusion and anxiety and promote harmonious relationships. In the end, having students and employees perform well and to the best of their ability is the goal. Being annoyed and frustrated because Millennials have not been prepared to meet expectations or intrinsically know exactly what is expected is a waste of time and energy, when a solution-oriented approach is readily available.

Northouse (2010) commented in, *Leadership Theory and Practice*, that the change from an industrial-based society to a knowledge-based society due to the Information Age has caused a shift from a bureaucratic to an interactive social character, which will have major implications for leadership practice. This chapter will focus on the development of a leadership model specifically related to the millennial generation of the Information Age.

GENERATIONAL OVERVIEW

For the purpose of this chapter, a brief overview of the last four generations will be provided as a baseline for further discussion regarding leadership of the Millennial Generation. The purpose of explaining characteristics of the generations is to provide a basis of understanding for conflict in the educational environment and workplace between generations and give weight to the need for consideration of specific leadership methods for members in the millennial generation. The dates of birth separating the generations have been reported differently depending on the researcher (Howe & Strauss, 2002; Skiba & Barton, 2006). It is important to note that generations fall along a continuum, may overlap, and are only generalizations. This chapter will combine the authors to present the most common dates discussed in the literature.

Veterans

For the purpose of this chapter, the Veterans were born between 1925 and 1942 (see Table 1); they are over age 65 and also called the "Silents" or "Traditionals" (Hagevik, 1999; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). They share formative influences of the World Wars and the Great Depression. They are characterized by their loyalty and patriotism and they have a strong sense of family and community. They tend to be thrifty, disciplined, respect law and order, and like consistency. Their management style is influenced by a lot of military experience and they appreciate the chain of command and respect authority and the hierarchy (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000).

Table 1.

	Veterans, Silents, Matures 1925-1942	**Baby Boomers 1943-1960**	**Generation X 1961-1981**	**Millennials (Gen Y) 1982-2005**
Childhood Influences	Patriotism, Great Depression, WWII, Rebels without a cause, activists,	Prosperity, TV, Vietnam, space, civil rights, cold war	Scandals, divorce, latchkey kids, MTV, AIDS, computers	Multiculturalism, school violence, mass media, helicopter parents
Defining Traits	Loyalty	Optimism	Skepticism	Realism
Management Style	Military chain of command	Change of command	Self-command	Collaboration

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