

The MYTHS of Generational Differences In the Workplace



Leadership Conference – October 19, 2015
Erin Stenson, Organizational Health and Development Mgr
Jason Glozier, Disability Rights Coordinator

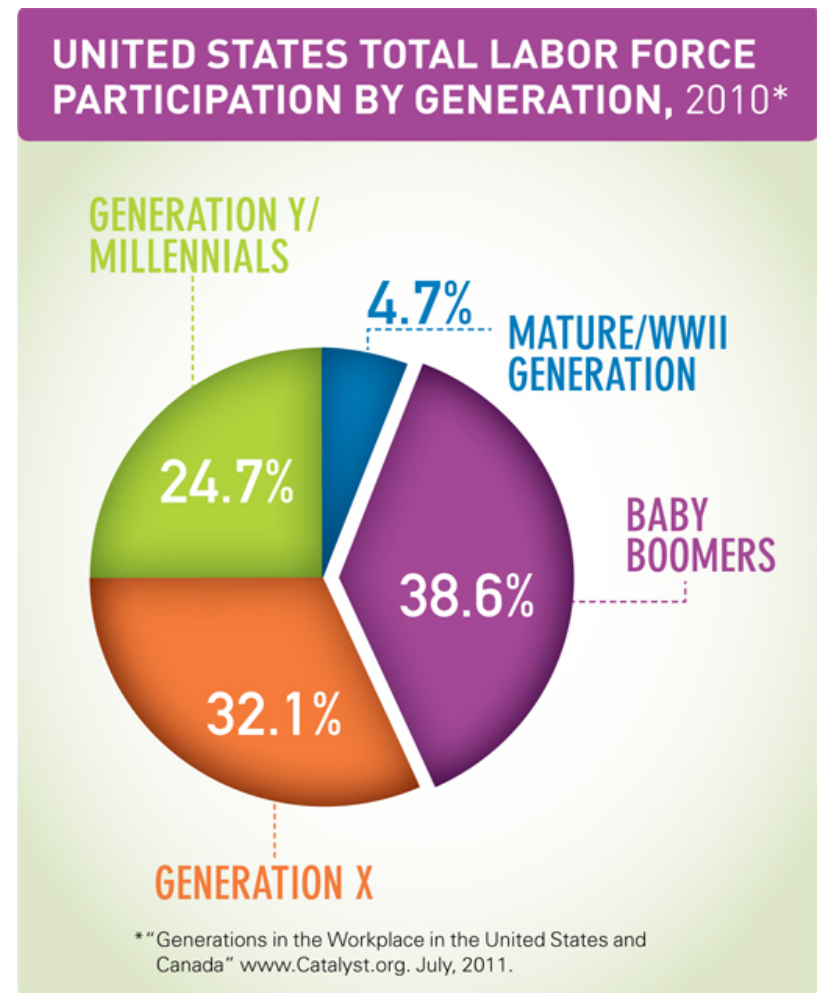
Purpose

- Define the issue
- Outline assumptions
- Understand how myths can turn into bias
- Develop leadership strategies that cross generational lines



Defining Generations

- Generations:
 - Span ~20 years
 - Common experiences
 - Shared technology, trends, and events
- Boomers
- Generation X
- Millennials



Generational Characteristics

- Turn to your neighbors
 - Outline common characteristics about assigned generation
 - Select a spokesperson
 - Provide feedback to larger group

Workplaces that are perceived as diverse have the highest levels of employee engagement.



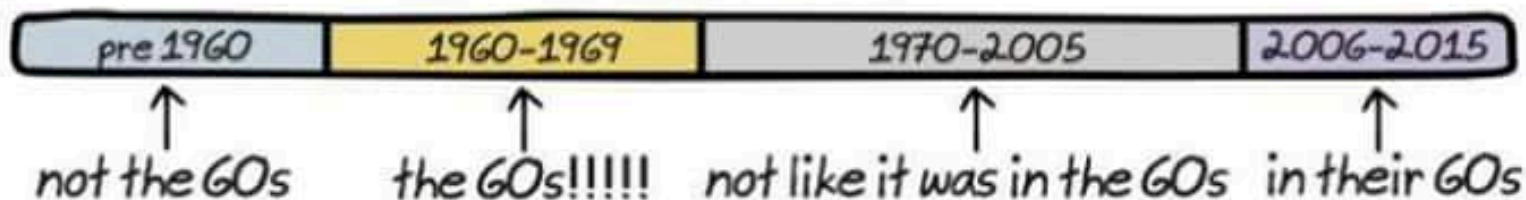
Now Ask Yourself....

- How many of the characteristics of my group are true for me?
- How many vary instead by:
 - Work experience?
 - Job category?
 - Personality?
 - Lifestyle?
 - Technology access?
- How does that feel?

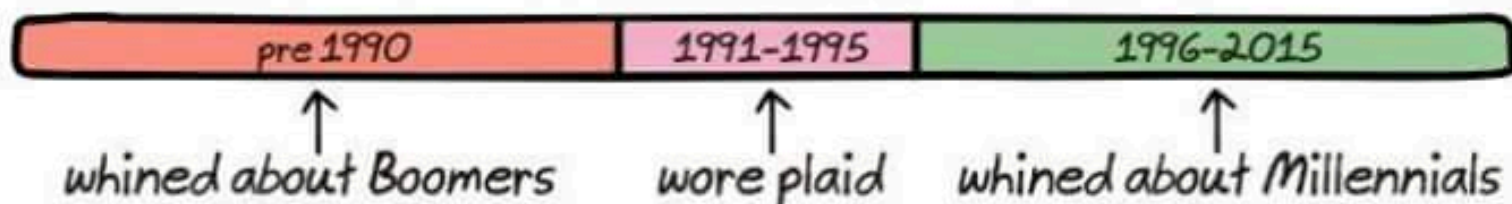
anatomy of generations

© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands

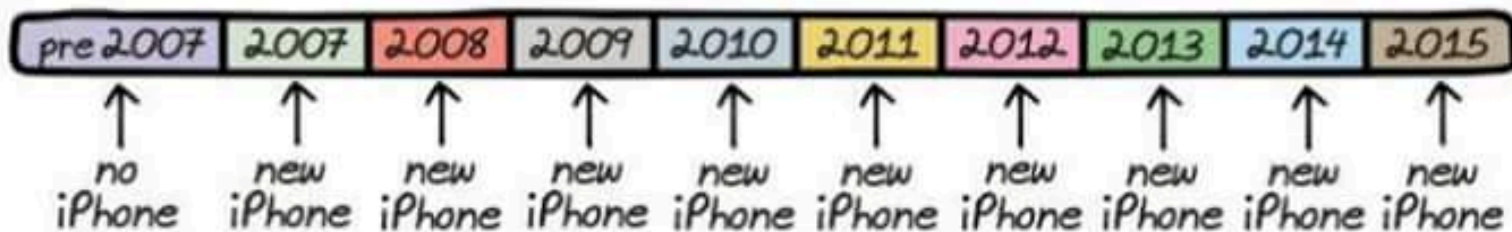
Boomers



Gen Xers



Millennials



© John Atkinson, Wrong Hands • gocomics.com/wrong-hands • wronghands1.com

Boomer Beliefs

- ❑ **Myth #1:** Boomers are technologically challenged
- ❑ **Myth #2:** Boomers are the “Me Generation”
- ❑ **Myth #3:** Boomers are all the same, think the same way



Gen X – Generalizations

- **Myth #1:** They have low organizational commitment.
- **Myth #2:** They bring different expectations to the workplace
- **Myth #3:** Men of this generation are more likely to understand and identify with women's career aspirations and experiences.

Millennial Myths

- ❑ **Myth #1:** Career expectations/ goals are different from older generations
- ❑ **Myth #2:** Likely to jump ship if a job is not fulfilling
- ❑ **Myth #3:** Want constant acclaim and think everyone on the team should get a trophy



Other Causes of Difference

- ❑ Social trends and culture changes
- ❑ Individuals change at different paces
- ❑ Technology changes are speeding up
- ❑ Systems are set up in specific cultural contexts



Then What is Real?

- According to the research:
 - The generations have similar values
 - Employees want respect
 - Leaders must be trustworthy
 - Change is hard
 - Loyalty depends on context
 - People like to learn and develop
 - Employees want feedback

Leading Multiple Generations

“These findings suggest... companies would yield better results by designing a well-balanced office that will accommodate the varied needs of different job functions and different preferences of individuals, independent of their age cohort.”



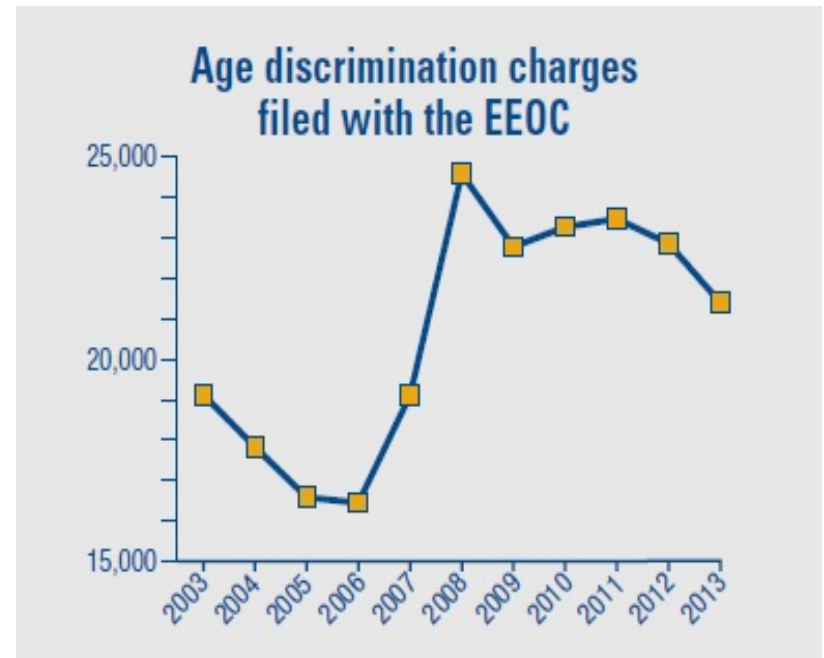
Get in Tune

- Understand how assumptions can turn to bias
 - Work assignment
 - Expectations
 - Overtime
 - Promotional opportunities
 - Training opportunities



Get Rid of Assumptions

- Implicit bias tests
- Training
- Develop authentic relationships
- Look for and celebrate the diversity in your current circles
- Get active in your community



Get in Touch

- Learn individual motivators
 - Informal/formal 1 on 1
 - Ask powerful questions
 - Identify unique skills
- Utilize situational leadership
 - Diagnose
 - Adapt
 - Communicate
 - Advance



Get Aligned

- ❑ Set group expectations
 - ❑ Responsibilities
 - ❑ Behaviors
- ❑ Identify common goals
- ❑ Identify work preferences
- ❑ Plan for misunderstanding
- ❑ Identify paths to resolution
- ❑ Check yourself!



Get Going

- What did we learn?
- Why does it matter?
- What will you practice?
- Questions?
- Resources
 - Contact Human Resources
 - 608-266-4615

