

# Tips for Managing Across Generations

## BABY BOOMERS

**Interact in-person.** Boomers are generally more comfortable with face-to-face interactions compared to digital interactions. Consider this when it comes to the interview process, performance evaluations, or addressing a concern.

**Recognize hard work to retain.** While younger generations are more likely to rotate through many jobs in their lifetime, Boomers value job security. Recognizing their hard work and leveraging their skills can make them feel appreciated and happy with their current role, leading to long-term retention.

**Explore group learning**—like in-services or team-building activities. Boomers can thrive in a group setting and it allows them to help younger generations.

**Think about retirement**—a major concern for many Boomers. While you may not control your company's retirement benefits, you can periodically ask HR to review those benefits with employees—or ask to bring in a representative from the plan for sit-down meetings.

**Consider corporate wellness.** Many in this generation are managing a chronic health condition, like high blood pressure or diabetes. If your company can include corporate wellness programs, it may keep your Boomers healthier longer—leading to better retention.

## GENERATION X

**Be transparent**—as much as makes sense for your company. Gen X is characterized by being skeptical yet adaptable. If you're trying to shield Gen X employees from problems, it might help to loop them in (when appropriate). Not only will this help them trust you as a manager, but it may give you some new ideas for solutions.

**Promote work-life balance.** Often home by themselves as kids, Gen X employees may not want to miss out on too much time from their own kids' lives. Do you offer staggered shifts? "Mother's hours"? Part-time positions? All of these may help encourage acquisition and retention.

**Add (low-cost) value.** Gen X embraces the "work to live" motto. Can your company offer any low-cost benefits that support this? For example, consider partnering with a gym that provides a discount for employees, or a farm that offers CSA delivery to your site. Both would cost your company nothing but offer work-life value to the employee.

**Avoid micromanaging.** This generation typically appreciates more autonomy. If you have a tendency to hover, consider taking a step back and observing how Gen X performs with a little more freedom.

## MILLENNIALS

**Ask for their input and advice.** Millennials in particular value sharing their thoughts, so asking them for input can make their day and can provide you with an unexpected perspective.

**Make them feel special.** Think of low-cost, low-time ways that can make your Millennial employees feel special. Examples could include regular praise for a job well done or a hand-written card on their one-year work anniversary.

**Recognize financial instability.** Many Millennials are dealing with shaky finances due to high student loan debt. Is there a way your company can help with this, leading to better retention? This might include competitive pay or raises after a certain time frame.

**Use their skills.** Gen Z may be the most digitally connected, but Millennials have been in the workforce longer. They may better understand your specific organizational technology, like POS systems or EMRs. Ask them about ways they might improve business systems, or work with them to facilitate technology training for new employees.

**Address stress.** This is a major concern among many Millennials. Perhaps your company can offer corporate wellness programming that targets stress relief, or simply send regular reminders about your organization's EAP (employee assistance program).

## GENERATION Z

**Embrace the digital world.** To attract Gen Z employees, create strong online branding with the ability to apply for positions online. Similarly, consider offering online training (for example, in allergy awareness) rather than only in-person sessions.

**Get tech advice.** Allow Gen Z employees to offer input about process improvements. This is the most tech-savvy generation to date, so they may have creative solutions that other generations might not have considered.

**Teach rather than tell.** Try approaching Gen Z in a style of mentorship and coaching, rather than top-down management. They appreciate collaborative relationships that help them grow and learn in their position.

**Think about retention.** Gen Z employees are young and have a full career ahead of them. Are there ways your organization can help support them (and thus retain them longer)? For example, is there a formal training you could offer to help some of your foodservice employees pursue their CDM, CFPP credential?

**Help with in-person communication.** Have empathy that in-person communication may be a struggle for some who rely predominantly on digital communication. Gently help them with these skills.