Lodge Dynamics

Greetings from Grand Lodge!

Over the last while I have been having conversations with lodges about communication and behaviours. One thing I wanted to point out is as our organization changes the people from within change too. This means that we are seeing a shift in many lodges. We are attracting members from different generations. I want to say that in order to have a strong lodge, all members must buy in to your purpose. In my opinion, the Elks of Canada are about serving our communities and especially helping kids. Those two things should be a common purpose across the country. What happens sometimes is we lose focus of this and we lose focus because of lodge dynamics. Change, new members, long standing members, traditions and trying to communicate it all becomes what we do rather than serving our purpose. I found information on the different types of generations and how they communicate and work. This applies to our lodges just like a place of work or in our social circles. As members, we must all buy in to our purpose and learn to communicate and respect each other’s differences. Have a read and put yourself in the shoes of others. Treat this information like you would for your career and apply it within your lodge. Hope it helps!!

Cory – Director of Member Services

* **Silent Traditionalists** (1928–1945): They opt for face-to-face communication, and like to have an agenda or memorandum in their hand. They are known for their company loyalty and the practice of working at one place their entire career.
* **Baby Boomers** (1946–1964): As they want in-person interactions, they much prefer to meet in a conference room than to attend a conference call or do a webinar. They can sometimes be less supportive of flexible work policies as for most of their careers they did not have the technology available to work remotely.
* **Generation X**(1965–1980): They want less supervision and the ability to get down to work. Generation X wants more physical and psychological space in which to work. They often see themselves as independent, self-sufficient and out of the mainstream. They are considered the most entrepreneurial generation.
* **Millennials** (1983–1996): They prefer to email or text rather than walk across the room to chat with someone. Their emphasis is on efficiency and ease. Millennials grew up in an era in which children received a lot more attention and coaching.
* **Generation Z**(1997–present): They find technology critical to communication. They are the most diverse generation in U.S. history and lean towards more inclusive communities and policies.

**Willing to share control**

This goes especially for the newer professionals. The best way to help them integrate with the rest of the workforce is to let them take the lead on some projects. This will enable them to share their background and areas of expertise.

**Go off-site**

Anything that can take employees away from their routines is good and healthy for your employees’ relationships. Where I work, going off-site, like organising an event or an exhibition, is the most efficient way for me to get to know my coworkers, and to talk and laugh with people I wouldn’t normally meet or even talk to in my day-to-day job.

**Set up cross-generational mentoring programs**

Managers should look for ways of working that enable the different generations to learn from and engage with each other. Mixed-age project teams can be the starting point.

**Customize your communication style**

As generations are used to receiving information in different ways in their personal lives, managers should tailor their communication methods towards each generation’s strengths, personality and aspirations. To reach baby boomers, for instance, you can direct email them. One way to delight them is to offer them coupons; many of them were brought up in environments where saving money was important, so this approach may be effective in reaching them. Mobile and desktop email alike appeal to Gen X as well. You can grab their attention through educational content too. In fact, over [10 percent](http://www.redorbit.com/news/science/1112840884/higher-education-for-generation-x-report-050813/)of them have completed a doctorate or other professional degree. This should give you an idea about how to communicate with them. As for millennials, it’s all about mobile. If you don’t have a website or a blog or a platform that is mobile-friendly, then don’t count on getting along with this generation. Also, authenticity and the real-time nature of some platforms appeal a lot to millennials.

**Listen**

As simple as this might seem, you can learn a lot by just listening to your employees. If you want to open up communication between generations and build relationships, just ask them about their preferences, interests and expectations, and then listen carefully. Engage in a dialogue and see where it leads.

Leaders who listen to their employees from the time they join the company understand that high-performance cultures are mainly built on relationships and based on communities of common interests.

**Conclusion**

Ultimately, managing generational differences in the workplace is all about creating an environment where people understand and appreciate various points of view, even if they differ from how they saw things going.

By understanding the different mindsets and tendencies of different generations, you can make your efforts go further by creating a less fragmented workforce and making people of all ages build relationships with each other. Appeal to the right people in the right way and you will have a workforce that operates beyond mere policies and processes, and strives to put in that extra amount of effort.