



Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce:

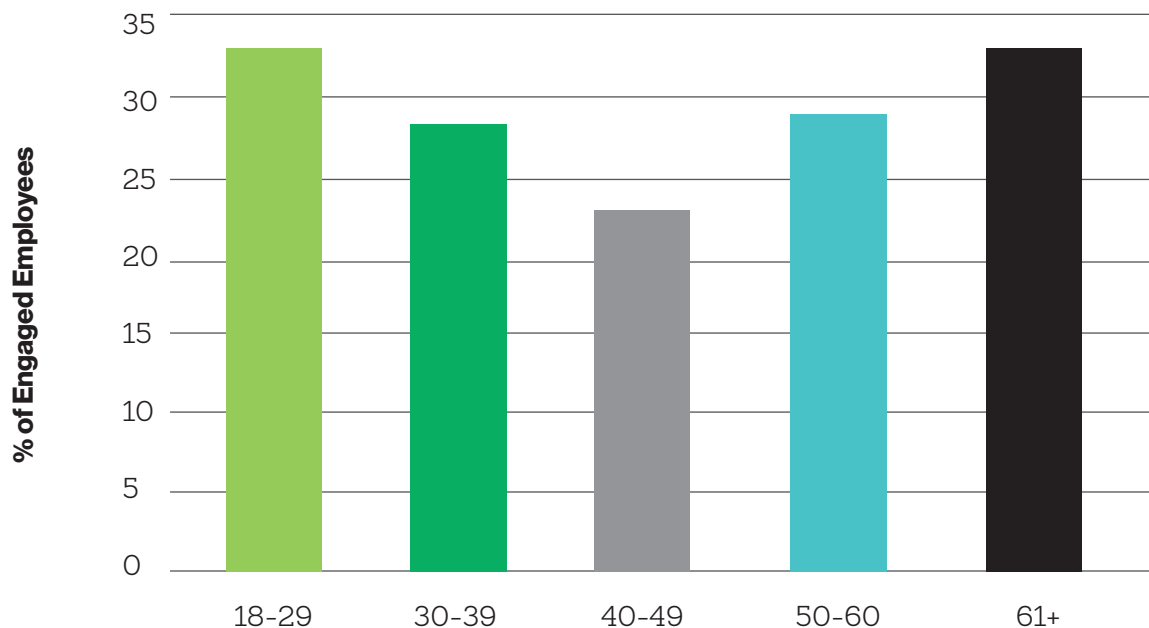
An Employee
Engagement & Coaching
Guide

Today, it is very common for leaders to manage a multi-generational team. Each generation has its unique mindset, work style and ways of communication. Managers need to recognize how to motivate team members individually and capitalize on strengths each member brings to the team.

Understanding attitudinal and behavioral differences among team members of different generations is an important tool of driving engagement.

Dale Carnegie employee engagement study shows that “Middle-aged employees (40–49 years) are less engaged or are disengaged with their organization.” This might be because of external pressure due to family life or feelings that they have reached a plateau in their careers.

In contrast, the study found that “young employees (around age of 30) and those age 50+ are more engaged.” This might be attributed to the youthful expectation of a new career, or — for older workers — of achieving career milestones.



At least 66% of the employees are not fully engaged. More importantly, engagement levels with experienced middle managers are very low.

Learn to communicate, coach, motivate and provide feedback for each generation!

To understand how to better motivate employees, we need to know some of the main characteristics of the groups that dominate today's workforce.

Baby Boomers born between 1945–1960



Many of the Baby Boomers are near retirement age. In some cases their retirement has been put off due to the global economic crises.

Engage Baby Boomers:

- Recognize their unique qualities and characteristics. Boomers like to feel unique and different from their co-workers.
- Provide them with resources and involve them in the decision making. They like a collaborative and consensual environment. They feel important when you include them in the decision-making process
- Appreciate their strong work ethic, willingness to work long hours, and desire to prove themselves.
- Communicate face-to-face and directly. Give them continual feedback with evidence.
- Recognize them publicly. They like to be praised in front of others.

“61% of employees who say they are satisfied with the amount of input they have in the decision-making process are engaged.”

– Dale Carnegie Employee Engagement Study

Generation X

born between
1960–1980

“38% of employees that express confidence in the leadership abilities of their supervisor are satisfied with him or her.”

– Dale Carnegie Employee Engagement Study



Generation X entered the job market in the wake of the “Boomers” and were confronted with new terms like “downsizing” and “outsourcing.” They tend to be skeptical toward authority and cautious in their commitments. Managers need to recognize those characteristics and provide the following:

- Freedom from traditional management practices. Give them the elbow room to be creative in the way in which they accomplish tasks and goals. Allow them the opportunity to make choices to use their own resources and creativity to achieve success. Invite them to engage in multiple projects and empower them to prioritize these projects themselves so they feel in control.
- Provide challenging tasks. Allow opportunities to learn new skills and provide a variety of responsibilities. This group loves learning opportunities and training programs. They know that keeping their abilities current is critical for their professional success, so investing in training programs can build on job satisfaction and engagement.
- Give them room to grow. To engage their employees, managers need to clearly communicate their employees’ career paths and align their career goals to the company goals.
- Coach briefly and be straightforward. Gen X members are self-learners. Encourage them to figure things out themselves. For example, ask questions like: “What do you think is the best approach?” and “How do you plan to solve this problem?” These employees feel appreciated when you need and ask for their opinions and ideas. Show them how their work makes a difference in the organization. To achieve full engagement from employees the manager needs to be proactive, show strong leadership skills, and foster a positive working environment.
- Listen attentively and respect their opinions. Provide constructive and direct feedback on their progress. They need to know what they are doing right and what they need to improve. This goes hand-in-hand with their desire for self-development, improvement and engagement.

Generation Y or Millennials

born between
1980–2000

“60% of the employees who feel they have an impact on the direction of the company are engaged.”

– Dale Carnegie
Employee Engagement Study



This generation grew up with technology. They are the employees most familiar with technology changes and multitasking. Extensive use of social media is one of the significant differences with older generations. Coming of age during a shift toward values, they are attracted to organizations whose missions speak to a purpose greater than a bottom line. Millennials are motivated from opportunities to learn and develop. In general, family and work-life balance are important to them.

Follow these tips to engage Millennials:

- Coach them directly and know they will get the point quickly. Paint visual pictures to engage, motivate and inspire them. Use different electronic forms to communicate with them.
- Get to know them as personalities and create a person-centered relationship with them. Show respect and interest in their personal lives. Focus on their personal values and goals, try to align those with the company's goals. Provide opportunities for learning, personal growth and responsibility. Communicate company's overall vision and plans for growth.
- Positively challenge their abilities, creativity and interests. Gen Ys like to be challenged. Assign them projects from which they can learn. They like to try new things. Encourage them to use the latest technology and media. Stimulate out-of-the box thinking and innovation.
- Create a positive, informal, and fun team environment and delegate tasks. Gen Ys prefer to work in tandem with others. Often their colleagues become their friends. Assign challenging and meaningful work. Show them how their work makes a difference and that it is important to the team and the company's goals. Give them flexibility, and they will be loyal to you. Respect their personal lives, family concerns and health issues, and they will pay you back with respect as a leader.
- Create an environment where reciprocal feedback is encouraged. Show Generation Y employees your door is always open for them. Recognize them frequently with positive feedback. Personal recognition from direct managers is a very effective motivator.