

Talkin' 'Bout My Generation: Understanding Generations @ Work

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Defining the Generations

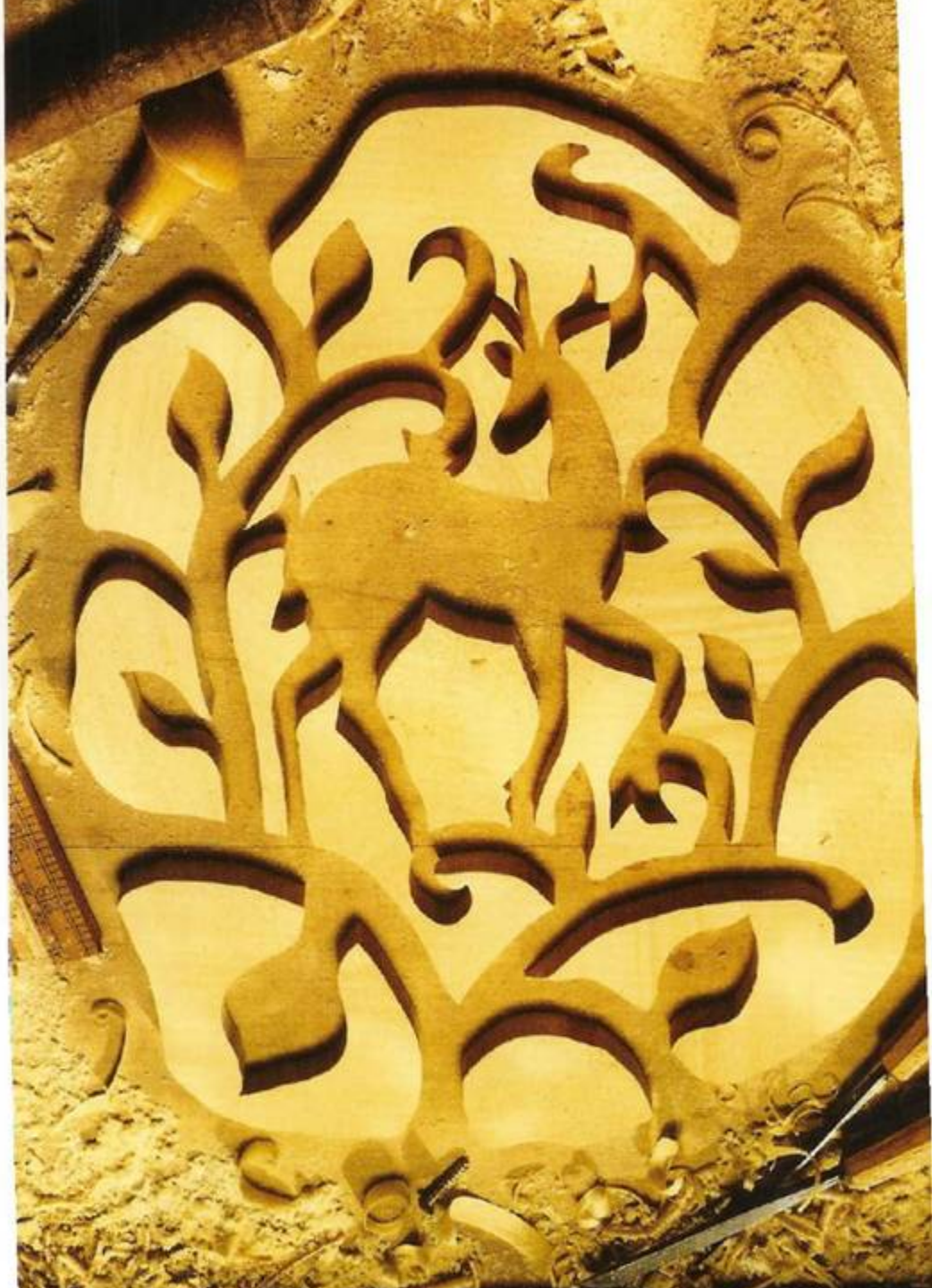
- **Silent Generation (1922-1945)**
64-87 year olds (63 million)
 - **Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964)**
45-63 year olds (76 million)
 - **Generation X (1965-1980)**
29-44 year olds (46 million)
 - **Millennial Generation (1981-1994)**
15-28 years olds (72 million)
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I LOST SOME
OF MY BEST
BUDDIES IN NAM.

WAS THAT THE NAME
OF YOUR HIGH SCHOOL?

“We do not see
things as they are,
we see things as
we are.”



There is no "other world."
I only know what I've
experienced. You must
be hallucinating.
(Rumi)

Child Blackmail Then...



Child Blackmail Now...



What is the reality?

- Since early 2005, Generation X and Y make up the majority of the workforce.
 - This means that experienced workers are leaving the workforce while less experience ones enters.
 - Baby Boomers will still dominate the workforce until about 2015.
 - 10,000 Baby Boomers turn 55 years old every day!
 - Women hold 49.83% of the nation's jobs (June 2009)
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"... Our research shows that the U.S. workforce is 26% engaged, 55% not engaged, and 19% actively disengaged."

- Marcus Buckingham, Gallup Polls

What are the biggest issues in the workplace today? Why?

- Retention and engagement of talented employees
 - Succession planning
 - Work/Life Balance
 - Productivity with people
 - Customer Service
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You can't solve
today's problems
using yesterday's
thinking.

-Albert Einstein

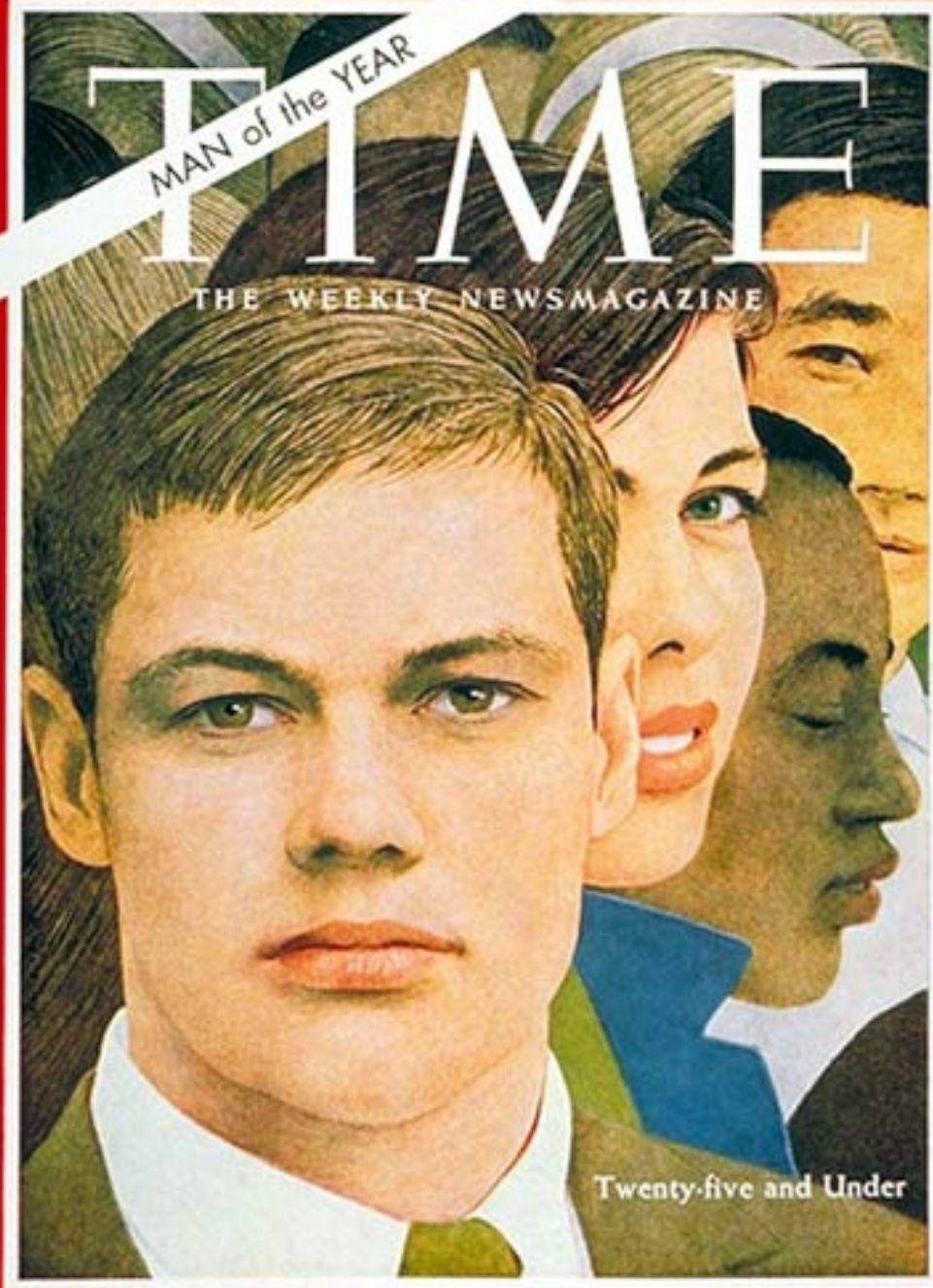
What kinds of challenges are you seeing in your work environment around generational issues?

Silent Generation (1922-1945)

- 63 million people
- AKA - Traditionalists, GI Matures, WWII Generation, Veterans, Seniors
- They are very hard working, economically conscious, and trusting of the government. They grew up being very optimistic about the future and held a strong set of moral obligations.
- Tend to be loyal to institutions and employers
- Will comprise the "oldest of the old" in society
- Generally uncomfortable with computer technology

Source: Boomer's International (www.boomersint.org)

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Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964)

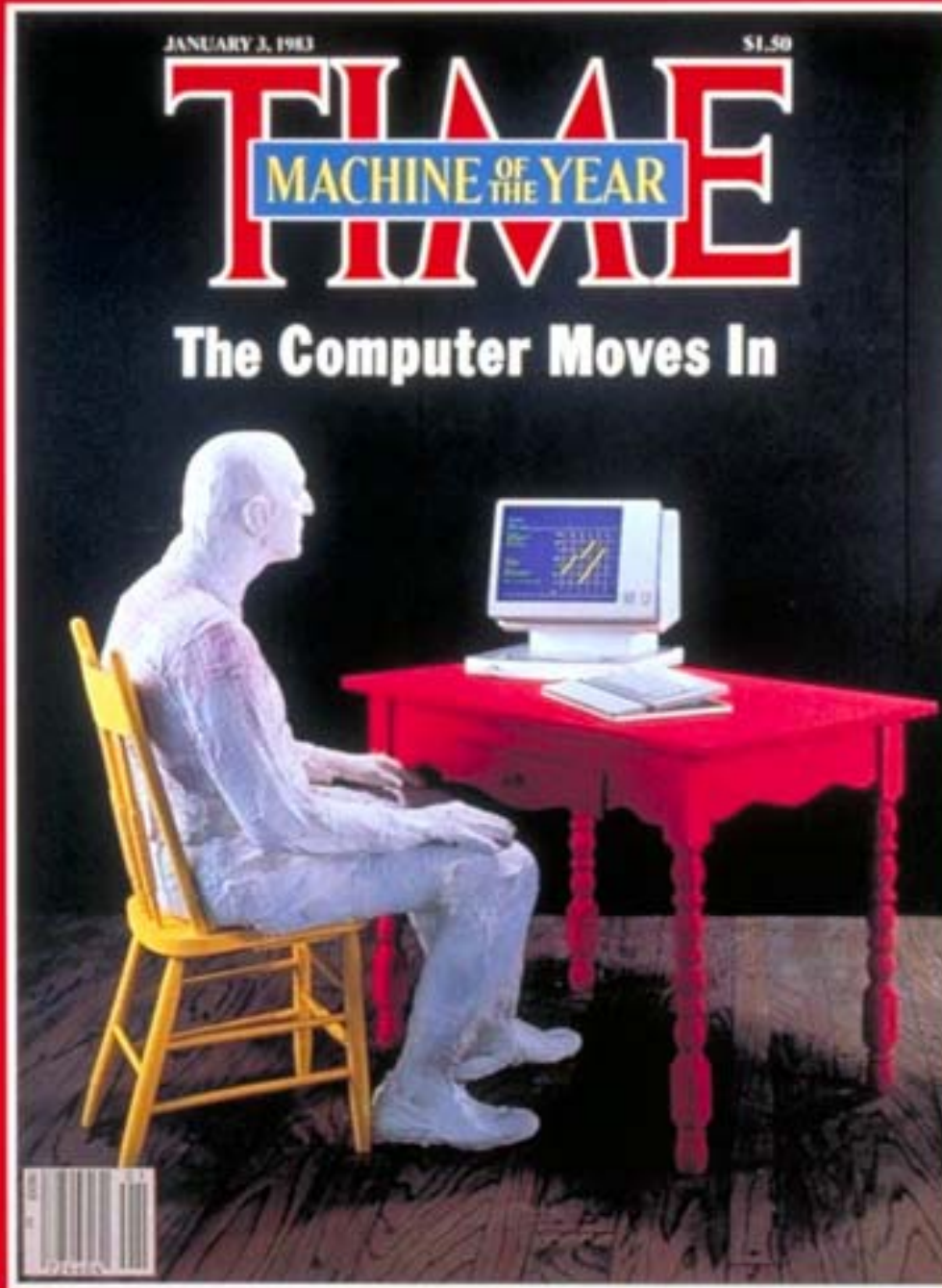
- 76 million people (largest generation)
- AKA - Boomers
- Grew up during a time of economic prosperity against a backdrop of rebellion. They entered the workforce optimistic and driven. They worked relentlessly in the pursuit of goals.
- Often question authority and admire independent thinking
- Influenced by great political causes such as Civil Rights, the Vietnam War and women's movement
- More comfortable with computer technology

Source: Boomer's International (www.boomersint.org)

Generation X (1965-1980)

- 46 million (smallest generation)
- AKA - Thirteeners, Baby Busters, Post-Boomers, Twentysomethings, MTV Generation.
- They are discouraged and disheartened. They are technologically adept, clever, and resourceful. They are comfortable with change and are clear about the meaning of balance in their lives. In other words, they work to live, not live to work.
- Tend to feel loyalty to themselves and their team and not the organization they work for
- Tend to be politically inactive
- Very comfortable with computer technology

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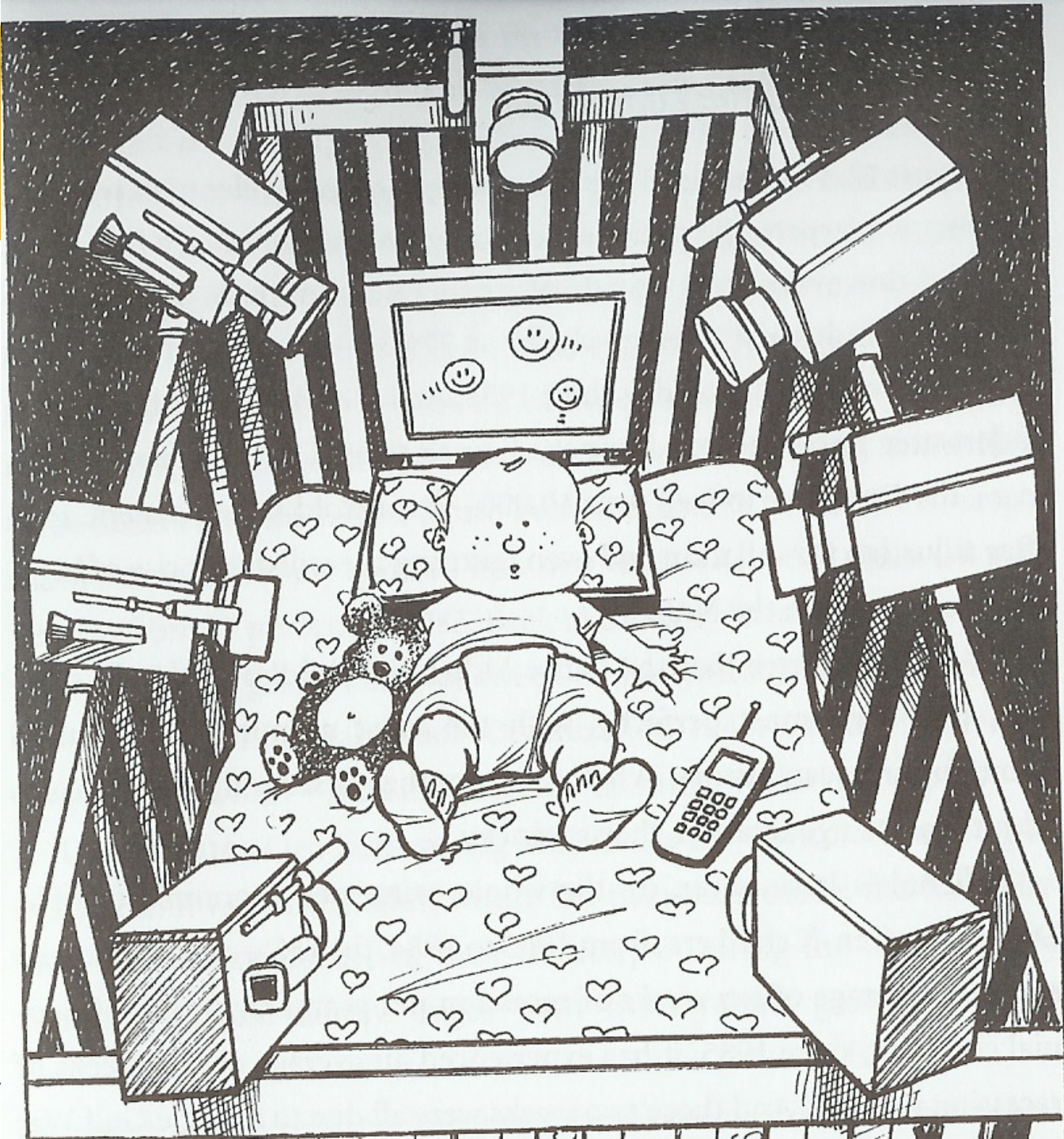


Millennial Generation (1981 - 1994)

- 72 million (second largest generation)
- AKA - Generation Y (or Why?), Nintendo Generation, Generation 2001, the Ne(X)t or Net Generation.
- They're sociable, optimistic, talented, well-educated, collaborative, open-minded, influential, and achievement-oriented. They are arriving in the workplace with higher expectations than any generation before them—and they're so well connected that, if an employer doesn't match those expectations, they can tell thousands of their cohorts with one click of the mouse.
- Most racially diverse generation
- Tend to be civic minded and more interested in political activities than Generation X



"YOU GET FIVE MINUTES BETWEEN SOCCER AND PIANO?
WHAT DO YOU DO WITH ALL THAT FREE TIME ?!?"



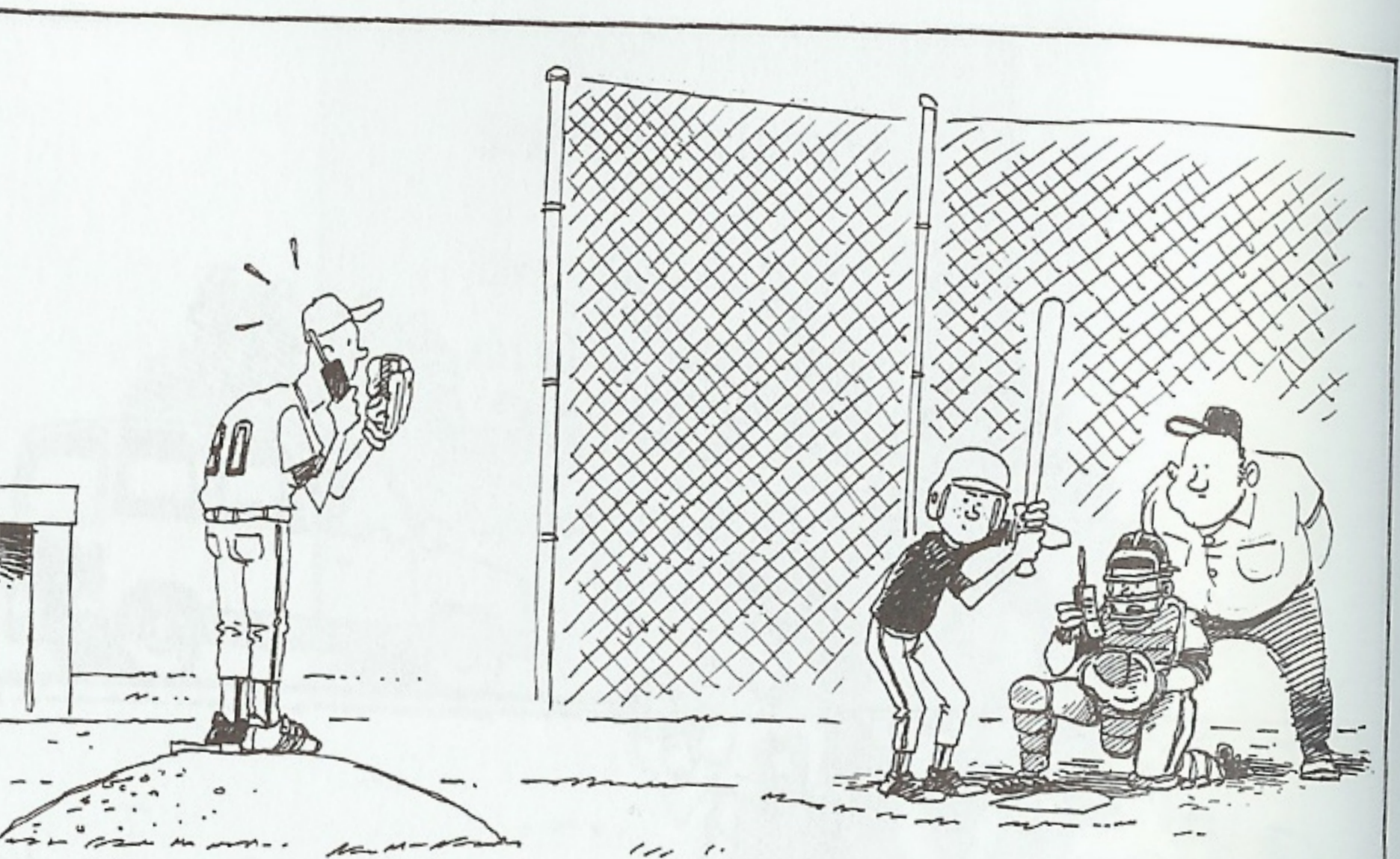
Parents of millennials have been obsessive about ensuring the safety of their children, Howe said. When the first wave was born in the early 1980s, "Baby on Board" signs began popping up on minivans...

...They were buckled into child-safety seats, fitted with bike helmets, carpooled to numerous after-school activities and hovered over by what Howe describes as "helicopter parents."

—Don O'Briant, "Millennials: The Next Generation," *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, August 11, 2003

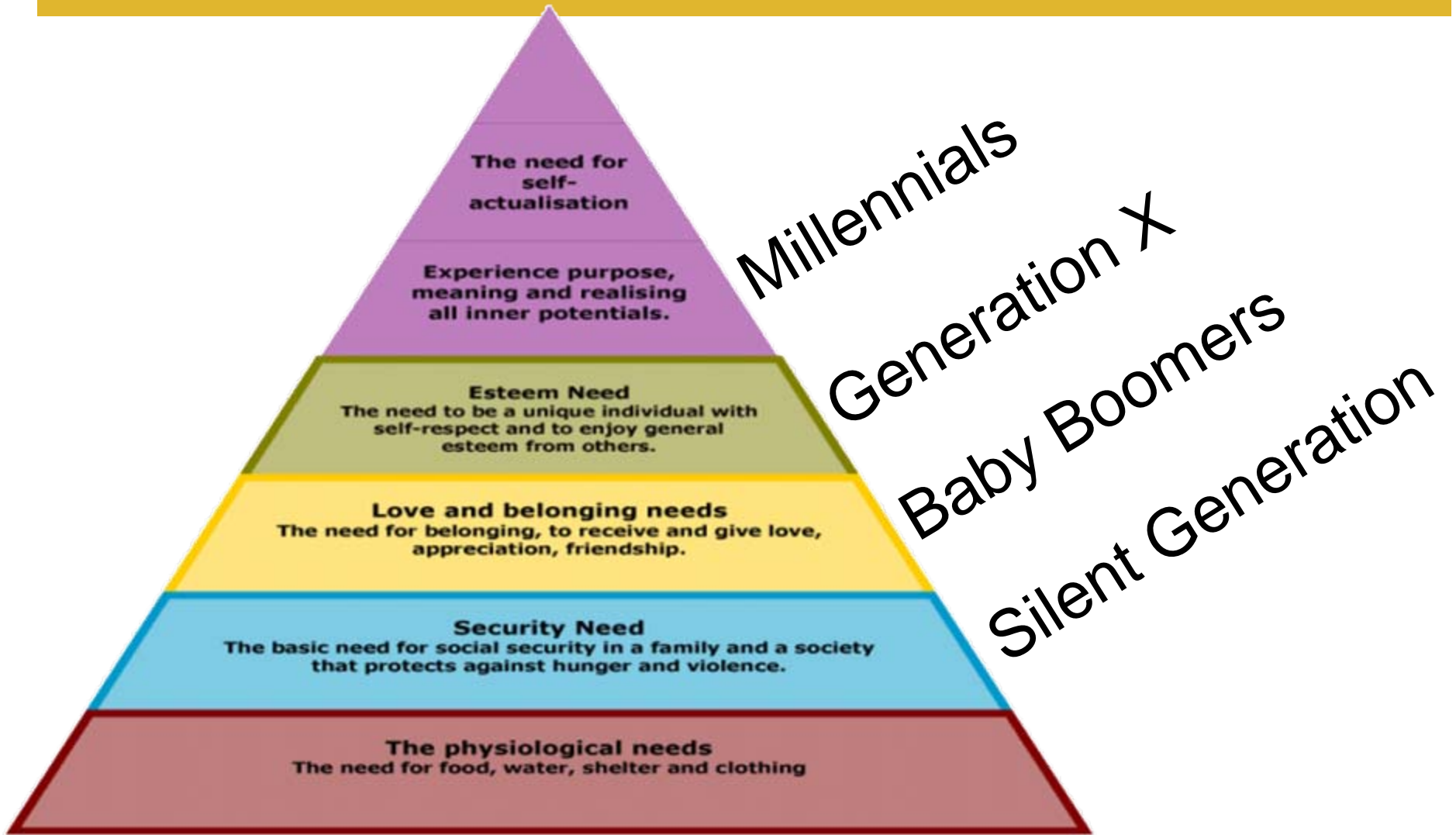
“I’ve been know for the last few years to call the cell phone the world’s longest umbilical cord.”

Dr. Richard Mullendore, a professor of college student personnel at the University of Georgia



"NO, * MEANS FASTBALL AND # MEANS CURVE!"

Maslow's Hierarchy



What can you
do?

“The single biggest
problem in
communication is the
illusion that it has
taken place.”

George Bernard Shaw

Digital Natives
vs.
Digital Immigrants

Marc Prensky

Digital Natives

- Parallel process and multi-task
 - Prefer graphics before text
 - Prefer random access (like hypertext)
 - Function best when networked
 - Thrive on instant gratification and frequent rewards
 - Prefer games to “serious” work
-

Digital Immigrants

- Step-by-step
 - One thing at a time
 - Linear teaching
 - Prefer text before graphics
 - Learning is serious
-

We judge ourselves
on our
INTENTIONS.

We judge others on
their BEHAVIOR!

Generation Y likes:

- Exciting, challenging, thrilling experiences
 - Opportunities to be innovative and creative
 - Immediacy. Engage them quickly, keep them busy and give ongoing, immediate feedback
 - Clearly defined tasks and expectations
 - Technology
 - Collaboration and teamwork
 - Being a respected equal
 - To ask questions and challenge assumptions
-



*"I'll have someone from my generation get in touch
with someone from your generation."*

	Career	Balance	Feedback
Silent Generation	Build a legacy	Support me in shifting the balance.	No news is good news.
Baby Boomers	Build a stellar career	Help me balance everyone else and find meaning myself.	Once a year, with lots of documentation.
Generation X	Build a portable career	Give me balance now, not when I'm sixty-five.	Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?
Millennial	Build a parallel career	Work isn't everything; flexibility to balance my activities is.	Feedback whenever I want it at the push of a button.

Recruiting Twentysomethings

- Include the phrase “we want you to have a life” and “hands-off supervision,” AND mean it.
- Convince them that ideas are evaluated on merit not experience.
- Make the work environment more fun and relaxed.
- Stress the technology available to them.

Retaining Twentysomethings

- Increase your training and development budget and promote learning. Provide a variety of forms of training - CD-ROM, E-Learning, and short workshops. Make resources available.
- Take an interest in their personal and professional goals.
- Give them lots of projects and the freedom to get them done.
- Make new technology available to them.
- Provide constant feedback and access to management.

Recruiting the Sixtysomethings


- Don't limit your consideration of them to full-time employment.
- Messages that speak to family, home, patriotism and traditional values touch the right buttons.
- Let them know their age and experience will be considered assets, not liabilities.
- Include please and thank you and avoid profanity.

Retaining Sixtysomethings

- Take plenty of time to orient them.
- You are likely to need to train this group in technology.
- Use the personal touch.
- Consider plaques and more traditional awards for this group.
- Bring them up to date on the “history” of the department.

The mistake we make when
we apply the values &
attitudes of our own
generation to someone of a
different generation.

Generational Myopia



Generational differences can be a source of creative strength and a source of opportunity, or a source of stifling stress and unrelenting conflict.

Generations at Work, Zemke, Raines, and Filipczak

Final Thoughts

- They need more of your time – give it to them – or accept that you’ll lose them.
 - If you want them to meet you half way, create the opportunity.
 - Your “work ethic” is not their “work ethic.”
 - If you need control, or believe experience and seniority should be respected, you’ll fail with this generation.
 - If you are still unsure as to how to deal with this generation – ASK THEM!!!
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So, from where you come...

- Thank you very much (Silent)
- Thank you (Boomers)
- Thanx! (Generation X)
- Yo, Dog! (Millennials)

www.generations.com



Resources

- **Tulgan, Bruce. *NOT EVERYONE GETS A TROPHY*. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2009.**
- ***Managing Generations – The Big Disconnect*, Dr. JP Pawliw-Fry, Institute for Health and Human Potential, 2008.**
- ***Intelligent Dialogue, Millennials*, Porter Novelli, Summer 2008**
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- **Lancaster, Lynne; David Stillman. *WHEN GENERATIONS COLLIDE*. HarperCollins Publishing, Inc., New York, NY, 2002.**
- **Chester, Eric. *EMPLOYING GENERATION Y?* Lakewood, CO: Tucker House Books, 2002**
- **Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants, Marc Prensky, *On the Horizon (MCB University Press, Vol. 9 No. 5, October 2001)***
- **Zemke, Ron; Claire Raines, Bob Filipczak. *GENERATIONS AT WORK*. New York, NY: AMACON Publications, 2000.**