NAVIGATING GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN TODAY’S WORKFORCE

EXPLORATORY

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This paper is being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Fellowship in the American College of Medical Practice Executives.
With a workforce that consists of four generations, healthcare administrators are facing significant challenges delivering client-centered, quality-driven care in a cohesive, coordinated manner. Just as younger physicians are challenging long held traditions of personal time sacrifices for the sake of patients in exchange for a more balanced, healthy work/life balance, so too are allied health professionals and front-line staff members entering the workplace with new ideas which are challenging the traditional hierarchical framework of healthcare delivery. Today’s healthcare workforce consists of staff from four generations, each bringing a different characteristic, work style, and value to the workplace. “Understanding, valuing, respecting and tapping the benefits of generational diversity enhances communication, builds bridges between generations and promotes collaboration among healthcare leaders and team members.” (McNally 2017)

The one-size fits all approach is no longer valid, and this new era of workers is causing leaders of organizations to reassess how their workforce views the work and one another. Administrators often struggle to meet the needs and expectations of the various generations while delivering care in acceptable ways to patients also spanning the four generations. How the generations will work together as a team for the organization to be successful is critical to the short-term survival and the long-term success of all types of healthcare entities. Organizations and leaders who do not embrace the multigenerational workforce will not only feel the negative impact within their organization, they will not receive the talent for which they are looking. (A. Jerome 2014)

Healthcare leaders can bridge the gap by leveraging the differences between the generations while building effective strategies that foster lasting relationships, fostering champions of the organization, and retaining valuable employees despite the generational difference. “The key to effectively managing a multigenerational workforce is to recognize the value that each group brings to the organization.” (Bretado 2016) By recognizing the value that each generation brings to the organization, healthcare leaders can harness their unique
characteristics and build collaborative teams. The goal of this paper is to define the characteristics of each generation, to provide actionable insight to work styles, and to assist leaders in creating work processes which leverage the strengths of each generation while fostering a workplace which is both tolerant of differences and efficient in operation.

**GENERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

In order to effectively understand the struggle that is eminent within the workforce, healthcare leaders and managers must first understand the characteristics of each generation and the corresponding mindset from which the workforce comes and how the generations are defined. (Wiedmer n.d.). For decades, many things have been written about the generations and generational differences. Researchers have defined the generations with characteristics and labels, and those definitions vary depending on the environment of the workforce. Understanding the generations as both individually and as a unit will aid healthcare leaders and managers as they try to operationalize the work tasks that must be completed.

The first generation that should be defined are the Baby Boomers, “This cohort was born during 1946 – 1964. This generation has lived through the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, the Women’s Movement, fall of the Soviet Union, and AIDS.” (Erickson 2008) It is the largest generation in America. As they begin to enter into enter retirement, it is changing the median age of the workforce. Being the working class, this generation constitutes the wealthiest generation and continues to view the world as one that will continue to improve, despite their turbulent upbringing. This cohort is responsible for Social Security and Medicare expenses that directly influence today’s marketplace. With people over 65 doubling between 2010 and 2050, it will force 80 million Boomers in the next decade to retire, which will open the door for the next generation, Generation X. (Kane n.d.)

The Generation Xer’s follow the Baby Boomers and serve as a bridge between the generations of Baby Boomers and Millennials. This cohort was born during 1963 – 1979 and “is technically advanced and comfortable with email, fax, cell phones, and emerging technology;
however, they are affected by the economic state of low job security thus resentful to the Baby Boomers depleting Social Security.” (Erickson 2008) Often referred to as the “Latchkey” kids or “Gen Bust,” this cohort is the lost generation who often were exposed to broken families, workaholic parents who were absent from the home, or living the life of the daycare child. This generation is engaging in financial planning, highly educated, active and very family oriented, while trying to avoid the broken home. With more than 29% of this generation achieving a bachelor’s degree or higher, this generation is undoubtedly the best educated, is independent and direct. Due to their unsubstantial upbringing, Generation Xer’s have grown to not only embrace change, but expect change. This makes them more apt to job hop to increase marketability and to ensure their work-life balance needs are being met. This generation expects freedom, but on a different level than the next largest generation, Generation Y.

The largest and most influential group entering the workforce following Generation X is the Millennials, also known as Generation Y. This cohort was born between 1979-2002, are more diverse than any other generation, and according to recent findings represent more than 1/3 of the US workforce. (Miller 2013) This workforce is motivated, challenging, and very ambitious, one that leads in entrepreneurial like skills and are titled the “digital” generation. (Erickson 2008) This generation has seen historical events occur such as Nelson Mandela’s and Princess Diana’s deaths, the World Trade Center attacks, the beginning of the Iraq War, Hurricane Katrina, and various bombings and shootings. This generation is being raised at a time when social media is at its highest, and information is at their fingertips. This assists in making this generation the savvy generation who stays connected to social media. Generation Y had parents who were available to them unlike Generation X; however, they demand more feedback and supervision, yet get bored easily, so multitasking is essential for them. As future business leaders, this generation will embrace technological advancements and will view employment in an entrepreneurial mindset. If they are not happy in their chosen career path, they will simply choose another one which is engaging. This generation connects globally, yet has attributes of
data and speed, much like Generation Z. Oddly enough, this generation causes troubles for the Baby Boomers as the older millennials are beginning to land executive positions, and their aspiring Generation Z is knocking at their door to follow. (Ferri-Reed 2016)

As Generation Z aspires to lead our industry for several decades, they are currently constituting a population of more than 23 million and will soon enter the workforce in growing numbers. (Schroer 2008) This cohort has an undefined birth range, but according to Schroer, the Generation Z members were born between 1995-2015. Being such a young generation, the true traits that will define this generation have yet to emerge; however, this generation is a “digital native.” Driven by technology and graphics, this generation is proving to have higher IQ scores than the previous generations, even though they are the most home-schooled generation in the modern public-schooled era. They require less direction because they have “ready access” to information at their fingertips through technology devices, which enable them to take on the world and stay connected to their peers through social media networks. This generation is the one that needs to be challenged by their teachers with project-based, active-learning opportunities which engage the mind and build social skills. In addition, research is proving that this generation will be the one of discovery, ideas and knowledge. It remains unclear of what Generation Z will prove to the workforce, as they are just beginning to emerge and enter college age; however, being the youngest of the cohorts, it is evident that Generation Z will learn from its predecessors and create their own path in this multigenerational workforce.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS</th>
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| **Baby Boomers**  
(Born 1946-1964) | **Generation “X”**  
(Born 1963-1979) | **Generation “Y”**  
(Born 1979-2002) | **Generation “Z”**  
(Born 1995-2015) |
| Life experience:  
Vietnam, Civil Rights,  
Woman’s Movement, fall of  
Soviet Union, AIDS | Life experience: The  
“Latchkey Kid”, the lost generation,  
exposed to broken families, low job securities | Life experience: “The Digital Generation,”  
“The Millennial,”  
Nelson Mandela,  
Princess Diana’s Death, World Trade Center attack, Iraqi War, Hurricane Katrina | Life experience: “The Digital Native”  
rapid expansion of technology, social media; ready access to information, currently emerging, youngest generation |
| Characteristics:  
Largest in America currently, beginning to enter retirement, wealthiest | Characteristics: Highly educated, active with family engagement, independent, direct, embrace change and expect change, technically advanced | Characteristics: Motivational, challenging, ambitious, entrepreneurial, savvy with social media, connects globally to internet and data | Characteristics: Most homeschooled generation, intelligent, requires minimal supervision; demands challenges and project-based teaching methods |
| Responsible for Social Security and Medicare expense increase rates | Expects freedom on job and will market self within organization and outside organization due to embracing change | Demand more feedback and get bored easily, multi-task, expects regular feedback and if not happy with career path will chose another one that is engaging | Generation of ideas and discovery, creating their own path |

**LEVERAGING THE DIFFERENCES**

The multigenerational workforce has been coexisting within the same workspace for more than a decade. With the workforce quickly changing from three generations to four, it is crucial for healthcare leaders to understand how to harness the strengths of each group while recognizing and managing the differences. Leaders must devote time to understanding how the generations’ expectations impact the workplace and the professional relationships that are formed. “Most people have a basic understanding of the various generations’ attributes, but they don’t always understand why those attributes exist. It starts by understanding each other’s
preferences.” (Merrill 2016) This too, is important when managing the mutigenerational workforce.

Because of the different social and historical life events which were discussed earlier in each cohort, it is apparent that each generation will have different motivators and values within the workplace. (McNally 2017) Baby Boomers, tend be self-absorbed, hard workers, and believe that their work defines who they are. (Brown 2009) They are the optimistic work force that works hard and are driven to do better than their parents and believes in achieving their identity through their performance. Although they are team oriented, they work for their own personal fulfillment rather than to improve the company, yet they are loyal employees. They will sacrifice their own personal interests to ensure the job is completed. Competitive in nature, they strive for possibilities and change but are the workaholics in the work force who will commit to the 60-hour work week; they are technologically disadvantaged compared to the younger generations and live to work. These employees are true workaholics who rarely job hop, dedicated to their employer, diligent, self-motivated and in the end, they expect to be promoted based on their seniority and loyalty to the company. Research findings by Gursoy showed that the Boomers generally had low opinions of both Gen X and Gen Y. (Gursoy 2008) Boomers consider Generation X to be laid back on the job, and consider Gen X and Gen Y to be disrespectful and talkative. Boomers also consider Generation X and Y to be inconsistent and unreliable in their work, which often leads to not receiving prompt recognition and reward when the job or task is done correctly. As subordinates, it is evident that the Boomer generation does not think highly of Gen X or Gen Y in a management role, and ultimately will state they are inexperienced in leading an organization. Because of Boomers having such negative perceptions, it should be apparent that Generation X will have perceptions that reveal the same expectations amongst employees within the workplace.

The next generation that brings characteristics to the workplace is Generation X. This generation is the first generation to enter the workforce after corporate downsizing. They grew up as latchkey kids and were often products of divorced parents. This generation makes up
approximately 33% of the current workforce. (Brown 2009) They seek work-life balance and if the work conditions are not satisfactory, they will change jobs. These employees move quickly and are not afraid to move from one organization to the next if they are not receiving what they need from the organization, as they feel the next position will advance them to a more substantial, financially-rewarding position. Unlike their seniors, they will speak up and speak their mind, creating a different environment, which the Baby Boomer thinks is crude. They are individualistic in that they are more likely to deviate from the rules and perform tasks their own way; however, they continue to think globally as they work to maintain balance in their world. Being more materialistic, they are techno-literate in today’s workforce and prefer to work independently and have a huge distaste for micromanagement, yet they value prompt recognition and reward on the job. Generation Xers also tend to have considerable debt which stems from their materialistic lifestyle, creating a struggle to achieve a work/life balance within the workplace. An allowance of family time is vital to them, unlike the Boomers. (Johnson 2015) Reactive in nature, they are unlike the Boomers because they work to live rather than live to work. They value recognition and expect to be paid for performance, but work is not their life. If the organization is not supporting them, and the leaders within the organization are not recognizing their worth, they will move on to the next opportunity. The Generation X employee often feels that Boomers are more obsessed with being promoted than supporting the well-being of their colleagues in the workplace. This fixation on achieving personal goals means Boomers are moving through the company at the expense of the younger generations. Generation X realizes that the Boomers have a strong work ethic; however, they become more easily irritated with the Boomers’ lack of acceptance of technology. In turn, they view being focused on results as being impersonal and bossy. In return, Gen X would rather mentor their younger counterparts Gen Y; however, over-praising them for a job well done without specific feedback is difficult to watch for a Generation that likes recognition and direct praise. Given these perceptions, there is a definite stereotype for each of the generations including the Millennial generation.
The youngest generation, Generation Y, is now among the healthcare professionals and research shows that millennials will compromise 75% of the workforce by 2025. (Ferri-Reed 2016) The characteristics and expectations of this workforce are very different than those that precede them. For the Millennial, technology is key; however, work life balance is also an important aspect of their life. They have high expectations and are goal oriented, so they must feel as if they are contributing to something larger than themselves. (Wescott 2017, Vol 8, No 3) Sensing a higher degree of entitlement, they are not driven by money, yet they expect to climb the corporate ladder sooner rather than later as the “trophy” kids. The millennial possesses a strong sense of entitlement as they feel positions should be offered to them in recognition of their abilities and skills, and they should be compensated according to their potential. (Ferri-Reed 2016) While Baby Boomers are accustomed to rewarding based on performed tasks; Millennials are expecting to be rewarded based on the potential to complete those tasks. This is a huge difference in the generations and shows just how independent Millennials are. Optimistic in nature, Millennials are confident and tend to work autonomously without micromanagement; even though they want to always have direct access to senior leadership so that their voice and ideas can be heard. They prefer to communicate through email and text rather than face-to-face, including office meetings. Being a social savvy generation, they remain connected with peers, and are a fun-loving generation. They are willing to learn and still crave attention through feedback and guidance, but they do not need a lot of fanfare. They need to be kept in the loop with changes in the work place and are empowered to work in a nonhierarchical workplace. Accessibility is key, and open communication is a must. This generation is willing to put in the work when they feel the work is meaningful and worthwhile, although they do not want work to define their life. They can commit to high performance on the job and will get the job done if needed. This generation is the impulsive generation that lives first and works later but enjoys a creative challenge. (Wiedmer n.d.) This generation seems to be over-praised and over-rewarded, yet they may or may not have enough experience to get the job done. (Angeline 2011) This is the
generation that will criticize leaders for not utilizing their resources and investing in their employees, yet it is truly difficult to pinpoint this young group as they are just that, young yet innovative. They are a creative group who expects their manager to be consultative in nature and are eager to share their ideas and opinions. When determining how Generation Y will view its predecessors, leaders need to realize that Generation Y has a different mindset than all other generations— the mindset of entitlement. Embracing this mentality and understanding that Gen Y brings a new model of employee to the workforce will engage leaders in bridging the gap and demonstrate that there is more to this generation then just text messaging.

The final generation is Generation Z, the newest and youngest generation who continues to be defined. They prefer interacting directly with media, rather than interacting with TV, print, or classroom lectures. They will expect to choose their own path and study whenever they want and how they want. They will not only set their own goals, they will define them, personally and professionally. Because of their quick access to media, they will continue to be a result driven generation who will require multiple projects, constant feedback, and quick results. They will keep their resumes handy, more than likely at their fingertips. (Renfro 2012) They will more than likely pave their own path. Being the youngest generation and newest, it is hard to state exactly what Generation Z will do, but as every generation has proven, each subsequent generation has grown in knowledge and sophistication; Generation Z will be no different.

While not all characteristics in each generation may apply to all individuals labeled as part of that generation, medical practice leaders may find it helpful to construct a summary chart, such as the one shown below, for easy reference. Such a tool also may assist in counseling or coaching sessions to spark discussion around generational perspectives. While it is important for leaders to understand these differences so they may more effectively lead, it similarly is helpful if workers recognize differences in perspective and life experience of their coworkers so may communicate more effectively and remain sensitive to differences of opinion.
## WORKFORCE CHARACTERISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baby Boomers</th>
<th>Generation “X”</th>
<th>Generation “Y”</th>
<th>Generation “Z”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-absorbed, hard workers who believe work defines who they are, the competitive workaholic</td>
<td>Seek work-life balance and if they don’t find it, they change jobs.</td>
<td>Seek work-life balance, but they feel they must be contributing to something larger than themselves, very goal oriented. (socially responsible)</td>
<td>Results driven, determine their own path and set their own goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team oriented but depends on personal achievement to validate their efforts; believes in promotion through seniority and loyalty</td>
<td>Prone to speaking their minds which can create tension in the workplace, global in nature, value recognition and expect to get paid for performance</td>
<td>Higher degree of entitlement; not driven by money, but expect to climb corporately at a fast rate</td>
<td>Leader, that brings quick results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loyal employees; self-sacrificial with their time. Will do what it takes to get the job done.</td>
<td>Will work hard independently and do not like to be micromanaged but needs recognition despite being materialistic</td>
<td>Work independently but want immediate access to all levels of leadership, innovative in nature and creative, they want management to be consultative in nature</td>
<td>Require multiple projects, constant feedback, and quick results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely job hop</td>
<td>Demand work life balance and without it, they change jobs to feel worthy</td>
<td>Willing to commit to getting the job done when they feel it is worthwhile to them and meaningful, and capable of high performance despite the young age</td>
<td>Keep their resumes handy and pave their own path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View later generations to be talkative, disrespectful and unreliable</td>
<td>Views Boomers as bossy and younger generations as cooperative</td>
<td>Will criticize leaders for not investing enough resources in their employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology disadvantaged</td>
<td>Techno-literate and savvy</td>
<td>Techno savvy and computer literate, easily connected with social media</td>
<td>Prefer to interact with media rather than print, highly connected to social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Live to work</td>
<td>Work to Live</td>
<td>Live first work later</td>
<td>Better and wiser</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NEGATIVE OUTCOMES

It is evident that society has defined significant differences between generations, and various characteristics that cause generational discrepancies. These generational differences noted above are often seen in the workplace, and in order to conceptualize a well-balanced environment, healthcare leaders need to move beyond just understanding the diversity in the workplace. Healthcare leaders need to move toward a workable strategy of engagement and task assignment. If leaders do not embrace these behaviors, attitudes, and work values then it will result in disharmony within the organization.

Incivility is one of the most significant negative outcomes that can result if disharmony occurs. All staff desires to be respected and valued within their organization, and incivility can disrupt patient care and erode organizational morale. “For example, tension in the workforce may lead to mistakes and carelessness in the care provided to patients.” (Moore 2016) This in turn leads to putting the patients at risk.

In addition to incivility, stressors and errors can be compounded with poor communication due to different perceptions and priorities not being aligned within the organization. An example of this is when a staff member of the Baby Boomer cohort is not comfortable entering a medication reconciliation on the EMR system and in turn delegates the responsibility to another employee. This practice is not only incorrect, it creates increased workload, and team-based problems within the organization, which ultimately could reinforce stereotyping.

Stereotyping already exists among the employees, and it is the role of the leader and the manager to move staff past those stereotypes and reveal opportunities for collaboration and synergy. Management must first understand that the expectations and perceptions that employees put on one another are quite high. When the workforce within an organization is focused on its own perspective, the expectations being projected by others may create misunderstanding that grows into resentment. Being able to avoid stereotyping is critical, and leaders need to ensure
that when interacting with team members, one must interact with team members individually not as a generational stereotype. Leaders also need to understand employee perceptions. By understanding the employee’s perceptions, one can reduce incivility, stressors, and stereotypes and in return create a positive and safe environment for the employee and the patient within the organization to help build a bridge between the generations by creating balance among the generations.

**STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGEMENT**

Beyond understanding the generations, how can healthcare leaders and practice administrators work with such diversity in the workforce to ensure that staff of all generations are experiencing a harmonious environment? How can healthcare leaders reduce incivility, stressors, poor communication and stereotyping among the generations and create a harmonious environment? The old model of recruit, train and retain is no longer viable for the employees in today’s market. Leaders must ensure that Human Resource personnel accept the new model of initiate, engage, collaborate and evolve to ensure that generational needs are met, and the rules of engagement are initiated. (A. Jerome 2014) There are new rules of engagement for these generations that should be followed to assist in bridging the gap. (Sujuansky 2004)

As a leader working with a multigenerational workforce, there are new rules to assist organizations in bridging the gap, and the first rule is to offer choices. Although all generations are different in what they want, they are all driven to achieve and will demand resources to assist them in growing their career. As noted previously, some generations live to work, while others live first and work later. Offering choices on multiple levels will allow employees the flexibility that is needed. Recommended choices that administrators and healthcare managers can review according to their work environment can include:

- Flexible hours
- Scheduling variabilities
- Flexible dress codes
• Options to work remotely

Although each generation will view the choices differently and some may not require any, the flexibility in providing choices to all generations will enhance productivity. (Sujuansky 2004) Developing choices for all generations is an essential rule of engagement and offering choices and training opportunities that appeal to all generations and their desire to learn will be equally important as healthcare leaders try to bridge the gap.

Although administrators have limited resources and funds, it would be worthy to allocate some funds internally to training and invest in the employee who is ultimately the most valuable resource within the organization or practice. With generational differences affecting the workforce, simple personality tests such as the D.I.S.C, Berkman, or Myers Briggs would bring valuable information to the organization that would provide valuable information to assist managers in how employees will collaborate within the organization. The inability of the organization to invest in the employee on the other hand, is costly, as turnover rates cost more than two times the average rate of the employee in training. Simple strategies of engagement that can assist any organization or healthcare leader when training could include:

• Offering training opportunities that appeal to all generations and their desire to learn
• Offer paid training and career development paths
• Ensure performance recognition programs and feedback is gauged to the generation as one generation requires immediate feedback while another required direct-face-to-face
• Assume the role of the coach/consultant/mentor
• Always reward employees when they perform well; (immediate recognition)

Training is a valuable resource, and no matter what generation, all employees want to advance and better themselves. The successful leader will be able to harness the attributes of
each of the generations and create an organization of trust and openness while developing cross-cultural teams within the organization.

**ATTRIBUTES OF THE SUCCESSFUL LEADER**

Adaptability is essential for every leader as the organization and the employee grow. Leaders and organizations must be adaptive in their communication styles on all levels. This includes staff meetings, recruitment strategies, face-to-face meetings, and daily conversations. Leaders who limit their communication context will limit their access to team members. Leaders need to be able to experiment with different communication styles, formats, and channels; and be engaging to all generations to ensure that they are accessible across all generations. The more flexible and adaptable the leader is in adjusting his or her own attitudes and styles, the more support different generations will feel.

Leaders in healthcare must be just as innovative as their employees and offer an evolving workplace to accommodate the unique attributes and traits which the generations should offer. Leaders should evolve and challenge employees while creating a motivating and engaging environment. A strong healthcare leader will recognize strengths and address weaknesses while building a trusting relationship that benefits everyone. Embracing generational differences is critical, but learning that there are common goals among the generations that as a team can be achieved together. Leaders must understand that generations have different perceptions within the workplace. To build a successful environment, a multigenerational approach is needed. Cross generational teams can create a collaborative environment rather than a competitive one.

**CROSS-GENERATIONAL TEAMS**

In building a multigenerational team the saying, “change begins at home” is imperative for healthcare leaders. (Piper n.d.) Practicing ethical leadership and creating a culture of trust and transparency starts from the top down. Implementing rewards with collaborative activities that are multigenerational will assist in creating long term teams that can mentor one another and offer coaching opportunities. (Angeline 2011) Motorola engages its Boomers as coaches to mentor
younger employees within the company, and at the same time, the younger employees can offer help to the older generations on technology and media relations. This collaborative team approach provides regular feedback and praise, both good and bad, and strengthens the bond between generations. Best Buy, Twitter, and Facebook are all companies that have amended daily operations to meet the multigenerational workforce and are proving that cross-generational teams are productive and effective. Providing an opportunity for mutual exchange on projects across generations can lead to cross-generational teams. Cross generational teams can also create a collaboration between generations rather than a competitive environment. Projects can be staged to improve an employee’s skills or competencies and create a cohesive work environment. This would allow employees of all generations to learn from one another despite the scope of the project and make working for an organization more rewarding. Projects can also be task-based which can offer immediate feedback to teams and provide immediate solutions to the organization. There are some things that cannot be taught from a textbook, and this platform would allow the older generations to bring their trait and knowledge to the newer generations resulting in growth and teaching new skills to others. (Majer 2008) As mentioned earlier, generations differ, with some needing the ability to multi-task with projects, while others need immediate feedback and attention. By working in cross-generational teams, leaders can create strategies that motivate each employee and bring value to the organization all the while understanding that each employee brings something different and unique to the work environment. By creating an environment that is engaging and innovative for all generations, both the employee and the organization wins. With companies outside of healthcare proving multigenerational teams to be more effective and productive, healthcare leaders must create new ways of building collaborative teams and reap the benefits they serve within the organization. To do this, leaders must analyze the employees within the organization and determine the strategy to move forward.
In closing, as leaders in healthcare, one must recognize the generational differences within the workforce and facilitate the knowledge, attributes, and strengths of that workforce to engage in performance and success for the organization and for the employee. A leader who fully understands employees and devotes time to their success sets the stage for success of the employee and the organization. All employees want their peers and superiors to value them and for the work environment to be productive and successful. Both the manager and the employee seek clear career paths within the workforce. The difference is that the perception is different from one generation to the next on how we travel on that path. As a leader in healthcare, not understanding those generational differences will lead to culture of distrust, high turnover rates, and unhappy employees. It starts at the top, as the leader must be adaptable, flexible and innovative in managing the multiple generations and trusting enough to lead the team through a more effective more collaborative environment. Leaders in healthcare must remember that healthcare is meaningful work, and the work should always go beyond regurgitating the mission and vision. (Piper n.d.) Leaders and organizations that do not bridge the gap in these generational differences and embrace the new workforce will find themselves hindering productivity, losing valuable resources and stunting the organization growth by discouraging the innovative employee. The leader that harnesses the generational differences within his or workforce will no doubt be able to lead effectively through generational differences. Every generation is unique and will bring attributes to the organization that are valuable, and the role of leaders in healthcare is to embrace those attributes and build a successful team within the organization.
Bibliography


