

BRIDGING — THE — GAP

Closing The Divide
Between Generations

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flexibility and patience allows for stronger, more thoughtful responses. Constructive feedback should always begin with positive reinforcement, followed by guidance for improvement. And finally, finding common ground, shared goals, values, and interests, creates a sense of belonging and strengthens connections across teams.

Recognize and challenge generational bias.

It's important to recognize and challenge generational bias by avoiding stereotypes that lump entire groups together. Instead of focusing on perceived negatives, highlight each generation's strengths. Baby Boomers bring wisdom and deep knowledge, Gen X is realistic and pragmatic, Millennials are ambitious and eager to contribute, and Gen Z is highly adaptable and quick to learn. By shifting the focus from assumptions to strengths, you create a more inclusive and collaborative environment where every generation can thrive.

Flip the Script

Negativity rarely moves a team forward. Focusing on strengths instead of shortcomings fosters collaboration and builds a positive culture. Words matter. They shape how people are perceived and how they perceive themselves. For example, rather than labeling Boomers as "old and stubborn," recognize them as "wise and

knowledgeable.” Instead of calling Gen X “skeptical and cynical,” highlight that they are “realistic and pragmatic.” Millennials are not “entitled and impatient” but “ambitious and eager to contribute,” and Gen Z is not burdened with “unrealistic expectations” but celebrated for being “quick to learn and adapt.” Shifting language from criticism to affirmation strengthens respect, trust, and teamwork across generations.

Talk Their Talk

The Golden Rule of communication is: *Communicate with others as you would like them to communicate with you.*

It’s a twist on the traditional Golden Rule (“treat others as you would like to be treated”), applied specifically to messaging and dialogue. Instead of assuming everyone prefers the same style, tone, or channel that works for you, you pause and consider the other person’s preferences, needs, and perspective.

For example:

- A Gen Z team member might respond best to a short, visual message via Slack.
- A Baby Boomer colleague might prefer a phone call with a detailed discussion.

Following this rule ensures clarity, reduces misunderstandings, builds trust, and strengthens

relationships, whether in the workplace, personal life, or cross-generational interactions.

At its core, this chapter reminds us that communication is far more than exchanging information. It is the bridge that builds understanding, trust, and lasting relationships across generations. By listening actively, practicing empathy, adapting to different styles, and challenging assumptions, we create environments where every voice is valued and every contribution matters. When we communicate not just as we would like, but as others need, we transform interactions into meaningful connections that inspire collaboration, innovation, and mutual respect. The real power of communication lies in its ability to unite people, regardless of age, experience, or perspective.