

Teaching and Managing The Millennial Mind

Robert W. Wendover

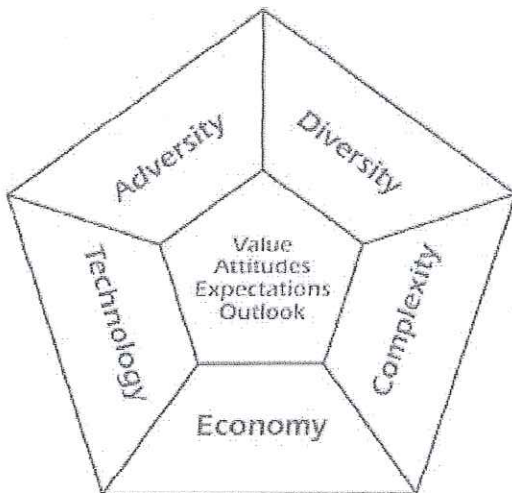
The Center for Generational Studies

303-617-7207

robert.wendover@generationaldiversity.com

Today's Generations

Matures (born prior to 1946)
Baby Boomers (born 1946-64)
Generation X (born 1965-80)
Millennials (born 1981-99)
Homelanders (2000 - ??)



What Do We Know About Millennials?

Born 1981-99 (81 million)

One in three is considered a racial/ethnic minority.

One in four has experienced parental divorce.

Impatient for immediate outcomes.

The teenage segment will spend 209 billion in 2011.

They are ruthless in their expectations of convenience.

Products of a world where situational ethics are prevalent.

Intolerant of repetition.

Evolving (or devolving) into "menu-driven" thinkers.

In the Workplace They Expect . . .

Ample opportunities for training and growth.

Consistency and fairness in management.

State-of-the-art computers and equipment.

A positive, optimistic workplace such as those they see illustrated in the media.

Compensation commensurate with their perceived financial requirements

Opportunities for advancement within a defined span of time.

A work environment that allows for the completion of personal tasks as long as the employer's work get done.



7595 South Elkhorn Mountain
Littleton, CO 80127
303-617-7207
www.generationaldiversity.com

Examining a Generation's Outlook on Life

The Center for Generational Studies has developed a model to illustrate influencers. These influencers play a role in the development of each generation's outlook on life. Please note that each has an impact on the others, in addition to having an impact on the generation itself. Let's take a closer look at each one of these factors.

Adversity – Every generation collectively experiences a range of adversities including war, economic hardship, natural disaster, terrorism, and many other calamities. However, some generations experience more adversity than others. Matures, for instance, grew up with world war, rationing, and hard economic times. Their children, the Baby Boomers, came of age in prosperity and relative peace. Generation X grew up with the impact of recession, inflation, massive corporate layoffs, and government scandals. The Millennials have come of age with unprecedented prosperity, technology, and conveniences. Is it any wonder that adversity has an impact on each generation's life view?

Diversity – As mentioned earlier, America's "melting pot" has taken on new meaning in the past few decades. While this book examines generational diversity, this is only one slice of a larger pie of influencers. It's important to point out that cultural heritage can have a significant impact on the importance of particular generational markers. I once made a comment about the Great Depression's impact on Matures, and an elderly African-American gentleman responded, "What depression? That's the way most African Americans lived at the time."

Economy – Income, spending, employment, interest rates, inflation, and consumer debt all play a critical role in a generation's outlook. At the same time, the nation's economy can be tremendously impacted by a generation's behavior as they mature through life. Spending and saving patterns of the Matures, for instance, have had a significant impact on Baby Boomers. But Baby Boomer spending and saving will have a significant impact on the economic welfare of those within Generation X. And so it goes.

Technology – In the past 20 years, the world has witnessed an explosion of technological advances. The way we work has changed due to the advent of computers. We see this in all areas of industry, education, and government. Matures came of age with typewriters. Boomers came of age with mainframes. Xers came of age with laptops. And Millennials are coming of age with hand-helds. Technological developments have helped introduce the era of convenience. Older generations sometimes lament the lack of hard work examples for younger members of the workforce. These younger cohorts have little understanding of what they're missing. Matures, for instance, can out-add anyone with a pencil. Millennials can out-calculate anyone with a computer. Neither is better than the other, but a healthy appreciation for each is critical.

Complexity – Daily life has become more complex. Society has become immersed in computer technology, globalization, vast cultural differences, boundary-less advertising, and mega changes in communication styles. However, America's teens don't see it that way. Veteran managers often marvel at young workers who can simultaneously surf the Web, use the phone, and prepare a report. Parents lament the fact that children remain glued to computer screens, forgoing the opportunity to have live interactions with others.

Every generation has complained about the fast pace and "new-fangled gadgets" embraced by younger generations. The difference now is the invasive techniques used by employers, merchants, educators, and government for the perceived purposes of manipulation. Only time will reveal the impact of all this, but chances are the Millennials will fare better than the Matures.