



# **Managing Generational Differences in a Utility's Workforce**

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PA AWWA Annual Conference

Hershey, PA

April 17, 2019



# Bond . . . James Bond

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*007*





[http://www.007james.com/articles/who\\_played\\_james\\_bond\\_part\\_2.php](http://www.007james.com/articles/who_played_james_bond_part_2.php)



1962-1967  
Sean Connery



1995-2002  
Pierce Brosnan

1973-1985  
Roger Moore



2006-2012  
Daniel Craig





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## Five Surveys Were Conducted

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Spring 2009: 15 companies in Central KY – 1,000 mix audience

Spring 2011: 100 Graduate and undergraduate students at Midway College

Fall 2012: 200 Utility Company in Central, KY

Fall 2013: 50 Surgery Nurses in Lexington, KY

Winter 2013: 800 Restaurant workers in KY, TN & GA





# Today's Take-aways

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- What generations are and how they evolve
- Causes of today's generation gap
- Management strategies for multi-generational workplace:
  - Motivation
  - Technology
  - Knowledge Management





# AWWA 2014 State of the Water Industry Report

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- **“Overall, how prepared do you think the water sector is to address issues related to talent attraction and retention in the next five years?”**
  - Only 1 percent indicated that the water industry was fully prepared to address issues related to talent attraction and retention in the next five years
  - 15 percent thought the industry not at all prepared
  - 35 percent thought it was only slightly prepared.

2014 AWWA State of the WATER INDUSTRY Report





# AWWA 2014 State of the Water Industry Report

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- **“Overall, how prepared do you think the water sector is to cope with any expected retirements in the next five years?”**
  - Only 1 percent of 2014 SOTWI respondents indicated that the water industry was fully prepared to cope with any expected retirements in the next five years while
  - 12 percent thought the industry not at all prepared and
  - 30 percent thought it was only slightly prepared. (AWWA, 2014)

2014 AWWA State of the WATER INDUSTRY Report







# Possible Financial Impact on Operations

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- **Operational costs** directly affect the bottom line through a wide variety of forces, including:
  - Lost revenue due to extended outages
  - Penalties from regulatory agencies, higher maintenance costs; and
  - Increased frequencies of forced outages and accidents caused by human error as highly experienced operators retire (since human error rates would be expected to significantly decrease with experience). Bruffy & Juliano (2007)





# Possible Financial Impact on Productivity

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- **Productivity costs** are being incurred over a wide variety of areas, including:
  - Increases in the duration of planned outages as new hires gradually build the expertise and efficiency that the current workforce has; and
  - Work time lost in recovery from injuries is expected to be much greater for older workers. Bruffy & Juliano (2007)





# Possible Impact on the Future

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- **Lost or delayed opportunities** to take costs out of the business are the opportunity costs of the aging workforce, including:
  - Executing performance programs that end up costing more than budgeted and which extend planned ROI time frames
  - Internal resources may be limited and act to prevent the performance program from ever beginning. Bruffy & Juliano (2007)





# Generations

Ketter & Taylor (2009)

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**Life Cycle Effect:** The biological impact of aging and the changing roles that people play as they grow older

**Cohort Effect:** Unique historical circumstances that impact cohort as adolescence and young adulthood that imprint itself, producing differences that persist even as the cohort ages.

**Period Effect:** The major events that are likely to have a simultaneous impact all age groups, but have the greatest impact among the young because values and habits are less fixed than those of other age groups.



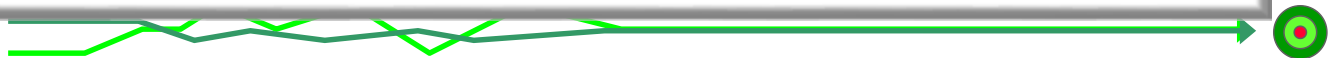


# The Generation Gap

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The term Generation Gap was used mostly to describe conflicts between parents and children. Today, the “Gap” has more of a presence in the workplace, where employees from different generations are finding it difficult to work side by side because their experiences, goals and expectations are different

Kogan, M. (2001)





# Four Distinct Generations

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Silent  
Generation  
(1928 –  
1945)

Baby  
Boomers  
(1946 –  
1964)

Generation  
X (1965 –  
1980)

Millennials  
(After  
1981)





## Key Findings

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Consistent pattern of generational differences in relations in the workplace

However, there is also overlap between the generations in terms of support for basic issues like job security, career advancement, and a secure retirement





## Baby Boomers Traits

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- More work focused than family focused
  - Loyal to the current organization & important that organization is loyal to them
  - Like to communicate in person
  - Company funded retirement is important
  - Comprehensive health insurance is important
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- ***Key: Hard work and are team players***







## Gen X Traits

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- Enjoy attending company events
  - Competition among co-workers is a strong motivator
  - Prefer group projects to individual projects
  - Believe teams are more effective than individuals
  - Having a strong voice in decision-making
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- ***Key: Life balance and respect for individuality***



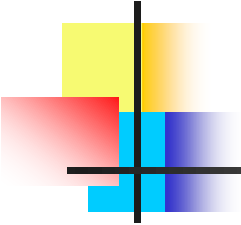


## Millenials Traits

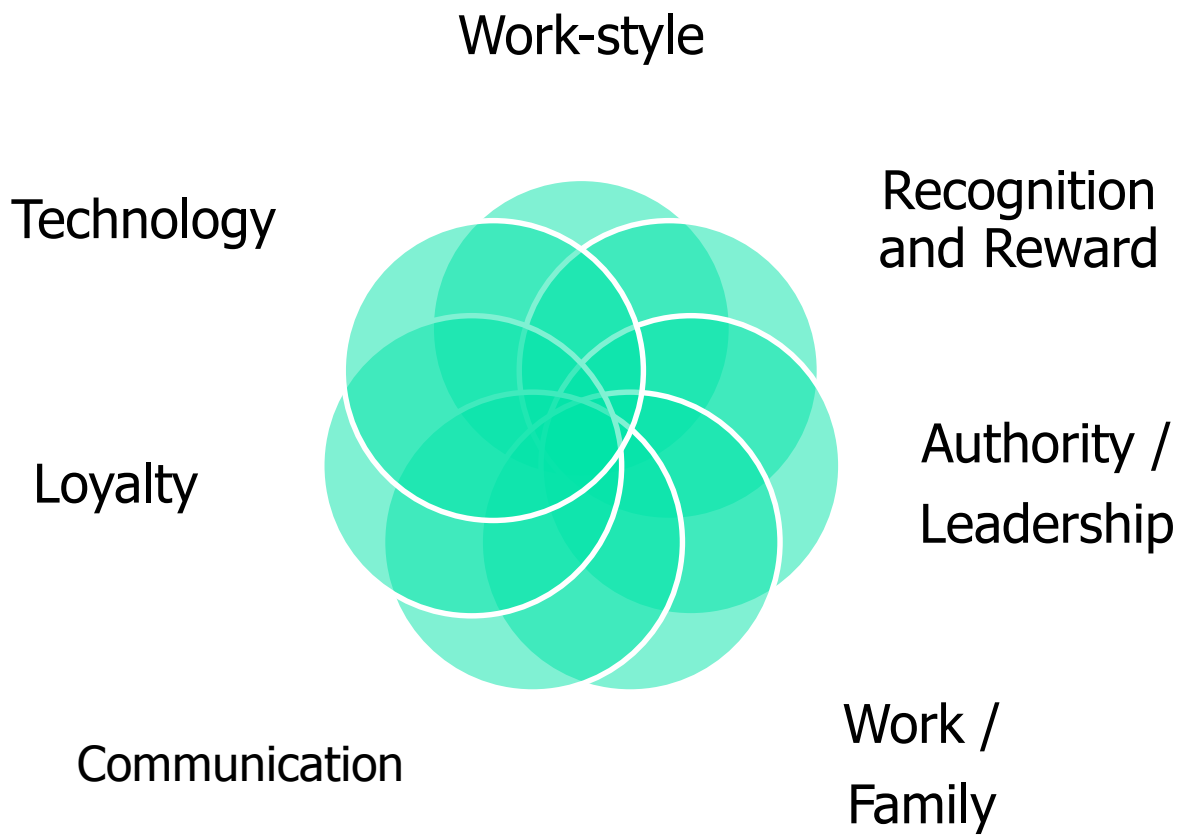
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- Close supervision improve my performance
- Job security is my top priority
- Special recognition is a strong motivator
- Teams are more effective then individual efforts
- Tangible awards (trophies, plaques, and parking spaces) strong motivators
  
- ***Key: Making a difference in the world and respecting diversity***

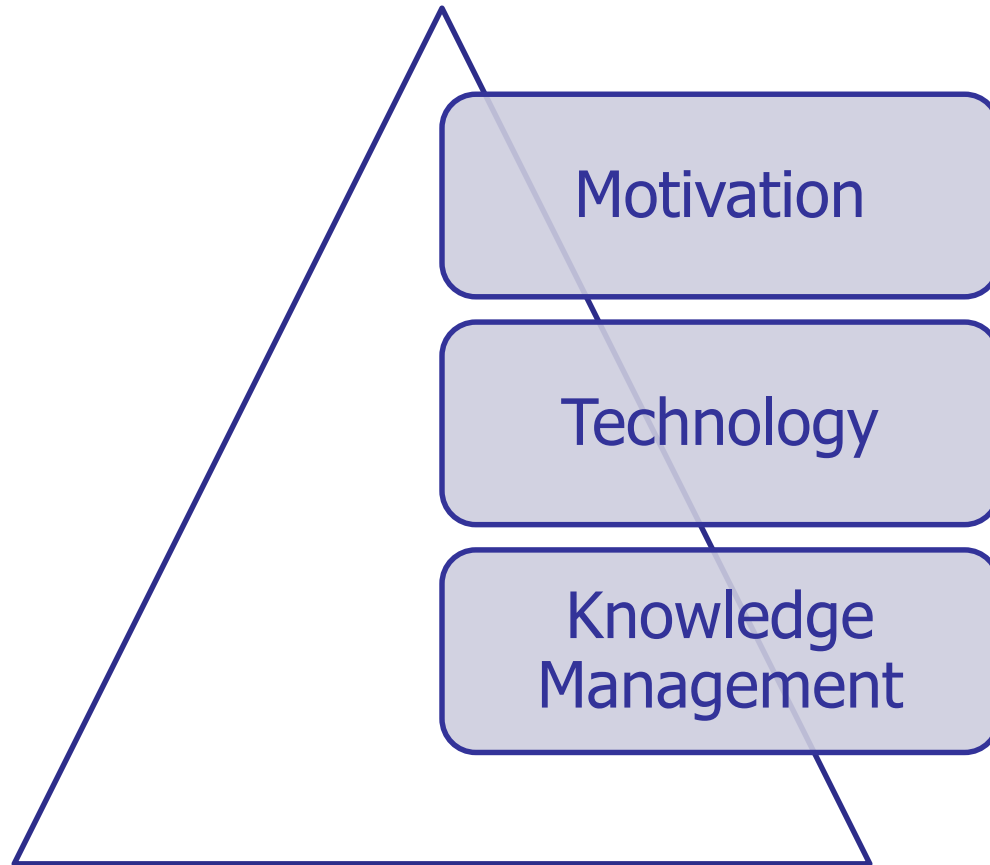




# Significant Impacts on the Workplace



# Focus on Three Areas in a Multigenerational Workplace





# Motivation

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
<b>WORK ETHIC &amp; VALUES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Workaholics <input type="checkbox"/> Working efficiently <input type="checkbox"/> Crusading causes <input type="checkbox"/> Personal fulfillment <input type="checkbox"/> Desire for quality <input type="checkbox"/> Questioning Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate the task <input type="checkbox"/> Self-reliance <input type="checkbox"/> Want structure and direction <input type="checkbox"/> Skeptical	<input type="checkbox"/> Asking what is next <input type="checkbox"/> Multitasking <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacity <input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurial <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant <input type="checkbox"/> Goal oriented
<b>LEADERSHIP STYLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Consensual <input type="checkbox"/> Collegial	<input type="checkbox"/> Believe everyone is the same <input type="checkbox"/> Challenging others <input type="checkbox"/> Asking why	<input type="checkbox"/> Will be better determined as this generation gets older
<b>INTERACTIVE STYLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Team player <input type="checkbox"/> Loves to have meetings	<input type="checkbox"/> Entrepreneurial	<input type="checkbox"/> Participative





# Motivation

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
<b>WORK AND FAMILY LIFE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> No balance <input type="checkbox"/> Work to live	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance	<input type="checkbox"/> Balance
<b>FEEDBACK AND REWARDS</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't appreciate feedback <input type="checkbox"/> Money <input type="checkbox"/> Title recognition	<input type="checkbox"/> "Sorry to interrupt, but how am I doing?" <input type="checkbox"/> Believes freedom is the best reward	<input type="checkbox"/> "Whenever I want it, at the push of a button." <input type="checkbox"/> Meaning work
<b>MESSAGES THAT MOTIVATE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> "You are valued." <input type="checkbox"/> "You are needed."	<input type="checkbox"/> "Do it your way." <input type="checkbox"/> "Forget the rules."	<input type="checkbox"/> "You will work with other bright, creative people."





# Technology

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- Pew Research notes that today's young are history's first generation of digital natives.
- The online world isn't something they've had to adapt to — it's all they've ever known, and it's their indispensable platform for social interactions and information acquisition.
- Take advantage of your millennial employee's computer, cell phone, and electronic literacy





# Technology

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- **So how can businesses take advantage of the tech-skills that younger workers bring?**
  - One effective strategy is reciprocal mentoring. Reciprocal mentoring takes that concept a step further by creating a two-way conversation.
  - As the mentor teaches the newcomer valuable business information, the young person can help their older colleague master the techniques of new technology, including how to avoid the embarrassing “newbie” mistakes that inhibit a lot of inexperienced users from participating in online activities.







# Knowledge Transfer

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- Personal dynamics and communication between source and receiver can make or break the transfer of knowledge, especially between generations.
  - Identify where it is most vulnerable
  - Evaluate current processes and practices for transferring critical knowledge to determine how its culture, systems, and processes enable knowledge loss

Bridging the Gaps: How to Transfer Knowledge in Today's Multigenerational Workplace. (2008, July 1).





# Knowledge is a Strategic Business Issue

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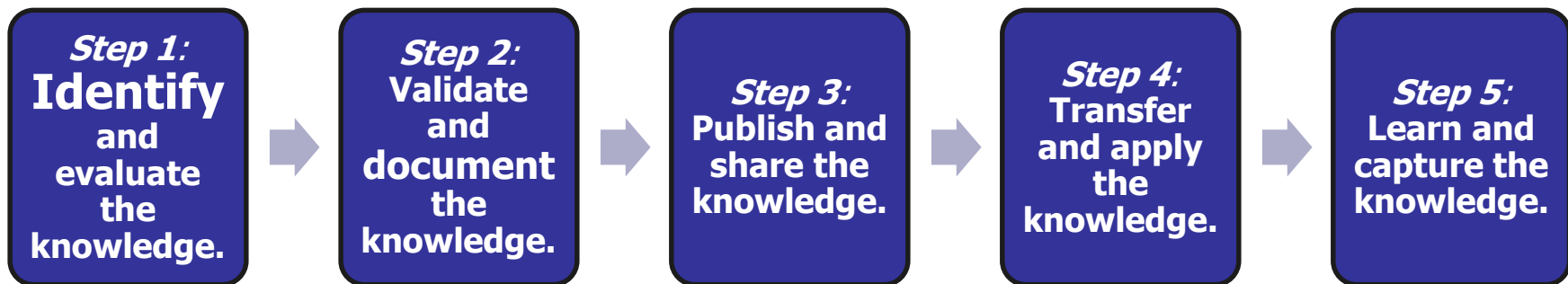
- Define losing knowledge as a strategic business issue, and articulate changing workforce threats to the management team—don't assume they get it
- Northeast Utilities developed a five-year corporate development program and funding plan. One of its components is the business case for retaining critical knowledge: to ensure that operational performance does not suffer as a result of known workforce transitions.

Bridging the Gaps: How to Transfer Knowledge in Today's Multigenerational Workplace. (2008, July 1).





# Knowledge Transfer Process Steps





# Channels for Knowledge Transfer

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- **Telling:** meetings, teleconferences, mentoring
- **Showing:** on-the-job training, mentoring
- **Background Prep:** reports, guides, manuals
- **Decision-Making:** persuasive documents, evidence (documents, statistics, cores, lab results, cuttings, gas analysis, etc.)
- **Sharing:** e-mail, list-serves & feeds, texting
- **Training:** workshops, classes, webinars, presentations

Bridging the Gaps: How to Transfer Knowledge in Today's Multigenerational Workplace. (2008, July 1).





# Essentials for Knowledge Transfer

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- Create awareness in older employees of the benefits they stand to gain, such as recognition.
- Build the human element into the process. After all, you can't force people with knowledge to share it, and you certainly can't force people who need someone else's knowledge to use it.
- Reciprocity and recognition are the foundation for changing the way we transfer knowledge.
- Emerging knowledge transfer methods such as reverse mentoring provide opportunities for behavior change in both the source and receiver.





# Knowledge Transfer

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- Focus on the receiver, not just the source. Younger employees should be involved in deciding how they want to receive knowledge.





# Recommendations to Gen X and Baby Boomers

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- Start listening and stop assuming
- Be present on college and high school campuses. Don't wait until millennials show up for an interview
- Start viewing millennials as strategic business investments
- Scrap "do as I say, not as I do"
- Learn to tap into millennials potential

Hain, R. (2013, July 30)





# Recommendations to Millennials

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- Having perspective is important
- Be patient
- Look at relationships and communication differently
- Convey respect while pursuing your goals
- Pursue mentors and advocates

Hain, R. (2013, July 30)







# Generation Z

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- 2001-Present
- Will outnumber millennials in 2019
- Anticipate being happier and more optimistic and happier than Millennials
- Knows the digital world even more intimately
- Grew up with “War on Terror” and Global Recession

Hain, R. (2013, July 30)





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