

Exercise: How Generationally Savvy Are You?

Your challenge as a Gen Mix manager is to steer your multi-generational team members off the rigid course of “business as usual” into an open field of innovation, productivity, and learning. Your goal is to help everyone make that transition quickly, gracefully, and collaboratively. Work through this Exercise and then share your results with the group.

GENERATIONAL I.Q. TEST: Who Said It?

Directions: Identify the generational source of each quotation below. Record your answers using these abbreviations:

S - Silent Generation

X=Generation X

B - Baby Boomer

Y=Generation Y

The answers are given at the end of the test.

- ___ 1. “I respect authority and follow the rules—but that authority has to earn my respect by being ethical and fair. Otherwise, I will do all I can do to circumvent the rules.”
- ___ 2. “I don’t take work for granted. Family is important and I need a balance. I am confident. Controlled leadership is important.”
- ___ 3. “I wouldn’t want [my managers] to be intimidating, but at the same time I want them to display that they have more knowledge than me. I want my bosses to respect me, but I also want to feel challenged by them. I don’t want to feel like I’m on the same level as them. You want to look up to your bosses and feel that there is something you can learn from them. But at the same time, I want to be able to be comfortable around them.”
- ___ 4. “The quality of my work is very important to me, and I want to be appreciated for that. I have other priorities besides my work; namely, family and faith. I prefer to work in a team environment. I need to feel that I’m making a difference in someone’s life. I have a strong sense of loyalty to what I do and who I do it for”
- ___ 5. “I’d rather be the authority than be subject to it.”
- ___ 6. “Above all else, I want my life to make a positive difference. I place a high value on learning—both academic and experiential. I am mistrustful of ‘the System,’ but expect government to play an active role in social services. Change is inevitable—it’s both a challenge and a pleasure. Change is difficult but exciting.”
- ___ 7. “When it’s all said and done at retirement, I want to look back and be able to say that I was happy with my choices.”
- ___ 8. “I still feel more comfortable with the hierarchy. But I want to be able to have input in decisions. I want my input to be considered.”
- ___ 9. “I want lots of free rein in a creative, flexible, non-traditional environment and [to] be treated with utmost trust, or else forget it—I’m leaving to find security and recognition elsewhere.”
- ___ 10. “Ideally I wouldn’t have a boss, but someone who assigns projects and gives me free rein—some kind of guidance, especially when I am new to the job, but free rein to do as I see fit and as I think is best. I will be responsible for the consequences, but let me do my own thing with as little supervision as possible.”

Answers: 1. B (age 44); 2. S (age 68); 3. Y (age 21); 4. B (age 48); 5. X (age 30); 6. B (age 57); 7. X (age 27); 8. S (age 58); 9. B (age 49); 10. Y (age 21).