Generational Differences in the Workplaces.

Dr. Ally Abouabas, MPM PhD.

It is not surprising due to globalization to see people from different generations working together; therefore, this variety has created challenges for managers where each generation has its values, skills, and characteristics. Some researchers have studied multicultural teams from the cultural differences' perspective, but others discussed regarding generational differences. Managers in the new business environment had the challenge to understand the individual's need stemmed from generational differences in addition to the challenge of cultural differences. The generations were classified into four categories according to the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund; however, Dumitrescu identified the fifth generation. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics and information for each generation.

Table 1

Characteristics of Different Generations

Generation	Born	Characteristics
Traditionalists or the veterans	Before 1945	- team players - loyal to a company all life long - respect for authority - obedient - do not discuss rules
Baby boomers	Between 1946 and 1964	- main objective: personal growth - sensitive to feedback - optimistic - personal satisfaction is very important for them

Generation X	Between 1965 and 1980	• positive attitude • they question the authority • goal oriented • not patient • able to multitask • flexible
Generation Y or millennial generation	Between 1981 and 2000	• Sociable • Heroic spirit • Do not know to deal with difficult people • Perseverant • Self-confident
Generation Z	After 2000	• More sociable • Media addicted • using high technology • quick accept difference • more tolerant

In multicultural teams, it is vital for managers to understand the structure and differences of the values underlying of each generation to create and maintain a healthy work environment that foster leadership, motivation, communication, and generational synergy. Managers of multicultural teams must be able to understand that young people want quick results and appreciation for their work while middle aged employees have to believe in a task to achieve better results. The old workers, furthermore, are very faithful and avoid uncertainty.

All generations are different in the 3Cs, which means commitment, communication, and compensation, therefore, managers need to consider several strategies to manage generational

diversity in workplace. Leaders should look at generational differences not merely as idiosyncratic inter-group differences, nor as age differences, but as a fact in society and workplace that continues to develop from generation to another. Leaders therefore, must understand the differences among generations and conflicts in the workplaces to ensure success. Managers who focus on the positive traits of each generational cohort will be able to develop an effective plan for business strategies, which promote quality and productivity and decrease tensions and conflicts among workers.