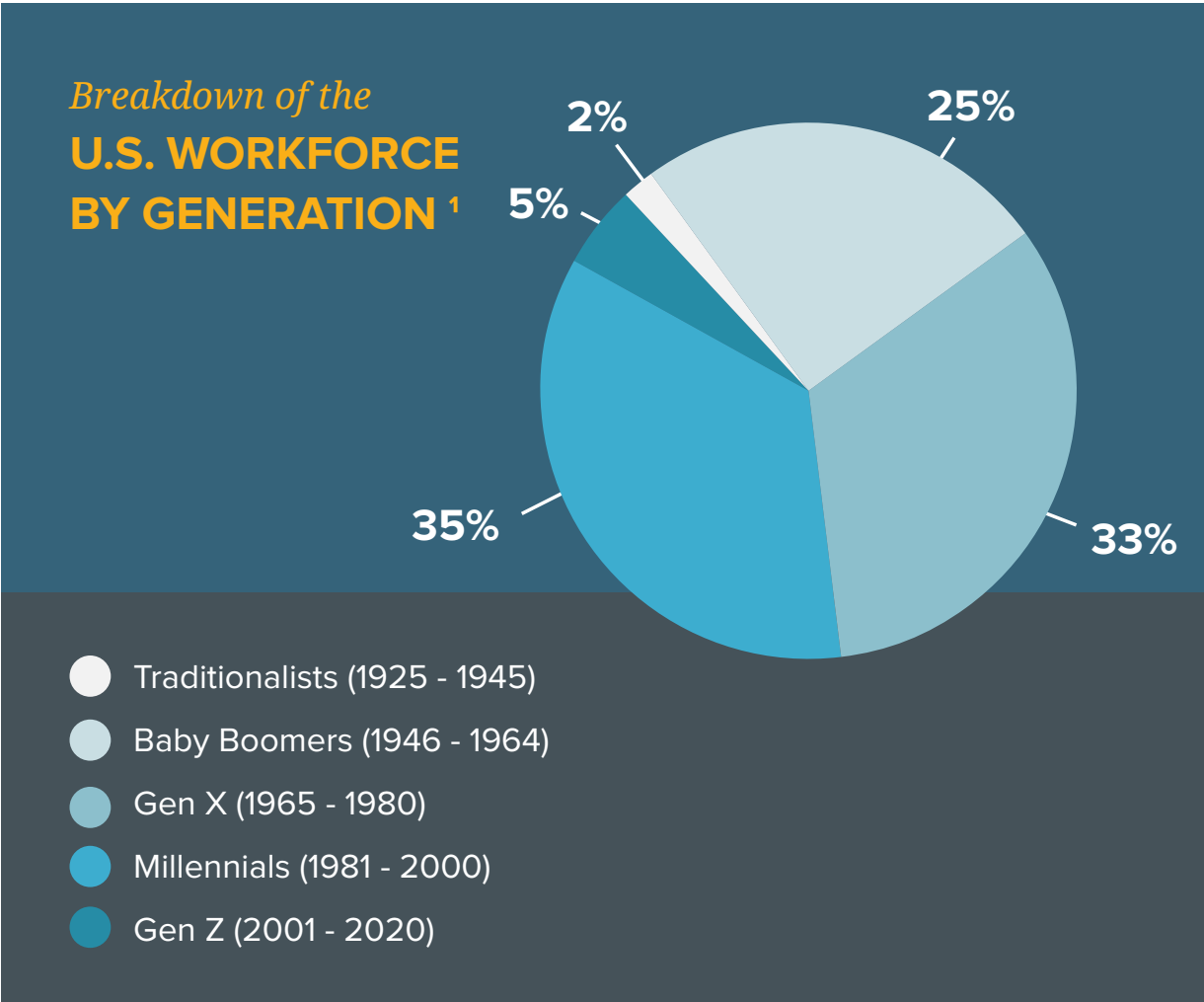


KEY TRAITS OF EVERY GENERATION IN THE WORKFORCE

and How to Harness Strengths

In 2019, the U.S. workforce made history when it grew to include five generations. To help effectively manage multigenerational teams, we created a chart that simplifies the key characteristics, expectations, and behaviors of each generation. Obviously these are the most common characteristics and not everyone fits into these particular guidelines. However, this guide will give you a better understanding of how to harness the respective strengths of each generation to develop a more collaborative and overall better functioning organization.



	TRADITIONALISTS	BABY BOOMERS	GEN X	MILLENNIALS	GEN Z
% IN WORKFORCE ¹	2%	25%	33%	35%	5%
KEY CHARACTERISTICS ²	Practical, Dedicated, Dependable	Competitive, Focused, Team-Oriented	Hopeful, Ambitious, Independent	Competitive, Achievement-Oriented	Entrepreneurial, Progressive
LIFE STAGE ³	Retirement imminent	Empty nesters, planning retirement	Supporting families	Starting families	Single
TECHNOLOGY FLUENCY ⁴	Limited technological knowledge. Typically use phones for phone calls, less internet savvy.	Some technological knowledge	Technologically capable. They grew up on the cusp of personal computer use	Technologically fluent	Digital Natives
COMMUNICATION PREFERENCE ⁵	Handwritten notes and in-person discussion	Face-to-face conversations	Communication via phone or email	Texting	Multi-tasking across multiple screens, texting, videos, images
TACTICS FOR RECRUITING ⁶	Pay, benefits, flexible schedule, and career stability	Opportunities for personal development and career advancement, benefits, pay	Independent work, flexible schedule, financial stability, performance management	Work-life balance, social office environment, opportunities for advancement and skills training, passion for the position	Doing meaningful work, opportunities for career advancement, flexible schedule, financial stability, performance management
MANAGEMENT STYLE ⁷	Chain of command, respect hierarchy	Expect direction of manager to lead them to organizational goals	Direct style of communication	Teamwork approach, not authoritative	Coaching
PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK ⁸	Annual reviews	More frequent and documented feedback	Constant feedback, want opportunities to grow and understand their contribution to the team	Daily feedback and positive reinforcement	Constant feedback and coaching
LEARNING STYLE ⁹	Structured, formal learning such as lectures	In-person learning	Self-directed learning. Least favorite is classroom-based learning.	Broad range of learning formats to keep them engaged, from in-person to online	Social learning in groups. Also expect on-demand learning available at all times
TRAINING APPROACH ¹⁰	Train at their own pace. Want to connect how the lessons will be used in their role	Personally-focused training, with in-class participation	Want freedom to train on their own schedule, with on-demand resources	Training that enables immediate feedback	Online training with collaborative group discussions

Sources: ¹ Pew Research Center, “Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force”; ² SHRM, “What Motivates Your Workers? It Depends on Their Generation”; Purdue University Global, “Generational Differences in the Workplace”; ³ Pew Research Center, “As Millennials Near 40, They’re Approaching Family Life Differently Than Previous Generations”; ⁴ Gartner, “Gen Z: How to Lead These Natural Digital Connectors”; Forbes, “How to Give Four Generations Feedback”; ⁵ Purdue University Global; ⁶ Gartner, “Leverage the 4 Generations at Work to Build Organizational Resilience”; ⁷ Chief Learning Officer, “Leading Across the Generations”; ⁸ Forbes; ⁹ Florida Institute of Technology, “Generational Learning Styles (Generation X and Y)”; ¹⁰ SHRM, “Hit the Spot of Four Generations with Personalized Training”