

# Hey Dude!

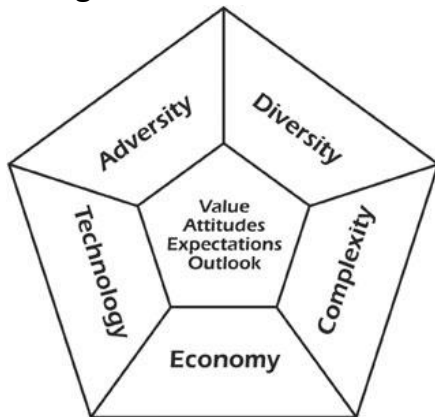
## Working Across the Generations within Industrial Distribution

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### Today's Generations

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

### Examining a Generation's Outlook on Life



For additional information on this model, please go to <http://www.generationaldiversity.com/index.php?/examining-a-generations-outlook-on-life.html>.

### Evolving Values and Priorities

#### Digital Immigrants

Live to work  
Career  
Rhythm and routine  
Work ethic  
In the future  
Connect with key people  
Debt is abhorrent  
Solve the problem  
Face, phone, and e-mail  
Right is right, wrong is wrong  
Greater good

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#### Digital Natives

Work to live  
Contract  
Flexibility and freedom  
Entitlement?  
In the now  
Survey 1000 "friends"  
Debt is a reality  
Find out who's solved it  
Text, tweet, and Snapchat  
Right and wrong are relative  
Social justice

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### Managing Differences in Priorities

*Establish and communicate clear expectations.* This is the hardest but most crucial element in the equation. Young people have come to believe that everything is negotiable.

*Exact a commitment during the selection process to meet these expectations.* This will eliminate potential "misunderstandings" in the first 60 days.

*Anticipate pushback and be prepared.* Digital natives have learned that questioning gets results. Determine your boundaries.

*Take a hard look at the firm's day-to-day policies.* What made sense even three years ago may now be out of date.

*Invite input from emerging contributors, but be prepared to act on it if it makes sense.*

### Fostering Engagement

*Focus on the outcome rather than the task.* Digital natives differ in their approach to work. Why not embrace it, if it achieves the desired results?

*Increase opportunities for social connections.* Attempt a variety of events. Be patient in letting the culture around these evolve.

*Increase opportunities for professional connections.* Cross-gen projects and discussions about differing approaches to work are a good way to start.

*"Touch" people more often, but manage the parade in your office.* Consistent contact is crucial but on the supervisor's terms.

*Consider your balance of control and flexibility.* Digital natives have come of age expecting more reasoning and nurturing.

## Cross-Gen Communication Practices

*Codify standards of communication with customers and colleagues.* When to e-mail. When to call. When to meet face-to-face. When to write a letter.

*Provide 24/7 training for learning new communication platforms.* Employ short video training clips and other applications that will allow digital immigrants to meet the digital natives half-way.

*Demand error-free textual communication.* One typo or math error can kill a proposal. Provide assistance for those unable to write skillfully.

*Actively manage mobile technology use.* See the column to the right.

## Managing Retention in Today's Workplace

*Understand the cycles of turnover within your firm.* If you study it for a bit, you will see patterns in your turnover. This will help predict when you're likely to see some employee churn.

*Take a closer look at your hiring priorities.* Selection can no longer be the mechanical process it has been for so many for so long.

*Look for the signs of leaving behavior.* Every employee displays them if you know what to look for. Ask Bob for an article on the specifics of this.

*Stay connected.* Digital natives expect more contact with supervisors, as they did with parents. A weekly one-on-one for five minutes might be all it takes.

*Instill ownership in young professionals.* The more employees understand the bigger picture, the more likely they will become emotionally invested.

*Make supervisory succession options a management priority.* In a workplace where loyalty has become less important, it is crucial to have determined in advance who can replace departing contributors.

*Make knowledge capture a part of the culture.* Whether it's customer insights or technical knowledge, the increased churn of the coming workforce will force us all to be more vigilant about preserving the information essential to ongoing business success.

## Managing Mobile Technology Use

**Evaluate** – Consider the roles that mobile technology currently plays within the organization's daily practices. Consider the most common ways that mobile technology use runs counter to organizational effectiveness and productivity.

**Establish** – Develop a written protocol for all mobile devices used on organization time, both business and personal. Elements should include communication with members and vendors, family and friends, media, and all others with whom staff interact.

**Collaborate** – When the protocol has been developed assemble a cross-generational team for input and for developing investment in the outcome. This is critical to avoid a cultural response of "not invented here."

**Communicate** – All staff should receive the same message that balances rules with reasoning. EVERYONE should clearly understand the impact of improper use on productivity, perceptions of members, and regard for co-workers.

**Enforce** – Consistency among supervisors is the key to reasonable enforcement. Supervisors should be encouraged to use their discretion rather than relying on an appeal process through human resources, senior management or some other administrative avenue. Mutual respect for others is key.

## Instilling Ownership in Young Professionals

**Explain the business** – Have them break down the revenue and expenses of a single transaction. Have them research how manufacture and service interact. Explain regulatory impacts. You get the idea.

**Reverse roles for a couple of days** – Let them find out what you really go thru. Experience the pressures they face on the front line. Have designers work in the shop. Ask fabricators to answer service calls. Then compare notes, make suggestions and tell a few stories. It will make you all feel heard.

**Ask for input** – And let THEM experience the trials and errors of implementation. There's no better way to engender empathy and ownership.