

Research administration is a complex career where we are constantly facing new federal regulations and forced to develop, communicate, manage, and enforce institutional policies with many internal and external constituents to include faculty, researchers and department administrators, peer institutional collaborators, agencies, and auditors. Leaders in research administration face challenges in hiring and development of staff, minimizing turnover, increasing burden, and managing people. The diversity of generations in the current workforce and reflected in most research administration offices adds a further layer of complexity that must always be considered when juggling the regulations, policies, people, systems, and organizational structures. There is value each generation brings the workforce. Similarity across all generations is respect and trust. Leaders must be credible and trust the people they work with directly. There is an opportunity for leadership to model the way and embrace the changing landscape.

Sharing an Appreciation for the Changing Work Landscape Creating an environment where multi-generations can function is essential. Leaders should leverage what each generation has to contribute in each one bringing its own set of core values that shape how work is done and approached. Stevenson breaks down the four generational classes of employees in the workplace and in the higher education classroom as follows (2014):

- The Traditional Generation (born pre-1945; 8% of the workforce) are considered loyal and dependable both to their supervisors as well as to the organization. They are described as appreciative of formality and preferring a top down chain of command, and in favor of making decisions based on what was done in the past. Their core values include respect for authority, conforming and being disciplined. As a result, they are characterized as dedicated, risk-averse, and least likely to welcome change in a work environment and believe hard work and sacrifice are the price to pay for success.
- Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964; 30% of the workforce) are competitive, prioritize work over personal life, and prefer recognition for their accomplishments. Baby Boomers are considered the Catholics and comprise the majority of the workforce. Their core values include optimism and involvement.
- Generation X (born 1965-1980; 17% of the workforce) are confident and self-reliant, comfortable with technology, and strive to achieve work and life balance. Gen X'ers are typically not dedicated to

courage to be as transparent with each other as possible. Making assumptions- The opposite of being curious would be to pass judgement and make assumptions. This is sometimes uncomfortable letting their team members and leaders understand what tasks they can most likely be successful in. As leaders, we should be mindful of each team member's strengths as well as their areas in which they are not as comfortable. Assignments can be given jointly to help achieve a balance is achieved. For example, you may partner a Traditionalist who is uncomfortable with systems with a Gen X'er who is comfortable with systems on the same implementation project. The Traditionalist will know what specifications need to be included in the system, and the Gen X'er can help translate that into the capabilities and lingo that developers might understand. Adapt your style as needed to accomplish the goals of the organization.

Cultivating Leadership- Leaders need to ensure everyone understands the ultimate goal and foster "curiosity and courage" with their staff. When interviewing for new positions, it is important to pull out strengths and not pass judgement or make assumptions based on the candidate's generation. Teams should be built in order that everyone brings different strengths that are all needed. Leaders should encourage differences, whether they come from multi-generational representation and/or natural personality traits. Some of the best teams have a person from every generation, and some of the best employees might have traits that have nothing to do with the generational stereotype.

"Connection Killers"

Munro states that these "connection killers" should be avoided by both leaders and colleagues (2015):

Failure to value everyone- As part of cultivating leadership and serving as the example, leaders should support and value everyone in the group. This seems so simple, but often we find it is easier to show favor to those members who are most like us in both generational backgrounds as well as personalities. Leadership should appreciate and pull out strengths from everyone continuously. Rath and Conchie state that "If you spend your life trying to be good at everything, you will never be great at anything... this approach inadvertently breeds mediocrity" (2008). A well-rounded team with multiple strengths and skillsets, which can come from cross-generational members, is optimal. Letting ego seize center stage- As leaders, we need to step aside at times and avoid "upstaging others", even if unintentional. This approach will not allow members to be "curious and courageous", so no one benefits from understanding and appreciating everyone's strengths.