

# Understanding and Addressing Generational Giving Patterns

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*"Transforming Potential Into Unmatched Performance"*



# Albert Einstein said...

- “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”  
And...
- “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”



# Jesus said...

So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus. “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with ‘unclean’ hands?”

He replied, ‘Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,

But their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain;

Their teachings are but rules taught my men.”

You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.’

Mark 7:5-8 (NIV)



## Some Basics:

- Over 25% of the Episcopal Church's members are 65 or older.
- That compares to only 13% of the general population.
- In 2008, the average age of a parish Rector was 58.



# Leadership Challenge

“As leaders we face the challenge of connecting company [church and parish] values to a diverse workforce [population]. To attract, retain and motivate very different generations of workers [members], we must understand their unique perspectives and the national events that shaped their values. To maximize performance [improve results], the generations need to work together in harmony, bridging the generational divide through shared values.”

Source: Barnett/Winning  
Bridging the Generation Values Gap



# Behavior Shaped by Values

Why is it important that leaders are aware of the generational value differences?

- Many behaviors are driven by values and beliefs.
- Attracting, retaining and motivating members is a church's life blood.
- If the old models were still working we would not be having this discussion.



# Veterans (The “Silent Generation”)

Born between 1920 – 1945

## General Characteristics:

Loyal, industrious, consistent and conforming

## Influences:

Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, World War II,  
Children “Seen and not heard”



# Veterans

## Value:

Privacy, Hard Work, Trust, Authority, Social Order, Formality (A strong sense of “Duty”.)

## Communication Tips:

- Often known as the “silent generation”, do not expect them to share their ideas immediately
- Face to face or written communication
- Word is his/her bond
- Don’t waste their time



# Baby Boomers

Born between 1946 – 1964

(out-number all other generations with approximately 80 million in the workforce in 2005\*)

## General Characteristics:

Competitive, political, hardworking, and loyal

## Influences:

World War II, Vietnam, Civil Rights, Post-War Prosperity, Cold War, Television

\* Source: Dana Kyles, Managing Your Multigenerational Workforce



# Baby Boomers

## Value:

Hard Work, Competition, Change, Teamwork,  
Success, Inclusion

## Communication Tips:

- Body language is important
- Open and direct communication
- Answer questions and expect to be pressed for details
- Present options



# Generation X

Born between 1965 – 1979

## **General Characteristics:**

Individualistic, Independent, Family Focused, and Distrusting

## **Influences:**

Working Mothers, Information Age, End of Cold War, Terrorism, Corporate Downsizing



# Generation X

## Value:

Autonomy, Creativity, Work-life Balance, Change

## Communication Tips:

- Give feedback but also ask them for their opinions
- Share information on a regular basis so they are “in the loop” (often prefer quick sound bytes)
- Allow them to solve their own problems when possible



# Generation Y (“The Millennials”)

Born between 1980 – 1999

## **General Characteristics:**

Group Oriented, Civic Minded, Adaptive and Idealistic

## **Influences:**

Internet, Terrorism, Single Parent Households, AIDS, “Shrinking” World



# Generation Y

## Value:

Diversity, Technology, Purposeful Work, Teamwork

## Communication Tips:

- Give regular feedback, e-mail is often preferred
- Encourage them to take risks and challenge them to try new things
- Use positive reinforcement, make them feel valued



# Other Generational Differences

- Older Generations have a strong sense of gratitude.
- Younger generations are distrusting of religion and institutions in general due to the moral failures they've witnessed among those institutions and their leaders.
- Younger generations are a dichotomy in that they've grown-up faster but have tended to put off many of the traditional roles of maturity such as marriage, children and career commitment.



# Other Generational Differences

- Younger generations are in search of their own “Holy Grail” consisting of:
  - Good pay from Day 1 (to fund a lifestyle that matches their parents’ and their peers’)
  - Fewer hours (more leisure time)
  - Rapid advancement
  - A career (work) they are passionate for.
- Younger generations are saddled with student debt.
- Younger generations’ social networks are not bound by geography.



# Generational Giving Patterns

- Sundays for them are about things other than church (like sports)
- Younger generations' motivation for giving are:
  - To make the world a better place; and,
  - To respond to the immediate needs of others. (Think impulse.)
- Younger generations' giving to the church is not on a par with the previous generations' when they were the same age because they do not see the mission and ministry of the church in a similar way.



# Generational Giving Patterns

- Younger generations secular giving patterns are no less generous and possibly a little more generous than those of the previous generations.
- In terms of generational giving patterns to the church, think “Bell-shaped Curve.”



# The Challenge:

- If we do not change the younger generations' views of the church and stewardship, many of our parishes will be in a world of hurt in the very near future.
- If we want a different outcome, we need a different approach.
- I.E., If we want to change the younger generations' behavior we should probably start with our own.
- So consider the remainder of this material and presentation with two groups in mind:
  - The Church as it exists; and,
  - Those we need to fully enlist in the mission and ministry.



# The Solution: Behavioral Change

- Event-based Behavioral Change:
  - A personal near-death experience
  - Birth of a child
  - A religious conversion experience
- All 3 are associated with Rites of the Church
- However, as Episcopalians we are more apt to be “marinated” in the traditions of our faith than awakened to them as part of a “Damascus Road” experience.



# Motivation-based Behavioral Change

- Incentives (“Bribes”)
- Punishment (or the Threat of punishment)
- Conditioning
- A Change in Beliefs
  - The Rational Element
  - The Emotional Element
  - The Environmental Element



# The Rational Element

- Focus on the “Bright spots”
- Script the critical moves
- Point to the destination



# The Emotional Element

- Find the feeling
- Shrink the change
- Cultivate a sense of identity
  - I aspire to be the type of person who...
  - The Identity Model:
    - Who am I?
    - What kind of situation is this?
    - What would someone like me do in this situation?
- Put “Cognitive Dissonance” to work



# The Environmental Element

- Tweak the environment
- Build habits
- Rally the herd (find the key influencers)
  - We do things because we see our peers do them.
  - Establish the group “norm”



# Actions to Consider:

- There is no monopoly on good ideas
- Look at stewardship holistically
  - Time (account for and recognize volunteer hours)
    - The younger generations like to be involved with the causes they support with their treasure
  - Talent
  - Treasure
- Find and promote the success stories
  - Celebrate success (movement) in the right direction



# Actions to Consider:

- Shrink the change
  - (launch your campaign with a running start toward the goal)
- 2 or 3 campaigns per year (ala NPR)
- Brief-cycle stewardship (partial year pledge; “try it, you’ll like it!”; if your circumstances change, you’ll have the opportunity to adjust your pledge) [Note: your Treasurers will hate this idea.]



# Actions to Consider:

- Assign mentors to younger generation members (just be sure your mentors are delivering the right message)
- Define expectations in New Member classes (Duties and responsibilities of membership)
- Increase the transparency
  - Celebrate the successes
  - DO NOT hide the problems
- Increase communication



# Actions Required:

- Change:
  - What we talk about...
  - How we talk about Stewardship
  - When we talk about Stewardship
  - Where we talk about Stewardship
  - Why we talk about Stewardship
  - Who talks about Stewardship
  - How much we talk about Stewardship



# Changes to Consider:

- Honor the younger generations' needs including:
  - Voice
  - Feedback (lots of feedback)
  - Challenge and purposeful work
  - Make them feel valued and valuable



# Changes to Consider:

- What we measure and how we measure stewardship
  - The Traditional metrics
    - No. of pledges
    - Average pledge amount
    - No. of new pledges received
    - No. of pledges increased from prior year
  - A New Set of Metrics are needed that include non-monetary items and that measure different things.



# Things to Remember

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- Consider your parish's context
- Expect failures and setbacks along the way –  
But DO NOT give-up or abandon the effort.



# References

- Portions of the material presented here are drawn from:
  - “Stewardship Among Young Adults in the Episcopal Church (USA),” a Masters Degree Thesis by James R. Landers III
  - A presentation made by Ms. Tavia Hatfield at Covenant Health System’s May 2008 Leadership Development Institute
  - SWITCH by Chip Heath and Dan Heath, Broadway Books, New York, N.Y, 2010
  - Other sources as noted throughout
  - For other suggested readings on this or other subjects please contact Keith or visit his web site at [www.jkeithhughey.com](http://www.jkeithhughey.com).



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