A Clash of the Ages: Generational Differences in Medical Staff Members

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GENERATIONS

- Traditionalists – Born prior to 1945
- Boomers – Born 1946 to early 1960’s
- Generation X – Born 1960’s to mid 1980’s
- Generation Y – “Millennials” Born 1980’s to 2000
- A Medical Staff is a blend of the above, but the majority of physicians are Boomers and X’s. Yer’s starting to enter the workforce

GENERATIONAL CLASH

- Fundamentally a shift from a “Church” Model to a “Theater” model.
  - They may participate IF they like what they see or if their parents tell them they should, but not because their peers tell them they should.
  - They may buy tickets to individual performances, and not show up if something else comes up they like better.
GENERATIONAL CLASH

- The past 30 years of my Medical career are a blur!!!
  Time goes by so very very quickly. Just think about it:
  - Crank Telephones and party lines
  - Encyclopedia Britannica
  - JAMA, NEJM
  - Pocket watch, lap-top, hand-held
  - Saturday morning cartoons, comics, YouTube

WHAT CHANGE

- At no time in record history has the difference among generations been so dramatic!!!
  - “Just Remember, You Can Never Go Back”

GENERATIONAL CHANGE

- Want to learn from the professor
- 3rd Generation Phenomenon
- Lifestyle and Family Values
- No Identity to “Belong,” are not joiners
- Informal, freedom loving, job neutral, techno-literate
- From books to on-line, confident, street smart, techno-savvy, non-conformists
BOOMERS

- Started our first job free of debt and on our own
- Our parents were Traditionalists – “The Greatest Generation”
- We grew up with the Cold War and Atomic Bomb
- We are visionary, can see the big picture, title agnostic, optimistic, loyal to the organization

BOOMERS

- We are competitive, resolve conflict
- Our parents assured us that our future was bright and would be rewarding as long as we worked hard
- We measured our success on what our parents had achieved in their lives
- We maintained the Status Quo

GENERATION X

- They are positive
- Goal oriented
- Multitaskers
- Globally minded, without much vision
- Informal
- Question their identity and reason for belonging and thus are less committed
- Less committed, less passion
3RD GENERATION EXAMPLE

- Classic Story
  - Moses and Joshua 1st generation
  - 2nd generation inherited it all only had to preserve the gains made by Moses and Joshua
  - 3rd generation had it even easier, no recall of Moses and Joshua, only stories
  - Good times prevailed, not much accomplished
  - Last verse of Judges (21:25) “Every man did what was right in his own eyes”

GENERATION Y

- Question everything, never answer question of “WHY?” with “Because that is the way we’ve always done it”
- Demanding, High Maintenance
- Their job/profession is not the most important thing in their lives
- Dress Code – HA! HA!, Tattoos, Body Piercings
- We need them more than they need us

GENERATION Y

- We are their parents!
- Looking for a job after amassing a large debt for schooling
- Often live with parents for a period of time
- Self-esteem replaced rules and discipline
- Threats are real – 9/11, Middle East
- No guarantees for their future
**GENERATION Y**

- Effects on our Medical Staff and Societies
  - Less revenue as there are fewer members
  - Shorter meetings and less meeting attendance
  - Former allies will be seen as competitors
  - Much different work habits, perhaps even off site
  - The more meetings and materials are pushed out online, the better
  - Must have interactions with seasoned leaders as they lack formal leadership training

**MANAGING GENERATION Y**

- Customize their training, well defined career paths, incentives that are attainable, well defined responsibilities
  - Climbing long career ladders – NO
  - Paying their dues – NO
  - What value can I add today – YES
  - What can I learn M-F – YES
  - What will I be rewarded today - YES

**GENERATION Y BIG IDEA!!**

- Never assume for a minute that current trainees are just like us, only 20 or 30 years younger. THEY ARE NOT!!!!
- Each generation has its own characteristics
- Never be judgmental
- Accept the differences and move on
Y BIG WORK CHANGES

• Higher starting salaries, immediate gratification
• Smaller to no buy-out of senior partners
• Y’s will only participate if it meets their standards and goals
• More focused and task oriented, fewer committee meetings
• Much less rigid hierarchy

Y BIG WORK CHANGES

• More access to policy makers
• Governing Boards will need to be more responsive and understanding of their values
• Treat Yer’s as colleagues not interns
• They need MENTORS not preachers
• They understand Big Picture issues and care less about our more focused issues
• Pick specific leaders for specific issues

Y BIG WORK ISSUES

• Yer’s are much more casual about their work habits, but that’s ok as everyone else will also be more casual
• Do not judge them by what they do, or how they look while doing it, but by the quality of their work product which must be recognized
• They will make us uncomfortable at times as well as often frustrated
A CLASH OF THE AGES

• No generation is necessarily better or worse, just different, and will respond differently to demands and requests and threats.
• Each generation will have its own pressures that will influence their decisions.
• Just remember that the 8 year old child who is asked by his parents to program their hand-held device because they can’t, will not hold their tribal elders in awe as we did.

QUESTIONS?

• Thank you for allowing us to discuss this issue with you today. We hope that it will help in your medical staff operations.