



MARTIN VEASEY
TALENT SOLUTIONS



How to Motivate, Engage and
Develop Your **Rapidly Changing**
Multi Generational Workforce

Hello,

The business world is changing as are the people who work in it. Over the last ten years, we have seen significant advances in recruiting and working practices.

Today 'virtual' working is a norm for many; no matter what size a business is, it can have clients across the globe and technology means we can Skype, Facetime, Messenger or join them on an international WebEx for a group meeting.

Over the coming years, one of the challenges that employers and managers face will be about how they engage, motivate, lead and develop a multi-generational workforce.

Gen Y/Millennials have taken over Baby Boomers as the most significant section of the working population in the United States with a similar situation in the UK, according to the **Pew Research** Centre. In this guide, we explain the characteristics of;

Baby Boomers

Gen X

Gen Y / Millennials

Gen Z

Also, we share ideas on how to lead and develop the different generations of employees so that companies build multi-generational high performing teams.

I look forward to working with you.

Best regards,



Martin Veasey

Managing Director Martin Veasey Talent Solutions

Office Telephone Number: +44 (0)1905 381320

Email: martin@martinveasey.com

web: www.martinveasey.com

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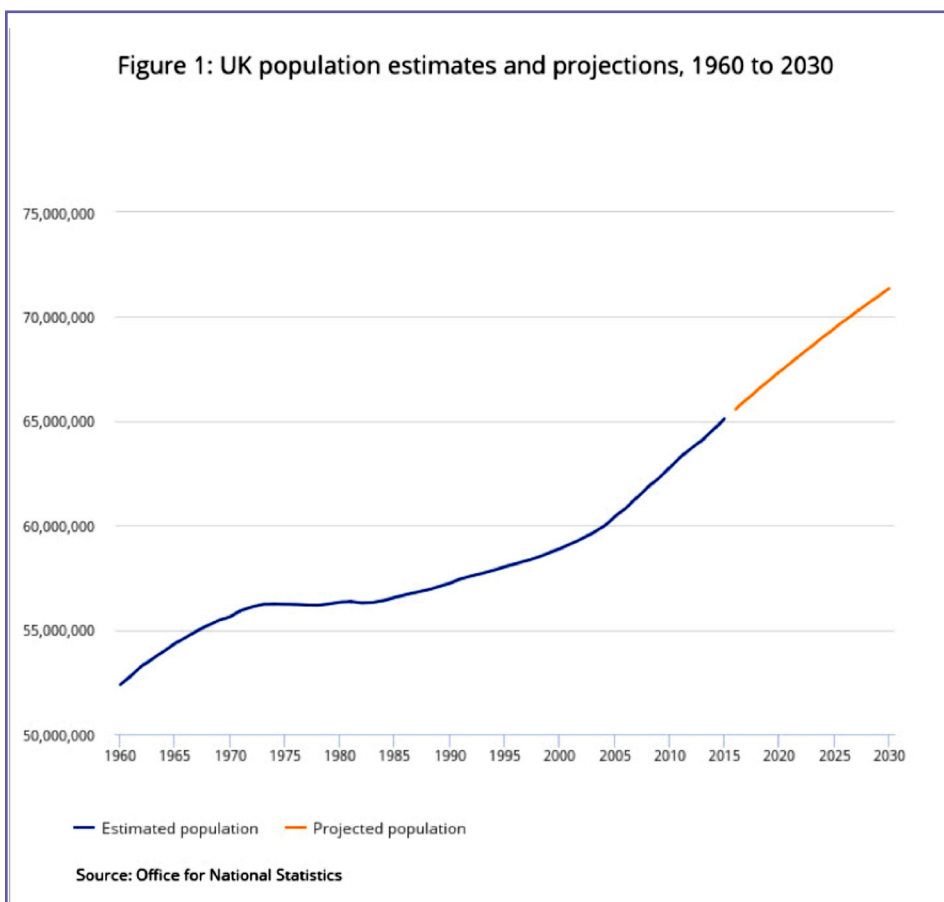


They believe in working hard; that's how they have been raised...

The Growth In Our Population And What The Future Holds

Before we dive into details about the various generations that make up today's workforce, let's take a look at a few UK statistics.

The graph below gives an overview of the estimated population in the UK up to 2030.



As we can see, there is a dramatic rise in the UK population starting from around 1990. This rise is partly because we have an ageing population who are living longer. The percentage of 65-year-olds or older increased between 1975 and 2015, from 14.1% to 17.8% of the population.

What does this mean from an employers point of view?

The reality is that we are living longer and people are mindful of their financial situation and how it will support them to live in a way that they want. Not all employees will have a desire to head out of the door as they approach their mid-sixties; which is a different challenge for Millennial managers when it comes to leading and motivating individuals of the same age as their parents.

First, let's understand more about the characteristics and traits of these different generations that make up our population.

Generations And Their Characteristics

Even though you may think you understand each generation, it's worth sharing the general characteristics of each group currently in our workforce to help give a sense of the motivations and drivers of the people you are working with every day.

Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers have what is known as a 'Puritan work ethic.' They believe in working hard; that's how they have been raised, which is fortunate as it is likely that the statutory retirement age will increase, reaching 67 by 2020 in the UK.

As we have already mentioned, that's assuming that individuals are financially able to retire. It is likely that fit, and healthy employees will want to work into their 70's over the coming years, and organisations need to be prepared for this to happen.

Baby Boomers

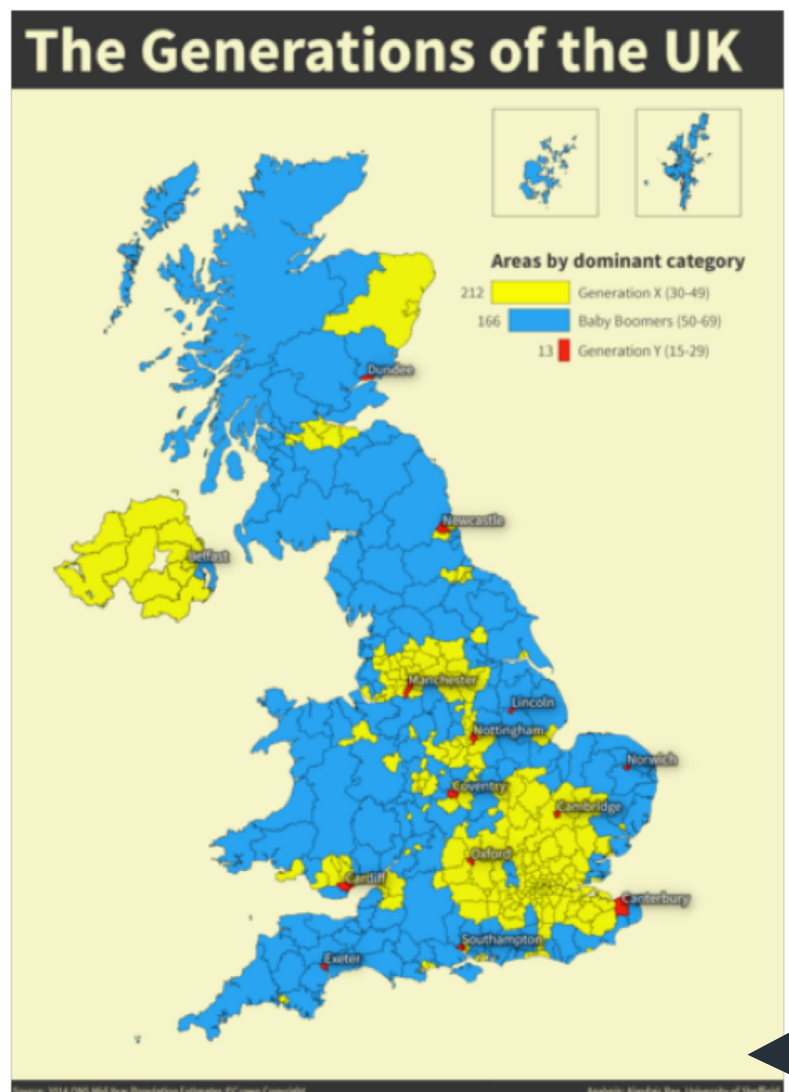
- Gain some of their self-worth directly from their professional achievements.
- They believe success comes from investing time and energy into their careers.
- Are independent and self-assured.
- Feel comfortable questioning authority.
- Are motivated by climbing the corporate ladder.

This group can be incredibly focused; they keep going until the job is done and don't give up easily.

Goal setting and high achievement has been a big part of their lives and continues to be.

Gen X

Gen X is a group that gets less visibility than the retiring Baby Boomer generation and younger Millennials as the latter two have gained more media attention. However, research by **Alasdair Rae** of the University of Sheffield shows that Gen X still dominates parts of the UK.





Millennials are viewed as the 'tech-savvy' generation...

Born between the early 1960s and early 1980 the nickname Gen X stuck thanks to the novel by Douglas Copeland: 'Gen X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture,' which was about Americans hitting adulthood in the late 1980s.

Gen X'ers are the first generation who experienced two-income families, increasing divorce rates and a yo-yo economy. A high proportion of Gen Xers lived through tough economic times in the 1980s with the loss of major industries such as coal and steel. Many saw their workaholic parents lose careers and livelihoods.

They tend to be less committed to a single employer as a result. They are more willing to change jobs to get ahead than the Baby Boomer generation who went before them.

Many in this generation display a casual disdain for authority and structured work hours; they can be a challenging group to manage and lead.

Millennials are viewed as the 'tech-savvy' generation, yet Gen X is very comfortable with every type of smart technology; ask Apple!

Gen X

- Adapt well to change.
- Are accepting of alternative lifestyles.
- Are ambitious and eager to learn new skills.
- Like to accomplish things on their terms.

Gen Y /Millennials

Millennials/Gen Y makes up the fastest growing segment of the workforce today and consequently will have a significant impact on our business economy and culture in the years ahead.

While we have said that Gen X are tech savvy, it's worth remembering that this is a generation who were born into a technology-driven world.

They like to communicate through email and texting rather than face-to-face contact and often prefer webinars and online technology to traditional lecture-based presentations.

It is common for Millennials to prioritise their lifestyle and employee benefits over high paying salaries and bonuses. They crave a 'work-life balance' which isn't always easy to deliver in today's current business landscape.

A criticism of this generation is that they are 'too' pampered as highlighted by **Simon Sinek's** famous Youtube video. The upside is that they are ambitious and results orientated; fueled by their self-confidence and self-worth.

Consequently, they have high expectations of the organisations they work for; they like a challenge, so are likely to question authority and the structure in which they operate.

Meaningful work and a development culture are two of their main criteria when it comes to their professional life. Their interest today is more to do with what experiences they can gain from their careers than the traditional career path of previous generations.

Living in a NOW culture, they are impatient; a potential downside of GenY employees is that they are always looking for something new and better; their desire to achieve, be recognised and rewarded is high, and their expectations can appear as if they want to expect things to happen by "yesterday"!

From a management and organisational perspective, this can be unrealistic and a challenge to manage.

It's common for a Millennial to be looking for their next opportunity every couple of years either internally or in new organisations.

Gen Z

Gen Z is a group we will begin to see more of in the workplace over the next few years.

Born between 1994 and 2010 this group have similar yet different traits to the Millennial generation before them.

While Gen Z does share similar characteristics to Gen Y, there are also some fundamental differences.

Gen Z in comparison to Gen Y are:

- More entrepreneurial, loyal, open-minded and less motivated by money.
- Realistic with their workplace expectations after seeing how unrealistic Gen Y have been.
- Understanding about what they are up against and are working out ways to adapt to the new reality.

Most people would think Gen Z would primarily use technology such as Facebook, Twitter or Snapchat to communicate. The opposite is true; they prefer in-person communication.

Knowing what we know now, how do we engage, motivate and lead these individual generations to contribute in today's workplace?



Without a doubt, the most successful leaders will be those who are clear and transparent about expectations and goals...

How To Motivate, Engage And Develop Your Rapidly Changing Multi-Generational Workforce

What Can Leaders Do?

There are a few guiding principles that are designed to help any leader navigate what might seem like choppy waters at times; then we'll go into some specifics by generation.

- Irrespective of which cohort a team member is a part of; *everyone is a unique and talented individual.*
- *We are all human, and we will make judgments of each other.* One team member will judge another from a different generation. The key for a leader is to help team members recognise they are judging each other on surface behaviours which stops them from wanting to get to know their colleague at a deeper level.
- *Seek to understand before being understood.*
Part of a leaders role is to take time to get to know and understand what's important and what motivates each team member. This will help a leader to connect what they are asking an individual to do with what motivates that person.

At the same time, leaders can support each team member to do the same with their colleagues so that they begin to understand, value and leverage their differences and collaborate to deliver improved results.

Without a doubt, the most successful leaders will be those who:

- Are clear and transparent about expectations and goals.
- Use their company's performance management system with transparency. This ensures that each team member understands how performance is rewarded and recognises that different employees will achieve their goals in slightly different ways.
- Demonstrate flexibility. Different age groups have separate personal and professional needs. Leaders need to be able to match their management and communication style to each team member.

How do you know what motivates a team member?

Ask a group of managers this question, and the answer will be; ask them what motivates them or '*I already know, it's money.*'

The fact is money doesn't motivate people. What drives people is what money allows them to do and this will differ dramatically by person.

If you are serious about understanding what motivates an individual then this is the question you must ask;

"What is important to you about...?" (the work you do, your career, your development)

Once you have asked the question, it's time to shut up and listen.

Actively listen to the answer and respect what is being shared. You may need to ask, “What else?” a few times until they share with you a list of answers. These answers give leaders direct insight into their team member’s motivations (values).

Understanding the different values between team members and how this knowledge is skillfully used will be vital to managing attitudes and allow leaders to drive the organisation forward.

Now you have a handle on this, let’s take each generation and look at what you can do to engage and develop your multi-generation team members.

Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomer generation exhibit some typical traits including a strong work ethic with a focus on achievement. In today’s economic climate these individuals continue to be an essential part of our workforce. They take an active interest in their physical and mental wellbeing and have a desire to keep working and adding ‘value.’

What To Do

1. Value their outputs

While they may not be up for those 60 hour work weeks anymore, it’s not to say that Baby Boomers don’t work hard; they do and get more done when they are at work. Interestingly, they are less likely than Millennials to call in for an ad hoc day off after a ‘heavy’ night on the town.

2. Ask for their advice

Most Baby Boomers don’t mind working for a younger manager, provided he or she doesn’t make the mistake of thinking they have nothing to contribute. They have a wealth of experience and are keen to add real value.

Baby Boomers understand corporate politics better than most Millennials. They have been around longer; they know how a company works. There are times when maturity is a real asset.

3. Employ reverse mentoring as a development strategy

Baby Boomers can often be labelled with the perception that they know everyone and have nothing to learn; not so. Many organisations are pairing senior managers and leaders with younger employees in programmes of 'reverse mentoring' where the 'younger' employee gets to help their older team members.

Companies who have adopted this approach say another benefit is reduced turnover among younger employees, who gain valuable insights into the world of management because of the connection with more experienced and older members of the team.

Gen X

Before we dive into what leaders can do to engage with this group, it's worth stepping back to look at why Gen X employees are so valuable to organisations in the first place.

Gen X is the most misunderstood group in the workforce today; they seem to have been overlooked because of the Baby Boomers before them and the Millennials who followed them.

Looking at the UK workforce data earlier in the report, Gen X has a lot to contribute; they have worked through more recessions than their parents or grandparents ever did!

Members of Gen X are in the prime of their working lives, so perhaps it's no wonder that they are highly invested in their careers. Unlike Baby Boomers, who are approaching retirement age, or Millennials, who are just getting their footing in the workforce and more likely to change jobs, Gen X employees combine the best of both worlds.



Gen X workers want to make an impact on your business...

They have the benefit of experience and know-how, with many productive years in the workforce still ahead. The impact they can make in their organisation is what motivates them. It's easy to see why they are highly desirable as employees.

What To Do

1. Be a leader

Gen X, as individuals, want to make an impact; they want to work for a company that makes a difference in its industry, community or the world at large. Leaders need to help their Gen X employees connect with the organisation's vision.

2. Value them

With all the noise about the 'one of a kind Baby Boomers' retiring in the coming years and the 'amazing Millennials' who are the future leaders, it's been easy for Gen X employees to be overlooked. These are individuals who are talented, have extensive knowledge, vast experience and still want to make a huge impact.

It's important to recognise this; let them know that they are valued and appreciated. You can demonstrate this by acting on points 3 and 4.

3. Empower and extend trust

Gen X workers want to make an impact on your business, and they can't do that if you don't trust and empower them to take the lead. Continually challenge them with new opportunities.

4. Create vehicles to utilise their knowledge

With all the knowledge and experience Gen X workers bring, make sure you put them in charge of new projects or training Millennials. Not only will they be more satisfied with their jobs, but you'll also gain the benefit of new leadership that will help you grow your business.

Gen Y / Millennials

The leading author and motivational speaker Simon Sinek describes Millennials as the generation with the lowest self-esteem of any generation to date.

One aspect of his basis for this is that Millennials were brought up by parents who, with the best of intentions, told their children they were unique and could do anything they wanted.

Fast forward to the work environment and Millennials can come across as demanding, impatient and self-interested. Often leaders talk about the 'challenges' of managing this generation which includes managing their expectations around the speed of promotion.

This can result in disengaged and demotivated employees; overcoming these challenges is therefore vital for any leader.

What To Do

1. Create a culture and environment where they can thrive

Contrary to common belief this isn't only about having a table tennis table installed in your trendy lounge and rest area.

The lines between work and social are blurred by this group's use of technology, and such is the case with their social life. Having strong social relationships with colleagues is important.

Create a culture with regular social events of varying types, for example, family days, sports teams entering inter-company games, and LGBT events. This creates opportunities to both engage employees and nurture relationships which will bear fruit for both the individual and organisation moving forward.

2. Help Millennials grow

Managers need to understand the personal and professional goals of Millennials who want to experience as much training as possible. If your organisation is focused on developing high potential or more senior people, then you could risk losing future talent if you fail to engage Millennials with development opportunities.

3. Create career development opportunities

Start as you mean to go on. One area that Millennials struggle with is the transition from university into professional life. Providing an induction programme that includes guidance on what it's like to work in a commercial environment; what's ok and what's not ok, will aid them in this transition.

Also;

- Create frequent opportunities to do short-term assignments in different departments of the business.
- Allocate projects to talented Millennials which fall outside their typical day job.
- Invite a team member to represent their department or Region and an international company conference.
- Create secondment opportunities that tap into their desire to work overseas.

4. Create space for knowledge sharing

Create situations where knowledge can be shared in a way that plays to the strengths of each person.

A Baby Boomer can act as a career mentor to a Millennial colleague. Similarly, the Millennial can inspire their more experienced colleagues with new innovative solutions and ways of working.

5. Give feedback

Millennials want and value frequent feedback. Ensure this is honest, fact-based feedback given in real time. We find that Millennials are focused on developmental feedback, in other words, “What do I need to do to be even better?”.

It is essential for managers to share motivational feedback so that their team members know what they are already doing well and what is driving their contribution.

6. Set them free: Millennials want flexibility

Millennials work well with clear instructions and concrete targets. If you know what you want to happen and by when, does it matter where and how they complete the task? This may prove challenging for some organisations who insist on employees working from an office.

It’s worth asking yourself the question, “What do you want?” Does it matter if the place your Millennial team member is at their most creative and productive is under a set of headphones in a coffee shop?

This is where leaders need to move beyond their judgments of this generation and don’t dismiss their needs because you just can’t imagine working in the way they do.

Remember: Set deadlines and if they meet them, don’t worry so much about their tactics and the time they clock in and out.

Gen Z

While you may not have too many Gen Z employees in your organisation at the moment, if you are recruiting graduates they will be the future of your company.

While Millennials are renowned as the tech-savvy generation, Gen Z adopts new technology even faster yet are happy to put technology aside to engage with people including their leader.

What To Do

1. Create high-intensity relationships

They react better to highly defined, small workgroups that have a strong peer leader. Ideally, have an easy to identify chain of command when it comes to your management and leadership structure. This group responds best to managers that teach while leading.

2. Invest in training

Gen Z employees may need more training, especially in the area of interpersonal and communication skills. If they are entering client services or customer-facing positions, create a training program that focuses on behaviour; showing them the right skills and communication techniques to fulfill their role.

3. Offer dream positions

Gen Z workers thrive on opportunity. If you want to keep them interested and motivated, you need to understand their aspirations then show them their dream position is within your business and help them work toward getting there.



With new awareness comes new opportunities to do things differently...

Closing Thoughts

Communication is the foundation of collaboration, leading people and delivering exceptional services to clients. Too often issues occur when there is a breakdown in communication, and this can happen when we judge each other and don't take time to get to know and value what we each have to contribute.

With new awareness comes new opportunities to do things differently. Our multi-generational global society brings every business a vast opportunity for growth.

If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change.

What changes are you ready to make?



MARTIN VEASEY
TALENT SOLUTIONS

How **Martin Veasey Talent Solutions** can help you

At Martin Veasey Talent Solutions, we have been working with blue-chip and SME businesses for over 35 years, both in the UK and around the world.

We are an independent consultancy company with highly qualified and experienced executive recruitment professionals including degree and Masters educated consultants, certified by professional bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and the British Psychological Society and with recruitment expertise across a diverse range of industry sectors and functions. Martin Veasey Talent Solutions are also experts when it comes to recruiting and building new teams.

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If you are looking to work with a highly accomplished recruiting partner, you can call us on **+44 (0) 1905 381320** or email **info@martinveasey.com**

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Here are the contact details:



[Martin Veasey's LinkedIn Profile](#)



[Roheela Khan's LinkedIn Profile](#)



+44 (0) 1905 381320



info@martinveasey.com



www.martinveasey.com



5, Deansway, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR1 2JG, UK

