Yo, Grandma, How’s it Hangin’?

With four separate generations, traditionalists, baby boomers, generation X, and millennials, coexisting in the world there are bound to be some major differences and these differences can lead to disagreements and hard feelings to each other. There are many factors that form a generation as well as their way of speaking. In more recent years, the gap in language between generations has been growing quicker than the past couple hundred years. This is partially due to the growing use of social media, extreme popularity of movies and video games, and the change in dynamics between the old and the young. Through my study of language dissimilarities between generations I found that these differences make it harder for the generations to communicate properly and therefore connect with each other due to the extreme variances in backgrounds, views, and priorities specifically in the work place. I LIKE PIE AND BEES

Anyone familiar with working with people in different age groups should agree that the difference of opinions between them can lead to an unhealthy workplace. Between the generations, they each have their own values, experiences and work ethics. Traditionalists prefer to adhere to rules, not question authority, and appreciate dedication and sacrifice (West Midland Family Center Generational Chart). Baby boomers are considered the “me” generation and are against war and the government, wanted equal rights and opportunities, and wanted to work, questioned everything, and trusted no one over thirty, they want to make a difference (WMFCGC). Generation X is all for balance and diversity, are highly educated with high job expectations, and they are self reliant and suspicious of the Baby Boomer’s values (WMFCGC). Millennials are all for self achievement, civic duty and extreme fun, they are highly competitive, socialable, and spiritual and are considered the most educated of the generations (WMFCGC). This data is presented as a chart with each of the four generations described in various ways. This helps to learn more about the core values of the generations. With this information, people can better learn what drives the generations and what they find important. How does this help the generations connect and work together in the work place? When people understand each other’s core values and beliefs, it helps them to get a better perspective on why people act the way they do. They begin to understand that growing up in different times will affect the way a person acts and talks, specifically in the work place. When it comes to the work ethics of the generations, their values begin to change as the years progress. Traditionalists take up about five percent of the work place (WMFCGC). They are all about saving their money and buying things with cash (WMFCGC). They are very dedicated to completing the tasks they are given and getting the job done. One of the biggest things they believed in is “authority is based on seniority and tenure” (WMFCGC). Baby Boomers take up about forty-five percent of the work place. They are very driven and “Invented the fifty-hour work week” (WMFCGC). This generation is considered workaholics. They began to be “skeptical of authority but are becoming similar to traditionalists- time equals authority” (WMFCGC). This group was very “hesitant of taking too much time off work for fear of losing their place on the corporate team” (WMFCGC). Generation X is more balanced than the traditionalists and baby boomers. They “work smarter and with greater output” (WMFCGC). They are all for structure and direction and are more self-reliant. The generation is “skeptical of authority figures [and] will test authority repeatedly” (WMFCGC). Millennials take up only around ten percent of the current work place. They are thought to be ambitious and tenacious. There are more entrepreneurs in this generations who test authority figures but still look up to them for guidance (WMFCGC). They are very “effective workers but [are] gone [at] 5PM…” (WMFCGC). Potato potato potato pickle

How do these differences become enhanced by the change of every day language? Even with the extreme differences that separate the generations, it has never caused too much of a problem when looking at the work place. Does the ever changing way people speak make the generation gap bigger? Why is language changing at such a faster rate? According to the article “Is English changing?” written by Betty Birner language “changes because of the needs of its speakers change” (Birner). When text messaging was developed people began to use more short hand and abbreviations which eventually leaked out into every day use. Another reason Birner points out is that “no two people have had exactly the same language experience” (Birner). The author specifically states that age differences are a main reason for language dissimilarities. In on paragraph Birner writes that young people interacting with those their own age develops their own language which is believed to be even more true with the growing use of social media. Social media, such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Vine are most popular amongst the newer generations, specifically the millennials. Through these outlets, any new slang and phrases are able to quickly travel around the country and the world and become popular and more used by more people. However, this language development can only be true between those who use these outlets. Therefore, those who do not, do not typically learn of these language adaptations. This adds to the generational language differences that broadens the generation gap. However, the older generations are trying to use the advantages of social media and the “social media language” as a way to try and reach the younger generations. According to “5 ways that social media benefits writing and language” by Mallary Jean Tenore, journalists and advertisers are taking advantage of the short and to the point style of social media to do this (Mallary). This article explains several different forms of social media and the type of language each provides as well as how journalists use them to reach the younger generations (Mallary). This article helps to prove that by understanding other generations and learning of the language differences, they can better connect with each other in the same that learning another language and being bilingual helps to connect cultures and countries.

The conclusions which Greg Hammill discusses in “Mixing and Managing Four Generations of Employees”, add weight to the argument that arguments arise in the work place because generations have different views. “At work, generational differences can affect everything, including recruiting, building teams, dealing with change, motivating, managing, and maintaining and increasing productivity” (Hammill). This article shows research that prove generational backgrounds are the main cause for such differences, especially in their form of speech.

Bibliography

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