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Are Baby Boomers Still Relevant in the Workplace?

UXL, March 2015



Baby Boomers—that generation born between 1946 and 1964—have been questioning our worth a lot lately. The recession that began in about 2008 caught a lot of Boomers off guard and left many out of work or stagnating in their current positions. Additionally, the younger generations aren't so young anymore. The Gen-Xers (1965-1979) and the Millennials (1980-2000) are steadily taking over leadership and



supervisory positions and bringing new technology, new work styles, and new ways of thinking and problem-solving. **Where do all these changes leave the Boomers? Not irrelevant!**

Even though the typical workplace looks a lot different than it did in the '70s and '80s, many of the lessons Baby Boomers have learned during those decades remain relevant and valuable. But how to take advantage of these lessons? And how to adapt to the current workplace?

The key to staying relevant is to work efficiently with generations across the board. Put your judgments aside! **All generations have valuable attributes to offer.** One of *the* best things you can do, as a Boomer worker, is to understand both your strengths and weaknesses. Here are three important work categories (communication, work styles, and goals) where Boomers can both teach and learn. Keep in mind, no single generation “does it best.” They all have unique skill sets and plenty to learn from younger and older co-workers.

COMMUNICATION

What Boomers do best:

Baby Boomers grew up during a time when face-to-face communication was the only game in town. In-person meetings, networking luncheons, golf games with the boss—these things helped to strengthen Boomers’ communication skills and build confidence in their speaking and networking abilities. Today, with so many people communicating electronically, a lot of those communication skills are lost. If you mentor any younger employees, be sure to stress the power of clear, confident face-to-face communication.

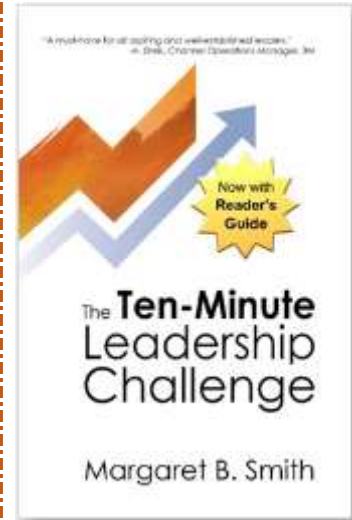
What Boomers can learn:

Sometimes Baby Boomers are accused to being inefficient and old-fashioned. While that critique may be harsh, Boomers can learn from it. Technology *does* have its place in the working world. Becoming adept at electronic communication means that you can reach more people in a given day and work more efficiently. Also, keep in mind that social media is here to stay. It is important to at least learn the basics of social media and why it is such an important marketing and communications tool for most businesses today.

WORK STYLES

What Boomers do best:

When most Baby Boomers started their careers, the economy was healthy, there were plenty of jobs, and most people expected to stay with one company for their entire lives. While that’s not necessarily realistic today, Boomers have learned a lot from this particular work



Have YOU Taken the Challenge?
[Available on Amazon.](#)

What Can YOU Achieve in 90 Days?



I recently learned from speaker and author David Horsager that 90 days is the "sweet spot" for making significant life changes. How can you make a 90-day plan? [Read on!](#)

No Excuses!



What does "No Excuses" mean to you? [Watch my](#)

style, particularly: loyalty, dedication, carving out a place for oneself within a company, and reliability. One of the great lessons Boomers can, and should, pass down to the younger generations is that of perseverance. Not everything is going to go perfectly *all* the time in your particular workplace and it's sometimes healthy to find ways to cope with or solve your problems (rather than jumping ship at the first sign of distress). That's not to say that younger generations job-hop without reason, but sometimes a situation might be remedied instead of totally scrapped.

What Boomers can learn:

One of the trends in the modern workplace is an emphasis on tasks, rather than hours. Especially in the Millennial generation, workers like to focus on particular tasks and do them as efficiently as possible, rather than focus on how to fill a 9-5 day. While this way of thinking may seem strange, it has plenty of advantages. Task-oriented workers with flexible hours tend to get work done in a shorter amount of time, perform better, and be happier than those who are constrained by rigid hours. What can Boomers learn from this work style? We can learn how to be efficient, flexible, and adaptable.

GOALS

What Boomers do best:

Typically, Baby Boomers are interested in job stability, salary and benefits, job titles, and a secure retirement. These are not bad goals (although they *do* sound a little boring to the younger generations!) and it is a good idea to mentor your younger peers on the importance of saving up for retirement. In an era when many companies are cutting back on salaries and benefits, younger employees could use any financial strategy advice they can get.

What Boomers can learn:

It's not all about the money. That's one huge lesson the younger generations are trying to teach us. Many young employees are less concerned about status symbols (a nice car, a big house, a large salary) and more concerned about company ethics and goals. They are also particularly concerned about having a healthy work-life balance and the majority (according to a 2012 study by Griffith Insurance Education Foundation) would take a pay cut if it meant more flexible hours or increased vacation time. Baby Boomers can learn from this mentality and realize that life really isn't "all about the money." Yes, it's great to have financial stability, but not if it means sacrificing ideals or a rich work-life balance.

[short video](#) to find out my thoughts on living and working excuse-free.

Millennials and Loyalty



Millennials often get a bad rap for job-hopping and disloyalty. But should we really write them off so quickly? [This post](#) looks at the Millennial workforce from a different angle.

**Bonus Post!
Millennials
Are Saying...**



We surveyed dozens of Millennials about their career paths, their ideal manager, why they job-hop, and what they *really* think about their generation. [Their answers](#) may surprise you!

Sincerely,



Margaret Smith

Founder, [UXL: Creating Successful Leaders](#)

Author of [The Ten-Minute Leadership Challenge](#)

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Date of actual consultation subject to availability.

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UXL

UXL's mission is to create leaders, promote positive change, and enable businesses and individuals to transform their dreams into reality.

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[Learn More about Margaret](#)



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