# PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES CONSIDERING GENERATIONAL THEORY

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A business cannot operate without a team. Whether it's executives or frontline employees, having staff is essential. While advancements in artificial intelligence make life easier, fully automating and digitalizing every process comes with high financial and long-term costs.

It is also important to highlight the severe shortage of personnel across nearly every industry due to the full-scale invasion. Over the past two years, the trend has shifted dramatically: the previous shortage of job openings has turned into a widespread lack of workers at all levels.

Today's businesses face unique challenges associated with generational diversity in the workforce. Line workforce management is becoming an increasingly challenging task since different generations, from baby boomers to Gen Z, have their own values, motivations, and work styles. The theory of generation allows for a deeper understanding of these differences and the development of effective management strategies taking into account the needs and expectations of each group.

The author will consider how the principles of the theory of generation can be integrated into management practices to improve interaction between employees, increase their motivation and productivity. An approach taking into account the diversity of generations will not only contribute to better team dynamics, but also help enterprises become more adaptable to changes in the external environment.

The theory of generations was formed as a result of the William Strauss and Neil Howe's research [3]. This theory is based on the comprehension of the generation as a group of people who were born in a certain time period, fell under the influence of the same events and features of upbringing, and also have similar values. The values determine the behavior of representatives of a particular generation. According to this theory, the following generations are currently represented: the Winners generation, the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomer generation, Generation X, the Millennial generation, or Y, and Generation Z. It gives the opportunities to make the following complementary conclusions:

– average life expectancy is 80 years and consists of 4 periods lasting about 20 years: childhood – youth – middle age – old age;

– a generation is a set of people who birth every 20 years;

– each generation experiences four transformations: rise – awakening – decline – crisis;

– the generation is considered dominant or recessive depending on the transformation that it experienced in youth;

– dominant behavior is independent behavior and the main role in the formation of the epoch [1,4].

The contemporary business environment is dynamic and constantly changing, which causes the need to adapt management strategies for effective management of the organization. In this context, the theory of generations becomes an important tool for understanding the needs and motivations of employees of different age groups.

The theory of generations assumes that different age groups have unique values, beliefs, motives formed under the influence of social, economic and cultural factors. According to this theory, contemporary society can be conditionally divided into four main generations acting as "players" in the labor market (Table 1):

1. The Baby Boomer Generation (BB) (1946-1964) are committed to career advancement and are often achievement-oriented leaders.

2. Generation "X" (1965-1980) appreciates the balance between work and personal life, have adaptability to change.

3. Generation "Y" (1981-1996) actively use technologies focused on teamwork and values related to changes in the world.

4. Generation "Z" (1997-2012) is the youngest generation growing up in the context of globalization and digitalization [2,5].

Table 1

The main characteristics of the four "players" of generations in the contemporary labor market

| Generations | Values [5] | Main features [6] | Main motives for looking for a job | The situation on the labor market in 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| BB | Work is the first, they are ready to sacrifice their own interests for the sake of work. | Optimism, interest in personal growth and remuneration, collectivism and team spirit | Loyalty and stability, professional reputation, knowledge transfer | Looking for themselves in new areas, not ready to leave the labor market |
| X | Workaholics, Not too ambitious. Those who do not seek to live for your pleasure | Willingness to change, ability to choose, technical literacy, individualism, pragmatism, Hope for yourself | Financial stability, career growth, work-life balance | Occupy most of the leadership positions in long-developed areas |
| Y | Tied to digital technologies at work, tend to value their own time and interests, no fear of losing their job | Self-confidence variety, balance between personal life and labor activity, ability to work in a team, using modern technical means | Search for meaning, development and learning, technological capabilities | They make up a larger share of the labor market and are a stable part of it. |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Z | Tied to digital technologies and work, tend to value their own time and interests, absent fear of losing job; | Aggressiveness, conflict, the need for novelty, virtual communication, hyperactivity | Flexibility and online work, social responsibility, diversity and inclusion | New players in the market who try to dictate conditions and easily adapt to new areas in which they become tops |

Overall, successful management by different generations at work requires openness, flexibility, and a willingness to take into account the unique needs of each one. This helps not only to increase productivity, but also to strengthen the team. Therefore, we offer several strategies that help in managing personnel of different generations (Table 2).

Table 2

Strategies for successful behavior with different generations of employees

| Baby boomers | Generation X | Generation Y | Generation Z |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Respect experience and knowledge: value their skills; ask for help, ask for questions | 1. Recognition of experience: value their skills; involve in mentoring: | 1. Open and honest dialogue: regular feedback; involve in decision-making | 1. Creating an open environment: involve in discussions; openness to feedback |
| 2. Offer clear technological solutions: adaptation to new tools | 2. Flexibility in management style: balance between control and autonomy; structuring | 2. Opportunities for training and development: investment in training; mentorship programs | 2. Flexibility and autonomy: flexible schedule; independence in decision-making |
| 3. Apply a personalized approach: individual work style and your own priorities | 3. Communication: open communication; constructive feedback | 3. Flexibility and balance: flexible work schedule; the importance of balance | 3. Technological integration: use of new technologies; learning new tools |
| 4. Openness to feedback: transparent communication and objective feedback | 4. Learning opportunities: professional development; training in new technologies | 4. Meaning and purpose: explain the mission of the company; social responsibility | 4. Meaning and purpose: the meaning of the work; social responsibility |
| 5. Provide an environment for mentoring and collaboration: implementation of mentoring programs | 5. Work-life balance: maintaining balance; flexible schedule | 5. Technological adaptation: use and learning new programs and technologies | 5. Opportunities for learning and development: continuous learning; mentoring |
| 6. Express appreciation and recognition of achievements to maintain team spirit | 6. Teamwork: supporting collaboration; informal events | 6. Teamwork: promoting team interaction; social activities | 6. Interaction and team: teamwork; social activities |

| 7. Maintain professional ethics and stability: honest and professional communication | 7. Recognition of achievements: regular recognition and winemaking | 7. Recognition and encouragement: continuous recognition; flexible reward system | 7. Recognition and motivation: timely praise; competitions and awards |
|---|---|---|---|

Generation Z is characterized by a strong commitment to personal growth, social justice, and self-actualization. In contrast, millennials prioritize professional development but also seek meaningful work and social interaction. Generation X values stability, career advancement, and recognition for their contributions. Meanwhile, ensuring effective communication and addressing the needs of baby boomers fosters a supportive and efficient work environment, enhancing their engagement and loyalty to organizational processes.

In the contemporary business landscape, frontline personnel management necessitates a flexible approach that accounts for the diverse values, motivations, and work styles of different generational cohorts. Generational theory provides managers with insights into employees' expectations, enabling the efficient integration of their expertise. A key factor in fostering a cohesive workplace is the establishment of an inclusive corporate culture that promotes intergenerational collaboration. Additionally, the implementation of both tangible and intangible motivational strategies is essential. By aligning personnel management practices with generational characteristics, organizations can enhance productivity, reduce employee turnover, and cultivate a more positive and cooperative workplace atmosphere.

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