How to navigate multiple generational workforce

Best practices to consider:

Restructure recruitment strategies

avoid age discriminating formulations, use a variety of communication channels to distribute vacancy information.

Individualize your approach

ask and learn employees of their preferred workstyles and arrangements and be prepared to "meet people where they are."

Adopt varying communication styles

don't discount one style of communication over the other, instead combine all communication preferences to create a robust communication campaign.

Revisit feedback delivery channels

some prefer ongoing feedback while others prefer structured feedback. Create a formula which strikes a balance between both groups and form an effective performance management system.

Age diverse project teams

harness the power of synergy and leverage each generational strength. They provide balance in technology and experience which make for effective

Challenge harmful stereotypes.

There lies real value in understanding the realities of each generation and the experiences which have made them who they are and build their value system. Understanding these nuances help us see the other point of view clearly and understand, not necessarily agree or conform.

Example:

- Pandemic job entrants could prefer remote working and communicating digitally, over a physical workplace
- A job entrant in the 2008/9 recession era would value job security, routine and a physical 9-5 job.

    Both justified viewpoints.

Communicate your preferences openly.

Discussing preference when it comes to modes of communication, and finding a midway point helps manage expectations and needless conflict.

Example:
- A generation may value face-to-face conversation they place a value on building relationships
- Another generation may place value on efficiency and quick resolutions via email or instant messaging.

Both approaches work, but there are instances where one is better than the other. The key is to set clear expectations and processes for when each of the communication channels is appropriate and expected to bring a closure to a project.

Respect boundaries.

Some generations are conservative when discussing sensitive issues like race, ethnicity, gender, sex, sexual orientation, religion, dis/ability, class, personality, and educational background, while certain generations are progressive and vocal. Be sensitive to these nuances.

Don't play favorites.

In creating a culture where everyone is willing to teach and learn, and in some cases unlearn from each other, facilitate an inclusive decision-making process of structured approach that encourages dialogue, and ensures every voice is heard. Asking probing respectful questions to establish the point of view of everyone is a great way to do this, and even though you may identify with the ideals of one generation more, get all the input and make an informed decision.

All you need to bridge a generation gap is flexibility and curiosity! We need to adopt the viewpoint that we are not working with generations but with people. Accepting that everyone's perspective regardless of age adds dimension to a vantage point is a powerful driver in a multigenerational workforce.

Instead of perpetuating an "us versus them" dynamic at work, let's change the narrative moving forward.