|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | |
|  | **Explain how employees' needs and expectations may change with age and family patterns. Compare the definition of the term "family" used today with that of the 1950s.**  So what is the difference between the workplace and family of the 1950s and today?  As Jennifer Buckett writes in her article published on web site, www.helium.com, ‘Compared to the 1950s, modern society does not value family nearly as much, due to the replacement of time spent as a family with time spent using media technology. Family is the main vessel through which morals and values are passed down, and therefore, a decline in time spent as a family can lead to inferior morals and values continuing to the next generation. In the 1950s, family dinners were an occasion to sit down with family members, enjoy a home-cooked meal and discuss life. This was a time of day when the rest of the world stopped and the focus was entirely on family. Wholesome morals and values relevant to the happenings of the day were often discussed and taught to children at this time. In the infancy the table with family lost its priority as dinner in front of the television became routine.  As family dinners were replaced by television, the vessel through which morals and values were taught shifted from family to the media. Television shows are the teachers now, and as television shows became more promiscuous and corrupt throughout the decades, so did the morals and values they taught. The present generation has grown up completely accepting of what they learn in the media because there is nothing to contest it. Family members don't have the time to teach such trivialities as honor, pride, and self-respect anymore. As women branched out of the house and entered the workplace, women's lives became more hectic. Consequentially, parents had less time to interact with their children, passing on advice and morals. Children turned to technology as a way to replace their parents and they started watching more and more television.  Technology and the media will always play a huge role in society: delivering entertainment, creating national idols, and teaching morals and values to new generations. In the 1950s, the majority of morals and values were endowed to children from family members, preserving the integrity and pureness of those beliefs. Nowadays, the family unit has been dethroned, being replaced by the media, especially television, and the celebrities within it. Children are taught morals and values through their exposure to the media, rather than through family, causing an inconsistency in ideas over generations. Ideology and actions that were once taboo in the 1950s are now tolerable in everyday life, due to the fact that this generation has been taught by the media that they are acceptable. With each new generation, the morals and values that are taught seem to be continuously more corrupt that those before them, leading to an increasingly wild and demoralized society that follows.’ (Buckett, 2007)  So how does America act with each new generation that is entering the workplace?  For the first in history, we are now dealing with four generations of human beings working together in one locale.  This in itself presents numerous problems as each generation (age group) brings its own set of values to a workplace.  Our workforce now contains four very distinct set of values and each generation needs to be treated in a different way in order for our vastly different age groups to gel and form a cohesive team.  These four generations are:  Radio Babies: born 1930 - 1945  Baby Boomers: born 1946 – 1964  Generation X: born 1965 – 1976  Generation Y: born 1977 – 1990(Buhrow, n.d.)  The term ‘family’ means something different to each of these generations; what one age group values, is not necessarily deemed as valuable by another.  **What are the implications of these changes for Human Resource managers?**  As an article published on the web site, www.kileyadvisors.com explores, we as Human Resource specialists must be able to understand what the values of each of these age groups is when they enter our workplaces.  ‘Having four generations in the workplace has created a new set of challenges employers have had to face for the first time. Four very different upbringings have cultivated four very different perceptions.  In looking at the Radio Babies, events such as World War II and the Space Age have shaped their perceptions, and the generation is often stereotyped as being conservative, fiscally prudent and loyal. These traits come from being raised by parents who had just survived the Great Depression.  The Baby Boomers were shaped by the Cold War, Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam and are often stereotyped as being ambitious, greedy and materialistic. This is a result of many pursuing the “American Dream” promised to them as children.  Generation X grew up with Watergate, dual income families and single parents and is characterized as being independent, cautious and flighty. Their perceptions were shaped by growing up having to take care of themselves early and watching their politicians lie and their parents get laid off.  Finally, Generation Y grew up with school shootings, terrorist attacks and AIDS and is characterized as being impatient, expressive and ambitious. This group hopes to be the next great generation and to turn around all the “wrong” they see in the world today. (Buhrow, n.d.)  Ms. Buhrow continues in her article, ‘Every generation brings these perceptions to the workplace; they translate into their values and attitudes toward work. And, in this time when there truly is a “War for Talent”, understanding these differences can give your company a competitive edge.  In looking to retain the different generations, tailoring is key. Younger generations are asking for a work/life balance, seen by the increased popularity of working from home and flex-time. They look for these benefits because they don’t want to miss their children’s lives like many feel their parent’s missed. Additionally, many wish to be more proactive in the community, whether through religious or non-profit work.  The older generations also would like a work/life balance, though for very different reasons. Many seasoned workers would like to work part-time or more flex-time rather than fully retiring. By having flexibility in their work, they can have the vacations and downtime they have earned, while still contributing to society and maintaining their current lifestyle, financially.  Catering to the work/life balance needs of workers can be a great benefit to employers as well, since they are able to keep their experienced workforce around longer to mentor and train the younger generations, and they can save some money on space needed for the workers who choose to work from home.  Benefits Packages can also be tailored to the needs of workers. Older generations may be more interested in assisted living care whereas the younger generations find daycare assistance more appealing. Longer vacation time, job-sharing opportunities, and training and development appeal to all the generations though for different reasons. For instance, with training and development, the older generations want to keep up with the younger generations while the younger generations are looking for ways to develop personally and professionally.  For employers, it is important to avoid stereotyping their employees. For instance, old dogs CAN learn new tricks. In fact, many of the Boomers and Radio Babies jump at the opportunity for continued learning, and can become more proficient than the younger generations in some cases. Computer programs and wireless devices are good examples.  Employers should also take note that creativity and ethics are still present in the younger generations, though it may be packaged a little differently. The tattoos and body piercings displayed on many young workers today are a way for them to express themselves. And many are task-oriented rather than time-oriented, so they feel that the focus should be on the results and not the process by which they get there. Because of this, many do not feel they need to be in the office from 8 to 5 as long as their goals are met and the customers are satisfied. Furthermore, the younger generations do not feel they should have to “wait their turn” to be recognized or promoted, but rather they expect advancement, recognition and increased responsibility if they have the skills.  Three important things to remember when trying to build a bridge between the different generations in your workplace are:  1.      One size does not fit all – remember to tailor to individual needs. They all want respect and flexibility; however that means something different to each generation.  2.       Understand and draw upon each generations unique perspective and experiences – In doing so, you will have a broader pool of ideas and views which will help to create and maintain a competitive advantage   3.      Position your company as one that values and embraces diversity – by building a brand of valuing diversity you will attract the best from all generations. (Buhrow, n.d.)  **From your personal perspective, describe a discrepancy in pay that would be legitimate?**  I find this is one of the most difficult questions that I have had to answer during this course.  Personally, I would say that no form of discrepancy in pay would be legitimate.  I like many others would argue that those with higher education should be paid more than those employees without.  I would then argue that they are many people in the work force who are paid based on experience; this married to education would then create another pay band if discrepancy pay was to be deemed as legitimate.  After my ramblings, I can conclude, as I did last week with the gender pay discrepancies, that any form of discrepancy is wrong.  Kev…  Sources:  Buckett, J. (2007, September 23). *www.helium.com*. Retrieved April 5, 2011, from Values and morals in American society: The 1950s versus today : http://www.helium.com/items/610190-values-and-morals-in-american-society-the-1950s-versus-today?page=2  Buhrow, C. (n.d.). *www.kileyadvisors.com.* Retrieved April 5, 2011, from Four Generations in the Workplace: http://www.kileyadvisors.com/publications/Generations%20in%20the%20Workplace%202008.pdf | |

KNor