

## GENERATIONS: WHO ARE THEY?<sup>1</sup>

In the United States, five generations are now represented among adults active in work and community life. These are:

	<b>TRADITIONALIST</b> <i>before 1945 and before<sup>2</sup></i> a.k.a. “Greatest Generation”, Silent, Veterans, Builder	<b>BABY BOOMER</b> ~1946-1964 a.k.a. Me Generation, Woodstock Generation	<b>GEN X</b> ~1965 -1980 a.k.a. Generation X, Busters, Post-Boomers	<b>MILLENNIAL</b> ~1981- 1995 a.k.a. Generation Y, Nexters, the Internet Generation	<b>GEN Z</b> ~1996 - a.k.a. i Gen, Centennials
<b>Defining Events &amp; Trends</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Depression</li> <li>• World War II</li> <li>• New Deal</li> <li>• Korean War</li> <li>• Rural Life</li> <li>• Automobiles</li> <li>• Telephones – party lines</li> <li>• Golden Age of Radio</li> <li>• Big Band music, Glenn Miller</li> <li>• The Silver Screen</li> <li>• Labor unions</li> <li>• Family-School-Faith</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prosperity</li> <li>• Space race</li> <li>• Cold War</li> <li>• The First TVs</li> <li>• Suburbia</li> <li>• Civil Rights &amp; women’s movements</li> <li>• Viet Nam</li> <li>• Kennedy &amp; MLK Jr Assassinations</li> <li>• Rock ‘n’ Roll, Beatles. Elvis (Presley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenger Disaster</li> <li>• Fall of Berlin Wall, Glasnost</li> <li>• Energy Crisis</li> <li>• Stagflation</li> <li>• Latchkey kids</li> <li>• Single parents</li> <li>• AIDS</li> <li>• Computers</li> <li>• Wall Street frenzy</li> <li>• Video, Computer Games</li> <li>• MTV, Disco, Punk, U2</li> <li>• Michael Jordan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech Boom: Computers, e-mail, internet &amp; cell phones</li> <li>• Columbine, Oklahoma City. 9/11</li> <li>• Reality TV</li> <li>• “It Takes a Village”.</li> <li>• Multiculturalism</li> <li>• Princess Diana</li> <li>• Tiger Woods</li> <li>• School debt</li> <li>• Grunge, Alt Rock</li> <li>• Mark McGwire, Sammy Sosa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tech revolution – on the grid 24/7</li> <li>• I pads, smartphones</li> <li>• Helicopter parenting</li> <li>• Obama</li> <li>• Terrorism and Endless wars – Afghanistan, Iraq</li> <li>• Recession – 2008+</li> <li>• Media on demand = streaming TV, music, movies</li> </ul>
<b>Popularized Characteristics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duty, honor, country</li> <li>• Loyalty</li> <li>• Conformity. Blending. Unity. Patience</li> <li>• Hard times, then prosperity.</li> <li>• National Pride</li> <li>• Doing a Good Job</li> <li>• Age = seniority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work ethic = worth ethic</li> <li>• Success is visible</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> <li>• Consumers</li> <li>• Defined by job</li> <li>• Personal Development</li> <li>• Health and Wellness – retain youthfulness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent, Self-reliant</li> <li>• Desire for Stability</li> <li>• Diversity</li> <li>• Thinking globally</li> <li>• Techno-literacy</li> <li>• Friend of parents</li> <li>• Informality</li> <li>• Cynical. Pragmatic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optimistic</li> <li>• Individualistic, yet group oriented</li> <li>• Social Commitment</li> <li>• Digital Native</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Instant results; constant feedback</li> <li>• Skill gaps</li> <li>• Lower expectations &amp; confidence</li> <li>• Global mindset - local reality</li> <li>• Infinite diversity unique to them</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Sources: Fry, R (2015, May 11), Millennials surpass genXers as the largest generation in U.S. labor force. Retrieved from [http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/11/millennials-surpass-gen-xers-as-the-largest-generation-in-u-s-labor-force/ft\\_15-05-11\\_millennialsdefined/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/11/millennials-surpass-gen-xers-as-the-largest-generation-in-u-s-labor-force/ft_15-05-11_millennialsdefined/); Center for Generational Kinetics (n.d.) Generational Breakdown: Info about all of the generations. Retrieved from <http://genhq.com/FAQ-info-about-generations/>; Lancaster, Lynne C. & David Stillman, (2002) *When Generations Collide*, New York: Harper Business; Zemke, Ron, Claire Raines, & Bob Filipczak,(2000) *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*, New York: AMACOM.

<sup>2</sup> NOTE: Years for generations vary slightly among scholars and practitioners.