



5 Generations: A Look in the Mirror

EXCERPTS FROM AN INSIGHT180 INDUSTRY SURVEY

July 2018

About the Survey



insight180 is forever curious – especially about forces and trends that shape companies' cultures and brands.

GOAL: We wanted to learn more about the impact of having, for the first time ever, four generations (sometimes five!) in the workplace.

TIMING: The survey was open from March 28 through April 3, 2018.

APPROACH: We used a non-scientific approach to solicit participation for this online survey. One leader of a local (Howard County, Maryland) community of business leaders agreed to invite members to participate. We also used emails and social media to invite colleagues, friends and family to respond.

PARTICIPANTS: We asked that respondents had professional workplace experience within the last five years.

RESPONSES: 97 people participated, with at least one person from each of the five generations.

Five Generations – Forces that Shaped Each



World events, cultural norms and media helped to shape key characteristics of each generation.

	Traditionalists b. 1925 – 1945	Baby Boomers b. 1946 – 1964	Generation X b. 1965 – 1979	Millennials b. 1980 – 1994	Generation Z b. 1995 – 2014
Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Came of age during WWI, New Deal or Korean War• Parents lived through the Great Depression• Experienced hard times growing up, followed by prosperity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Led the Civil Rights movement and the sexual revolution• Protested Vietnam War• Highest divorce rate ever• Expected the American Dream	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lying politicians (Watergate)• Parents laid off from work• Latchkey kids of dual-income parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Economic recession, then boom, then bust• (Often divorced) parents kept kids busy and protected from disappointment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experienced 9/11, the War on Terror, global financial crisis• Globalism• Multiracial kids, some growing up with same-sex parents
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most grew up listening to radio at home• Among the first to have TVs in their homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergence of portable radios and color TV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology to entertain (console games, Sesame Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MTV, CNN• Emergence of the Internet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PC, smart phones, web, social media• Netflix• GPS
3 Defining Traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patient• Loyal• Task-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team-oriented• Calm in a crisis• Strong work ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal• Self-reliant• Balancing work and time off	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confident• Hotly competitive• Self-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accepting of differences• Entrepreneurial• Wired



How the Generations See Themselves

EXCERPTS FROM SURVEY RESPONSES AND RESULTS

QUESTION



Fill in the blanks: I'm proud that my generation is known for _____,
but disappointed that it is also known for _____.

Representative Responses

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
I'm PROUD that my generation is known for _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard work; work ethic• Prosperity; success• Activism; making a difference; rebelliousness• Unity; team oriented• Women having careers; bringing women into the workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking on racism; inclusion; open-mindedness• Ability to adjust to change in tech; technology know how; technology advancements• Music videos; such good music!• Practicality and toughness; stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activism; standing up for our rights; changing the world for good• Technology advancement; technology in the workplace• Acceptance of diversity; open minds• Work to live and not live to work; being dedicated parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Activism; march for our lives• Ease of technology usage• Innovation
I'm DISAPPOINTED that it is also known for _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being stuck on traditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chasing dollars; materialistic; excessive lifestyle• We started the drug culture; meaningless sex and drugs• Haven't passed independence along to kids; neglect of our children (in daycare)• Vietnam	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compliance; conformity; not an activist generation; slow to take on important issues• Debt; lack of pensions; lack of preparing for future• Self-absorption; slackers; self-centered behavior; greed; selfishness• Children of divorce• Too focused on work; Career first, family second	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being addicted to technology; being so reliant on technology• Immaturity; needing hand-holding; lack of responsibility; being unable to handle adversity• Entitlement attitude; wanting everything now; complaining• Lazy; laziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having our heads stuck in our phones; dumb internet trends• Laziness• Little work ethic

QUESTION



Fill in the blank: I've noticed that my generation is unfairly stereotyped as

_____.

Representative Responses

Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Old• Unwilling to listen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Out of touch with the younger generation; not caring about the younger generation• The ME generation; selfish; narcissistic; materialistic• Difficulty embracing or understanding computer technology• Stuffy; aloof; know-it-alls• Out of touch with social media; out of touch• Male chauvinists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selfish; apathetic• Complainers• Unimportant; the in-between generation; meaningless• Disaffected• Materialistic; spoiled• Being boring; shallow• Lazy and self-centered; slackers• Disappointing; we haven't moved the needle as fast as the next generation would like	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lazy and unmotivated• Poor performers• Too focused on social media• Privileged snowflakes• Needing hand holding, encouragement and recognition for everything we do; being coddled and dependent• Immature; naive• Do not respect elders• Self-absorbed• Spoiled; entitled; arrogant; whiny• Not good communicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indecisive• Entitled• Spoiled• Too lazy to work

QUESTION



Which of the following traits best apply to professionals in your generation?

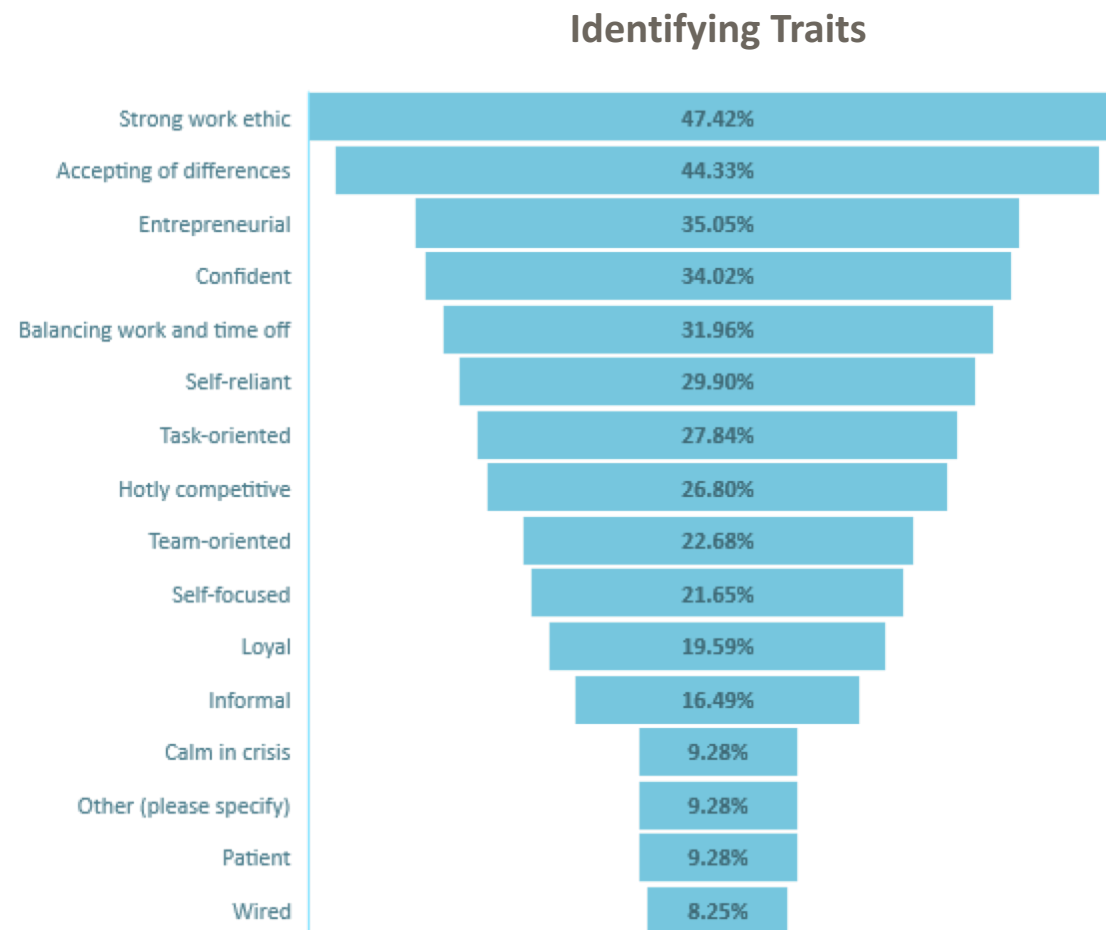
Participants were invited to select three traits.

Top Three Responses

- Strong work ethic
- Accepting of differences
- Entrepreneurial

Bottom Three Responses

- Calm in a crisis
- Patient
- Wired



Which of the following traits best apply to professionals in your generation?



Comparison of the Top Responses and Defining Traits* for each Generation

	Traditionalists	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Top Responses, by Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calm in a crisis• Loyal• Strong work ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong work ethic• Loyal• Task-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-reliant• Strong work ethic• Accepting of differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accepting of differences• Balancing work and time off• Entrepreneurial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accepting of differences• Balancing work and time off• Task oriented
Defining Traits for each Generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patient• Loyal• Task-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team-oriented• Calm in a crisis• Strong work ethic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal• Self-reliant• Balancing work and time off	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confident• Hotly competitive• Self-focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accepting of differences• Entrepreneurial• Wired

For the survey, we included three traits used to define each generation, **from this source, published by Sandra Rudd in [issuu.com](https://www.issuu.com).*



Observations

THREE SURPRISING THINGS WE LEARNED

Top Traits



Within each generation, there was high agreement around which traits are most favorably and unfavorably associated with that generation. Even if participants didn't identify with a generation, they were aware of the stereotypes.



Strong Work Ethic



Though “strong work ethic” is traditionally most strongly associated with Baby Boomers, participants from every generation cited this trait as one they associate with their own generation.



Accepting of Differences



Accepting of Differences is most often associated with our youngest generation, Generation Z. Yet, it was one of the top three traits selected by Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z to describe their own generation.



Thank you

We hope you find it just as informative and interesting as we did!

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