

ROLE AND TASKS FOR EACH GENERATION

Differences in how generations approach leadership are based not only on each cohort's experiences but also on their stage of life. How they view themselves and the world changes as they age and approach different development tasks, with each change affecting work, family life, and the general sense of what is needed for well-being. Each generation's leadership tasks in social sector work reflects their stage of life and the unique circumstances of their age cohort.

GENERATIONAL STAGE	LEADERSHIP TASK
Millennials: DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on how to apply learning and ideas to work setting. • Acquire skills in work. • Practice critical analysis of the world as it is versus what it claims to be. • Generate ideas of different approaches to the work.
Generation X: ESTABLISHMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand assumptions about making change. • Solidify and extend relationships. • Stretch to incorporate new skills and deepen understanding of work. • Find or create opportunities to implement ideas.
Baby Boomers: ASSESSMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stock of areas of influence and power. • Use influence, experience, and relationships to make change • Reflect on learning, and consolidate to pass on to others. • Promote promising leadership to support the next phase of work.
Veterans of Change: CONTRIBUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take stock of areas of influence and power. • Use influence, experience, and relationships to make change • Reflect on learning, and consolidate to pass on to others. • Promote promising leadership to support the next phase of work.

Adapted from *Working Across Generations* (© 2009 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

These skills and development tasks summarize each generation's primary identification now. Different generations of non-profit leadership also have specific roles to play in relation to other generations. The table below outlines the ways that each generation reacts to the others and the support and challenges they can offer.

Though these roles are not fixed, they can provide a way to understand how each generation is needed to build and solidify ongoing leadership and press social sector work forward. The ability to recognize different generations' leadership trajectory provides a guide for how to view our differences.

GENERATIONAL ROLE	WHAT WE DO FOR OTHER GENERATIONS
<p>Millennials: LEARN AND CONFRONT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn from Gen X and baby boomers both the content of the work and the way it is currently done. • Confront (and respect) older generations, especially Gen X and baby boomers, by raising new ways to do the work. • Make mistakes; learn from experience.
<p>Generation X: SUPPORT AND PUSH</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of millennials, and learn from their ideas. Expect pressure from them to institute new ways to do the work. • Push up against baby boomers with both content knowledge and experience from a decade in the field. • Partner with baby boomers to move work ahead and make needed changes.
<p>Baby Boomers: PARTNER AND CHALLENGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Generation X, bringing them into leadership, including giving them significant responsibility and authority, while challenging and pushing them to build leadership skills. • Encourage millennials through acknowledgment and attention. • Acknowledge the work of veterans of change generation and assure them their legacy will be carried on.
<p>Veterans of Change: CONTRIBUTION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mentor Generation X and millennials by listening to their grievances and supporting their desire to make change. • Remind baby boomers that though they are now in power, they should start to prepare the next generation of leadership. • Offer honest assessments of recent history, and remind others of values and elements of change.

Adapted from *Working Across Generations* (© 2009 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc.)

LEADING AT ALL LEVELS

Older long-term nonprofit leaders want to continue contributing to the common good in meaningful social purpose work, in paid or volunteer roles, after they leave their current positions. While they want to keep working in the social sector, they are not looking for comparable leadership positions. Instead, they want to work in different ways where they are less in charge and have more flexibility and fewer responsibilities.

At the same time, younger leaders are struggling to fill specific highly-skilled roles, while also wanting time and space to reflect on their larger vision for change and how to achieve impact at a much larger scale than they can currently do at the local level. Base building and leadership development remain important, and all these things take time.

Millenials want to gain as much experience as possible in as many places that allow them to learn. This requires flexible organizations with lots of different types of positions, time commitments, and responsibilities. By tapping the unique skills and talents of each generation, many of these needs can be met.

LEADERSHIP TOOLS

The exercises and reports in this section of *Leadership Tools* will explore individual leadership tasks and roles, and help users come together in support of the part each person has to play. From Baby Boomers to Millennials, each generation has to be mindful of the road ahead. Boomers should get in the habit of sharing organizational history, while Gen Xers and Millennials should focus their attention on skill development.

In the next section, trust and transparency are examined. One of the biggest factors in successfully working across generations is to constantly be building and practicing trust.