

Generations

M.E.E.T. for Respect in the Workplace

Preview Only

Facilitator Resources

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What is a Generation?

A “generation” is defined as a group of people born and living about the same time. Within each generation, its members share values, behaviors and work ethics that have been shaped by the economic, social and political climates in which they come of age. Thus, from one generation to another, there are significant differences in “world view” and work styles. These generation “gaps” sometimes lead to misunderstanding, miscommunication, conflict and the corresponding loss of productivity.

While their labels and time spans are debated, each generation is the product of its time and displays a unique set of characteristics. It is important to remember that each individual is unique and will not necessarily identify with or reflect these characteristics. The following is a quick overview of the current generations in the workforce:

Traditionalists:

Born prior to the end of World War II (1925–1942), this group also is referred to as *Veterans, Builders or the Silent Generation*. Although many in this group are now at or past the age of retirement, they are staying in the workforce longer, reflecting both the need for their skills and the impact of such laws as the *Age Discrimination in Employment Act*. Research and scientific organizations in particular have growing numbers of employees in their 70s who have no immediate plans to retire. For this generation, longevity with one employer is seen as a positive measure of success. Restaurant and retail organizations are aggressively seeking workers from this group, viewed as stable, reliable and drug-free.

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Baby Boomers:

Born between 1943 and 1960, this generation has shaped American society since its inception. Baby Boomers experienced the societal “firsts” of desegregation and integration, as well as other significant political and cultural changes. Now in their 50s and early 60s, Boomers are characterized by optimism and a reluctance to grow old. They currently dominate the ranks of senior management in organizations and positions of power in established political institutions. The first wave of retiring Boomers is redefining the meaning of “old” and the concept of retirement in our society.

Generation X:

Born between 1961 and 1981, Gen Xers also have been called *Baby Busters* and the *13th Generation*. Now in their mid-20s to early 40s, they grew up in the culture created by the Baby Boomers—self-indulgent, mobile and materialistic. They are knowledgeable workers who have been influenced by technology, as well as by shifts in family and societal trends, including divorce, two-income households and gender, racial and ethnic diversity. Given this worldview, their values tend toward individualism and self-reliance.

Generation Y:

Those born between 1982 and 2002 have received multiple labels, among them *Gen-Next*, *Nexters*, *Millennials*, the *Digital* or *Net Generation* and the *Mosaic Generation*. Currently in their early 20s and younger, Gen Y is entering the workforce in significant numbers. As a group, they are more diverse and globally oriented and more knowledgeable of computers and technology than any preceding generation. This also is reflected in the ways in which they learn and work (e.g., multitasking, use of multimedia, etc.). This group is actually a

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larger demographic than the Baby Boomers and is predicted to have an equally distinct impact on society and the workplace.

Cuspers

Also important to note are *Cuspers*, those born near the end of one generation or the beginning of the next. They may identify with one of the generations they overlap but can share the characteristics of either and relate well to the generations they fall between.

The following table provides a thumbnail sketch of each generation. Under the column heading “Stereotyped as” is a sampling of the negative traits often associated with one generation by the members of other generations. The terms are included to highlight how employees of different generations can stereotype and misunderstand one another’s actions and intentions.

Generation	Born between	Characteristics	Stereotyped as
Traditionalists	1925–1942	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardworking & Dedicated • Respectful of rules and authority • Conservative & Traditional 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old-fashioned • Behind-the-times • Rigid/Autocratic • Change/Risk averse
Baby Boomers	1943–1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a youthful self-identity • Optimistic • Team players • Competitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-centered • Unrealistic • Political • Power-driven • Workaholics
Generation X	1961–1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced (work/life quality) • Self-reliant • Pragmatic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slackers • Selfish • Impatient • Cynical
Generation Y	1982–2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast-paced • Multitaskers • Fun-seeking • Technology-savvy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a short attention span • Spoiled/Disrespectful • Technology-dependent

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For more information about generations, download the VisionPoint Perspective, *Generations: Harnessing the Potential of the Multigenerational Workforce*, found in the online resources at www.visionpoint.com.

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History of M.E.E.T.

F.A.I.R.

Feedback
Assistance
Inclusion
Respect

M.E.E.T.

Make time to discuss
Explore differences
Encourage respect
Take responsibility

Since 1992, the F.A.I.R. model has been helping to bring about a profound shift in the way hundreds of private and public sector organizations approach EEO, affirmative action and inclusion in the workplace. No longer do their employees view these issues only through the lens of laws and regulations; rather, they see them within the context of fairness, integrity and respect. F.A.I.R. offers practical ways to be fair in day-to-day interactions; compliance comes as a natural result of the workplace culture that emerges.

M.E.E.T. gained momentum in 2000 as an extension of F.A.I.R. to provide a behavioral skills model specifically for resolving conflicts driven by cultural differences—differences that traditional conflict resolution and problem-solving models do not take into account. M.E.E.T. is based on research into stress-reducing communications, helping to minimize the “fight or flight” response and encouraging calm, considered discussion of conflicts that arise from diversity dynamics.

Combined, F.A.I.R. and M.E.E.T. provide a complete curriculum for organizations making the shift from reactive to proactive management of inclusion. These proven, best practice models help support high-performing

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teams, foster collaboration and drive innovation for a powerful competitive advantage.

To see a list of programs that incorporate F.A.I.R. and M.E.E.T., see *Suggestions for Additional Diversity and Communications Training* on page 62 or contact the Trainer *TALK™* helpline at 800-300-8880 x302 or trainer@visionpoint.com.

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Suggestions for Prework

Assigning prework before the workshop can help engage participants in the workshop content even before they arrive. If you would like to include prework as part of the workshop design, we have included some suggestions below for integrating prework into the workshop.

Suggestion #1

Provide a copy of VisionPoint's Perspective Paper, *Generations: Harnessing the Potential of the Multigenerational Workforce* (available as an online resource at www.visionpoint.com) as prereading material. During introductions, ask everyone to share what they found most interesting and what they'd like to learn more about. [Option: Provide a copy of the cross word puzzle based on the perspective (also available as an online resource). The puzzle can also be used as an energizer activity during a break, formed as a competition (e.g., the first person or first team done wins a prize).]

Suggestion #2

Provide a copy of the *Generations Word Search* (available as an online resource at www.visionpoint.com) as prework. During introductions or early in the session, ask everyone to share thoughts, ideas, emotions or questions they have about the words and phrases they found. This word search can also be used as an energizer activity during a break, formed as a competition (e.g. first person or first team done wins a prize).

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SMART-START® Activity

Using the SMART-START®: Bridging the Gap Video

Time it takes: 30–35 minutes (15 minutes prior to session start time, 15–20 minutes after session begins)

What it is about: Opening the session on a positive note

What you will need:

- Video: *SMART-START® Generations: Bridging the Gap*
- Index cards with three questions written on them

How to do it:



1. Fifteen minutes prior to the session start time and while participants are arriving, have the *SMART-START®* video playing. If you are using the DVD, set the control to automatically loop. If you are using the VHS, the video will repeat itself at least four times.
2. When you are ready to begin your session, turn the video off and explain that you will refer to it in a few minutes. Then use this activity as part of your introduction after the participants have introduced themselves (either to conclude Step 1 or during Step 2).

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Optional Activity 1 M.E.E.T. in Action

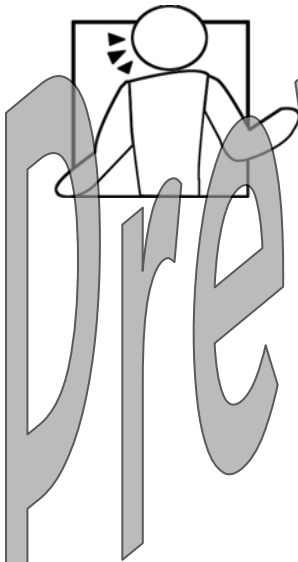
Time it takes: 45–60 minutes

What it is about: Examining each step of the M.E.E.T. model in detail and allowing participants to discuss and apply M.E.E.T. to various situations

What you will need:

- Handout #1 – *Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action*
- Handout #2 – *M.E.E.T. in Action Worksheet* (note this handout is multiple pages)
- Handout #4 – *Tips for Working with Every Generation* (note this handout is multiple pages)

How to do it:



1. Make sure each participant has a copy of all handouts. Begin the discussion by saying:
Let's look at Handout #1, a summary of M.E.E.T. in Action. We have seen four different situations today where employees and managers used M.E.E.T. to take action where generational differences were causing interpersonal conflicts and interfering with productivity.

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Optional Activity 2 M.E.E.T. Skills Practice

Time it takes: 45–60 minutes

What it is about: Examining each step of the M.E.E.T. model in detail and allowing participants to practice using M.E.E.T.

What you will need:

- Handout #1 – *Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action*
- Handout #2 – *M.E.E.T. in Action Worksheet* (note this handout is multiple pages)
- Handout #3 – *M.E.E.T. Skills Practice Worksheet*
- Handout #4 – *Tips for Working with Every Generation* (note this handout is multiple pages)

How to do it:



1. Make sure each participant has a copy of all handouts. Begin the discussion by saying:
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Optional Activity 3

M.E.E.T. Our Multigenerational Workplace

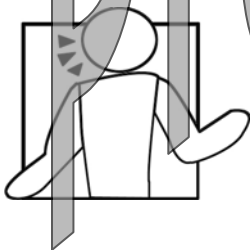
Time it takes: 45 minutes

What it is about: Giving participants an opportunity to hear first-hand perspectives on what works well in the workplace and what doesn't from members of other generations

What you will need:

- Handout #5 – *M.E.E.T. Our Multigenerational Workplace*
- One sheet of flipchart paper for each generational group. Tape the sheets in four different places around the room. Prepare the sheets by writing one of the following at the top of each sheet:
 - Traditionalists – born between 1925 and 1942
 - Baby Boomers – born between 1943 and 1960
 - Generation X – born between 1961 and 1981
 - Generation Y – born between 1982 and 2002

How to do it:



1. Be sure participants have the handout. Begin the discussion by saying:
We are each a member of a specific generation. Because of this, we may have distinct preferences for such things as communication style, dress, approach to work, motivation for work, preferred leadership style, type and

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Optional Activity 4 Working with All Generations

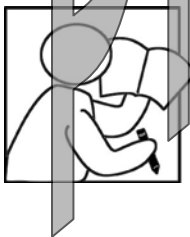
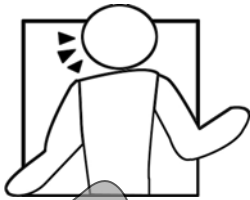
Time it takes: 60–90 minutes

What it is about: Allowing participants to practice what they have learned

What you will need:

- Handout #1 – *Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action*
- Handout #4 – *Tips for Working with Every Generation* (note this handout is multiple pages)
- Handout #6 – *Working with All Generations* (note this handout is multiple pages)

How to do it:



1. Introduce the activity by saying:

We have seen the M.E.E.T. approach demonstrated several times on the video and have examined M.E.E.T. letter by letter. Now we are going to apply the four key steps to a situation so you can practice. Before we get started, let's review M.E.E.T. and some tips for working with every generation.

2. Make sure participants have Handout #1 and Handout #4. Review M.E.E.T. using Handout #1. Walk through each step by saying: **Let's review each step of M.E.E.T.** [Walk through each bullet and ask for examples of what this might look like. Be prepared to share your own example for each step of M.E.E.T.]

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Optional Activity 5

Next Steps: Start, Stop and Continue

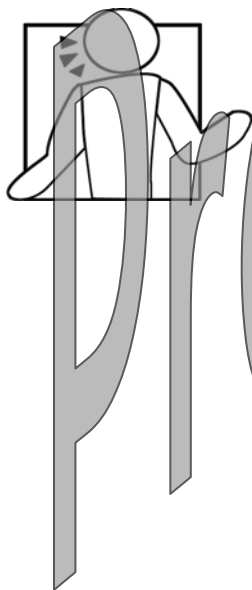
Time it takes: 40–45 minutes

What it is about: Allowing participants to identify things they can immediately do to communicate effectively and create a respectful work environment using what they've learned about the four generations and the M.E.E.T. model

What you will need:

- One sheet of flipchart paper for each of the four groups
- Handout #4 – *Tips for Working with Every Generation* (note this handout is multiple pages)

How to do it:



1. Introduce the activity by saying:

We have learned about the four generations in the workplace and how to use M.E.E.T. to resolve generational differences. We will now talk about some next steps we can start, stop or continue to do to create a respectful work environment.

2. Review Handout #4. Say:

First, let's take a look at the *Tips for Working with Every Generation* handout.

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DVD Bonus Materials Who, What, How & When

Bonus materials are provided to help facilitators supplement a training plan and prepare for an effective workshop. Bonus materials may be used before, during or after a session.

Bonus materials provided on the DVD for this program include:

What it is	How to use it
SMART-START® Generations: Bridging the Gap – A short video, ideal for kicking off or closing the training session.	See Optional Activity #1 for one way to use this video. Other activities are available in VisionPoint’s <i>Beyond the Box</i> activity book available for purchase.
Vignettes-only	During a training session, review a particular video situation by using the vignettes-only feature to quickly access a specific situation without having to watch the entire video.
TrainerTalk™ , an interview with Master Trainer, Sue Mueller	While preparing for a session, tune in to this interview for insights on how to best use VisionPoint programs.
Generational Insights , an interview with Content Expert, Debra Alexander, Alexander Consulting & Training, Inc.	During a break or as follow-up training, provide insights on creating a respectful and harassment-free workplace.

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PowerPoint® Slides, Flipcharts and Handouts

PowerPoint® Slides: For your convenience, we have included “thumbnail” icons of the PowerPoint® slides throughout the *Facilitator Guide* in the place that each slide is being referenced. Electronic copies and the most current versions of PowerPoint® slides can be found in the online resources at www.visionpoint.com.

Flipcharts: Flipcharts used in this program could be prepared in advance by the facilitator or by the participants during each activity. Electronic copies of flipchart templates can be found in the online resources at www.visionpoint.com.

Handouts: Masters of the handouts are found on the following pages. You may reproduce these documents as often as you like or use them as a starting point to create any other visual aid you feel would enhance the learning experience. Electronic copies and the most current versions of these handouts, along with any appropriate answer guides, can be found in the online resources at www.visionpoint.com.

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Handout #1 – Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action

We need to be aware of generational differences and ways to work successfully in a multigenerational workplace. M.E.E.T. will help us communicate effectively and build a respect-filled workplace where people of all generations can do their best work.

Make time to discuss – Deal with a situation when you first become aware of a problem or concern.

- Communicate your need to M.E.E.T.
- Suggest a time and place
- Use a courteous and considerate tone
- Assess the situation and be prepared to communicate the issue in 30 seconds or less

Explore differences – Be open to other view points; do not assume you know it all. Ask to hear the other side.

- Explain the problem, situation, need or concern from your perspective
- Invite the other person's perspective
- Acknowledge the similarities and differences that exist

Encourage respect – Encourage respect even when you don't agree or understand why a person has acted the way s/he did.

- Demonstrate consideration for the other person
- Use respectful communication styles
- Stay in the present and focus on the future vs. rehashing the past

Take responsibility – Take responsibility to take action. Model the behavior you want to see.

- State what you need and your willingness to help the other person with what s/he needs
- Reach agreement
- End on a positive note
- Follow up

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Handout #2 – M.E.E.T. in Action Worksheet

In your assigned group, look at each situation and discuss how you can apply M.E.E.T. to communicate effectively and build respect. Be sure to use the *Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action* and the *Tips for Working with Every Generation* handouts to help you identify the best way to approach each situation.

1. A Traditionalist coworker seems bothered by your habit of multitasking. You do review email messages at the same time that you are talking on the phone or are in a meeting, but from your perspective it's not all that distracting. Your coworker criticizes you for text messaging during a meeting. You stop by his office later and say:

M –

E –

E –

T –

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Handout #3 – M.E.E.T. Skills Practice Worksheet

1. Describe a real situation where M.E.E.T. could be used.
2. In your group, read your example out loud; listen to others' examples.
3. Select one example for the group's presentation (or create a composite).
4. Identify the generational influences or dynamics that may be present.
5. Determine how M.E.E.T. can be used in this situation.
6. Prepare a 2–5 minute demonstration or skit showing how your group used the M.E.E.T. approach to address the situation you selected.

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Handout #4 – Tips for Working with Every Generation

The following tips are useful for working effectively with ANY generation.

DO

- Recognize that generational differences influence our ideas, expectations, values and behaviors at work.
- Acknowledge that everyone wants to be treated with respect—and recognize that respect might look and feel different, based on differing experiences and perspectives.
- Know that you have different life experiences and can learn from others' experiences and perspectives.
- Find ways to create shared values and common ground.
- Be willing to flex your natural style and preferences in order to work effectively with all your colleagues.
- Be open and honest about your “hot buttons” (i.e., recurring sources of tension or conflict).
- Give your colleagues specific suggestions on what they can do to help you perform your best.
- Focus on what really matters—productivity, teamwork and customer relationships.
- Challenge assumptions and raise awareness regarding the multigenerational workplace.

DON'T

- Stereotype (e.g., judging your colleagues' capabilities by what they wear and what their work hours seem to be).
- Ridicule or make derogatory remarks like “dinosaur,” “bureaucrat,” “slacker” or “kid.”
- Miss opportunities to improve communications and strengthen relationships.
- Assume every member of any given generation thinks or behaves exactly alike.

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Handout #5 – M.E.E.T. Our Multigenerational Workplace

In your group, discuss the following questions and record your responses on the flipchart. Be sure to select a spokesperson who will share highlights of your conversation.

1. What are some of the factors that influenced this generation growing up?
(Examples: Family values; media; technology; games; music; social mores; societal/political events; etc.)
2. What do you like about this generation?
3. What do you want others to understand about this generation?
4. What statements or comments about this generation do you never want to hear again?

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Handout #6 - Working with All Generations

Instructions:

All: There will be three rounds of practice (15 minutes each), giving each person an opportunity to practice using M.E.E.T. In your group, decide who will practice each situation. For each round of practice, everyone should read the entire scenario (both people). After you have completed Scenario 1, switch roles and move to Scenario 2 and then to Scenario 3.

ROLES

Person Practicing: Take a couple of minutes to prepare your thoughts. Refer to the *Summary of M.E.E.T. in Action* and *Tips for Working with Every Generation* handouts. How will you:

- M – Make time to discuss?
- E – Explore difference?
- E – Encourage respect?
- T – Take responsibility?

Start the conversation when you are ready or when the observer tells you it's time to start.

Person Responding: Do your best to respond to the person practicing, based on the information provided in the scenario. Suspend reality and “play the role” as the person practicing applies M.E.E.T. Even though you are not the primary person practicing, you are in essence practicing to respond within the M.E.E.T. context, which is equally as important, so take your role seriously.

Observer: Allow 2–3 minutes for preparation, 5–7 minutes for practice and 5 minutes for feedback. Use the *Feedback Form* on the last page of this handout to help guide your discussion.

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Working with All Generations

Scenario #1 – Please, no more “upgrades”!

Person Practicing: Sandy (Traditionalist)

You are an experienced project manager with many years of successfully planning and executing projects, but lately, it seems just when you get some skill level with a new software program, the IT department installs an “upgrade.” You actually like the project management software that has become available over the past several years, but it does take some time to get proficient with it. And to make matters worse, the young, hotshot IT staff members treat you with disdain when you don’t immediately pick up the new features. You just had a meeting with Ryan, and it didn’t go very well. You’d like things to go better when you meet again tomorrow. When you are ready, initiate M.E.E.T.

Person Responding: Lee (Gen X)

You graduated a few years ago from a top engineering school with a degree in computer engineering. You work in an IT department with coworkers who have all studied advanced computer and electrical engineering. You spend your days solving complex networking and other IT problems. The IT department also provides support to staff in other departments, helping employees with their computer problems, so you spend a lot of time with all kinds of coworkers, many of them 20 years older than you or more. They often have trouble troubleshooting problems, and they frequently talk about how “complicated” the computer and related applications are. They also tell you that you go too fast when you show them how to solve problems on their own.

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Online Resources

VisionPoint's website is host to the most up-to-date **program resources** including program-specific tools like reproducible participant materials, self-study guides, facilitator answer guides, FAQs, session extenders, **SMART-START®** activities, case studies, video scripts and more.

Additional **trainer resources** include information and tools such as energizers, team builders, competency matrices, perspective papers, learning style guides and access to VisionPoint's master trainers and TrainerSelect™ team.

Resources are updated regularly, so check back when preparing for a new training session.

To access the online resources, go to www.visionpoint.com and select the **Resources** menu. Log in for full access to this program's resources.

If you have any questions about resources available, contact the TrainerTALK™ helpline at 800-300-8880 x302 or trainer@visionpoint.com.

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