

# Silent Generation / Traditionalists (born before 1946)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grew up during the Great Depression and WWII</li> <li>• Either fought in WWII or were children</li> <li>• Behaviors are based on experiences during the Depression and WWII</li> <li>• Wealthiest generation</li> <li>• Men typically worked while women stayed home to raise children</li> <li>• Has largest lobbyist group, AARP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 55 million</li> <li>• Majority are retirees</li> <li>• Largest voting population</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviors are based on experiences from the Depression</li> <li>• Want to feel needed</li> <li>• Strive for financial security</li> <li>• “Waste not want not” attitude</li> <li>• Conformity</li> <li>• Conservatism</li> <li>• Traditional family values</li> <li>• Strive for comfort</li> <li>• Demand quality</li> <li>• Simplicity</li> <li>• Understands the nobility of sacrifice for the common good</li> <li>• Patriotic</li> <li>• Patience</li> <li>• Team players</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loyal to employers and expect the same in return</li> <li>• Possess superb interpersonal skills</li> <li>• Enjoy flexible arrangements so they can work on their own schedule</li> <li>• Believe promotions, raises, and recognition should come from job tenure</li> <li>• Measure work ethic on timeliness, productivity, and not drawing attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Great Depression</li> <li>• WWII</li> <li>• The Cold War</li> <li>• McCarthyism</li> <li>• Started the Civil Rights Movement</li> <li>• Children were “seen, but not heard”</li> </ul>

Sources: <http://www.marstoncomm.com/matures.html>; <http://merrillassociates.com/>

# Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grew up during the Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War</li> <li>• Born during a spike in child births after WWII</li> <li>• Created the term “workaholic”</li> <li>• The largest generation</li> <li>• Single largest economic group</li> <li>• Sometimes referred to today as “Empty Nesters”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 76 million</li> <li>• Makes up 28% of Americans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Run local, state, and national governments</li> <li>• Largest workforce</li> <li>• Believe rules should be obeyed unless they are contrary to what they want; then they’re to be broken</li> <li>• Experimental</li> <li>• Individualism</li> <li>• Social cause oriented</li> <li>• Free spirited</li> <li>• Can be less optimistic, cynical, and distrust government</li> <li>• Want products and services that show their success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work ethic is measured in hours worked</li> <li>• Less importance placed on productivity</li> <li>• Teamwork is critical to success</li> <li>• Relationship building is important</li> <li>• Expect loyalty from those they work with</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assassinations of JFK, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr.</li> <li>• Cold War</li> <li>• Walk on the Moon</li> <li>• Vietnam War</li> <li>• Protests and Sit-Ins</li> <li>• Civil Rights, Women’s, and Environmental Movements</li> <li>• Watergate</li> <li>• Nixon Resignation</li> <li>• Self-discovery</li> </ul>

Sources: <http://www.marstoncomm.com/matures.html>; <http://merrillassociates.com/>;  
[http://www.escapehomes.com/articles/Baby\\_Boomers\\_Statistics\\_on\\_Empty\\_Nests\\_and\\_Retirement.htm](http://www.escapehomes.com/articles/Baby_Boomers_Statistics_on_Empty_Nests_and_Retirement.htm)

# Generation X / Busters (1965-1980)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defined as “slackers”</li> <li>• They have the “carpe diem” attitude</li> <li>• First generation to develop ease and comfort with technology</li> <li>• “X” described the lack of identity that members of Generation X felt, not sure where they belonged</li> <li>• Experienced more divorces than any other generation</li> <li>• Had to learn to fend for themselves</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50 million</li> <li>• Single parent families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quest for emotional security</li> <li>• Independent</li> <li>• Very self-reliant</li> <li>• Informality</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial</li> <li>• Expect immediate and ongoing feedback and is comfortable giving feedback to others</li> <li>• Reject rules</li> <li>• Mistrust institutions</li> <li>• Believe friends do not equal family</li> <li>• “Latchkey” kids</li> <li>• Multi-taskers</li> <li>• Suspicious of Boomer values</li> <li>• Value family time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casual, friendly work environment</li> <li>• Involvement</li> <li>• Flexibility and freedom</li> <li>• A place to learn</li> <li>• Work smarter, not harder</li> <li>• Want open communication regardless of position, title, or tenure</li> <li>• Value control of their time</li> <li>• Look for a person to whom they can invest loyalty, not a company</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• AIDS</li> <li>• End of Cold War</li> <li>• Vietnam</li> <li>• Watergate</li> <li>• Nixon resignation</li> <li>• Computers</li> <li>• Grunge/Hip-Hop</li> <li>• Vietnam</li> <li>• MTV</li> <li>• Challenger explosion</li> <li>• Fall of Berlin Wall</li> <li>• Reaganomics</li> </ul>

Sources: <http://www.marstoncomm.com/matures.html>; <http://merrillassociates.com/>; <http://apps.americanbar.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt08044.html>

# Generation Y / Millennials (born 1981-1994)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grew up with technology- computers, cell phones, internet, etc.</li> <li>• Also known as the “Entitlement” generation</li> <li>• Boomer and late X’er parents raised them to be sheltered and to constantly build Millennials’ self-esteem</li> <li>• Plagued with high levels of student debt</li> <li>• Second largest generation to be entering the workforce under the Boomers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80 million</li> <li>• More ethnically and racially diverse than older generations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambitious yet clueless</li> <li>• Optimistic</li> <li>• Patriotic</li> <li>• Impatient</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial</li> <li>• Individualistic yet group-oriented</li> <li>• Want to be like peers but with a unique twist</li> <li>• Very informal</li> <li>• Busy</li> <li>• Short attention span</li> <li>• Acknowledge and admire some authorities</li> <li>• More culturally and racially tolerant</li> <li>• Acceptant of change</li> <li>• Un-trusting of “the man”</li> <li>• Achievement-oriented</li> <li>• Financially savvy</li> <li>• Want instant gratification</li> <li>• “Everybody wins!”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searches for the individual who will help them achieve their goals</li> <li>• Want open, constant communication and positive reinforcement from their boss</li> <li>• Search for job that provides great, personal fulfillment</li> <li>• Want to be close to their peers</li> <li>• Want leadership from bosses and supervisors</li> <li>• Look for opportunities to learn</li> <li>• Work to live, rather than living to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oklahoma City bombing</li> <li>• Rise of the Internet</li> <li>• O.J. Simpson trial</li> <li>• Death of Princess Diana</li> <li>• CDs/DVDs</li> <li>• Columbine shootings</li> <li>• Y2K</li> <li>• Terrorism</li> <li>• Swine flu- 1988</li> </ul>

Sources: <http://www.marstoncomm.com/matures.html>; <http://merrillassociates.com/>; <http://apps.americanbar.org/lpm/lpt/articles/mgt08044.html>; <http://www.rosettathurman.com/2010/>; <http://pewsocialtrends.org/>

# Generation Z / Digital Natives (born after 1994)

Who?	Population	Characteristics	At Work	Historic Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Also known as Generation M, Net Generation, Internet Generation</li> <li>• Grown up with world, wide, web. (Became available after 1991)</li> <li>• Born during minor fertility boom around US Global Financial Crisis</li> <li>• The children of Generation X</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 23 million and growing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly connected to the use of communications</li> <li>• Like Instant Gratification</li> <li>• Thrive on acceleration and next, next, next</li> <li>• Independent people, lacking a community- oriented nature due to social media</li> <li>• Are very open book with little concern to privacy and personal information. Except for when it comes to money</li> <li>• Thrive on small bits of information. Think in terms of status's and Twitter language</li> <li>• Under a lot of pressure to succeed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very collaborative and creative</li> <li>• Will have to solve the worst environmental, social and economic problems in history</li> <li>• Will not be team players</li> <li>• Will be more self-directed</li> <li>• Will process information at lightning speed</li> <li>• Will be smarter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 9/11 attacks - 2011</li> <li>• Great Recession - 2008 to present</li> <li>• Terrorism - these individuals do not remember a time without war</li> <li>• Swine Flu outbreak - 2009</li> <li>• Hurricane Katrina - 2005</li> <li>• iPod - 2001</li> <li>• Facebook – 2004</li> </ul>

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## Generations of Faith

### Small Group Conversation & Reflection

- What assets in other generations surprised you?
- Which generations are present in your congregation?
- Which generational gifts are currently being offered in your congregation?
- How does your congregation value the presence of the various generations?
- In what ways do you see an example of “bridge building” between generations in your congregation?
- What are ways to encourage “bridge building” in your congregation?
- How do you view the role of congregation in the community?
- How do you experience gratitude, both giving and receiving?
- Is everyone in your congregation able to give in a way that is easy and convenient for them?



***Name 3 actions you and your congregation might take to  
“build bridges” across generations.***