

# Generational Forms of Recognition

Adapted by Chester Elton and Adrian Gostick's *Managing with Carrots*, 2001

An organization's success depends in large part upon its ability to embrace diversity and to realize the benefits of everyone in the organization. Matures, Baby-Boomers, Generation X and Y'ers may have different perspectives toward work and their roles in the workforce, but they all want to be recognized for their contributions. It is important for managers and supervisors to be aware of the varying forms of recognitions that may be most appreciated by employees from different generations. Though not applicable to every individual, this handout contains recognition points to address diverse generations.

## **Matures (Born before 1946)**

- Provide them with recognition in front of their peers
- Recognize them for their loyalty and hard work
- Recognize them for their experience and wisdom
- Provide them with technology training – don't rush it! Respectfully with low stress.
- Use a personal touch for recognizing – hand written thank you notes
- Use traditional awards for this group

## **Baby-Boomers (Born 1946-1964)**

- Understand their loyalty to the company
- Give them feedback in front of others – recognition
- Let them know they are important in the process
- Let them know they are valued and make a difference
- Provide them with many developmental experiences
- Provide them with books and training tapes as a bonus
- Give them a chance to prove themselves and their worth
- Give them perks
- Reward their work ethic

## **Generation-X (Born 1965-1977)**

- Appreciate their technical savvy
- Recognize more often
- Value them – they are credible individuals
- Give them new challenges/projects – often
- Teach them new skills – often
- Allow them to make their own career choices – build a plan together
- Performance evaluations must be frequent, accurate, specific, and timely – constant feedback
- Value their work-to-life balance – time off, flex-time, and have a more flexible workplace

## **Generation-Y (Born after 1977)**

- Allow for flexible work schedules if possible
- Performance evaluations must be frequent, accurate, specific, and timely
- Provide positive reinforcement
- Recognize more often – value their presence
- Value their technical savvy – Internet knowledge
- Appreciate their creativity
- Value them – they are credible individuals
- Give them quick and easy tangible rewards
- Keep them challenged and learning new skills – often/training



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# THE MATURES (Born before 1946)

## Events

World War II ended  
Depression  
Holocaust  
A-bomb  
Proliferation of autos  
Radios  
Women in the workplace  
Rationing  
GI Bill  
Vaudeville  
Live bands  
Superman  
Babe Ruth

## Values

Cash purchases  
Community spirited  
Self reliant  
Patriotic  
Opening up of opportunities for women  
Work ethics – hard work  
Loyal to employer  
Strong chain of command  
Stability  
Dedication  
Sacrifice  
Patience  
Respect for authority  
Honor  
Duty before pleasure

## Motivators

Money  
Responsibility  
Public recognition  
Desire to lead  
Control  
Common goals  
Hierarchy  
Consistency and uniformity



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# BABY BOOMERS (Born 1946-1964)

## Events

Assassinations  
Vietnam War  
The Draft  
Student deferment  
Catholic president  
Cold War  
Khrushchev  
Cuban Missile Crisis  
Hippies  
Love beads  
Peace signs  
Chicago Democratic Convention  
Kent State  
Credit cards  
Woodstock

## Values

Personal freedom  
Question authority  
Political disillusion  
It is ok as long as you don't hurt somebody  
Women's liberation  
College education  
Work ethic  
Loyal to employer  
Career Focused  
Diplomacy  
Driven  
Relationship and results oriented  
Optimistic  
Growth and expansion  
Health and wellness  
Involvement  
Personal growth and satisfaction

## Motivators

Money  
Opportunity for management  
Care deeply what others think  
Public recognition  
Want others to work with them  
Team-focused  
Genuine mission statements with real purpose  
Must win – competition  
Committed employees



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# GENERATION "X" (Born 1965-1977)

## Events

Assassinations	Iran Hostage Crisis
Vietnam and POWs	Cable TV
Lunar Landing	VCRs
Oil crisis	Fax Machines
Munich Olympic Games	Microwaves
MTV	Pagers
Disco	Cell phones
Civil Rights legislation	Palm Pilots
Downsizing	CNN
Roe vs. Wade	
Computers	

## Motivators

- Work-life balance
- Telecommuting
- They aren't attracted by the promise of a rosy future
- Customized for us
- Flexibility
- Immediate feedback
- Skill building
- They resist hierarchy
- Cross-training
- Dynamic work environment and mission
- Time off
- Less oversight – more empowerment
- Software and hardware
- Lack of rules
- Not corporate - informal

## Values

- Political cynicism and apathy
- Feminism
- Challenge traditional roles and values
- Global leadership
- Entitlement of rights
- Make it work for me
- Convenience
- Innovation
- Embrace change
- Disposable consumption
- Lifestyle comes first - balance
- Don't care what others think
- Prefer to work alone, not in teams
- Techno literacy
- Task and result oriented
- Job focused
- Straightforward
- Self-reliant
- Skeptics
- Diversity
- Informality



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# GENERATION Y – MILLENNIALS (Born after 1977)

## Events

Columbine  
Oklahoma City  
Random violence  
Clinton-Lewinsky  
Computers/technology  
The Internet  
Talk shows with no limits  
Multi-culturalism  
Exposure to diversity from birth  
High speed video games  
ATM  
Barney  
9/11

## Values

Stopping violence  
Sense of civic duty  
Self-confidence  
Tolerance  
Technically savvy  
Lifestyle first  
Live with parents  
Sports  
Fitness  
Doers and achievers  
Education  
Diversity  
Equality for all  
Integrity  
Realistic  
Collaboration  
Negotiation

## Motivators

Time off  
Portable skills  
Meeting own goals  
Loyalty to self  
Flex time  
Personal safety  
Opportunities to collaborate and participate with others  
Involvement  
Diverse workforce – not just token diversity  
Technology  
Allowing for creativity  
Ability to multitask  
Defined career path  
New opportunities  
Portable benefit packages  
Short training sessions – “boot camp” style  
Opportunities for mentorship



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