



Leading and Managing our Workplace Generations

(Aligned to the Moccasin Approach® Thinking)

The four generations currently in our workplaces (Date ranges seem to vary a lot).

1. **Gen Z** (1997–2012). As employees, they often value:

- a) Purpose and meaningful work.
- b) Regular feedback and coaching.
- c) Flexibility and autonomy.
- d) Authentic, values-led leadership.
- e) Personal growth and career development.



2. **Millennials (Gen Y)** (1981–1996). As employees, they often value:

- a) Purpose and meaningful work
- b) Collaboration and inclusion
- c) Feedback and coaching
- d) Development opportunities
- e) Flexibility and wellbeing

3. **Gen X** (1965–1980) As employees, they often value:

- a) Authenticity and transparency
- b) Frequent feedback
- c) Diversity, inclusion, and social awareness
- d) Flexibility and autonomy
- e) Rapid development and progression

4. **Baby Boomers** (1946–1964). As employees, they often value:

- a) Stability and job security
- b) Respect for experience and tenure
- c) Clear hierarchy and structure
- d) Loyalty and commitment
- e) Recognition for hard work and dedication

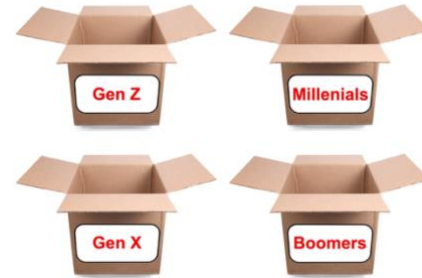
As you'll be aware, all of the above can vary greatly when you search the internet or talk to others about these generations.



Putting people in boxes

At LAPD Solutions, we have a very specific viewpoint on the generations and how they should be managed and led.

We recognise these generations, and we also believe that organisations should be conscious of their preferences and needs under their labels. **“But”** we believe that effective leadership is not about “managing a generation differently”. Instead, it is about **adapting your leadership and management style** to meet modern workforce expectations, personal preferences, and individual needs, such as neurodiversity and differing abilities, regardless of their assigned label.



We must do this while maintaining our organisational values, holding our people accountable and responsible for their actions and behaviour, and all colleagues being mindful of the consequences if we fail to do so. This thinking is underpinned by Emotional Intelligence (EI).

Leaders and managers need to consider that, like all humans, not each person categorised under these generations will be defined by that category or descriptors. We are all different as we have been shaped by parents, guardians, schooling, religions, friends, even people we have met when travelling, and the cultures we have experienced. We must **be very wary** of categorising and treating people the same, just because of a date range and given descriptors. When you think of it in that way, doesn't it sound odd that we've done that, at least a little bit?

So, the big question is: how do we approach our people to ensure we consider their generation label and, **more importantly**, their personal preferences, likes, and dislikes and how they wish to be led and managed in the workplace? You'll be delighted to know we have the answer, and it is through our Moccasin Approach®.

What is our Moccasin Approach®?

In 2005, LaPD Solutions Ltd coined the phrase “The Moccasin Manager®” and in 2006 “, The Moccasin Approach®” followed. Both were trademarked in the UK in 2017 and then in the USA in 2020. Our phrases are taken from the saying “walk in someone's shoes,” which, although often attributed to various Native American tribes, we are informed came from [the poem](#) “Judge Softly” by Mary Lathrap (1895).



To us, her poem suggests that if we do not know a person well enough, we will never know the challenges they face. So how can we judge them unless we walk a mile in their moccasins first?

A relatively simple task of getting to and from work for one person may be hugely challenging for someone else, especially for people who may have a hidden disability or condition. Some people might be dealing with loss, sorrow, or hidden pain, which may impact them daily. Until we **truly** know them, we don't know what the world is like from **their** perspective.

3. Coach more, command less.

Move from a directive management or leadership style to an [altrocentric](#) approach. Build your relationship with them by:

- Asking what they need from you to do a great job?
- Using coaching questions to expand their understanding of areas of their work
- Asking them for their opinions when you are problem-solving.
- Encouraging ownership of identified issues and identifying solutions.

4. Make expectations explicit.

Do not assume workplace norms are understood.

Clarify:

- Expectations around communication and their standards.
- Professional boundaries.
- Quality and output expectations
- Time management and accountability.
- That psychological safety should be practised, and they can use their voice (professionally, respectfully and politely).



5. Provide frequent feedback.

Use regular, constructive feedback loops:

- Short check-ins as you pass them.
- Give immediate praise and recognition, as this is the foundation of motivation.
- Share successes as inspirational stories to encourage others.
- Have real-time coaching conversations, and don't wait until performance management one-to-one reviews to do this.

6. Support growth and development.

Retain Gen Z talent by investing in progression:

- Discuss career aspirations honestly and realistically.
- Offer stretch assignments to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Delegate tasks to demonstrate your confidence in their abilities.
- Recognise errors as opportunities to develop and learn how to avoid them in the future.
- Create mentoring opportunities for them with new starters.



Leadership/Management Hints and Tips

Avoid:

- Stereotyping based on age.
- Equating different communication styles with a poor attitude. *Are they neurodivergent?*
- Don't micro-manage them, especially digital-native employees.
- Withholding autonomy unnecessarily.
- Offering advice instead of attention.
- Neglecting development conversations.
- Use "because I said so" leadership.
- Clinging to a single communication style.
- Being unclear about expectations.
- Using critique without context.
- Holding on to the past as the benchmark.
- Saving feedback for annual reviews.

Hints
& 😊
Tips

In Summary.

Managing Gen Z effectively means balancing empathy with accountability.

The Moccasin Approach® helps leaders and managers understand the person behind the behaviour, adapt their communication, and create conditions in which younger employees can thrive while still meeting organisational expectations.

Ask Yourself:

"Am I leading this employee based on assumptions about their generation, or am I taking time to understand their individual perspective and needs?"

The Moccasin Approach®