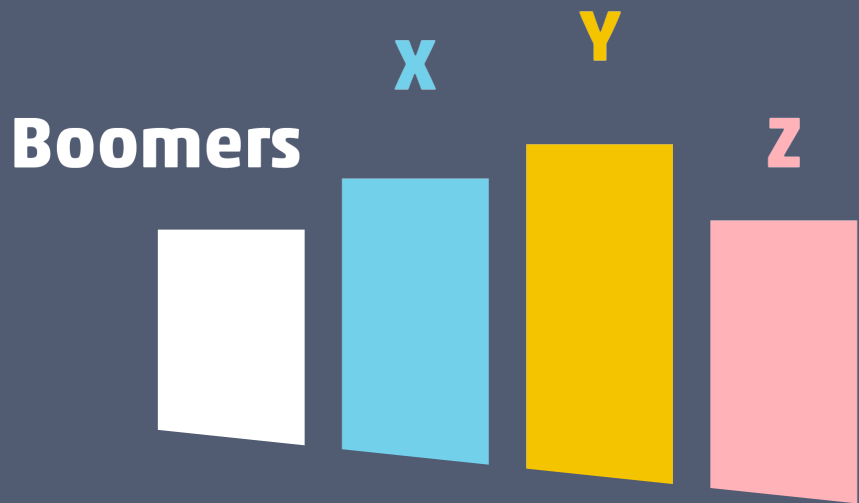


How to Engage Different Generations **at Your Association**



You might have heard that there are now four generations functioning within the workforce.

Well, that means that there are now four (or soon to be four) generations of members within your association — all with different likes, dislikes, and personal preferences.

In this guide, we'll go over who makes up each generation, a few characteristics about each generation, and how your association can cater to those differences.

Check it out!

Baby Boomers

Born: 1945 - 1960

Common characteristics:

- **Ambitious:**
Baby Boomers are often branded as “workaholics.” They grew up in a time of prosperity and saw hard work lead to success. As a result, they’re very driven and expect others to be driven too.
- **Like face-to-face interaction:**
Baby Boomers value face-to-face interaction more than any other generation. They prefer in-person meetings/conversations over emails, calls, and texts.
- **Appreciate print (with small doses of digital):**
Baby Boomers like traditional, printed publications. They like something they can hold onto and reference as needed. That said, they also like social media, as long as it’s fairly basic and kept in moderation.

How to engage with them:

- **Coordinate in-person meetings and events:**
Since Baby Boomers like face-to-face interaction, make sure you’re providing them with several in-person meeting opportunities. They’re much more likely to attend those than they are virtual events (webinars, Twitter chats, etc.).
- **Continue publishing white papers, newsletters, and other print publications:**
We may be living in an age of “snackable” content, but your Baby Boomer members still want traditional, printed publications. That said, make sure you’re providing them with fresh, valuable content in those simple, traditional formats.
- **Acknowledge that they are on social media (particularly Facebook):**
Yes, Baby Boomers like print, but as we mentioned, they also like social media, particularly Facebook. Don’t rule them out when drafting your social media content. Know that they are there and they want to engage.

Generation X

Born: 1961 - 1980

Common characteristics:

- **Value people/relationships more so than work:**

Gen X-ers grew up with workaholic parents (the Baby Boomers). Because of that, they care more about their personal lives and maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

- **Care about efficiency:**

Gen X-ers don't like to waste time. They value productivity and like getting tasks done — quickly!

- **Appreciate humor:**

For the most part, Gen X-ers like humor. They like laid-back environments and fairly upbeat messages.

How to engage with them:

- **Provide them with opportunities to hang out and mingle:**

Gen X-ers don't want their lives to revolve around work. To get them to show up after hours, provide them with fun opportunities to get to know their peers (happy hours, dinners, family nights, etc.).

- **Keep processes efficient:**

Remember, Gen X-ers value productivity. If you want them to engage with you, you must keep things simple — your meetings, your communications, your payment processes, etc.

- **Incorporate humor into your messages:**

If you want to grab the attention of your Gen X members, humor is the way to go. That said, do so sparingly and only when appropriate.

Generation Y (AKA Millennials)

Born: 1981 - 1996

Common characteristics:

- **Multitaskers:**
Millennials are known for their multitasking abilities. Rarely are they ever focused on just one task.
- **Love technology:**
It's no secret that Millennials love technology. They grew up with computers, iPods, and cell phones — and those items are rarely far away.
- **Value flexibility:**
Millennials like to have a say in what they do and when. They value laid-back environments and the ability to choose.

How to engage with them:

- **Create short, snackable content:**
Since Millennials are multitaskers, the shorter (and more scannable) you can make your association's content, the better. Think blog posts, infographics, social media posts, etc.
- **Stay active on social media:**
Speaking of social media, this is one of the best ways to engage your Millennial members. Find out where your Millennial members are at (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.), then engage with them accordingly. *(Not sure where your Millennial members are at? Ask! Talk to them at your next meeting or send them a quick survey.)*
- **Allow flexibility:**
If you want to engage your Millennial members, you must allow some flexibility. For example, don't just give them one opportunity to volunteer — give them several with varying dates and times. The more you're willing to work with them, the more they'll be willing to work with you.

Generation Z

Born: 1996 - 2015

Common characteristics:

- **Uber tech-savvy:**
Gen Z is the most tech-savvy generation yet. While Millennials grew up in the world of cell phones, Gen Z grew up in the world of smartphones. They've always had a computer in their pocket, and they're Internet experts, consequently.
- **Willing to work hard:**
Gen Z grew up in the Great Recession. They watched their parents struggle with finances that were seemingly stable just months before. As a result, they worry about the economy and are willing to work hard for a living.
- **Want to have an impact on society:**
Gen Z-ers want to have an impact, both personally and professionally. They want to advance their careers and give back to society.

How to engage with them:

- **Take your tech game up a notch:**
Gen Z-ers do everything online — and we mean everything. That said, make sure your website and emails are mobile-friendly and that you're staying active on social media.
- **Provide them with plenty of professional development opportunities:**
Since Gen Z-ers are looking to get ahead, this is the perfect opportunity for your association to engage with them. Provide them with plenty of professional development opportunities, such as accreditations, certifications, mentoring programs, etc.
- **Provide them with plenty of volunteer opportunities:**
Remember, Gen Z-ers care about more than just work — they want to give back to society. That said, be sure to provide them with plenty of volunteer opportunities (all with varying dates and times).

Sure, there are a lot of differences between each generation, but at the end of the day, people are just people. Don't stereotype your members based on their age. Get to know them and see what they like/dislike. And if you're not sure how your members want to engage with you, just ask! I'm sure they'll be more than happy to tell you.

Speaking of engagement, if you're still at a loss for ideas (regardless of the generation), let us help.

Check out our free guide to **Membership Engagement for Small Staff Associations** here!



◀ **Click here to check it out!**

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MemberClicks offers all the tools that membership organizations need to make the most of the web. From online databases and event registrations to custom-designed websites and member communities, our products are tailor-made for small-staff organizations.

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