



## Talkin 'Bout My Generation: Coaching with the MBTI

**"If one does not understand a person, one tends to regard him as a fool." – Carl Jung**

Here's the challenge - the Baby Boomer generation is getting closer and closer to the retirement finish line, but the generations coming in behind them in this race, Gen X, Gen Y, and Gen Z aren't quite ready to fill the senior leadership seats they occupy. It's not that they aren't eager, most of them just may not have quite enough professional and life experience to make the tough decisions required of a senior leader. How do we coach and develop these younger generations to fill the leadership pipeline?

Each generation brings their own perspective and views about career and development to the workplace. Our views are shaped by our unique life experiences. Every individual is unique and different, however, the themes below seem to emerge when looking at the generational impact on career view and development.

<b>Generation (Birth Dates)</b>	<b>Life Events</b>	<b>Career Views</b>	<b>Development</b>
Veterans/Silent Generation (1922-1945)	The Great Depression WWII	Loyalty Respect Rules Respect Authority Dedication Patience Adhere to rules	Classroom Learning from Experience Organized Prepared
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	The Civil Rights Movement Woodstock JFK Assassination Vietnam War Landing on the Moon	Optimism Personal Growth Work Efficiently Cause Driven Desire quality Question authority	Interactive Team Oriented Contribution Oriented Career Oriented
Gen X (1965-1980)	Two Working Parents Recession/Downsizing Watergate MTV Personal Computers The Challenger Disaster	Independence Self-reliance Skepticism Informality Work/Life Balance	Computer Based Develop Skills Self-Driven Results Oriented Information Based Multi-Task
Gen Y (1981-2000)	Terrorist Attacks 9/11 Financial Instability Technology - Instant Messaging, Wireless, Internet Oklahoma City bombing School Violence You Tube	Confidence Goal Oriented Immediate Feedback Respect for authority Dedication Optimism Multitasking Tenacity	Interactive Coaching & Frequent Feedback Teams Technology Based Career Path Action Learning - Solving Real Work Problems

When in doubt about how to best coach someone, regardless of their generation, the best approach is to build trust first. There's no substitute for clear and direct communication across generations or any other difference. The MBTI assessment is one of the best self-assessment and coaching tools for understanding personal strengths, communication style, and the type of position, work environment, and development plan that best fits a person's style. Our personality and our generation affect the way we approach decisions and it impacts our communication with others. It can be used to facilitate communication across generations and leverage the information to build a meaningful development plan.

Development plans should be customized to fit the individual given their personality type, communication style, and generation. Development experts agree that up to 70 percent of development plans should include new experiences, 20 percent learning from self and others such as a coach or mentor, and 10 percent training. One of the best ways to learn is by doing—by gaining experience, trying something new, or taking on a project or stretch assignment.

Your plan for coaching and follow up during an assignment might vary depending on the individual's generation and personality type.

For example, a Gen X employee with an introverted preference might require less conversation when completing a developmental stretch assignment once they clearly understand the goals, deadlines, and resources available. The combination of Gen Xer's typical self-reliance and the introverted preference for thinking things through might be vastly different from a Gen Xer with an extraverted preference for talking things out during the project.

Gen Y has grown up with technology, text messaging, and quick answers. This in combination with an extraverted preference for talking things through, might lead to a desire for more frequent conversation and feedback. If you were to add in a preference for Judging, the individual might be more receptive to a planned weekly conversation, versus a Perceiving preference for more flexibility and spontaneity, but might be prone to drop by.

Knowing the MBTI preferences may also help shed some light on personal preferences for working with details, numbers, and data (Sensing), or looking at the big picture (Intuition) and decision making approaches that range from considering values and the impact on people first (Feeling) to objective, rational, logical analysis (Thinking).

So how do you begin to customize a development plan? For starters, ask a few good questions and always listen with respect to the individual.

- What's most important to you at work?
- What are you really proud of at work or school?
- What are your strengths?
- In what areas would you like to develop?
- What motivates you most?
- What are your career goals?
- What actions will you take to achieve your goals? & When?
- How can I help you?
- How often would you like to talk or meet about your development plan?
- How do you like to be recognized?

**"Your vision will become clear only when you can look into your own heart" – Carl Jung**

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