
GEEKS, GEEZERS, AND GOOGLIZATION

By Dr. Ira S. Wolfe

How to Manage the Unprecedented Convergence
of the Wired, the Tired, and Technology
in the Workplace

Geeks, Geezers, and Googlization

Geeks, Geezers, and Googlization

*How to Manage the Unprecedented Convergence
of the Wired, the Tired, and Technology in the Workplace*

Ira S. Wolfe

Copyright © 2009 by Dr. Ira S. Wolfe.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2009907057

ISBN: Hardcover 978-1-4415-5536-6 Softcover 978-1-4415-5535-9

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying or recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Permission to quote brief excerpts for review purposes is granted without additional permission when accompanied by publication data.

Published and Distributed by Ira S Wolfe and Poised for the Future Company,
Lancaster, Pennsylvania USA

Cover photography by iStock Images and Spiderbox Photograph
Used by permission.

DISCLAIMER: The purpose of this book is to provide insights regarding management skills, employee motivation, and workplace improvement. It is intended only for general use and not as a specific course of treatment.

This book was printed in the United States of America.

To order additional copies of this book, contact:

Xlibris Corporation
1-888-795-4274
www.Xlibris.com Orders@Xlibris.com

or

Ira S. Wolfe
1-800-803-4303
www.super-solutions.com

CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Googlization: Remember the Water-Cooler?</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Geezers And Geeks: Wow or Woe?.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Who Are The Four Generations?.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Who are the Veterans?.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Who are the Baby Boomers?.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Who is Generation X?.....</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Make Way for Generation Y.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Unintended Consequences of Generational Crowding</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Tube Tops, Flip Flops, and Body Piercings.....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Helicopters, Boomerangs, and Sandwiches.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>The Silver Tsunami Changes Color of Discrimination</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Gen X Hits Gray Ceiling.....</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Dumbest Generation?.....</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>ConverGENce:Converting Clash Points to Collaboration.....</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>The clash over work and other things</i>	<i>98</i>
<i>Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce.....</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>Managing Styles for All Generational Seasons</i>	<i>111</i>
<i>DISC: A universal language for all generations.....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Bridge the Generational Gaps One Style at a Time</i>	<i>129</i>
<i>Different Points of View: Generational Values</i>	<i>141</i>
<i>Shared Attitudes and Values</i>	<i>150</i>
<i>Basic Survival Skills for Managing the Millennials.....</i>	<i>156</i>
<i>Training Tomorrow's Highly Skilled Worker</i>	<i>161</i>
<i>Recruiting Young Workers: Four Strategies for Success</i>	<i>170</i>
<i>Best Practices for Managing an Aging Workforce.....</i>	<i>179</i>
<i>Appendix</i>	<i>186</i>
<i>Generational Comparisons: Fun, Fads, and Facts.....</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>A Silent Epidemic: High dropout rates</i>	<i>191</i>
<i>D-I-S-C Meets Social Networking</i>	<i>193</i>
<i>Values: Why We Use Social Networks</i>	<i>195</i>
<i>Workshop Icebreakers and Discussion Starters</i>	<i>197</i>

Gen X Hits Gray Ceiling

Warnings about the near apocalyptic "brain drain", when Baby Boomers would leave the workforce en masse to travel, play golf, visit grandchildren or consult, has made nearly every executive and business owner feel like they are standing on a track with a locomotive barreling toward them.

But suddenly, over the past few years, the locomotive seemed to slow. From the tracks you could hear a huge sigh of relief and shouts of joy - THE BOOMERS ARE STAYING, THE BOOMERS ARE STAYING!

Boomers are staying in their jobs longer for a whole host of reasons. Topping off the list is a lack of money to retire in a style to which they have become accustomed. According to a recent McKinsey & Co. report, nearly two-thirds of Early Boomers – who are aged 54 to 63 – are financially unprepared to retire. The second reason is that many Boomers do not know what a life without working is. Eighty-five percent of the Boomers in the McKinsey study said it is at least somewhat likely that they will continue to work, with 38 percent saying it is extremely likely they will continue to work.

So what's the problem? What's so wrong with Boomers staying in place longer? Shouldn't managers be celebrating? Could all this brain drain stuff be just a bunch of over-hyped media?

Just like a medication that eliminates an infection, it sometimes creates a side effect that may be worse than the cure. At least for companies that are thinking long term, the workplace side effect in this case is that twenty- and thirty-something managers are in trouble. That big promotion from middle-management into the senior ranks has just been put on ice. Bosses who aren't focused on how to keep Gen X happy

will inevitably find that somebody else is. The risk of losing these experienced 30-somethings is huge. The delay in Boomer retirement is temporary and a bit of a trojan horse. Eventually the Boomer will retire and when the coach turns to his reserve bench, it might be empty. So much for the "future of the firm."

Increasingly, younger workers are finding that no matter how many hours they put in or how much their bosses rave about their work, they're just plain stuck. An entire generation is bumping against something called the Gray Ceiling. Just a few years ago this term meant something very different: older workers were shown the door as quickly as their hair turned gray and replaced by younger and less costly employees. Today, Gray Ceiling takes on a new meaning.

Fortune Magazine in its August 21, 2006 issue described this workplace dynamic: "Generation X, it would seem, is in danger of turning into the Prince Charles of the American workforce: perpetual heirs apparent awaiting the keys to the kingdom." More and more 30-somethings harbor growing resentment of Boomers who are blocking their path and the Gen Ys who are leapfrogging them into desirable positions.

Many Xers tell me that they feel like they've been waiting for years for Boomers to vacate the really "good" jobs. Now, just as the prize is finally looming into sight, Boomers are being advised to "retire retirement." Meanwhile, the workplace is flooding with a new crop of highly talented, upwardly mobile and technically savvy Generation Y's. And, to top it all off, these two huge generations, the Boomers and the Y's, are quietly enjoying a workplace love fest, with the much smaller cohort of X'ers often feeling on the outs and sandwiched in the middle. The longer the Boomers stay in place, the more time the Gen Ys have time to develop. Feeling like the fair-haired

middle child, many Xers, long known for their fast-track careers, free agency, and need for continuous stimulation aren't waiting around anymore.

The fastest way out from under the Gray Ceiling is to ditch the tried and true career path entirely. Quite a few Gen X, especially those with skills in demand, don't want to get pigeon-holed. "Unless you're a professional like a dentist or accountant, staying in one industry too long is just plain stupid," advises one Gen X. They saw their Boomer bosses climb the mid-management ladder and then lose their jobs when organizations flattened. Armed with experience rich resumes, they hit the streets looking for jobs only to find their skills too industry or job specific.

Gen X don't talk to their Boomer bosses about it. Instead, they just quit. Employers in kind have said good riddance, breathing a sigh of relief when these uppity, independent workers leave. But then the Boomer turns to find no one qualified to replace them or to fill that now-vacant position.

Retaining aging Boomers longer may not be all it's cracked up to be without some talent management planning. Is your business at risk? Maybe not, maybe so. The quickest way to find out is to do a workforce audit. Start with a study of your demographics. How many Boomers are lingering on and how many are likely to exit the business in the next 2 to 3 years? How many Xers are patiently waiting to move up? How long are they willing to wait?

By planning ahead, you might just be able to get out of the way of the locomotive when it begins to pick up speed again.

About the author

Ira S Wolfe is a “Gen Y trapped in a Baby Boomer body.” He is a widely respected expert, speaker and consultant on workforce trends and recruiting, selecting and retaining top performers. In addition to serving as president and founder of Success Performance Solutions, he is a popular speaker at conferences, organizations, and CEO groups. He writes a monthly column for Business2Business magazine, contributes to several blogs (www.workforcetrends.com and www.GeeksGeezersGooglization.com), and has authored several books including *Perfect Labor Storm 2.0* and *Understanding Business Values and Motivators*.

He invites readers to contribute and/or comment on his blogs, become a Facebook fan at *Geeks, Geezers and Googlization*, and to email him at iwolfe@geeksgeezersgooglization.com.

Praise from Geeks, Geezers, and Googlization readers

"This [book] could be the only one you'll really need to keep on your shelf."

Beverly Kaye, CEO/Founder
Career Systems International

"FABULOUS book!! Outstanding! This will be the best read that any organization can have for their leaders. I just love it! Read it in one sitting!!"

Gloria Washington, Regional Training Manager
Dollar Tree Stores, Inc.

"The elephant in the room has been exposed.

This is a must read for every Company President and HR Professional."

Amos Dienner, HR/Safety Manager
Smucker Company

"Congratulations, it is right on target. I want to read it again.

Second, for every one of our managers, it should be a mandatory read."

Dennis Spencer, Vice President
Securus

"You have hit a home run!! I think it is fantastic!"

Martin E. Gilligan, Jr.
Martin & Associates

"Geeks, Geezers and Globalization is straight-forward, highly readable, and full of ready-to-use solutions. This book is a "must read" for all leaders struggling to manage."

Judy I. Suiter, Founder & CEO
Competitive Edge, Inc.

"Enlightening! Dr. Wolfe takes our understanding of generations to a whole new level. He offers practical, real world solutions to improve our interactions with every generation in the workplace."

Tammy Ditzel
Corporate Trainer, Performance Consultant, Executive Coach