

The Veterans

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how and when to do it. Today's teams, however, do not resemble the "command and control" teams of old. Teams can be community sized, with no defined leadership. They can even be virtual, with each team member working on their role without even seeing any other team members.

Management. While Veterans tend to be pleasant and at ease with customers, they can also be prone to buck the authority of younger managers or get mired in the "we've never done it that way" mentality. If you are a younger manager and have Veterans reporting to you, take the time to learn from their experience and discover what their preferences and personal needs are. However, be aware that respecting their experience does not mean being intimidated by it. Remember that you are the boss — the one who must take hard stances when those stances are needed. Don't let your respect for your Veteran workers get in the way of managing effectively.

Technology and training. Much of your training efforts with Veterans will likely focus on technology. Unlike Gen Xers or Nexters, Veterans didn't learn about computers in school, and often find technology intimidating and confusing. Do not rush the training. Keep your efforts as loose and stress-free as possible. One way of accomplishing this is by finding older instructors to conduct your training, or finding younger trainers who understand Veterans and speak their unique language.

It is also important to refrain from stereotyping all Veterans as technophobes — remember, their generation invented the electromechanical and telephonic concepts and structures that made your computers possible! Once

How do I Recruit a Veteran?

1. Keep in mind that if your customer base includes a good percentage of seniors, your work force should, too.
2. Don't limit your consideration of older employees to full-time employment only; many of them are not interested in leaving the work force entirely, preferring part-time positions in which they can play a useful part of an organization's efforts.
3. Let them know their age and experience will be considered assets, not liabilities. If you can use their help and experience on a project, tell them so.
4. Use clear enunciation and good grammar when communicating with Veteran recruits. Include "please" and "thank you" and avoid profanity at all costs.

The Workplace of the 1950s

To best understand Veterans in today's workplace, it is helpful to keep in mind the workplace they first entered and how that shaped their lasting impressions of their profession:

- **Division of labor.** Executives were the brains of the operation; workers were the brawn.
- **Rank and status.** Seniority and age correlated.
- **Structure and advancement.** Positions were hierarchical; people knew where they stood and were able to move up the ladder through perseverance and hard work.
- **Relationships.** Formal relationships were de rigueur; employees called those above them on the chart by their last name, with "Mr." or "Mrs." in front of it.
- **Authority.** There were clear distinctions between bosses and workers.
- **Conversation.** Personal topics were not up for discussion.
- **Boundaries.** "Work life" and "family life" were separate.
- **Speaking up.** There were certain unwritten rules that dictated what junior members could say about their own careers. Asserting an opinion on the topic was frowned upon.

trained, many Veterans will take to the new technology and continue learning. ■

The Baby Boomers

From 1946 (almost nine months exactly after VJ Day) through 1960, the Veterans gave birth to a truly revolutionary generation — 76 million children who would form the central bloc in perhaps the greatest period of social (and, eventually, professional) change in the history of the United States. This "Baby Boom" would also oversee a great period of growth and expansion and a push toward individualism over teamwork.

Indeed, Boomers are seen as the generation of achievers, concerned more with raising fortunes than consciousness, and with finding ways to increase their status, prestige, and power. They have an almost Pavlovian tendency toward being driven; this is, after all, the generation of the Yuppie, responsible for many of the stereotypes now commonly associated with the Baby Boom — ruthlessness, Rolex watches, designer glasses, and second homes in Aspen.

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