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## Leveraging the Generational Differences in the Workplace

One of the best received learning sessions at HMA's recent National Conference and Expo in Fort Worth was the handiwork of our '**Next-Gen' Millennials**. Without question, they were at the top of their game! If you were unable to be in Texas, here's a look at what you missed.

A member panel, moderated by Claire Thompson Getty and comprised of HMA Baby Boomers Ray Wheeland and Eric Porter, Generation X'ers Matt Fisk and Bob Miller, and Millennials Tim Brownlee and Thomas Battle, discussed how, "**Leveraging the Generational Differences in the Workplace**," would increase productivity, employee retention, customer satisfaction, and profitability. It was an eye-opener!

### Understanding the Generations

- **Baby Boomers (1946-1964)** grew up in a healthy economic era and believe that long hours and hard work result in success.
- **Generation X (1965-1979)** was raised in a period of great socio-economic upheaval. Mothers were forced to enter the workforce, and that meant that children had to care for themselves after school - "latch key kids."
- **Generation Y "Millennials" (1980-1999)** are 'the' technology savvy gadget users. They enjoy networking and appreciate speed.

### Recognizing & Leveraging their Strengths

To get the best from **Baby Boomers**, honor their experience and recognize their value. Involve them as mentors/coaches/trainers, and find ways to accommodate their schedules.

**Generation X'ers** love technology. They are multi-taskers. They manage time well and are goal and objective oriented. Tap into their technology expertise. Value their competence and creativity, but be sure to provide "role" models, and clearly explain company goals and objectives.

Techno-savvy **Millennials** use technology to work smarter, not longer. Utilize their expertise in technology. Create a plan for their future and develop ways to cross-train and rotate roles. Mentor and coach one-on-one, and work to eliminate bureaucracy.

### Best Practices in Leading a Multigenerational Workforce

- **Operate from a Sophisticated Management Style** – Over-communicate! Communicate company vision, goals and measures to employees. Communicate,

manage and train based on best management practices. Engage all generations for planning and decision-making. Use multiple communication vehicles.

- **Create Workplace Choices** – Allow the workplace to shape itself around the work being done, the customers being served, and those doing the work. The result – less bureaucracy, short chain-of-command, and a relaxed workplace.
- **Respect Competence & Initiative** – Assume the best in people and provide autonomy. Listen to ideas. The ‘next big thing’ for your company may originate from a young, twenty-something staffer.
- **Accommodate Employee Differences** – Treat employees like customers. Recognize and try to accommodate workforce diversity via flextime, job sharing, telecommunicating and scheduling options.
- **Nourish Retention** – Encourage life-long learning. Offer training, coaching, mentoring, leadership opportunities, and a wide variety/choices of benefits. This builds employee experience, confidence and loyalty.