



ZASHIN & RICH

**The Chameleon Communicator:
How to effectively communicate in today's
multi-generational workplace**

Presented By: Brad E. Bennett



Brad E. Bennett

- 18 years of experience as an employment lawyer and human resources professional.
- Represents clients in litigation, collective bargaining, arbitrations, and administrative proceedings.
- Defends public sector clients before the State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR), State Employment Relations Board (SERB), and assists with public records compliance and Civil Service Law.
- Certified as a Specialist in Labor and Employment Law by the Ohio Bar Association.
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The Chameleon Communicator

- **What is a Chameleon known for?**



The Chameleon Communicator



- **What is a “Chameleon Communicator”??**



The Chameleon Communicator

- The Story



Chameleon Communication Attributes

- *Communicates based upon the generation- (“Nurture”)*
- *Communicates based upon personality- (“Nature”)*
- *Has a High Emotional Intelligence (“E.Q.”)*



“Generational” WARNING . . .



Every individual is “unique” . . . (some more than others)

- AS A RESULT -

While the data regarding each generation is compiled from surveys, authoritative research, articles and experience, it still ***may not be reflective of every individual member*** of each generation.



INTRODUCING THE GENERATIONS



- Traditionalists (before 1945)
- Boomers (1945-1964'ish)
- Gen X (1965-1980'ish)
- Millennials (1981-1999'ish)



Traditionalists (5% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: “work all of your life” (work is an obligation)
- b) Respect authority and rules
- c) Tend to avoid confrontation
- d) Hierarchical work structure
- e) Seniority and tenure focused
- f) Pride in hard work
- g) Face-to-face communication
- h) “No news is good news”



Traditionalists (5% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Use expert endorsements or testimonials of those they trust.
- b) Promote patriotism, teamwork
- c) Allow time for decisions – do not rush or pressure them for a decision.
- d) Hierarchical work structure – so use “top-down” chain of command approach.
- e) Use proper etiquette (“Mr.,” “Mrs.,” “Director”)
- f) Provide detailed directions.
- g) Face-to-face communication preferred



Baby Boomers (45% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: “live to work” (invented the phrase work-a-holic)
- b) Competitive (thrives on it)
- c) Work hard by putting in long hours– feels that you should too.
- d) Not afraid of confrontation and may question authority.
- e) Communicates one-on-one or in large group (holds lots of meetings).
- f) Prefers traditional office environment



Baby Boomers (45% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Provide them with knowledge. They like to understand the “big picture” of things.
- b) Offer a proposal as a new experience – this generation is adventurous.
- c) Provide alternatives/choices when possible. They like to weigh their options.
- d) Communication should be future oriented – not past focused.
- e) Focus on their own achievements and goals.
- f) Communicates one-on-one or in meetings (no texts)



Gen X (35% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: “work hard, play hard” (X-games)
- b) Not always committed long term – desires to have transferable skills (free-agent)
- c) Independent and entrepreneurial (hey ... don’t forget all of the “dot.com” start-ups)
- d) Skeptical (prove it to me...)
- e) Desires work-life balance through “working smarter” and/or “thinking outside the box”
- f) Enjoys discretion
- g) Tech savvy and communicates by e-mail.



Gen X (35% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Don't use "hard sell" techniques – let them make a decision at their own pace.
- b) Provide variety of choices –even more options than Boomers ("think outside the box")
- c) Keep your promises – deliver what you say, when you say.
- d) Offer suggestions rather than telling them what to do
- e) But – get to the point. Don't hint at something.
- f) Let them get to know and trust you.
- g) E-mail communication is expected.



Gen Y – “Millennials”



Millennials (15% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: “Work to live.”
- b) Relies heavily on technology (raised multi-tasking)
- c) Not afraid to speak their minds (and will . . . a lot!)
- d) Expects instant feedback/recognition
- e) Informal work environment – flexible workplace and work-from-home options
- f) Communicates by technology instead of in- person (including text messaging).



Millennials (15% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Let them communicate online for convenience.
- b) Consider using blogs, social media, text, i.m.
- c) Give them feedback on their idea (promptly)
- d) Find a way to make them feel involved and valued but manage expectations.
- e) Be sure your communication offers “value” that will help them with their problems/job.
- f) Make sure you have researched the issue – expect that they have done so (or can get up to speed quickly through technology)



Do the generations even speak the same language?



The Chameleon Communicator



- **How would a “Chameleon” have handled the previous exchange?**
 - A baby boomer Chameleon?
 - A millennial Chameleon?



What “carrots” work best for each generation?

- **Traditionalists:** Public acknowledgement for their seniority and dedication
- **Boomers:** Public acknowledgement of “hard work” and contributions.
- **Gen X:** Bonuses/name-brand gift cards
- **Millennials:** Time off



Similarities with Gen X and Gen Y

- Loyal to persons NOT the “employer” (good supervisors critical!)
 - Get to “know” them on personal level
 - Notice and comment on their successful efforts
- Need IMMEDIATE feedback
 - Evaluate performance constantly not just once a year. Both will also require facts to support poor ratings.
 - Millennials likely have a harder time with negative evals.
 - Xers are skeptical of too much praise (“okay...what are you trying to get out of me now?”)



The Chameleon Communicator

- Understand that within all generations, individual personalities also are at play . . .
 - Some are **more difficult** than others.
- To be a true “Chameleon Communicator” – you must be able to recognize the personality type and use proper communication techniques that will work with that personality!



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES



**WHAT ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT
PERSONALITY TYPES?**



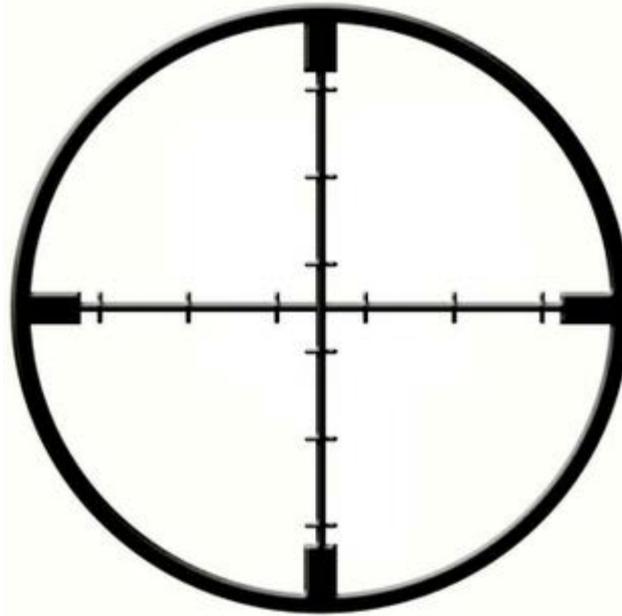
DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE COMPLAINER (Gen Y prevalent)



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE SNIPER (Gen X prevalent)



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DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE “NO” PERSON

(Traditionalist Prevalent)



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE GRENADE (Boomer Prevalent)



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE TANK ("bully")



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

- When faced with irrational co-worker – ask:
 - “What exactly are you upset about?”
 - Shows your listening and care
 - Places burden back on them.
 - Don’t keep apologizing
- “I” vs. “we” (common ground)
- That’s interesting
 - ...tell me more.
 - ...why do you feel that way?
 - ...what makes you say that?



The Pillars of Effective Communication

**Clear, Direct, Positive
COMMUNICATON is ESSENTIAL!**



Miscommunication of Performance



Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

What is it?

- The ability of a person to positively handle and manage their own emotions so as to improve interpersonal relationships and communication.



Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Examples of Impact of Stress on Communication.

- You are driving home from work and have been stuck in high traffic. You are then cut-off in the exit lane by fast driver . . .
- Co-worker comes into your office and demands that you “give them” the folder you are using and they grab it off your desk and storm out...
- Normally outgoing co-worker has been ignoring you and only talks to you when you ask them something and then it is short and to-the-point. . .



Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Impact of Stress on Communication:

- Impacts ability to :
 - Properly “read” situation;
 - Hear what other side is saying;
 - Be aware of your own feelings and needs
- Those with high E.Q. can properly read (and control) their own emotions and the emotions of others
 - The ability to calm yourself down quickly helps you feel balanced, focused and in control



Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Use E.Q. to reduce stress and improve communication in 5 easy steps:

1. Work on your Emotional Awareness
2. Identify When You Are Stressed
3. Pay Attention to Non-Verbals
4. Use Humor!
5. Resolve Conflicts Positively



Conclusion

A “chameleon communicator”:

1. Changes their communication style to fit both the generation (“nurture”) and personality (“nature”) of the other person;
2. Applies the 3 pillars of effective communication to the situation.
3. Increases their E.Q. in order to control their emotions and improve communication



THANK YOU!

If you have questions concerning this presentation, please contact:

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