

Engaging Multiple Generations Among Your Workforce

"You can divide any working population into three categories: people who are engaged (loyal and productive), those who are not engaged (just putting in time), and those who are actively disengaged (unhappy and spreading their discontent). Our research shows that the U.S. workforce is 26% engaged, 55% not engaged, and 19% actively disengaged."- Marcus Buckingham, Gallup Polls

As Jack Welch, former CEO of General Electric, stated, "Any company trying to compete... must figure out a way to engage the mind of every employee." But how can a 20-something safety coordinators engage the members of his team who range in age from 23 to 68?

For the first time in modern history, the American workforce encompasses four separate generations working side by side -- and the differences among them are one of the greatest challenges facing safety managers today. It's likely for an organization to include members of multiple generations - the Silent Generation (born 1933-1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation Xers (born 1965-1976), and maybe even some Millennials (born 1977-1998).

Many safety managers are unaware of the issues contributing to the differences among these groups, and most are struggling with how to constructively work with individuals in each generation.

In today's fast-changing work environment, it has never been more vital to an organization's success to find ways to maximize the performance of every person. To succeed, you need to engage your employees. This means first understanding what drives each generation and then creating a compelling work climate that addresses the unique needs of each group in a way that creates bridges and common ground.

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