Robert Half Canada

How Do Generations of Canadian Workers Differ?

Survey: Communication Skills, Adapting to Change and Technical Expertise Top the List

TORONTO, Jan. 17, 2017 /CNW/ - In today's multigenerational workforce, most executives agree that each age demographic exhibits its own styles and approaches. Canadian CFOs in a Robert Half Management Resources survey said they see the greatest generational differences in employees' communication skills, ability to adapt to change and technical abilities.

CFOs were asked, "**In which one of the following areas do you see the greatest differences among your company's employees who are from different generations?**"
Their responses*:

Communication skills	44%
Adapting to change	18%
Technical skills	17%
Cross-departmental collaboration	5%
No differences	16%
Don't know	1%
	101%

*Responses do not total 100 per cent due to rounding.

Research conducted for Get Ready for Generation Z by Robert Half and Enactus highlights key differences in these areas among baby boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1977), Generation Y (1978-1989) and Generation Z (1990-1999).

- **Communication style:** Baby boomers tend to be more reserved, while Gen Xers favour a control-and-command style, the research indicates. Conversely, Gen Yers prefer a more collaborative approach to communication, and Gen Zers prize in-person interactions.
- **Change management:** According to the research, Gens X and Y tend to see change as a vehicle for new opportunities, while Gen Z is accustomed to change and expects it in the workplace.
- **Technical skills:** When it comes to building their abilities, employer-backed training is expected by all workers. Baby boomers and Gen Xers most value traditional instructor-led courses or self-learning tools; millennials, which include Generations Y and Z, prefer collaborative and technology-centric options.

"The unique perspectives of each generation should be welcomed and embraced in the workforce," said David King, Canadian president of Robert Half Management Resources. "Generationally diverse teams draw from varied experiences, and company initiatives are strengthened by more comprehensive skillsets and insights."

Managing a multigenerational team shouldn't be intimidating, added King. "Successful companies recognize the valuable and creative business solutions that come from encouraging engagement across the organization's workforce, regardless of function or tenure." he said. "To maximize potential growth, executives should strive for a collaborative work environment that supports different communication methods and work styles."

Robert Half Management Resources offers five tips to help manage a multigenerational workforce:

- **Don't overthink it.** Start with the understanding that everyone wants to do a good job and help the company. This commonality lays a strong foundation for relationship-building.
- **Customize your style.** Staff possess common attributes, but they also have individual needs. Tailor your management for each person's strengths, personality and aspirations.
- **Go off-site.** Host team-building events outside the office to give employees a chance to get to know each other in a different setting.

- **Let newer professionals take the lead.** Institute reverse mentorships, where less-seasoned staff advise and share their insights with veteran colleagues. Also invite team members from all generations to share their unique areas of expertise.
- **Mix and match project teams.** Put together groups with complementary skills and diverse perspectives. This can prompt innovation and new problem-solving techniques.

About the Research

The survey was developed by Robert Half Management Resources and conducted by an independent research firm. It is based on telephone interviews with more than 270 CFOs from a stratified random sample of companies in Canada.

About Robert Half Management Resources

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