

# BRIDGING GENERATION GAPS IN THE MEDICAL PRACTICE

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**“Understanding a  
generation is key  
to reaching its  
members successfully.”**

William Strauss

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## Generations Today

Silent Generation	Born 1930 – '45	Ages 61 to 76
Baby Boom	Born 1946 – '64	Ages 42 to 60
Generation X	Born 1965 – '76	Ages 30 to 41
Echo Boom (Y)	Born 1977 – '94	Ages 12 to 29

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## The "Perfect Storm" Brewing in The Medical Field

- Growth of older population
- Boomers about to retire
- Shortage of new workers

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## Growth of Age 65+

- 1900            3.2 million        4%
- 2004            35 million        12%
- 2030            71.5 million     20%

What are we seeing? Home Health, Aquatic Centers, Nursing Homes, Funeral Homes.

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## The Baby Boom Generation

- America's largest generation
- 77 million American's
- Born 1946 to 1964
- Ages 47 - 65

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**“Boomers don’t migrate into traditions, they transform them.”**

Ken Dychtwald Ph.D., testifying before Senate Committee on Aging, 1999.

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**Boomers Flood 50 - 64**

- 1996 35 million
- 2000 40 million
- 2010 56 million
- 2020 62 million

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**Boomers account for:**

- 42% of all U.S. households
- 50% of consumer spending
- More than \$2 trillion a year

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## Product Changes

- Cell phones that monitor health
- Home elevators
- Infinity M series
- Tire pressure and vehicle maintenance alerts via email

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## Growth of 55+ Workforce

- 12% of today's workforce are 55+
- 20% in 2025 are expected to be 55+
- This may transform the workforce because:
  - Many will not have saved enough
  - Likely to continue working
  - Will delay traditional retirement
  - Will look for monetary/psych. benefit

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## Boomer Statistics

- According to AARP, 8 out of 10 boomers say they plan to work in retirement.
- 42% of boomers want to cycle between periods of work and leisure according to Merrill Lynch research.

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### Boomer's Concerns

- Care and loss of aging parents
- Adjusting to reduced expectations about finances/early retirement
- Rising anxiety about healthcare costs, pensions and Social Security

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### Management/Coworker Tips

- Retain/recruit mature workers
- Redesign jobs
- Chip away at stereotypes
- Create an age friendly culture

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# GENERATION X

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**Generation X**  
(also called the Baby Bust)

- Born 1965 – 1976
- Ages 35 – 46
- Small generation
- 49.3 million people

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**Xers Formative Years**

- Watergate
- Sexuality shaped by AIDS
- Often were children of divorce
- Challenger explosion
- MTV, Internet, video games, computers
- 90s corporate downsizing & “McJobs”

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## Xer Characteristics/Smarts

- Individualistic / independent
- Self-reliant / entrepreneurial
- Pragmatic, smart
- Don't take things for granted
- Well-educated generation
- Savvy with technology

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## Xers Today & Tomorrow

- Forming families
- Buying homes
- Entering peak earning years
- Xers will slowly supplant Baby Boomers in peak earnings in the next decade
- Xers will move into senior and executive level positions over next 4-6 years.

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## Xer Workforce Traits

- Family comes first, career second
- Men share parenting responsibility
- Home and work success don't negate one another
- Like to get things done efficiently and conveniently

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## Management/Coworker Tips

- Treat them as individuals
- Respect their diversity
- Stress practicality, sensibility
- Avoid hype – be direct
- Value opinions, ideas
- Provide them new challenges
- Provide them training

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## The Echo Boom Generation

(also called generation Y)

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## The Echo Boom

- Born: 1977 – 1994
- Ages 17 – 34
- 70.7 million (25.8%)
- First graduated high school in 1994
- First graduated college in 1998

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### Echo Boom's Formative Years:

- Raised in booming 90's economy
- Technology advances all around them
- Well-educated / high academic aspirations
- Growing up in a global economy

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### Echo Boom Characteristics

- Optimistic
- Problem solvers
- Service oriented
- Team oriented
- World view
- Lifelong learners
- More Diverse

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### Echo Boomers Workforce Characteristics

- Want to be members of a group
- Seek appreciation from their peers
- Assume and celebrate diversity
- Tech savvy multi-taskers

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## Hopes Tied to Echo Boomers

- Mega-size generation will help stabilize the economy and workforce
- Likely to emerge as a politically powerful generation
- Watch for increased community involvement and focus on good deeds

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## Management/Coworker Tips

- Don't chastise them for not doing it your way – encourage innovation
- Don't do their job for them
- Don't interfere all that much
- Don't tell them to focus on one thing - they're best at multi tasking
- Be a "strategy guide" vs. boss

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## Bridging Generations Together in the Medical Field

- Chip away at stereotypes
- Understand views, values, needs
- Keep baby boomers on the job
- Recruit younger and older workers
- Build age-diverse teams
- Allow workforce to reflect increasing diversity

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Source: Tom Akins, Age Speak.

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