

District 15 Conference, May 2021

# Reconnecting Across the Years: Generational Collaboration in Toastmasters

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# Agenda

- ▶ Introduction and Icebreaker
- ▶ Who Are We Talking About?
- ▶ Group Activity
- ▶ Generational Challenges Facing Clubs
- ▶ Tools to Bridge Generation Gaps
- ▶ Discussion and Conclusion

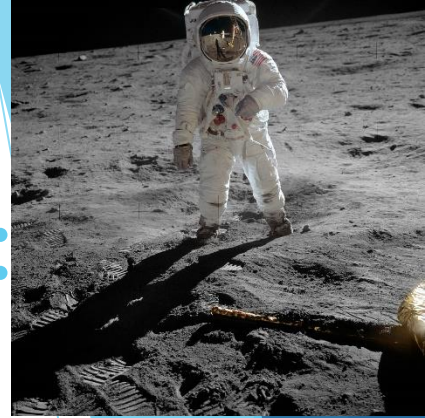


# Your Presenter



- ▶ Twenty-five year Toastmaster
- ▶ Self-described Baby Boomer
- ▶ Generation Team Building instructor for 20 years
- ▶ Passionate student of history
- ▶ Training manager at Ada County Juvenile Court Services in Boise, ID (4 generations in the staff, soon to be serving customers in a fifth generation)

For this session, the Generations  
(please see your handout as well):



- ▶ **G.I.: 97 to 111 years old**
- ▶ **Silent: 79 to 96**
- ▶ **Baby Boomer: 57 to 78**
- ▶ **Generation X: 40 to 56**
- ▶ **Millennial: 27 to 39**
- ▶ **Generation Z: 12 to 26**
- ▶ **Generation Alpha: 11 and younger**

# Disclaimer and Explanations



- ▶ There are always exceptions to a generational characteristic
- ▶ Some members do not conform to norms
- ▶ Other factors affect characteristics (race, economic status, geographic location, language, job experience, time in TM)
- ▶ Never assume members of a generation always act as their generation “should”

# Who Are We Talking About?

## Generations - Generally



- ▶ World War II (or G.I.) - born between 1910 & 1924
- ▶ Silent - 1925 to 1942
- ▶ Baby Boomer (Boomers) - 1943 to 1964
- ▶ Generation X (X'ers)- 1965 to 1981
- ▶ Generation Y (Millennials) - 1982 to 1994
- ▶ Generation Z - 1995 to 2009
- ▶ Generation Alpha - 2010 to 2024<sub>6</sub>

# Icebreaker Activity



- ▶ I am going to state the name of several names or events over the course of the generations
- ▶ If you know the answer, use your CHAT box to send it to me - I will share the correct response
- ▶ This will cover from the 1950's through the 2010's
- ▶ Ready? Let's begin

# Answer in Your Chat Box

- ▶ What year was the Woodstock concert held?
- ▶ Who was Captain Kangaroo?
- ▶ Who are Sheldon, Leonard, Howard, Raj, and Penny?
- ▶ What is TikTok?
- ▶ Where was the Gulf War of 1991 fought?
- ▶ Who is the current host of the Tonight Show?
- ▶ Who was the FIRST host of the Tonight Show?
- ▶ Who was the “American Idol” competitor who just dropped out of the competition?
- ▶ How many characters did Twitter originally limit users to?
- ▶ Who recorded the hit version of the song “Cathy’s Clown”?



# G. I. Generation (ages 97 to 111)



- ▶ This generation won WWII and saved the USA
- ▶ Out of clubs now, but they positively impacted Toastmasters for the next 2-3 generations
- ▶ Known for:
  - ▶ Loyalty to country, company, and club (Ed Hedges - over 40 years in Ada Club, Boise)
  - ▶ Ambitious but appreciative men & women
  - ▶ Wearing formal business attire
  - ▶ Being well-educated (thanks to the GI Bill)
- ▶ Somewhat hesitant about new things (rock'n'roll)

# Silent Generation (ages 79 to 96)



- ▶ Youth = Great Depression and the War
- ▶ Role models: the G.I. Generation
- ▶ Adult years featured cultural diversity, economic success, unrest of the 60's, and entrance of women into TM (1973)
- ▶ Committed club leaders in their day
- ▶ Superb mentors for younger TM's - still a few active in Toastmasters

# Baby Boomers (ages 57 to 78)



- ▶ Once the largest of all American generations
- ▶ Products of WWII victory & 25-year economic boom
- ▶ Boomer cultural touchstones still impact us (rock & roll, television, antiwar protests, sexual revolution)
- ▶ Often joined Toastmasters to build speaking skills AND network
- ▶ Workplace motto: work hard, pay your dues, & you will do well (but then life happened in 70's/80's)
- ▶ Toastmasters unofficial motto: serve as a club officer, participate in contests, organize social events, use your CTM/CC manual, etc.<sup>.11</sup>

# Generation X (ages 40 to 56)



- ▶ Saw end of the Cold War and Gulf War victory
- ▶ Smaller generation: affected by increase in divorces, more moms in the workplace, & fewer children born during recessions
- ▶ Self-reliant and independent (latchkey kids)
  - ▶ No real belief in workplace guarantees or promises, based on what they saw happen to Boomers
- ▶ Less optimistic about the future and more cynical about the world; saw TM as skill-building
- ▶ The Work-Life Balance Generation

# Millennial (Gen Y) (ages 27 to 39)



- ▶ Multi-taskers extraordinaire
- ▶ Saw great horror (9/11, terrorism) and great triumph (expansion of the Internet)
- ▶ Often the largest single generation in a TM club
- ▶ Very comfortable changing jobs/careers/clubs
  - ▶ Generally do not like giving extra time to employers
  - ▶ Club commitment can be driven by skill set needs
- ▶ These men and women are the TM future
- ▶ Very comfortable moving to online meetings

# Gen “Z”

(Ages 12 to 26)



- ▶ First Americans to grow up in a Internet-dominated world (and the Net is in your pocket)
- ▶ Who are they? Kids born from 1995 through 2009; followed by Generation Alpha
- ▶ They expect instant and total communication (“digital natives”), including in TM Clubs
- ▶ Known for knowledge access 24/7, multi-culturalism, globalism, & *much more*
- ▶ **Along with Millennials, they are TM’s future**



# And Next? Generation Alpha (Birth to Age 11)



- ▶ The newest generation - not much known right now
- ▶ What is expected
  - ▶ Generally, they are the children of Millennials
  - ▶ Variety of family living arrangements for children, with a high number of foreign-born parents
  - ▶ Greater racial diversity than in any previous generation
  - ▶ More economic challenges (wealth inequality)
  - ▶ More changing of residence and career than in the past
  - ▶ Technology is omnipresent in their lives - gamification, digital fluency at a young age, short attention spans
- ▶ This generation can join Toastmasters starting in 2028

# Activity

- ▶ Take a moment to reflect
  - ▶ What is the biggest generational challenge facing your club today?
  - ▶ What is one thing you and your club members can do to face that challenge?
- ▶ Write down your answers in the next minute and be prepared to share



# Current Challenges to Clubs

- ▶ Covid-19 related restrictions
  - ▶ Online vs. in-person vs. hybrid
  - ▶ Meeting site limitations
- ▶ Pathways transition and momentum
- ▶ Loss of continuity and traditions
- ▶ Others?

# Generational Challenges

- ▶ If you feel comfortable, please share your club's generational challenge, and one thing you can do to deal with it
- ▶ We will take a few examples for discussion

# Generational Challenges I Have Seen (and how to face them)

- ▶ Challenge: Older/long-term members struggling to use ZOOM or other online software for meetings
  - ▶ Solution: Pair a younger member with each older member as a mentor/coach on tech
- ▶ Challenge: Gen Z and Millennial members uncomfortable with planning in-person club events
  - ▶ Solution: Organize committee with a mix of generations (Boomer, X'er, Millennial, Gen Z)

# More TM Generational Challenges

- ▶ Challenge: Misaligned communication methods (using the wrong type for that generation)
  - ▶ Handwritten notes or excessive paper documents for Millennials and Gen Z
  - ▶ Texting a Silent Generation or older Baby Boomer
- ▶ Solution: Use well-aligned communication methods for club members (and use multiple methods)
- ▶ Challenge: Multiple members of one generation leaving the club or failing to renew dues
- ▶ Solution: Do quick e-polls or phone calls to determine the causes of departure; address generational barriers

# Tips to Improve Inter-Generational Communication

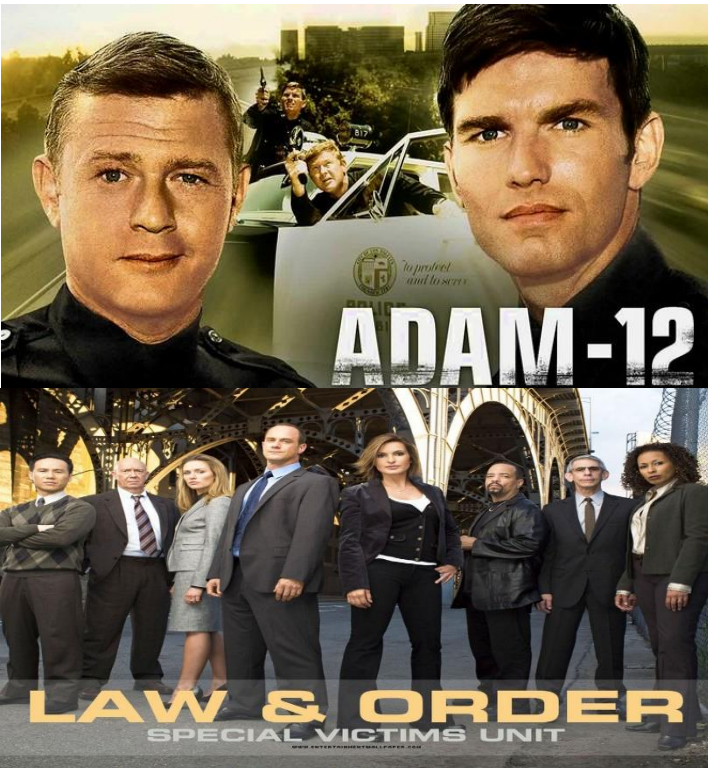
- ▶ Understand the motivating factors for the generations
- ▶ Know their communication preferences
- ▶ Stay educated on the generations in your club and how you can reach out to them
- ▶ Develop cross-generational communication relationships
- ▶ Use platforms and techniques tailored to your audience



# Three Goals to Set in Your Club

- ▶ Learn the generations in your club (and do NOT ask for their ID!)
- ▶ Host a generation-themed club meeting that allows members to safely discuss challenges/solutions
- ▶ Honor the older generations as you welcome newer/younger members
- ▶ *With your club leaders, set dates for each to be accomplished*

# Summary Comments



- ▶ We are all unique, regardless of our generation
- ▶ Whether or not you watch *Adam-12*, *Law and Order SVU*, or *NCIS* doesn't matter
- ▶ What matters is our ability to communicate and work with members, fellow clubs, guests, and everyone else, regardless of when they were born



# A Quote to Ponder

- ▶ **“If you want happiness for a lifetime, help the next generation.”**
- ▶ *Chinese Proverb*



# References

- ▶ **“You Raised Us - Now Work With Us: Millennials, Career Success, and Building Strong Workplace Teams”** by Lauren Rikleen
- ▶ ***Generational Dynamics: Collaborative Styles for Intergenerational Team Building*** by Dr. Annika Hylmo - [readytomanage.com](http://readytomanage.com)
- ▶ **“What Millennials Want From Work: How to Maximize Engagement in Today’s Workforce”** by Jennifer Deal
- ▶ ***How to Play Together in the Multi-Generational Sandbox at Work*** by Caroline Higgins - [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com)
- ▶ **“Sticking Points: How to Get Four Generations Working Together in the 12 Places They Come Apart”** by Haydn Shaw

# Conclusion

- ▶ Thank you for your service to Toastmasters!
- ▶ I appreciated your attention-and your not texting (too much) during my session 😊
- ▶ Feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions
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