

ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL RECOGNITION? NOT ANYMORE

John O'Brien, Vice President, Employee Performance Group, BI WORLDWIDE

If your recognition strategy is designed to fit everyone, you've got some tailoring to do.

Peek into America's conference rooms today and you'll likely see plenty of white and gray heads among the usual black, brown and blond.

Today's workforce is a vibrant mix of four generations, each molded by its distinct era. Think about it. Your Traditionalist sales manager is a loyal, dependable hard worker. Your Baby Boomer accountant is the ultimate team player. Your Gen X creative is a free-and-easy individualist. And let's not forget your Millennials — connected, energetic and eager to prove themselves by taking on any challenge that comes their way.

Research has shown that the individuals in each of these four groups often share characteristics that help determine their preferences — in management styles, communication modes, company benefits and recognition.

Now, more than ever before, a one-size-fits-all recognition strategy just isn't a good fit.

Who are your employees ... and what engages them?

Understanding your employees is key to developing a recognition strategy that **works**. Here's a look at common characteristics and preferences of each of today's working generations. Does your recognition strategy adequately address the needs of your multigenerational workforce?

GENERATION	TRADITIONALISTS (born before 1946)	BABY BOOMERS (1946 - 1964)	GENERATION X (1965 - 1980)	GENERATION Y/ MILLENNIALS (1980 - 2000)
CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loyal, strong work ethic, stable, disciplined, risk-averse, focused, experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optimistic, hard-working, team players, experienced 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tech-savvy, optimistic, adept multitaskers, socially conscious, ambitious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-reliant, flexible, tech-savvy, willing to do things differently, goal-oriented
WHAT THEY VALUE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of a job well done Acknowledgment of loyalty, hard work, sacrifice Appreciation for passing on knowledge, mentoring Face-to-face thanks, handwritten notes Traditional corporate status symbols 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Status based on experience and accomplishment Recognition for making a difference Thanks for going above and beyond Appreciation for being good team players Flexible scheduling and time off Leaving a meaningful legacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freedom to do work when and where they want Autonomy to do the job their own way Opportunity to socialize with coworkers Time off for family and leisure Learning opportunities Latest technology Healthcare coverage and convenience benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful work Opportunity to develop relationships with their workforce peers More responsibility; chances to prove themselves Time off Appreciation for sacrificing time off Opportunities to learn and be mentored
DESIRED AWARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plaques, certificates, other tangible awards for loyalty, dedication and service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal thanks and appreciation, promotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free time Upgraded resources Opportunities for development Bottom-line results Certifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awards, certificates, experiential awards

ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL RECOGNITION? NOT ANYMORE

How effective is YOUR strategy?

Review your recognition strategy by asking yourself these questions:

- 1 Do your managers understand the importance of a multigenerational recognition strategy and how they are vital to its success?
- 2 Do you recognize employees for a wide variety of behaviors and achievements?
- 3 Do you offer a mixture of award types that appeal to various generations?
- 4 Do you regularly solicit feedback from your employees about the type of recognition rewards you offer?
- 5 Do you clearly communicate about recognition in ways that speak to all generations at your company?
- 6 Does your recognition strategy reflect your company values — and those of each generation?
- 7 Does your recognition strategy positively affect each generation's motivation, work ethic and loyalty?

The good news is...

The multigenerational workforce comprises wisdom born of experience, a strong work ethic, energy, creativity and unprecedented technological skill. Think of the power of multigenerational teams at your organization. What better way to succeed in today's ever-changing and challenging marketplace?

Combine this with a recognition strategy that truly engages all generations of workers and you'll be looking at exciting outcomes for both your individual employees and your organization.

INDIVIDUAL: Increased job satisfaction, motivation and loyalty; a strong sense of teamwork; and an improved relationship with supervisor.

ORGANIZATIONAL: Increased cost savings, profitability, productivity, quality, retention and a reputation for being a great place to work.

What's next?

In 2015, one in every five American workers will be older than 65. Millennials will become the workforce majority (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics).

And in just five short years, the first wave of Generation Z will be looking for work. Born 2001 to the present, this generation has never known life without a digital connection — bringing all new perspectives and attitudes to the workplace.

Make sure your recognition strategy is as dynamic and multigenerational as your workforce and you'll enjoy benefits as rich as the talent that comes through your door.

To learn more about BI **WORLDWIDE**, visit: BIWORLDWIDE.com
or email info@BIWORLDWIDE.com.

