HUNTER VALLEY OPERATIONS

Learning through Generations

Off the back of attending the resource training council conference a couple of weeks ago, a
thought-provoking key-note speaker talking to generational learning styles triggered a
review process for the Training and Development team at Hunter Valley Operations.

For the first time in modern history, organisations have been tasked with supporting
employees spanning **4 generations**.

HVO employs team members who can remember the days of black and white television and
rotary phones, and seat them in a truck or just an office space away from recent graduates or
trainees who've never known a world without the internet or email.

As the industry is currently experiencing a high turn-over of workers, we may be more likely to
have a higher percentage of inexperienced workers training our trainees, graduates and
apprentices alike. Older generation trainers who have not yet had the opportunity to upgrade
their TAE skillset to include LLN skills to better identify learning styles, Mentors who may have
not yet received formal TAE learning and increased mixed age groups with differing LLN styles
which will increasingly add to the pressure put on our trainers and assessors

So, we are who we are, and why we are who we are!
- Why do generations have these common trait's and do we identify with ours?
    - *Focusing only on the 4 main generations currently in the workforce, we pulled this
      apart as a group to look into some key life-changing factors of our generations,
      focusing on Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Zoomers, we touched on a few
      points;*
    - The team looked into Pop Culture/ Music/ Famous People *(The Beatle's, Hitler, the
      Free Love of the 70's)*
    - Historical Events *(Television, Man on the Moon, 9/11 , Covid-19)*
- However, there are also some common factors why we may not meet the stereotype of
  our own generation;
    - Being raised by grandparents and inheriting parts of their life experience and values
      (children of the depression?)
    - Parents who have had children at a later stage in their life, or
    - Parents who had children at a young age.

So what are the Learning Styles of the Generations at Work?
- **Baby Boomers** — Born between 1946 and 1964, baby expect a more personally-focused
  learning structure. They value relationships and solidifying their interpersonal skills,

primarily because they didn't grow up with the current technological advances (internet, smartphones)

- **Generation X** — Born between 1965 and 1980, are often he most independent of the groups, prioritising self-directed educational opportunities and programs that enable them to learn on their own schedule. Un-like Baby Boomers, Gen X is focused on work-life balance rather than being organizational lifers (staying with the same organization for life). This generation delayed marriage and childbearing to focus on developing themselves first, most likely as a response their parents being workaholics

- **Gen Y / Millennials** — Born after 1980, this is latest generation to enter the workforce and were the first generation to enter university with a laptop in hand, favouring highly personalised training on a self-directed schedule. As the members of Gen Y grew up with the internet, it should be no surprise millennials like to access information on-demand, whenever and wherever they may happen to want it.

- **Gen Z or Zoomers**- Are digital natives, they socialise online and expect personalised on-demand learning. Due to their integration of technology into everyday life, "the constant stimulation and access to all the world's information at their fingertips has given them an eight-second attention span and has trained their brains to expect instant gratification"

- **That then brings us to Gen Alpha**- Likely to be the most diverse generation in history, they're also more likely to grow up in non-traditional households.

  Given their vast diversity, these students will likely need social-emotional learning support more than ever. Social awareness skills can help make students more empathetic toward others, leading to greater tolerance. Students' abilities to connect with others positively can have long-term benefits, including better education and career readiness.

  A unique digital savviness will also be a defining characteristic of their generation. Consider that many parents are regularly immersed in their smartphones and that tech-wielding kids aren't spending as much in-person time playing as prior generations did. This could lead to a reduction in social-emotional learning support at home and in their communities, making educational roles in providing SEL support even more important.

  The COVID-19 pandemic will likely have lasting effects on Gen Alpha as well, although it may be still too early to tell the extent. Spending the better part of a year attending primary school virtually, as many Gen Alpha students did, is bound to have an effect on development, especially when paired with reduced in-person extracurricular activities.

I am sure most of us in the room at some point, have struggled with completion of training activities, not all stakeholders are 'on the bus' so to speak, however, have we really looked at why?
Is training sometimes talked about as fundamentally one of the most important parts of the operation of a business, but so often always ends up the lowest priority?

Apart from conflicting priorities, have you ever thought to unpack why?

Most of our leadership teams and supervisors driving our people may be a product of their generation? Did they grow up in a time where training was minimal, there wasn't much of it and it certainly wasn't formal.

Bring us forward to 2022, learning and development is a part of our everyday life. It is expected we have formal qualifications and learning to be accepted onto a worksite, and without them we certainly won't be completing any work.

So, is it not so much about coal through the bin but a product of our time, our generation?

To put that into context, how as a generation do <u>we</u> perceive training? Broadly,

Baby Boomer – may view it as, too much and I'll leave?

Gen X- Training is required to keep me?

Millennials- Training is continuous and expected!

Zoomers- Training, learning and development is continuous. Its embedded into the workplace and not only helps me in my role but also to grow as an individual.

So as Training Professionals now all of a sudden we are having to deal with 4 very different generations of people and learning styles, how do we make connections to content?

What are some ways that can assist us with building that connection to help with retention of information to learners?

- Do we use commonalities as reference points, this can work well with older generations.
- Real life examples/ Case Studies, or liken yourself to a similar situation.
- Humour, works well for all of us, right?
- Social facts – emotional effects and Pop culture.
- Do they believe that you, the trainer is competent?
- A training tool that is common across all generations is Television!

For Example;

Baby Boomers and Gen X grew up with the Flintstones.

Gen Y then grew up with The Simpsons

And Gen Z had Family Guy.

That brings us once again to Gen Alpha, Rick and Morty is the new Flintstones

They all have something is common, all could be portrayed as dis-functional families with an overweight dad who goes to work, except for Rick and Morty.

They're all of a sudden thin characters, grandad lives with the family in a non-traditional household and mum is the one who goes to work.

Here is the change, right before our eyes on a platform familiar to us all, TV!

So we asked ourselves, do we have what it takes? Have we got the balance right and are we prepared for training now and for future generations?

Is In-Class, a thing of the past?

Is elearning, the way to go?

Simulation and virtual reality?

Devices, tech, in room discussions and group activities

The workforce is changing, can we keep in front of it?

Generation	Silent or Traditional	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y or Millennials	Generation Z
Born	1925 – 1945	1946 – 1964	1965 – 1979	1980 – 1994	1995 - 2010
Communication Style	Top – down	Guarded	Hub & spoke	Collaborative	Electro-social, highly connected
Problem Solving	Hierarchical	Horizontal	Independent	Collaborative	Global Tribe/ Independent
Decision Making	Seeks approval	Team informed	Team included	Team Decided	Sonar / Individualistic
Leadership Style	Command & Control	Get out of the way	Coach	Partner	RSS Protagonist
Learning Style	Classroom	Facilitated	Independent	Collaborative & Networked	Pocket mobile internet based
Learning Format	Formal Instructive	Relaxed Structured	Spontaneous Interactive	Multi-sensory Visual	Student centered Kinesthetic
Training	The hard way	Too much and I'll leave	Required to keep me	Continuous & expected	Playing Life
Training Focus	Traditional On-the-job Top-down	Technical Data Evidence	Practical Case Studies Applications	Emotional Stories Participative	Multi-modal e-Learning Interactive
Learning Environment	Military Style Didactic & disciplined	Classroom Style Quiet atmosphere	Round-table style Relaxed ambience	Café style Music-multi-modal	Lounge room style Multi-stimulus
Ideal Leaders	Authoritarian Commanders	Commanding Thinkers	Coordinating Doers	Empowering Collaborators	Inspiring Co-creators
Performance Feedback	No news is good news	Once per year	Weekly/ Daily	On Demand	Continuous social sonar
Technology Use	Uncomfortable	Unsure	Unable to work without it	Unfathomable if not provided	Lifelong use
Job Changing	Unwise	Sets me back	Necessary	Part of my daily routine	Improve my flexibility

Troy Jones – Training Coordinator

HUNTER VALLEY OPERATIONS