



ZASHIN & RICH

**The Chameleon Communicator:
How to effectively communicate in today's
multi-generational workplace**

Presented By: Brad E. Bennett



Brad E. Bennett

- 20 years of experience as an employment lawyer and human resources professional.
- Represents clients in litigation, collective bargaining, arbitrations, and administrative proceedings before the EEOC, OCRC, SERB, SPBR.
- Assists clients with HR compliance, including day-to-day issues, discipline, handbook policies, job descriptions, investigations, leave issues, FLSA compliance, salary surveys, and internal HR audits.
- OSBA Certified Specialist in Labor and Employment Law.
- Selected to "Super Lawyers" each year since 2015.
- Listed in Best Lawyers in America for Employment Law- Management.



OSBA Certified Specialist
in Labor and Employment Law



2

The Chameleon Communicator

- **What is a Chameleon known for?**



3

The Chameleon Communicator

• The Story



4



The Chameleon Communicator



• What is a “Chameleon Communicator”??

5



Chameleon Communication Attributes

- *Communicates based upon the generation- (“Nurture”)*
- *Communicates based upon personality- (“Nature”)*
- *Has a High Emotional Intelligence (“E.Q.”)*



6



“Generational” WARNING . . .



Every individual is “unique” . . . (some more than others)

- AS A RESULT -

While the data regarding each generation is compiled from surveys, authoritative research, articles and experience, it still **may not be reflective of every individual member** of each generation.



7

INTRODUCING THE GENERATIONS



- Traditionalists (before 1945)
- Boomers (1945-1964'ish)
- Gen X (1965-1980'ish)
- Millennials/Gen Y (1981-1999'ish)
- NOW ENTERING: Post Millennials/Gen Z (2000 -)



8

Traditionalists (3% of workforce)



Characteristics

- Motto: “work all of your life” (work is an obligation)
- Respect authority and rules
- Tend to avoid confrontation
- Hierarchal work structure
- Seniority and tenure focused
- Pride in hard work
- Face-to-face communication
- “No news is good news”



9

Traditionalists (3% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Use expert endorsements or testimonials of those they trust.
- b) Promote patriotism, teamwork
- c) Allow time for decisions – do not rush or pressure them for a decision.
- d) Hierarchical work structure – so use “top-down” chain of command approach.
- e) Use proper etiquette (“Mr.,” “Mrs.,” “Director”)
- f) Provide detailed directions.
- g) Face-to-face communication preferred



10

Baby Boomers (25% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: “live to work” (invented the phrase work-a-holic)
- b) Competitive (thrives on it)
- c) Work hard by putting in long hours– feels that you should too.
- d) Not afraid of confrontation and may question authority.
- e) Communicates one-on-one or in large group (holds lots of meetings).
- f) Prefers traditional office environment



11

Baby Boomers (25% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Provide them with knowledge. They like to understand the “big picture” of things.
- b) Offer a proposal as a new experience – this generation is adventurous.
- c) Provide alternatives/choices when possible. They like to weigh their options.
- d) Communication should be future oriented – not past focused.
- e) Focus on their own achievements and goals.
- f) Communicates one-on-one or in meetings (no texts)



12

Gen X (34% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: "work hard, play hard" (X-games)
- b) Not always committed long term – desires to have transferable skills (free-agent)
- c) Independent and entrepreneurial (hey ... don't forget all of the "dot.com" start-ups)
- d) Skeptical (prove it to me...)
- e) Desires work-life balance through "working smarter" and/or "thinking outside the box"
- f) Enjoys discretion
- g) Tech savvy and communicates by e-mail.



13

Gen X (34% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Don't use "hard sell" techniques – let them make a decision at their own pace.
- b) Provide variety of choices –even more options than Boomers ("think outside the box")
- c) Keep your promises – deliver what you say, when you say.
- d) Offer suggestions rather than telling them what to do
- e) But – get to the point. Don't hint at something.
- f) Let them get to know and trust you.
- g) E-mail communication is expected.



14

Gen Y – "Millennials"



15

Millennials (36% of workforce)



Characteristics

- a) Motto: "Work to live."
- b) Relies heavily on technology (raised multi-tasking)
- c) Not afraid to speak their minds (and will . . . a lot!)
- d) Expects instant feedback/recognition
- e) Informal work environment – flexible workplace and work-from-home options
- f) Communicates by technology instead of in-person (including text messaging).



16

Millennials (36% of workforce)



How to Communicate:

- a) Let them communicate online for convenience.
- b) Consider using blogs, social media, text, i.m.
- c) Give them feedback on their idea (promptly)
- d) Find a way to make them feel involved and valued but manage expectations.
- e) Be sure your communication offers "value" that will help them with their problems/job.
- f) Make sure you have researched the issue – expect that they have done so (or can get up to speed quickly through technology)



17

Do the generations even speak the same language?



18

The Chameleon Communicator



• How would a “Chameleon” have handled the previous exchange?

- A baby boomer Chameleon?
- A millennial Chameleon?

19



What “carrots” work best for each generation?

- **Traditionalists:** Public acknowledgement for their seniority and dedication
- **Boomers:** Public acknowledgement of “hard work” and contributions.
- **Gen X:** Bonuses/name-brand gift cards
- **Millennials:** Time off



20



Similarities with Gen X and Gen Y

- **Loyal to persons NOT the “employer” (good supervisors critical!)**
 - Get to “know” them on personal level
 - Notice and comment on their successful efforts
- **Need IMMEDIATE feedback**
 - Evaluate performance constantly not just once a year. Both will also require facts to support poor ratings.
 - Millennials likely have a harder time with negative evals.
 - Xers are skeptical of too much praise (“okay...what are you trying to get out of me now?”)



21



The Chameleon Communicator

- Understand that within all generations, individual personalities also are at play . . .
 - Some are **more difficult** than others.
- To be a true “Chameleon Communicator” – you must be able to recognize the personality type and use proper communication techniques that will work with that personality!



22



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES



WHAT ARE THE MOST DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES?

23



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

**THE COMPLAINER
(Gen Y prevalent)**

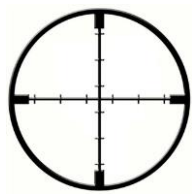


24



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE SNIPER
(Gen X prevalent)



25



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE "NO" PERSON
(Traditionalist Prevalent)



26



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE GRENADE
(Boomer Prevalent)



27



DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

**THE TANK
("bully")**



28





DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

THE GREEN-EYED MONSTER



29





DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PERSONALITY TYPES

- When faced with irrational co-worker – ask:
 - “What exactly are you upset about?”
 - Shows your listening and care
 - Places burden back on them.
 - Don’t keep apologizing
- “I” vs. “we” (common ground)
- That’s interesting
 - ...tell me more.
 - ...why do you feel that way?
 - ...what makes you say that?

30





The Pillars of Effective Communication

Clear, Direct, Positive
COMMUNICATON is ESSENTIAL!



31



Miscommunication of Performance



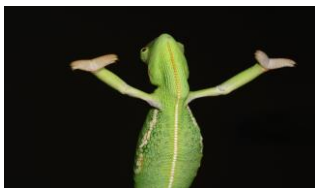
32



The Pillars of Effective Communication

BRINGING IT HOME:

- Be Prepared
- Be Objective
- Be Aware of your Own Behavior



The Pillars of Effective Communication

Be Prepared:

- Organization is crucial
- Research all sides of issues in advance
- You don't have to immediately respond – it is acceptable to say "I will get back to you"
 - But ALWAYS follow-up
- LISTEN!!!



34



The Pillars of Effective Communication

Be Objective:

- Don't attack the person
- Maintain positive attitude
- Don't get emotional (work on your E.Q.)
- Know facts – NOT speculation
- You must confront the difficult issues
 - Seek solutions, common ground . . .



35



The Pillars of Effective Communication

Be Aware:

- Maintain proper eye contact, tone of voice, body posture.
- Don't interrupt (let them vent if needed)
- Don't argue
- Don't say "calm down"
- Don't be negative.
- Improve your emotional intelligence (EQ)



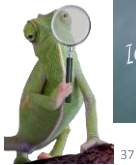
36



Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

What is it?

- The ability of a person to positively handle and manage their own emotions so as to improve interpersonal relationships and communication.



37

Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Examples of Impact of Stress on Communication.

- You are driving home from work and have been stuck in high traffic. You are then cut-off in the exit lane by fast driver . . .
- Co-worker comes into your office and demands that you “give them” the folder you are using and they grab it off your desk and storm out...
- Normally outgoing co-worker has been ignoring you and only talks to you when you ask them something and then it is short and to-the-point. . .



38

Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Impact of Stress on Communication:

- Impacts ability to :
 - Properly “read” situation;
 - Hear what other side is saying;
 - Be aware of your own feelings and needs
- Those with high E.Q. can properly read (and control) their own emotions and the emotions of others
 - The ability to calm yourself down quickly helps you feel balanced, focused and in control



39

Emotional Intelligence (E.Q.)

Use E.Q. to reduce stress and improve communication in 5 easy steps:

1. Work on your Emotional Awareness
2. Identify When You Are Stressed
3. Pay Attention to Non-Verbal Communication
4. Use Humor!
5. Resolve Conflicts Positively



40



Conclusion



A "chameleon communicator":

1. Changes their communication style to fit both the generation ("nurture") and personality ("nature") of the other person;
2. Applies the 3 pillars of effective communication to the situation.
3. Increases their E.Q. in order to control their emotions and improve communication

41



THANK YOU!



If you have questions concerning this presentation, please contact:

Brad E. Bennett
Zashin & Rich
 17 South High Street, Suite 900
 Columbus, Ohio 43215
 (614) 224-4411
Beb@zrlaw.com
www.zrlaw.com

Copyright 2016