

In her new book *Connecting in the New Workplace – How to Talk so Everyone Will Listen*, Sonya Hamlin draws some interesting insights into perceptions of three generations regarding communication approaches and channels. She admits that generalizations and stereotypes have to be taken in context. However, it is clear that her main point -- we have to know our audience – was never more important!

There are many definitions of these generations, in her book, this is how she defines the groups:

- Baby Boomers : Born 1946 to 1960: ages 46 – 60
- Generation X: Born 1961 – 1978: ages 30 – 45
- Generation Y: Born 1978 – 2000: ages 6 - 29

PRIORITIES AND ATTITUDES

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION XERS	GENERATION YERS
<i>I get most information from...</i>	Network news, mainstream newspapers, traditional magazines, my friends	Cable news, alternative newspapers, niche magazines, my friends	Websites, e-zines, blogs, my friends
<i>I can be persuaded with...</i>	Traditional perks, public recognition, participative decision making	Insiders’ benefits, private recognition, responsibility for decision making	Moral payoff, respect for authority figures, clear expectations, freedom
<i>My career goals are...</i>	To have a stellar career with increasing status	To have a movable career where I’m in charge	To have parallel careers with jobs I love
<i>I resent...</i>	Disrespect, being passed over	Politics, trade-offs	Stereotyping, limits
<i>My preferred work day is</i>	Not over until I’m done with what I set out to accomplish	Getting the job done on my terms	Lots of fun and working with people
<i>I am motivated by...</i>	Recognition, being valued and appreciated	Trust, getting to do things my way	Results, the opportunity to make tangible changes
<i>In the media I trust those who...</i>	Give full analysis, are in prestigious position	Are irreverent, pushing the envelope	Are online or books, not TV or newspapers

The Generations at Work

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
<i>Getting ahead</i>	My job has defined me. Now that I've gotten where I wanted to be, I want more balance. I am the expert - let others do the work.	I'll end up in a good place if I stick to my beliefs and get lots of diverse experience - but work isn't everything without a "life".	I'm going to work hard and learn what it takes to get ahead. Mainly I think authority isn't too difficult to earn
<i>Communications</i>	Formal vertical systems in organization – don't copy me on everything, just keep me informed	I need continuous flow, back and forth - don't keep things from me	I need to be in touch constantly. I know what's going on, so don't hold back. My friends and I talk about everything.
<i>I trust and listen to those who...</i>	Give a full analysis.	Push the envelope.	Are cool, totally connected, and easygoing.
<i>Team building</i>	It's OK to have a team, but individual contribution is what makes things happen. You can't build a team with games and exercises.	I like having a sense of family – let us hang loose together, have fun together, then we'll get the work done.	If we can all put our skills together, we can take collective action that will truly be more powerful than just individual contributions.
<i>Speaking of respect,</i>	I expect to be listened to.	I don't think anyone listens to me, so I'll use my own ideas!	I think people listen to me.
<i>Someone's experience and credentials</i>	I am either really impressed or not at all.	You have to prove to me you're legit.	Not assumed, but I'll listen.

Thoughts about Information Technologies/Communication Channels

	BABY BOOMERS	GENERATION X	GENERATION Y
<i>Email is...</i>	One more place to check, another method to learn.	The best way to stay in touch.	Not nearly as good as instant messaging and blogging.
<i>Voice mail is...</i>	Convenient; more personal than email but what's safe to say on tape?	A slow alternative to email.	Passé: a mere substitute for IM.
<i>Text message is...</i>	For techie kids.	Too much work but good for short messages.	What I do all day.
<i>Landlines are...</i>	Essential!	For real conversations.	Expensive and why bother – I've got my mobile and VoIP.
<i>Mobile phones are...</i>	So handy but also really intrusive. And Taking pictures???	The only way to stay in touch and be continually available.	My lifeline.
<i>PDA's (like Palm Pilots) are...</i>	Another gadget. But really useful.	Where I used to keep my life before data phones.	For old people. We don't need them.
<i>Conference calls are...</i>	Formal performances.	A way for everyone to stay involved.	Rare – used them for school projects.
<i>Video conferences are...</i>	Painful, expensive, never really work.	Not much better than conference calls.	Haven't tried them. Sounds cool.
<i>Web conferences are...</i>	How does it work? How can I talk to someone? How do I use it?	Great, but a little slow.	Super cool, especially if I can do it myself. Love chat rooms.
<i>Face-to-face group meetings are...</i>	The way to get everyone tuned in. How can you do it without being in the same room?	Key. I need to know people understand what is important.	Uncomfortable, confrontational, and overly formal.
<i>Memos are...</i>	A great way to communicate to everyone when there is something important to say.	Totally out of date and out of touch.	So lame.
<i>PowerPoint is...</i>	A little intimidating but so effective and impressive!	My right arm.	A necessary evil; they're pretty boring in a speech. Hard to make interesting.

<i>Flip charts are...</i>	Easy and comfortable.	Very 60s.	Preachy, old fashioned, cumbersome; you have to type it to record it, don't you?
<i>Books are...</i>	Still great - love to read, especially nonfiction.	Great but take so much time.	Too time consuming and take too much thinking. For learning, not entertainment.
<i>Search engines are...</i>	I use them but still don't like them- who knows where the info is from?	How did we ever survive without them?	My super tool. My home page and lots more.
<i>Libraries are...</i>	For research, the best Place.	Where they keep all the books if I ever, for some reason, might need them.	Good places to hang out (College years). Boring. Too quiet (H.S years)
<i>Overhead projectors are...</i>	Much better than slide projector! Easy to use.	Just fine but charmingly old fashioned.	Retro; used them in school.