

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in a Multi-Generation Workforce

By Marbella Miller

For the first time in history, we have five different generations in the workplace. As more people continue to work as they pass the average retirement age of 65, it will become more common to see this age group in the workplace.

In fact, the Population Reference Bureau estimates that the number of Americans aged 65 and older will double from 46 million to 98 million by 2060. They also project that this year (2022), American men (27%) and women (20%) aged 65 years and older will be part of the workforce.

Additionally, according to a 2021 Gallup report, a combination of millennials, anyone born during 1981 and 1996, and Generation Z, anyone born during 1997 and on, now make up nearly 46% of the full-time U.S. labor force.

Generational diversity in the workplace is a trend that is not only expected to continue, but it is expected to grow. In that same vein, as companies continue to evolve in the way they work, it will be vital for organizations to understand, embrace and establish a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) strategy in an ongoing effort to help employees of all ages feel like they are respected, valued, understood and belong in their workplace. If you don't have a DEI strategy in place at your organization, here are a few ideas you can implement now:

## Recruiting

Diversify your workforce with qualified cross-generational employees by recruiting talent that reflect the needs of different age groups in the workplace. Implementing structured interviews and diverse interview panels in the hiring process can also mitigate age bias.

## Training

Provide training to managers and employees to learn about each generation's needs and styles as it relates to communication, motivation, development and feedback. As part of the training, include information about ways to avoid age bias and way to be more age inclusive. This will allow each age group to understand how to better interact with other.

## Team Structure

According to the American Society on Aging, team leaders should encourage collaboration by building multi-generation teams whenever possible. They also encourage creating a mutually respected space of understanding and open communication which can lead to higher levels of engagement and productivity.

## **Leadership**

Ensure all age groups are well represented in leadership by planning advancements now. A 2017 Deloitte study reported that higher levels of age diversity were partly responsible for increased revenue, higher profits and more customers.

In conclusion, to combat today's high turnover rates and to retain top talent, organizations should cultivate a strong company culture and keep employees' experiences top-of-mind. Doing so can result in increased creativity and innovation, reputation, responsibility, team performance and financial performance, according to 2020 research conducted by Catalyst.

The inclusion of different age groups, and all diverse groups for that matter, should be felt throughout the company in everyday experiences and behaviors. Invest time and effort in developing a diversity, equity and inclusion strategy within your organization today. Not only will your employee morale improve, so will your ROI.