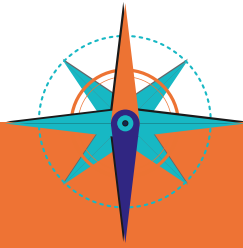




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Manager

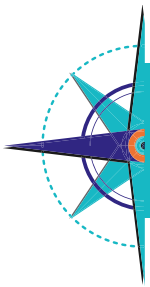
compass

Intergenerational Management



Four generations work side by side in our organisations today. This diversity is a real asset for our operations and a real power of attraction for the administration. However, it is also a key issue for managers who have to juggle daily with different approaches and ways of relating to work. Managing an intergenerational team consequently becomes a real challenge that calls for a reworking of traditional management methods.

The purpose of this tipsheet is to give local managers concrete elements and simple courses of action to adjust their practices and bring real collective value to their team geared to the particularities of each of the generations in the workplace.



Generational diversity: a key issue for managers

It is not rare today to find two, three or four of the following generations in one and the same team:

Baby-boomers

1946 - 1964

Génération X

1965 - 1980




Génération Y

1981 - 1996

Génération Z

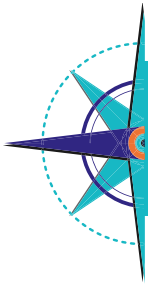
1997 - 2010

 **What the generations say**

-  "Work and personal life go hand in hand! I'm 26 and, more than anything, I want to protect my work-life balance and give a sense of purpose and meaning to my day-to-day life." (Louis, Generation Z)
-  "As a Generation Xer born in 1970, work has always been really central in my life. I absolutely had to have a good wage and a position of responsibility. (Julie, Generation X)
-  "I'm 33 and job satisfaction is the most important thing to me. So I expect my relationship with my manager to be a two-way street with interesting projects and recognition, in return for which I put my all into meeting my work targets." (Manon, Generation Y)

So steering a team made up of young graduates, highly experienced workers and staff in their forties is no mean task as each person has their own way of relating to the hierarchy, their own need for recognition, their own ways of working, different needs for independence and autonomy, and so on. Generation gaps can therefore complicate the collaborative group dynamic. Misunderstandings, tensions and even conflicts can disrupt the team's day-to-day life. It is vital to work on the group's cohesiveness to make this diversity a strength and a real asset for complementarity and efficiency.

Intergenerational management supports the place of each individual, turning it to advantage for the benefit of the work team. It calls for managers to develop leadership and management methods geared not to one specific generation, but to all the staff on their team. Their aim is therefore to give each generation the keys it needs to adjust to others and create a bonded work team.



Leverage and actions

It is important to note that a one-size-fits-all management model cannot possibly meet everyone's needs. **Managers need to be careful to avoid stereotyping individuals by generation.** A number of actions can be leveraged to develop everyone's potential for the good of the team.

Launch an intergenerational drive to share skills and expertise

Intergenerational management encourages group complementarity. All generations can consequently share and transmit their skills and knowledge in different ways. This needs to be a two-way learning exchange so that everyone can benefit from the pooled expertise, experience, know-how and soft skills.

Set up diversity-based work couples to shake up everyone's habits and foster cooperation and exchange between different generations.

Establish sponsorship to give new arrivals the benefit of support from a staff member in all areas and especially practical matters (how the department or structure works, etc.).

Offer mentoring programmes for interpersonal learning between experienced and novice employees with skills and knowledge to acquire. Reverse mentoring can also be beneficial in certain areas where younger staff can bring their knowledge to more experienced workers (e.g. use of social media, IT skills, etc.).



Intergenerational Management in Action
Le CAP Normand – Public Servant Skills Legacy programme

Launched in 2021, the skills legacy programme is a regional inter-civil service HR programme for staff nearing the end of their career. Launched by the Normandy Prefecture and the Secretary-General for Regional Affairs, this pilot test is designed to develop intergenerational transfers of practices in the civil service.

The approach is twofold: 1) to leverage staff know-how and enable them to pass on their professional expertise before they leave (retirement, redeployment, etc.), and 2) for managers to contain the “evaporation” of expertise and ultimately gain in efficiency in their department.

The programme takes the form of “skills circles”, workshops of four to six voluntary staff members who will be leaving their job in the near future (six months to three years’ time). A “circle” is a cycle of three one-day sessions with three aims:

- Undertake a professional assessment to outline the legacy,
- Identify transferable skills,
- Build a personal skills transfer plan and plan of action to continue working and/or make the transition to retirement

These circles provide a forum for thinking and discussions to take stock of careers and actively explore the way forward. Facilitators propose a range of tools and techniques for questions and discussions between peers to structure the approach.

The programme therefore boasts real advantages by keeping staff engaged in their work until they leave and building a continuity of practices and professional heritage that extends well beyond technical information. It perpetuates the know-how of the organisation itself, its history, its players and its codes. It also acts as a real sign of professional recognition for the member of staff who is leaving.

Advice to managers considering piloting this type of programme!

- The skills legacy programme and its organisation need to be tailored to the department’s particularities and constraints
- It is essential to present the programme at a departmental launch meeting to explain how it works and make sure that all staff have the same information
- It is imperative to free up the time needed for staff embarking on this approach. It is therefore important not to “overload” the outgoing staff member!

For more information on the pilot test and the principle of “skills circles”, see:



[\(479\) Le legs de Compétences entre Agents Publics normands : découvrez LeCap normand ! - YouTube \(available in French only\)](#)

 **Promote intergenerational team communication**

Managers are the guardians of group cohesiveness. Their role is to foster teamwork, rising above differences and any generation-based value judgements.

It is therefore important for managers to build a “collective intelligence” dynamic based on team creativity and teamwork. This calls for:

Listening skills, crucial for a climate of trust to prevent isolation and malaise at work. Good communication calls first and foremost for managers to actively lend a sympathetic ear.

Collaborative tools such as the Osmose and Resana communities, used to work together on projects, discuss ideas and share good practices. These collaborative tools can help prevent gaps in the communication of information.

Informal chat times for group bonding (e.g. team lunches outside of the workplace) alongside the formal discussion times (department meetings, office meetings, etc.) vital to monitor work and share information among team members.

Proposing team projects is a fully-fledged part of intergenerational management. Collective intelligence work makes each member of staff appreciate their own role and the importance of other team members' contributions.

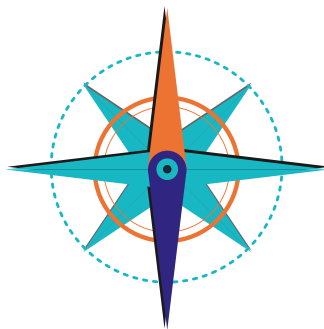
Suggestions for action:

Keep everyone engaged day to day with a group project or a higher-order mission (reduce the department's carbon footprint, hold/attend a social event, etc.) on which everyone can work and contribute their expertise.

Develop a departmental operational charter by means of one or more workshops to brainstorm and prioritise good practices to be applied on a daily basis. The purpose here is to set five to ten golden rules for the department for collaboration, information sharing, human relations, etc.

Further reading:

- ➔ Comment attirer et fidéliser les nouvelles générations dans la fonction publique ? – Local HR policy workshop conducted by the Brittany, Loire and Normandy regional platforms for interministerial HRM support (PFRH) in partnership with the Directorate General for Public Administration and the Civil Service (DGAFP) (November 2022 – web page forthcoming) <https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/ecole-management-et-des-rh-emrh>
- ➔ Guide de l'encadrante et de l'encadrant dans la fonction publique – DGAFP (2017) – “Le management intergénérationnel” (page 107) - Guide-de-l-encadrant-web.pdf (fonction-publique.gouv.fr) (available in French only) [fonction-publique.gouv.fr](https://www.fonction-publique.gouv.fr)
- ➔ Management Intergénérationnel : quels leviers ? – Learning Evaluation, Documentation and Innovation Centre (CEDIP)/Ministry for Ecological Transition and Territorial Cohesion (MTECT) (September 2022) (available in French only) <https://www.cedip.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/quels-leviers-pour-le-management-a2143.html>
- ➔ “Ageing and Talent Management in European Public Administrations” – OECD study (October 2021) <https://www.oecd.org/gov/pem/ageing-and-talent-management-in-european-public-administrations.htm>
- ➔ Le CAP Normand « Le Legs de compétences entre agents publics » <https://www.bibliotheque-initiatives.fonction-publique.gouv.fr/initiatives/competences/legs-de-competences-entre-agents-publics-normands>



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