



Effective Communication: Who

The answer to “Who” isn’t just a name. It’s a person. Discover the different communication preferences for each generation.

In the last issue of *Production Machining*, we looked into the overall decision-making for effective communication: determining Who, What, Where, When, Why and How Many helps determine the How to communicate. So is the Who just a name? No. The Who is a person and since the first rule of communicating is to consider your audience, the person’s preference should be considered.

When trying to decide the best communication method with which to communicate, a relatively easy factor to consider is the generation to which your audience belongs. According to Forbes Magazine’s “The Business Leader’s Guide To Communication Across Generations”, there are general communication preferences for each generation.

Traditionalists (born before 1945)

Most Traditionalists are enjoying retirement, however, there are a few for whom retirement is unwelcome and they are still part of the workforce. Traditionalists used rotary dial phones and put letters in the mail. They prefer face-to-face communication.

Baby Boomers (born between 1945-1960)

Baby Boomers have seen a lot of changes on the communication front. They still prefer phone calls and face-to-face, but have embraced email as a form of communication.

Generation X (born between 1961-1980)

Generation X (or Gen X’ers) was the first generation to see a boom in double income households and are considered the “latch key” generation. Generation X prefers email for communication and doesn’t mind face-to-face as long as it warrants a face-to-face conversation.

Generation Y (born between 1981-1995)

Generation Y — more commonly known as Millennials — grew up on the internet and were the social media natives. They prefer to text above all, but will use email in a business setting.

Generation Z (born after 1995)

Communication for Generation Z is digital, digital, digital. Their preferred method of communication is face-to-face via video (e.g. Facetime and Skype). Because they are just entering the workforce, they will have to use email — the preference of their Baby Boomer and Generation X bosses — but don’t be surprised if video calls are commonplace in business when Generation Z starts to lead. **PMPA**

Carli Kistler-Miller, MBA has over 20 years of experience with communications, event/meeting planning, marketing, writing, and operations. Email cmiller@pmpa.org.

Communication Preferences by Generation					
	 Traditionalists born before 1945	 Baby Boomers born 1945-1960	 Generation X born 1961-1980	 Generation Y born 1981-1995	 Generation Z born after 1995
Communication Preference					
Secondary Preference					