

## 4 SKILLS TO RESOLVE GENERATIONAL CONFLICT

- 1. Make it safe.** Begin by clarifying your respect as well as your intent to achieve a mutual goal.
- 2. Start with the facts.** Describe your concerns *facts first*. Don't lead with your judgments about their age or conclusions about their behavior. Start by objectively describing the actual behaviors that create problems.
- 3. Don't pile on.** If your colleague becomes defensive, pause and check in. Reassure him or her of your positive intentions and ask about concerns.
- 4. Invite dialogue.** After sharing your concerns, encourage your colleague to share his or her perspective. Inviting dialogue will result in greater openness.

## LEARN NEW SKILLS.

To Learn how Crucial Accountability can help you navigate high-stakes situations, visit [www.vitalSMARTS.com](http://www.vitalSMARTS.com) or call 1.800.449.5989.

## ABOUT THE RESEARCH.

The Study collected responses via an online survey of 1,350 individuals in January 2014. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

VitalSmarts research show generational tensions are pervasive in corporate America. Specifically, **more than 1 in 3 people waste 5 or more hours each week** (12% of their work week) due to chronic, unaddressed conflict between colleagues of different generations.

The two generations who struggle to get along the most are Baby Boomers (49 – 67 years old) and Millennials (13 – 33 years old). When they do work together, they experience:

- Dismissal of past experience
- Lack of discipline and focus
- Lack of respect
- Resistance to change or unwillingness to innovate

But conflict is not isolated to just Baby Boomers and Millennials. Each age group harbors resentment for their colleagues. Specifically:

**Baby Boomers** complain that Gen Xers (34 – 48 years old) and Millennials lack discipline, focus, and are distracted. They also think Millennials lack commitment.

**Gen Xers** complain that Baby Boomers display resistant/dogmatic thinking and are sexist, defensive, incompetent, resistant to change, and lack creativity. They believe that Millennials are arrogant.

**Millennials** complain that Baby Boomers display resistant/dogmatic thinking, and are sexist, defensive, insensitive, slow to respond, resistant to change, incompetent, and lack creativity. They also believe Gen Xers have poor problem-solving skills and are slow to respond.

And on top of the resentment, there is a surprising level of incompetence among all generations to resolve concerns. Across all generations, 1 in 4 people admit to avoiding conflict with colleagues of a different age. Other trends include:

- Younger generations hesitate to hold older generations accountable.
- Millennials are the least confident in their ability to handle a difficult conversation.
- Older generations admit to losing their temper more easily. More than 1 in 4 say they became frustrated, upset or angry during a difficult conversation.

## KEY RESULTS

**1 in 3** people waste **12% of their work week** due to chronic, unaddressed conflict between colleagues of different generations.

**1 in 4** people admit to **avoiding conflict** with colleagues of a different age.

**About VitalSmarts**— Named one of the Top 20 Leadership Training Companies, VitalSmarts, a TwentyEighty, Inc. company, is home to the award-winning Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability, Influencer, and Change Anything Training and *New York Times* bestselling books of the same titles. When used in combination, these courses enable organizations to achieve new levels of performance by changing employee behavior. VitalSmarts has consulted with more than 300 of the Fortune 500 companies and trained more than 1.5 million people worldwide.

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