

GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES TOWARD ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

by

Madiem Kawa

A seminar paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE LEADERSHIP

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Introduction

This paper on organizational change uses a secondary literature review to examine, in the context of the generation theory, the workforce characteristics of five generations to figure out how they navigate change and what motivates them to support change. It was discovered during the research that the lifespan theory that proposes age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status, in addition to generation, should be included for a complete worldview of stakeholders. The lifespan theory suggests that the generation theory alone leads to stereotypes and, if used in organizations for policy and strategy, could put them at risk for legal complaints of ageism. This paper explores new opportunities in the organizational change discipline to leverage this historic period with more generations working in companies than ever before. Studying generation diversity and the complexities it brings to workplaces is viewed in this paper as an opportunity for innovation and successful organizational change. The research concluded that four work-related parameters or components, which will be explained in more detail later, will be used to develop recommendations for change agents to lead stakeholders to support change initiatives.

This paper aims to understand better generation theory, generation stereotypes, generational differences, and what motivates multi-generations to support organizational change initiatives. Scholarly research arguments will be explored to understand lifespan theory and why it should be a factor in determining a whole person based on age, personal identity, socioeconomic status, and generation. This paper's research contributes to organizational change and change management disciplines by studying how multi-generational diversity in the workplace can contribute to successful change initiatives. Using existing organizational change principles and tools, recommendations are made to propose strategies to support employees through organizational change initiatives.

The paper has four sections. The first section is the problem statement, which examines organizations' current state, why organizational change initiatives fail, and how we can close the gap using the generation theory. The second section reviews the literature with three subsections of generation theory explaining each generation, how they respond to organizational change, and, for content, what historical and social events influenced their worldview. Second, it explores the work-related parameters or components discovered during the research on each generation, organization engagement, organization identity, agility, technology, and innovation. Using the workplace parameters, there are opportunities to improve the existing organizational change framework that includes stakeholders' values to lead them to support change initiatives. The third literature review section is the lifespan theory and ten generational myths. The lifespan theory argues that generation alone does not give a holistic view of people in organizations and can lead to generational stereotypes and ageism. The fourth section suggests recommendations using existing tools from the organizational change discipline to help change agents and leaders support stakeholders by coaching them to align their values with the vision, mission, and purpose of change initiations.

Background of Study

This literature review examines how generation and lifespan theories can be used to understand what makes stakeholders align their values to a change initiative's vision, goals, and purpose to increase their success rate. Ewenstien et al. (2015) scholarly research shows that resistance to change is central to why 70 percent of change initiatives fail. Unpacking employees' reasons for resisting change is complicated and steeped in physiological, economic, and cultural reasons. Similar observations during the research that motivated stakeholders to change are empathy, inclusivity, and understanding of what employees value. This literature review focused

on how generation theory and existing organizational change frameworks offer an approach to driving successful organizational change initiatives.

Stakeholders change less when given data analysis and more when told the truth that evokes their feelings (Kotter, 2002). Kotter (2002) points out that organizations use data gathering, analysis, and presentations to change how stakeholders think, hoping this will change behavior. Kotter suggests that instead, teaching stakeholders how to solve problems evokes positive emotional feelings that motivate stakeholders to support change initiatives.

Change leaders have a rare opportunity to harness the diversity in organizations that, for the first time in history, include five generations: Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Events in history shaped the worldview of each generation, giving them a unique perspective to bring creativity and innovation to organizations. Parry and Urwin (2011) are authors who believe there are more similarities than differences between the generations.

The central focus of this paper is to research the generational differences and similarities to figure out what motivates an employee to change. Generation theory groups people into age ranges, and their personalities are determined based on events that occurred during the formative years of each generation. In contrast, the lifespan theory focuses on how people change and evolve as they age in their careers. Scholars such as Rudolph et al. (2021) argue that the generation theory is too narrow and limiting and recommend including the lifespan theory to get a holistic view of a personality by factoring in age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status. The literature review will detail the generation and lifespan theories to understand what motivates people to change.

Literature Review

The first section of this literature review examines why organizational changes fail at 70 percent. The second section discusses the events influencing each generation. The third section explores common themes used as parameters or components to decide the best organizational change framework to mitigate risks and increase the success rate of change initiatives: organization engagement, organization identification, agility, and technology and innovation. Earlier, we discussed how some research argues that lifespan should be a factor in understanding an individual; section four dives deeper into the lifespan theory and ten generational myths that lead to generation stereotypes.

Why Change Initiatives Fail

Seventy percent of change initiatives fail because leaders do not support stakeholders, causing organizational change resistance (Ewenstein et al., 2015). Stanleigh (2008) says organizations are not creating and supporting an environment for employees to align their values with the proposed changes' vision, mission, and purpose. For change initiatives to be successful, Stanleigh recommends change leaders develop strategic planning at the beginning of change initiatives that incorporate ways to motivate stakeholders by communicating the vision of the change, and empower people to act on a vision, plan for periodic wins, keep the momentum for change moving, and help stakeholder identify with change. Hubbard (2023) agrees with Stanleigh (2008) that seeking buy-in from stakeholders early will decrease change resistance, increasing the chances of a successful change initiative. Kotter (as cited in Crouzet et al., 2014) pointed out that change requires leaders, not managers, to define and communicate a clear vision for the future that provides direction to stakeholders. Kotter says the vision should be inclusive and empathic, making stakeholders feel valued, energetic, heard, and treated fairly. Hubbard (2023)

pointed out that part of the initial strategic planning should include improved efficiencies and job opportunities for employees that are inclusive and align with stakeholders' values.

Crouzet et al. (2014) argue that resistance to change has positive and negative aspects. Change managers should learn how to manage resistance to use what values it brings to change initiatives. A recent study debunks the notion of previous scholarly research that says resistance is a major cause of failed change initiatives. Rod (2023) suggests that change initiatives fail because organizations are focused on day-to-day system operations to track performance and the expectation of efficiency, making self-preservation the central motivator for stakeholders. Kotter (as cited in Rod, 2023) noted that strong organizational culture and systems trump change vision communication, urgency, and guiding principles.

This literature review explores the generational theory of historical and social events that influence how each generation approaches change to help gain insight into their value system and understand what motivates them to support change initiatives. The section focuses on five generations occupying workspaces: Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Additionally, this research will help us with ways to close the gap with the reasons why change initiatives fail, such as stakeholder resistance.

Generational Theory

This section discusses the generational theory to uncover historical events that shaped each generation's worldview and how they impact an individual's capacity to support change initiatives. We will also see if we can answer why stakeholders resist change. Generational researchers Anantatmula et al. (2012), Wiedmer (2015), and Jones et al. (2018) analysis consists of historical factors that shaped the generations, organizational behavior, and standard positive and negative stereotypes associated with each generation. The research highlights vital

parameters or components that could impact organizational change, as summarized in Table 1.2: organization engagement, organization identification, agility, and technology and innovation. It is worth analyzing these topics and how each generation approaches change, as summarized in Table 1.1.

Most researchers, such as Jones et al. (2018), generally agree that historical events during the formative years of each generation did have some influence on their worldview. However, other researchers, such as Rudolph et al. (2021), believe age and lifespan, which will be covered later in the lifespan section, are a complete view of how individuals navigate and approach organizational change.

Silent Generation or Traditionalist (between 1922 and 1945)

Since Traditionalists value commitment to organizations and will not challenge the status quo even though they are risk averse, they will support change initiatives significantly if they are rewarded with job security and a salary increase (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Anantatmula et al. (2012) suggest that the worldview of the Silent Generation is shaped by iconic events, such as the Great Depression and World War II, resulting in a generation of loyal, ethical, and formal change of command employees. Wiedmer (2015) noted that Traditionalists highly regard authority and family values, do not blend work and family life, and pride themselves in being loyal and disciplined. Wiedmer highlighted that Traditionalists are self-sacrificing and place value on money and organizational positions. According to Wiedmer, Traditionalists learn by instructor-led instruction, and they feel valued by their managers if they receive gifts of certificates, trophies, and plaques.

Traditionalists prefer working alone to working in teams (Jones et al., 2018). Jones et al. (2018) assert that Traditionalists prefer structured environments, such as top-down organizational structures and defined management approaches, and value obedience could be labeled as negative attributes. Traditionalists are loyal employees, dependable, and prefer communication that is respectful, formal, and professional. Also, they understand the importance of separating work and home life (Jones et al., 2018).

Since Traditionalists comprise only 5 percent of the generations in workspaces, we will not do a deep dive into this section. During change initiatives, Traditionalists will be silent soldiers ready to do what is best for the organization, and they will expect their colleagues to fall in line when duty calls. Since Traditionalists were born during World War II, they value the chain of command, respect structure, and authority, and will not challenge the status quo (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Wiedmer (2015) states that Traditionalists work well in a structured, well-defined organization and respects authority. Wiedmer asserts that Traditionalists are determined workers who value and support change initiatives if rewarded with a pay increase and prominent positions.

Baby Boomers (between 1946 and 1964)

While the research on Traditionalists and how their approach changed is limited, the research on Baby Boomers is more available. They share attributes with Traditionalists of preferring loyalty and structured environments and differ as Baby Boomers identify with their career, are independent, and are collaborative. Baby Boomers are goal-oriented and are driven to succeed and make a difference at their jobs; thus, they may see organizational change as an opportunity to get a promotion if they work hard and show determination (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

Anantatmula et al. (2012) say that Baby Boomers were the first to experience the age of television and enjoyed post-World War II prosperity; these cultural shifts caused the Baby Boomers to be collaborators, and their communication and people skills influence organizational change. Wiedmer (2015) noted that other cultural upheaval events caused uncertainty with the Baby Boomers, including the civil rights and women's rights movements, the Vietnam War, and the assassination of iconic figures like John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Wiedmer points out that Baby Boomers are the first in their families to go to college and said like Traditionalists, money, power, and recognition is their driving force. Wiedmer mentioned that Baby Boomers are independent and hardworking, and their work gives them self-worth. Baby Boomers are accustomed to structured environments with clear rankings, authority, and significant organizational responsibility. This could cause contention because they may feel threatened by their prestige in an organization.

Wiedmer (2015) warns that we will see a staggering loss of skilled and experienced employees once Baby Boomers begin retiring because they are the largest living generation. Hunter (2020) explained that people working at fifty-five and older are causing a gap in knowledge of innovative technology. Hunter suggests that companies should invest in technology and technological innovation training for Baby Boomers to enhance the future of change in organizations. Duxbury et al. (2014) argue that the key strategies to increase productivity and retain the Baby Boomer generation in large corporate settings require supportive managers who encourage work-life balance, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and workload.

In contrast to Traditionalists who separate work and their private lives, Jones et al. (2018) assert that Baby Boomers believe work is an extension of their whole selves, which is considered

a negative stereotype. Due to prosperity during their formative years, Jones et al. say Baby Boomers generally have an optimistic outlook on work and life, which is a positive attribute. Unlike the earlier generation, the Baby Boomers experience opportunities to be creative at work, participative management, and teamwork. They prefer informal communication, like face-to-face and chats at the coffee station, which are positive experiences (Jones et al., 2018).

Baby Boomer's approach to change is collaborative and will make good change leaders because they excel in communicating and collaborating with many people. To motivate Baby Boomers to support a change initiative, they would need a prominent role in the organization that allows them to plan the change initiative and make decisions. As Jones et al. (2018) pointed out, Baby Boomers were born during a time of prosperity that influenced their optimistic outlook on life. Many Baby Boomers are also the first in their families to go to college, which motivates them to be ambitious and to work hard to be promoted (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

Generation X (between 1965 and 1979)

The research on Generation X mainly highlights the significant shift in ideology due to the technology boom of the 1990s, creating the first tech-savvy generation in history. Generation X values consistent and regular feedback and thrives in environments that give them autonomy due to their experiences growing up when divorces were prevalent, resulting in a generation of children that received less parental attention than previous generations (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) assert that Generation X will challenge decisions made during change initiatives. Dwyer and Azevedo point out that Generational X is less loyal to organizations than earlier generations. Since we know they will challenge change initiatives and value autonomy and flexibility at work, the lack of options may convince this generation to seek other positions outside their current organization.

Anantatmula et al. (2012) assert that Generation X was born when Americans suffered layoffs and inflation, which led them to develop themselves; they were raised to believe in the work-life balance concept and are more technically savvy than the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers. They are also called the lost generation because they were exposed to daycare and divorce (Wiedmer, 2015). Wiedmer (2015) noted that Generation X is most likely to challenge organizations and seek buy-in on decisions, policies, and projects. Wiedmer says Generation X is free-thinking and enjoys creative and independent projects.

Jones et al. (2018) point out that this generation lacks the organizational loyalty of its predecessors and does not stay a lifetime at one organization, which is considered a negative stereotype. Generation X prefers balancing work and their personal lives. This generation was introduced to nontraditional work hours, and they do not subscribe to believing work is their whole life. These are positive traits of the generation (Jones et al., 2018).

Generation X approaches change differently than the last two generations because they are less loyal to one company. They require autonomy, agility, and participation in decision-making to keep them engaged and supportive of change initiatives. Generation X was born during increased divorce rates and childcare, resulting in a generation that expects and values autonomy, work-life balance, and flexibility in work hours (Anantatmula et al., 2012).

Generation X is also more technically savvy than earlier generations and will challenge decisions made for change initiatives before supporting change initiatives (Wiedmer, 2015).

Millennials or Generation Y (between 1980 and 2001)

The research on Generation X and Millennials shows tech-savvy and work-life balance similarities. However, research shows that Millennials require consistent communication and feedback from their managers, while Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Traditionalists are independent.

Millennials value workplace diversity, creativity, and innovation and are more global-minded than earlier generations (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016). Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) point out that Millennials value leadership consultation during organizational change as issues arise and thrive during challenging situations because it gives them a sense of organizational identity and meaning. Millennials also value being part of the decision-making process during change initiatives (Dwyer & Azevedo, 2016).

Anantatmula et al. (2012) point out that Millennials, in contrast with the earlier generations, have an entrepreneurship mindset over working at the same company for the rest of their career. According to Wiedmer (2015), Millennials are transitioning from traditional organizations to self-employment and are open to multiple jobs and career options. Qualities of data, speed, and execution are incorporated into their business acumen; hence, Millennials prefer working for organizations that are technically advanced. Social media and cell phones have shaped Millennials' worldview; they are prone to job hopping and do not conform to the standards that set them apart from other generations (Anantatmula et al., 2012). Wiedmer (2015) points out that Millennials lived through historical events such as school shootings, government building bombings, the Iraq war, and Hurricane Katrina. Although less independent than earlier generations, they enjoy a work-life balance and expect a certain level of supervision and mentorship on the job (Wiedmer, 2015).

Myers et al. (2010) examined Millennials negative and positive traits to understand what shaped their perspective on how leadership should communicate to them to increase their organizational engagement levels to drive impactful change. During organizational changes, stereotypes of Millennials from earlier generations are expected to be heard. They are considered self-centered, unmotivated, disrespectful, and unloyal (Meyers et al., 2010). Myers et al. point out that these stereotypes can create communication setbacks during organizational change. According to Giambatista et al. (as cited in Rahim et al., 2022), including having narcissistic tendencies, Millennials are labeled as self-centered, not committed to work, low motivation, disrespectful, and avoid complicated tasks. These attitudes and behaviors by Millennials cause organizational conflicts with Generation X and Baby Boomers because the earlier generations see this as unacceptable (Rahim et al., 2022).

Some positive qualities of Millennials, Myers et al. (2010) point out, are their need for frequent communication with their supervisors and communication on technology topics. If organizations provide these prerequisites, it could change Millennial engagement in organizations. Rahim et al. (2022) assert that the positive traits of Millennials distinguish them from prior generations in that they work well on teams, thrive in organizations that allow them to collaborate, and have frequent communication with their supervisors; if encouraged, they want to bring positive change to their organization. Millennials have been in the workplace long enough to conclude that they want consistent communication with leadership, including receiving feedback and appreciation for their contributions. They are ambitious, technologically astute, accept diverse environments, enjoy social networking, are civic-minded, and prefer high-technology training and development options. They enjoy a fun and positive work environment (Paukert et al., 2021). Lyons et al. (as cited in Paukert et al., 2021) assert that since Millennials

have more mobility, leaders must think of creative incentives to keep Millennials for long-term employment. According to Singh (as cited in Paukert et al., 2021), Millennials are competent, socially aware, motivated, technologically savvy, adventurous, and averse to risk-taking. Tysiac (as cited in Paukert et al., 2021) points out that Millennials prefer in-person communication regardless of their technologically focused reputation.

Overall, Millennials will support change if technology is advanced, in a positive and fun environment, and an element of creativity to engage them in supporting change initiatives. Since their formative years were shrouded with horrible events such as mass school shootings, Millennials, although they are more entrepreneurial than earlier generations, are ironically less independent and require more consistent communication and feedback from leadership during change. However, they are motivated to bring positive change to organizations (Rahim et al., 2022).

Generation Z (between 1997-2012)

Generation Z is the newest generation and is the future of organizations. Since this generation has been in the workforce for only a few years, little literature research is available, but they are the most diverse and digital generation in history.

Luianoff and Haidt (as cited in Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021) assert that Generation Z grew up with overprotective parents, which resulted in a generation with fewer social and emotional skills than earlier generations, making it harder for them to be independent adults. Generation Z has similar values such as work-life balance, being achievement-oriented, working in a supportive environment, and needing frequent feedback; they differ in that Generation Z's extrinsic work values include needing security, needing constant feedback, and having more risk reversion than the risk-taking Millennials (Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021). Gabrielova and Buchko

(2021) point out that Generation Z values being part of the decision-making process in organizations, and they want their ideas valued. Martin (as cited in Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021) says Generation Z thrives in organizations where consistent change occurs.

Generation Z is the most diverse and digital generation in history, and they work at organizations because they like their colleagues and work. They quickly move on to better opportunities if these prerequisites do not exist. Generation Z values the quality of life, and their well-being is more important than working for the same company for the rest of their lives (Translated by Content Engine LLC., 2023). Wiedmer (2015) asserts that Generation Z is the most technically savvy generation as they communicate in real-time with individuals not physically sitting in the same room. They are socially connected through social media and more accepting of diverse populations and environments. Wiedmer points out that Generation Z does not like lecture-test classroom environments. Instead, they want learning to be customized individually. Generation Z will not be a 40-hour per-work employee that works in a cubicle like the earlier generations because they require the flexibility of contracting with expertise.

Generation Z's approach to change is supportive. Since they are used to fast-paced situations, their agility will shine during change if there is real-time communication, mobility, and flexible work locations and hours. Generation Z's core value systems were manifested because of their upbringing with overprotective parents, resulting in a generation that requires constant feedback, more security, and their ideas valued. Generation Z is adaptive and agile and can transition quickly during change initiatives (Gabriela & Buchko, 2021). Patel (as cited in Gabrielova & Buchko, 2021) suggests that a distinct trait of Generation Z is that they expect their managers to be their mentors to help with their personal development.

Each generation has distinct approaches to change initiatives, and their perspectives were cultivated through events that occurred during their formative years. The generations next to each other may share similar perspectives, as highlighted in Table 1.1. For example, Traditionalists and Baby Boomers share the same values for organizational structure and respect for authority and are loyal to organizations. In contrast to Traditionalists, Baby Boomers have an informal communication style and prefer collaborating with leaders and colleagues; work is an extension of their lives. Generation X is more tech-savvy than Traditionalists and Baby Boomers because they were born during the technological boom. Another distinct trait Generation X shares with Millennials and Generation Z is that they are less loyal to organizations than earlier generations. Millennials and Generation Z share similar approaches to change because they are both entrepreneurs and require feedback from their managers. Generation Z is more digital than earlier generations in that they expect real-time communication and constant feedback.

Table 1.1

Summary of the Generations' Approach to Change

Generational Cohorts	Birth Years	Approach to Change
Traditionalists or The Silent Generation	(1928-1945)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regard for authority, structure, and chain of command, silent soldiers. • Family values, discipline, and loyalty. • Organizational position, money, and instructor-led training.
Baby Boomers	(1946-1964)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefers structure and organization loyalty. • Collaborators, independent, hard-working, informal communicators, and creative. • Work-life balance, organization responsibility, work is an extension of their lives, need a prominent role in organizations.
Generation X or the Lost Generation	(1965-1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technologically savvy, less loyal to organizations, and requires autonomy. • Need decision buy-in on initiatives, free thinkers, and will challenge organizations. • Enjoy creative and independent projects.

Millennials or Generation Y	(1981-1996)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneur, tech-savvy, work-life balance, less loyal to organizations. • Require consistent communication and management appreciation. • Highly technologically mobile, work well on teams, inclusivity, and creativity.
Generation X	(1997-2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most diverse and digital, less loyal to generations. • Real-time communication and socially connected. • Like consistent organizational change. • Expect managers to be mentors. • Expect flexible hours and locations to work and prefer customized learning experiences.

Table 1.1 summarizes the approach to change of each generation and highlights their similarities and differences. As you can see, generations next to each other have similar approaches than differences. For example, Traditionalists and Baby Boomers respond to organizations with structure and respect for authority. Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z are technically savvy and want more decision-making autonomy. The purpose of the table is to summarize the generational approaches to change that make it clear to an organizational change practitioner.

Change Initiative Components

The literature review revealed that 70 percent of the failed change initiatives were due to employee resistance and lack of engagement. Before we can propose recommendations to increase employee engagement, an analysis of each generation propels an investigation into four key components, as summarized in Table 1.2, to motivate stakeholders of any generation to support change initiatives: organization engagement, organization identification, agility, and technology and innovation—these components factor in generation and lifespan theories for a complete, nonbiased consideration of all organizational employees.

Organization Engagement

Kultalahti et al. (2014) assert that Millennials, like Baby Boomers, will become more impactful in organizational change when they work for a company that has a work-life balance and allows time to spend with their hobbies, family, and friends and can work on their physical and mental health. For Millennials to be engaged in an organization, there must be a close working community with gratifying colleagues who are as engaged in the organization as they are (Kultalahti et al., 2014). Multalahi (as cited in Kultalahti et al., 2014) added that Millennials want to be seen as human beings in organizations. This means companies must hire motivated and skilled managers to cultivate suitable team environments to support what Millennials need to be motivated to evoke change. As Martin (2005) mentioned, Millennials are unafraid of organizational change. Kultalahi et al. (2014) highlighted that Millennials are not motivated by money and status symbols; vigorous learning, development, and being challenged prevent boredom. Martin (2005) points out that Millennials' effects on organizational change are hidden in their creativity, flexibility, and collaborative nature in the workplace, and they are not afraid of change. Millennials are independent; they do not like micromanagers since they grew up when both parents were working or in single households where they did not get much attention, thus forcing them to be independent. In the study by Zemke et al. (2000) and Lippel and Walters (2019), three out of five Millennials do not believe in the traditional nine-to-five schedule and do not believe productivity only occurs in an office setting. In a Mustkat and Reitsamer (2020) study, 328 European hospital employees were examined to understand what motivates Millennials to support organizational change. They concluded that appreciation was a motivator but was more prevalent in male Millennials than females.

Saratovsky et al. (2013) assert that Millennials influence organizational change, emphasizing expanding connections to the broader world using modern technology, such as social media, that humanizes people and organizations. For example, the old professional perspective of organizations not revealing your interests to the world is not aligned with the Millennial perspective of expressing your hobbies, interests, and passions, making people more exciting and sophisticated (Saratovsky et al., 2013). Saratovsky et al. point out that Millennials are collaborative, allowing everyone, regardless of position or title, to contribute to wins and failures (Merchant, 2010). Millennial organizational contributions break down barriers to create solutions (Saratovsky et al., 2013). Tutar et al. (2022) assert that Millennials grew up during a painful time in a society where terrorist attacks and natural disasters, infectious diseases, obesity, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome were on the rise. The political, economic, and technology boom was rapidly changing the world, which brought rise to the internet and social media, thus making this generation's beliefs and values different from earlier generations.

Organization Identification

According to Zhao et al. (2021), charismatic leadership is the key to unlocking the innovative performance of Millennial and Generation Z stakeholders. Zhao et al. suggest that fostering and elevating a leader's charisma will enhance employee and leadership organizational identification. Ashforth and Mael (1989) defined organizational identification (as cited in Zhao et al., 2021) as the perception of oneness with or belongingness to the organization. Zhao et al. noted strategies to enhance organizational identity by consciously incorporating the organization's goals and values daily to create a humanizing, collaborative, and inclusive culture. Researchers suggest leaders are the cornerstone of an organization:

The leader is responsible for organizational harmony and acts as an organizational agent in subordinate interaction. As organizational representatives, leaders represent the image of the organization. Their behavior and style can inspire employees to recognize organizational aspects, and correct major decisions can determine the organization's fate (Zhao et al., 2021).

Norris (as cited in Zhao et al., 2021) suggests that charismatic leaders can raise stakeholder confidence levels by providing a clear, motivating, and engaging vision that encourages a sense of belonging to the organization. Charismatic leadership Hayes (2018) believes it inspires stakeholders to accomplish goals they did not know were achievable. Antomakis (as cited in Hayes, 2018) suggests using Podsakoff's model of transformational-transactional leadership to develop charismatic leadership by communicating a clear change vision, setting goals and performance expectations, supporting stakeholders to be creative and innovative to reimagine old problems in new ways, and creating a collaborative teamwork environment. Charismatic leadership will help support stakeholders through day-to-day decision-making during change initiatives.

Agility

Millennials and Generation Z are entrepreneurs, love technology, and function best in autonomous environments that focus more on personal development and are highly competitive. Being autonomous is a common theme among Millennials, and they do not adapt well to authority; instead, they prefer working in an environment of democracy and togetherness. Franklin (2014) highlighted that building relationships allows us to empathize, influence, and motivate our colleagues, which is crucial in successfully implementing change. Millennials are motivated by setting visions and being part of strategic decisions in organizations. This contrasts

with Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, and Generation X in that they approach work in a traditional style. Tutar et al. (2022) assert that Millennials, due to their vast adaptability qualities, can contribute to organizational change. With the new agile corporate environments, employees must be ready to pivot when necessary, whether part of a significant organizational change or on a project with a singular focus (Franklin, 2014). In the study by Zemke et al. (2000) and Lippel and Walters (2019), three out of five Millennials do not believe in the traditional nine-to-five schedule or believe productivity is necessary in an office setting.

Technology and Innovation

Another aspect of the Millennials and Generation Z personalities that organizations must consider and prepare for is their preference for working for cool organizations, such as Apple, Google, Amazon, Nike, Microsoft, and Uber (Wolverton et al., 2021). In contrast, Millennials consider Walmart, McDonald's, Burger King, and AT&T uncool organizations (Wolverton et al., 2021). Wolverton et al. (2021) studied 70 Millennials who defined cool companies as innovative, unique, employee/customer-focused, and having good products; by contrast, they consider uncool companies as lacking innovation, unethical behavior, being average, low quality, and products or services that customers are unhappy with. Njenga et al. (2021) examined Millennial contributions and influence on organizational change in the hospitality industry. They found them to develop fresh ideas and implement contemporary technology and processes that contribute to organizations standing out amongst their competitors. Zhao et al. (2021) believe that if leaders include employees in decision-making and create transparent and open communication channels, they will create strong relationships built on trust, enhancing organizational identification and thus enhancing Millennials and Generation Z's innovative

performance. Hayes (2018) suggests that leaders can motivate stakeholders to support change by including them in the day-to-day decision-making process during change.

Studies show that 70 percent of change initiatives fail, and employee resistance significantly contributes to those failures. Studies show change initiatives fail because leaders focus on the process instead of motivating their employees, the main benefactors of the change. The literature review reveals the qualities of each generation, gives an insight into their approach to change, and shows there are more similarities than differences. Another finding was that lifespan, as highlighted in the lifespan section, should also be considered, giving us an even more holistic view of individuals as they age in their careers.

This paper aims to contribute to the field of organizational change and change management by proposing that practitioners consider processes and people to motivate stakeholders to support change initiatives. The generation and lifespan theories are a start to considering people using four components that motivate through organization engagement, organization identification, agility, and technology and innovation, as summarized in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2

Change Initiative Components

Change Initiative Components	Strategies for Change Leaders can use to help stakeholders support change initiatives
Organization Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide work-life balance and flexible work hours/location. • Cultivate a collaborative environment. • Provide consistent learning and development.
Organization Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a compelling vision message. • Establish daily goals and values. • Open communication channels.
Agility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an autonomous environment that values empathy, diversity, and influence. • Flexibility to pivot when requirements change. • Allow stakeholders to contribute to decision-making.

Technology & Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open to new and innovative ideas and collaborations. • Organizations must stay technologically advanced. • Consistent technological lecture-led and online training and development.
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Lifespan Theory and 10 Generational Myths

This literature review's scholarly research on lifespan theory argues two significant points. Number one is that the generation theory is too narrow and does not consider a 360° view of an individual, such as age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status. Number two is that generation theory can create an organizational environment that encourages ageism due to generation stereotypes. Ageism puts organizations at risk of litigation. Scholars such as Rudolph et al. (2021) introduce ten generational myths to support the lifespan theory. According to Irehill et al. (2023), a stakeholder's corporate well-being has nothing to do with age specifically; lifespan plays a more critical role in how someone approaches change initiatives. Irehill et al. believe younger stakeholders have more demands and lack resources compared to the sophistication of older stakeholders, who do not require much to function with higher well-being during change, which points to the lifespan theory. Irehill et al. suggests that leaders design ways to meet the prerequisites of younger stakeholders to make age differences in organizations an advantage for implementing change initiatives.

Parry & Urwin (2011) suggest age affects organizational behavior over the concept of generation and explain that every employee is similar once they reach a certain age or life stage. Parry and Urwin (2011) point out that it is better to use age diversity in organizations by appreciating life stages within generations. For example, a 50-year-old woman, Generation X, will have similarities to a 50-year-old Millennial due to the age effect and generational differences due to historical events and cultural norms that influenced a generation. Parry and

Urwin argue that generations have more similarities than differences. Rudolph et al. (2021) explain that differences and similarities in the generation are not a neat explanation; instead, it is complex and suggests that we must consider aging perspectives at work. Rudolph et al. suggest that we must expand our thinking of generations from just birth year because it is an inclusive perspective that considers the complexities and nuances of aging that influence how the generations respond to organizational change. In contrast to the generation perspective, the lifespan perspective teaches us that age builds control mechanisms inside humans that allow us to have the endurance to weather organizational change storms (Rudolph et al., 2021). Rudolph et al. try to debunk ten myths about generations in organizational science and practice:

Myth #1: Generational “Theory” Was Meant To Be Tested

Rudolph et al. (2021) argue that earlier scholars and their experiments used historical and social insights rather than adopting familial or genealogical perspectives. Rudolph et al. point out that using the social perspective reaches a broad spectrum in cultural exchanges rooted in historical events, thus distinguishing the generations and drawing parallels to their predecessors. Rudolph et al. assert that earlier studies of generational perspective were not meant to be empirically studied and suggested that earlier studies did not test for generational differences but used the information conceptionally.

Earlier studies of the generation theory were experimental, using historical data to explain behavior and perspective. Rudolph et al. (2021) help us understand how lifespan theory considers how people change over time as they age, increasing emotional stability and job knowledge that adds value to change initiatives.

Myth #2: Generational Explanations Are Obvious

Rudolph et al. (2021) assert that we should not use generational theory to draw a line in the sand and distinguish the generations influenced by historical and social narrowing. Rudolph et al. explain that if you think about historical events such as World War II and the associations of public figures such as John F. Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King, instead of digging deeper into the mechanisms leading up to those events, age was at their root. Strauss and Howe (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) discovered using a taxonomy of generations analyzing mounds of historical records and called it “age-determined” participation. Rudolph et al. noted that social and historical events are associated with age or period effects. Rudolph et al. draw on an example of a study of high school and college students who are less likely to find school jobs compared to two decades ago. Rudolph et al. explain that this is not a generational factor but somewhat related to current-day economic conditions.

Rudolph et al. (2021) assert that generational groups based on chronological age ranges of years focused on one point in time. The lifespan theory helps us understand when we consider that younger generations will change their perspectives as they age.

Myth #3: Generational Labels and Associated Age Ranges are Agreed Upon

Rudolph et al. (2021) pointed out that literature and studies use the start and end birth year age range interchangeably to group the generations, and there are noticeable inconsistencies. Other scholars noticed these inconsistencies, such as Costanza et al. (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021), who noticed start and end dates ranging from 3 to 9 years, depending on the study. Rudolph et al. also noticed how researchers discuss cultural differences related to generations, and the generation year ranges are different in other countries. For example, Deal et al. (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) state that the generation label “Millennials” is not used in many

countries that use the Chinese, Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist, Sakka, or Kolla Varsham calendars. Generations can be labeled as such according to what political events, cultural events, and epochs were happening at the time. Papavasileious (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) continues to draw multi-cultural examples explaining that members of the Greek workforce are categorized into the Divided Metapolitefsi Generation and the Europeanized Generation. Deal et al. (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) point out that wars are used to categorize generations in Israel. Moreover, in Germany, the media labeled younger people as Generation C6, Generation Golf, or Generation Merkel. In China, generations are grouped as Post-50s and Post-60s, and in India, Srinivasan (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) asserts there are three generations called Conservatives, Integrators, and Y2K. Rudolph et al. argue that the complexities of cultural nuances have encouraged researchers to ignore them and use generic US-based labels that tell half the story.

The lifespan theory can be applied worldwide because people change their perspectives as they age, which is universal in contrast to the myth above that shows cultures view generations differently worldwide. People become more emotionally intelligent, confident, and knowledgeable about their positions as they age, which adds value to support organizational changes.

Myth #4: Generations are Easy to Study

Organizational behavior is dynamic and complex, so it will be impossible to decipher conflict based on the narrow view of birth year ranges (Rudolph & Zacher, 2017). Rudolph and Zacher (2017) assert that generational impacts are daunting and require studying intersectionality that includes age span. Rudolph and Zacher argue that it makes sense to research to pause the time-based theory and conceptualize generations to measure and understand organizational

behavior. Rudolph and Zacher point out that numerous designs have concluded that age, period, and cohort groupings are limiting to detecting age effects interpretations.

According to Rudolph and Zacher (2017), the narrow view of the generation theory, which considers age and period to determine people's perspective, cannot be thoroughly studied. In contrast, the lifespan theory is practical in considering how stakeholders evolve as they age, positively impacting change initiation by bringing skill and knowledge to organizations and decision-making.

Myth #5: Statistical Models Can Help Disentangle Generational Differences

Statistical techniques Rudolph and Zacher (2017) assert that researchers have been inconvincibly using the generational theory of age, period, and cohort confounding issues as it relates to cross-sectional design comparisons with generational cohorts. Researchers also used the *cross-temporal meta-analysis* (CTMA) approach that uses age as a constant and that only sampled college students (Rudolph & Zacher, 2017). In 2019, Rudolph, Costanza, Wright, and Zacher examined the assumptions of the CTMA model using Moneta Carlo simulations. He found that CTMA did not correctly estimate cohort effects by three to eight times, making them question the source and size of the differences. Another study by Yang & Land (as cited in Rudolph & Zacher, 2017) tries to crack the generational code using the *cross-classified hierarchical linear model* (CCHLM). Again, age is left fixed while period and cohort vary. Rudolph and Zacher point out that the CCHLM model did not consider that cohort and period can also be fixed while age varies in the population, creating different outcomes. The CCHLM study, Rudolph and Zacher conclude, misses the mark because it does not consider population effects; instead, relying heavily on analytics results in age, period, and cohort as ambiguous parameters as inputs into a study.

According to Rudolph and Zacker (2017), no statistical model identifies the generational effects. Instead, Baltes (as cited in Rudolph et al., 2021) suggests that lifespan theory forces individuals to process and react to age and history-graded influences that lead to stability and change.

Myth #6: Generations Need To Be Managed at Work

Since generational differences are not supported by research, leadership in organizations should not use them to customize company policies to manage their employees. Rudolph and Zacher (2017) recommend using lifespan and career stages to determine how to address stakeholders. Rudolph and Zacker (2017) point out that age and career stage effects may, on the surface, look like generational differences when they are not. Böhm et al. (2014) suggest building a positive, supportive, and work-life balance environment for all ages while considering age-focused policies such as age-inclusive human resource practices that foster opportunities to contribute, irrespective of age. Studies prove, as pointed out by Rudolph and Baltes (as cited in Rudolph and Zacker, 2017), that employees and stakeholders benefit from working in an autonomous environment that has flexible work hours that give everyone, regardless of age, the option to decide where or when they would prefer to work. A critical consideration an organization should take into account is the compliance implications if companies customize their HR policies based on generational stereotypes to support this claim. Rudolph and Zacher (2017) refer to several legislations that include provisions in the Civil Rights Act of 1964, The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1991 that protects employees from being discriminated against because a person belongs to a

particular group based on characteristics. Age is a protective class for employees 40 years old and older.

Rudolph et al. (2021) assert that organizations leave themselves open to ageism litigation when considering generation to manage stakeholders. Rudolph et al. suggest that organizations should manage the perceptions of a generation and not a generation. Lifespan theory is more practical in determining stakeholders based on how they develop and change throughout their lives.

Myth #7: Members of Younger Generations are Disrupting Work

Societal events such as COVID-19 shifted everyday norms, affecting how all ages work, live, and play. Rudolph and Zacher (2017) argue that younger generations should not be blamed for disrupting work. COVID forced the need for some employees of all ages to work from home, which afforded them the ability to have flexible work hours, making it convenient for some that had childcare and eldercare responsibilities easier. In contrast, others of all ages felt isolated.

Myers et al. (2010) point out that later generations need frequent communication with their supervisors and work-life balance. If organizations provide these prerequisites, it could change Millennial and Generation Z engagement in organizations.

Myth #8: Generations Explains the Changing Nature of Work (and Society)

Rudolph and Zacher (2017) highlight that political and social events affect older and younger people, too, and we should not single out people who are younger when events are happening; they will only be affected. The generational hypothesis is a simplistic view of individuals that ignores individuals, their personality, identifying qualities, age, lifespan, and events that play a role in people's worldview. Rudolph and Zacher suggest we must consider the intersectionality of an individual's age, life stage, social context, and historical context across the

lifespan. Rudolph and Zacher argue that using the generation theory to pigeonhole individuals into a group has not been proven in research to be a convenient way to label individuals that ignore the fact that people and the environment they reside in add layers of complexity. The generation theory insinuates that individuals with the same age experience develop uniformly without recognizing social identities, personality, and socioeconomic factors in developing an individual's values and behaviors (Rudolph & Zacher, 2017).

Rudolph and Zacher (2017) point out that considering only the generation theory lumps everyone in an age range into the same categories and avoiding the complexity of individuals using personal identity, age, and socioeconomic status, stakeholders bring us closer to understanding what values stakeholders that have motivates them to support change initiatives.

Myth #9: Studying Age at Work Is the Antidote to The Problems with Studying Generations

Rudolph and Zacher (2017) emphasize that only using the generation theory to identify how an employee will behave or their values are incomplete and should include a spectrum of factors such as age. Age and age research is an in-depth approach organizations should consider when they are finding ways to support a diverse organization that has multiple ages. Rudolph and Zacher point out that age should not replace generational research. Instead, research should consider the complexities of individual lives.

Age research is a complete strategy for determining what motivates organizational stakeholders to support change. Although Rudolph and Zacher (2017) do not recommend excluding or replacing generational research altogether, to be inclusive and welcome diversity in organizations, leaders should consider personal identity, age, and socioeconomic status with generation to understand individual stakeholders' values and how to motivate them to change.

Myth #10: Talking About Generations Is Largely Benign

Implicit bias results in agism of all kinds when discussing generations is minimized as being benign. Rudolph and Zacher (2017) highlight a comparison that racism is characterized as being subtle, and implicit comments and suggestions toward Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) are called microaggressions. Webster's dictionary defines microaggressions as a statement, action, or incident as an instance of indirect, subtle, unintentional discrimination against a marginalized group such as a racial or ethnic minority. Rudolph and Zacker explain that microaggressions are sanctioned by societal beliefs that have become normalized, pervasive, and supported by the media and culture. Rudolph and Zacker warn that microaggression can lead to discriminatory practices that are harmful, divisive, and potentially illegal.

Scholars such as Rudolph and Zacher (2017) suggest that lifespan theory considers age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status, including generation, to understand the worldview of individuals to determine what they value and how they respond to change. Organizations should use the lifespan theory instead of generation alone to avoid the possibility of stereotypes and workplace misunderstandings leading to conflicts and possible litigation that could interfere with change initiatives.

This literature review is another stepping stone to closing the gap in the organizational change and change management disciplines, identifying opportunities to improve its competencies using the generation and lifespan theories. Generation and lifespan theories were explored to understand what motivates employees to align their values with an organization's change vision, mission, and purpose. Ultimately, we made an inclusive contribution using recommendations from existing organizational change strategies and tools for change leaders to increase their change initiative success rate by putting people first. In some instances, the

recommendations will point to specific threats of a generation to draw connections between the strategies. For example, with knowledge-sharing, it is noted that Millennials and Generation Z function well in organizations that encourage knowledge-sharing. This distinction from the earlier generations shows how organizations can leverage to support stakeholders through change.

Recommendations

In the McKinsey & Company article Changing Change Management by Ewnstein and Sologar (2015), 70 percent of change initiatives fail due to employee resistance and lack of management support. The article also points out that the chances of change initiatives taking hold increase when stakeholders are invested in the change. Five generations are in the workplace for the first time in history, adding layers of complexity for change leaders to support stakeholders successfully during change initiatives. The literature review conducted a deep dive into the unique generational characteristics and their approach to change outlined in Table 1.1 Summary of Generation's Approach to Change. Additionally, the literature review discussed arguments by scholars Cort W. Rudolph and David P. Costanza that the Lifespan perspective suggests people continuously and incrementally develop over time, making worldview fluid with age. Scholars do not discredit the generation perspective. Instead, they argue that the generational perspective is ambiguous, and the lifespan perspective closes gaps in determining an individual's worldview.

Change Initiative Components, as summarized in Table 1.2 in the literature review, four components were created to build recommendations for change leaders to motivate stakeholders to invest in change initiatives. These recommendations aim to contribute to the field of organizational change leadership and change management, specifically from the perspective of

the various generation groups and considering the lifespan, as people continuously change throughout their lives, as argued by scholars Richard Pascale and Anthony G. Athos. The change initiative components in Table 1.2 were used to develop the recommendations based on existing change management models. Figure 2.1 illustrates a nonbiased approach to educating change leaders to support change initiatives in multigenerational workplaces. Environments, such as the McKinsey 7s model, find gaps in organizations and areas of communication, strategic leadership, relationship building, motivating people to invest in change, creating an environment that welcomes knowledge sharing, and supporting stakeholders through the process of change.

Figure 1.1

Nonbiased Model to Support Change Initiatives in Multigenerational Workplace Environments



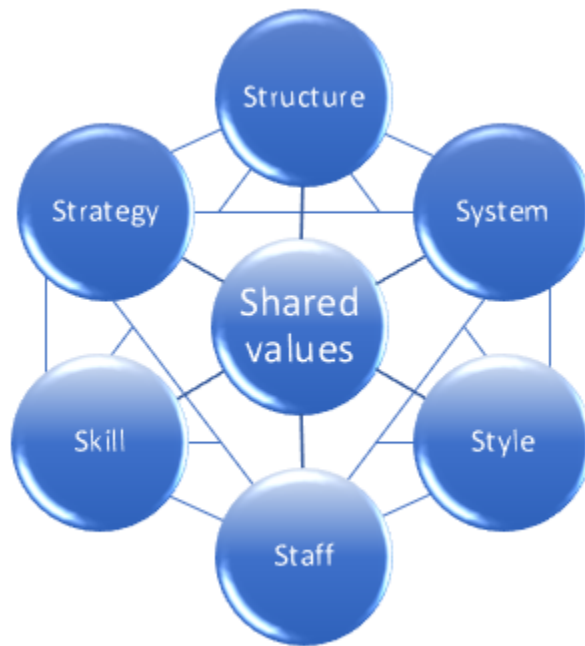
Figure 2.1, the nonbiased model to support change initiatives in a multigenerational workplace environment, illustrates six tools recommended to change leaders to support stakeholders to invest in change initiatives—the lines without arrows from one model to the next signal that each is interchangeable and interconnected. In the middle of the diagram are communications and active listening, showing their importance during the deployment of each model. This next section is a detailed walkthrough for each tool highlighted in Figure 2.1. the nonbiased model to support change initiatives in multigenerational workplaces.

McKinsey 7S Model

Using the McKinsey 7S Model, as illustrated in Figure 2.2, leaders can find misalignments before and after change initiatives using seven interrelated elements (Hayes, 2018). As Hayes (2018) noted, the 7s model illustrates relationships and how organizations are misaligned. The seven elements of the McKinsey 7S Model in Figure 2.2 are broken into two categories: complex elements (strategy, structure, and system) and soft elements (skill, staff, and style). According to Subiyanto and Hatammimi (2023), complex elements are traditional aspects of an organization, and soft elements are dynamic and more difficult because they evolve and constantly change. Subiyanto and Hatammimi point out that both hard and soft elements are interconnected; changes to one affect the entire organization. Soft elements in staff include stakeholders' generational affiliation, personal identity, age, and socioeconomic status related to generational and lifespan theories. For example, change leaders could use this tool to identify gaps during change initiatives and then use the various tools in the Nonbiased Model to Support Change Initiatives in Multigenerational Workplace Environments, as illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.2

The McKinsey 7S Model



The shape of the McKinsey 7S Model in Figure 2.2 is essential in showing no hierarchical structure because the elements are interconnected; if there is a misalignment in one element, the others will be affected. The seven elements of the *McKinsey 7S* model are outlined in detail as follows (Waterman et al., 1980):

Table 2.1*McKinsey 7S*

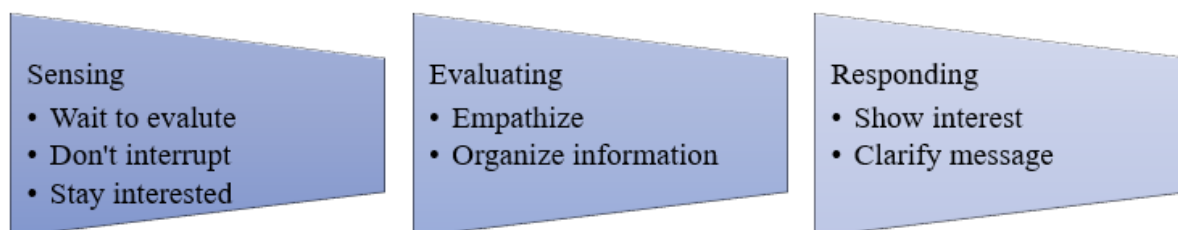
Elements	Description
Strategy	Vision and purpose of the change initiative
Structure	Nature of the organization: top-down, bottom-up, departmental activities.
Systems	Organizational processes and procedures, informal communication, and how decisions are made. Resource allocation, reward systems, conflict resolution.

Staff	The organization's demographics, its human resources, and other characteristics such as educational attributes.
Style	Behavior patterns of the entire organization and critical stakeholders.
Shared values	The organization's core values and beliefs and how they influence customers, stakeholders, and the community.
Skills	Core competencies of the organization and what sets the organization apart.

The McKinsey 7S model in Table 2.1 explains the elements of each component in the model. Waterman, Peters, and Phillips (1980) assert that when using the *McKinsey 7S model* in Table 2.1, organizations, in an unbiased way, can make changes to accommodate the growing number of age demographics that work on cross-functional teams to help change agents find where the gaps are. It is essential to consistently use practical communication skills through each step, as outlined in the next section, communication. Once the gaps are found, change leadership can use the recommendations in the upcoming sections: strategic leadership, relationship building, motivating stakeholders, knowledge sharing, and tools to help support stakeholders during the phases of change.

Communication

As shown in Figure 2.1, active listening should be integral during all stages of organizational change. Engaging stakeholders in the early planning stages of organizational change is essential in crafting an inclusive, nonbiased, and visionary communication message (Lewis et al., 2006). Pound (as cited in Lewis et al., 2006) suggests that change leaders should open multiple communication channels (e.g., face-to-face and written) and be active listeners and receptive to stakeholders when providing input. McShane and Von Glinow (2018) suggest ways to improve communication skills using *active listening* skills in three basic active listening steps: sensing, evaluation, and responding.

Figure 2.3*Active Listening Process and Strategy*

The active listening process in Figure 2.3 shows three boxes. The first box of sensing suggests that listeners should not interrupt when someone is speaking, showing the speaker their interest in the conversation and waiting to evaluate. The second box is when the listener should value and organize the information, and the third box is when the listeners should continue to show interest in the conversation and respond to clarify the message.

Now that we have covered the importance of each step during the active listening process, the following section discusses the different communication channels and strategies and when to use them for various purposes that will make them most effective. The next topic, communication, should be practical and present with each stakeholder during every stage of change to improve change initiative success rates. Active listening skills, creating communication channels, and using various communication strategies that fit the situation and environment will increase the chances of successful change initiatives.

Communication Channels

According to O'Reilly and Pondy (as cited in Hayes, 2018), written communication is effective when there are two types of vocabulary spoken by the sender and receiver, allowing time for the receiver to understand the message, and face-to-face is very effective when

stakeholders' express concerns or issues, and a persuasive message is needed. O'Reilly and Pondy (as cited in Hayes, 2018) argue that face-to-face communication is impossible when leadership and stakeholders are in different physical locations.

Five Communication Strategies

Change leaders must incorporate a strategic communication plan to accommodate diverse stakeholders. Clampitt et al. (as cited in Hayes, 2018) highlight five communication strategies in Table 2.2 that leaders can choose that is right for their environment, and sometimes it makes sense to choose multiple strategies for the same change initiative when appropriate:

Table 2.2

Five Communication Strategies

Communication	Strategy
Spray and pray	Deliver constant communication to give stakeholders the feeling that they are being informed.
Tell and sell	Updates stakeholders on the issues as they become available, primarily related to the change initiative.
Underscore and explore	Deliver messages on critical issues. Allow stakeholders the autonomy to determine how to resolve critical issues. Change leaders should apply active listening skills, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, to mitigate misunderstandings and misinformation.
Identifying and replying	It is a reactive communication strategy that allows stakeholders to think about issues in a confusing environment. Leaders may use this strategy and trust that stakeholders will have the expertise to resolve the issues.
Withhold and uphold	The approach is withholding information from the stakeholders for external reasons, such as commercial. Some organizations have the viewpoint that keeping information from stakeholders gives them power. Also, some organization leaders believe stakeholders at various levels would not understand the big picture.

The following section discusses four leadership strategies for change initiatives. Each strategy can be used in different organizational environments and situations. These options give change leaders a toolbox of practical and unbiased approaches to leading multigenerational stakeholders.

Leadership

Bourne (2015) recommends that leaders understand how each generation approaches workplace change to effectively facilitate change initiatives by adopting leadership strategies. Since organizations interchangeably refer to leadership and management, making a clear distinction between them is essential because they differ. Kotter (as cited in Hayes, 2018) asserts that management involves planning, allocating resources, establishing budgets and timelines, and managing the progress of change initiatives; in contrast, leadership develops and communicates a compelling vision message, provides the conditions to align with the change, and motivates and inspires people to achieve the vision. Now that the distinction between leadership and management is made clear, the upcoming section first discusses how cognitive psychology contributes to strategic thinking in the four leadership strategies covered at the end of this section.

Strategic leadership

Five generations are working in organizations for the first time in history, and change leaders need tools to support diverse stakeholders through change initiatives. The goal is to find nonbiased and inclusive ways to engage stakeholders to connect and align their core values to change initiatives to increase their success rates. Olsen and Simerson (2014) assert that leaders are influential when they seek different perspectives and initiate strategic change by integrating strategic thinking. Before we get into the different strategic leadership styles, Olson and Simerson explain the three components of strategic thinking highlighted in Table 2.3: cognitive psychology, game theory, and systems thinking.

Table 2.3*Three Components of Strategic Thinking*

Strategic Thinking Components	Description
Cognitive psychology	Decision-making, creativity, perception, and thinking.
Game theory	Decision-making involving two or more participants.
Systems thinking	Deciphering how systems behave, how environmental connections exist, and how participants influence each other.

Considering the unique age diversity in modern organizations, the complexities across the infrastructure should be used to be innovative in this highly technologically advanced and diverse world. Leaders should be strategic while facilitating change initiatives to be proactive, empathic, and engaging when interacting with employees in diverse organizations. Olson and Simerson (2014) suggest that by using cognitive thinking, stakeholders can effectively manage internal bias and gain the ability to think through complexities, increase their evaluating abilities, and look at all possibilities to come up with solutions, prioritize tasks, identify risks, and develop mitigation plans. Olson and Simerson highlight that the two parts of leading strategy include *strategic formation* by deciding the organization's vision, mission, and objectives. Secondly, *strategic execution* aligns deliverables and communication with the organization's vision, mission, and objectives. Cognitive thinking is embedded in the following topic, introducing four strategic leadership types (e.g., visionary, directive, incubating, and collaborative) that change leaders can interchangeably use to support stakeholders while facilitating change initiatives for a successful outcome.

Four types of strategic leadership

Olson and Simerson (2015) identified four types of strategic leadership: visionary, directive, incubating, and collaborative. Olson and Simerson define *visionary strategic leadership* as driving strategy through personal insight; *directive strategic leadership* involves driving strategy through structure and process; *incubating strategic leadership* as driving strategy through empowering others; and *collaborative strategic leadership* as driving strategy through cooperation. As suggested by Olson and Simerson, it is worthwhile for leaders to build skills for each leadership strategy, and this could be beneficial when facilitating change initiatives in an age-diverse organization. Olson and Simerson outline each leadership strategy in Table 2.4: Visionary strategic leadership, incubator strategic leadership, and collaborative strategic leadership:

Table 2.4

Four Types of Strategic Leadership

Visionary Strategic Leadership	
<i>Creative thinking</i>	It allows one to draw on unique experiences and observations for insight and inspiration. Olson and Simerson (2015) point out that a striking element of creative thinking is leveraging connections to develop ideas.
<i>Self-reliance</i>	Independent of receiving external resources from oneself. Olson and Simerson (2015) noted leaders who are self-reliant and confident and rely on inner reserves for inspiration.
<i>Inspiring others</i>	Creating inspiring environments to motivate others with a compelling vision. Olson and Simerson (2015) note that visionary leaders achieve excitement and enthusiasm in others.
Director Strategic Leadership	
<i>Critical thinking</i>	Analyzes and evaluates data and information to come to solutions and conclusions.
<i>Planning and organizing</i>	Exacting, process-oriented, intentional, and purposeful when planning.
Collaborative Strategic Leadership	
<i>Synthetic thinking</i>	Formulates and can independently integrate ideas and existing concepts and form new concepts.

<i>Active listening</i>	Listens to people with the intention of understanding to articulate information shared by two or more people. See Figure 2.3 for the steps of active listening skills.
<i>Relationship management</i>	Ability to work with groups and individuals to achieve results.
Incubation Strategic Leadership	
<i>Evaluative thinking</i>	Getting to the bottom of and understanding expectations, assumptions, and requirements. They investigate emerging technologies, products, and services and prob for opportunities to exceed existing and emerging needs. Olson and Simerson (2015) highlighted a study by Cornell University that defined evaluating thinking as a cognitive process motivated by curiosity and value evidence. Applying cognitive psychology helps us manage areas of weakness and prejudices (Olson & Simerson, 2015).
<i>Value and leverage diversity</i>	Valuing diversity, complex viewpoints, and perspectives can help create new ideas and solutions to problems and help people strive to understand the worldviews of others.
<i>Sponsor others</i>	Help them succeed and advocate to build relationships with stakeholders. Also, it includes aiding in the success of initiatives. Sponsoring also includes coaching others to succeed and advocating for their training and development, which is vital for all ages. Hayes (2018) points out that coaching is essential in helping others remove impediments, helping stakeholders recognize opportunities, and bringing out their strengths. Coaching helps improve and sustain the performance of stakeholders continuing with the change.

Incubation strategic leadership needs to be expounded on as a non-biased guideline for leaders to learn to nurture all ages through change. Olson and Simerson (2015) outline incubation strategic leadership as nurturing, perceptive, and focused on the success of others, and they help other leaders succeed. Incubating leaders build networks, assess opportunities, distribute resources where needed, and create organizational support ecosystems (Olson & Simerson, 2015). Incubation strategic leadership builds relationships, whereas the following section elaborates on techniques for building relationships highlighted in the book *Agile Change Management* by Franklin (2014).

Building Relationships

Franklin (2014) asserts that building relationships are essential in combating threats as changes emerge. Building a network of trusted resources to persuade and influence is critical during organizational change. Franklin points out that effectively monitoring our feelings and others is advantageous during negotiations and influencing change. Franklin recommends these steps to build effective relationships: Personal awareness, emotional assessment, and personal leadership.

Personal Awareness

Franklin (2014) recommends getting to know ourselves, how we react to different situations, and what triggers us. Franklin asserts that self-assessments are an effective strategy for building relationships by understanding who we are and how we respond to change. Self-assessments will help us identify our strengths and limitations using psychological profiling tools. Franklin points out that we have things that we find easy, enjoy doing, and have preferences in how to get work done. Franklin recommends leveraging and maximizing tasks where we are naturally talented and understand and express our preferences.

Emotional Assessment

Franklin (2014) recommends conducting an emotional assessment to understand and identify our emotional triggers and how our emotional state impacts others. Franklin points out that before negative triggers impact us, we must reduce adverse circumstances at work, manage triggers to minimize negative responses and minimize the negative ones that impact others. Change agents must improve their engagement with others at work to influence stakeholders through change. Franklin highlights that engagement comes in two forms: direct and indirect. *Direct engagement* includes face-to-face communication where stakeholders can read your

emotions through facial expressions and gestures. On the phone, where your voice and words can be interpreted, and in written communication such as email, your emotions are conveyed in your words. Franklin states that we must consider a few factors to adjust our approach to stakeholders to understand their viewpoints. The factors to consider when communicating to stakeholders include territorial subjects, their positive and negative history on the topic, topics' priority to the stakeholder, the importance of the topics, and momentarily pressure may predict how they respond. Franklin suggests these engagement strategies and techniques.

- Show appreciation for expertise by acknowledging and emphasizing how they can contribute to organizational change.
- Connect positive experiences using similarities of the proposed change.
- Encourage participation in making decisions by asking for their contributions.
- Develop a well-defined vision and be clear about the expectations of stakeholders.
- Respect that stakeholders may have priorities over your change goals and explain that their expertise is essential for the success of the change.

Personal Leadership

Franklin (2014) asserts that personal leadership regulates emotions and stress levels in many situations. Franklin suggests that personal leadership involves five, as outlined in Table 2.5: commitment, authority, self-control, trustworthiness, and flexibility.

Table 2.5

Five Elements of Personal Leadership

Elements of Personal Leadership	Description
Commitment	Commitment is being a change agent who takes responsibility for the change by delivering a compelling vision, being its champion, and showing resilience through organizing and planning.

Leverage Authority	Leverage authority through structural in your position, specialists' authority in subject expertise, interpersonal authority by leveraging nurtured relationships, physical authority by personal presence, and communication abilities by holding stakeholders' attention.
Self-control	Having self-control restrains from responding to hostile situations because organizational changes can be emotionally high.
Trustworthiness	Franklin (2014) asserts that building trustworthiness in organizations directly impacts how quickly stakeholders expedite change. Franklin developed five elements to build trust within an organization: reliability, predictability, congruence, openness, and loyalty.
Flexibility	Being flexible in agile workspaces in the modern world. Change agents must lead teams to adapt to change and keep learning about the change. Franklin (2014) encourages flexibility on change efforts to welcome new change participants and pivot to new approaches, strategies, and techniques.

Franklin (2014) asserts that it requires effective listening, as illustrated in Figure 2.3, and creating empathy by having a two-way conversation without uncomfortable subjects being off limits, feeling comfortable with controversial subjects, understanding different perspectives, learning how to read emotions to deliver the proper responses, and showing the receiver that you trust the information they are sharing with you.

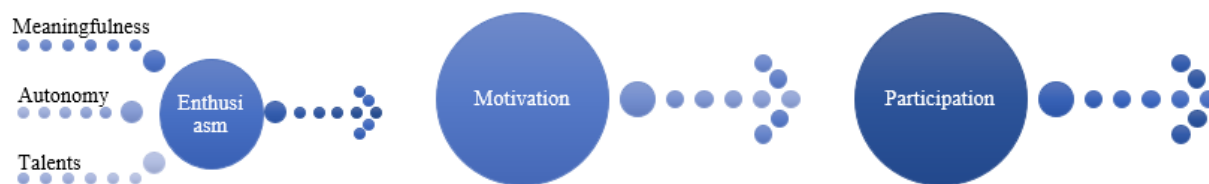
Building relationships in organizations is crucial to motivate stakeholders that are resistant to change. The following section discusses strategies to motivate stakeholders to support and align their values to change initiatives' visions, mission, and purpose. Techniques used in this paper to motivate employees include intrinsic motivation. All generations and those in any lifespan of their careers can benefit from intrinsic motivation because it focuses on essential elements of meaningfulness, autonomy, and talent. If all three elements are present, the outcomes are enthusiasm, motivation, and participation, as illustrated in Figure 2.4.

Strategies to Motivate People to Change

For all stakeholders, regardless of their generation, age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status, strategic leadership must be present to motivate stakeholders through organizational changes. Hayes (2018) asserts that leaders must motivate stakeholders to support organizational change. Choi (as cited in Hayes, 2018) states that stakeholders must change their behaviors for change to occur and notes that stakeholders must be at the center of the organization from the bottom up for there to be successful organizational change, and leaders must find ways to winning the support of those that manage the outcome of the change. The following two sections, intrinsic motivation, and expectancy theory are existing strategies from the organizational change discipline leaders could use to motivate stakeholders that are resistant to change.

Intrinsic Motivation

Franklin (2014) asserts that leadership should consider creating an energetic and enjoyable environment for stakeholders to support change through *intrinsic motivation*. Franklin explains that *intrinsic motivation*, described in Figure 2.4, has three elements: meaningfulness, autonomy, and talent. Franklin defines *meaningfulness* as having a belief in the proposed organizational change resulting in a positive view of the change, *autonomy* as providing stakeholders with the ability to make their own decisions, and talent leveraging stakeholders' core strengths and abilities during and after the change. Stakeholders find meaning in their work when they have the autonomy to use their talents, which results in positive outcomes (McShane & Von Glinow, 2018). Franklin (2014) points out that when all three elements, meaningfulness, autonomy, and talent, are present during change initiatives, stakeholders become more enthusiastic and motivated to participate in change, as illustrated in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4*Creation of Intrinsic Motivation**Expectancy Theory of Motivation*

Another motivation technique Hayes (2018) suggests is expectancy theory of decreasing stakeholders' resistance to change initiatives; expectancy theory considers how expectation influences motivation. Vroom, Porter, and Lawler (as cited in Hayes, 2018) are expectancy scholars who argue that behaviors function in two factors: attrition to the outcomes and what is expected if successful outcomes are achieved. Hayes (2018) concludes that stakeholders are most likely to resist change if it results in a decrease in something they value, and in contrast, stakeholders will be supportive of change if what they value increases. Stakeholders will be motivated and support change if their expectations are valued. Hayes points out that the combination of relationships during the outcome's effort, performance, and value will determine a stakeholder's motivation or resistance toward change, as illustrated in Figure 2.5.

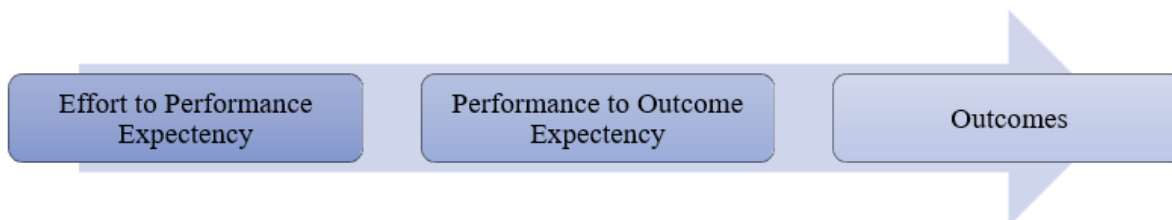
Figure 2.5*Expectancy theory of motivation*

Figure 2.4 shows that a stakeholder that performs at a certain level will result in successful performance. Successful performance is expected to result in the desired outcome, such as a motivated stakeholder instead of a stakeholder who is resistant to change. Hayes (2018) suggests that during the planning stages of change initiatives, change leaders assess how the change will impact the availability of outcomes (e.g., pay, flexible work arrangements, recognition, and autonomy) that stakeholders value the most. Hayes recommends that once leaders identify the most impacted stakeholders, they could compare the valued outcomes in the existing situation to new outcomes in the changed environment to clearly understand what stakeholders will gain and lose due to the change. This strategy will help mitigate issues before and after the change by knowing the proper actions.

Knowledge Sharing

Motivating stakeholders to support change initiatives instead of resisting them using effective communication and leadership strategies provides us with skills to share knowledge with stakeholders involved in change initiatives. Millennials and Generation Z collaborate and enjoy brainstorming and sharing their knowledge with colleagues. Leaders should use their knowledge-sharing abilities to influence support for change with their colleagues; they can help explain the positive benefits of change, train other employees, and support others through change, as we will discuss in the next section, supporting stakeholders through change.

Table 2.6

Transition Phase of Change

Transition Phase	Description
Shock	Reaction during the initial announcement of the change. Leadership during this time should provide consistent and prompt information and find ways to involve stakeholders in decision-making.
Denial	Leaders should use active listening skills, as shown in Figure 2.3. The

	denial stage is an excellent time to increase communication by honoring timelines and communications critical to milestones to show evidence of change to help stakeholders face the realities of change. Taking earlier action during the denial stage is critical.
Depression	Leadership to provide a supportive environment for stakeholders and actively listen, as illustrated in Figure 2.4. Change leaders must find outlets for stakeholders to release their frustrations and fears. Leadership must develop strategies and opportunities to give them hope to move on.
Letting go	Leadership can facilitate and allow stakeholders to let go of the past. Bringing up positive aspects of change, such as opportunities, benefits, how they can influence change, and helping them envision a successful future at the organization.
Testing	This is a critical step because it gives them the opportunity and autonomy to be creative. Allow stakeholders time, space, and resources to test, encouraging creative thinking and risk-taking and giving stakeholders room to make mistakes.
Consolidation	It is an excellent time to evaluate stakeholders' performance, use that information for training and development, reward stakeholders, and create a knowledge-sharing environment. Displaying successes and wins throughout the organization is a great way to support stakeholders through change transitions.
Reflecting, learning, and internalization	Allow stakeholders to express their thoughts and experiences of the change using different formats of storytelling and open discussions.

Priyadarshi et al. (2019) assert that employees sharing their knowledge with their colleagues has a connection to improved productivity, competitiveness, innovation, and personal learning. When employees do not share, Priyadarshi et al. argue, it is associated with insecurity, the culture and structure of the organization, and individual personality traits. Cultivating good relationships with colleagues through continuous communication will create meaningful knowledge exchanges of skills, experiences, and expertise that will foster an organizational learning culture (Priyadarshi et al., 2019). Cummings (2014) (as cited in Priyadarshi et al., 2019) defines knowledge sharing as the provision or receipt of task information, know-how, and feedback about a product or procedure. Priyadarshi et al. hypothesize the relationship between those with high emotional intelligence, are politically astute in organizations, and are most likely to share knowledge. Creating a knowledge-sharing environment for Millennials and Generation

Z to thrive is essential in moving the workplace forward in the modern world. These skills will help other earlier generations support change. The following section, supporting stakeholders through change, highlights the importance of building a knowledge-sharing environment in the consolidation stage.

Supporting Stakeholders Through Change

Hayes (2018) explains a psychological reaction to change rooted in transition phases of awareness/shock, denial, depression, letting go, testing, consolidation, internalization, reflection, and learning. Hayes suggests leaders need to facilitate stakeholders through organizational changes during each transition phase, as outlined in Table 2.6

Skills shared in this section include communication, identifying gaps, strategic leadership, building relationships, motivating stakeholders, and knowledge sharing, which prepare leaders to help stakeholders through change. Table 2.6 is a non-biased roadmap outlining steps for change leaders to use to support stakeholders from any generation through change.

Table 2.7 summarizes the recommendations using existing strategies from the field of organizational change. They are intended to be a nonbiased approach to leading a multigenerational organization through change initiatives. Based on the findings from the literature review of how each generation approaches change and the lifespan theory consideration, the strategies were chosen because of their universal appeal, inclusivity, and empathy. Since miscommunications are common in workplaces, especially since five generations are working together, active listening skills, as shown in Figure 2.3, should be at the forefront when implementing any of the recommendations.

Table 2.7

Summary of Recommendations

Recommendation	Description
Identifying gaps using the McKinsey 7S model	The tool is used to identify gaps in organizations, such as communication misunderstandings.
Communication	Communication methods used active listening, communication channels, and communication strategies (e.g., spray and pray, tell and sell, underscore and explore, identifying and replying, and withhold and uphold)
Strategic leadership	Four leadership strategies (e.g., visionary, director, collaborative, and incubation) to use interchangeably in diverse organizations.
Building relationships	Building a network of people in organizations through developing personal awareness, emotional assessment, and personal leadership.
Motivating people	Motivate stakeholders to support change using intrinsic motivation and expectancy theory.
Knowledge sharing	Knowledge sharing is an essential component of supporting stakeholders through change.
Supporting stakeholders through change	There are multiple stages (e.g., shock, denial, depression, letting go, testing, consolidation, reflecting, learning, and internalizing) that stakeholders go through during change, and change leaders should identify the symptoms to support stakeholders through change.

Conclusion

Limitations

Limitations in the study suggest there needs to be more empirical research on how race, ethnicity, and gender play a role in the generations. Did historical events, such as the Jim Crow and Civil Rights movements, affect race and gender differently? In some writings, there are multiple inconsistencies in the start and end range for age groups, and the ranges were quite substantial, up to 9-year differences. The generational theory or perspective would be more meaningful if studies included culture, ethnicity, race, and age to determine people's natural personality traits. Using the generation scope only is too narrow of a lens that minimizes the complexities of age, societal influences, personality, and socioeconomic status factors to create a worldview. Combined with the generation perspective, the age perspective gives a broad and complicated look at individuals by the above factors (e.g., age, societal influences, etc.) Using only the generation perspective can allow bias to fester in organizations trying to improve relationships to drive change. For example, the generation theory is linked to negative stereotypes such as Traditionalists and Baby Boomers not being technically savvy or having a high regard for respectful communication, which can create resentment in later generations that could result in ageism in organizations.

Findings

Organizations are changing rapidly due to environmental, social, economic, and political reasons. New generations are taking over workspaces, imprinting how organizational change is received, supported, communicated, and delivered. The literature review revealed compelling revelations about the five generations that occupy the modern workplace. Generation Z is starting to influence organizational shifts by demanding alternative work locations such as work-from-home models and being able to work off-site. They also encourage organizations to

incorporate attractive new benefits packages with mental health insurance options.

Traditionalists are hanging on to their mere 5% spot of generational workspace occupants. Baby Boomers are retiring, and Generation X and Millennials have the highest numbers of employees. Millennials and Generation Z, although entrepreneurial and the most tech-savvy generations, surprisingly require consistent feedback and prefer collaborative and knowledge-sharing environments more than earlier generations. Traditionalists and Baby Boomers prefer well-defined structured organizations and have respect for the chain of command. At the same time, Generation X breaks their mode, wants more work-life balance and individual status recognition, and considers work part of their entire being. The literature review highlighted scholars who argue that the generation theory is narrow in scope in determining people's worldviews. Instead, we should consider the lifespan theory that hypothesis people's perspectives change as they age in their careers in organizations; thus, factoring in age, personal identity, and socioeconomic status gets us closer to closing the gap in determining personality. Using the lifespan theory with the generation theory minimizes stereotypes that could put an organization at risk of litigation. Organizational change requires all generations to leverage their insights and unique perspectives to increase the success rates of change initiatives. It is hard to remove negative stereotypes, and instead, this paper focuses on the positive sides of the generations and recommends non-biased strategies to support all generations through organizational change. The recommendations are existing strategies (e.g., leadership, motivation, knowledge) in the organizational change leadership and change management disciplines. The goal is to share strategies with change leaders to decrease stakeholder resistance to change initiatives and increase their success rates.

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