

Understanding Generations in the Workforce Today

Building stronger teams through multi-generational understanding and inclusive practices for Queensland trucking businesses



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The Reality Check: Your Workforce is Changing

What We're Seeing

The trucking industry is experiencing a significant generational shift. Baby Boomers, who've been the backbone of our industry, are retiring at unprecedented rates. Meanwhile, Millennials and Gen Z are entering the workforce with different expectations and values.

This isn't about one generation being "better" than another - it's about recognising that different generations bring different strengths to your business.

The Challenge

Many trucking businesses are struggling to attract younger drivers and trainees whilst retaining experienced workers. The old recruitment methods aren't working as effectively, and workplace tensions can arise from generational misunderstandings.

But here's the opportunity: businesses that successfully integrate multiple generations create stronger, more resilient teams.



Understanding the Generations in Trucking

Baby Boomers (1946-1964)

Key Characteristics: Loyal, disciplined, experienced, value job security and respect for authority.

Work Preferences: Traditional structures, clear hierarchies, direct communication, recognition for hard work.

Value to Trucking: Deep industry knowledge, mentorship, strong work ethic, reliability, hands-on problem-solving.

Generation X (1965-1980)

Key Characteristics: Independent, pragmatic, self-reliant, adaptable, value work-life balance.

Work Preferences: Autonomy, flexibility, results-oriented, informal communication, less rigid structures.

Value to Trucking: Adaptability to change, entrepreneurial spirit, efficient problem-solvers, bridge between generations.

Millennials (1981-1996)

Key Characteristics: Tech-savvy, collaborative, purpose-driven, desire growth and development, feedback-oriented.

Work Preferences: Flexible arrangements, team collaboration, learning opportunities, regular feedback, technology integration.

Value to Trucking: Digital literacy, innovation, collaborative solutions, focus on sustainability, early adopters of new tech.

Generation Z (1997-2012)

Key Characteristics: Digitally native, empathetic, socially conscious, independent, value authenticity and diversity.

Work Preferences: Flexibility and work-life balance, efficiency and access to technology and modern-tools, mental health support, purpose-driven work, ethical workplaces, diverse teams.

Value to Trucking: Advanced tech proficiency (AI, automation), fresh perspectives, strong focus on social responsibility, rapid learning of new systems.



Debunking the Myths About Younger Generations

Myth: "They Don't Want to Work Hard"

Reality: They want meaningful work with clear purpose. They're willing to work hard when they understand the "why" behind their tasks, how they're contributing to the bigger picture and see opportunities for growth and development.

Myth: "They're Always on Their Phones"

Reality: They're digital natives who use technology efficiently. This can be a massive advantage for your business - they adapt quickly to new systems and digital solutions.

Myth: "They Job Hop Constantly"

Reality: They stay when they feel valued and see career progression. They're actually looking for stability, just in different forms than previous generations. They're not scared to "make good" when you "call their bluff".



LIABILITIES AND ADVANTAGES

What Different Generations Want from Work

Boomers & Gen X Value

- Job security and stability
- Clear hierarchies and respect for experience
- Face-to-face communication
- Traditional benefits packages
- Recognition for years of service

Millennials & Gen Z Seek

- Career development and learning opportunities
- Flexible working arrangements where possible
- Purpose-driven work environment
- Regular feedback and recognition
- Modern equipment and technology

The key insight: **These wants aren't mutually exclusive.** A well-designed workplace can satisfy multiple generational preferences simultaneously.

Aligning Your Business Brand with Personal Values

Today's workers, especially younger generations, want their personal values to align with their employer's brand. This doesn't mean you need to change your core business - it means being clear about what you stand for.

1

Define Your Values Clearly

What does your company stand for beyond moving freight? Safety, reliability, community support, family business traditions? Be explicit about these values in your communications.

2

Show, Don't Just Tell

Demonstrate your values through actions - how you treat employees, your safety record, community involvement, environmental initiatives, or support for local causes.

3

Respect Different Perspectives

Create space for respectful discussion of different viewpoints whilst maintaining professional boundaries. Focus on shared workplace goals rather than divisive topics.

4

Navigate Social Media with Care

Recognise that personal social media activity can reflect on the business brand. Many younger candidates research potential employers online, and posts perceived as overly political or divisive can alienate them and damage your brand's appeal.

Encourage employees to separate personal opinions from their professional identity, especially when online. Develop clear guidelines for social media use that foster respect, maintain professional boundaries, and align with company values. The goal is to build an inclusive environment focused on shared business objectives, not personal political or social views.

Building an Inclusive Workplace Culture

01

Start with Language

Use inclusive language that welcomes all generations. Instead of "young gun" or "old-timer," try "new team member" or "experienced driver." Avoid generational stereotypes in job descriptions and workplace conversations.

02

Create Learning Opportunities

Establish reverse mentoring programmes where younger workers share tech skills whilst experienced drivers pass on industry knowledge. This builds mutual respect and understanding.

03

Flexible Communication

Offer multiple communication channels - some prefer phone calls, others text or email. Use a mix of face-to-face meetings, digital platforms, and written communications.

04

Recognise Different Motivators

Celebrate milestone anniversaries for long-term employees whilst also recognising innovation and fresh ideas from newer team members. Both contributions are valuable.

Crafting Job Ads for all Generations

Essential Elements to Include

- **Clear career progression paths:** Show how someone can advance from trainee to senior driver to trainer or supervisor
- **Comprehensive benefits:** List both traditional benefits (health insurance, superannuation) and modern perks (flexible scheduling, training opportunities)
- **Modern equipment:** Highlight new trucks, GPS systems, and safety technology
- **Company culture:** Describe your team environment, values, and what makes working there special
- **Training and support:** Emphasise mentorship programmes and ongoing professional development

Where to Advertise

- Traditional job boards and newspapers
- Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram)
- Industry-specific websites
- TAFE and training provider partnerships
- Employee referral programs





Digital Outreach

1

Social Media Presence

Share behind-the-scenes content showing real drivers in action. Post about company achievements, safety milestones, and employee spotlights. Authenticity beats perfection.

2

Employee Stories

Let your current employees tell their stories - both experienced drivers and recent hires. These testimonials are powerful recruitment tools that show career satisfaction.

3

Video Content

Short videos of a day in the life, truck tours, or safety demonstrations perform well. They don't need Hollywood production values - smartphone footage works fine.

4

Respond and Engage

Actually reply to comments and messages promptly. This shows you value communication and are approachable - important qualities for potential employees.

Your Action Plan for Multi-Generational Success

1 Audit Your Current Practices

Review your job advertisements, workplace policies, and communication methods. Identify areas where you might be inadvertently excluding certain generations.

2 Start Small, Think Big

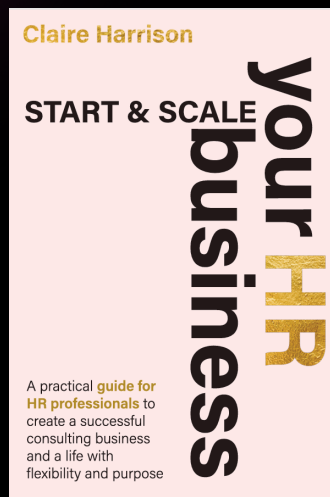
Choose one or two initiatives to implement first—perhaps updating your job ads or creating a mentorship programme. Build success gradually rather than overwhelming yourself.

3 Measure and Adjust

Track your recruitment success, employee retention rates, and workplace satisfaction. What's working? What needs tweaking? Continuous improvement is key.

Remember: This isn't about completely changing who you are as a business owner. It's about understanding your workforce better and making small adjustments that create big improvements in recruitment, retention, and workplace harmony. Every generation brings value to your trucking business - the goal is helping them work together successfully.

How Harrisons Can Help...



Recruitment & Employer Branding

Support with recruitment campaigns designed to attract Millennials and Gen Z through digital outreach, social media, and authentic employer storytelling.

Position trucking businesses as employers of choice for skilled, multi-generational candidates.

Training & Development

Provide leadership and management training to equip supervisors with tools to engage diverse teams.

Offer generational-awareness workshops to foster understanding across age groups and reduce workplace friction.

Deliver upskilling programs that prepare mature-aged workers to adapt to digital tools and processes.

Organisational Culture & Change Management

Facilitate cultural assessments to identify gaps in inclusion and collaboration.

Design change programs that ensure smooth adoption of new technologies and processes across generations.

Support leadership teams to build a resilient, future-ready culture.

Start a Workforce Planning conversation

QTA's Industry Workforce Advisor for Transport and Logistics provides the transport and logistics sector with a wide range of **workforce** planning advice and accessibility to support services.

Workforce planning can be successful without being complicated. Get in Touch today for a conversation.



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