

BCS 114

Understanding and Communicating with Today's Leaders



Time allotted	50 minutes
Teaching format	Instructor-led discussion with PowerPoint support, Activity

Resources

Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BCS 114 - Engaging Millennial Parents in Scouting – 1 per person• BCS 114 - Welcoming Millennial Parents- New Member Coordinator – 1 per person
Equipment and materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• BCS 114 – Understanding and Communicating with Today's Leaders course plan• BCS 114 - Understanding and Communicating with Today's Leaders PowerPoint presentation• BCS 114 - Generational Icebreaker Activity document (instructor reference material)• BCS 114 - More Diverse Population document (instructor reference material)• Computer and projector• Whiteboard or flipchart, appropriate markers and eraser
Resources for additional participant learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Course Connections

Connections to other CCS courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DCS 514 – Building Meaningful Relationships• CED 720 – A Commissioner's Introduction to Valuing Diversity
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Presentation Outline

Introduction and Course Objectives – 2 minutes

We, as commissioners, need to understand the differences in relating to the generations involved in scouting and inclusiveness. This course encourages understanding between the different generations – particularly Generation X and Millennials – to help commissioners better communicate with their units.

Introduce the learning objectives, noting that by the end of this session, each participant should...

- **Identify** the characteristics of generations within Scouting's leaders.
- **Understand** the differences in relating to generations involved in scouting
- **Embrace** the differences and similarities to make the scouting program stronger.

The Generations – 20 minutes (including 10-minute activity) (slides 3-9)

While obviously not every “Mature” – combination of Greatest and Silent Generations, “Baby Boomer”, “Gen Xer”, Millennial” or “Gen Z” may fit within their generational stereotype, taking note of generational diversity is still important, especially since intergenerational conflict in Scouting may keep planning, programs and activities from moving forward.

Every generation is influenced by its period's economic, political, and social events--from the Great Depression to the civil rights and women's movements to the advent of television and advanced computer technologies. Looking at historical events, and social and demographic changes, the generations are usually defined by these ages – give or take a year or so. These defined generations are very “generalized”. Generation-shaping trends are most influential as people come of age, which means that members of a particular generation will develop and share similar values, beliefs, and expectations.

It is important to remember that at an individual level, everyone is different. But looking at people through a generational lens offers useful predictability for those trying to reach, inform, or persuade a large cross section of a population.

- **The Matures** – this now combines:
 - The Greatest Generation (those born before 1925) – “saved the world” - fought and won WWII.
 - The Silent Generation (born 1925-1945) - children of the great depression and WWII – Silent refers to their conformist and civic instincts – and the contrast with the noisy Boomers.

- **The Baby Boomers** (born 1946-1964) - their name refers to the spike in fertility that began in 1946 – right after WWII – ended abruptly in 1964 – around the time the birth control pill went on the market. ***Gen Xers and Millennials are mostly the children of baby boomers and the focus of this course.***
- **Generation X** (born 1965-1980) - are often depicted as savvy, entrepreneurial loners.
- **The Millennials** (born 1981-1996) or (Gen Y born 1981-1994) – these terms used interchangeably - the generation to come of age in the new Millennium. They are very different from the Gen Xers. In fact, many researchers say they are most like the Matures / Silent Generation and they have an affinity with them as well.
- **The Post Millennials** (Gen Z) – born after 1997 - post-Millennials are growing up in more affluent circumstances than previous generations did. They are always multi-tasking and have developed short attention spans. They may *seem* not to have time for serious stuff at school and at work, but experts presume they are very much goal-oriented and pragmatic.

***Note** – Data sources may define generation year charts differently by a few years.

Let's Get to Know Each Other - Activity and Instructor Led Discussion – 10 minutes

This exercise is designed to encourage discussion about generational differences and commonalities. The exercise can be conducted with the whole group or with a larger group divided into several smaller groups.

Instructor – Use BCS 114 – Generational Icebreaker Activity- as resource for the guided discussion.

Ask each participant: What's your middle name and why did your parents give it to you? Have participants form pairs, small teams, or one large circle to discuss their answers.

Then, lead a guided discussion beginning with observations and continue with the questions provided - as time allows. A lot of the questions may be asked as a "poll" or just take a few answers for each question – to get a feel for the group.

For virtual presentation, consider the following:

Use the chat line. Ask the question, ask students to race to answer the question. Ask the facilitator to tell you who answered first. Then, either call on that person or ask the facilitator to provide the answer. You can ask the person why he/she gave that answer. The game becomes the race to answer the questions first.

Instructor note: Slides 5-9 are informational graphs – go thru quickly

Slide 5 – Generational Composition

U.S. Population 2020: Looking at the generations today – 20% are Gen Xers and 25% are Millennials. That's 45% of our population and these are the parents of our scout-aged youth.

Knoema 2020 – US Population by Age and Generation in 2020

Slide 6 – More Diverse Population

This statistic shows the distribution of race and ethnicity of the United States population in 2018, by generation. One important characteristic of this new generation – they are more diverse. You can see that this younger generation has a growing representation in cultures that are not traditionally BSA members. This trend will continue. The percentage of the white/European heritage population is shrinking, caused by new immigrants and more racial blending. See chart – Gen Z and younger show their ethnicity as two or more races.

Statistica 2020 - Percentage chart in Course Plan materials (for instructor reference)

Slide 7 – Volunteering Demographics

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics about 1 in 4 Americans volunteered through an organization and nearly two-thirds helped their neighbors last year, demonstrating that service to others continues to be a priority for millions despite the slight drop in numbers. But there are some bright spots and generational surprises buried in those stats. It turns out that one generation is volunteering more than they ever have.

So, who volunteers/contributes the most? Generation X (those born between 1965 to 1980) leads volunteering among generations in the United States.

Data source: AmeriCorp - Volunteering in America 2018-updated 9/28/2020

data.nationalservice.gov/Volunteering-and-Civic-Engagement/Volunteering-in-America

Slide 8 – Volunteering Demographics

Look at these numbers this way:

- Gen Y (Millennials) may not be able to contribute financially – but they are very willing to give time to neighbors and volunteering in general - and BSA needs their time!
- Gen Xers have more financial resources and are more likely to do something personal for a neighbor
- Boomers have more time to give and may be able to contribute more financially but might not be able to do something for their neighborhood
- Matures may have similar circumstances as Boomers financially and for their neighbors but due to aging and health may not be able to physically contribute to their neighborhood or volunteer as actively

These generations were raised with an expectation of volunteerism – community service was even required in some schools – and it weighs heavily on college applications.

Data source: AmeriCorp - Volunteering in America 2018-updated 9/28/2020

Slide 9 – Organization to Support

When choosing an organization to support

- 58% consider the organization's cause

- 38% consider its mission

- 3% consider the history of the organization

Clearly, Millennials don't care if the BSA has been around 100 years (they will grow to care after they join).

The BSA is more of a mission-driven organization than a cause. One challenge will be to get the parents to see Scouting as a **cause** to build their child into a competent, contributing member of society. (Examples of causes: donating/helping people after a natural disaster or participating in a 10K run or other event to raise money for research for a cure.)

By the way - This will be a challenge inside the BSA, too - as the percentage of our Millennial employees grows. Older generations have had a loyalty and commitment to the mission of their employers, that Millennials do not have.

Source: Volunteerism and Charitable Giving among the Millennial Generation, Kennesaw State University

Generation X and Millennials – 15 minutes (slides 10-18)

This course is centered mostly around Generation X and Millennials. Millennials were born after 1980; Gen Xers after 1965. They are beginning to have an effect throughout our society and they are (or soon will be) the parents of our new Cub Scouts and are our new volunteers.

As commissioners we need to look at the characteristics of the Gen Xers and Millennials, how we can understand the environment they were raised in and the challenges they are facing today. This will help us when communicating with the leaders in our units and also recruiting for our new and younger commissioner staff.

Understanding is the key here. We can foster a consensus model in which all players work in concert with each other for the common goals of scouting or foster the conflict model in which we work against other components, which is of course counterproductive. In essence, it is either a "we-they" or an "us gratification". Exclusive vs. inclusive? The choice is apparent for the success of Scouting.

- Both groups want their children involved in extra-curricular/after school programs and want to be involved themselves.

- These two generational groups and beyond represent our multicultural diversity target for recruitment into Scouting.

(BSA Study, 2006-2010)

How can we connect with Millennials (and Gen Xers too)?

So, you're ready to engage Millennials and Gen Xers. Here are a few things to keep in mind when approaching for these audiences:

- **Ask for more than money.** Share our cause. They will sign up and volunteer their time for fundraising, crowdfunding or fieldwork. Value the whole interaction with young donors. This prepares them (and you) for long-term relationships that run much deeper than a single donation.
- **Tell stories.** The space is crowded. Everyone receives millions of messages each week. Telling our story will motivate them more than facts. Rather than saying how *many* people are affected by something, show *how* someone has been affected and benefited from the work you are doing. Personalize it.
- **Keep it simple.** Our cause should be tweetable and repeatable. Avoid overcomplicating your message and stick to the high points. What is our goal? Say that.
- **Communicate urgency.** The first thing potential donors ask is: Why does this matter to me now? Getting urgency across in our message is essential. Show them where their time and money will go right now. What kind of impact will they make?

There has been so much said and written about millennial entitlement and apathy. But millennials are the furthest thing from a passive audience. In fact, it's their very obsession with progress that the philanthropic community has been waiting for. They are a generation of people who believe life can and should be better: the impact generation.

With regard to Gen Xers, education makes up almost 39 percent of this group's volunteer work. This is likely due to the fact that many have school-age children. Gen-X parents see this as a way to be involved in their children's education while helping out a good cause. Since BSA is focused on youth we have a good chance of attracting this group. When possible, use the school system as a way to get the word out about opportunities. It may also be a good idea to have events at school facilities and/or perhaps even organize events aimed at volunteering as a family.

Characteristics of Millennials

Let's look at the characteristics of Millennials. Of course, everyone is an individual and many, many elements affect "who" each person becomes as an adult. And I'm sure you see that characteristics cross generations.

That said, the research often narrows down to seven characteristics that differentiate the Millennials from previous generations.

- **Special** – You may be old enough to remember all the hype in 1982 – when the class of 2000 was born - older generations have instilled in Millennials the sense that they are, individually and collectively, vital to both the nation and their families – the 1980's

brought a new emphasis on family values – general image of childhood became more positive in their culture. With all this, they are also respectful of elders.

- **Sheltered** – Child protection became a social priority, bullying became an issue, school shootings became notable. Millennials are not necessarily risk-takers; they have been coddled by parents. Their helicopter parents hover over them into college and into the corporate world. Slower to adulthood.
- **Confident** – Personally happy and excited about their future, they have faith that their generation can make the world a better place. They are empowered by digital technology and are confident in their economic futures despite coming of age in bad times.
- **Team-oriented** – Strong team instincts, tight peer bonds, upswings in community service, student juries, 24/7 peer-to-peer contact.
- **Conventional** – Creativity and originality are less important to them than prior generations, but they know how many pop-songs, movies, even TV show remakes were produced lately.
- **Achieving** – Standardized testing with increasingly higher standards – good or bad. Competitiveness is a factor in this element. They are averse to conflict.
- **Pressured** – This special “trophy kid” was pressured to excel, with expectation of higher academic achievements, with specialization of athletics, club teams to keep up for the next season, required private music lessons to stay in the orchestra. They grew up with little unstructured time.

Be sure to be open and honest – Don’t bait and switch, promising an easy job that turns out to take much more time or effort than they expected. Be realistic when discussing time commitment. The “it’s only one hour a week” comment does not work and develops mistrust from the onset.

Millennial Parents

- One of the largest and most diverse generations in history
- Single parents – 26% are married versus their Baby Boomer parents at 48%
- Very tech-savvy
- There is no values gap between Millennials and their children. You will find them:
 - Buying same clothes
 - Sharing iTunes and Spotify playlists
 - Watching the same movies

Characteristics of Generation X

Let’s look at the characteristics of Generation X. This overlooked generation spans only 16 years which may be one reason they’re so often missing from stories about demographic, social and political change. They’re smack in the middle innings of life, which tend to be short on drama and scant of theme.

But there are other explanations that have nothing to do with their stage of the life cycle. Gen Xers are bookended by two much larger generations – the Baby Boomers ahead and the

Millennials behind – that are strikingly different from one another. And in most of the ways we take stock of generations – their racial and ethnic makeup; their political, social and religious values; their economic and educational circumstances; their technology usage. Gen Xers are a low-slung, straight-line bridge between two noisy behemoths.

Gen Xers have also gotten the short end of basic generational arithmetic. Due partly to their parents' relatively low fertility rates, there are fewer of them (65 million) than Boomers (77 million) or Millennials (an estimated 83 million assuming a roughly 20-year age span and including those who have yet to reach adulthood).

But there's another reason that Xers are a small generation: Most generations are credited with lasting for about 20 years. How come? No one really knows. Generational boundaries are fuzzy, arbitrary and culture-driven.

For Gen Xers, there's one silver lining in all this. From everything we know about them, they're savvy, skeptical and self-reliant; they're not into preening or pampering, and they just might not give much of a hoot what others think of them. Or whether others think of them at all.

Generation X is known as the "latch-key" generation, due to the fact that they often took care of themselves after school while their parents worked long hours. Thus, the group as a whole is known to be very independent. Remember this when recruiting and assigning duties. These folks are likely to be resistant to micro-management. In our recruiting materials, we should highlight how Gen-X volunteers can help our cause in their own "hassle-free" way. We need to convince them that our organization is reliable and will simplify rather than complicate their lives.

Gen Xers as Volunteers

Types of organizations Gen Xers volunteer for include:

- Education or youth service
- Religious
- Social or community service

BSA is all of the above. We need to let them know that!

Types of volunteer work most commonly performed by Gen Xers:

- Fund-raising or selling something to raise money
- Collecting, preparing, or serving food
- Tutoring or teaching
- Transportation/general labor
- Mentoring youth

BSA includes all of these volunteering opportunities. We need to let them know that too!

Because of the way this generation has been raised and its job patterns, Gen Xers look for what is in it for them. They want to see a direct return on their investment of time and money.

And that's ok...BSA just needs to let them know what the Gen Xers direct return is...an investment in their child's future.

Where Do We Find Today's Leaders? – 10 minutes (slides 19-25)

Parents of New Cub Scouts

So, where can we find these parents, volunteers, and new Cub Scouts that the BSA needs in this second century of Scouting?

In the past, most of our chartering orgs fall into three categories:

- Public schools – we know this access is challenging for many councils
- Civic organizations
- Faith-based organizations

But this is not where we will find Millennials.

Civic Organizations

Most civic organizations are not growing. In fact, most no longer post their membership numbers publicly. For example, Lions, Optimist, American Legion, VFW, Kiwanis, Moose, Elks, and Rotary. But YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs - these are the organizations that have chartered the largest number of BSA youth members in previous years.

Only YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs have shown growth in their own membership in the past few years. These two organizations should be targets for new chartering organizations.

Faith-based Organizations

The decline in membership of the faith-based organizations is not surprising considering that overall, today, among adults ages 25-35:

- 25% have no religious affiliation
- 22% identify with non-denominational churches
- 8% identify as other religions
- 55% of Millennials are not in our largest traditional markets

This doesn't mean they don't believe – 64% of Millennials - Say they have an “Absolutely certain belief in God” (compared to 73% of those over 35) and they pray about as often as their elders did in their own youth.

So, if they aren't in our traditional markets - Where **can** we find these parents?

- On their social networks - They don't need to join organizations; their social life is at their fingertips (or thumb tips) but they do get involved in their communities often through service projects – and supporting causes.

- Millennials say their main sources for news are from television (65%) and the Internet (59%). They communicate through technology - Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, texting, or tweeting – they are **never** without their smart phones.

To keep up – to even be noticed by this new generation – councils and districts will need to become **more involved in their communities** – and will **have** to learn to communicate through technology.

Don't Forget...

So, we want to appeal to the parents and to the youth – But don't forget the grandparents.

- These are the parents who raised this Millennial generation – and they don't stop parenting when their kids become adults.
 - **AND** these grandparents are still involved with our traditional chartering orgs.
- They are more likely to have been Scouts than their Millennial children.
 - **AND** they have more time to get involved in their grandkids' lives.

Connecting with the grandparents of Cub Scout-age youth can help councils in their efforts to recruit youth and volunteers.

Grandparents of New Cub Scouts:

These are the parents of Millennials – they are the “helicopter parents” we hear so much about. The rise of helicopter parenting coincided with two social shifts.

- first was the comparatively booming economy of the 1990s, with low unemployment and higher disposable income.
- second was the public perception of increased child endangerment. Helicopter parents attempt to "ensure their children are on a path to success by paving it for them."

Have you noticed the commercials lately, even the military recruiting ads appeal to both the Millennials and their parents? Employers see parents getting involved in the interviewing process when Millennials are applying for jobs.

Well-known companies are even creating “Parent Days” where job candidates can bring their parents to tour the company's work environment, meet their potential managers, etc.

- **And**, unlike the previous generations, they get along well with their parents. They respect and seek their parent's opinions.
- **And now**, hard times have kept a significant portion of adult Millennials and their parents under the same roof. About one-in-eight Millennials over 22 years old say they've “boomeranged” back into a parent's home because of the economy.

So – does this new generation **want** their kids involved in Scouting? Yes – But they might not know it. Our research shows that Scouting provides what kids want and what parents want for their kids– across cultures and generations.

Recognizing the recent years of declining BSA membership, we know that fewer of the Millennials were in Scouting as kids. We also know that Scouting hasn't been a tradition across all cultures in the U.S.

Millennials are confident, connected, and open to change.

We need to show these parents why their child should be in Scouting. They want to be good parents and we need to be ready to answer their question, “How does Scouting fit into the broader architecture of my life?”

Summary/Conclusion – 1 minute

- There are several generations active as leaders in Scouting.
- All in all, it's important to know, understand and embrace the differences in each generation. Each generation has value that can help grow our program in this second century of Scouting. It is also essential to understand how our communities are changing and include as many youth and parents in as many markets as possible.
- Scouting in the 21st century must be inclusive and must reflect the demographics of our communities.

Questions? – 2 minutes