

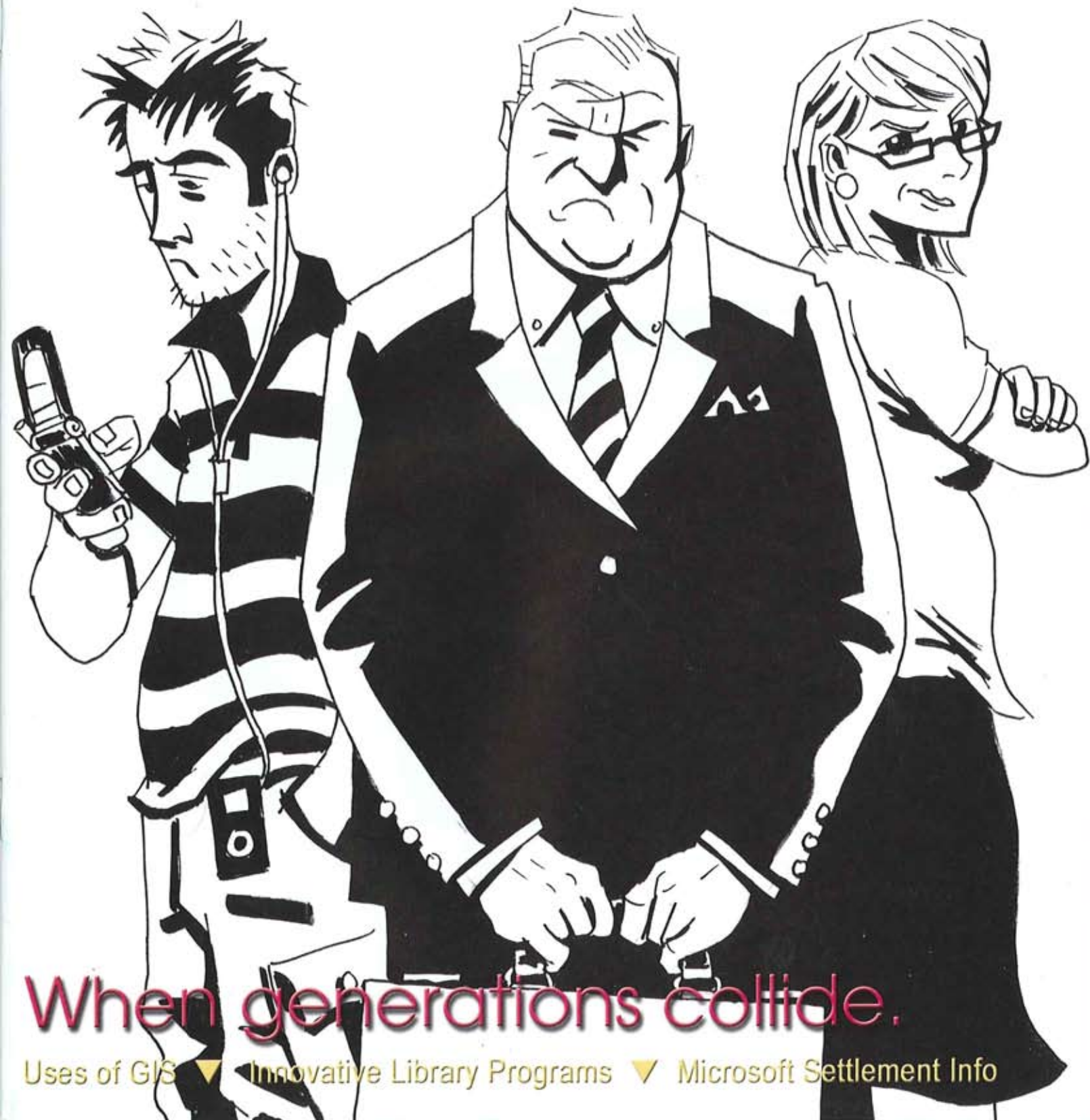


VISIONS FOR LOCAL LEADERSHIP IN IOWA

AUGUST 2007



CITYSCAPE



When generations collide.

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Meet the Players

Baby Boomers - Born 1946 to 1964 Average Age: **50**
Current Workforce: 80 million

Frequent traits of this generation:

- Believe that more experience brings rewards.
- Hard to balance life and work.
- Key word: optimistic
- Competitive in the workplace.
- Desire continued career advancement and challenge.
- Work to contribute to society and help people.
- Salary, status & title.

Familiar faces: Martin Luther King, Jr.; Beaver Cleaver; Richard Nixon; Captain Kirk; Gloria Steinem; the Beatles; and John McEnroe.



Generation X - Born 1965 to 1980 Average Age: **32**
Current Workforce: 46 million

Frequent traits of this generation:

- Want a voice in what's going on.
- Want autonomy - less direction.
- Key word: skepticism
- Want praise and rewards; require much more motivation.
- Unimpressed with authority; rely on themselves and skill.
- Want flexibility and fewer regulations in expression & dress.
- Resourceful and independent.

Familiar faces: The Brat Pack, Tom Cruise, Barack Obama, Quentin Tarantino, the cast of *Friends*, Beavis and Butt-head, Janet Jackson, and Snoop Dogg.



Generation Y - Born 1981 to 1999 Average Age: **24**
Potential Workforce: 76 million

Frequent traits of this generation:

- Appreciation of diversity.
- Key word: realistic
- Determined in their work ethic.
- Want to contribute & collaborate.
- Polite in their view of authority; will follow leadership by teamwork.
- Tend to put more focus on family/personal life vs. work.
- Want training, coaching and mentoring at work.

Familiar faces: Prince William, Chelsea Clinton, Tinky Winky, Leonardo DiCaprio, Backstreet Boys, Cartman, and the Williams sisters.



When generations collide, can they learn to work together?

"When people learn to balance and ride a bike, it becomes so easy that they never have to think about it again. But what happens when you have several people attempting to ride the same bike? Balancing becomes a lot more difficult. Probably one of the biggest obstacles in achieving balance in today's workplace is that we have several generations not only wanting balance, but coming at it from different directions and colliding."

When Generation Collide, Lancaster & Stillman

by Betsy Knoblock, Communications Coordinator

Although the generations have always clashed, the differences among them now is much more prevalent than ever before. Each generation brings their own set of values, life experiences and ideas to the table, which can quickly cause conflict in the workplace or when trying to build a strong team. More often than not, cities often run into this issue with the six faces that sit around the council table. This tension can make things difficult to get accomplished if the participants aren't able to get past their natural differences.

Currently, there are four distinctive groups in the workplace. Those dubbed "Traditionalists" were born between 1900 and 1945. Most are close to or have reached retirement, therefore this group is less than 15% of the current working population. The main focus the generational collide is the three generations born after 1946. The "Baby Boomers" were born between 1946 and 1964; they account for 80 million workers and over 47% of government position alone. After that, "Generation X" came along, born between 1965 and 1980; they are only 46 million strong, but bucking the system every step of the way. The most recent workers to arrive in the professional world are "Generation Y." They were born between 1981 and 1999; their sheer size will someday rival the Boomers (at 76 million), but they are just starting to enter the workforce.

Many of the generational differences that currently exist are simply because of the environment in which they were raised in. The events and the culture happening during their formative years gives each generation the conditions they have built their personality on. To add to the conflict, co-workers from different eras are also likely to be at different stages of life, often not with the same priorities in mind. It is possible to devise intergenerational strategies in order for everyone to be motivated and succeed - the key is to understand the differences and embrace the strengths each person brings to the table.

Understand the differences

If an Xer asks for flexible hours, a Boomer might be likely to question their loyalty to the organization. The Xer has the point of view to "work to live" instead of Boomer's perspective of "live to work." From the Boomer's work history, there were millions of other people competing for the same job; they had to set themselves apart from the crowd and continue to show their worth. If these two parties can realize each thrives in the workplace because of their perspective, they are more likely to build a stronger working relationship.

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the feedback, but they also want continued coaching or mentoring in order to continue developing their skills.

Learn to try new things and new ways

For younger workers, they want to be a part of the development process instead of being told how "it has always been done." Teamwork and collaboration is important to them. If a new project or process is being determined, try to include the different perspectives within the office in the discussion. Explore new ways to provide existing services and programs. In addition, include some flexibility in completing the work through various levels of participation and time commitment. It is also important to make sure the proper training is included for all participants, even if that means reviewing how things have been done in the past. Once the process has been completed, make sure it is evaluated on a regular basis. Review is especially important because technology and the organization's talent can change frequently.

Don't let age determine your opinion

Like any environment, preconceived notions and stereotypes exist; they often arise from resentment from misunderstanding and the workplace is a volatile place where each person is competing to be heard. The most important thing to remember is that no one is right or wrong, they are just different. Learn to understand each person's perspective and experiences. The generational traits can only try to provide some insight into how each one ticks, it will take action from everyone to keep the peace and begin learning from one another.

Resources: *When Generations Collide*, by Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman, HarperCollins, © 2002. *Bridging the Generation Gap*, by Linda Gravett, PhD and Robin Throckmorton, M.A., Career Press, © 2007.

New legislative focus on youth

During the 2007 legislative session of the 82nd Iowa General Assembly the issue of Iowa's ability to attract and also retain young adults in the state was addressed in a practical and inspiring way. House File 617 creates a Generation Iowa Commission established within the Iowa Department of Economic Development for the purposes of keeping more young adults working and living in Iowa. The bill was drafted by four legislators' elected last fall that are under the age of thirty and felt that this issue was vital for Iowa's future and should not be ignored. The bill was signed April 5, 2007 by Governor Chet Culver.

The Commission will consist of fifteen voting members that are appointed by the governor. Each appointee shall be at least eighteen years of age and less than thirty-five. Selected members will also fulfill requirements to create diversity among the group including variety in geography, education and areas of employment. The Governor's office received over 250 applications for the Commission, more than any other board or commission. Among the fifteen voting members will also be four non-voting members chosen from the General Assembly.

Beginning in January 2008, the commission will submit a written report to the governor and the General Assembly that includes the findings and recommendations of the commission regarding the status of their efforts. They will also develop a best practice guideline for employers on how to attract and keep young adults as employers.

