



# Security Spotlight

## An Informational Guide for Securitas Clients

### Know your generations

Understanding the different generations currently in the workforce can help you recognize different communication styles and be prepared to close communication gaps. Some companies may employ or serve as many as six generations:

- Traditionalists (born circa 1924–1943)
- Baby Boomers (1944–1964)
- Generation X (1965–1975)
- Generation Y (1976–1985)
- Millennials (1986–1994)
- Gen Z (1995–2005)



### Intergenerational communications

More than ever, businesses are committing to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and providing a welcoming environment for their employees, clients, and surrounding communities. While companies have made great strides accepting people regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual identity, a commitment to DEI also addresses less visible obstacles, such as communications gaps between members of different generations. Most companies have a diverse employee base and may encounter an even wider array of diversity through their customers

and business partners, making effective communications skills and being sensitive to how a person's differences might influence their interactions especially important.

### Avoid unconscious bias

Generational differences can result from having different experiences. For example, workers who started their career in a time of economic prosperity may see things differently than those who began during a recession. The relative ease they may have had securing employment and meeting basic needs in good times could contrast directly with those who struggled to find stable employment.





### Common ground, different styles

Despite the unconscious bias some may hold, there are cross-generational commonalities. According to the Center for Creative Leadership, similar values are held across the generations, with “family” the most chosen value by people of all generations. Other shared values include integrity, self-respect, love, and happiness.

Another contributor to inter-generational miscommunications is the preferred primary communication style of each. In general, Traditionalists prefer face-to-face contact, while Baby Boomers often rely on the telephone, and the most recent entrants to the workforce often gravitate to texting and social media. These differences in style are relevant because they highlight the potential for disconnect between different age groups. Individuals that rely on in-person or telephone communications are used to more listening and explaining in their exchanges while those who prefer to text and use social media rely on quick, brief exchanges.

As a result, people who entered the workforce in a down economy might be tempted to perceive others as spoiled or entitled simply because they entered the workforce under different economic conditions. Said another way, some people may hold an unconscious bias toward others from different generations.

Unconscious bias is a kind of stereotyping. Some examples of this in the workplace include describing Millennials as “slackers” or Baby Boomers as “hippies.” These are generalizations and stereotypes. Not every older employee is afraid of technology, and not every younger employee is a computer whiz.

### Closing the communications gap

One strategy to help minimize miscommunications is the “5 Cs of Effective Communication”—Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete, and Considerate.

**Clear:** Make sure that what you’re saying cannot be misinterpreted in any way. For example, common texting abbreviations like “LMK” (let me know), “RN” (right now), or “IDK” (I don’t know) should never be used in business communications. Also, avoid slang terms with which members of other generations may not be familiar.

**Concise:** Stick to the point and make it brief. Someone who grew up without

today’s real-time communication devices may want to over-explain things. Relay relevant details simply to help avoid misunderstandings and facilitate timely action.

**Correct:** Possibly the most important C. Inaccurate information can undermine the whole communication process. Regardless of what generation you are from, it is important to accurately pass along all information pertinent to the matter being addressed.

**Complete:** With a complete message, your audience has everything they need to be informed and, if necessary, act. At the same time, it’s important to read written communications thoroughly to ensure a full understanding what’s being communicated.

**Considerate:** Effective communication is based on respect. Regardless of age, color, culture, or ability, it is always important to be considerate and respectful of others.

Effective communication is a valuable skill. Remember that people from different generations may express themselves differently from you, so always be aware of potential communications gaps. And, no matter who you are communicating with, always remember the “5 Cs”—Clear, Concise, Correct, Complete and Considerate.

