

How to Train Five Generations of Employees on New Technology

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For the first time ever, there are five generations in the workplace: traditionalists, baby boomers, Generation X, millennials, and Generation Z. With traditionalists born as early as 1925 and Gen Z born in the early 2000s and after, today's employees have a broad range of experience, knowledge, and skills.

Helping different generations work together is challenging — especially when using technology. Whereas earlier generations have seen computer technology evolve drastically, Gen Z has never known a world without smart devices.

To get the most value from your systems, an effective training program is key. According to Pew Research, millennials are the largest age group in the U.S. workforce, so it makes sense to gear your training toward them. That said, training should be relevant to employees of all ages.

Take the time to research these five generations and follow the tips below to help your employees use technology to meet your multifamily community's goals.

BE FLEXIBLE

Consider offering multiple training times and formats, allowing employees to choose what works best for them. For example, traditionalists prefer a structured learning environment, Gen X prefers self-directed learning, and Gen Z expects video.

When planning a training session including people of various ages and technical skill levels, create an agenda and stick to it. If certain employees need additional training or have questions most other employees already know the answer to, set up a separate time to meet with those team members.

NEVER STOP

The multifamily industry's employee turnover rate has hovered around 30 percent since 2011. This means you'll be frequently training new employees, so an efficient training process is a must.

It's also important to never stop training existing employees. Offer training whenever you implement a new technology and schedule refreshers periodically. In certain situations, like when employees are repeatedly breaking policies or residents are complaining about customer service, ad hoc training may be necessary.

COMMUNICATE

Regardless of an employee's age, they won't meet your goals if you don't communicate. Explain the why behind the technology, tailoring as needed for specific generations.

For example, millennials need to feel like they're making a

difference in their community. If you're implementing an electronic key control system, explain that learning how to use it properly will help protect residents. Or if you're installing a new work order system, describe to Gen Xers how the technology will help them be more productive.

Make sure your team understands what's being asked of them, and provide feedback on how they're performing. A quick text with a GIF works fine for Gen Z, whereas traditionalists prefer a handwritten note.

ENGAGE YOUR PARTNERS

When choosing a new technology partner, look for one that offers multiple training formats to appeal to different age groups. Traditionalists and baby boomers, for example, prefer structured learning environments. For them, in-person or live video training is most effective.

Gen X, millennials, and Gen Z, on the other hand, like to learn independently. They do best tinkering with a system, reading written tutorials, or watching prerecorded videos. Customized live training sessions work well too — as long as they're to the point and at a time that's convenient.

It's true that different generations learn differently, but an effective training program will improve anyone's job performance, no matter how old they are. Whether your employees have been in the workforce for decades or are just getting started, technology training will empower them to work together to meet your community's goals.

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