

The Generational Edge: How Diverse Legal Teams Better Serve Clients

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In today's legal landscape, multi-generational teams are not just common – they are a source of strength. For the first time in history, the United States workforce is made up of four generations: Baby Boomers (1946 – 1964), Generation X (1965 – 1980), Millennials (1981 – 1996), and Gen Z (1997 – 2010). In the legal field, where collaboration, judgment, and communication are critical, this generational diversity is reshaping how law is practiced and how clients are served.

Within the workforce, Baby Boomers represent 25 percent, Gen X accounts for 33 percent, Millennials make up 35 percent, and Gen Z accounts for the remaining 7 percent. This generational diversity is reflected in law firms, in-house legal departments, and courts. Although a workforce composed of four generations presents a unique set of challenges, it also brings many advantages that can be utilized to provide superior client service and work product. The central theme is clear: multi-generational legal teams are uniquely equipped to better serve clients. Attorneys of different generations bring distinct skill sets, perspectives, and experiences that, when combined, result in smarter strategies, more effective communication, and ultimately better legal outcomes.

Take, for example, how attorneys craft a trial plan or litigation narrative. A diverse team is better able to anticipate how a multi-generational jury might perceive evidence, arguments, and even the tone of delivery. More experienced attorneys may bring a deeper understanding of jury behavior developed over decades, while younger team members may contribute insights into current media consumption patterns or cultural trends that influence jury perception.

The same is true in the complex and high-stakes world of transactional and corporate law. Corporate attorneys from older generations offer decades of experience in navigating economic cycles, negotiating complex deals, and conducting thorough risk assessments. While younger attorneys may not yet possess the same depth of experience that many corporate clients value, they contribute strengths of their own, such as technological fluency, fresh perspectives, and adaptability. Together, these complementary skill sets enable multi-generational transactional legal teams to deliver more effective service and higher-quality work for their clients.

Younger generations, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, tend to be more comfortable with technology, social media, and evolving client expectations. This is largely due to their upbringing in a rapidly advancing world, causing them to rarely bat an eye when circumstances change. They are also often able to streamline workflows through modern communication platforms, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, and digital case management systems. Becoming proficient in these tools requires initial practice, but once mastered, they can be utilized to produce the same quality work product in less time. What younger workers lack in experience and matured perspective, they make up for by being able to deliver more for less. Meanwhile, older generations contribute what no amount of technology can replace: seasoned judgment, historical context, and the ability to see patterns and priorities that younger attorneys may miss. That is a different kind of efficiency – one built on experience, instinct, and perspective.

Together, these generational differences create balanced, dynamic teams that outperform more homogenous groups. Studies show that diverse teams, including age diversity, consistently outperform non-diverse teams when it comes to innovation, decision-making, and problem-solving. The legal profession is no exception.

Multi-generational legal teams also bring benefits beyond internal collaboration. Clients themselves increasingly represent multiple generations, and legal teams that reflect this diversity are better prepared to meet them where they are. For example, younger clients may gravitate toward associates closer to their own age because of comfort and familiarity – even when the matter requires the insight of a more senior partner. Having a multi-generational team allows for seamless internal collaboration, where a younger attorney or legal assistant can help bridge communication styles and preferences, ensuring the client remains engaged while still benefiting from senior-level strategy and oversight.

Moreover, this generational diversity is not limited to attorneys. Legal teams often include legal assistants, paralegals, clerks, and administrative professionals from a wide age range. These varied roles contribute to a broader team perspective. While a younger legal assistant might bring efficiency through technology and digital workflows, a more experienced assistant might catch strategic or procedural issues that newer team members may overlook.

Communication is a key factor both internally among team members and externally with clients. Generational preferences in communication style, tone, and medium (email vs. phone vs. text vs. video call) can differ widely. Gen Z may prefer instant messaging or short emails, while Baby Boomers may lean toward in-depth calls or face-to-face meetings. Effective legal teams recognize these preferences, adapt their communication strategies accordingly, and use their internal diversity to align better with client needs. In some cases, this might involve younger attorneys helping senior colleagues understand a client's digital expectations – or senior attorneys mentoring younger team members on professional tone and nuance in client correspondence.

Although humans are inherently adaptable, mismatched communication styles can lead to misinterpretation, inefficiency, or reduced client satisfaction. Having someone on the team who can identify and smooth over these generational divides – both within the team and in client interactions – is more valuable than it might initially appear.

At its core, the benefit of multi-generational teams is simple: clients receive better service. They get the technical skill, trend awareness, and eagerness of youth combined with the seasoned insight, judgment, and relational depth of experience. This leads to more personalized service, stronger relationships, better communication, and improved legal outcomes. It also enables legal teams to construct trial strategies, client communications, and corporate deals with broader insight and adaptability.

In an increasingly complex legal environment, no single generation holds all the answers. But together, across generations, legal teams are creating a new standard of excellence – one that is more inclusive, more agile, and better suited to the evolving needs of today's clients.