



A Jones/NCTI® White Paper

WHAT GAP?

Generational Views on Learning and
Technology in the Workplace



RESEARCH REVEALS GENERATIONS IN THE WORKPLACE SHARE LEARNING STYLES

Nuances specific to each generation offer distinct opportunities to connect with learners

Challenges caused by three generations working side-by-side make compelling news stories. Baby Boomers crave respect. Members of Generation X want to do it their own way. Millennials see work-life balance as a birthright.¹ While the headlines highlight differences in approach and workstyle, the generations all agree – learning and development matters.

New research by Jones/NCTI reveals the three generations currently in the MSO workforce (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials) share more similarities than differences when it comes to workplace training and technology.

**1946-1965:
BABY BOOMERS**
(an estimated 76 million Americans)

**1966-1980:
GENERATION X**
(an estimated 41 million Americans)

**1981-2000:
MILLENNIALS**
(an estimated 77 million Americans)



Make it personal.

Three types of training – all with a personal touch – rank the highest for all three generations for “preferred learning style” and “most helpful to their current role.”



Train to retain.

Seven in 10 respondents say job-related training and development opportunities impact their decision to **stay with a company.**



Improve technology.

70% of employees say corporate technology and training tools fall short when compared to **personal technology.**



¹ Forbes

1 MAKE IT PERSONAL.

The majority of employees from all generations learn by doing. As much as 70% of work-related learning occurs on the job.² All generations surveyed by Jones/NCTI indicate in-person learning makes the most impact. Millennials, GenXers and Baby Boomers rank training with a personal touch highly, especially both formal and informal **one-on-one mentoring**.

In order, the types of learning cited by **all generations** as the top four when it comes to “preferred style of learning” and “most helpful” to their current roles are:

- » **One-on-one mentoring** – Formal or informal individual training, demonstrations or coaching
- » **Traditional classroom learning** – Instructor-led in-person sessions
- » **Team collaboration** – Team training, weekly meetings, group feedback sessions
- » **Online courses** – Web-based training tools

Technology trends do influence the generations, with the newest workers leading the way. Millennials, also known as “digital natives” rank game-based learning as their fourth “preferred style of learning” when the results were viewed by individual generation. Baby Boomers and Gen Xers prefer online courses.

The popularity of game-based learning with Millennials offers new opportunities for companies to test gamified learning tools for entry-level employees or younger workers.

What the findings mean for MSOs and frontline teams:

A mix of peer and manager **training** with ride-alongs, manager and peer **mentoring** and **weekly team meetings** provides the most impact for all workers in your frontline teams – when combined with classroom learning and online courses. An investment in mentoring programs for employees at all levels of your organization will reinforce critical knowledge, help employees do their jobs better and support all employees’ preferred learning styles.

2 TRAIN TO RETAIN.

There’s no generation gap when it comes to learning and development. Everyone wants to learn in order to do their job well, and it’s a topic brought up most frequently in conversations with employees of all generations.³ In fact, **80% of respondents** across generations say it’s important or very important that their company provides training options to fit their learning styles.

² United Nations

³ American Management Association

Learning and development plays a critical role in employee retention. **Seven in 10** respondents say job-related training and development opportunities impact their decision to stay with a company. While training matters to all generations, it's most important to younger workers who may be eyeing new opportunities as they advance in their careers.

» **75% of GenX employees** rank learning and development as important or very important to their decision to stay with a company, compared to:

- **71% of Millennials**
- **61% of Baby Boomers**

What the findings mean for MSOs and frontline teams:

Ongoing investments in learning and development, including a **clearly defined career path**, support corporate retention efforts. A 2014 Jones/NCTI survey of MSO frontline employees showed strong support for career paths, with 83% indicating a clearly defined career path is the primary reason the surveyed employees wanted to stay with their company.

3

IMPROVE TECHNOLOGY.

Trends including Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) and Bring Your Own PC (BYOPC), the Internet of Things (IoT) and the proliferation of smartphone apps to track every aspect of life are changing the way we think and work. Employees expect more from corporate technology offerings.

Companies fall short when comparing corporate technology and training tools to personal technology, according to **70% of employees**. Baby Boomers, who remember the pre-Internet workplace and are exposed to new technologies by their digital native children, are the most critical of company-provided technology and learning applications.

» Only **23% of Baby Boomers** say company-provided technology is current and relevant, compared to:

- **30% of GenXers**
- **32% of Millennials**

Boomers are recognized as early adopters who dominated the workforce during the rise of information technology. They also have the financial means to purchase the latest personal technology, and often may enjoy tools and technology that are more advanced than current corporate offerings.⁴

⁴ ReadWrite

Employees also say they want more sharing, collaboration and training tools. Across generations, employees say their companies could provide more of certain types of technology to better support them in their current roles. The most popular tools are:

- » File-sharing applications that allow multiple users to access documents from any device
- » Instant messaging tools to communicate with colleagues
- » Job training apps that show training progress, learning modules completed and assessment scores
- » Collaboration tools to monitor project status and work completed

Millennials, seen as bright, tech-savvy and social, and GenXers, recognized as technologically adept and heavy users of personal social networks, also rank work-related social networks highly.

What the findings mean for MSOs and frontline teams:

Companies need to offer a variety of technology tools that offer **tracking, accountability and flexibility for employees**, and that are designed and delivered for the way people learn today. Closer alignment between IT and Learning & Development organizations can provide improved offerings for learners, such as more robust analytics and more opportunities to bring or adapt personal technology for business use.

The findings come from an ongoing, comprehensive research effort by Jones/NCTI to better address the evolving learning and development needs of broadband industry clients. The company conducted a national survey of 422 full-time and part-time employees during the month of January 2015. The findings were correlated by a Jones/NCTI industry panel discussion during the National Cable Television Cooperative's (NCTC) Winter Educational Conference during the same month.

How Jones/NCTI Supports Multi-Generational Learning for Cable Operators

PERSONALIZED LEARNING. The best learning programs offer a variety of choices. You need learning that appeals to your multi-generational teams, and aligns with your company's technology, approach and values. We work closely with MSO partners to create enterprise learning content to support your specific business needs.

Our focus on mentorship includes specialized courses designed to develop peers and supervisors into impactful mentors.

TRAINING TO SUPPORT RETENTION. We help develop your people. Your investment to train, enable and empower the frontline is an investment in the future of your business. From developing a full curriculum to creating targeted modules to address learning gaps, we support your learning objectives with relevant, timely and actionable content.

We also support long-term retention goals through custom career paths and college degree programs. From Baby Boomers who began their careers on the frontlines to Millennials new to the workforce, more than 400,000 industry professionals credit Jones/NCTI with long-term career growth and development.

MSO clients turn to us to support custom career path solutions that include:

- » Integrated career paths
- » Job-specific training and tools
- » Industry-recognized certifications
- » Academic support and college credits

TECHNOLOGY THAT APPEALS TO MULTIPLE GENERATIONS.

Technology is transforming how communities, businesses, and individuals work, play and engage with the world around them. Complexity demands a highly skilled, educated workforce with deep foundational knowledge and immediate access to relevant information on the job.

Amp™ by Jones/NCTI is a mobile field knowledge app built to take learning to the next level with anytime, anywhere information. Designed for the way people learn today, the mobile app provides access to on-the-job information with videos, tutorials, graphics, demos and competency assessments. It also supports the growing interest in game-based learning with Jones/NCTI's popular cable version of Jeopardy!

Soon-to-release updates to Amp address employees' desires for visibility into training progress with advanced tracking as users complete courses and move closer to advanced certifications and college degrees.

**Contact us to learn more about Jones/NCTI and our solutions
to support your multi-generational learning goals:**



ABOUT JONES/NCTI

Jones/NCTI powers frontline teams and drives performance. The company equips the field for success with results-driven learning content and tools. Designed for the way people learn today, Jones/NCTI's quality content and flexible technology solutions are created for use in the classroom and on the job. A passion for people development drives Jones/NCTI. Hundreds of thousands of technicians, customer service representatives and broadband industry executives credit Jones/NCTI for the knowledge and skills needed to build rewarding careers and contribute to their companies' growth. Clients achieve measurable gains with their business and customers through actionable, timely and relevant learning. Find out how Jones/NCTI helps partners deliver a superior customer experience at www.jonesncti.com.