



Supervising A Multigenerational Workforce

Using Kadushin's Model to Strengthen Engagement, Performance and Retention

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Learning Outcomes



Define supervision and explain why it matters for outcomes, culture, and retention



Use Kadushin's three supervision functions: administrative, educational, and supportive



Identify four generations currently represented in the workforce



Adapt supervision approaches without stereotyping staff



What is Supervision



- **What it is**
 - A structured, intentional process that supports staff performance, development, and wellbeing
 - A relationship that aligns day-to-day work with mission, standards, and outcomes
 - More than oversight: supervision includes teaching, coaching, and support
- **What it can accomplish**
 - Clarify expectations and accountability
 - Build skill and confidence
 - Reduce burnout and turnover
 - Improve service quality, safety, and consistency



Why Supervision Matters in a Multigenerational Workforce



The Positives	The Pitfalls
Differences become assets, not friction points	Misunderstandings get labeled as attitude problems or generational conflict
Staff understand expectations and how to succeed	Feedback lands poorly or is avoided altogether
Leaders respond to individual needs while maintaining standards	Team members disengage, withdraw, or leave
Teams benefit from broader experience, creativity, and adaptability	High performers can feel unseen or unsupported



The Best Supervisor....



Think of the best supervisor you have had.



What did they do that made supervision effective or meaningful?



Reflect & Share



Kadushin's Model of Supervision



Three Core Functions

Administrative

Accountability
Standards
Performance

Educational

Teaching
Coaching
Skill Building

Supportive

Encouragement
Resilience
Morale

Key point: effective supervisors balance all three.

Most teams feel the strain when one function dominates and the others are neglected.



What is the Function



Function	Focus	Examples
Administrative	Accountability and Coordination	Scheduling, policy compliance, documentation, performance expectations, follow through
Educational	Growth and Competence	Coaching, modeling, feedback, reflective questions, skill practice
Supportive	Sustainability and Morale	Recognition, empathy, check-ins, stress management, psychological safety



Generations in Today's Workforce



Generation	Birth Years	What many supervisors notice
Baby Boomers	1946-1964	Institutional knowledge, loyalty, respect for experience and structure
Generation X	1965-1980	Independence, pragmatism, self-direction, value for efficiency
Millennials	1981-1996	Collaboration, feedback orientation, purpose and growth focus
Generation Z	1997-2012	Digital fluency, desire for clarity, inclusion, rapid communication



A Product of the Times



Generation	Events and context that Shape many workers	Possible workplace hallmarks
Baby Boomer	Civil Rights era, Vietnam War, post-war institutional growth, long-term careers	Commitment, loyalty, value for hierarchy, appreciation for earned authority and recognition
Generation X	Economic uncertainty, rising divorce rates, more self-reliance, early technology transition	Independence, skepticism of bureaucracy, desire for autonomy, practical problem-solving
Millennials	9/11, Great Recession, student debt, expansion of digital collaboration	Purpose-driven, collaborative, feedback-seeking, value for development and inclusion
Generation Z	Smartphone and social media era, COVID-19, mental health openness, constant connectivity	Need for clarity, rapid communication, flexibility, psychological safety, digital fluency

Leveraging Strengths



Generation	Strengths to Leverage	How supervisors can activate them
Baby Boomers	Experience, perspective, historical memory	Invite mentoring, consult on complex situations, recognize contributions publicly and respectfully
Generation X	Efficiency, independence, realism	Give ownership, clarify outcomes, minimize unnecessary bureaucracy
Millennials	Team orientation, innovation, learning mindset	Use collaborative problem-solving, coaching, and stretch assignments
Generation Z	Digital agility, adaptability, candor about wellbeing	Use microlearning, quick check-ins, and fresh ideas for process improvement



Supervision Applied across the Generations



Kadushin Function	Supervision strategies that resonate across generations
Administrative	Be explicit about expectations, timelines, standards, and what success looks like
Educational	Adapt the teaching format: demonstration, discussion, microlearning, practice, or peer mentoring
Supportive	Ask what support is helpful, acknowledge stressors, and connect work to meaning and growth



Delivering without Stereotyping



Generation	Administrative	Educational	Supportive
Baby Boomers	Respect structure and experience	Connect new learning to proven practice	Recognize expertise and commitment
Generation X	State goals, then allow autonomy	Focus on practical tools and efficiency	Show trust and avoid micromanagement
Millennials	Explain the why behind expectations	Use coaching, reflection, and feedback loops	Connect work to growth and purpose
Generation Z	Give very clear next steps and timelines	Use bite-sized teaching and timely feedback	Normalize check-ins, questions, and wellbeing support



Questions that Work



What to ask	Why these questions matter
What helps you feel most supported at work?	Helps to shift from guessing to understanding
How do you prefer to receive feedback	Reduces stereotyping and increases trust
What motivates you to do your best work?	Makes supervision more individualized and actionable
What makes supervision meaningful, to you?	Assists supervisors to choose the right balance of clarity, coaching, and support



Feedback Across Generations



Universal Feedback Principles

Be timely and specific

Describe behavior and impact, not character

Balance accountability with curiosity

End with clear next steps and support

Adjust delivery as needed

Some staff want direct verbal feedback; others benefit from follow-up in writing

Some want regular quick check-ins; others prefer fewer but deeper conversations

Ask before assuming and revisit preferences over time

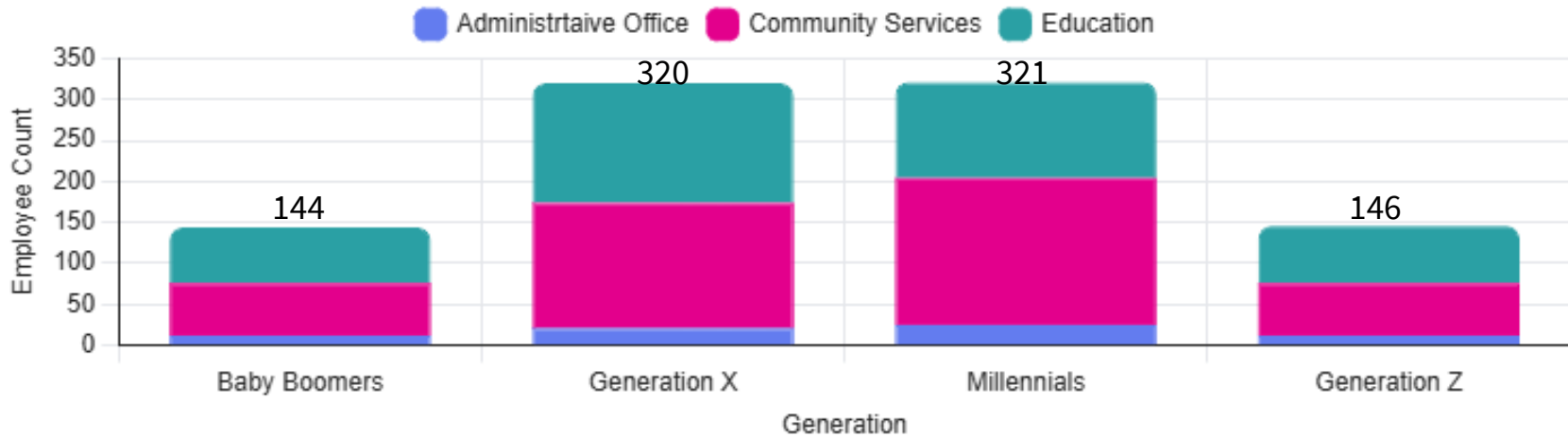


Agency Generational Snapshot



16 17 18

Employee Count by Generation (3 Departments)

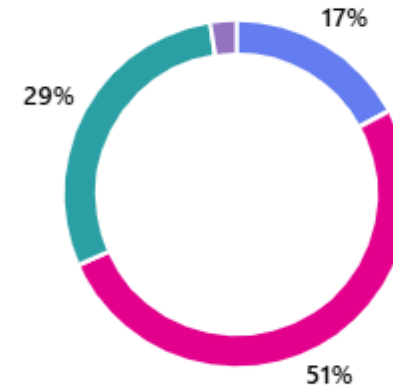


Survey Results



How they Self Identified-41 Respondents

● Baby Boomer	7
● Generation X	21
● Millennial	12
● Generation Z	1



In Their Own Words-Top Answers across All Generations



What helps you feel most supported at work

The Team



How do you prefer to receive feedback

In Person



What motivates you to do your best work

Having an Impact, Recognition, Support



What makes supervision meaningful to you

Receiving Feedback



In Their Own Words



Cross Generational Trends

- Listening and communication are universally essential.
- Feedback is most valued when it is timely, specific, and constructive.
- Employees across generations want supervision that supports growth, learning, and meaningful impact.
- Recognition and appreciation matters at all career stages.

Key Differences

- **Baby Boomers** prioritize interpersonal dialogue, experience-based collaboration and appreciation.
- **Generation X** values clarity, autonomy, efficiency, and follow-through.
- **Millennials** emphasize frequency of feedback, transparency, purpose, and relational supervision.
- **Generation Z** seek structure, clarity, accessibility, and reassurance as they build confidence.



In Their Own Words



Bottom Line

Effective supervision across generations is not one-size fits all, but the data clearly shows that clear communication, consistent feedback, and genuine listening form the foundation of meaningful support for everyone – while how those elements are delivered should be calibrated by generation and individual need.

Take our Survey



In Their Own Words



- What Helps you feel most supported at Work
 - Baby Boomers
 - Generation X
 - Millennials
 - Generation Z

- How do you prefer to receive feedback
 - Baby Boomers
 - Generation X
 - Millennials
 - Generation Z



In Their Own Words



- What motivates you to do your best work
 - Baby Boomers
 - Generation X
 - Millennials
 - Generation Z

- What makes supervision meaningful to you
 - Baby Boomers
 - Generation X
 - Millennials
 - Generation Z



Closing Reflection



What is one thing you will do differently in supervision starting tomorrow?

Thank you

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