MODULE OVERVIEW

Mixed-age teams: See the person, not the generation

Adaptive module | ~20 min

Four to five generations now coexist in the same team, sometimes 50 years apart. Yet generational frameworks don't hold up against day-to-day reality, and worse, they end up producing what they predict. This module goes further than dispelling the myths: it teaches learners to read a person's life stage rather than their date of birth. It then provides tools for working across ages, from mentoring in both directions to working pairs where one person's experience meets the other's boldness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

01 Distinguish the myth of generations from the facts: on engagement and values, the differences between generations are statistically insignificant.

02 Recognize the self-fulfilling prophecy: how an age stereotype, by changing our behavior, ends up producing what it predicts.

03 Think in terms of life stages, not generations, and ask each person what they need rather than guessing.

04 Foster cooperation across ages: two-way mentoring, intergenerational working groups, and pairs combining experience and boldness.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers of mixed-age teams and colleagues of all ages who work side by side.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

1. **Self-assessment**: on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
2. **Expert video**: 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
3. **Practice scenarios**: the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
4. **Dated commitment**: one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
5. **Memo to download**: key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

A SAMPLE PRACTICE SCENARIO

For a month, the team has had to report breakdowns on a tablet. Nadia, 61, keeps writing them in the paper logbook; Malik, 34, enters them for Nadia at the end of his shift. Malik doesn't know why Nadia doesn't use the tablet, and thinks: "It's generational." What does Malik do?

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- "Stages not Ages" – Ipsos (Emily Cooke): thinking in life stages, not generations.
- The self-fulfilling prophecy – Robert K. Merton (1948).
- Reverse mentoring – a practice popularized by Jack Welch (General Electric, 1999).
- "Ask rather than guess": moving from the generation to the person – Afthonios method.

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Ipsos, 2025–2026, "Stages not Ages" (3.5 million responses, 30 countries)
- Workday, 2025: analysis of more than a million employees; only one of 14 engagement drivers differs by generation
- Danone and Rennes School of Business, June 2024: 8 students train 80 team members to use Copilot
- AARP, Multigenerational Work and Mentorship: nearly 9 in 10 employees see multigenerational work positively

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