

SMART *Perspectives*

A publication of SMART Conversations®

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A Baby Boomer's Take on Gen-X @ Work

They're smart and savvy. They are fiercely independent. They're cell phones seem to be an evolving appendage. They value and demand work-life balance, prefer casual dress to formal and have vastly different expectations of work than prior generations.

We, as Baby Boomers and today's leaders find ourselves conflicted. We need to attract and retain all of the generations for reasons that span institutional knowledge to grooming the future leaders of our organizations. Yet, we disapprove of the new generations' work ethic and sense of entitlement. What is the solution? Instead of studying Gen X'ers and Y'ers under the microscope - leave that to the behaviorists - we need to engage them in conversation. Dialogue, a conversation style that dates back to aboriginal tribes, suggests that everyone in a conversation honor the following four core conditions:



Shared Meaning – Are we talking about the same thing? (Audio CDs vs. Certificates of Deposit) Authenticity – are we being real with each other, Respect – can we respect our differences and still work together? And Trust – can we trust each other enough to listen and be open to diverse viewpoints?

Talking to each other – human-to-human seems pretty basic, yet it's a skill that many of us seem to have forgotten. We can teach and learn from one another; we innately possess that wisdom. We can choose to suspend our judgments and assumptions by asking questions, listening, sharing our individual perspectives and valuing our differences.

Where do you fall?

Veterans— born before 1946
Baby Boomers—1946-1964
Generation X—1965-1979
Generation Y—1980-1995

Upcoming Events

- **May 27** —"Connect Collaborate Innovate" Webinar presented by Kai Method & SMART Conversations®
- **June 1** —"A Taste of Dialogue" Webinar ,ACEC/FL
- **July 22**—"A Taste of Dialogue" seminar, SHRM Conference, Jax, FL
- **July 26** —Workshop: SMART Conversations | The 4Ds Jacksonville, FL
- **July 27-28** —SMART Conversations Instructor Certification, Jacksonville, FL

Get SMART About Email ~ We'll Show You How

You spoke. We listened. That's why SMART Conversations® / Online will be debuting this spring. What we heard: inappropriate and unprofessional texting, emailing and I'M-ing. Not enough face-to-face and phone conversations.

Your observation: increased liability, less robust client relationships and increased misunderstandings. If you're interested in launching a pilot, let us

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"Connect Collaborate Innovate" Free Webinar, May 27

In the spirit of walking our talk and modeling our principles, we recently partnered with The Kai Method to bring you a validated, strategy that leverages the power of dialogue as the "lubricant" to grease the wheels of innovation.

To kick off this collaboration, we are offering a sneak preview on May 27 via webinar. Registration link: <https://www.gotomeeting.com/register/462934800>

Get SMART About Email, cont'd. from page 1



know. In the meantime, here are five tips for improving your online persona:

1. **Connect before content.** Always begin your email with some type of a greeting followed by an effort to connect. For example: "Hello Marik. I hope you had a nice weekend." It may sound obvious, and it isn't to everyone. Take a moment to set a positive tone for your email.
2. **Show Respect.** Email does not allow you to practice engaged listening. Therefore, you are at a disadvantage because you can only "speak" or "ask questions." If you are simply providing information, show respect by asking the recipient if they need clarification. If you need information, ask your question and provide the context for your request. For example, "I would like to know the progress of this project because I need to set a deadline for my own contribution" so that your intention is clear.
3. **Check out your assumptions.** Be tolerant of others' faux pas. Resist the urge to jump to conclusions or make assumptions about someone's message. If you suspect that you've been the victim of sarcasm or condescension, copy and

paste the offensive line to your sender and tell them that you are unsure how to interpret their comment and ask them for clarification. Better, yet, pick up the phone and give them a call.

4. **Manage your Trigger Style.** Perhaps your pet peeve is an email without a subject line or appearing in the cc: when the content does not involve you. Before responding out of anger or frustration, try giving the "benefit of the doubt" and refuse to get triggered. If you feel it is important enough to address, then bring it to the person's attention when you are feeling calmer. Otherwise, choose to let it go and expend your energy in a more productive way.
5. **Eliminate eraser words.** When writing as in speaking, drop your "but's" and replaced them with "and." "But," "however" and "yet" erase the positive impact of the previous clause. For example, imagine giving your employee this feedback "You are coming to meetings on time, but you haven't been taking good notes."

Share your online tips by emailing Michele at msimos@smartconversations.net.

“Tell me, and I'll forget; show me, and I may remember; involve me, and I'll understand.”

- Chinese proverb

Elevate Meeting Efficiency & Effectiveness

Before engaging in a dialogue, divergent conversation, we recommend giving everyone involved a copy of our conversation agreements to refer to during the conversation. We find that it sets the tone for a dialogue, provides shared meaning around behavioral expectations and promotes Authenticity, Respect and Trust. Give it a try at your next meeting and let us know how it went.

SMART Dialogue Agreements™

- Discover new insights or connections.
- Inquire with the intent to understand — not persuade.
- Avoid assumptions and suspend judgment.
- Listen to and respect all points of view.
- Observe and manage your trigger style.
- Give voice to whatever is important to you.
- Uphold Shared Meaning, Authenticity, Respect & Trust
- Encourage everyone to express their perspective.

Inspired by the World Cafe