



Stay HR Savvy with HR Elements®

Welcome to the UBA Partner Firm exclusive monthly newsletter delivering insights about timely human resources and employee benefits topics.

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Dear HR Manager,

I am in a bit of a pickle. I was recently promoted to management from an individual contributor role. This is good news, except for the fact that I am discovering my introverted nature does not jibe with the expectations for this job. In my old role, it was not uncommon for hours to go by where I did not speak to another human. My new boss let me know in no uncertain terms that building working relationships with others, socializing and networking is a big part of my manager job. How can I build connections in this new role?

– Introvert Seeking Connections

Dear Introvert Seeking Connections,

First off, congratulations on your promotion! It sounds like the company observed your strong performance and noticed your potential. Let's figure out how we can tackle the networking part of your job in a manner that is true to who you are.

The good news is [you are not alone](#).

Introverts are estimated to make up 25% to 40% of the population.

This means that there are *very* good chances that some of your colleagues have similar preferences.

My question to you would be, what sort of social interactions make you feel comfortable, or at least, less squeamish?

- If your answer is the virtual kind, use technology to start building connections. Emails, IMs, and virtual calls have a role in corporate networking and may provide just enough comfort to encourage you to start outreach.
- If you feel more comfy in person, try asking someone out for coffee. Start by asking someone else that seems to shy away from the crowd as well. And a coffee (or insert beverage here) is a good place to start because it is short. Remember, this is a new skill you are developing so it will take time to try new things and see what works.

Be patient with yourself, and remember, there are many ways to network.

– *HR Manager*

Workplace Culture | Leaders Take on Decision Fatigue

A particularly taxing day for a leader may mean sitting through hours and hours of meetings where they are asked to make enough decisions to make their head spin. They arrive home or shut down their laptop for the day and feel mentally exhausted. Then they are faced with still another decision...what to eat for dinner. And then they break their healthy eating resolution in favor of pizza delivery because they cannot evaluate and plan anything else. It just seems easier.

Researchers call this behavior [decision fatigue](#). It is the diminishing quality of decisions that result after an individual makes too many decisions.

This common phenomenon can affect your team and the outcome of your work. Instead of accepting decision fatigue, leaders can use these guiding principles to support quick and effective decisions in the workplace.

Remember the 80/20 rule.

Otherwise known as the Pareto Principle, this rule predicts that 80% of outcomes result from 20% of actions. While this principle can be applied to many of life's random occurrences, leaders can leverage a Pareto analysis to identify the root cause of a problem before making key decisions. This decision-making principle encourages leaders to keep their business priorities (the crucial 20%) in sight and use a laser focus on what matters. It also aids leaders with perfectionist tendencies who may experience paralysis by analysis or overanalyze their options.

Use your tools.

Business researchers love a good model to make decisions, and you should too. The options are endless and range from a weighted decision matrix where you give a numerical value to the most important decision criteria, to an effort/impact grid which evaluates options based on the time or energy input and the predicted result. Using a model is not cheating and can help you simplify the decision-making process.

Delegate authority.

Leaders who hold onto all decision-making ability are more likely to experience decision fatigue. Additionally, they may be holding their teams back from growing. In passing along ownership for specific decisions to your direct reports, you are also empowering them to take ownership and accountability for their work. This is key in developing your staff and will protect you from becoming a decision bottleneck.

Let's be clear. We all deal with some level of decision fatigue. When in a high-pressure position, you may experience it more than others. It is said too much of a good thing is a bad thing, and as it relates to making strategic decisions while under pressure, this is definitely the case. [Simplifying your decision-making process](#) will enable you to confidently make decisions without sweating the small stuff.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | Generational Myths, Part 4: Baby Boomers

Today's offices potentially span five full [generations](#) ranging from Generation Z to the Silent Generation. A coworker could just as easily be raised with a smart phone in hand as they could have used a typewriter at their first job. Some see differences between generational colleagues as an annoyance ("kids these days!") and many rely on generational stereotypes as fact. Current research questions the validity of generational stereotypes. This series uncovers top generational myths as a strategy to support a diverse and healthy employee population.

The U.S. population soared following World War II and this surge created the aptly named **Baby Boomer** generation. This generation was born between 1946 and 1964 and represents the eldest colleagues at work. The top three myths of Baby Boomers include:

1. Baby Boomers don't understand technology.

This stereotype has been overplayed in popular media. (The older colleague scared of Excel who needs to call the helpdesk to send a Slack message.) The truth is that a member of this generation (Tim Berners-Lee, to be exact) invented the internet. And while their zeal for new apps will likely not match your fresh college graduates, they are still more than capable. Between 76% and 81% of Boomers go online regularly. Give them a chance.

2. Boomers are traditionalists.

The real question is, how are you defining tradition? Because [Baby Boomers were the firsts in a lot of meaningful areas](#) that can hardly be called traditional. Many Baby Boomers were idealists and had no problem taking action to support their social and political visions. This same vigor is seen in the workplace. For example, more Boomer women entered the job force than prior generations, increasing representation in the workplace. Just because this generation doesn't share some of the same proclivities as younger generations, don't assume they won't speak up for what they want or will accept the status quo.

3. Boomers are ready to exit the workforce.

With the older members of this generation approaching 80 years old, many assume this group is on its way out the door. The facts tell a different story. A [2018 Pew Research Study](#) showed that close to 30% of Boomers in the 65-to-72-year age range were engaged in looking for a job or working. Baby Boomers aren't sitting back on their heels (nor can they with the additional income needed to support the longer lives they lead in comparison to their parents' generation). They want to stay connected with the workforce whether this is staying on staff in a full-time capacity or finding a part-time job where they can explore their hobbies. Boomers make great mentors as well so don't pass up this opportunity to learn from your elders.

Baby Boomers had, and still have, a heavy pull in corporate America. This is a result of their group's size, as well as their plans to stick around the office longer than expected. They may be more technology savvy than assumed and can't be boxed into the traditionalist category. Finally, Baby Boomers are full of institutional knowledge that other generations should soak up.

This is the last article in the multi-generational myths series and can serve as a warning to not judge a book by its cover. While generations are affected by similar political, social, and economic events, they also develop in nuanced ways.

Leadership Tip: Active Listening

You can practice *active listening* by paraphrasing what the speaker says back to them. This mirroring exercise helps you dedicate yourself fully to the conversation, rather than planning how you will respond.