



Employee Engagement Differences Across Generations Are Relatively Small, Says Sirota Study

'Traditionalists' (Age 63 +) Score Highest

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PURCHASE, NY – March 31, 2008 – Contrary to much that has been written about the differences between generations regarding their attitudes toward work and their engagement in their jobs, these variations are actually relatively small, according to research just completed by **Sirota Survey Intelligence**, specialists in attitude research.

"With the exception of employees age 63 and older, the differences between employees' levels of engagement in their jobs are fairly narrow," said **Douglas Klein, President of Sirota Survey Intelligence** (www.sirota.com).

"Our research dispels the myths about younger employees being more disengaged from their jobs. It also refutes the contention that Generation X employees (ages 28-42) are the most cynical of age groups," added Klein.

Sirota conducted a major study of cross-generational attitudes of more than 300,000 workers in over 50 organizations that the employee attitude research firm surveyed during 2006 and 2007.

The study encompassed four generational groups:

- **Generation Y – ages 27 and younger**
- **Generation X – ages 28-42**
- **Baby Boomers – ages 43-62**
- **Traditionalists – ages 63 and older**

The research included employees' overall satisfaction with their jobs, pride in working for their employers, whether they would recommend their organizations as a place to work, and their willingness to put forth extra effort. Their responses collectively comprised an "index of employee engagement."

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Employees of the Traditionalist generation (ages 63 and older) are the most engaged in their jobs overall, with an 84% employee engagement level. The engagement levels of the other groups are within a relatively narrow range of 77-80%, according to the study.

Levels of employee engagement by generation, according to the study, are:

- **Traditionalists – 84% employee engagement level**
- **Baby Boomers – 77% employee engagement level**
- **Generation X – 78% employee engagement level**
- **Generation Y – 80% employee engagement level**

Traditionalists (whether newly hired or long-tenured) are even more favorable regarding their engagement levels than all other generations at any point in their measured tenure.

Range of scores across various tenure points

	<1yr	1-2	2-5	6-10	10+
• Traditionalists – range (88%-83%):	88	87	85	84	83
• Baby Boomers – range (82%-75%):	82	77	75	76	77
• Generation X – range (82%-76%):	82	78	76	76	79
• Generation Y – range (82%-74%):	82	77	75	74	-

As one can additionally note, there is a strong pattern of difference between employees' attitudes about, and engagement in, their jobs based on how long they have been with their employers, according to the study.

Overall employee engagement levels according to tenure are:

- **One year or less tenure – 83% employee engagement level**
- **1-2 years tenure – 79% employee engagement level**
- **2-5 years tenure – 75% employee engagement level**
- **6-10 years tenure – 76% employee engagement level**
- **10 or more years tenure – 79% employee engagement level**

Sirota's research demonstrates that, although an overwhelming majority of new employees are enthusiastic when starting a job, there is a measurable decline in their morale after the first year (often after the first 6 months) which continues through the 5th year.

"Many new employees begin losing their enthusiasm for their new jobs regardless of how old they are," said Klein. "Employees' continued or maintained level of engagement depends on how well management meets their needs and expectations during their time with their employers."

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Employees' engagement level typically begins to recover after they have been with their employers for 6 years or more.

Reflecting on these results, Klein notes that traditionalists (age 63 and older) may be an overlooked resource for employers. "They consistently have higher employee engagement levels than other employees with comparable tenure." For example, Traditionalists with between 2-5 years tenure have an engagement level of 85% – 10 percentage points higher than that for Generation Y and Baby Boomers (75%), and 9 percentage points higher than that for Generation X (76%).

"With more people living healthy, active lifestyles, and so many Traditionalists uncertain whether they will have the financial resources to enable them to retire, they may want to stay in the workforce longer. Employers may want to consider part-time and/or flexible work arrangements to keep more of these loyal, enthusiastic workers onboard," Klein added.

About Sirota Survey Intelligence

Founded in 1972, Sirota Survey Intelligence (www.sirota.com) specializes in attitude research. Headquartered in Purchase, NY, Sirota has conducted thousands of attitude surveys around the world that have helped organizations build strong, productive relationships with their employees, customers, communities, opinion leaders, investors, shareholders, suppliers, and other publics. The major results of their surveys have been summarized in ***The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit by Giving Workers What They Want*** (Wharton School Publishing www.enthusiasticemployee.com).

Compiled since 1972 and continuously updated, Sirota's multi-national, multi-industry database comprises data from millions of employees collected through the firm's employee survey research (predominantly among the Fortune 500). It is possible that the results from the companies in Sirota's database are more favorable than a national probability sample.