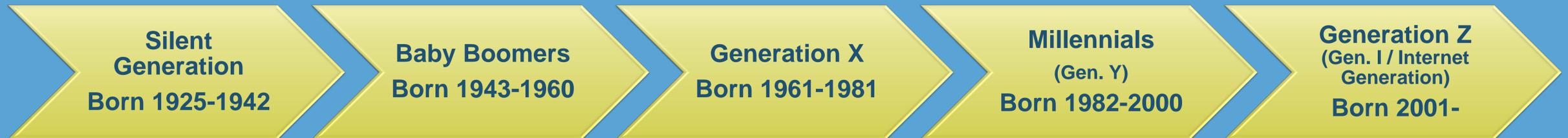


Planning for Today's Test Taker – Matching Your Voluntary Credential to the Candidates of Today and Tomorrow

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Background

Voluntary credentialing programs must design their programs to remain compelling to the varying needs of test takers.

Generational differences affect:

- Communication styles and tools/techniques
- Expectations and dealing with change
- Motivation factors

Considerations for how credentialing programs are developed and delivered include:

- How program information is communicated
- How application for the testing program occurs
- How examinations are delivered

Organizations must examine how to capture Millennials to build and propel growth. **Almost 3 of 4 Millennials expect to seek another degree or a certification (Hastings, 2008).**

Millennial Characteristics

- Look for goal oriented products – products that enable them to advance their career / personal development goals
- Change jobs more frequently, so credentials are part of a lifetime pursuit
- Expect information to “be” where they are, rather than looking for information
- Prefer e-mail, mobile based, social networking, and word of mouth communication methods
- Prefer engaging visual communication
- Look for instant gratification

Communication of Program Information

- Promote value of certification and certification process via social media:
 - Facebook / LinkedIn groups centered on certification – have ability for candidates to communicate with Customer Service here
 - YouTube videos to walk through certification and re-certification process
- Provide practice tests that simulate the actual tests – Millennial candidates expect to have a chance to practice before the “real” exam
- Keep in touch with certification prospects via mobile marketing – send marketing messages or process updates to candidates using SMS (short message service), MMS (multimedia message service), or a mobile application
- Ensure that your e-mail communications can be read on common Smartphones and do not solely rely on graphics to communicate a message
- Ensure that the technology reflected by your certification program’s communication is up to date

References

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Exam Delivery

- Expect immediate feedback - develop test forms that are pre-equated so results can be offered immediately
- Give meaningful score report feedback – within psychometric constraints – as Millennials expect both useable and transparent information
- Consider shorter, more content specific exams – even if it means dividing a credentialing program into 3 exams rather than one
 - Provides prompt gratification, while combining the smaller components for a credential
- Investigate new technologies for exam delivery, such as internet based testing (IBT)

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