# Course Introduction

**Topic Summary**

For the first time in history, four generations work side-by-side in many organizations. The working generations span more than 80+ years, including so-called Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Millennials/Generation Y. All bring different experiences, perspectives, expectations, work styles and strengths to the workplace. Despite the perceived "generation gap" from differing views and potential conflict, organizations have the opportunity to capitalize on the assets of each generation for competitive advantage.

SHRM's director of diversity and inclusion initiatives, Shirley A. Davis, Ph.D., points out that in the United States, discussions of workplace diversity tend to focus on topics of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and disability. "However, in all parts of the world, there is another category of diversity that cannot be overlooked: multigenerational diversity. Today, there are greater numbers of workers from each age group that bring both new opportunities and challenges. If organizations want to thrive in this competitive environment of global talent management, they need employees and managers who are aware of and skilled in dealing with the four generations that make up the workforce."

**Course Goal**

In today's struggling global economy, it is more important than ever that organizations leverage the knowledge, skills and abilities of all workers. The purpose of this course is to raise awareness and facilitate conversation about generational diversity in the workplace helping participants from all generations to capitalize on one another's strengths and values.

**Course Highlights**

This session will highlight the following:

- What is Diversity?
- Review generational "cohorts" and likely ages within each
- Review cohort characteristics, based on how they experienced major events during "coming of age" period
- Generational Self-Awareness
- Cohorts Impacting in the Workplace
- Demographic Workforce predictions
- Review of Best Practices in a multigenerational workforce

# Course Details

**Course Design**

I. **Workplace Diversity?**
- Review key terminology including Diversity, Inclusion, Diversity Management
- Diversity Traits, i.e. Visible, Invisible
- Social Identity
  - Emphasizes factors regarding social identity as a form of group membership
  - Explanation of Primary or Secondary social identities
  - Visible or invisible nature of social identities

II. **Four Generations in Today's Workforce**
- **Description**
  - Traditionalists
  - Baby Boomers
  - Generation X
  - Millenials
- **Example impacts of per generation**
- **Events and Characteristics of each generation**

III. **Self-Awareness Discussion**

IV. **The Impact of Generational Diversity**
- Key points:
  - Emphasizes that organizations utilizing the strengths of different generations in the workforce are best positioned for success Intergenerational dynamics offer organizations a highly competitive advantage
  - Highlights the effectiveness of working together and how it impacts the overall success of organizations

V. **Workforce Predictions**
- 2000 vs. 2020

VI. **What All Generations Want**
- Key Points:
  - Studies in organizational and human behavior find that people seek similar factors in the workplace, and these commonalities can be leveraged to bond employees in support of a company's mission, vision and goals.
  - A common complaint among generations focuses on *work ethic.*
  - Despite generational differences, regardless of one's age, people value achievement, balance and responsibility and want credible, trustworthy leadership.

# Course Details, Continued

**Course Design, continued**

**VII. How do we best deal with the generation mix?**
- **Key Points**
  - The challenge for Generational Mix Managers is to move away from "business as usual" into an open field of innovation, productivity, and learning.
  - The Generationally savvy manager establishes a safe environment where workers of all ages can openly share who they are and what they bring to the table without fear of being judged, "fixed," or changed.
  - Great organizations ensure that everyone understands the importance of working together.
  - Keeping people of all ages on track and in harmony with the mission, goals, roles, and responsibilities inherent in the work.
  - Successful approaches include:
    1. Collaborative discussion,
    2. Training managers on dealing with generational differences;
    3. Teambuilding activities; and
    4. Creating mentoring programs to encourage workers of different generations to work together and share experiences. The goal of this strategy is to help ensure the transfer of knowledge from one generation to the next.
       - On boarding
       - Speed mentoring
       - Senior Management
       - Group
       - One-on-one
  - YMCA example

**VIII. Generational differences case study that occurred in a organization**
- Description:
  - Employees from four generations (Traditionalists, Baby Boomers, Gen-Xers, and Millennials) experienced communication challenges, differing value systems, disparate approaches to museum work, and interpersonal conflict while using a team approach to introduce a new program. The groups will negotiate to come to consensus on issues related to planning and scheduling work activities to optimize productivity; communicating effectively across generations; and utilizing the strengths, experiences and potential of each worker.

# Course Details, Continued

**Learning Outcomes**

- Describe the primary work ethic characteristics of each of the generations represented in today's workplace
- Discuss the evolution of America's generations over the 20th century and the historical events that affected each generation.
- Anticipate and proactively respond to generational differences that affect workplace performance and productivity
- Use knowledge of inter-relationship across generations to meet organizational goals
- Focus on goals and behavior rather than personality in conflict situations
- Collaborate with others to create and sustain a work environment that capitalizes and celebrates generational diversity in a manner which results in service excellence to the organization's internal and external customers

**Expert Contributors**

**Shirley A. Davis, PhD – Director of Diversity Issues**

Dr. Davis acts as the SHRM "thought leader" on global diversity issues and has successfully positioned SHRM as the leader in the diversity and inclusion field since joining SHRM in 2006.

Shirley has more than 15 years of experience in Human Resources, Organizational & Leadership Development and Diversity Management. Shirley has worked at major Fortune 500 and 100 companies such as Constellation Energy, Capital One, Circuit City, and Bank of America and has led such functions as Training & Education, Leadership Development, Performance Management, Recruiting, Change Management, Strategic Planning and Global Diversity. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Pre-Law, a Master's Degree in Human Resources Management, and a Ph.D. in Business and Organization Management.

**Eric Peterson – Manager of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives**

Eric works directly with the Director of Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives to position SHRM as a leader in the diversity management and inclusion field. He acts as a thought leader, champion, and project lead in the design and implementation of innovative diversity strategies.

Eric has 10 years of experience in Diversity Climate & Culture Programming, Diversity Education, Learning Strategies, and Organization Development. He has worked extensively as a Diversity Educator and Practitioner. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre Arts from Gonzaga University and a Master's Degree in Organization Development from American University. Eric comes to SHRM from a 15-year career at Booz Allen Hamilton, where he held such positions as Diversity Learning Manager, Diversity Climate & Culture Manager, and Training & Development Specialist.