

*Improving the lives of women and girls
 through programs leading to social
 and economic empowerment.*

## Soroptimist International of the Americas

**Generation X: Generational Profile**

**Born 1965-1981**

**Age range in 2017: 36-52**

**Generational Outlook: Skeptical**

Generation X were given the name “X” because they were seen as searching for identity and a unifying purpose. This is the first generation to grow up in the new family systems created by divorce and became the first “latchkey” kids, so they are very independent. Generation X adapted to the Baby Boomers “question authority” attitude very quickly—much to the dismay of their parents. They are determined to be involved, responsible and in control. Because of this, Generation X will take risks, but they take calculated risks. This group is more wary and cautious than the Baby Boomers.

Because they grew up watching television, Gen Xers are savvy consumers and their sophistication about advertising comes from a lifetime of being exposed to more of it than any other generation. The world they grew up in was a highly charged political environment and one that was broadcast on 24-hour TV news stations. They tend to have a more cynical outlook than their predecessors. Gen Xers have developed an attitude that says, “Life is short. Eat dessert first.”

Gen Xers are not likely to conform to the previous generation’s definition of work. They saw their parents get laid off or face job insecurity. Many of them entered the workplace in the early 1980s, when the economy was in a downturn. Because of these factors, they’ve redefined loyalty. Gen Xers have no expectation of job security, so they tend to see jobs as temporary and as stepping stones to something better—or at least to something else. This also heavily affects their attitude toward joining and staying in membership organizations.

Generation X has a more balanced view of the role work plays in their lives. They are willing to work, but they also expect to have lives outside of the office. Money is a motivator, but they are also looking for decent hours and personal development opportunities. Generation Xers are eager to learn new skills because they want to stay employable.

Because they don’t exhibit the same loyalty as previous generations toward organization/institutions, paired with their reluctance to make their job their life, this generation has been labeled as “lazy” or “slackers.” This is definitely not the case. Gen Xers will work very hard for a job they believe in, for something that challenges them. Instead of remaining loyal to their company or an organization, they have a commitment to the quality of their work.

They are problem solvers and tend to be very goal oriented. Gen Xers are determined to be involved, responsible and in control. Other Generation X traits include working well in multicultural settings, desire for some fun in the workplace and a pragmatic approach to getting things done.

Recently this group has been referred to as the “middle-child” because they are stuck between the Baby Boomers and Millennials. There are fewer people in Generation X than in the Baby Boomer and Millennial groups—about 40% less—which means there are less people in this generation available to volunteer.

Characteristics of Generation X

*Values*

* Contribution
* Feedback and recognition
* Autonomy
* Time with manager

*Attributes*

* Adaptability
* Independence

*Work style*

* High-quality end results
* Productivity
* Balance between work and life
* Flexible work hours/job sharing appealing
* Free agents
* See self as a marketable commodity
* Comfortable with authority but not impressed with titles
* Technically competent
* Internal promotion
* Ethnic diversity

*Sources and references:*

Generation X. (n.d). Retrieved from http://www.valueoptions.com/spotlight\_YIW/gen\_x.htm.

Sowa, C. (December 22, 2009). 6 Rules of Marketing to Generation X. Retrieved from http://www.americasbestcompanies.com/blog/6-rules-marketing-generation-x.aspx.