

How to Coach Using AI-Powered Insights Across Your Multi-Generational Workforce

How smarter coaching can improve
the employee experience and
transform customer experience

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Introduction

Believe it or not, there are **five generations** that make up today's workforce.

- Traditionalist (Born 1925-1945)
- Baby Boomer (Born 1946-1964)
- Generation X (Born 1965-1980)
- Millennial (Born 1981-2000)
- Generation Z (Born 2001-2020)

Each of these generations has different ways in which they communicate and different preferences in the ways they like to be communicated to. Understanding how each operates in your workplace can be invaluable when it comes to delivering highly personalized, effective feedback and coaching. In fact, knowing the different ways these generations are motivated and tend to communicate can help you be a better leader. While it might sound counterintuitive to generations who didn't grow up with technology, AI can be the unifying force for tailoring the right one-to-one coaching to the right person at the right time.

This technology can unlock ways to provide positive reinforcement and inspire productivity, regardless of the generation you're working with. For customer-facing employees, this coaching has a measurable impact on the resulting customer experience (CX) delivered by your employees. Beyond CX, this technology can also be the key to understanding your employee experience (EX) as well.

Beyond CX, this technology can also be the key to understanding your employee experience (EX) as well. For example, nearly **70% of HR leaders still struggle** with their EX efforts, despite surveys and other efforts to collect employee feedback. The biggest difference: solicited feedback from mechanisms like surveys doesn't uncover the unvarnished truth of what employees really think. Leveraging AI to analyze unsolicited, on-the-job insights from employees can help you uncover an even deeper understanding of the generational and individual differences that motivate and retain employees.



Generations across the workforce today

Traditionalists

(2% of the workforce)

Dependable, straightforward, tactful, loyal

Motivations: Respect, recognition, providing long-term value to the company

Communication style: Personal touch, handwritten notes vs. email

Worldview: Obedience over individualism; age equals seniority; advancing through the hierarchy

Key Takeaways: Provide satisfying work and opportunities to contribute; emphasize stability

2%

Baby Boomers

(25% of the workforce)

Optimistic, competitive, workaholic, team-oriented

Motivations: Company loyalty, teamwork, duty

Communication style: Efficiency matters, prefer phone calls and face to face

Worldview: Achievement comes after paying one's dues; sacrifice for success

Key Takeaways: Provide them with specific goals and deadlines; put them in mentor roles; offer coaching-style feedback

25%

Gen X

(33% of the workforce)

Flexible, informal, skeptical, independent

Motivations: Diversity, work-life balance, their personal-professional interests rather than the company's interests

Communication style: Similar to boomers, prefers whatever is most efficient

Worldview: Favoring diversity; quick to move on if their employer fails to meet their needs; resistant to change at work if it affects their personal lives

Key Takeaways: Give them immediate feedback; provide flexible work arrangements and work-life balance; extend opportunities for personal development

33%

Millennials

(35% of the workforce)

Competitive, civic-minded, open-minded on diversity, achievement-oriented

Motivations: Responsibility, the quality of their manager, unique work experiences

Communication style: IMs, texts, and email

Worldview: Seeking challenge, growth, and development; a fun work life and work-life balance; likely to leave an organization if they don't like change

Key Takeaways: Get to know them personally; manage by results; be flexible on their schedule and work assignments; provide immediate feedback

35%

Gen Z

(5% of the workforce)

Global, entrepreneurial, progressive, less focused

Motivations: Diversity, personalization, individuality, creativity

Communication style: IMs, texts, social media

Worldview: Self-identifying as digital device addicts; valuing independence and individuality; preferring to work with millennial managers, innovative coworkers, and new technologies

Key Takeaways: Offer opportunities to work on multiple projects at the same time; provide work-life balance; allow them to be self-directed and independent

5%

According to [research from Purdue University](#) cited in the image above, both cultural and life experiences shape the way people prefer to work.

Leveraging AI-driven coaching to every employee

AI is a critical technology to understand unsolicited employee feedback at scale. For example, technology like AI-powered conversation intelligence helps supervisors understand where team members are excelling and where they need more support. This technology is particularly useful on large and/or distributed teams, or teams that handle high volumes of customer interactions like contact center or customer service employees.

Due to the sheer volume of customer interactions, managers and supervisors need technology to help them deliver effective, data-driven, one-to-one coaching at scale. Conversation intelligence platforms mine data for insights from 100% of conversations that happen between employees and customers – regardless of the channel in which they originate. These insights help managers and supervisors provide coaching opportunities for customer- or prospect-facing employees, such as sales, customer support, and more.

And personalized, tailored coaching and training provides more opportunities for growth and helps employees realize their potential in your organization.

This type of AI technology is also incredibly effective in understanding the voice of the employee (VoE) to enhance EX efforts. This includes:

- **Analyzing feedback to improve experiences:** Collect both solicited and unsolicited feedback to identify areas of opportunity to better meet employee needs and expectations.
- **Building cultures of improvement:** Empower employees with clear direction and a path for improvement with real-time feedback and improved departmental communication.
- **Driving change to increase retention:** Leverage emotion scoring, sentiment analysis and trend analysis to better understand what employees want, and take action to improve their job satisfaction and reduce turnover.

Ideally, CX and EX efforts go hand-in-hand. Happy, fulfilled and well-coached employees reflect their attitudes outward to customers, creating a virtuous cycle of positive engagement across the board.

Avoiding cognitive bias and stereotyping

While generational insights are an important data point to understanding the modern workforce, employers and managers should work to avoid stereotyping. Stereotypes can be a dangerous side effect of applying broad-brush psychology to everyone within a certain cohort.

For example, **studies** have shown that age-related cognitive bias can emerge in settings that over-use generational psychology tactics. This bias comes in the form of perceptions about other generational cohorts. In addition, employees might feel anxiety and concerns about how others perceive their own age group.

It's important to consider all of the data from employee conversations when working to understand how they want to be coached and trained. Experts recommend tracking individual employee differences over time, and working on shared goals as a team to unify employees.

It's important for management teams to also acknowledge when bias exists in other areas (gender, race, sexual orientation) and work to **become an ally** of your direct reports. That means listening to people, believing their experiences and challenging ingrained assumptions.



Three practical ways to leverage AI across generations

Now that we've examined how different generations tend to prefer to receive feedback and how AI can help at a high level, let's look at some practical ways you can apply technology like conversation intelligence within your workplace.

Back up KPIs with data from the field

Many organizations wrongly assume that coaching must be a completely separate goal from business and compliance-oriented KPIs. The truth is, these KPIs can be a starting point for a formalized coaching program. And AI can deliver insights needed to align both performance and coaching benchmarks.

For example, healthcare revenue cycle management company **Hollis Cobb** must adhere to strict compliance standards - from HIPAA to PCI. As a result, the company has to maintain strict QA policies and track agent adherence to specific guidelines. The company uses conversation intelligence to fulfill QA and operations requests by searching conversations for specific verbiage, ensuring that Hollis Cobb agents are meeting clients' customer satisfaction and compliance requirements.

Beyond these KPIs, managers use the dashboards to home in daily on their direct reports. That way, they can reward agents who meet and exceed expectations. If agents are underperforming, managers can address any issues with specific training and feedback, creating a culture of continuous improvement.



Deliver real-time feedback

Conversation intelligence can be an effective tool for real-time employee engagement and to course-correct on tricky issues. By delivering timely "nudges" to contact center agents - such as alerts to an agent's desktop - conversation intelligence can help them navigate difficult situations and avoid unnecessary escalations or issues. Supervisors and managers can use these alerts to understand daily and weekly team performance trends, and identify what actions to take next.

Real-time feedback can be used in a variety of ways to **enhance CX**. For example, in a sales scenario, it can identify customers who are well-suited for an up-sell/cross-sell, as well as the specific offer for the employee to present to them. The real-time application can pick up the nuances of a conversation, identify the appropriate offering, and provide instructions or a script for the agent to follow to complete a sale.

Empower employees to be more empathetic

Far beyond the positive and negative binaries of sentiment, you can use AI-powered analytics to understand customer emotions and coach employees to respond accordingly. Emotional insights can identify indicators like loyalty and churn-likely behavior. According to the recent **Forrester Snapshot Study**, commissioned by CallMiner, 68% of businesses agree that the call center has become the new empathy channel for customers, and 70% feel that contact center agents are dealing with more emotionally charged situations than ever before.

Specifically, emotion analysis can help with training and support to improve employee responses to dynamic situations. Providing employees with the knowledge and tools to address customer needs is critical for CX improvement. Also, emotion analytics can monitor agent performance to identify patterns, helping agents develop the skills they need (empathy, politeness, efficiency) to reach better outcomes.

Generational tips on how to structure 1:1 coaching

Traditionalists: Recognize the value they are providing by giving positive reinforcement.

Pro tip: Don't force interactions with technology beyond their comfort zone, instead treat technology as a way to deliver more informed coaching and feedback.

Baby Boomers: Encourage their loyalty by regularly offering or scheduling one-to-one coaching sessions.

Pro tip: This cohort may have varying degrees of comfort with AI, so provide context into why certain recommendations are being made.

Generation X: Give them structured guidance, but enough flexibility to execute on that guidance as they see fit.

Pro tip: Use AI to provide the structure to steer these independent employees in the right direction, vs. being too heavy-handed.

Millennials: Use data to set benchmarks and stretch goals.

Pro tip: Leverage data-driven feedback to inspire this group's ambition, and regularly reward progress.

Generation Z: Give them a window into the data and the technology you're using, and how it informs specific outcomes.

Pro tip: Technology comes as second-nature to this generation, so they may find extra value in a look behind the scenes.

Creating a culture of continuous improvement

One of the best things AI-powered technology can do is create a culture of continuous improvement in your organization. Employees crave regular, direct, data-driven feedback, even if they're top performers. Conversation intelligence technology helps managers and supervisors focus on exactly how to provide this feedback, consistently and at scale. Paired with insights on how individuals – generationally and otherwise – prefer to receive coaching, this level of feedback can improve retention, making employees feel valued and connected to your organization.

Other departments across your organization, such as HR, can also leverage AI to understand EX at a deeper level, beyond solicited feedback tools such as surveys. Rather than paint a broad picture of what each generational cohort or individual might need in terms of programs, benefits and more – your business leaders can use AI to understand exactly how employees feel at any given time. From there, you can tailor individual conversations and EX programs to improve morale and encourage long-term loyalty.

These changes aren't just good for people, they're good for your business. Loyal, happy employees project their feelings toward their careers outward to your customers, improving CX and other critical business outcomes across your organization.



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About CallMiner

CallMiner is the global leader in conversation intelligence to drive business performance improvement. Powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning, CallMiner delivers the industry's most comprehensive platform to analyze omnichannel customer interactions at scale, allowing organizations to interpret sentiment and identify patterns to reveal deep understanding from every conversation.

By connecting the dots between insights and action, CallMiner enables companies to identify areas of opportunity to drive business improvement, growth and transformational change more effectively than ever before. CallMiner is trusted by the world's leading organizations across retail, financial services, healthcare and insurance, travel and hospitality, and more.



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