

# Module 1. Diversity Management and High Athletic Performance

## Introduction

Globalization and access to technology have generated one of the most significant demographic changes in recent years in the world of organizations. The incorporation of various generations operating under different paradigms; competition between different age groups face the challenge of finding common work spaces.

The environment of sports communities, regardless of where they may be located, the competitive level, the athletes' genders and ages, are not exempt from this reality. What's more, they are fully involved in it.

The time gap separating one generation from the other has undeniably decreased, and the differences in personalities, interests and objectives occupy a more than significant role in various action areas, including sports, both in the training and the competitive level.

It's worth acknowledging that when defining a generation, we are talking in a general sense, as every human being has their own rich tapestry of idiosyncrasies; however, studies have shown that we are able to group most of them based on a set of beliefs, values and attitudes (Gadow, 2010).

By the same token, each generation contributes its own attributes and competencies, some similar to the others, while others differ strongly, often complementing each other, and thus becoming part of one of the dimensions of diversity facing society in general, and the different social groups with their individual functions.

One dimension does not seek to close gaps; its real challenge lies in finding generating the coexistence of expectations and values in a common space. It should be tackled by incorporating various audiences, understanding the models of thought and management of the older generations, and new ways of understanding the requirements, possibilities, and interests of the young.

Athletic performance as a key objective for all who contribute in their role to an athletic community (coaches, members of the technical team, managers, parents, psychologists, representatives, etc.) can only be understood these days through understanding the peculiarities of various generations existing in parallel through the processes of teaching -- learning, and the various management types of each one of them. As is said colloquially, "let the old work well with the young". This does not just apply to the athletes in a team, but to all interactions in the world of athletic activity.

These days, effective Diversity Management is the key to ensure that audiences of various generations not only cohabit in a shared space, but also get along in the same process.

By the same token, Contreras (2001) names diversity as a post-modern educational concept seeking to individualize, compensate and promote equal opportunity, which becomes relevant from the circumstantial perspective of being different. An approach framed as "normality is diversity; what's normal is to be diverse or different".

Each generation has easily observable characteristics and behaviors ("what" they are doing). But beliefs and underlying generational attitudes ("why" they're doing it) are invisible, and this is why to manage multi-generational teams effectively, the leader must learn about the individual beliefs and attitudes of each generation, and adapt their managerial style thusly.

For these reasons, this module will focus on describing the main characteristics for each generation. We can currently link them together in a single social body and they possess traits that are related to athletic activity as a device for teaching and learning skills, and drivers that can exist to increase Athletic Performance in each one of these generations:

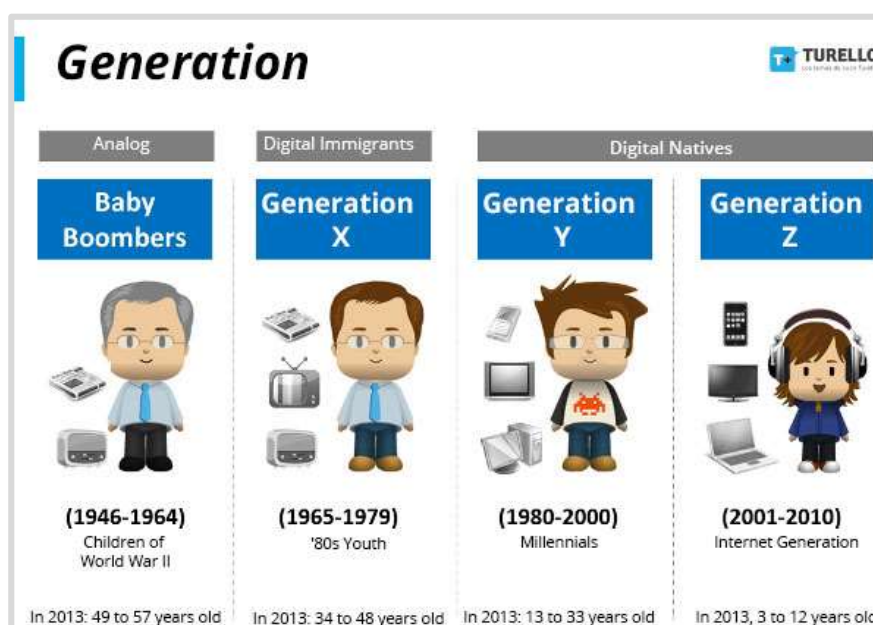
- Baby Boomers (born between 1944 and 1960).
- Generation X (born between 1961 and 1980).
- Generation Y (born between 1981 and 2000).
- Generation Z (born between 2001 and 2010).

# 1.1 Psycho-Social Traits of Generational Diversity in the Athletic Community

From working with athletes in the last decade since the advent of sports psychology, and having previous experience as a basketball athlete, the person who writes these lines can assert how the prevailing generational diversity presents a challenge to the entire athletic community to produce conceptual, didactic, pedagogical and methodological solutions at a speed that was unnecessary 20 years ago.

The global age, the advent of ICTs, the rearrangement of the short, medium and long term for everyone, and the reassessment of priorities, have created a new environment in athletic activity. A new paradigm regarding how to teach, how to learn, how to want to be an athlete.

High Athletic Performance should have the different generations permanently in the management map. They may want the same things, but in different degrees, extents and formats. The dilemma stems from understanding what each group wants and how to provide it to them in a significant manner, while also keeping harmony and equity to get the most out of each individual's motivation, thus increasing the chances to obtain a better Athletic Performance.



Source: [Untitled image about generations] 2014, retrieved from <https://goo.gl/ZHfKTW>

## 1.1.1 Baby Boomers (born between 1944 – 1960)

- **Distinctive features:** A generation that seeks to compete, be optimistic, "everything is possible". Energetic. Motto "be productive". They seek empowerment and participation. They never plan to retire, they want to keep working.
- **Values and beliefs:** Opposition to traditional values. Peace (hippies). Success: amount of material income. Status from consumption of goods. Education as a means to progress. Have a career. Search for power. Competition to reach the top. Problems balancing work and personal life.
- **Socio-cultural context:** Post-war economy provides conditions of optimism, building up, abundance. Consumption boom. High levels of education. Wish for change, energy. A generation of idealism, social movements, breaking paradigms. The woman joins the workforce.
- **Interpersonal communication:** This generation values being treated with respect for what they know, for their trajectory and experience, not just what they do. They feel more comfortable with innuendos and euphemisms.
- **Conflict:** They develop a bad disposition if confronted with concrete criticisms, certain orders or the same innuendo. Feedback is necessary once a year and should only exist if there is a lot of information and acknowledgment in the feedback process.
- **Reinforcement policy:** They must overvalue privileges, constant recognition, and referring to a specific status, or climb above their station. In order for them to continue contributing with their wisdom and experience, the result is to stand out, show off, and shine.

### Aspects of the athletic environment to consider with this generation (Baby Boomers)

The most prominent feature of this generation in current athletic communities is the role they predominantly play, and it is not precisely being athletes, if we talk about formally doing sport and high-performance competition. Except for disciplines such as golf or equestrian sports (just to name a few; these two are not the only ones), there are not many others that allow active high-level performance upon reaching the age range corresponding to this generation.

Let's take into account the fact that, a person born at one of the ends of this generational age range (1944) is over 74 years old. At the other end, the youngest of this generation are turning 60 years old, or are close to it.

Thus, they mostly occupy the roles of:

- Administrators.
- Coaches.
- Members of the technical team.
- Athletes' parents.

The common denominators between these audiences has to do with leadership over other athletes and their educational and influential role on them. Another important aspect: many of them have already retired from these roles, remaining as informal mentors due to their long trajectory from their long careers.

For those who are currently in any of the previously mentioned roles, it is a constant challenge to bridge the gap between themselves and the athletes.

Perhaps the most disruptive cross-generational meeting in terms of the paradigms related to management / teaching / learning of sport, is persistently between this generation and the youngest, meaning the "Y" and the "Z". If we had to list the central variables in relation to which the Baby Boomers need to focus to optimize the athletic performance of the youngest athletes, from the psycho-social point of view, the following list might be appropriate:

- 1) Communicational strategies: Athletes and members of sports communities of under 35 currently employ spoken and written language less, and symbols and audio-visual support more as the means of communication they consume and emit.
- 2) Use of new technologies: The Smartphone as an instrument of permanent connectivity to social media and online search engines is part of the daily existence of members of each community, with members of generations "Y" and "Z" using them most intensely. Including these devices (not just Smartphones but tablets, laptops, Smart-TVs, desktop computers, among others) is key in coordinating the same communication channels through which many messages related to management and athletic activity are sent.
- 3) Short, medium and long term adaptation: a Baby Boomer's interpretation and management times at their age, as recipients of their predominant functions, have little to do with the liquidity or immediacy with which everything is perceived today. Having short, medium, and long term goals with members of younger generations is paramount in order to determine not only the possibility of an athletic process's success, but also the viability of its existence.
- 4) Balance between personal and professional life: The Baby Boomers' culture of effort and constant sacrifice colors their overall

perception of life. The same does not happen with generations "Y" and/or "Z". Without attempting to judge what is wrong or right (which is not this course's objective), the description says that the establishment of priorities to navigate processes is not the same for Boomers as it is for the younger generations. The balance between wishing for personal and professional fulfillment today is instilled in youth as a life premise, meaning that they generally will not be willing to give up many aspects of their life beyond athletics. Sports may be a central aspect, but it is not everything.

- 5) Empathy criteria for decision making: For a Boomer, putting themselves in the place of others does not mean doing whatever the younger generation wants. But it does imply keeping the real criteria from which young people make their decisions in mind, as regardless of preference, understanding their information processing and subsequent behavior is a fundamental part of positively influencing whoever has among their favorite items: short-term satisfaction, the necessary foundations to understand why things should be done in the established way, the immediacy in getting results, and the exaltation of confirming experiences beyond athletics.

### 1.1.2 Generation X (born between 1961 – 1980)

**Distinctive features:** Individualistic, cynical, misunderstood, rebellious. Skepticism. They believe in themselves, not in others. They are known as an apathetic generation, independent, focused on personal achievements.

- **Values and beliefs:** Disappointed with their parents' values. Group solidarity. Culture of immediacy. No long-term projects. Professional projects. Motto "the future wasn't appealing". They speak several languages. They are citizens of the world. Raised in homes with two working parents. They work and study or train. Nothing guarantees progress. They reassert a balance between life and work. They enjoy work and balance with their personal activities. They prioritize family and bonds.
- **Socio-cultural context:** "TV" and "PCs" appear, as well as video games. Post-feminism - divorces triple. Delayed motherhood.
- **Interpersonal communication:** About achieved and pending results. They prioritize what is practical and direct, without fooling around. This comes with precision in an environment suitable for conversation, opinion-sharing, facilitating observations, and self-assessment.

- **Conflict:** Will arise when they are unable to reach the balance between a productive and a pleasant life. They are able to prioritize this balance because they are independent and autonomous.
- **Feedback and reinforcement policy:** It will be successful when its result causes an increase in their learning, and its application can generate changes in the pertinent field of action. Otherwise, it will be in vain. They seek to reach their personal goals. They are individualists.

### **Aspects of the athletic environment to consider with this generation (Generation X).**

This generation serves as the "bridge" between the Boomers and the advent of Millennials "Y" and "Z". Last generation in history where the Internet did not play a part in their infancy or adolescence. They are currently (in the year 2016) between 51 and 36 years old. They were professional athletes in the 80s, 90s and the first decade of the 2000s (the youngest in this generation are currently retiring if they are in a professional high-performance sport).

We have a mass of recent former athletes and athletes in activity (today, mature athletes in professional sports are the last representatives in the game field of a generation that grew without online screens... the last in the history of humanity).

Another large portion of this generation are currently active athletic coaches, technical team members, and managers. One could say that the global-scale sports phenomenon these days is "led" by Generation X.

So, the High Athletic Performance currently has leaders outside the field and mature athletes in the field who are part of this generation.

Individualists, with a certain apathy towards the environment born out of the permanently-turmoiled world they were brought up in (Cold War, fall of socialist regimes and the development at all costs of capitalist logic), they knew (and know) how to adapt to the Boomers' methods and find it easier to get along with the "Y" and "Z" (since their own children will be from this generation).

Proponents of training and competition models where social media and the trans-media phenomena did not exist, information was enough but not free nor in excess as it currently is, these athletes who are currently coaches and managers tend to have the following as objectives:

- 1) Adapting to a 3.0 sporting world: which has nothing to do with "local" recipes with which they grew up as athletes.

- 2) Apply a completely different leadership style to the one they adhered to growing up, which was based a lot more on authoritative orders given by a boss (conceptual leadership) than the capacity of positive influence that a leader is currently expected to have, becoming a facilitator for the tasks of those they lead, working towards a consensus along with them (situational-behavioral leadership).
- 3) Decode the Boomers' legacy: whom they themselves refer to as mentors, and transmitting these messages to the members of the "Y" and "Z" generations that have nothing to do with what the former, living together in double vertical logic (with "X" as the leader - and "Y"/"Z" as the followers) and horizontal logic (fellow members of the technical - management - sporting establishment teams).
- 4) Leaving behind training and competition processes from a physical, analog and local world they developed in, in favor of a liquid, digital-virtual and global one in which they would predominantly interact with younger people who are "set" under the online paradigm.

## 1.1.3 Generation Y (born between 1981 – 2000)

### Distinctive features

Virtual-oriented. Citizens of the world. Defiant, autonomous, with disperse attention. They are multitaskers. Commitment geared towards results and the effect of their task. Entrepreneurial style.

- **Values and beliefs:** Respect for diversity, justice, and solidarity. "Everything NOW." Motto "what is there for me today?" Face challenges. Acquire new skills and knowledge. They seek to be valued, acknowledged, challenged, listened to in their needs and contributions. Being connected. They care less about money. Obsessed with aesthetics. They live in a bubble of comfort. They seek their economic independence and save money to enjoy their private lives. Low commitment to organizations. They aim to work and create friendly environments, respectful treatment with positive people. Prioritize family and bonds. Sensitive to social and environmental problems.
- **Social-cultural context:** Internet, cell phones, mp3, Playstations. Social media. Multimedia is their favorite resource. Productive as long as they find themselves challenged, entertained and enthusiastic. Economy of consumption. Culture of games and gadgets. Audiovisual, interactive, "channel-surfing" culture. Video games as an important hobby or pastime. Web of connections and

knowledge. High connectivity. Continuous access to information. Experimental and virtual learning (as something natural)

- **Interpersonal communication:** They will continuously underline the need to feel heard and respected; that their personal needs are contemplated and require as much help as possible balancing their work and personal lives. They consider it fundamentally important to create a pleasant, open, stress-free work environment. They aim to stimulate and recognize collaborative teamwork, networking, and cultural diversity; making it productive and attractive every day.
- **Conflict:** They will make themselves heard when they perceive situations of injustice, lack of solidarity, or someone breaking the flexible and pleasant environment, generating hostility and mistrust in shared spaces.
- **Feedback and reinforcement policies:** It's a generation that favors advanced technological work platforms, communication and training. Stimulate permanent entertainment and opportunities for training. Propose experiences that will allow them to develop another set of skills. This is why they expect feedback in a positive and highly constructive way. In accordance to this, they look for tutoring, mentoring, or coaching relationships. The leader must balance the role of coach as well as that of teacher and guide. This concept of leadership seeks to develop an environment of acknowledgment and reward for additional effort (reinforcement policy), promoting interpersonal communication spaces such as meetings, after-work get-togethers, breakfasts, etc.

### **Aspects of the athletic environment to consider with this generation (Generation Y):**

Currently in 2017, they are between 35 and 16 years old. They form the largest group of active athletes in all high athletic performance disciplines at the global level. Also, some of the young coaches and managers that start working in a world littered with an abundance of information, born out of the cross-media phenomenon and the online empire.

The characteristics of their teaching and learning processes are closely related to this generation's traits as listed above, as well as the contributions linked to the section dedicated to Baby Boomers.

The great challenge facing Generation "Y" is being led by previous generations who are used to a vertical link that has little to do with the world in which Generation "Y" has developed. Becoming interpreters of

the methods of Generation "X" and adapting them to "Y" language, is something we see daily in athletic communities. The Generation "Y" of athletes is the last to be an active part in training and competition processes led by offline subjects, somehow synthesizing the enormous differences between the everyday life of 30/40 years back and current day.

Generation "Y" will surely be remembered as the first to demand leadership styles and types of daily training and competition management in accordance to their devices, their terms, and the world in which they grew up, and the last to receive their own needs from generations that belonged to a pre-Internet world, bringing efforts to try to understand a new language and a new way of living within sports activity.

### 1.1.4 Generation Z (born between 2001 and 2010)

**Distinctive features:** Digital natives. Overstimulated. Less reflective, and impatient. Avid consumers. Entrepreneurial spirit. Independent. Collaborative and creative.

- **Values and beliefs:** Versatility and flexibility. They have the need to be seen and acknowledged, and no environment is left out of this. They handle digital language instinctively. They seek to be taken seriously, to have their ideas and contributions be heard. They consider honesty the most important quality to be a good leader. They value the opportunity for growth over a large check.
- **Socio-cultural context:** Culture of immediacy. Culture of abundance and consumerism: products, brands, stimulus, everything is one click away. Video games and social media provide refuge.
- **Interpersonal communication:** "Linked through networks". Digital natives. There's no waiting for anything to happen, it's the culture of immediacy where everything is one click away.
- **Conflict:** may be caused by impatience, or by (almost non-existent) self-reflection. The same occurs when they are not provided the space of acknowledgment and attention they seek (for their ideas), but not due to status or power, but to get opportunities for growth development. Economic remuneration does not hold the important status it used to.
- **Feedback and reinforcement policies:** They value feedback if they allow for an honest and transparent treatment by the leader or

mentor. Otherwise, they'll turn their backs to it. They agree that a reinforcement policy should go hand in hand with growth opportunities, incentivizing their entrepreneurial spirit, and fostering a collaborative and creative environment. But they are mainly flexible.

### **Aspects of the athletic environment to consider with this generation (Generation Z):**

In 2016, they are between 6 and 15 years old. The only generation that, in the current sports context, is represented only by athletes in formative stages of development. The main distinctive trait that members of Generation "Z" feature is the question mark that the athletic community has surrounding the final product that will result from the current teaching and learning methods, where on one hand parents, coaches and managers attempt to understand a childhood and adolescence experience that has absolutely nothing to do with their own, a world tangentially different from theirs at the same ages, a sports culture that does not even remotely resemble what today's children and adolescents go through: the most absolute immediacy, hyper-stimulation, multitasking, all under a virtual halo: what's not available on the web through a digital device, does not exist.

For the first time in the history of Humanity, we see the effect of double reality for adults, only reality for members of the "Z" generation: the co-existence of a physical and a virtual world.

Sports are once again not foreign; the "e-sports" phenomenon is a tremendous challenge that educators, parents, and mentors of this generation must be willing to provide leadership, didactic, pedagogical and methodological answers for, so that they work for and not against the integral development of our youngest. For the first time one single subject can play soccer, basketball, tennis, or whatever sport, with a "real" ball, in a "real" field, with "real" partners, and on the same day, do it through online platforms where they "pretend" to be whoever they wish to be in a virtual dimension. To the reader of this course, there is surely still a distinction between those two spheres. For the members of the "Z" generation, there isn't: the melding of the two is their reality. Their only reality.

However, citing Gadow (2010), when it comes to establishing what the representatives of different generations value we can observe common factors that encourage the development of Diversity; some of these factors are: being heard, understood, and respected, having

opportunities for growth, being acknowledged, having credible leaders, feeling part of something, keeping up to date (using the tools available in each time frame).

The challenge is an enriching and complementary coexistence of all of them in a shared productive space, to obtain better results and levels of satisfaction.

*In summary, respect, permanent opportunity for dialog, listening, openness and flexibility are competencies that contribute to adjusting everybody's expectations so as to minimize frustrations and maximize motivation and benefits.*

Achieving a harmonious coexistence and a shared work space requires effort from the older generations to help the young mature, and effort from the younger generation to understand the rules of the world of work and learn from experience, and from each other to identify and explore common interests.

*Diversity strategies* are an excellent tool to work on the development of generational competencies that allow for the recognition, appreciation, and encouragement of different visions, knowledge, and methodologies of a multi-generational work force, to be put at the service of competitiveness and societal enrichment.

The athletic institutions that are skillful or visionary enough to understand and take advantage of the generational differences will have an insurmountable advantage in forthcoming years.

# 1.2 Generational Diversity in Training Processes and Competition

Diversity Management is the "active and conscious development of a process of acceptance and utilization of certain differences and similarities as potential in a large organization, a process that created added value, a process of communicational management, based on strategic values and facing the future" (Keil, Amershi, Holmes et al. 2007).

Managing diversity implies ensuring inclusive work environments, that perceive difference as a source of enrichment for both the teams and the organization at large.

Similarly, we must not forget that knowing a team is a continuous process that requires and demands time and dedication. So, one of the main challenges of the leader of a sports team is to *find the way to reconcile the interests and expectations derived from the differences between the people in the entire team.*

In other words: the definitive success of a multi-generational team depends on how well it's led and inspired, to not only acknowledge but reconcile the differences. With a proactive approach, the team will be able to find similarities and take advantage of the different points of view.

Respect, the permanent opportunity for dialog, openness, and flexibility are basic rules to achieve a harmonious cohabitation and create a shared space for all people.

*It's important to reiterate that working cooperatively with people from a different generation is a key factor to learning: cooperating in several places where there was once competition, with time becomes a strategy of great relevance to take maximum advantage of each member of a specific sports team, and the organization at large.*

It's worth pointing out that, during the current course unit, we will be talking predominantly from the point of view of the leader of the team, so that the reader has the clearest vision possible of the strategies that can be used by whoever is in charge of managing the processes of training and competition.

### 1.2.1 Interpersonal Communication Map in Generational Diversity, Adapted to Training Processes and Sports Competition

The success of organizations depends largely on the performance of its work teams. Creating high-performing teams is a necessity. The same rules apply in the environment of athletics.

Athletic institutions operate in very rapidly changing environments and this requires the skill to adapt and respond effectively, which calls for the integration of different practices and processes. Interpersonal communication is a central variable in the attempt to achieve this goal.

Next, we present a descriptive chart with some recommendations about communicational methods by generation, valid in both training as well as competition.

<b>Baby Boomers</b>	Euphemisms over direct information.
	"Politically correct", and thus it's preferable to temper bad news and/or critiques.
	Being conciliatory and reach agreements.
	Apply hints more than orders.
	Show advantages and benefits when receiving feedback.

Source: Developed by the author.



<b>Generation X</b>	Describe objectives reached and yet to be reached.
	Communicate with precision.
	Allow others to converse, give opinions, propose ideas. Facilitate observation and self-assessment.
	Discuss careers and future plans.

Source: Developed by the author.

<b>"Y"/"Z" Generations</b>	Offer constant feedback.
	Be clear, do not hesitate to say what is good or bad.
	Have arguments ready for their requests and requirements.
	Be positive, close, direct.
	Establish a space for conversation and exchange. No monologues.
	Recognize and offer concrete guidelines for improvement.
	Listen to their opinions

Source: Developed by the author.

## 1.2.2 Map for Managing Conflicts in Generational Diversity, Adapted to Training Processes and Sports Competition

How could strategies that integrate diversity be effectively implemented as an asset within a team? Before adapting to certain differences in a team, they must be acknowledged and respected. Inevitably, there will be tensions that must be respected and resolved in a positive manner and may result in a change of direction. Conflict management.

In this sense, it's important to point out that conflict is inherent to human nature; thus, it is part of group dynamics in general and sports in



particular. We mention this element to debunk the concept that "only bad teams have conflict". This is not the case. Differentiating regular teams from those that seek High Performance is saying that they both have conflicts, but only in the latter is there an effective management method for them. Possessing concrete management strategies is a critical success factor in the development of high performance teams.

Having said all this, why should diversity be a concern? Most specialists on the subject agree that greater diversity may increase a team's work effectiveness when achieving its goals, as well as increase productivity. As the author Chelladurai (2001) states: "taking advantage of the differences between members and coordinating them to obtain greater effectiveness is one of the pillars of management" (as cited in Hall, 2004, p.2) Athletic management in this case, concrete attempts for the leader to obtain the greatest performance in regards to training, and transferring it to competition.

In this sense, independently of which generations the coach has to deal with, there is a precept from the field of management that applies perfectly to sports: "You cannot improve what is not managed". Thus, the golden rule when faced with conflict is precisely that: to manage it. And managing it means doing so under the following guidelines:

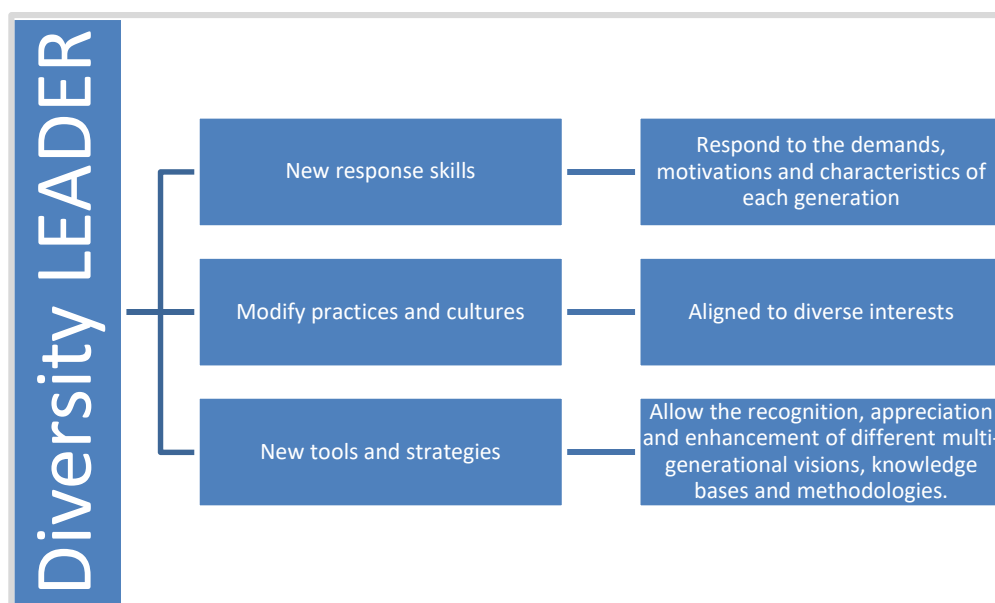
- Without any time delays.
- Without unnecessary interlocutors beyond those involved.
- Without value judgments that tinge the conflict in subjectivity.
- Without any magic solutions offered in advance.

Let's remember the key leadership assets proposed in the corresponding course: identify, address, reinforce.

Specifically, managing conflict means addressing it. For this, leaders have several specific communication tools at their disposal, one of them being descriptive feedback, which we will explore in the following section.

Finally, reinforcing new behavior proposed as a result of conflict management is to implement an appropriate reinforcement policy, covered in the final section of the unit.

An athletic leader who works in accordance with this criteria is able to manage diversity from the following perspective, completely aligned with current training and competition process requirements.



### 1.2.3 Descriptive Feedback on Performance in Generational Diversity, Adapted to Training Processes and Sports Competition

Valuing diversity involves an important source of new ideas, attitudes, visions, perspectives, challenges, and opportunities for any organization. In the words of Lenihan (2000) "developing a culture that values diversity demands commitment and active participation from all members of the organization, (and) the valuing of diversity must be observed as something more than a topic managed by specialists. It is about a practice, a way of involving people, subjects, and tasks from one end of the organization to the other." (as cited in Hall, 2004, p.6). This rings true in the world of athletics.

From another point of view, Thomas (1991) defines diversity by including everyone, instead of defining it by classifying groups based on race or gender. Diversity, then, extends to all kinds of personal and organizational characteristics, including (but not limited to) age, education, physical ability, personality, lifestyle, sexual orientation, geographic origin, management, etc. He asserts that "diversity management is a complete management process whose finality consists in developing a framework that is effective for all employees" (as cited in Hall, 2004, p.2).

Understanding Diversity Management in an athletic environment from this perspective would involve including each member of the training

and competition process as an active agent in their own growth as an athlete. This is achieved based on communicational instruments: one of them being descriptive feedback.

Feedback in the sense of providing feedback about each athlete's behaviors, providing them with an external perspective on what they did and how they did it.

Descriptive in the sense that these statements are backed up with concrete, objective data, that distances these comments from the coach's subjective perspective.

This communication tool is especially important with new generations, since they are eager to receive constant feedback on their actions (short term is everything to members of the "Y" and "Z" generations; immediacy and the supremacy of "now"). Thus, the frequency of feedback with these two generations should be nearly constant, while being frequent with members of Generation "X" and infrequent with Baby Boomers.

The objective descriptive trait is essential with younger generations, since they haven't been raised to obey orders or respond "yes, sir", but instead to inquire. Gaining credibility with them implies nothing more than being able to substantiate every claim in the feedback with concrete arguments. With members of the "Y" and "Z" generations, descriptive feedback should be direct, without delay, covering conducts they should foster and reinforce as well as behaviors to incorporate or suppress. With members of generation "X", the mode of communication should be balanced in terms of combining positive actions at first, with constructive feedback including strategies that could benefit them. And with the Baby Boomers, the "politically correct" language and measured speech are advisable, leaving direct criticisms to the side, bringing up behaviors to maintain, and looking for the best ways to gradually introduce behaviors to reinforce, add, and suppress.

Finally, it's recommended that the meeting to deliver descriptive feedback should always be one-on-one rather than as a group, since, depending on the generation each member belongs to as well as individual personality traits, addressing them as a group can generate awkwardness and discomfort. The one-on-one interview is the most powerful instrument a leader possesses to share sensitive information with each member of the team.

## 1.2.4 Reinforcement Policies in Generational Diversity, Adapted to Training Processes and Sports Competition

According to a study from the European Commission (2003) *The Cost and Benefit of Diversity*, the five most significant advantages that the "companies with the most politically active diversity" assign to diversity (adapted to the pertinent concepts) are:

- Strengthening of cultural values within the team.
- Improving the team's reputation.
- Helping to attract and retain highly talented people.
- Increasing motivation and effectiveness.
- Increasing innovation and creativity among players.

Advantages that involve all levels of an organization or sports team, especially management. Thus, it is worth focusing on the third asset of the leadership model proposed in the corresponding course: reinforcing.

It is worth reminding students that a reinforcement policy is applied to "increase the likelihood of the appearance of required behaviors, or the disappearance of unwanted behaviors".

It's made up of 4 action possibilities for the leader:

- Positive reward: Positive stimulus is applied
- Negative reward: A negative stimulus is removed.
- Positive punishment: An incentive is applied.
- Negative punishment: A positive stimulus is removed.

Now, the key for these strategies to be effective is to know what effectively constitutes a reward or a punishment for each member of the team. One may think one is rewarding someone when one is really punishing them, and vice versa. Whatever the mistake, the end result is the opposite of what they look for.

Keeping the generational differences in mind, it's recommended that rewards are favored over punishment with Baby Boomers, and if applying the latter, doing so with as much finesse as possible so as not to shut off future commitment from those involved. With members of Generation "X", both positive and negative rewards can be applied as far as adding or removing negative stimuli, since this generation is more used to the culture of effort and sacrifice than the younger ones. The opposite applies with Generations "Y" and "Z", where applying or removing positive stimuli may be the most efficient, given the familiarity

they have with the objects of their desire. It should be pointed out that the application of rewards and punishment with the younger generations should be done directly and with no delays, considering that the short-term is their default temporal point of reference.



Source: [Untitled image on the Yo-Yo machine] (s. f.) Retrieved from: <https://goo.gl/u2a0US>

***"We are all in the same team with our differences, not in spite of them"***

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