

Rural Conference Keynote Offers Insight into Multi-Generational Workforce

Mastering the art of cross-generational leadership



Phil Gwoke

Last year members of the Baby Boomer generation were outnumbered, again, by other generations in the workforce: Millennials and Gen Z. This new shift is a mark of the challenge health care leaders face: engaging and retaining a workforce made up of five generations. On July 9, Milwaukee-native, national speaker and advisor on growing meaningful human connections Phil Gwoke opened the Wisconsin Rural Health Conference with a well-received session on this workplace generational evolution and the art of cross-generational leadership.

Gwoke explained, "As we grow up, we get used to things being a certain way, and then change catches up, and each generation is stuck in their old paradigm." He offered insight into how each generation connects, finds meaning and seeks success in the workplace. Along the way, the human connections expert shared examples of old paradigms that stick, such as "rolling up" the car window or "dialing" the phone, even though cars haven't had roll-up windows or phones rotary dials in the lifetimes of the two largest generations in the workforce, Gen Z and Gen X. Building on the generational insight, Gwoke offered attendees

strategies for "how to speak their language."

Gwoke cautioned the pictures he painted of each generation are broad generalizations to help with a leadership shift and don't apply equally to individuals. Attendees had a chance to network and utilize what they learned in a table exercise. Their task: convince employees from the youngest generation in the workforce, Gen Z, and the oldest, the Baby Boom, to share their knowledge with others in the workplace. Learning that "knowledge is their power" for Boomers, and that Gen Z "yearns for human connection" helped groups appeal differently to each generation.

Phil Gwoke closed his presentation by sharing that health care workplaces will need wisdom, discipline, innovation and human touch to succeed in the next 30 years. Boomers bring wisdom, Gen X brings discipline, Millennials bring innovation and Gen Z bring human touch. We need each generation, and their unique paradigm, to make it happen.

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EDUCATION EVENTS

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Rising Claims, Real Impacts: Wisconsin Hospital Risk Trends and What Leaders Can Do Now

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Seeing the Real Market: Using Claims Enhanced Intelligence to Make Better Strategy, Access, and Growth Decisions

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Caring for Wisconsin's Caregivers: 2026 WHA Healthcare Workforce Well-being Summit