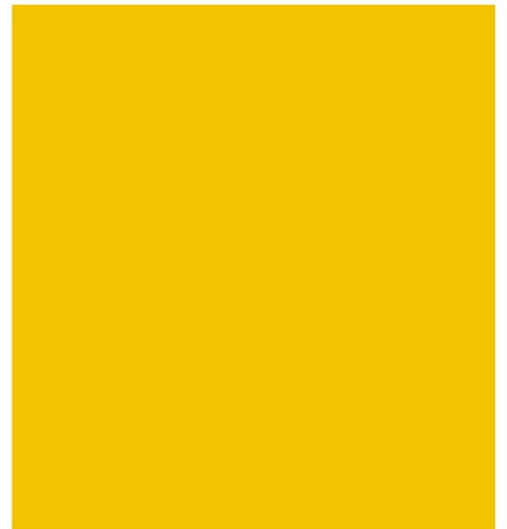


Generational Check-in

Results of Survey on Remote Working



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Introduction

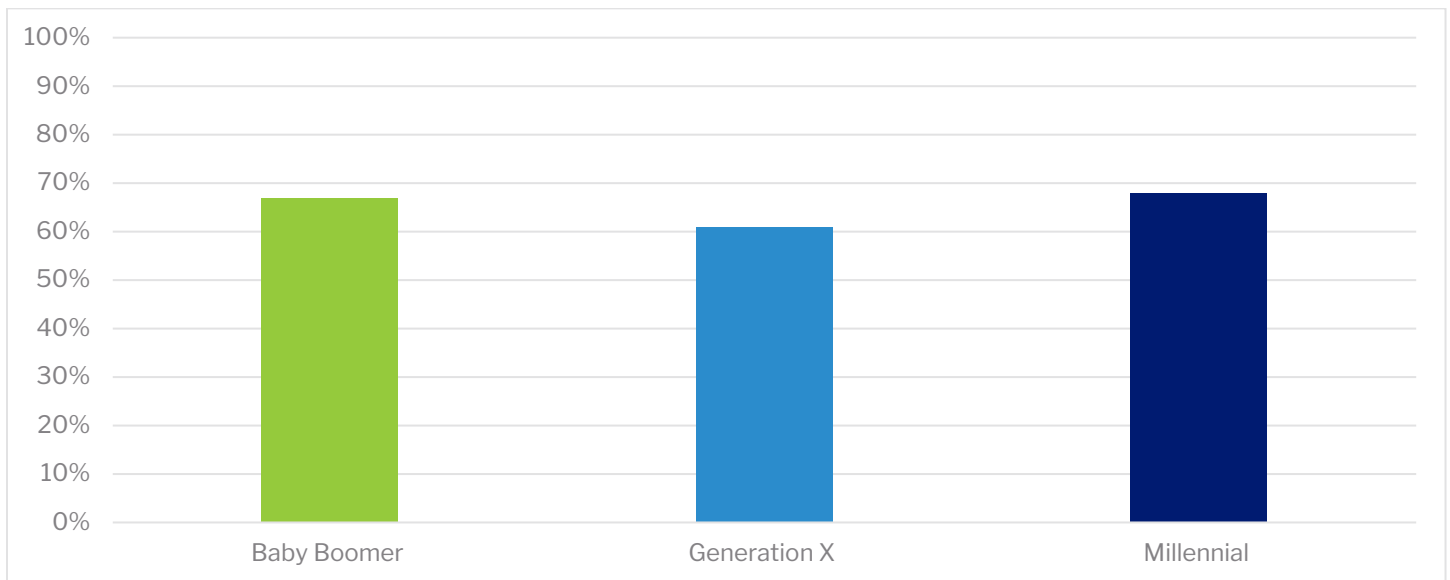
Work will never be the same after the pandemic. After the vaccine has been developed, remote working habits will persist. How do people feel about remote work, and how do different generations react to this new reality?

In April 2020, Second Wave Learning conducted a national survey of full-time workers across each of the three generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials. All respondents were screened for their employment status as full-time and are currently engaged in remote work. Here are the highlights:

All generations like remote work

The survey found that 65% of all generations actually like remote work and would prefer it going forward as part of their regular work schedule. Millennials are slightly more likely to prefer remote work compared to Boomers and Generation X, but the differences were negligible.

I like to work remotely

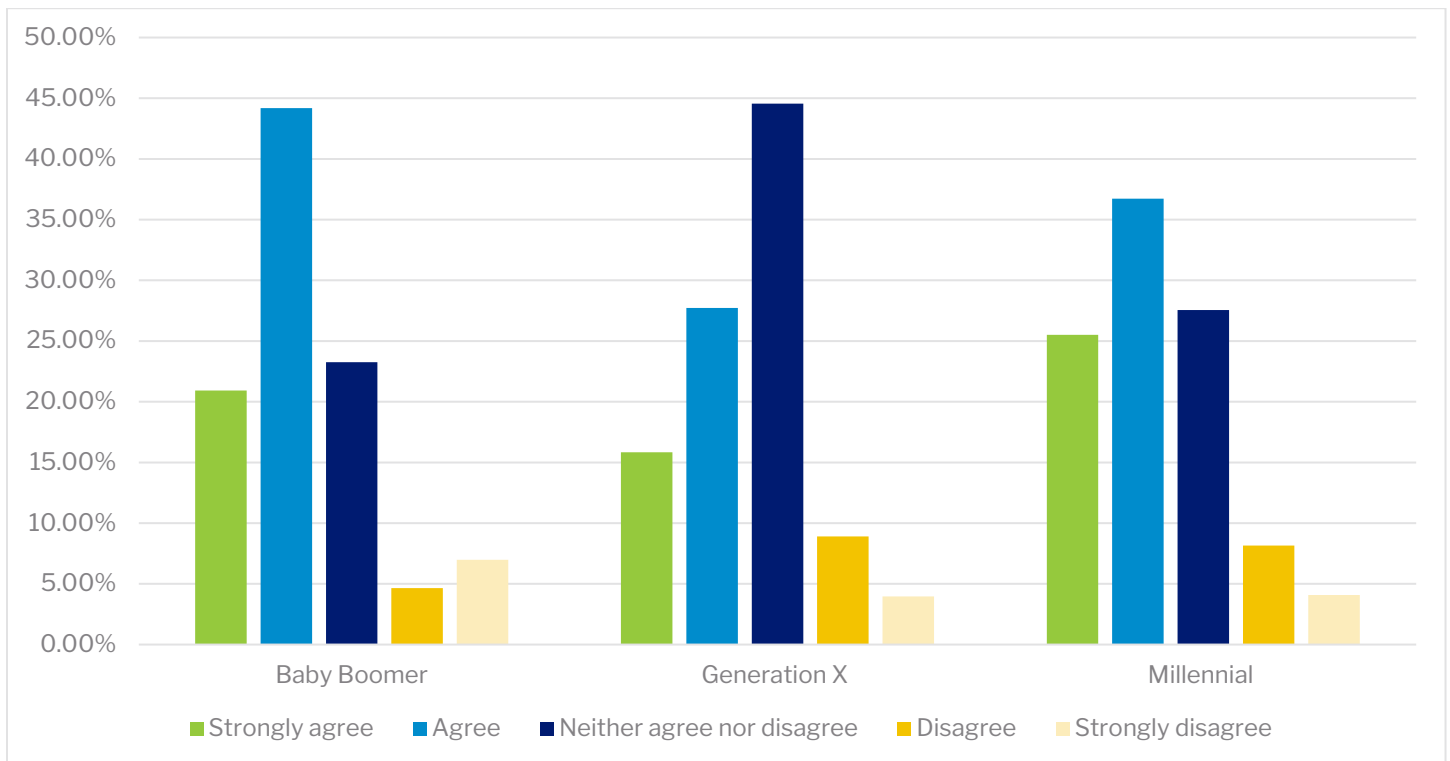


57% of all generations would like to continue working remotely after the coronavirus pandemic is over. **This is a clear mandate for employers to consider making remote work a regular part of their operating procedure.** Additionally, 79% said they feel comfortable using Zoom or other videoconferencing software with Millennials slightly more comfortable compared to the two older generations.

Getting back to the workplace

When asked the level of interest in getting back to the workplace, the results were mixed. While Boomers and Millennials generally agree with the statement, “I am looking forward to getting back to the workplace,” Generation X is far less likely to agree. This attitude of indifference is consistent with other surveys on GenXers. They are more likely to roll with the punches and accept whatever comes their way. Some refer to them as the “whatever” generation, as this was a favorite phrase of their coming-of-age experience. Furthermore, GenXers value efficiency, and virtual communication tends to be more time-constrained with more clearly defined goals. Face-to-face time in an office environment can lead to longer meetings and longer, less focused conversations.

I am looking forward to getting back to the workplace

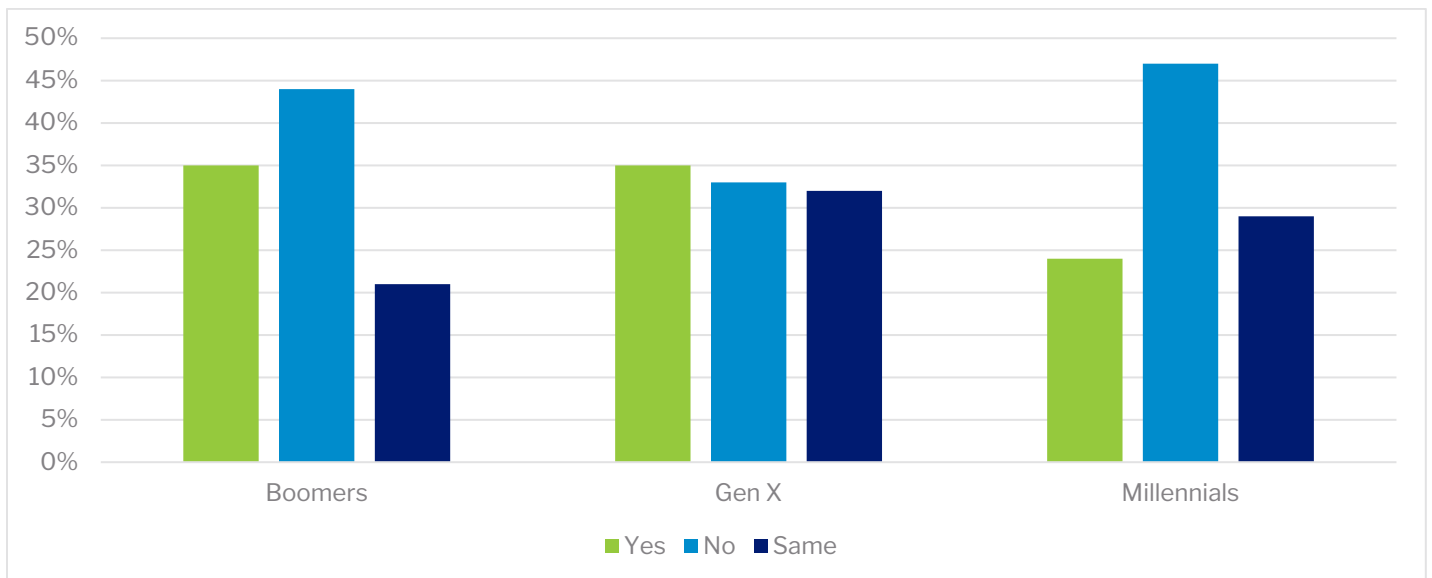


Connected and informed while working remotely

One of the perceived challenges of remote work is the ability to keep employees connected and informed. On this question, there were wide variances in responses according to the generation. Millennials were the least likely to feel connected and informed, followed closely by the Boomers. Millennials generally have higher expectations about quantity and frequency of feedback in their daily work. They may not be getting that from the older generations, which would account for this perception.

Unlike the other two generations, Generation X actually feels slightly more connected and informed while working remotely compared to working in an office. This might be due to the fact that GenXers view the idea of “connecting” as being more work-related and less social. They tend to value efficiency of workstyle, and there is not as much excess banter and watercooler talk when connecting virtually.

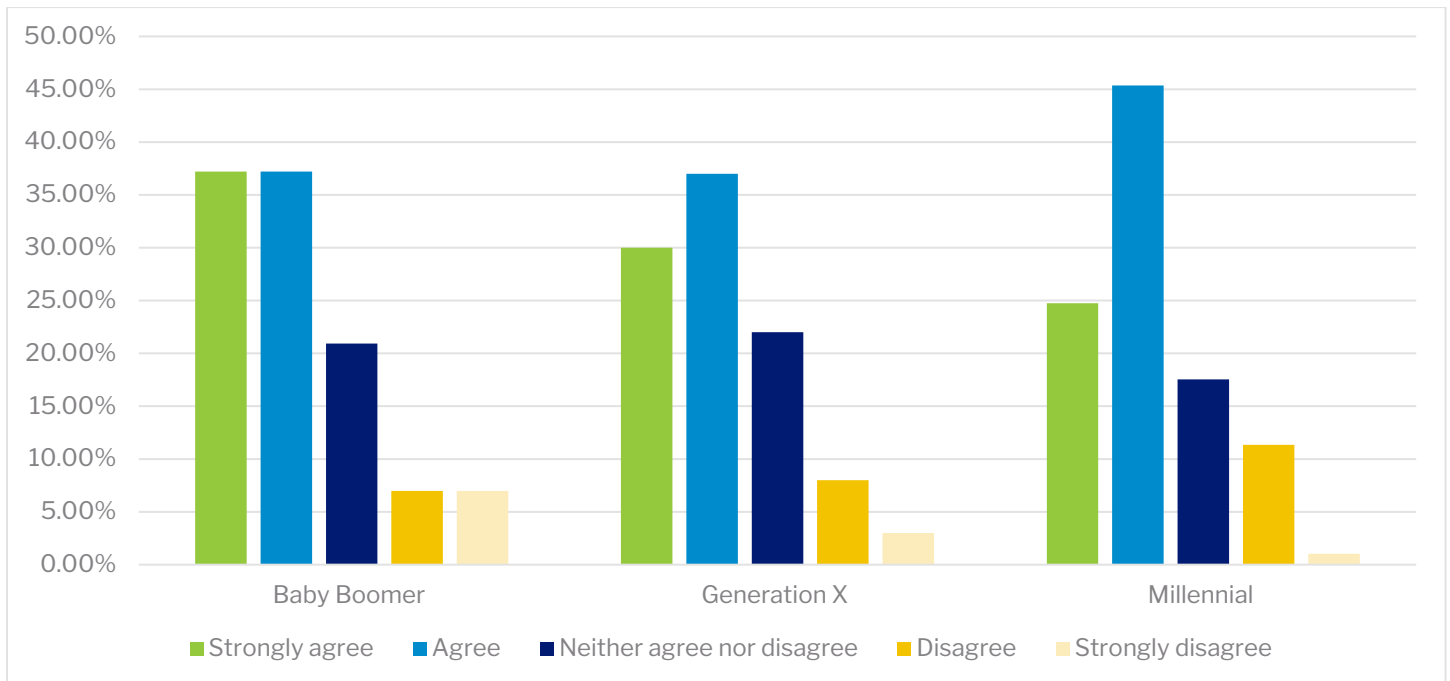
Connected and informed while working remotely



Is leadership responding during the coronavirus pandemic?

We asked respondents the extent to which they agreed with the statement: “The leadership and management at work has responded well to the coronavirus situation.” Fully seven out of ten agreed with this statement. Not surprisingly, Boomers responded more favorably to this statement—possibly because they are the leaders and managers themselves. Millennials were second most supportive, while GenXers rated leaders and managers the lowest.

The leadership and management at work has responded well to the coronavirus situation



Communication gap between generations

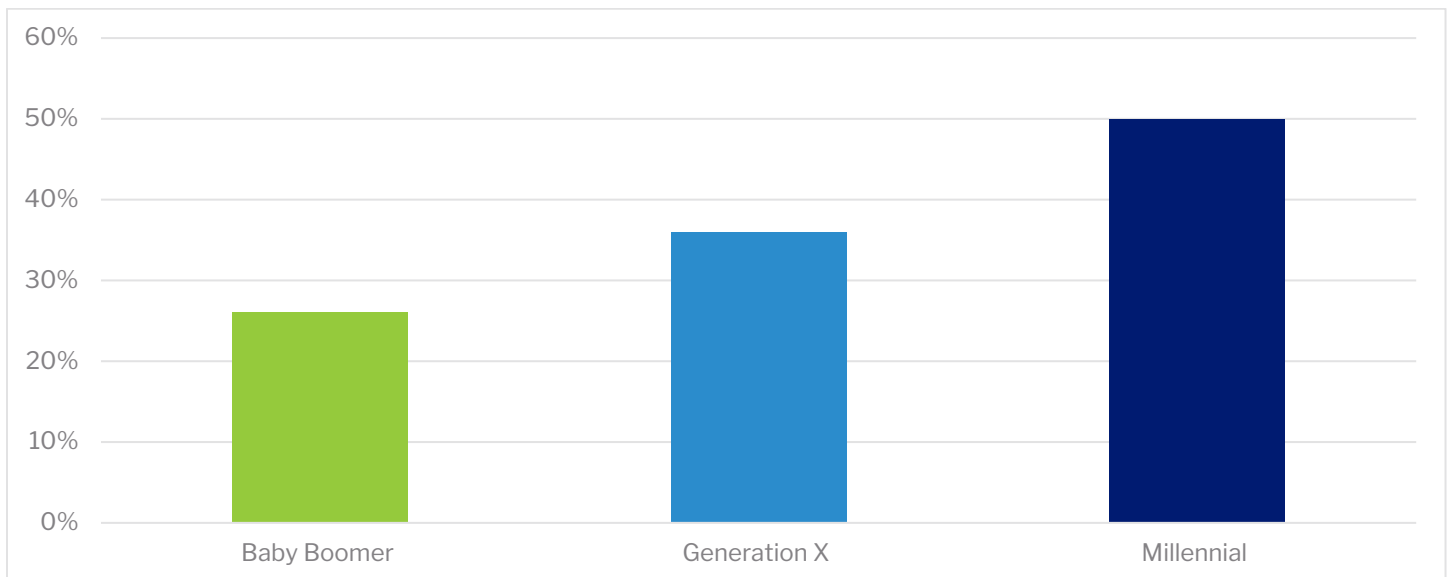
One of the more remarkable data points of this research was the disconnect in perceptions generations had about one another. Respondents were asked to respond to the statement: “Sometimes it is difficult to work remotely with people from different generations.” Millennials were almost twice as likely to say that it is difficult as compared to Boomers and 14% more likely than GenXers.

Boomer and GenXers didn’t think there was a gap, but Millennials did.

This could be for a number of reasons. In subsequent focus groups when we asked Millennials to comment on the differences, they said the word “remote” means “technology,” and when it comes to technology, they always feel that the older generations slow them down and don’t use technology in a way that is effective.

But this also points to how unaware older generations are about the daily frustrations Millennials feel about the workplace. On top of this, there is now less lack of clarity of the future, and Millennials prefer to have a plan with clearly defined outcomes. This is often difficult to achieve for many businesses, as uncertainty is the only thing that is certain. Another contributing factor to the generational disconnect Millennials feel is that they are less likely to agree with the statement, “I enjoy the work I do.” Generational disconnect could be leading to decreased engagement.

Sometimes, it is difficult to work remotely with people from different generations



Conclusions

Despite the unprecedented disruptions in standard workplace practices and the new stresses of everyday life, employees seem to be making the best of it in their transition to remote work. Most employees feel their leadership is responding well to the coronavirus situation. However, there appears to be room for improvement in keeping employees connected and informed. This is particularly the case for Millennials, who also feel it is more difficult to work with the older generations. Considering remote work is now here to stay, it would benefit companies to address this generation gap head-on with carefully designed programs, trainings, and workshops.

