

Questão Discursiva 03906

Read Text I and write a brief summary in your own words (10 to 15 lines) in which you mention the main idea and relevant details. Topics should not be itemized and copying parts of the text should be avoided.

TEXT I

At a recent professional development retreat led by corporate trainer Dana Brownlee, a woman in her mid-50s stood up and started citing a laundry list of communication conflicts on her mixed-age team. Chiefly, she was angry that the younger members rarely returned her phone calls by phone. Instead, seeing the issue as non-pressing, they typically would text or email back a response.

As she continued to speak, Brownlee realized the woman's concern ran deeper than mere frustration. Her voice cracked and her breathing faltered until she couldn't continue and sat down. It was more than anger. She felt disrespected and unappreciated.

Welcome to life in the new workplace. As people live and work longer than ever before, the modern office now houses up to four wildly different generations under one roof—and it can be a Petri dish for problems. Veterans (born before 1946), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1979), and Generation Y or Millennials (1980-2000) grew up in vastly different times, have wide-ranging value sets and often employ conflicting communication styles.

The intricacies of workplace communication—what we say, how we say it and what our choices say about us—have become increasingly complex as each group brings a different set of experiences and expectations to the table.

Years ago workplaces were much more formal, says Brownlee. Now it's much more casual and colloquial. However, old-school formality and new-school ease can cause culture clashes. Whether it's a full suit vs. jeans or company letterhead vs. a quick email, perceptions of what's appropriate vary widely. She works with one manager who regularly feels he has to rein in his younger employees who write emails to coworkers and clients as if they were texting. While they prefer efficiency and are more likely to perceive formal correspondence as tedious, he values form and precision.

Furthermore, like the woman at Brownlee's retreat, differences in communication mode often create tension. To curb the potential dangers, Brownlee encourages managers to set clear ground rules for what's expected in both internal and external communications. At the same time, she advises workers across all age groups to individualize their approach by learning their coworkers' preferences and attempting to meet in the middle.

Brownlee, a Gen Xer herself, often hears from her Veteran and Boomer clients that in their day they felt proud and lucky to have a job. It was a means of providing for their families, and they wanted to give their lives to the company, knowing the company would take care of them. Therefore, they can't understand why younger generations often don't share the same work ethic of doing whatever needs to be done and staying as long as it takes.

However, the economic environment has completely transformed the values and priorities of younger workers. While older generations tend to respect hierarchy more and focus on moving up the ladder where they are, she says younger workers are more entrepreneurial and tend to jump between jobs. They also want to align their lifestyles and sense of purpose with their jobs, so tend to seek flexibility and meaning from their work. It's not that they don't work hard; it's that they think of work differently.

Additionally, younger people often seek more guidance, feedback and acknowledgement on the job, Brownlee says, which can create a perception gap. Older workers may think the younger group is needy or high maintenance, and younger workers may feel in the dark or unappreciated. The solution is on both ends, she says. Leaders need to realize how important that acknowledgment is, but the younger generations need to realize they're not going to get an IV drip of praise.

The solution won't come from any one person or generation. Being aware of the differences is a good start. More than that, she encourages people to talk about them, to demystify what's unknown or misunderstood.

It starts with a baseline of respect. Go out of your way to learn from each other, she advises. Older workers can lend their vast industry knowledge and experience. Younger workers can shed light on demographic, pop culture and technology trends. It starts with a coffee or a walk.

(Adapted from: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jennagoudreau/2013/02/14/how-to-communicate-in-the-new-multigenerationaloffice>).