

SUBMISSION TYPE:
IGNITE

TITLE:
IGNITE! Hot Topics for the Future of Work: The Future (Age Diverse) Workforce

SHORTENED TITLE:
Future of Work Hot Topics: The Future Workforce

ABSTRACT

Seven scholars will discuss various ways in which an increasingly age diverse workforce reverberates across planning for and researching the future of work at an introductory to intermediate level. Presenters will summarize scientific research and offer practical solutions to stimulate and guide future research and practice. Audience questions and participation is encouraged.

PRESS PARAGRAPH

Throughout developed nations, the escalation of age diversity in the workforce represents a significant conundrum that organizations must manage. In this fast-paced session, seven distinguished scholars will share varying perspectives on why age diversity is hot topic for the future of work, including research findings and practical implications. Presenters will discuss topics such as emotional diversity, interactions and stereotypes of younger and older workers, work ability, occupational health, training an age-diverse workforce, and the evidence base for conceptualizing generations at work. This session promises to enlighten attendees to an often-overlooked aspect of the future of work.

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IGNITE Hot Topics for the Future of Work: The Future (Age Diverse) Workforce

Gretchen Petery & Gwen Fisher, Co-Chairs

The future of work is rife with change. Attention tends to focus on technological advances to come. However, the changing, and aging, composition of the workforce promises to be a major, yet often neglected, issue for organizations across the globe. Moreover, as the workforce ages, it also becomes increasingly age diverse, meaning it will be increasingly common to employ individuals ranging from late teens through their 60s, 70s and beyond. An aging and age diverse workforce has implications for all aspects of work, making it a hot topic for those striving to best prepare for what lies ahead. This IGNITE session features brief presentations from seven I/O psychologists highlighting a myriad of ways aging and age diversity permeates organizational practices, decisions and management. With that in mind, the goals of this session are to:

1. Describe the various ways in which an age-diverse workforce affects the future of work.
2. Educate the audience about current research on age and age diversity, and how these findings can translate into actionable initiatives.
3. Generate an audience discussion that allows for forward progress in this area.

To accomplish these goals, the session will follow an IGNITE format for the first 35 minutes, with each presenter allotted 5 minutes with 20 auto-advancing slides. We conclude with 15 minutes of panel and audience discussion highlighting an agenda for future research and practice. The session co-chairs will facilitate the discussion with the audience.

Presentation Topics

- **Gretchen Petery: Why Age is a “Hot Topic”**

Business professionals typically associate the future of work with artificial intelligence, or how automation will change the way we work. However, the workforce is also undergoing a radical shift, simultaneously becoming older and increasingly age diverse. These changes to labor force demographics represent opportunities and challenges for organizations to bear in mind as they plan and prepare for the future (Chand & Tung, 2014). In this presentation I will discuss how management approaches need to be individualized and agile to accommodate for the needs of an age-varied workforce in order to leverage the diverse skillsets and talents of these workers. Organizations that proactively adopt age-inclusive business strategies and practices stand to gain a stronger competitive advantage going into the future (Boehm, Kunze, & Bruch, 2014).

- **Cort Rudolph: Emotional Diversity: An Unanticipated Benefit of the Aging Workforce**

It is well-established that aging is a process that is characterized by gains (e.g., increases in emotion regulation capacity) and losses (e.g., declines in fluid cognitive abilities). To the former point, research supports the idea that aging positively affects emotional competencies, which benefit older individuals in the types of social-interactive processes that typify work relationships (e.g., customer service interactions). Moreover, as the workforce becomes increasingly older and age heterogeneous, the emergence of a new form of diversity, which I have termed “emotional diversity,” bears deeper consideration. In this presentation, I will describe the important and emergent role that increasing age diversity has on aggregate levels of emotion regulation capacity within work units. Then, I will argue that such diversity has important and implications for individual- and unit-level processes and outcomes. Finally, I

will indicate that recognizing and capitalizing on emotional diversity represents an under-realized competitive advantage, with distinct advantage to organizations and their constituents.

- **Elora Voyles: Interactions and Stereotypes among Young and Older Workers**

Today's workforce includes more age diversity and intergenerational interactions compared to past workforces. The increased age diversity and close interactions between different demographic groups can encourage stereotyping and metastereotyping by workers of all ages. In an investigation into the content of age stereotypes, research by Finkelstein, Ryan, and King (2013) found a mix of positive and negative stereotypes for both younger and older workers. Common stereotypes for younger workers included: ambitious, inexperienced, unreliable, and tech-savvy. Common stereotypes for older workers included: experienced, lower trainability, resistance to change, knowledgeable, and hardworking (Finkelstein et al., 2013). Metastereotypes are beliefs about the stereotypes that other groups engage in when thinking about one's own group membership. Metastereotypes often mirror the actual stereotypes with workers being aware of what different age groups think about their age group. Metastereotypes have been shown to have significant influence on workers' reactions and behaviors (Finkelstein, Voyles, Thomas, Zacher, 2019). This Ignite presentation will discuss stereotype and metastereotype content, and the influence of those beliefs on older and younger workers. For example, research shows that that younger workers consistently report more negative metastereotypes compared to other age groups. This, and other key facts will be discussed along with recommendations and implications for practice and research on managing intergenerational workplaces.

- **David Cadiz: Work Ability across the Lifespan**

Work ability (WA) is defined as a person's ability, or perceptions of their ability, to meet the demands of their job. Findings from a number of longitudinal studies reveal WA predicts important individual, organizational, and societal outcomes, including retirement age, future disability status, job attitudes, and even mortality. With increasing concerns about the aging workforce, the necessity of extending workers' careers to stabilize retirement systems, and the need for broadening the scope of succession planning, understanding how to develop and maintain WA among employees will be critical. I plan to discuss the current state of our knowledge about the promising concept of WA, identify areas where we have gaps in our knowledge. In light of the aging workforce and relatively few answers we have to manage this important demographic trend, there is an urgent need for the continued exploration of WA, as well as for increased use of WA as a workforce tracking and surveillance tool.

- **Gwen Fisher: Occupational Health and an Aging Workforce**

Looking ahead to the future of work and the associated changes to the way work is performed, there are many potential issues that may impact workers' safety, health, and well-being. As workers age, they may be at a higher risk of chronic illnesses but may also still have a high level of work ability (consistent with the previous presentation by Dr. Cadiz). Many individuals are remaining in the workforce until later ages because they either want to or need to. However, it is important to understand how work relates to workers' health and well-being, particularly as we age (Fisher, Ryan, & Sonnega, 2015; Fisher, Chaffee, Tetrick, Davalos, & Potter, 2017). During the first part of my presentation I will describe risk factors, job demands, and stressors that are currently and likely to continue to influence workers well-being into the future. Some examples include frequent technological adaptations, job lock (i.e., when an individual would prefer not to work but perceives they need to work for economic reasons, such as for wages or health insurance), high workload, and cognitive demands. The latter portion of the presentation will offer practical recommendations by describing methods (e.g., work design with increased

autonomy, flexibility, and task significance; supervisor support, co-worker support; establishing a positive health and well-being culture) for reducing the negative impact of job demands and work-related stressors.

- **Margaret Beier: Training an Aging Workforce**

In the near future, two factors will converge making it imperative for organizations to understand how to best train mature workers: (a) the graying of the global labor force and (b) technological innovation that will change the types of jobs that are available and the work that people do in those jobs. Workers with skills that compliment technology will have little trouble finding work in the future (Autor, 2015). But workers will need to be nimble and adaptable to ensure their skills remain useful in the context of technological innovation. Although research on age and learning and development is limited, there is evidence that older workers take longer and do less well in training than younger workers do (Kubeck, Delp, Haslett, & McDaniel, 1996). Moreover, older workers may have little motivation and self-efficacy for learning new skills (Kanfer & Ackerman, 2004). Nonetheless, older workers can continue to learn and develop when learning environments are designed with their unique needs in mind (Beier, 2008). This presentation will describe the necessity of training and developing workers throughout their careers with a focus developing training interventions for older workers to ensure that they can remain productive in the 21st century workplace.

- **David Costanza: Generations are Dead. Now What?**

The empirical evidence is mounting against the concept of distinct generations and the existence of cohort-specific characteristics and their effects on a variety of work and non-work outcomes. Studies have questioned the methodological, analytical, and conceptual underpinnings of the generations literature and raised doubts about the supposed effects of generations in the workplace. In short, the conceptualization of generations as distinct cohorts formed by major historical events that create shared characteristics and have an identifiable impact is pretty much dead. So, what's next? This IGNITE presentation will focus on what's next after generations. A number of researchers in a variety of areas, as well as an ongoing study by The National Academy of Sciences, are working on understanding how the range of ages in the workplace, the variety of perspectives and attitudes, and how the changing nature of work itself is impacting workers and outcomes. If what managers and employees are experiencing are not generational differences, what are they? What are the changes we are seeing in workers as a whole, what is the role of technology and the changing nature of work, what do researchers need to be studying, and what do organizations need to do to manage?

Presenters Bios (alphabetical order)

Margaret Beier is a Professor of Psychological Sciences at Rice University. Margaret's research focuses in lifespan development, learning, and training, particularly as related to individual differences in abilities, personality, and motivation. As part of this work, she has investigated how to best develop training interventions for workers of all ages, autonomous workplace learning, and the impact of technology on training and development. She is a member of Rice University's initiative on Technology, Culture, and Society, which investigates the impact of technology on life and work. She has published in outlets such as the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, and *Psychological Bulletin*. She is a fellow of SIOP and of the Association for Psychological Science and served on the National Academies of Science Committee on *How People Learn II: Learners, Contexts, and Culture*.

David Cadiz is a faculty member in the School of Business at Portland State University. Prior to joining Portland State University, Dr. Cadiz was a Director at the Oregon Nurses Foundation, a non-profit organization focused on building healthy workplaces. David teaches Organizational Behavior, Contemporary Leadership Issues, Training and Development, and Human Resource Strategy. He serves as the faculty advisor for PSU's student chapter of the Human Resource Management Association (HRMA). Dr. Cadiz's research broadly focuses on the influence of diversity in the workplace and is influenced by his applied work experiences in the healthcare, training, and technology industries. Specifically, he investigates multiple aspects of the aging workforce, the intersection of behavioral health and the workplace, and has developed and evaluated interventions focused on effectively managing workplace diversity issues. He has co-authored several peer-reviewed articles and book chapters related to these topics and frequently presents his work at academic and professional conferences.

David P. Costanza is an Associate Professor of Organizational Sciences and of Psychology at The George Washington University and has served as Department Chair and Program Director. He is also a Senior Consortium Fellow for the U.S. Army Research Institute. His research, teaching, and consulting are in the areas of generational differences, leadership, culture, organizational performance, decline, and death as well as statistics and research methods. His work has been published in journals including the *Journal of Business and Psychology*, *Personnel Psychology*, and *Work, Aging and Retirement*. He has authored work for *Slate* as well as numerous book chapters and conference presentations. He has been interviewed by the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Financial Times, TIME Magazine, VOX, and Yahoo! Finance. He is a member of The Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology and the Academy of Management and serves on the Editorial Boards of the *Journal of Business and Psychology* and *Work, Aging and Retirement*. He earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia and his masters and doctoral degrees from George Mason University.

Gwenith G. Fisher is an Associate Professor of Psychology at Colorado State University (CSU) and Director of the CSU Occupational Health Psychology training program funded by the NIOSH Mountain and Plains Education and Research Center. She is also an Affiliate Researcher for the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research. Her research investigates individual and work factors related to workers' health well-being, and retirement. Her research has been recognized with multiple awards, including the Best Paper in *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* in 2013-2014 and multiple editor commendations in *Journal of Business and Psychology*. Her research has also been published in *Journal of Applied Psychology* and *Journal of Organizational Behavior*. She serves on the Editorial Board of multiple journals. In addition to her research, and consults with organizations primarily on issues related to work/life balance, occupational health assessment, and implementing workplace solutions to improve workers' well-being. She is a SIOP member and member of the Executive Committee for the Society for Occupational Health Psychology (SOHP).

Gretchen A. Petery is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Future of Work Institute, Centre for Transformative Work Design at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia. She is also a research fellow for the Centre of Excellence in Population Ageing Research, funded by the Australian Research Council. Her research focuses on the issues central to an ageing and age diverse workforce, including workplace age stereotypes and age bias, successful ageing at work, subjective ageing, and worker health and well-being. She has authored a number of journal articles, book chapters, and conference presentations, and is a reviewer for *Work, Aging*

and Retirement. Gretchen earned her bachelor's degree in psychology from Washington State University Vancouver and her master's and PhD from the University of Connecticut, and holds university certificates in human resource management and occupational health psychology. Prior to her academic career, Gretchen spent more than 20 years in managerial and other industry roles, and owned her own business, giving her a unique perspective of work and working life.

Cort Rudolph is an Associate Professor of Industrial & Organizational Psychology at Saint Louis University. He received a B.A. from DePaul University, and a M.A. and Ph.D. from Wayne State University. Cort's research focuses on a variety of issues related to the aging workforce, including applications of lifespan development theories, wellbeing and work-longevity, and ageism/generationalism. His work has been published in top-ranked IO/OB journals, including the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, the *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, the *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, and *Leadership Quarterly*. Cort is an associate editor of the *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, and serves on several editorial review boards, including the *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, and the *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. His recent book, "*Work Across the Lifespan* (co-edited with Boris Baltes and Hannes Zacher) is available from Academic Press.

Elora Voyles has a Ph.D. in Industrial Organizational Psychology and Social Psychology from Northern Illinois University. She is currently an Assistant Professor of Psychology at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. Her research focuses on age metastereotypes and the influence of these perceptions on worker's reactions. Specifically, she investigates how reactions to metastereotypes influence workers' perceptions of their own characteristics and their behaviors at work. Within the domains of aging and stereotypes, she has a book on stereotypes in press and a book chapter on aging and worker performance in progress. Her work has been published in academic journals such as *Career Development International*, *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice* and *Work, Aging and Retirement*. In addition to research, she also has applied experience with job analysis, recruiting and interviewing, employee performance appraisals, and succession planning.

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