Next time you are walking down the halls of your firm, stop for a second and look at the diversity in the age of your office. There is a good chance that you could be looking at an office with an age gap of 40, 50 even 60+ years between the youngest and oldest employees. For the first time in history, five generations of Americans are actively working. Managing a law firm with such diversity of age can be a scary proposition. However, it does not have to be.

Here are 3 tips for leading a multi-generational team:

1. **Identify and Educate Employees about Misleading Stereotypes**
   - Baby boomers do not embrace technology. Gen Xers are skeptical and negative cynics. Millennials are self entitled and expect everything to be given to them. These are just a few of the generational stereotypes that permeate offices and create office drama. As a leader, it is important to create an environment where tasks and projects are completed based on one's skill set not their age. Just because someone is in their 60s does not mean that they are not tech savvy or that a 20-year-old is not ready to roll up their sleeves and get their hands dirty to complete a project.

2. **Create Multi-Generational Work Teams**
   - One of the best ways to combat destructive stereotypes is to create multi-generational work groups. Individuals from different generations view the world through different prisms. When you build teams based on skills, abilities and work style and not age, you create groups that are more collaborative, creative and productive. Creating positive experiences between individuals of varying ages helps to foster a more open and understanding environment.

3. **Find Engaging Ways to Connect with Every Employee, Regardless of Age**
   - Connecting on a personal level with a multi-generational work force is not an easy task. Single-tone communication tends to fall flat and create unseen barriers. Whenever possible, you should adjust your message to different generations and individuals to ensure that it resonates on a greater level. Using multiple channels for communication including email, instant messaging, social media and in person communication also helps to disseminate information to your work force in the areas where they are most comfortable consuming it. Adjusting training programs to include video training, interactive tutorials and written narratives allows individuals the ability to learn firm procedures and policies in the the most engaging method for their personal learning style.

The challenges of leading a multi-generational work force cannot be solved overnight or by rolling out a couple new procedures. Recognizing and embracing the different strengths and views of your work force will help to create a more open and effective firm. Society is changing at a faster rate than ever before. Older generations are staying in the workforce longer and the younger generations are entering the workforce with more knowledge and information at their figure tips. As firm leader it is your job to create an office environment that embraces the differences, recognizes the strengths and cohesively connects each generation.

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