THE DIRT:

EXPLORING GENERATIONAL INFLUENCES & COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES

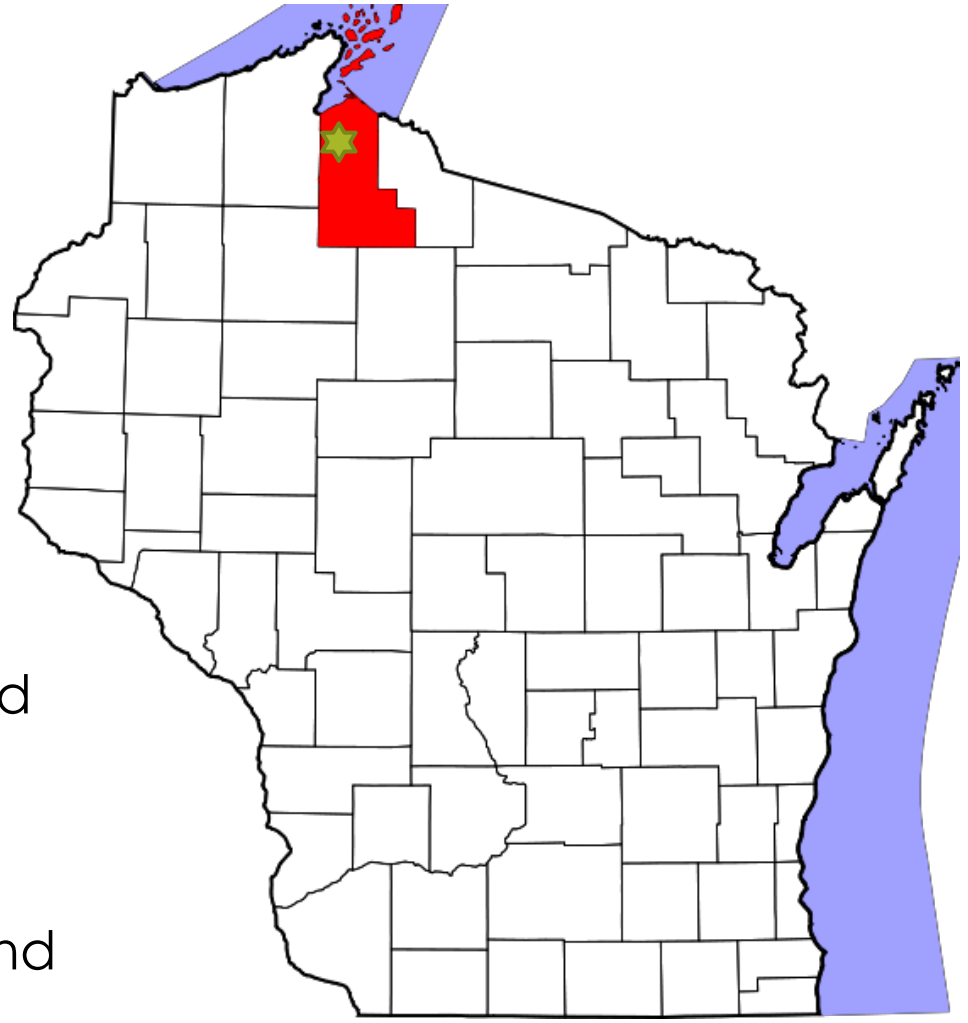
Brad Gingras

SUPERIOR STRATEGIES

Superiorstrategies.org

Me, in a nutshell…

- 25+ years of leadership, supervision, mentoring, and coaching all ages throughout the workforce
- 20+ years of executive leadership in non-profit, workforce development and healthcare education
- The Executive Director of Northwest Wisconsin Area Health Education Center (NWAHEC)
- Owner of Superior Strategies, LLC providing training, education, development, facilitation and strategy
- A curious dude who is always thinking about approaches, leadership, attitudes, psychology and changes within the workforce and society



Pre-presentation Caveats:

- The workforce is evolving quickly!!! Items discussed will be relevant to YOUR workplace, volunteer organizations and the people you interact with
- Each Generation/Age Cohort has differences. Understanding, not getting frustrated, to those differences is beneficial for all
- Generational characteristics are NEVER one size fits all
- Be REFLECTIVE and OBSERVANT. How have your attitudes and beliefs towards the world of work and how you interact and communicate evolved or recent years?



Why Understanding Workforce & Generational Trends is Important…

The more you understand current trends, attitudes, and desires the better equipped you are to adapt, or communicate appropriately, to what challenges may present themselves.

U.S. Demographics

Generation	Years*
Silent Generation/Traditionalists	1925-1945
Baby Boomers	1946-1964
GenX	1965-1980
Millennials/GenY	1981-1995
GenZ	1996-2008
Generation Alpha	2009-?

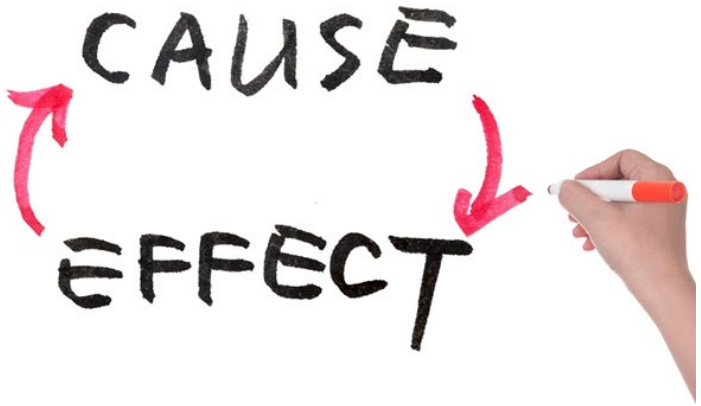


* Variance in data based on resource referenced

How Generational Trends Form:

Influences such as technology, world/national events, polarizing people, media, etc. impact and form generational trends

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF THAT INFLUENCE?



Lets explore Generational Characteristics



BOOMERS!



- Workers!
- Loyal & committed
- Civic-minded
- Routine oriented
- Were raised with stricter workforce etiquette and standards; i.e. punctual, focused on work, dress codes, etc.
- Recognizing how, adapting to, or acceptance of change, may come at a slower pace, especially with technology and breaking the 'way its always been' or 'back in my day'
- **Socializing is predominantly face to face and in person**





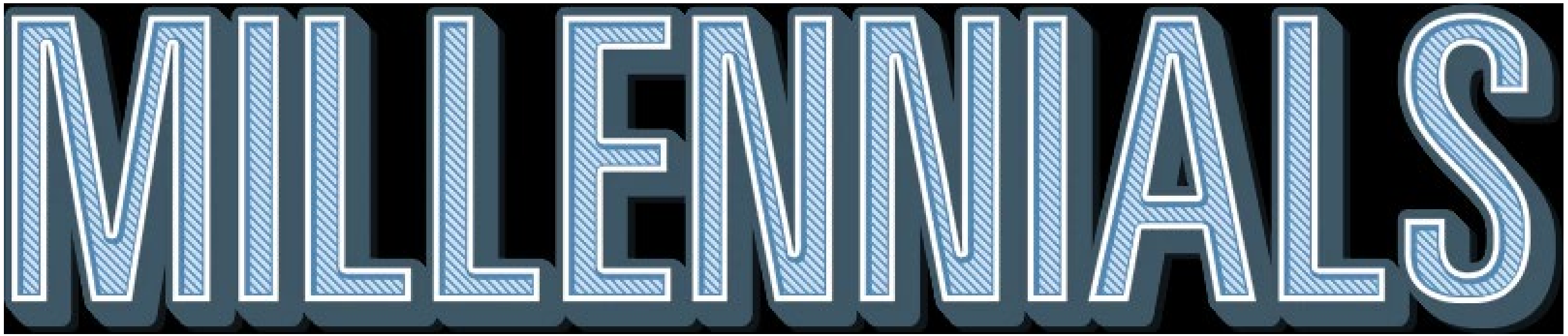
- Adaptable & Independent
- Will ‘Figure it Out!”
- Don’t want to waste their time
- Balance between work and life—work to live not live to work

- Value partnerships & networking
- Many have adapted to digital/virtual socializing & communication
- Predominantly the parents of GenZ

Boomers: yelling at millenials for toast
Millennials: yelling at Boomers for ruining the world
GenZ: snorts tide pod and yeets into traffic

Gen X:



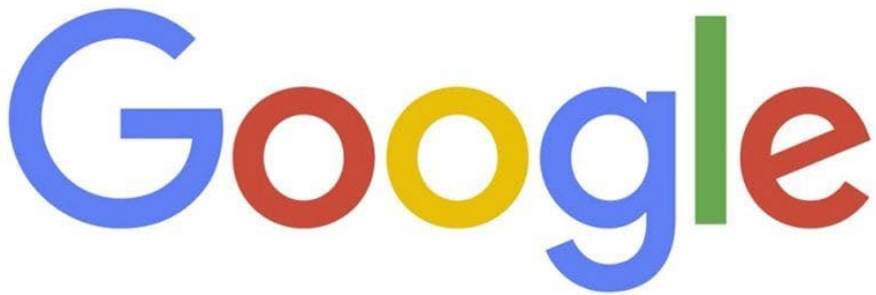

MILLENNIALS

BG/AG

before



after





- Strive for flexible autonomy with job duties & responsibilities
- Will balance work, social, family, friends….all at the same time
- Time (not necessarily punctuality) & efficiency is important to Millennials.
- Loyal to their skill set and what they can do for an employer or group
- Value consistent feedback but also want to give it back
- Millennials are collaborators, networkers, and connected
- Raising the next generation of youth (Alpha Gen)

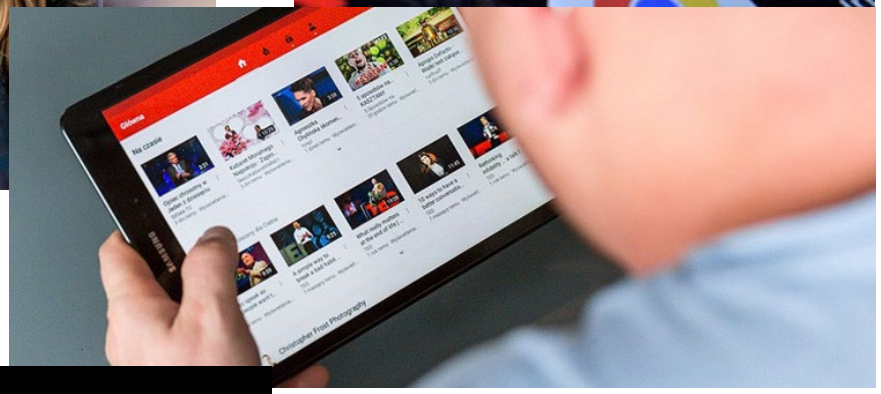


GenZ Influences









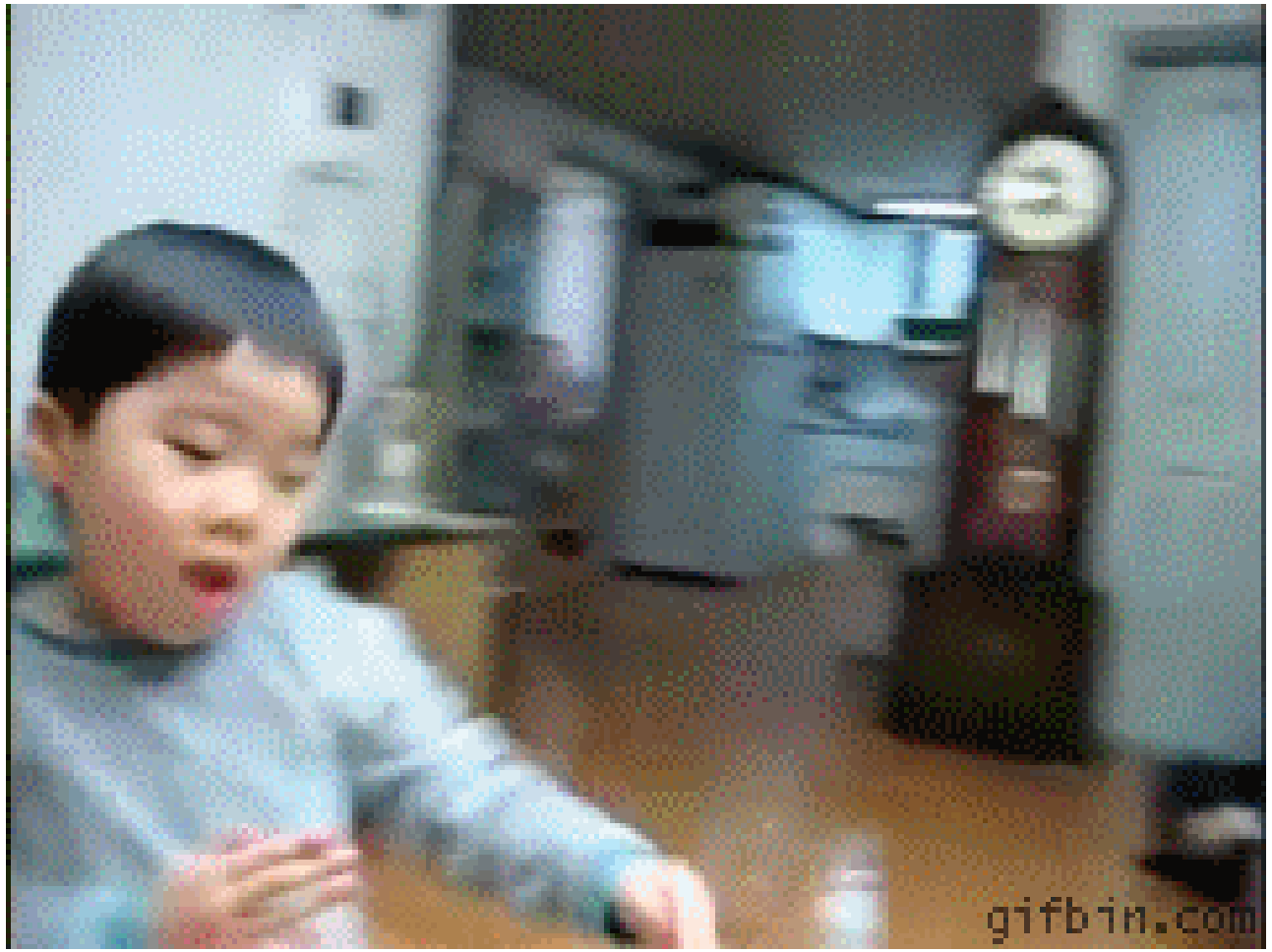








- Socially and culturally diverse. Want equality for all
- Products of the post-911 and ‘mass shootings’ world…. uncertainty and fear
- Products of how parenting has shifted towards protection and safety
- Strive for safety, security, and stability
- Individualistic- Raised with their individual needs met and in a customized world
- Demands choice, especially when it impacts them
- Prefer less risk taking than previous generations
- Mental health challenges and awareness are important
- Great dancers!!!


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DA
ZN

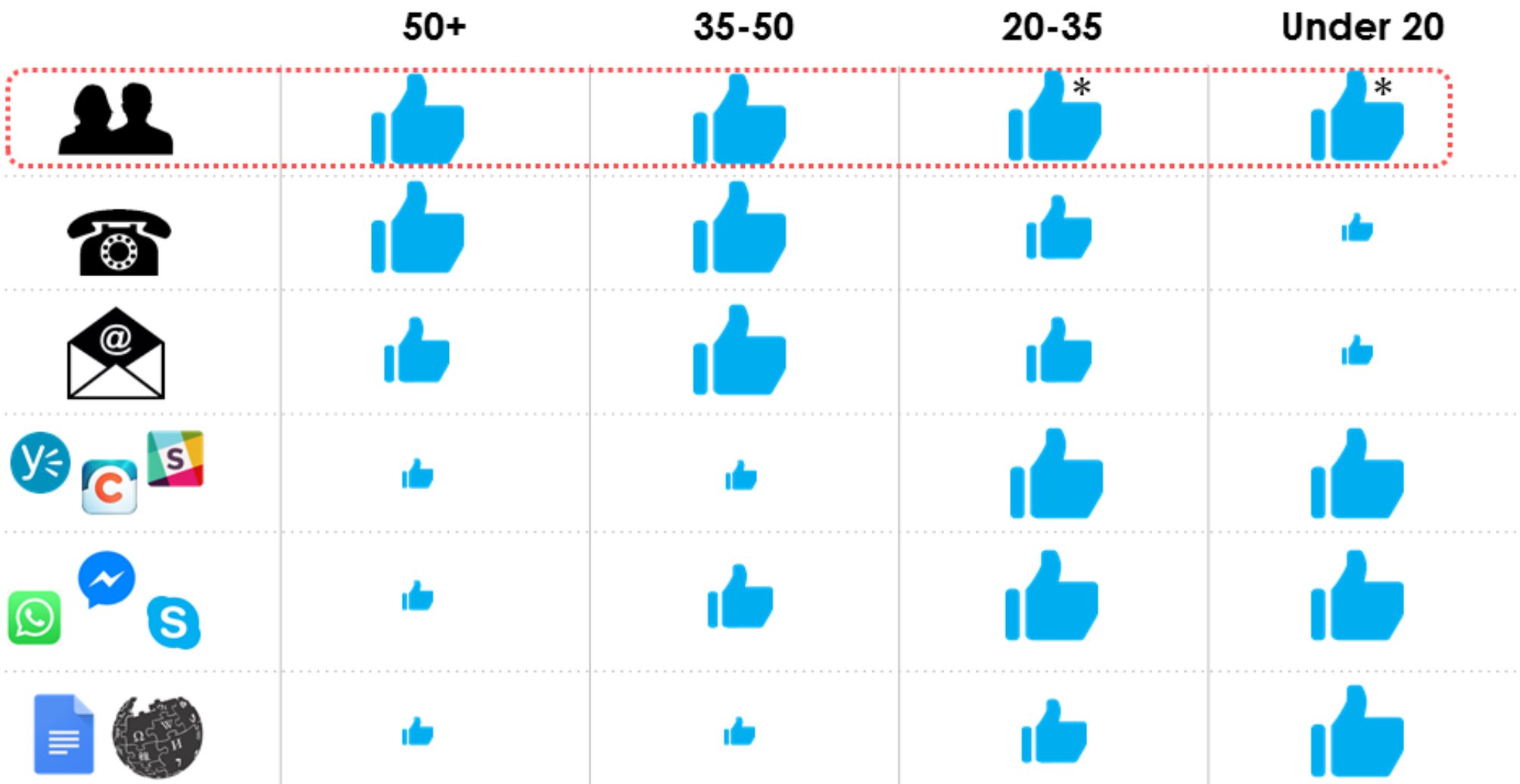
Decision Making & Implementation

- **BOOMERS:** Decisions will be well thought out and utilize 'the way we've always done it' especially when 'it' has worked in the past
- **GenX:** Get out of their way. They will figure it out and adapt as necessary
- **Millennials:** Want to know WHY! They will use technology for efficiency and a democratic, inclusive approach
- **GenZ:** Prefer to be told what to do, but also want to make a choice in how it gets done




COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION PREFERENCES BY AGE COHORT



*lower initiation rates

Various Sources © Simon Walker & Candover Consulting

Communication Tips

- For many (most?) workplace communication has changed drastically in the post Pandemic world and is becoming preference and habit
- Don't assume **your** preferences are best for the team, group, situation, or relationship
- Communicating about communication needs to be a consistent discussion
  - How we will communicate (platform, program, etc.)
  - Frequency
  - Boundaries (response times, etc.)



Communication Techniques Leaders Must Ask Themselves….consistently

- What does my team need to know?
- WHERE are we headed and HOW? (vision and direction)
- WHY am I making this decision, conducting this action, etc.
- WHO should I connect with today?
- HOW, WHAT, and WHEN is the ideal communication method?
- Discussing potential changes
- Potential opportunities (when appropriate)



- These actions and behaviors lead to TRANSPARENCY which leads to many other positive results for you and your team.

ONE OF THE GREATEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE IS ASSUMING THE OTHER PERSON(S) KNOWS WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

BE CLEAR, CONCISE, AND CONFIRM UNDERSTANDING

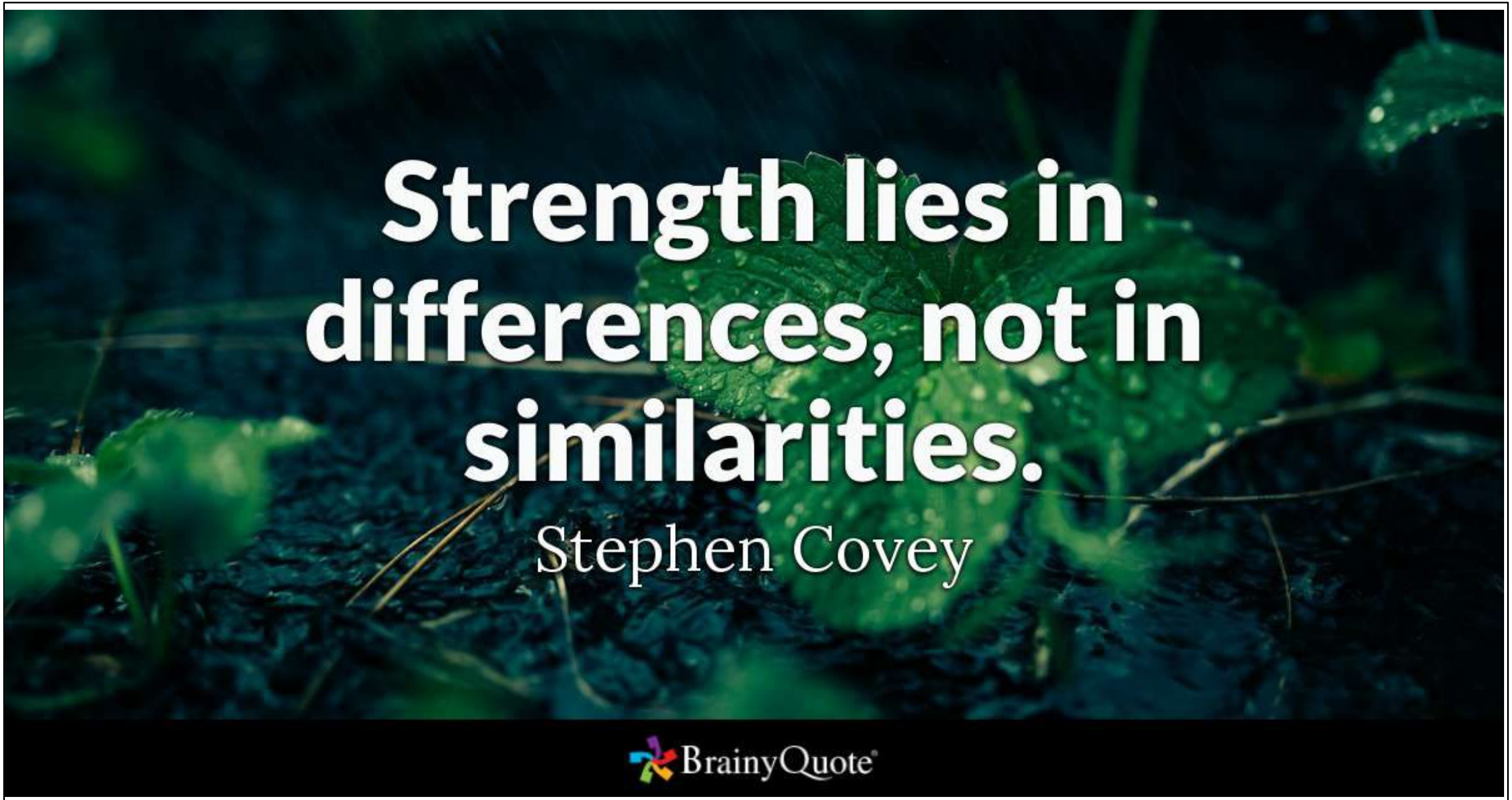


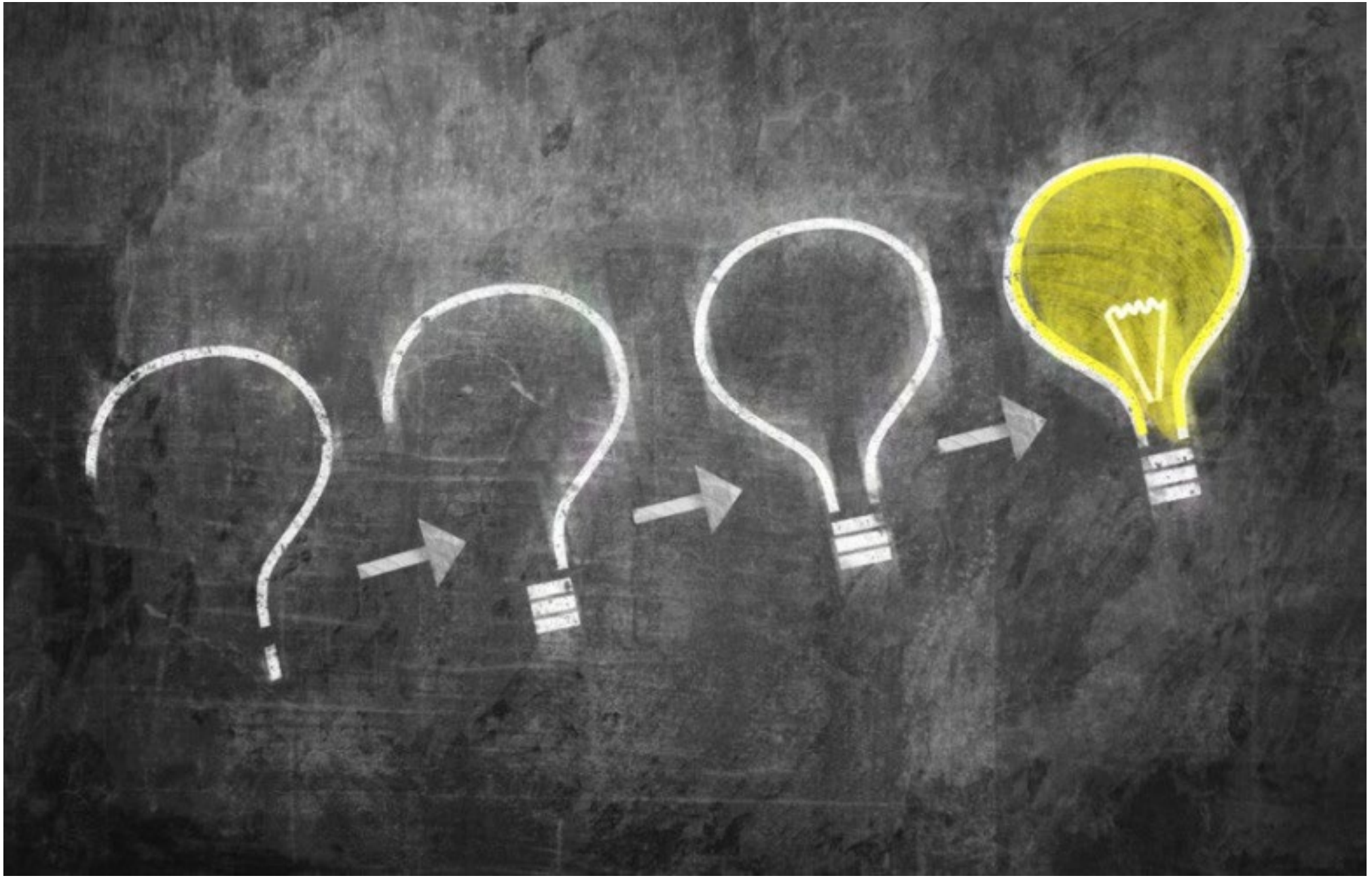
Good communication and outreach takes effort, discussion, and adaptation.

Your ultimate goal is to get, or be, on the same page!



BEST CASE SCENARIO!!!


Strength lies in differences, not in similarities.
Stephen Covey
BrainyQuote



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