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Blend into a Young Team

When Abhay Sabharwal, 42, joined an online fashion retailer in an IT role, he was in for a culture shock of sorts. Sabharwal suddenly found himself working in a small team where the majority was in their 20s and early 30s. Sabharwal took quite a bit of time to settle down and vibe with his new colleagues. While it's true that the young and the old both bring their individual strengths into an organisation, it's not easy for either of them to adjust in a workplace dominated by the other kind. Given the right mindset, though, it can be a good challenge. **Sreeradha D Basu** brings you a few tips.

1 Blend with the Team

Young or old, both have their advantages. The key is to understand and appreciate differences and leverage it for organisational success. Says Saba Adil, head-talent at AEGON Religare Life Insurance: "Have an open mindset and the agility to blend in with the team. Be ready to let go of baggage and relearn to ensure team success. Remember, at the end of it all, team objectives are important."



2 Keep Ego Out

"Don't operate from a high-ego standpoint," says Ronesh Puri, MD of executive search firm Executive Access. "You may feel you've been there and done all that, but that attitude only creates barriers." Puri advises older people to put in effort. "Don't put the onus on them. Go the extra mile to develop a rapport," he says.

3 Make Learning Fun



However odd it may feel, be ready to acknowledge development areas to blend in with the team. "Participate actively in group activities whether in or out of office," advises Adil. "Don't get into the 'odd one out' or 'where am I' syndrome but freely mix by breaking mental barriers. After all, age is only a number!" she says.

4 Act as Equals

"It's not your biological age that matters as much as your mental age," says Puri. Never underestimate younger team members for the lack of experience, contribute actively and never feel shy to ask for help. "Where credibility is built, respect comes naturally and the older ones are sought for advice, stretching beyond just the professional variety. They become the anchors or the levers, going a long way in building engaged workforces," he adds.

5 Understand Expectations

The young and old may have different expectations – if loyalty, brand works for the older generation and job profile and performance payouts work for the young, so be it. "Never impose choices, be patient and share perspectives to make people understand your point of view," says Adil.

