Slide 1: Welcome to the 2025 Un-Salary Guide Generational Synergy.

Slide 2: What is an *unsalary* guide? Well, last year, Agilus shifted the conversation away from traditional salary guides to focus on what truly drives job seekers as it is more than just a salary.

Slide 3: We explored the impacts of culture, growth and benefits as salary data is now more easily accessible with pay transparency legislation.

Slide 4: This year, we're tackling generational synergy. With the potential for organizations to have five generations working side by side, diversity fuels innovation, but it can also bring challenges in communication and collaboration. By investing in understanding what drives each generation, businesses can fill skills gaps, boost retention, enhance teamwork, and see real return on investment through a stronger and more connected workforce.

Slide 5: For those of you who may not know us, Agilus is all about connecting people with meaningful work and helping companies find the best talent for their teams. In fact, we place over 10,000 candidates each year.

Slide6: As Canada's largest privately-owned, full-service recruitment firm, we offer a full range of talent solutions including recruitment, contingent workforce management, payrolling, and more. What sets us apart is our personalized approach and deep industry expertise that spans over 48 years. We focus on building relationships and delivering better outcomes. We're also proud to say that our commitment to excellence has earned us 25 consecutive wins as one of Deloitte Canada's Best Managed Companies. So, whether you're hiring or you're job hunting, know that Agilus is here to help you succeed.

Slide 7: And me? Well, I'm Sherry Strong, and I'm the Director of Organizational Talent and Development here at Agilus. I've been in the recruitment industry for over 30 years, and I'm as passionate today as I was when I started about positively impacting my colleagues, our customers and candidates, and my community at large. And I'm thrilled to spend

some time with you today.

Slide 8: While the topic of generations in the workplace is not a newer topic, say like AI in the workplace, which we see news articles about almost daily, it is an evolving one, because the challenges, motivators, and values of the different generations are nuanced. And, as time moves forward, new generations are born. The generations may differ in how they approach work life balance, career growth, loyalty, authority, and other issues that affect an organization and the working relationships within it. Awareness and understanding of the differences and similarities between generations can help us leverage collective strengths and understand and respect any differences.

Slide 9: The generations are defined by significant world events that occurred during their lifetime, as well as the general parenting style of the time they were raised. There are conflicting dates for when a generation begins and ends, and so for the purposes of our learning session today, the time frames you see on the screen are what I will reference. Two of the strongest shifts propelling workplace change today are the rise of millennial employees into leadership roles and the entrance of Gen Z into the workforce. You may be curious as to why I have included traditionalists in this chart because if I was born in 1945 then in 2025, I would be turning 80 years old. Understanding a bit about the generations preceding boomers will help frame the conversation going forward. Typically, if traditionalists are in the workforce today, it is because of passion, and we often see them sitting on boards or in consulting roles. Traditionalists are also known as the silent generation, because they were raised to be seen and not heard, and this upbringing flowed into workplace dynamics as well. The generation before Traditionalists is called the Greatest Generation, and they survived the Great Depression and World War II. It's interesting to consider that the Greatest Generation and Traditionalists came of an age of technology innovation just like Millennials and Gen X, but the technology was different. It was the telephone, radio, and TV. So, I encourage you to not just think in terms of the differences between generations, but also the similarities. While the technology innovation is obviously different for Gen X and Y, the experience of change, adaption, and adoption is similar.

Slide 10: Take a moment to read the quote on this slide. My hope is that by exploring the

generations today, you will be hopeful and focused on potential and not problems. I think it's also important to remind everyone that there is diversity within each generation, so it's important not to think in terms of stereotypes. Our objective today is to seek to understand and not label. Discussions around generations is not a one size fits all.

Slide 11: Here's a term you may not be familiar with. A cusper is an individual whose birth date is close to the end of one generation and the beginning of the next generation. Because of this tighter time frame, cuspers may share characteristics and experiences of both the older and the younger generation. I think it's also a good time to clarify that not all the information I am sharing today can capture the nuances of different races, ethnicities and cultures. For example, a colleague once shared with me that in his culture, the tradition of a blended family home where different generations live together, greatly influenced his values and motivators, as well as the parenting style that he grew up under. In turn, he found that he did not always feel aligned with his peers, despite going through the same world experiences at the same time.

Slide 12: So now, let's move forward and explore each generation, from the Boomers to Gen Z. In order to do this, we're going to use three lenses. The first one will be characteristics, then some insights about how they show up in the workplace, and finally, some suggestions on how we can best work with them.

Slide 13: Boomers get their moniker from the baby boom that followed World War II. Core values of boomers are often recognized as optimism, acceptance, being work centric, and seeking stimulation. There are a couple of points on this slide I want to explore with you a little bit more deeply. First, the point about boomers feeling other generations may lack professionalism. Well, this is relative to what the term professional meant to boomers when they started in the workforce, and not just now. For example, dress codes were more restrictive, such as pantyhose and suit and tie requirements. As well, what is considered professionally acceptable for one sector may not be so for another. And there have been several new industries and sectors introduced over the years. There are jobs now that did not exist just a few years ago. Furthermore, the evolution of communication technologies and methods can be challenging for some boomers to view as professional. The formality of letters, for example, has been replaced with quick emailed notes, or in some situations,

even just a text. The second point I want to address may seem contradictory to what I just shared, as in fact, boomers are more text savvy than we often give them credit for. And yes, they have adopted social media. In fact, they're the top users of Facebook. The thing is, though, the generations following continue to move on at more of a rapid pace, trying and adopting newer social media platforms. So, what do boomers look like in the workplace? What do they bring? And what do they seek? This list actually accentuates the concerns we hear about boomer brain drain for organizations that have not actioned mentorship programs and succession planning to support the transfer of the tacit and tribal knowledge that is usually gained through accumulated experience and wisdom. During COVID, we saw an increase in early retirement, but overall, more people are working past 65, especially if they are in less physically demanding jobs, because the economy has evolved to include more service industries. As the cost of living rises, more Canadians are delaying retirement. In fact, roughly one in five seniors aged 65 to 74 is still employed, and for many, that's by necessity, according to a Statistics Canada analysis.

Slide 14: Now that we have a better understanding of the events that shaped the boomers, and we know some of the resulting behaviors and characteristics and values that they bring to the workplace, we can use this information and capitalize on some of these attributes and then acknowledge and support some of the other attributes. There are a couple of points that we should explore more deeply. First, on the play to side, some people may summarize these points with a label commonly applied to boomers, that of being workaholics. It's true, boomers do tend to respond well to KPIs, and they don't want to let their teams down. But on the other side of the coin, they may need support with change, especially if they abide by the "if it's not broken don't fix it mindset", and yes, I'm using air quotes. They also may not ask for help. Due to pride in being self sufficient. Do you see this at play with your peers? What about your clients? What about your vendors? It would benefit us all if we broaden our definition of what working with different generation means to go beyond our own organizational borders.

Slide 15: Generation X is sometimes referred to as the MTV generation and also the latchkey generation. Other monikers for this generation include the forgotten, lost, or sandwich generation. MTV, of course, refers to the influence of music television and music

videos. Latchkey references the fact that in this generation, it was more common for both parents to be working. So, children took care of themselves before and after school, literally letting themselves in and out of the house with a key. And the forgotten, lost, or sandwiched generation refers to the fact that this group will never make up the majority of the workforce. As a demographic cohort, it is the smallest generation. That is until the generation after Gen Z, but more about that later.

Slide 16: As an interesting side note, Canadian author Douglas Coupland gets credit for coining or at least popularizing the term Gen X in his 1991 book, Generation X– Tales for an Accelerated Culture.

Slide 17: Gen X attributes include being skeptical, not as impressed with authority like the boomers, and seeking a better balance between work commitments and spending time with family and friends.

Slide 18: Gen X in the workplace introduces less formality. We see this in a preference for hands off management as well as less formal meeting structures. Gen X promotes more social and humorous elements into the workplace. The boundaries between professional versus personal identities start to blend a little bit more with this generation, and they do not apologize for wanting to play as hard as they work. With Gen X, there is also a shift to being more receptive to receiving feedback and actioning it, and there's also a shift in terms of being willing to ask for help as they see it as a learning and growing opportunity.

Slide 19: Working alongside Gen X, we can see from this chart that there is opportunity to lean into their attributes like their focus and ability to generate revenue. In fact, their entrepreneurial mindset sets the stage for them to approach work like it is their own business. Gen X is typically noted to be more open and adaptable to change and to being creative problem solvers. You may have noticed managerial skills and executive presence under two separate columns on this chart. Well, research indicates that Gen X does indeed have strong managerial skills and they seek more opportunity to move into leadership and executive level roles, but in fact they feel restricted. If this is happening at your workplace, consider these two things. Are they being mentored by boomers? Or are they literally outnumbered by Gen Y in your workplace? Another reference point to the term sandwich generation should also be noted. Gen X is at a stage in their life now where they may be

caring for both their children and their elders. And this is demanding on many fronts, financially, emotionally, their time commitments, attention, and focus.

Slide 20: Now let's explore Gen Y, or Millennials, as they're commonly called. This generation exhibits values of being purpose driven and goal focused under the influences that are captured in this slide. Sometimes we can see the pendulum swing sharply from one generation to the next, as we have seen in parenting styles. If you recall, traditionalist parents expected children to be seen and not heard. The boomers then redefined parenting by looking at things from their children's perspective. Gen X then came along with latchkey parenting styles, and now Gen Y, they're referred to as helicopter parents. What is helicopter parenting? Well, it's often described as being overly protective and involved in children's lives. Literally think of a parent like a helicopter, who hovers and swoops in to rescue at the first signs of trouble or disappointment. Now couple this with participation trophies, where there's no winners or losers. Combine helicopter parenting and participation trophies and think about how this played out when the first of Gen Y was entering the workforce. These two factors alone prompted a broad stroke label of the soft generation. However, this generation is also characterized by their adaptability, tech savviness and desire for meaningful work.

Slide 21: Gen Y in the workplace is recognized as being comfortable with innovation and seeking to use technology to promote working smarter and not harder. This generation pushes forward from Gen X's work hard and play hard beliefs to seeking more balance and blending of work and life. There is an expectation to have access to senior leaders and an expectation that praise, and rewards should not be limited to only coming from a direct leader. Millennials are also characterized as being collaborative and flexible. As we consider these attributes, it's also important to recognize and acknowledge if we have any conscious or unconscious biases and if biases influencing us to apply labels or think one size fits all. Consider, for example, if you have family members of a particular generation and how that may affect overgeneralization based on your personal experiences.

Slide 22: Further to the characteristics we just explored, let's now consider how to best work with Gen Y. As Millennials have an ability to embrace and even seek change, it can be beneficial for organizations to strategically partner with Millennials and have them act

as early adopters. This way they can promote and support change with the other generations who typically may need more time. Gen Y's desire to grow and develop coupled with an inherent natural enthusiasm can also work well in reverse mentoring relationships. If you're not familiar with the term or practice of reverse mentoring, it is basically when more junior employees advise the more senior or tenured employees on emerging topics. Cross generational knowledge sharing is best supported in a reciprocal mentoring relationship in which each party learns from each other. Imagine the respect developed in a reciprocal mentorship relationship when a baby boomer, for example, shares company history and practices and Gen Y shares about technology. There are new perspectives to be gained from each of the participants. The other side of the coin around desire to grow and develop is that Gen Y and the following Gen Z generation can be so eager for change and development that it results in shorter attention spans and can even feed an impatience for wanting to move up or out in order to get the exposure, experience, and education that they seek. Millennials also appear to be less comfortable with ambiguity compared to their predecessors, so we can expect that they will seek guidance and transparency and will question authority and workplace norms.

Slide 23: The newest generation to the workforce is Gen Z. They're also known as globals, gamers and Zoomers. The Zoomers moniker is surprisingly not coined after Zoom, the video meeting service, but rather is a play on the term boomers and refers to the fast paced nature of Gen Z's upbringing amidst the explosion of technology and culture. In 2024, Gen Z surpassed the number of boomers in the workforce, and by 2030, they will make up 30 percent of the world's workforce. This generation has never known a world without the Internet as it exists today. Working and playing with technology is second nature to them. A significant event impacting this generation as they entered the workforce was COVID. Spending two years in remote learning resulted in some core content either not being covered or not introduced or explored in the more traditional manners. Ultimately, for some, the COVID learning environment did not mean an equivalent learning experience. Consider, for example, the learning differences for those in the medical and artistic fields. The lack of practical, hands on learning was also coupled with a decrease of in person social interactions, and this has contributed to a rise in mental

health conditions such as anxiety and depression. But also take note of the characteristics of creativity and customization. Gen Z prioritizes creativity, and in fact, they seek to monetize it with side hustles, like selling on Etsy. And regarding customization, this is a generation that has grown up with an ability to curate to their individual interests. Think about curated musical playlists. This fosters a desire for a similar customized experience in the workplace, and therefore they are less accepting of standardized content, practices, and delivery methods. These factors could contribute to perceptions that this generation is arrogant and difficult to work with, or we could look at it from a lens of they are competent and confident.

Slide 24: This generation values uniqueness, authenticity, creativity, and shareability. Due to the reduced social interactions during COVID, many Zoomers are actually building their personal social networks through office colleagues, thus further blending work and life. The global label that's also applied to this generation speaks to a world without boundaries due to technology, as well as their focus on being good global citizens. Organizations seeking to attract Gen Z will need to communicate and promote how they give back to and protect their broader global community, as well as how they drive and support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. This is an ask of candidates in initial conversations and will influence their decisions about where they see themselves best able to align and thrive. Gen Z also has a fear of missing out. They're driven, competitive, and ambitious. This is contrary to opposing perspectives that this generation is lazy. The key word here is perspective. It is also important to note that the definitions of ambition and success can look very different across the different generations. In fact, an article last year in fortune. com stated that Gen Z is not interested in climbing the traditional corporate ladder that has defined ambition and success for previous generations. So, working with Gen Z, we can support and capitalize on their desire for accelerated development. They are eager to keep learning. Just not necessarily to the subject matter expertise level that previous generations may equate to growth. Their push for progress is not limited to technology, however. They seek progress on all levels and in all interactions. This can fuel a desire for more immediate results and recognition. So, Gen Z may need support in playing the long game and despite being digitally connected, they may need guidelines

around office protocol and etiquette as their in person connections were restricted during COVID. This group of employees will drive purpose driven work and diversity, and they expect and deserve access to mental health support and resources.

Slide 25: With these shared insights around the generations in the workforce, we can further our ability to work most effectively with them by also recognizing that they often have unique values and may define work ethics differently. They may also work best under different leadership styles. They may interact with colleagues differently and expect or respond to feedback and rewards differently. To learn more, download our workbook at the end of this presentation.

Slide 26: There are also typical generational preferences around communication methods or styles. However, we continue to need to remind ourselves of bias, as again, one size does not fit all. As you can see from the chart on this slide, the degree of preferred formal communication declines from Boomers to Gen Z, and the preferred platform also changes to reflect more digital communications from Gen X to Gen Z. One point I find particularly interesting is the rise of visual communication preferences with Gen Y and Z, such as infographics.

Slide 27: When you are dealing with a diverse audience representing multiple generations, it's important to consider how to best engage with each group. A multi layered communication strategy, or segmented messaging, may be needed at times. This is the same approach used when we consider different learner styles. It's important to promote multi generational relationships in communication as well. Peer to peer interactions across generations can foster deeper understanding when interpretation and insights are shared. In addition, work attitudes are not fixed, so when people work closely together, values can rub off on each other. Another point to consider, which I know I've been guilty of at times, is not to overuse generation specific references. Analogies, examples, and stories that lean into events and topics only from a specific generation can make it challenging for others to understand and relate to the information being shared. And of course, there is slang that has become common vocabulary within each generation. Check out our workbook to see some of the most popular North American slang terms for each generation. As I pointed out at the beginning, it's important to understand not only the differences, but also the

similarities between the generations.

Slide 28: The goal for us is to achieve multi generational harmony in our workplace. The strategies on this slide are a strong framework, and then you can identify additional strategies to reflect the nuances of your teams, industry, business, leadership, and the like. While we have just explored that each generation typically has different preferences, values, and motivators,

Slide 29: We also consciously recognize that one size does not fit all for the individuals within a generational timeline. Another important factor to consider is that all generations have the same life stages. Just not in the same time periods. This continuum thought model highlights how similar generations are despite the different world events and parenting styles experienced. In the workplace, all the generations want to believe in what they do, they want to learn and grow, and they want to belong.

Slide 30: The key is to acknowledge differences. And that will help inform communication, leadership, and learning strategies. Then, we want to promote cross generational commonalities. As we've discovered, there is a fine line between awareness and stereotyping.

Slide 31: And what are these commonalities? Well, not surprisingly, they embody themes such as pride in work, ability to grow in one's career, as well as creating strong relationships and working in fair work environments.

Slide 32: And what comes after Gen Z? Well, it is the Alpha Generation, and the last of this group were born in 2024. This is a new approach to the naming of generations as it is scientific based and uses the Greek alphabet. The generation born between 2025 and 2040 will be known as Generation Beta, followed by Generations Gamma and Delta. Today's workplace is a blend of multiple generations, and this creates a dynamic environment. A multi generational workforce can sometimes bring misunderstandings and biases due to different communication styles, work ethics, expectations, and values. And yet there are just as many similarities between the generations. It is everyone's responsibility to foster respectful and productive work environments. So thank you for spending time with me today.

Slide 33: You can download a copy of the transcript from today's session and access the

supporting workbook here. I also encourage you to explore our blog series on working with different generations.

Slide 34: A number of resources supported the development and delivery of this topic, and you may want to review them.

Slide 35: If you would like to learn more about Agilus, we would love to connect with you.