



# Step by step to Embrace Your Millennial Workforce

Millennials! They have been called many names, like stubborn, impatient, feeling entitled and dopamine addicts! These are the people that are now joining our workforce, and were born between the years 1981 and 2000. Millennials' work characteristics have been shaped by a number of factors, ranging from devoted parents, the structured lives they live, the evolving technologies they use, and also being in contact with a diverse group of people. Today, the discussion on managing the Millennials at the workplace argues how difficult it is to handle this group. However, in a recent video interview, Simon Sinek shared his research findings that had a powerful message: Millennials are critically misunderstood!

## Understand your Millennials: why they are allegedly not living in the “real world”?

- ✚ The average tenure of millennial employees is two years! They are the most connected generation and will network their way out if their needs are not met.
- ✚ They have a “can do” attitude about tasks, but look for feedback frequently. They seek a variety of tasks and expect that they will accomplish every one of them.
- ✚ They want to make an impact. They're looking for a leader who is communicative and able to share with them the company's vision, mission and values and tie in with the work that they're doing. However, they expect their ideas to be welcomed and respected instantly.
- ✚ They seek challenges and they do not want to experience boredom, but expect flexibility and paid vacations.
- ✚ They are very entrepreneurial, but expect work-life balance and job security.

## How can leaders help them?

The Millennial survey respondents cited honesty, communication, approachability, confidence and the willingness to be supportive as the key traits of a good leader. Among this generation's workers, nearly 79% said that they are aspiring to be leaders themselves.

## Are they really different?

It is important to understand ourselves and others within a workplace. After all, it was not that long ago when Gen X (born mid 1960's to early 1980's) entered the workforce and their elder 'boomers' were equally irritated and portrayed as aspirational slackers, infantile and distrustful. The following chart compares rankings of work elements and makes a good example of similar styles of thinking throughout the generations. (The colours correspond with the different thinking preference of the Whole Brain® Model.)

RANK	Millenials	Gen X	Baby Boomers
1	Problem Solving	Problem Solving	Problem Solving
2	Interpersonal Aspects	Interpersonal Aspects	Interpersonal Aspects
3	Planning	Analytical	Planning
4	Analytical	Planning	Analytical
5	Organisation	Implementation	Implementation
6	Implementation	Teaching/Training	Teaching/Training
7	Teaching/Training	Organisation	Organisation
8	Expressing Ideas	Expressing Ideas	Expressing Ideas
9	Conceptualising	Conceptualising	Conceptualising
10	Writing	Writing	Writing
11	Creative Aspects	Innovating	Innovating
12	Innovating	Integration	Creative Aspects
13	Integration	Creative Aspects	Integration
14	Technical Aspects	Technical Aspects	Technical Aspects
15	Administrative	Financial Aspects	Financial Aspects
16	Financial Aspects	Administrative	Administrative

- ✚ When you understand your people, you understand your business! By using the Whole Brain® Model, all generations can gain insights into how different generations are defined and how they can leverage their differences at work for better results by exploring their core values and communication styles.
- ✚ According to a Gallup survey only 29% of Millennials are engaged at work. Managers need to plan and spend more time with millennials - by coaching them and providing frequent feedback sessions.
- ✚ Taken into consideration that only 29% of millennials are engaged at work, then these findings suggest that managers should double the prospect of engaging millennial employees by doing something many would consider simple and intuitive: holding them accountable.
- ✚ Studies show that 'reverse mentoring' is proving to be more beneficial than formal training. The younger generation that grew up with the internet can help the older generation to understand the power of social media and utilize it to drive business results. At the same time, the more experienced employee share institutional knowledge with the younger worker.
- ✚ Mixed-age work teams are another way to promote cross-generational mentoring. BT, the British Telecommunications company, offers a peer-to-peer learning program called Dare2share, a social collaboration platform that allows employees to pass on their knowledge and insights to their colleagues through short audio and video podcasts, RSS feeds and discussion threads, as well as through traditional training documents. BT employees can view content on Dare2share and rate each learning module according to its relevance and quality.
- ✚ Managers can take advantage of the Millennial's comfort level with diversity in order to encourage collaboration among teams. The U.S. Marine Corps routinely puts 22-year-old lieutenants in charge of 45-year-old sergeants. The mind-set is to make that person your partner and involve them in everything you do. All employees want to feel valued, empowered and engaged at work. It is a fundamental need, not a generational issue.

## Final thoughts

The rise of this most populous – not-so-popular workforce will have a major influence on the workplace for decades to come. They are the largest demographic group yet. Leaders need to learn how to attract and engage them. Leaders need to really comprehend that these millennials, due to the environment they grew up in, they come armed holding high expectations from their managers and co-workers, and they expect continuous learning opportunities with a high drive for career development. Understanding these qualities and addressing them won't just make their managers' life easier but will actually make the millennials more productive. Just take a glance at Forbes 30 under 30, be amazed and embrace the future!

- REFERENCES**
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