

LEADING MILLENNIALS

Master Millennial Leadership for Major Recruitment and Performance Advantages.

There's no shortage of news stories and thought-leadership pieces on the style, values, motivators and interactions of Millennials – and the fact that they are very different than previous generations. Unfortunately, these pieces often focus on complaining, ridiculing and predicting a dire future, rather than dealing with the reality. Leaders who strive to understand and create productive working relationships with Millennials can create a competitive advantage and lead their organizations to achieve outstanding results.

Soon, Millennials Will Rule the World

Several projections say Millennials will make up 75% of the global workforce by 2025 – they are the future, and the future is now. Change and management expert Erika Andersen says Millennials are individualistic, desire work/life balance, challenge authority figures, seek Managers' support/feedback, and expect to be paid well and promoted quickly. That's a significant change from baby boomers who thrived by being team players, dedicating themselves to work, following the rules, and putting in their time to get ahead. Those are two seemingly disconnected worlds.



Leadership theories and strategies of the past don't completely align with the Millennial way of thinking. Fortunately, while Millennials may be a new breed of worker, they make no secret of the leadership traits they respond to. According to researchers Cahya, Putriastuti and Stasi, the seven leadership traits most frequently identified and desired by Millennials are:

1	COMMUNICATION	97.9%
2	RESPECT	85.4%
3	VISION	79.1%
4	INFLUENCE	75%
5	TRUST	68.7%
6	INTEGRITY	64.5%
7	GROUP/TEAMWORK	62.5%

Smart leaders will be sure to focus on these seven traits when leading today, and into the future.

We need a new leadership theory to overcome the disconnect so Millennials can become top-notch performers.

Products of Changing Social, Work and Physical Environments

The Millennial culture is relatively new to the workforce, when compared to other generations. Baby boomers, for example, have a history that dates back to Beatlemania. Even though the Millennial experience is still being defined, we can strive to identify and understand the differences between Millennials and previous generations. Those are the first steps towards moving forward and success. Otherwise, we risk unintentionally lowering productivity and profitability because of poor communications, low morale and all-too-common workplace conflict. On the other hand, researchers Janet Jones, Samantha Murray and Shelly Tapp found that leaders who promote a better understanding of generational differences can improve Millennial outcomes – from recruitment and retention to engagement and performance.

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What Makes a Millennial?

Let's take a closer look at Millennials. As a generation matures, world events, along with social norms, greatly affect generational thinking, motivators and the perception of success. The large influences that shaped the Millennial mindset and values include The World Trade Center attacks, the increase in mass shootings and more frequent natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina, California wildfires and global warming. Millennials grew up with technology, the expectation of immediate answers and digital, instead of face-to-face communications. They were active participants in organized sports, experiencing continuous interaction with coaches. Their helicopter parents pushed them to achieve, avoid risk and capitalize on opportunities.

As a result, Millennials expect more supervision, more structured objectives and clearly defined goals.

They prefer teamwork and they desire to know that their work is important and meaningful. They want to feel they are successful, moving forward, and have a say in their future.

Leading Millennials – An Evolving Task with Clear Direction

Being an effective leader of Millennials is about give and take. You need to pay attention to coaching, caring and sharing information. At the same time, you need to allow Millennials to be part of your decision-making, planning and idea generation. Research shows millennials do not have the same sense of company loyalty as prior generations – so it's important to keep their engagement high. They need to feel a sense of ownership as an important part of the process.

In many ways, success comes down to coaching and caring, while giving Millennials meaningful, challenging work experiences – in an environment where they can comfortably express their opinions, promote innovation, make decisions and...

...believe they are being heard.

