

## THE FOCUS MY MILLENNIAL GENERATION NEEDS

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### GENERATIONS

It's no question that in today's job market there are a variety of challenges especially when it comes to managing a workforce with multiple generations. The underlying problem especially in agriculture is trying to fit an increasingly nontraditional workforce into a largely traditional workplace. Each generation has been influenced by particular experiences that create specific preferences, expectations, beliefs, and work styles. It is important to understand characteristics of each generation to be successful in today's workplace.

The four generations in the workplace today:

Traditionalist Born 1925-1945	Baby Boomers Born 1946-1964	GenX Born 1965-1980	GenY or Millennials Born 1981-2000
Team Players	Big Picture/Systems in Place	Positive Attitude	Confidence
Indirect in Communicating	Bring Fresh Perspective	Impatience	Sociability
Loyal to Organization	Do Not Respect the Titles	Goal Orientated	Morality
Respect the Authority	Disapprove Absolutes and Structure	Multi-tasking	Street Smarts
Dedication and Sacrifice	Optimism	Thinking Globally	Diversity
Duty Before Pleasure	Team Orientation	Self-Reliance	Collective Action
Obedience	Uncomfortable with Conflict	Flexible Hours, Informal Work Environment	Heroic Spirit
Respond Well to Directive Leadership	Personal Growth	Just a Job	Tenacity
Seniority and Age Correlated	Sensitive to Feedback	Techno-Literal	Technological Savy
Adherence to Rules	Health and Wellness	Informal – Balance	Lack of Skills for Dealing with Difficult People
	Personal Growth	Give them a lot to	Multitasking

		do and Freedom to do Their Way	
		Question the Authority	Need Flexibility

(Talent Management Team, United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund)

The Traditionalists, also known as the ‘silent generation’ or the ‘greatest generation’ are the oldest generation in the work place today. Most of which are retired, they were influenced by challenging times such as the Great Depression and WWII. This led to them being fiscally conservative, disciplined and cautious. This generation is extremely loyal, highly dedicated, not very risk tolerant, hard workers, have respect for authority and do not like change. Traditionalists prefer a hierarchical organization and display command-and-control leadership similar to the army. They set and obey the rules.

The Baby Boomers grew up in an abundant, healthy post-war economy, becoming an egocentric generation. This generation is referred to as the Baby Boom, because of the extra seventeen million babies born during that period relative to previous census figures (O’Bannon, 2001). They are considered workaholics given that they see work as self-worth especially when comparing to others. Baby Boomers value recognition and achievement, favor top-down management, and believe in paying their dues. They have a sense of entitlement, have been known to micro manage, thrive on the possibility for change, and will fight for a cause even though they do not like conflict. They value chain of command, may be technically challenged and expect authority (Rath, 1999).

Generation X lived in the shadow of the Baby Boomers. They experienced corporate downsizing, substantial layoffs, and government scandals. Growing up in homes with two incomes or with divorced parents has led them to be very independent, self-reliant individuals. Witnessing their parents (Baby Boomers), sacrifice greatly for their companies and living to work, Generation X adopted the mentality of working to live and have a more positive attitude toward the world. They were influenced by MTV, AIDS, and worldwide competition and are accustomed to receiving instant feedback from playing computer and video games (O’Bannon, 2001). GenX is not necessarily motivated by money, but an absence can lead to declined motivation. Teamwork, fun, and flexible schedules play a bigger role in the workplace with less respect to authority figures.

Generation Y, also known as The Millenials, is the most diverse and youngest generation in the workforce today. They grew up in a culturally diverse school and play environment, are tech-savvy, enthusiastic, self-centered, confident, well networked and achievement oriented (Mayhew, 2014). Their parents have been labeled ‘helicopter parents’ thanks to technology, they are never out of reach and focused on filling their children’s lives on highly supervised education and activities. As children, Millenials were taught to question authority, make their own decisions and told they could do anything. This generation of worker is coming into the workforce with networking, multiprocessing, and global-minded skills that the traditionalists and baby boomers could not have imagined (Talent management Team, United Nations Joint Staff pension Fund). They crave immediate feedback, don’t expect to ‘pay their dues’, and want to feel valued in the company they are working for. Millenials are independent, flexible, multi-taskers and susceptible to change.

## Motivating Millennials:

- We love a challenge and want to be creative and complete tasks on our own time with our own methods. The internet will be an instant source along with a network of friends or associates. We are driven more by accomplishments rather than money. If we are doing something wrong, we want to know about it right away so we can move on.
- We function well in teams and have been brought up with sharing rewards. Coaching and mentoring are a must and we need to know we have access to asking questions. Teach us 'WHY' we are doing the job we are doing.
- We want to be heroes. For ourselves and for our company, we seek out those opportunities and thrive off of them.
- We want it right now. Our minds are 'always on' and 'always connected'. Consistent access to information leaves us never satisfied and we expect instant results.
- We need praise. Parents and teachers gave us constant praise as well as second, third, and even fourth chances. As adults we need that same praise and we need it often even from employers.

Management style is important when dealing with us Millennials. Clearly define your expectations and give detailed instructions on what you want done but let us get the task done our own way. We are accustomed to new ideas and constantly want to learn as long as the work we do is relevant to ourselves and to the company. Millennials are loyal to managers, not to companies so investing in management is a key aspect of success. If managers are emotionally unintelligent and do not know how to handle Millennials and the frustration we bring, then we will quit now and not worry about the next job, that will come later. If it does not, we will lean on our helicopter parents for support.

## How to effectively train a Millennial:

- We thrive in multimedia environments
- We can learn anytime, anywhere
- Need flexibility and multi-tasking
- Use the internet and social media
- Keep the learning structured regardless of form
- Connect us with everything
- We are true team players

“Managing multigenerational workforces is an art in itself. Young workers want to make a quick impact, the middle generation needs to believe in the mission, and older employees don't like ambivalence. Your move.”

Harvard Business School “Working Knowledge” Newsletter- April 17,2006: “Can you manage different generation?”