



# **Managing Millennials**

**Why Women Leaders  
Have an Edge**

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You've heard the stereotypes about millennials at work:

*"They're entitled."*

*"They're lazy."*

*"They're job hoppers."*

Yes, the "trophy generation" can be a challenge for those who manage them, but the sooner leaders can begin to understand this often-misunderstood generation – and harness their many talents and abilities – the better for them and their companies.

## Millennial Metric:

They now comprise:

**36% of the workforce.**



By 2020:

**46% of the workforce.**



By 2025:

**75% of the workforce.**



Sources: *Maximizing Millennials in the Workplace study*, *The 2016 Deloitte Millennial Survey* and *3 Things Every Employer Needs to Know about Millennials*

Millennials are beginning their careers in record numbers, now making up more than a third of the workforce. And they are disrupting the way we work, and the way you – as a manager – need to manage in order to thrive and survive in the new corporate landscape.

Learning how to motivate them is key, particularly because nearly half of the workforce will be made up of millennials by 2020.

The good news: Women are better suited to manage millennials than men because they're more relationships-driven, which is what matters most to millennials. And as millennials multiply in the workforce, the unique skillset that women bring to the table will be key to managing this emerging workforce.

But first, you should equip yourself with what you need to take advantage of their unique characteristics. Millennials tend to be collaborative, innovative and tech-savvy – key elements of tomorrow's global workplace.

### ***Adopting a coach-centric management style***

Since the trophy generation was raised with constant coaching and feedback, millennial employees thrive when they have a boss who has a more coach-centric management style – someone who can empower them and have an impact on them to succeed.

### **Millennial Metric:**

#### **6 out of 10**

*cite a "sense of purpose" as part of the reason they chose their current employer.*

*Source: Deloitte Millennial Survey*

Once you learn what it is that motivates this younger generation and understand their mindset, you'll begin to see very positive results, instead of multi-generational conflict at play every day within your team.

You'll begin to think of your millennial workers in much more positive and productive terms – as fiercely loyal, innovative, team-oriented and resourceful – things that most bosses desire in a winning team.

Now, let's dispel millennial stereotypes, so you can motivate them to be your most productive and valued employees.

## Chapter 1: Mastering the Millennial Mindset

First, for you to understand these key members of your team and to appreciate their many talents and abilities, it's important to look at what was happening in the workplace – and in the world – when millennials were coming of age.

It was during that span of time from the Enron scandal in 2001, the housing market crash of 2007 and the financial crisis of 2008, which was followed by high unemployment, the rising cost of student debt and the reality that job security – something they may have heard about from their grandparents – was a thing of the past.

### Millennial Metric:

**21%** left a job in the last year to do something else (3 times higher than non-millennials).

Source: Gallup poll, "How Millennials Want to Work and Live"

This uncertainty has reshaped millennials' attitudes toward work. They understand the consequences of unethical business practices, which is why they look for employers to be

highly ethical. Generally, they are reluctant to work for businesses that behave in anything but a responsible manner.

No surprise that millennials have also been dubbed "the anxious generation." What they are looking for is to work with employers to bring about change in the world, in the industry, in people's lives – as they are given opportunities to develop new skills.

### What's driving millennials (and how you can harness that)

Their apparent lack of attachment to companies has led millennials to think more like entrepreneurs. Some of the same things that drive entrepreneurs – lifestyle and freedom – drive millennials, says Colby B. Jubenville, co-author of *Zebras and Cheetahs: Look Different and Stay Agile to Survive the Business Jungle*.

In this "age of the entremployee," as former Facebook marketing chief Randi Zuckerberg refers to it, millennials crave innovation. In fact, 62% think of themselves as "innovative," according to The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2017.

If millennials are always looking for the next big idea – and if you can harness that entrepreneurial mindset for your company to bring a fresh perspective or add value – you may just find your company's next big idea.

Meeting new goals and challenges keeps them motivated. While their enthusiasm for change may be met with some pushback by their older co-workers, baby boomers and Gen-Xers, "it's not about age with millennials," says Bonnie Monych, author of *Get Your Shift Together: The Secret to Working with Multiple Generations in the Workplace*. "It's about skillset, passion, energy and excitement for the workplace."

### 6 things millennials want in a job

These six concepts from a recent Gallup poll, *How Millennials Want to Work and Live*, will help you better understand the millennial mindset:

#### Millennial Metric:

**71%** who are likely to leave a job in the next two years aren't satisfied with the development of their leadership skills.

Source: Deloitte Millennial Survey 2016

1. Millennials don't just work for a paycheck – they want a purpose.
2. Millennials aren't pursuing job satisfaction – they're pursuing development.
3. Millennials don't want bosses – they want coaches.
4. Millennials don't want annual reviews – they want ongoing conversations.

5. Millennials don't want to fix their weaknesses – they want to develop their strengths.

6. Millennials don't want just a job – they want a lifestyle, as well.

So these key elements are where you – as a female leader – can shine when it comes to managing millennials. Women are born nurturers, multitaskers and motivators – all things that are valuable when it comes to managing millennials.

Here's how to better understand what it takes to motivate them, how to make them feel empowered and inspired, how to keep them engaged – and ultimately how to develop them into key team members.

### **Millennial Motivator No. 1:**

***“I want a job with a sense of purpose.”***

Millennials see jobs more like life choices, rather than just employment. Many see their hard work, day in and day out, as a trade-off for learning new skills and having more experiences, so they have high expectations of their employer. They expect their bosses to provide a road map to their success, and if you can, you'll keep them fully engaged.

### **Millennial POV:**

*“Work-life balance means doing an awesome job at work but also having enough time and energy to focus on my other passions and relationships.”*

— Kayla Buell, author and millennial career blogger (*Forbes*)

The younger generation wants to work for a company that's making an impact on social and environmental issues. They are seeking engagement – an emotional connection – to their boss, to their work and to their company.

Millennials want to believe in the company's mission; in fact, 92% believe businesses should be measured by more than their profits. Millennials want companies to focus more on people (employees, customers, society, etc.), and less on profits, according to Deloitte.

Many millennial workers are striving for a sense of accomplishment and purpose. “Millennials really, really, really do have an intrinsic drive to do well and to achieve and accomplish,” said Cathy Benko, managing principal of Deloitte, whose company conducts surveys on millennials. “It's just that it has to be on their terms.”

Leaders who can help them drive their career and accomplishments are making a difference in engaging millennials. Women leaders, who have struggled to achieve great success as well as a work-life balance, certainly have a lot to offer millennials in the way of proving that you can “have it all” – a job, along with a sense of purpose.

### **Millennial Motivator No. 2:**

***“I don't want the traditional career path.”***

Millennials are forging their own path. It's not about securing the corner office anymore. The younger generation may not necessarily want your job, but they do want to see a career path, and want you – as their leader – to help them get there.

Millennials may not necessarily conform to the career ladder mindset, but they want to know they are working toward a goal. And many do want to grow and develop into future leaders.

Their strong desire to get training and professional development is the great differentiator between them and all the other generations in the workplace, according to the Gallup poll, *Millennials Want Jobs to be Development Opportunities*.

### Millennial Metric:

*They want feedback*

**50%** more often than other employees, with most preferring it weekly or monthly.

*Source: How to Engage Millennials to Ensure the Future of Your Business*

This aspect of looking at jobs as development opportunities gives managers a unique way to engage their millennial workers. By offering them advance professional training, you will prove to them that you value their skills and abilities and want to invest in their professional growth. Female managers were rated much higher than their male counterparts in the areas of development and motivating others, according to a *Harvard Business Review* study.

A big criticism of millennials is that this need to “develop” their career is not earned. In other words, millennials didn’t put in the time. But in millennials’ eyes, development shouldn’t only come from tenure. For them, it’s not about entitlement, it’s about development, according to Bridge LMS’s *Working with Millennials* report.

### Millennial Motivator No. 3:

***“I want a boss who can coach me.”***

Millennials want to know how they are progressing in their jobs, and careers, on a regular basis. And since the mindset of a coach tends to be more supportive, caring and nurturing, women leaders have an advantage when managing millennials since they are stronger at building relationships and sharing stories, says career coach Meghan Godorov.

Many women managers are finding that if they shift from a management mindset to a coaching mindset, they get better results with their millennial workers, says executive coach Jamee Tenzer.

To help make the transition, here are her simple coaching tools to add to your managerial toolbox:

- 1. Stay open.** Ask open-ended questions and share stories to make a personal connection.
- 2. Listen more.** Practice active listening and ask clarifying questions.
- 3. Remain curious.** Try to learn something new about your younger team members during every interaction.

## Millennial POV:

*"I like to generate ideas, flesh out part of my plan and then get feedback from my manager."*

– Emily Disston, Director of HR, BetterCloud  
(TheMuse)

The coaching mindset is not about telling people what to do, but helping them to connect and collaborate to get the job done. "The best managers – and indeed the teams that go on to greatness – are the ones who understand this important distinction," offers Karie Willyerd, co-author of *The 2020 Workplace*.

### **Millennial Motivator No. 4:**

***"I need constant feedback."***

Millennials don't like yearly performance reviews. They like feedback a lot more frequently; 80% of millennials prefer frequent feedback to traditional performance reviews, according to a study by Namely, an HR platform.

In fact, the vast majority think the performance review needs a complete overhaul, according to TinyPulse's *The Truth Behind Performance Reviews* study. Millennials would prefer that performance reviews be more conversational, rather than their boss just running down a checklist of performance criteria.

To them, the yearly reviews are too infrequent and too impersonal; 62% of millennials have even felt "blindsided" by a performance review, according to a TriNet survey.

The occasional "nice job" isn't enough either. But what millennials do want from a boss is a constant back-and-forth on a daily basis. That's what keeps them engaged and that's what keeps them around.

In their Facebook, Twitter and Instagram worlds, they are used to getting constant feedback on their ideas and opinions. And they look for the same in a boss – someone who is inspiring, encouraging and a constant presence.

## Millennial POV:

*"I feel most accomplished in my career when, at the end of the day, I'm able to think of a moment when I provided my thoughts or ideas on a project and they were taken into account."*

— Brianna Lawson, online marketing specialist  
(Association Adviser)

Millennials say they want to know "how they are doing" a staggering 71 times a year, according to an ORC International survey. So managers need to increase their check-ins on a daily basis, even if it's a quick text or a 30-second desk-side check-in.

Waiting to give feedback at a scheduled meeting, where you want to discuss a list of topics, is not the best approach to take with millennial workers. "Make sure you stop

to point out successes as you see them," writes Collegial Services President Robin Reshwan in a *US News and World report*. "It's important to not save the praise."

### **Millennial Motivator No. 5:**

***"I want to develop my strengths."***

Millennials don't like to be reprimanded (who does?). But the trophy generation is simply not used to it, says millennial expert Lyndsey Pollak. They received positive feedback their whole lives and social media provides constant, mostly-positive feedback, she explains.

So it's not surprising that the younger generation prefers a strengths-based type of leadership, which focuses on what their strengths are and builds on them, rather than trying to correct their weaknesses.

By leveraging their strengths, you can better encourage them to take the lead on projects that will play to those strengths, keeping them engaged and motivated.

You might send them to trade shows, conferences, seminars or even a lunch-and-learn program at the office to help them gain more insight into your company and your industry. Or challenge them to come up with new ways to streamline long-established, labor-intensive processes.

"Retaining millennials requires a different strategy from employers to maximize potential," suggests Jeannine Kunz, director of Tooling U-SME, an online learning organization. "Companies who embrace the millennials' unique differences are the ones that will break new ground in the workplace."

But, remember, even strengths-based leadership doesn't totally ignore weaknesses. It just minimizes them. "With a constant flow of feedback, the negative comments get interspersed with the positive ones, which lessens the sting," offers Christy Hopkins, HR consultant.

### **Millennial Motivator No. 6:**

#### ***"I want a work/life balance."***

Of course, all of us want a work/life balance, but millennials, more than any other generation, are unsatisfied when they don't get it. You see, they have a lot of family, travel and work goals they want to accomplish.

So, it's all about flexibility for millennials. Expecting them to keep to a 9-5 workday is not a reality anymore. Most want the flexibility to take that early morning yoga class even if it means they'll be at work a little later. But they have no problem catching up on work emails late at night.

The majority of millennials want more opportunities to work remotely, and they expect change in the workplace now. They certainly don't understand when you say, "That's the way we've always done it around here."

Studies show that 88% of millennials consider their work-life balance when choosing a job, while 74% say flexible work schedules are a priority.

Some ways bosses can provide this balance are by discouraging weekend work and allowing all workers the flexibility to leave work early, not just parents who have to take their child to the doctor or attend a school play, recommends millennial expert Lindsey Pollak.

Even though millennials want more work-life balance, it doesn't mean they're not ambitious. They value work-life balance in addition to having a successful career. And they have the education to back it up: Millennials are the most-educated generation to date, with higher degrees and higher-level internship experience than previous generations, according to the Pew Research Center.

## Quiz: How Well Do You Know Your Millennial Employees?

Answer True or False to the following statements, then check the correct answers on the following page.

1. Millennials prefer training and development more than cash bonuses.

true

false

2. Millennials prefer to receive voicemails over emails at work.

true

false

3. Having a boss check in for 15 minutes each week is more important to millennials than a top benefits package.

true

false

4. Millennials say the best way to advance a career is to move from job to job at different companies.

true

false

### **Answers**

- 1. True.** Training and development programs are high priorities for millennials in the workplace.
- 2. False.** They tend to view email as the primary method of communicating at work and see phone calls and voicemails as disruptive and inconvenient.
- 3. True.** Most (81%) millennials would rather join a company that values open communication than one that offers great perks such as top-flight health plans, free food and gym memberships, says a 15Five survey.
- 4. False.** Surprisingly, almost half (44%) say “move up the ladder at a single company” rather than job hop (25%) to advance their career, says *The Millennial Economy Survey*. But they will job hop if they are not fully engaged at their job.

## Chapter 2: Millennials Are Disrupting the Workplace (but it's all good for managers)

*Jackson, a 22-year-old assistant, was given a list of 20 tasks to accomplish on his first day of work. While he finished 17 of the 20 items on his to-do list in record time, he had no qualms about telling his boss, a female CEO, that he "skipped" the remaining three items on the list, suggesting there would be someone else "better suited" for those tasks.*

### Millennial Metric:

**60%** leave their company in less than three years.

Source: Retail Wire

Well, many of you might have fired Jackson for his actions, but this particular CEO, as told in *Forbes*, retained this multitasking millennial and now considers him a "valuable" member of the team.

This story illustrates how the younger generation of workers today – millennials – are disrupting the traditional employer/employee relationship. Yes, while many leaders may get incensed at what they perceive as subordinate behavior, others are embracing their forthrightness.

Millennials are having a profound impact on the workplace, driving change in workplace culture, structure, leadership and the technology used to get the job done.

Since many entered the workforce at the downturn of the economy, just prior to the 2008 economic collapse, millennials learned to expect change from the very beginning of their working careers.

As the younger generation begins to dominate leadership roles in the next several years, the way of doing business will change in many ways. But the good news: Many of the millennial disruptions are quite positive for the workplace.

### **Avail yourself of quicker access to data**

The millennial mindset is focused on making all things easier, faster and more efficient, which translates to mobile devices and instant access. And company policies are changing to allow the use of smartphones and mobile apps to get it all done more efficiently.

The shorter attention span has affected communication. Millennials want to get work done quickly and don't have time for formalities. They prefer to communicate by texting, and for a company to stay competitive in this fast-paced world, the quickest way of communicating is usually the best.

So it's time to evolve your thinking and embrace change, write Regina Luttrell and Karen McGrath, authors of *The Millennial Mindset*. By recognizing that this unique generation can help you with quicker access to information, "you will unlock potential you didn't even know your organization could possess," they say.

### **Tap new technologies**

Millennials are the first generation to have had access to digital technology their entire lives. The fact that technology and digital communication is such a massive part of their personal lives means that a workplace that doesn't adapt to it – and keep on evolving with it – could seem outdated and not a place millennials want to devote their professional lives to.

Leaders who embrace their expertise in this area can benefit tremendously. Since they're attuned to what is trending (on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), your millennial team members can help you keep a finger on the pulse of what is going on with your competitors, your customers and your industry, as well as other departments or cross-functional teams.

Online collaboration tools that help you share files and keep projects flowing in real time have increased and are more accepted in the workplace, and millennials know all about them. Ask them for suggestions on which tech tools would work best for your organization, and why.

### Offer flexible schedules

Since millennials crave flexible work schedules, figure out how you can build them into your workplace.

### Millennial POV:

*"The number one reason millennials leave companies is that they don't feel valued or respected."*

—Tammy Erickson, author of *Plugged In*  
(GothamCulture)

We no longer have to work around others' schedules, since technology has made it too easy to work wherever you are, so you can attend to more of those life events. The normal 9-5 workday seems to be more and more a thing of the past.

Are you – and your company – willing (and able) to accommodate a more flexible workplace?

"If the senior management or companies decide not to embrace that, you're going to lose talent," said Monica Marquez, Ernst & Young's West region inclusiveness and flexibility lead.

"We're at a point now where we understand that in order to engage and retain millennials, flexible work arrangements are going to have to be a reality," said Peter Yobo, consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers.

### De-emphasize the corporate ladder

"Since we shifted from an industrial age to a digital age, there has been a shift in the corporate structure," says Cathy Benko, vice chairman, Deloitte LLP.

Millennials don't trust "the system" to take care of them long-term, so they don't see the point in putting in the time to maybe get promoted five years down the line. They want to see their career laid out in front of them. They are looking at next week, next month, next year.

Millennials don't want to climb a structured career ladder. They want to work for a company where all employees have access to each other, are valued and can change the workplace for the better. They believe that communication is paramount to success.

## Millennials Aren't Job Hoppers if ...

The fact is millennials do not want to job hop. As long as you can show them a path for growth, engaged millennials will stay put, according to a Deloitte study.

Giving millennials ownership over their assignments, for example, will correlate with job satisfaction and foster loyalty to your company.

"Millennials often believe you don't need a title to be a leader," says Bonnie Monych, author of *Get Your Shift Together: The Secret to Working with Multiple Generations in the Workplace*. "It can come from heading a project or campaign, or even taking an active role on your team."

By making jobs and career paths as customizable as possible, you can retain more millennials. "Millennial-friendly companies are creating rotational programs where employees can move around and try different career paths to see where they fit best," says millennial expert Lyndsey Pollak.

### **Raise your company's social conscience**

Millennials are looking for transparency in a company. They were brought up with a focus on volunteering and a culture of giving back, so they want to continue that social awareness at work. They expect to know how and where products are made and that it was done ethically, so transparency is what they look for in a leader.

Create opportunities for them – or ask them to come up with ideas or projects – to participate in socially-aware company initiatives, such as asking for volunteers for a local community or charity organization. It will make them feel part of something more powerful, more meaningful and more purposeful than their day-to-day duties.

## Chapter 3: What Millennials Want From a Job

### Millennial Metric:

Those engaged at work are **64%** less likely to switch jobs than those disengaged.

Source: Gallup poll, *Many Millennials Are Job Hoppers – But Not All*

There is somewhat of a disconnect between millennials' expectations and what companies think they want, says millennial workplace expert Lindsey Pollak. That is why some companies are bringing in consultants to help managers understand how to better motivate – and retain – this growing group of workers.

Companies are turning to the hundreds of firms, speakers, authors and experts that are vying for the share of millennial expertise, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Goldman Sachs and Coca-Cola, for example, have hired so-called millennial experts, sometimes for as much as \$20,000 an hour, to help them engage the younger set at work.

Dan Schawbel, partner, Future Workplace, for instance, advised Red Robin Gourmet Burgers to let employees set flexible schedules and make upper management more visible. The company now gives workers Friday afternoons off and CEO Stephen Carley now brings doughnuts or bagels into the office once a quarter and personally hands them out to employees.

Lisa McLeod, an independent millennial consultant, advises clients to take out numbers from internal presentations because, she says, millennials find stories more engaging than numbers.

Other millennial-centric recommendations include things as simple as movie outings and other team-building activities or loosening up corporate meetings.

Many generations-old workplace cultures are struggling to hire and inspire the young talent. So how does the average company fulfill a millennial's professional needs?

Here is specifically what they are looking for from you, their boss, from your company and from new learning opportunities that may be afforded to them.

## What Millennials Want ... from You, Their Boss

"The good news is millennials generally like and look up to their managers," says Lyndsey Pollak. They see you as a mentor. They are drawn to leaders who invest in their success. Here are some ways to keep them equally committed to you:

**Help navigate a career path.** Millennials want constant growth. So, if you can set them up on a career path with clear guidelines on what skills are necessary to get there, they'll remain loyal to you. But they need to understand all the steps they need to take along the way.

**Offer straight feedback.** Honest, consistent, constructive feedback is key to managing millennials, and studies show that women leaders tend to be better communicators and show more empathy than male leaders. So the more you can show them they are on the right track to getting an assignment accomplished, the more they will be open to constructive criticism. This means a greater number of touch points – weekly check-ins, progress reports, quarterly reviews, etc. They crave feedback from their direct managers. While setting time every week or so to review goals is important to them, it will also help you to keep watch on your millennials' engagement.

### Millennial Metric:

**52%** said honesty was the most important quality they want in a leader.

—Source: Randstad survey

**Offer professional development.** Mentoring, training and professional development opportunities that indicate how to advance are important to millennials. Understanding how a millennial fits into the big picture directly correlates with whether or not that employee chooses to stay with a company. That's why

it's key to emphasize short- and long-term goals, the path to reach those goals and the training and development that's needed to be successful in your company, recommends Matt Roddan, head of employee research, ORC International.

**Be transparent.** Honesty is the way to go with millennials. Keep an open relationship by sharing opinions and stories with your younger workers. Women leaders, who are more willing to reveal personal stories and how they may have handled a particular professional situation, seem to have an advantage with millennials in this aspect.

**Foster a collaborative environment.** Whether it's with your team or with other departments, millennials thrive when they work in groups. By putting your millennial workers on cross-functional tasks, you'll be taking advantage of their strengths, as you strive to achieve a company goal. It's a win-win.

### **What Millennials Want ... from Your Company**

Millennials judge a business by how it treats people. That's why company culture is important to them. They want to be part of a company with a sense of community. They are less impressed with the scale of a business and more interested in a company that has a high-quality, reliable product and cares about its customers, according to *The Deloitte Millennials Survey 2016*:

### **Millennial Metric:**

**3 out of 5** expect to work remotely.

—Source: Oasis Outsourcing

However, millennials do recognize that financial success is one of the elements that characterize a leading organization, but they have certain priorities, which have been labeled the Four Ps in *the Deloitte survey*:

- **Profit**
- **People (employees and society in general)**
- **Products**
- **Purpose**

**Support flexible schedules.** Equipping young workers with online portals, cloud storage and video conferencing, which gives them the flexibility to work hours that best fit their lifestyle, goes a long way toward engaging them.

**Provide impactful benefits.** As the line between professional and personal time is getting blurred, millennials want more freedom, as well as more paid time off. Some companies, such as Best Buy and Virgin, are matching flexible working schedules with unlimited vacation policies. Others are offering more holistic wellness options, such as stress management classes, yoga classes and nutrition consultations, to appeal to millennials. If your company doesn't have the budget for salary increases, additional training and career development tops the list for millennials.



## Mentoring Millennials

Advances in technology have made millennials quick learners. In order to mentor a millennial, a leader needs to offer support, counseling and role modeling – all things women excel at, as well as the ability to think outside the box:

**Help them navigate.** They can't learn everything they need to know about leadership on YouTube. Recommend places they can turn to for more business advice and tips. Introduce them to worthwhile business websites, insightful articles or business books.

**Focus on their values.** Find out what your millennial believes in. A good mentor will help a millennial to turn his or her values into something valuable at work. For example, if a millennial feels strongly about the environment, encourage him or her to find ways to make the department greener (recycling, going paperless, etc.) "Take any opportunity to tie those values back to the organization so they can see their personal values at every level of what they do," said Aaron Michel, CEO, PathSource.

### **What Millennials Want ... from a Learning Experience**

Millennials want the opportunity to learn, whether from you, as their boss, or from someone who has expertise in their field. Millennials not only seek continuous development, but two-thirds expect their employers to provide the opportunities, according to *Bridge Learning*.

**Technical skills** When you grow up using computers and cell phones, you have a different perspective on technology than other generations, so millennials always want to know the latest technology. After all, they adapt to new technology twice as fast as their elders. By continuing to invest in them, and their technical skills, your company's prosperity will improve as well.

**Leadership skills** By giving millennials a chance to manage a project, you can create an opportunity for them to learn a new skill. "Pair the millennial project-lead with a senior executive, or someone with 15-plus years of experience," suggests Adam Smiley Poswolsky, author of *The Quarter-Life Breakthrough: A Guide for Millennials to Find Meaningful Work*. This will make your young staffer feel valued while giving them the chance to learn one-on-one from a senior leader. Or ask them to start a new project at work – something that will give them the opportunity to challenge themselves.

**Industry knowledge** "Millennials look for jobs where they can truly immerse themselves in all aspects of a company, learn quickly and make a positive impact early on," according to Madison Lichtmann, author, *WeSpire.com*.

**Innovative culture** Millennials want to be recognized for their ideas and be a driving force in a company's success, and success begins with innovation. If you can help them develop marketable ideas, you will retain them. Create a culture of innovation by carving out some time for it in your team's workday to encourage diverse opinions, which can often lead to breakthrough ideas.

## Chapter 4: Communicating with Millennials: How to Speak Their Language

To millennials, the most important quality in a leader is communication, according to a Randstad survey. But unfortunately, a lot of managers don't know how to communicate properly with millennials.

When it comes to addressing performance problems of millennials, there are two common mistakes managers make, according to Bruce Tulgan, author of *Not Everyone Gets a Trophy*:

### Millennial POV:

*"When it comes to feeling appreciated, we are much the same as older generations. We want our hard work to be known and appreciated where it counts."*

—Kelly Clark, manager for online marketing  
(Association Adviser)

- 1. Withholding feedback** Sometimes managers take back incomplete work and reassign it. Other times, the problems are not addressed, leaving millennials to figure out for themselves the correct approach.
- 2. Hit-and-run criticism** This type of manager offers honest feedback but it's sporadic, so millennials are left feeling that they're not getting a clear vision on how work should be done. Managers aren't taking the time to systematically review their work, so when they do get a negative critique, millennials feel blindsided.

Instead, try these suggestions for communicating with your millennial employees more effectively:

**Be approachable.** Managing the millennial starts by increasing the lines of communication. For them, it's the FOMO (fear of missing out) phenomenon. They want to be kept in the know and want their bosses to share department or company news, which helps build a connection. Make it known to your millennials that you're open to their ideas. They need the consistency of open communication, rather than the rigid protocols of one-on-ones.

**Listen more.** With unprecedented access to information, millennials want to be heard. They will be highly forthcoming when asked their thoughts on a particular decision. "Millennials need to feel like they

### Millennials' Greatest Strengths

- *Tech-savvy*
- *Innovative*
- *Well-connected*

### Millennials' Greatest Weaknesses

- *Noncommittal*
- *Narcissistic*
- *Awkward communicator (in person)*

Source: Express Employment Professionals survey

are being heard and understood," said Elaine Hughes, CEO, E.A. Hughes, an executive search firm. "In fact, the key to properly managing millennials is to understand them so you can then motivate them. And listening is critical."

#### Tell them saying "No problem" is a problem.

Words matter in business. When acknowledging a thank you, millennials tend to say "no problem" (or even "no worries") instead of a "You're welcome." But to clients, customers and senior executives, it could come across as a flippant response, and could be offensive to a valued customer. Some other recommended phrases: "It's my pleasure," "I'm happy to help" or "We appreciate your business," recommends modern manners authority Diane Gottsman.

**Keep it brief, but meaningful.** Millennials have mastered the art of saying something meaningful in 140 characters or less, thanks to Twitter. Attention spans have drastically shortened over their lifetimes. If you are sending a time-sensitive email, include "Important Please Read ASAP" in the subject line.

### The Right Way to Give Feedback

Be sure your feedback hits the mark with millennials.

"This is not the way to do this."	"Here's another way to approach this..."
"This is unacceptable."	"I know you had the best intentions, but if you make these changes, you'll be more successful."
"Here's what you need to do to change."	"What do you think you can do differently?"
"Good job."	"What I liked about what you did was..."

## Chapter 5: Optimizing Your Millennial Employees

Since millennials seek purpose, flexibility and innovation at work, the key is for you to show that you have a plan for them to do meaningful work that's interesting, challenging and rewarding.

### Millennial Metric:

Only **23%** are receiving the feedback from their boss that they need to succeed.

Source: *Engage Millennial Employees with Feedback and Evaluation.*

And it's also a matter of learning new skills to be able to manage millennials in a more effective way. In other words, if you're using outdated approaches to managing them, you're working counterproductively.

There are proven strategies that managers use to harness millennial strengths, according to recent reports:

- **Give millennials the gift of context.** Explain to your millennial workers how they fit into the larger picture, suggests Bruce Tulgan, CEO, *Rainmaker Thinking*, which conducts research on millennials. The "why" matters to them ... a lot. What helps is to let them know what your company roadmap looks like, along with short- and long-term goals. Clue them in to the "why" of each project, as well.
- **Encourage them to bring ideas forward.** If millennials believe their ideas and opinions matter, they will be much more engaged and willing to contribute to the team. "Frankly, you do need their ideas," wrote Ben Peterson, CEO, BambooHR in *Inc. magazine*. "They often know things that their older colleagues don't - especially around media and tech."
- **Teach millennials how to manage themselves.** As advanced as millennials may be in their knowledge and technological skills, says Tulgan, they are often lacking maturity when it comes to professionalism, communicating and critical thinking. So teach them the basics of good work habits, good attitude and good teamwork.

- **Establish a regular routine for one-on-ones.** Schedule regular discussions with each of them about their work. “Keep asking, ‘What do you need from me?’” suggests Tulgan.
- **Provide opportunities for growth.** Millennials seek leadership, and even structure. Help them formulate a plan on how they can move up in the company and help them to visualize their career trajectory.
- **Encourage mentorship.** Millennials crave mentoring, which may be more important to them than it was to any other 20th century generation of white collar workers, says Matthew Randall, executive director of the Center for Professional Excellence. Millennials are benefitting from having somebody to turn to for advice or who helps them develop their leadership skills. They want to be part of something bigger than themselves and want to learn from those who have paved the road.



## Manage Millennials (*without catering to them*)

As a leader, you need to decide how many changes you and your company need to make in order to accommodate millennials. Some advice from other leaders:

- “You need to assess how flexible you can afford to be while remaining true to your company’s values, priorities and bottom-line goals,” offers Dr. Denise Federer, owner, FPMG Consulting.
- “Don’t make changes to your business simply to appeal to millennials. Make them to balance the ideals and work styles of all of your talent to optimize the common ground,” offers Justin Tobin, president of DDG, a Fortune 500 consultancy.
- Make changes when you “see the resulting increases in employee productivity and engagement,” said Jan Ferri-Reed, president, KEYGroup consultancy.

- **Close the technology gap.** Whatever technology that enables them to do their job more efficiently appeals to them, from a tablet to a task management app (Todoist, Wunderlist and EverNote, to name a few). And give them a say in tech-related decisions for your department or company.
- **Assign coaches for new hires.** Help millennials assimilate to the culture of the workplace. “The exchange of ideas and the development of relationships in the workplace is what is most beneficial,” said Regina Luttrell and Karen McGrath, authors of *The Millennial Mindset*.

The millennial worker is vastly different from those generations before them. Along with that difference comes technical knowledge, innovation and a passion to learn and be successful. Millennials often bring these hard skills to the workplace, but it's the soft skills they are lacking, and this is where women leaders have the edge. Women are more equipped with emotional intelligence, which gives you the ability to listen and communicate effectively, as you aim to inspire, which is exactly what millennials are looking for in a leader.