

A Leadership Minute

ON MILLENNIALS

When surveyed, 64%
of Millennials replied
“Dude; what?”



Millennials interact
differently...

By Age 21:

- ❖ 10,000 hours of video games
- ❖ 200,000 emails sent - and untold IMs and Tweets
- ❖ 20,000 hours of TV
- ❖ 10,000 hours on cell phone
- ❖ Less than 5,000 hours was spent reading

... in a different kind
of world

- ❖ The Top 10 jobs for 2014 did not exist in 2004
- ❖ Millennials will have 10 to 14 jobs by the time they are 38 years old
- ❖ TV took 13 years to reach an audience of 50 million ... the iPod took 3 years; Facebook took just 2 years

The “Where’s the Latte Machine, Tweet Me Later, I Don’t Do Mornings” Employee has Arrived

Millennials (people born between 1977 and 2000) have begun to enter the US workforce in earnest. They are now about a third of the total workforce, and are expected to be nearly half by 2020. Their expectations for the workplace, family/ work life priorities, even how they define success are considerably different from most of their managers’. If you felt the need to roll your eyes as you read this, you are already aware of the challenges they present for hiring, training and operating managers.

Millennials have different career goals

There have been many studies of what Millennial workers want. Most boil down to this: meaningful work, flexibility, a sense of accomplishment, a collaborative environment and active, involved leadership to guide them and help them learn. That’s where you come in. And leading Millennials is much more than giving them flexible hours or operating in a socially responsible manner.

Millennials think differently

And this isn’t just conventional wisdom. We actually studied Millennial thinking styles and compared them to Non-Millennials, people over the age of 32. Almost 3,000 professionals answered 90 questions. Here’s some of what we learned:

- ❖ About 2/3 of Millennials who hold jobs in Marketing or Sales use their *feelings* more than analytics or logic when solving problems and making decisions. They are *holistic, creative thinkers*.
- ❖ Less than half of Non-Millennials do this. Most Non-Millennials use *analytics*, logic, and reasoning. They are *critical thinkers*.

S'awesome...

Nobody is completely a creative or a critical thinker. We are all a little of both. But Millennials are more creative and Non-Millennials are more critical in their thinking styles. These style differences in the workplace can cause frustration and hinder performance. Or, they can invigorate and transform a workplace to performance at much higher levels.

What happens in your workplace is up to your leadership.

You can spend your time grousing about "them" and trying to hammer home why they have to be more analytical. You can even spend money training all the Millennials in your workplace in SPSS, SAS or Excel. Yeah, turn all those puppies into Big Dogs like you. But, hands-on experience with the thousands of Millennials who have passed through our university classrooms tells us this: *not gonna happen*.

So, here's the bottom line. Forget about *UPPERCASE TALKING* at your Millennial workforce. Find more creative ways to use these more creative kids, well, more creatively. Here's an example:

- ❖ Those of us over 35 or so most often express knowledge as **facts**. Like this: "Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow. And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go."
- ❖ Millennials most often express knowledge as **stories**. Like this: "Mary had a lamb that really loved her."

When it comes to making a decision in the workplace, the process really has two parts. First, it's all about making the best decision possible given the information available, of course. But after the decision is made, it becomes all about making it stick... getting people on board so they don't torpedo or undermine the new status quo. Enter stage right (with smartphones and ear buds)...your Millennial workforce.

Facts help make a decision. Stories help make a decision stick.

So, you do the number crunching and analysis; you know, like this... *we think Mary should be the new spokesperson for the credit card we want to offer to little white lambs because when we tested them in focus groups, 58.6% of little white lambs said they either definitely would or may follow Mary.*

Let your Millennials add the glue ... *You should have seen the love on those little lambs' faces when we showed them a picture of Mary...it was like, powerful, dude.*

Powerful indeed...dude.



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