



# WHAT MILLENNIALS WANT

## (In the Workplace)

A Guide to Navigating the New and Not-Always-Different World of Your Youngest Employees



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# MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT:

## Why It Matters

The people who comprise a business are more important than the actual product or service produced by the business.

Seems like a fairly bold statement, right? But employees create the customer experience for every business. When they're invested and engaged, studies show that customers are naturally more engaged. Most organizations that have more than 50% employee engagement rates retain over 80% of their customers.

Besides exciting customers, an engaged workforce has countless other positives: increased productivity, reduced turnover, more ethical behavior, low absenteeism, among others.

Disengaged employees, or those who aren't willing to invest anything beyond minimal effort, can spoil every aspect of a company. If they don't care, why should a customer?

Today, a stunning 16.8% of U.S. employees are actively disengaged. "Actively disengaged" means they're intentionally sabotaging the company's efforts with co-workers and customers.

It doesn't matter how great your products or service are, one bad personal interaction with a company representative can send away a customer for life.

Think about some of today's most beloved brands, such as Google, Whole Foods and Apple. Each is known for their treatment

of employees. Heck, Starbucks spends more on benefits than coffee beans.

It works, as evidenced by the success of each brand. Their employees are dialed in, producing great work, and more importantly, taking customer service personally.

**At a time when 75% of consumers say they have no loyalty to any particular brand, every company has an opportunity to stand out.**

That opportunity begins at your doorstep, with every person in your organization.

And it starts with the newest and largest generation in the American workforce: Millennials.



# CRACKING THE MILLENNIAL CODE

## Millennials, or those born between 1980 and 2000, seem difficult to comprehend.

They're hyper-connected, oversharing know-it-alls with outrageous demands and no respect for proven workplace standards and traditions.

They're also incredibly well-informed, driven, disciplined and idealistic.

They're unlike every other generation in the U.S. workforce to date.

Yet they share a lot of commonalities with pretty much every other generation that's passed through the workplace.

As complex and unique as Millennials are, they've become the linchpin of success in the modern workplace.

We have no choice but to figure out what makes them tick.

That's because they're now the largest generation in the American workplace, and the last wave of them aren't even finished with college yet.

The good news is we've cracked most of the code that comprises Millennials' motivations and desires.

In this eBook, we're going to look at eight key generational traits that have proven to be key differentiators for Millennials. Whether it's financial compensation or emotional connections to co-workers, these are the traits on which successfully engaging Millennials hinges.

By breaking down these eight key traits, we'll dispel a few myths about Millennials, but we'll also confirm a few stereotypes too. More than anything, we think after reading you'll see this generation for what they are – a uniquely talented and driven group shaped by the experiences of the generations that have come before them.

## The Millennial Environment

Compared to Gen X and Boomers at the same age, Millennials are living in an entirely different world.

### WITH SOME COLLEGE EDUCATION

Millennials: 54%  
Gen X: 49%  
Boomers: 36%

### AVERAGE COLLEGE DEBT

Millennials: \$24,301  
Gen X: \$8,871  
Boomers: \$1,500

### ANNUAL TUITION COST

Millennials: \$21,189  
Gen X: \$6,562  
Boomers: \$2,275

### OF JOBS REQUIRING A COLLEGE DEGREE

Millennials: 60%  
Gen X: 46%  
Boomers: 30%

### WHO ACCEPTED FINANCIAL HELP FROM PARENTS AFTER COLLEGE

Millennials: 36%  
Gen X: 19%  
Boomers: 6%

### EMPLOYER OF THE MOST COLLEGE GRADS

Millennials: Starbucks  
Gen X: GM  
Boomers: IBM

# MILLENNIALS WANT... More Compensation



Every relevant employee engagement + loyalty statistic has been compiled into one web page, with citations and links to original sources. [Click here to check out this useful resource.](#)

## Millennials want to be well compensated.

For most people, the fact that the youngsters want more money will elicit a big fat “Duhhhhh.”

For others, it may come as a surprise. After all, this was supposed to be an idealistic generation who select workplaces based on the causes it supported.

Maybe. There’s evidence those extraneous factors matter, but at the end of the day, the new generation wants to get paid.

From our compendium of [employee engagement statistics](#):

- 68% of Millennials say compensation is the most important aspect of their workplace (Oxford Economics)

- 38% of Millennials say money would motivate them to work harder and stay with their employer longer (Millennial Branding/Randstad)
- 41% of Millennials say higher compensation would increase their loyalty and engagement with the company (Oxford Economics)
- 41% of Millennials would prefer a job with potential for regular pay raises (as opposed to professional development opportunities) (EdAssist)
- 76% of hiring managers believe Millennials are motivated by money (Eance/Odesk)

Yeah, everybody wants a raise.

That same Oxford Economics research said that 84% of employees, regardless of generation, think competitive compensation is the most important benefit a workplace can offer.

## Earning Their Keep

The pushback towards Millennials seems to be that they want too much, too fast. That they haven’t paid their dues.

They’ve grown up in comfortable homes with endless entertainment and food aplenty, yet they forget their parents worked 30 years to be able to provide that standard of living.

While that may be true to some extent, to this point there hasn’t been much indication that they’re not willing to *work* to earn their money. By all accounts, uber-connected Millennials are [putting in more hours than any generation before them](#) and bringing in highly-sought skills that are uniquely second nature to their generation.

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# MILLENNIALS WANT... More Compensation

Employee Benefits  
Package

They simply want to be compensated fairly for their efforts. In that regard, they're no different than any other generation.

## Not Just Dollars and Cents

So how do you handle a generation that wants to get paid? Simple, you let them prove themselves and compensate them fairly. Just like any other generation.

The good news is that Millennials may be more willing to budge on what they perceive to be "fair compensation."

In fact, to them, compensation doesn't just mean "salary."

Research has shown that **benefits** are important to Millennials, playing a major factor in where they work and how engaged they are.

- 96% of Millennials say that great health benefits are important in choosing a job (Deloitte)

- 51% of Millennials say benefits are where their current employer has the most room for improvement (Aon Hewitt)
- 50% of Millennials expect financial support from employers in paying for further education (EdAssist)

Treat benefits as part of your compensation package. Emphasize the return to your younger employees, and actively promote usage.

The encouraging news for fiscally strapped offices is compensation is just a part of the pie. As you'll see throughout this eBook, there are multiple factors that matter just as much to Millennials.



# MILLENNIALS AND COMPENSATION

Millennials Want to be Fairly Compensated...But It's Not Always About Salary

**68%**  
of Millennials say compensation is the most important aspect of their workplace

**96%**  
of Millennials say that great health-care benefits are important in choosing a job

**41%**  
of Millennials say higher compensation would increase their loyalty & engagement with the company

**51%**  
of Millennials say benefits are where their current employer has the most room for improvement

**38%**  
of Millennials say money would motivate them to work harder and stay with their employer longer

**50%**  
of Millennials expect financial support from employers in paying for further education



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## More Flexibility



The traditional American workplace is under attack, friends.

The office environment we all know and love is being destroyed from within. The very fabric of the working experience is being ripped to shreds in a swift-moving assault on the status quo.

It's being carried out by a group of assailants in skinny jeans, with lattes in hand and eyes tightly fixated on smartphones.

That's right, people. Gird your loins, the Millennials have arrived and they're changing EVERYTHING.

Or, at least that's what you're supposed to believe. That hyperbole is just a summary of what you'll read in many of blogs and publications.

It's true that Millennials come from a background unlike any the U.S. has seen. They were raised with the Internet, hold insane amounts of college debt, and keep a wealth of information (and distraction) always on hand with smartphones, to name just a few unique characteristics. They're a different breed, for sure.

These unique circumstances have led Millennials to become accustomed to certain freedoms, attitudes and management styles that make them a bit unique from their older peers.

### Millennials Crave Flexibility

There's a major disconnect between work and life for many Millennials. Their smartphone and internet addictions are leading them to work more hours than other generations. For many, there isn't a true work/life balance – they're always on.

Yet most jobs still expect a standard 9-to-5, 5-days-a-week cubicle residency. To many of this generation, simply getting their work done on time is enough no matter where, or what time of day it happens.

How badly do Millennials want flexibility?

According to a recent survey, 77% of Millennials say flexible work hours would make the workplace more productive for people their age, and 43% of them are willing to switch jobs to get more flexibility. Amazingly, **40% of them would accept lower pay for more freedom.**

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# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## More Flexibility

### The Takeaway

Millennial ideas are spreading to other generations. Because they've learned how to use the internet pretty well too, Gen X and Boomers are also interested in more flexibility. 65% of the workforce believes more flexibility equals more productivity, yet only 19% of employers allow employees to work remotely.

Change is hard. Trusting your employees to take care of business on time, outside of your watchful eye, is hard.

Doing so takes a leap of faith that may very well come back to bite on occasion. But the potential benefits outweigh the risks in terms of productivity, overhead costs, employee engagement and satisfaction.

The takeaway is that every company should try out benefits such as

flex schedules, remote working, fewer hours, expanded (or outright eliminated) PTO policies, and other ways that allow employees to feel like they're free to work wherever and whenever they choose.

Develop a system for communication and monitoring, as well as regular virtual meetings with an occasional in-person meeting.

Everyone at your company has a job to do. **The question to ask is, do they really have to be in an office for nine hours a day to do that job effectively?** Are they really more productive under constant supervision?

If the answers to those questions aren't a resounding yes, then consider loosening the reins.

## The "Always On" Generation

Why do Millennials crave workplace flexibility? Because their mastery of technology already has them working long after the office has closed. For this generation, work/life balance doesn't exist - everything blends together.



**77%**  
of Millennials say flexible work hours would make the workplace more productive for people their age

**50%**  
of Millennials say flexible work hours and the freedom to work from any location would improve their work/life balance

**70%**  
of Millennials work up to 20 hours or more outside the office each week

**60%**  
of Millennials say their employers expect them to be accessible during off hours

**81%**  
of Millennials think they should be allowed to make their own hours at work (vs just 69% of Boomers)

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Good Business



Millennials, or those born in the 80s and 90s, were raised with messages gleaned through the learnings of generations before them: eat more veggies, take care of your family, respect nature, be kind to others.

They saw the commercials on late night TV about hungry children in third world countries. They may have shed a tear or two when Sarah McLachlan warbled over footage of abused animals.

Millennials' mastery of modern technology gives them real-time information on human events – terrorism, world hunger, natural disasters, corporate greed and the growing income gap.

They connect with these occurrences, often in a direct manner, and as a result, these things become very real to them.

**They've been told all their lives to care.** Guess what? It worked.

If you're wondering how a 20-something can be so concerned with eating organic food while weeping over a folk song on vinyl, just know that the world conditioned them to be like that.

And they want to work for a company that shares those sensitivities.

### The Raw Data

Millennials are acutely conscious of their surroundings and their ability (or lack thereof) to have an impact. To a large extent, the

generation recognizes the need for corporate profit, they just think businesses have a responsibility to do more than make money.

- 84% of Millennials say that helping to make a positive difference in the world is more important than professional recognition (Bentley University)
- 82% of Millennials said it was important to them to have a career that does some good in the world (Clark University)
- 63% of Millennials like their employers to contribute to social or ethical causes (Brookings)
- 6 in 10 Millennials cite a "sense of purpose," as part of the reason they chose to work for their current employers (Deloitte)

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# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Good Business



Good business is good for business. Check out “Nice Guys Finish First,” a free eBook that outlines the success that comes from being kind.

Millennials aren't just looking for good deeds from employers, they're willing to change the brands they spend with based on corporate behavior:

- 47% of Millennials would change brands if their current brand were found to have bad business practices (Adroit Digital)
- 1 in 3 Millennials will boycott or support businesses based on causes (TBWA/Worldwide)
- 52% of Millennials think brands should be willing to change based on consumer opinion (Adroit Digital)
- 4 in 5 Millennials said they'd be more likely to purchase from a company that supports a cause they care about, (if price and quality were equal) and 3 in 4 would think more highly of a company that supports a social cause (TBWA/Worldwide)

- Over 85% of Millennials correlate their purchasing decisions (and their willingness to recommend a brand to others) to the responsible efforts a company is making (SquareSpace)
- 73% of Millennials are willing to try a new, unfamiliar product if it supports a cause (SquareSpace)

As we said already, most Millennials aren't interested in enabling the next Wolf of Wall Street. They're okay with big profits as long as their company is doing something to change the world. (The companies Millennials most want to work for? Google and Disney.)

Here are a few basic ideas that might make all the difference in the world to your youngest employees:

- Encourage on-the-clock employee volunteerism
- Create a corporate giving program

- Agree to match employee donations to select causes
- Form partnerships with local non-profits
- Be honest and open about company finances
- Enact – and promote – ethical practices

Regardless of size, any company can create an atmosphere that's comfortable to Millennials. Supporting a cause doesn't mean killing profitability or turning your lobby into an endangered animal sanctuary.

The good news is all of these activities can align with the company brand. The better news is these small things will matter a great deal to many employees and prospective employees.

And the best news? Your company can help causes that could really use a hand.

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Better Relationships



### **BRO.**

Heard that word in the office lately?

It's quite a word. To younger males, it conveys a thousand meanings.

"Bro" uttered with enthusiasm expresses joy.

But lower the pitch, slow it down a bit, and "Bro" becomes a warning, a brief way of saying, "You've messed this one up, good sir."

While a bit goofy, the word illustrates another strong trait Millennials have exhibited in the workplace: a desire to connect with co-workers and supervisors on a personal level.

### **Like a Boss**

It's all about comfort.

Think about how corporate culture has been portrayed in movies and television consumed by this generation. "Greed is good," the Devil Wears Prada and endless TPS reports – in short, bosses are expected to be difficult.

What Millennials want in a boss may not be a total "Bro" (or whatever the female equivalent of the word is), but someone who at the very least treats them like human beings. Here's a sampling of stats from our collection of employee engagement statistics:

- Millennials' top attributes of the perfect boss: Ethical and fair 35%, transparent and readily shares information 35%, dependable and consistent 32% (IBM)
- 28% of Millennials have texted a manager outside work hours for a non-work related issue, compared to only 10% of Baby Boomers (LinkedIn)

The need for a reasonable manager isn't just exclusive to Millennials, however. There is growing evidence that executives and managers are as responsible for employee happiness as any other factor.

- 54% of employees who feel they can approach their manager with any type of question are highly engaged (Gallup)
- 50% of U.S. adults have left their job to get away from their manager (Gallup)
- 80% of those dissatisfied with their managers are also disengaged from their employers (Dale Carnegie)
- In companies where both leaders and managers are perceived by employees as effective, 72% of employees are highly engaged (Towers Watson)
- Disengaged managers cost the U.S. \$77 billion to \$96 billion annually (Gallup)

### **People don't quit jobs, they quit managers.**

It's a classic business adage, but statistics have borne it out.

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# MILLENNIALS WANT... Better Relationships



Millennials' work preferences are heavily influenced by their consumer preferences. [Click here to see every relevant statistic about Millennial loyalty and brand selection, complete with citations and links to original sources.](#)

## Peer Pressures

Relationships with superiors are critical, but to a Millennial, the supporting cast is just as (or perhaps more) important.

- Among Millennials, friendships in the workplace make them feel happy (57%), motivated (50%), and productive (39%) (LinkedIn)
- 78% of Millennials say it is more important to enjoy work than to make a lot of money (Clark University)
- Half of Millennials would "rather have no job than a job they hate" (MTV)
- 78% of Millennials say workplace environment affects their decisions to stay at a job (RingCentral)
- 69% of Millennials say the people whom they work with would enable their best work (Millennial Branding/Randstad)
- 88% of Millennials want their co-workers to be their friends (MTV)
- One-third of Millennials think socializing with co-workers will help them move up the ladder (compared to 5% of Baby Boomers) (LinkedIn)
- 67% of Millennials are likely to share personal details including salary, relationships and family issues with co-workers, compared to only about one-third of Baby Boomers (LinkedIn)

Essentially, what Millennials are looking for is a comfortable environment. Their jobs are hard enough; they don't want to constantly battle co-workers as well.

## The Takeaway

Relationships can make or break employee success in an office, regardless of generation. It's intensified with Millennials, a generation concerned with causes and having an impact.

The reality is an employee's day to day tasks are only a fraction of their office experience. Their environment is just as important, along with salary and benefits.

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# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Better Relationships



Here are five basic tenets of enabling great relationships within the office:

- **Hire personality, develop ability.**  
Say you have two candidates - one who's amazing at their particular skill but not a fit in the company culture, or someone who would fit perfectly but isn't quite as proficient. If corporate culture is important, the second person gets the job. Their professional skills can be developed, whereas a cultural misfit can affect the performance of co-workers and potentially alienate customers.
- **Be flexible.** Assuming employees are doing their jobs well and completing tasks on time, treat them as adults and let them chit chat next to the cooler, or take a long lunch with co-workers.
- **Be inclusive.** It's fine to be friends with employees, but the onus is on the manager to prevent cliques. Nothing will poison an office culture quicker than an "inner circle" – especially if the manager is in the clique.

- **Focus on people, not finances.**  
Companies that build their goals around customer satisfaction – and not financial gains – are much more likely to have higher employee engagement (not to mention happier customers). Placing an emphasis on money leads to mercenary thinking among employees – the type of thinking that causes individuals to dial in primarily on their own personal gain.
- **Never lose sight of productivity.**  
It kind of goes without saying to always emphasize performance and service. The bigger key here is to build a team's camaraderie around achievement. **Celebrate great accomplishments and utilize the success of the individual to lift the overall unit.** Think of sports: nothing helps a team's chemistry like winning together.

Enabling relationships in a corporate setting is a delicate balance. Too much emphasis on relationships can hurt

productivity. Too much emphasis on simply working can cause employees to feel like soulless cogs and disengage.

But by focusing on a culture of high achievement and hiring the right people, a company's culture can become a major asset that attracts and retains Millennial employees – and every other generation out there, Bro.



**Engaged employees aren't just good for productivity and office happiness. Studies show a correlation between employee engagement and customer engagement. When your employees are dialed in, your customers will be also. [Click here to get the details.](#)**

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Something Resembling Life



Every year during March, basketball distracts a significant portion of your employees.

Some may be sneaky about watching the tournament, utilizing lightning reflexes to switch windows when a supervisor passes by.

Others may bask in it, displaying the bandwidth-hogging hoops in all 21-inch-monitor glory for everyone to see.

Odds are your Millennial employees will fall into the category of “shameless viewers.”

It’s tempting to chalk this behavior up as Millennial entitlement and arrogance. Regardless of how it’s classified, there’s no denying Millennials want a workplace that is as comfortable as home.

This culture shift is maybe the biggest change offices are having to cope with. Millennials are now the largest generation in the American workplace, and frankly, they don’t think it should feel like a work place.

They want something resembling the rest of their lives – free, casual, “chill.”

### **Life is Work, and Work is Life**

For decades, people have lived in two worlds – home and work. Home is where they can relax, do what they like, wear what they like, spend time with their family and be at the beckon call only of friends and family.

Work is the opposite. They have to be in a specific place during a specific time, performing specific tasks, adhering to a dress code, seeking permission to handle non-work duties or to take a few days off.

Generations have been fine with this arrangement. Millennials, by and large, are not.

- 78% of Millennials say it is more important to enjoy work than to make a lot of money (Clark University)
- Among Millennials, friendships in the workplace make them feel happy (57%), motivated (50%), and productive (39%) (LinkedIn)
- Half of Millennials would “rather have no job than a job they hate” (MTV)
- 78% of Millennials say workplace environment affects their decisions to stay at a job (RingCentral)

*Continued...*



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Something Resembling Life

- 64% of Millennials said they would rather make \$40,000 a year at a job they love than \$100,000 a year at a job they think is boring (Intelligence Group)
- 79% of Millennials think they should be allowed to wear jeans to work (at least sometimes) versus 60% of Boomers (MTV)
- 28% of Millennials have texted a manager outside of work hours for a non-work related issue, compared to only 10% of Baby Boomers (LinkedIn)
- 88% of Millennials want co-workers to be their friends (MTV)
- 89% of Millennials regularly check work email after the work day has ended (Bentley University)
- 60% of Millennials say their employers expect them to be accessible during off hours (RingCentral)
- One-third of Millennials think socializing with co-workers will help them move up the ladder (compared to 5% of Baby Boomers) (LinkedIn)
- 67% of Millennials are likely to share personal details including salary, relationships and family issues with co-workers, compared to only about one-third of Baby Boomers (LinkedIn)

Those are some different dynamics from what everyone has come to expect from the traditional office experience. Millennials are heavy into relationships and being comfortable with what they're doing.

**They want their home life to be their work life to be their home life.**



### Balance Schmalance

Balance doesn't exist for Millennials. Work/life is one constant stream to them, thanks largely to their smartphone addictions.

This can mean a few different things for an office. Here are three basic guidelines:

- 1. Set clear expectations** – This should be done from the outset. Millennials (and any generation) aren't big on surprises. If Millennials are getting into a job that expects butts in seats for nine hours a day, let them know it up front. If streaming basketball games is forbidden, put it out there.

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# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Something Resembling Life

### 2. Have reasons for those expectations

– If you have a strict dress code, then have a rationale for it. Strict policies that exist just because “that’s the way we’ve always done it” probably won’t make sense to Millennials. Policies with sound reasoning will be much more likely to be accepted.

### 3. Reward them for meeting those expectations

– We know Millennials want more money, but this goes beyond that. If they’re asked to adhere to a strict 8-5, then don’t ask for the other 5-8. Reward them with a traditional balance and respect boundaries. If they’re asked to put in longer hours, first see #1, and second, make it worth their time by relaxing the atmosphere.

### The Takeaway

As much as some hate to admit it, Millennials are adults. As such, they should be trusted: trusted to get their work done on time, even if they’re not in a cubicle; trusted that they know to continue being productive while keeping an eye on the basketball tournament.

If a company has made an investment in bringing in the right people, Millennial or otherwise, then the company should also be willing to place that employee in the best position for them to succeed.

This may not look like a traditional 8-5 cubicle jockey wearing professional attire and only taking the allotted 15 minute breaks. In reality it’s probably closer to a bearded man in a beanie that prefers to listen to vinyl while working on the couch in the break room.

As it is today, Millennials are often the square pegs placed atop round holes. And



the result is a lot of yelling about “WHY DON’T THESE SQUARE PEGS LOOK MORE LIKE MY ROUND ONES THAT FIT SO WELL IN THESE ROUND HOLES?”

In reality, maybe adjusting the holes those pegs fit in might be better for productivity. Maybe loosening up on the college basketball streaming policy, or the “no loitering at the water cooler” policy is a small concession that will have a net positive effect.

It takes a leap of faith to adjust a working culture, but sometimes a little “chill” can have a hot result.

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Opportunity

### Millennials are very important people.

At least that's what they want everyone to believe, right?

There is a general feeling that Millennials tend to swagger into an office and expect to be running the show within days, if not sooner.

They're know-it-all, spoiled brats who don't understand the concept of paying dues, right?

It's a stereotype attached to Millennials. And while stereotypes often have an element of truth to them, the perception of Millennials needs to be shifted away from "entitled" to "eager."

As we've mentioned, this is a generation with a lot of knowledge and motivation to dig out of financial holes. It's important to the bottom line to start taking advantage of their unique abilities and attitudes.

This means feeding them opportunities, letting them fail and/or succeed on their own merits, and helping them learn from it.

### A Different World

To understand Millennials' desire to mean something to their employers, it's important to understand what's happening in the background.

First, they're the most highly educated generation in American history. They have a wealth of knowledge and street smarts. **Millennials believe they know what they're doing when they walk into an office.**

On the flip side, they're also saddled with loads of debt – an average of over \$20,000 per person. A lot of them still live with their parents. So they have a pretty serious incentive to climb up the food chain as quickly as possible.

To them, "paying dues" is what they've been doing through years of education

and debt. But don't confuse that with an unwillingness to work. **70% of them work up to 20 hours or more outside the office each week.**

### Generation Entrepreneur

Millennials grew up in a time when entrepreneurs became rock stars. Steve Jobs, Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, Sergey Brin and Larry Page, Elon Musk, Oprah, even Jay Z - they're all people who made billions and didn't fit the mold of successful businessmen as crotchety old curmudgeons in suits and combovers.

No, those entrepreneurs are seen as rebels, and Millennials want to emulate them:

- 66% of Millennials would like to start their own business and 37% would like to work on their own (Bentley University)

*Continued...*



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Opportunity



- 53% of Millennials aspire to become the leader or most senior executive within their current organization (Deloitte)
- 52% of Millennials say opportunities for career progression is the most desirable quality in a workplace, while 35% say it's good training and development programs (PWC)

We're not saying that the Millennial you just hired is the next Steve Jobs, but her ambition and independent spirit can be harnessed in a way that greatly benefits the company and its clients.

### The Takeaway

One common trait among those entrepreneurs Millennials admire is each of them embraces the benefits of failure. Fast iteration and learning are invaluable to a company, and Millennials are willing to embrace

those opportunities.

### Give them opportunities to succeed, fail, and learn.

Within reason. Don't fire your CEO, or hand over the reins to your most important accounts just yet. Don't give them a promotion that someone else is more deserving of just because the Millennial is louder about it.

Instead, give Millennials incremental opportunities.

What else can they do in their current position to help their clients or co-workers?

Consider the strengths of each Millennial employee you have, and craft opportunities for them that maximize those strengths.

They may surprise you. Even

better, they'll probably learn.

Heck, they may also inspire co-workers to push their own boundaries.

Here are a few other ideas to help you engage and challenge Millennial employees (and quite frankly, other aspirational employees in your business):

- **Invest in training and learning.**

Training and learning opportunities are seen by many as an employee benefit, or a way for the company to invest back in employees. It shows the company wants employees to not only be better at their jobs, but to also earn promotions and climb the internal corporate ranks.

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# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Opportunity

- **Start a mentoring program.**

Assign new employees a veteran from whom they can learn about the company. The mentor can be from other departments, which will help new employees learn how the company operates and inspire new collaborations.

- **Encourage intrapreneuring.**

Some employees may have a great idea for a new product, a new use for an existing product, or an idea for a bold new branch for the business. Not every idea will work, but encouraging entrepreneurship from employees will inspire creativity, and they'll appreciate the opportunity to show leadership.

- **Be open to altering your organizational structure.**

An employee who was hired for X purpose may discover that she can add a lot of value to the company by doing Y (which hasn't been a role for anyone previously). Be open to new ways of doing things and new structures that maximize the strengths of employees, instead of rigidly enforcing a structure simply because that's the way it's always been done.



**The economic reality for Millennials is a major influence in their haste to move up the corporate food chain. They're also majorly frugal in their spending, and are frequent users of coupons. [Click here to see how they can be reached via deals and offers.](#)**



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## The Comforts of Technology

Like a teenager at the Grand Canyon who never looks up from his iPhone or pulls out his headphones, Millennials have been accused of being too plugged in, self-centered, and unable to communicate face-to-face.

Like some of the other traits we've discussed, there is a bit of truth to the stereotypes around Millennials and technology. Yes, Millennials are obsessed with their phones (83% sleep with their phones every night). They do eschew face time for screen time. And they absolutely want constant access to their social networking sites.

The way this generation utilizes technology is fundamentally different from how traditional workplaces operate.

But that isn't a bad thing.

With the right policies and freedoms in place, **Millennials and the technologies they prefer to use can usher in higher**

**productivity and collaboration** throughout the entire office, not to mention more positive online prominence for a business.

### An Untapped Resource

It's important to remember that these youngest entrants into the workforce have always had access to the internet and mobile technology. Only the oldest Millennials even know the pain of dial-up internet (not to mention how many uses one can find for dozens of AOL discs).

The technologies that are a convenience for everyone else are critical for them. That includes social media, texting, web conferencing, instant messaging, and remote working.

It shows in the traits specific to the generation: connected, collaborative, enthusiastic, flexible, entrepreneurial. Each of these are either enabled or enhanced by modern technology.

**78% of Millennials believe that access to technology makes them more effective at work.**

Of course, if it were up to Millennials, they wouldn't *even be* at work. Technology enables the blended work/life they prefer, hence why only 28% say their current employer is making full use of their skills.

Those other 72% of workplaces would say they're trying to keep their younger workers focused and productive. As much as Millennials love being able to Skype into meetings (41% say they prefer to communicate electronically at work than face-to-face or even over the telephone), team camaraderie can suffer from a lack of actual face time. Plenty of Millennials have lost jobs due to improper use of social media networks, as well.

As it stands, just 41% of companies have made changes to adjust to younger workers.

*Continued...*

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## The Comforts of Technology



### The Takeaway

When it comes to Millennials and technology in the workplace, think “guidelines” instead of “restrictions.”

Businesses that thrive today allow employees to take ownership of how they work, while maintaining a few traditional practices.

Consider these guidelines when crafting how you want to enable and regulate the use of new technology among employees:

- **Give them access to social media at work.** There are positives to allowing social media access during working hours, including more prominence online, recruiting and office relationships (70% of employees have “friended” their managers and co-workers on Facebook). Trust adults to be adults and to responsibly handle their

duties while keeping an eye on Instagram, but advise them on the possible consequences of misuse. Bonus tip: emphasize LinkedIn, which is great for business but is also a hub of useful, entertaining content.

- **Trust in BYOD policies.** 86% of corporate employees use their personal smartphones to get work done, even outside business hours. It may make the IT department sweat, but a Bring Your Own Device policy will make Millennials more productive (and in their minds it’ll feel like a corporate perk).
- **Use technology that mirrors what they use personally.** There is a lot of cool productivity technology that has popped up in recent years that will appeal to younger employees.

Yammer, Slack, wikis, task managers (Todoist, Tick Tick), Evernote, hosted VoIP, even tablets - all of these enable productivity from anywhere, anytime.

- **Put their skills to work.** If an employee is a prolific blogger, Tweeter, Instagrammer, or whatever social network is in vogue, that’s a profitable skill a brand can harness. Ask them to contribute to the brand’s presence on those platforms - the employee will become more attuned to the brand, and the brand will benefit from their perspective. (Cool example: check out IBM’s collection of 300+ blogs from their employees.)

*Continued...*



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## The Comforts of Technology

### • Keep some things sacred.

There are quantifiable benefits to face-to-face communication, including better relationships and efficiency (20 emails usually equals a five minute conversation). Set a mandatory, regular in-person meeting with your team. Encourage employees to meet in person instead of emails or phone calls when possible. Considering only 54% of workers say they like the people they work with, everyone can benefit from better relationships.

Some of these guidelines are major departures from traditional work policies, others are just loosening the reins a bit. Every office and occupation has different requirements, but the bottom line is being open to an agile, rapidly-evolving workforce.

The benefits? **More engaged employees equals better engaged customers.** Your employees will be less likely to tune out, but will instead utilize their technology for the benefit of the brand, themselves, and most importantly, your customers.

**Check out these really cool (and really useful) apps that have business benefits.**

#### Task Management

- Any.do
- ToDoist
- Tick Tick
- Wunderlist

#### Organization

- EverNote
- Day One
- Scannable
- Pocket
- Salesforce1
- nbox by Google
- IF by IFTTT
- Google Calendar

#### File Management

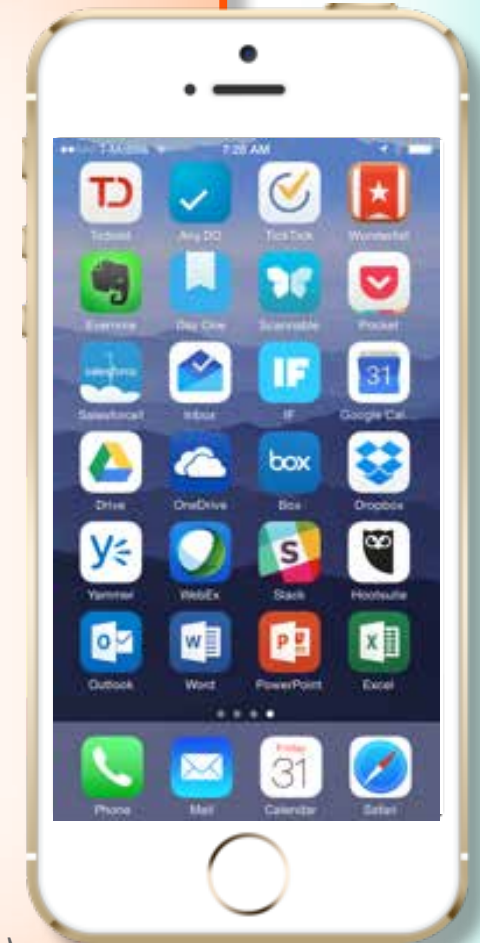
- Google Drive
- Microsoft OneDrive
- Box
- DropBox

#### Communication

- Yammer
- WebEx
- Slack
- HootSuite

#### Office Essentials (mobile)

- Outlook
- Word
- PowerPoint
- Excel



# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Employee Perks



Ask a Millennial what's cool about their workplace, chances are they won't mention their generous salary.

Or the full insurance coverage they receive.

Or even their great boss.

No, you'll probably hear something about their free meals, on-site day care, summer Fridays, yoga classes, or the water fountains that dispense Hawaiian Punch.

There is statistical evidence that salary, managers, and benefits matter most to Millennials when selecting and staying with a workplace.

Yet, what seems to get them most excited are the employee perks.

In the Millennial mind, they can get a great salary and insurance benefits from just about any employer. 48% of employees (regardless of generation) think they can find a job that matches their current compensation within six months.

But an office that allows working from home, or a "bring your dog to work" policy?

That's not so easy to find, and those types of extra benefits are what may make the difference in engaging and retaining younger employees.

### People - Not Employees

Perks are a differentiator to Millennials. (And really, to any employee, regardless of age.)

They can serve as a bandage over uncompetitive compensation.

Their most effective use, however, is to emphasize the better qualities of an employer that is already investing in employees.

When added to a workplace that compensates fairly and provides opportunity, **perks help remind employees that they're valued, and that the organization wants them to be happy.**

That's an important distinction in the everyday engagement levels of the people who comprise an organization.

*Continued...*





# MILLENNIALS WANT... Employee Perks



Currently, just 29% of employees feel valued by their organization. 80% are stressed out by work. The right perk can make a big difference in both of those issues.

## Disengagement is More Expensive

Employee perks can be costly, but employee turnover is even costlier.

**Actively disengaged** employees are even more expensive.

Perks show an investment into the entire person – not just the employee. Remember, Millennials in particular are looking for a workplace that's human.

They see themselves as much more than just another cog in the corporate wheel, and want employers to recognize that.

It's a worthwhile investment on several levels.

The good news is perks don't have to be expensive. A business doesn't have to

offer an all-day fondue station or weekly motivational meetings with Tony Robbins to add some value to its employees.

Some perks are inexpensive, such as employee discount programs. Others don't have much of a hard cost at all, such as unlimited vacation days.

The important things are to find what a team values, and encourage usage of the benefits.

## A Competitive Difference

Perks are closely tied to employee engagement and retention. Their role in recruiting may be even bigger, however.

They may be sometimes hesitant to discuss salaries, but Millennials have no qualms about bragging on their corporate perks.

Plus, read through any area's "Best Places to Work" lists and the write-ups will focus on the perks. Google's

profile immediately jumps to generous parental leave policies, and Salesforce.com's mentions volunteering PTO.

Both of those places compensate their employees just as well as anyone. But the chance to take a "vision quest" is just stinkin' cool.

Millennials are attracted to exclusivity. They love belonging to things the rest of the world doesn't understand or have access to.

And much like the bearded hipster who (not so) discreetly shares the secrets of his vegan diet with friends at the farmer's market, Millennials love one-upping peers with how amazing their offices are.

That makes a unique workplace perk a competitive advantage in attracting talent.

*Continued...*

# MILLENNIALS WANT...

## Employee Perks

### The Takeaway

As tempting as it is to try and maintain traditional standards, it just isn't going to work.

Millennials are too wrapped up in technology, too willing to work around the clock, too interested in proving themselves to fit into older models.

What's at stake is customer engagement and loyalty. The more engaged employees are, the better the customer experience is.

The better the customer experience, the more customers return, spend, and share.

There are a lot of factors that go into keeping Millennial employees engaged, but corporate perks are one of the simplest ways to keep them dialed in and sharing that love with their peers.

So go out and pick up that Hawaiian Punch fountain. Hire that meditation guru or massage therapist.

Or just check out [Access Perks](#), our take on employee discount programs that can put hundreds of dollars back into the pockets of every employee.

**DANGER**  
**TOXIC EMPLOYEE**  
**DISENGAGEMENT**



# YOUR CHALLENGE:

## Embrace Change!



Keeping your employees engaged can pay off in terms of customer loyalty. [Click here for some tips on why you shouldn't just count on turnover, and how to prevent it.](#)

In some ways Millennials are like aliens in the workforce. They are motivated by unique factors, and they want to behave and interact with superiors and colleagues in ways that aren't traditional.

No matter what the perception of them is, one thing's for certain: they're already the largest generation in the workplace, and there's still a giant wave of them coming soon.

We have no choice but to make the most out of them. That means we have to emphasize their strengths, and find the right mix of compensation and flexibility that keeps them engaged and productive.

Some things are going to change, which is okay. The goal is a company that better serves its customers, not an office that maintains traditions and classic standards.

Now that you know a bit more about the particular needs and desires of Millennial employees, here are a few final principles

to keep in mind that will help guide engagement with all employees, regardless of generation.

- **Gear toward their strengths.** Find what each employee does best and put them in position to be world class at that skill. Always look to develop new, complementary skills, but don't downgrade someone simply because they're not great at a tangential ability.
- **Be willing to experiment with different arrangements.** For example, try allowing employees to work offsite for a couple weeks, with a clear understanding of expectations and measurable progress. If they don't meet those expectations, bring them back in and try another tack. The important thing is being consistent with each employee, and open to any arrangements that might maximize effectiveness of each employee without being detrimental to the group as a whole.

- **Place an emphasis on hiring.**

Specifically, spend time in hiring getting to know the person. As we mentioned earlier, skills can be developed, but personality and cohesion with the rest of the team is much harder to change. Find people who fit the organizational profile and are willing to buy in to a customer-centric perspective.

- **Expand your benefits.** Benefits have a major impact on employee retention and engagement. Health is basically a must-have, but most employees won't feel a tangible impact from it unless they have a devastating injury or a child. Plus, they're still probably paying quite a bit out of pocket for their coverage anyway.

You also have to offer some other, more relevant benefits. A mix of perks is best, like on-site yoga *plus* personal development courses, a monthly catered lunch as well as 401k matching.

Continued...

# YOUR CHALLENGE: Embrace Change!

Of course, when it comes to employee benefits, we're partial to discount programs. Savings are particularly relevant to Millennials, 96% of whom use coupons.

**It's hard to get more relevant and tangible than half off lunch every day at the deli next door to the office.** That's what Access Perks offers, for just about the price of a candy bar per employee, per month.

Access Perks features over 350,000 deals at restaurants and retailers across America. These aren't the same deals you can find through a simple online search - these are private offers at merchants in your community, at the places your employees are already spending their dollars.

**Ready to try it for yourself?**

Or just want to learn more? Click here to learn more about Access Perks.



Get Started



# GET CONNECTED

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