

Millennials and the Supervisory Relationship: Bridging the Generation Gap

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Introductions

- Name
- Organization
- Role – how long you've been a supervisor
- Words of Wisdom about supervision

60 minutes

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owwM6FpWWoQ>

A new breed of American
worker is about to attack
everything you hold sacred!

(60 Minutes TV show)

Defining the Generations

- Millennials: 18-30 years old
- Oregon Trail generation: 30-33 years old
- Generation X: 34-50 years old
- Baby Boomers: 51-68 years old
- The Greatest Generation: over 69 years old

Millennials in the Workplace

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sz0o9cIVQu8>

Oh No!! Here Comes One of Those Gosh-Darn Millennials!!

- They are just so entitled!
- They always seem so distracted
- They are so self-absorbed
- They think everyone should get a trophy---just for existing!
- Their work ethic is just not the same
- They don't have any attention span
- They won't stay long. They have very little sense of “duty”, or loyalty to the organization
- They are always on those phones!

Millennials say...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQC7YM4CFVU>

Some Millennials Say...

- “I want to be valued. I don’t want to feel I am merely a means to a number. My input is unique and I want it valued as such” (Krystina Augustine)
- “We enter the workforce as children whose brains have been overstimulated by technology, so my brain is constantly going. What I need is to be motivated by my work, feel empowered by my supervisor to trust that I am capable to get the job done well. I am full of ideas and want to be seen as a key part of the team and not second class in my career”. (Saira Batasar-Johnie)
- “Sometimes you just have to tell us what to do. Be sure the expectations are clear” (Lais Colombo)
- “I want a supervisor who will help me, not just hire me to their advantage. I want to be valued and have a mentor” (Larissa Ortega)

Some Millennials Say...

- “It is important to have mutual respect and clear communication about expectations. Also, if I do something that is not correct I want to know so I can make it better” (Jija Issac)
- “I want to see my supervisor have a passion for the work we do. I want to have her as a role model” (Leticia Coelho)
- “When I have a worker who is going ok and not causing me any problems that bothers me more than those giving me problems. OK is not good enough when working with kids and I go home and wonder what else I can do to connect with them better to motivate them. I don’t think we should settle for less than excellent” (Melissa Ladwig, Millennial Supervisor)
- “Supervisors should not lower their standards/ expectations for Millennials. Supervisors should instead sharpen their supervision skills to meet Millennials where they are and then help them grow personally and professionally which in turn helps to better the organization as a whole” (Constanzia Nizza)

“We have grown up in an age of exciting change and advancement. Just remember, society has changed and advanced alongside us. It is imperative for supervisors to appreciate that not all young people fit neatly into the Millennial mold. Focus on our individual qualities, contributions and integrity. If there is one thing I believe to be true and all-encompassing about the Millennial generation, it is that we are diverse and at our core, we are just people.”

(Hayley Milne, Child and Youth Care Worker, Winnipeg, Canada)

“ I find the best workers I hire
are Millennials who have been
raised with old fashioned
values”

(Tony Castillo, Chief Executive Officer, Boys Haven of America)

Herm Edwards...

- <http://espn.go.com/video/clip?id=espn:14330258>

Some Dynamics about Millennials

- By 2020, 46% of the workforce in the US will be Millennials (UNC)
- The main reason they stay in a job for the first three years is loyalty/respect for their supervisor. The main reason they leave is dissatisfaction with a supervisor.
(Klass and Lindenberg)
- They tend to value the concept of “paying your dues” or “playing the game” less.
(NY Times)
- Millennials tend to value job security less than previous generations and value employment flexibility more
- Millennials generally have a different view of a “work/life” balance
- Millennials are the most educated generation in history (Newman)

Participation Trophy?

http://espn.go.com/nfl/story/_/id/13447657/james-harrison-pittsburgh-steelers-takes-away-kids-participation-trophies-says-awards-earned

Some Dynamics about Millennials

- Millennials are the most diverse generation in history
- “Every kid should get a trophy.” Many Millennials have grown up thinking “You can’t fail”...Many times being rewarded for participation and not necessarily achievement
- Some Millennials are coming out of a university culture of “trigger warnings”, hypersensitivity to offending, “micro-aggressions” being sanctioned, etc. (The Atlantic Magazine)
- Millennials have had a lot of experience “multi-tasking”
- Millennials tend to have a different view of “loyalty”. They tend to place less value on loyalty to an organization and more value towards involvement to make things better

The “Cowboys” vs. Millennials

The Cowboys	Millennials
Command and Control Management Style	Active Involved Leadership
Individually focused work	Collaborative, teamwork
Managed flow of information	Unstructured flow of information
Job security	Employability
Work = income	Work = income and personal enrichment
Structure	No structure; flexibility is highly valued
Inward looking	Outward looking
Influence through organization, position	Influence through networks and communities

What Millennials Want in a Job (Nekuda)

- Compensation (Recent college graduates average \$20G in debt)
- Flexible work schedules
- Opportunity to make a difference. In a survey 30% of Millennials felt making a difference was extremely important and only 12% of supervisors felt so.
- Trust in organization's leadership
- Receiving benefits
- Professional Development opportunities

Just give up the idea of
trying to manage
Millennials....

Lead them instead (George Bradt)

Leading Millennials (G. Bradt)

- **You and them.** Treat Millennials with the same respect with which you want them to treat you. Give them access to information. Forget “need to know” limitations. They hunger to know what’s going on and how their jobs fit into the organization’s purpose – which should have a component that betters the world.
- **Work and personal.** Get over this historical divide. The two blur for Millennials. Accept it. Embrace it.
- **Individual and group.** Leverage Millennials’ bias to work in networked teams. Encourage and applaud their joint efforts.
- **Face-to-face and electronic.** Leverage and let them leverage the electronic tools they are so familiar with. Text and chat are as valid forms of communication for this generation as were PowerPoint slides in darkened rooms for Baby Boomers.
- **Inspiring and enabling.** Leadership is about inspiring and enabling others. For Millennials, enabling is inspiring. Do both...and do both together

Why they are the worst

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygBfwgnijlk>

Supervision

- Supervision is a professional relationship that provides support, education, monitoring of quality, and creates a safe forum to reflect on professional practice. It should encourage constructive confrontation and critical thinking and inform and improve the practice of all parties. Respecting the inherent hierarchy in the relationship, it should accept the ethical responsibility to use power in a thoughtful manner. The dynamics in the supervisory relationship can create a parallel process in all other relationships including that of the client/worker.
- Ultimately, supervision should be the vehicle to create dynamic growth, establish high professional standards and enhance quality and culturally competent services.

Strategies Going Forward

- Supervisors should re-think their hiring practices and philosophies. Thought should be given to less emphasis on recruiting for long term employment and more for shorter periods of time as well as ways to recruit to Millennials' strengths and interests
- Millennials prefer to work in teams. Look for ways to involve Millennials on committees and stress the value of their contributions
- Supervisors should enhance and focus on their “coaching skills” and repertoire as a supervisor...including on the spot coaching
- Supervisors should make attempts to get to know Millennials “as a person”. What are likes, dislikes, strengths, doubts, beliefs??

Strategies Going Forward

- Supervisors should discuss and be clear about what expected boundaries are in the supervisory relationship, i.e social media, protocols, etc.
- Try to tell or show Millennials what to do less, and give them the desired outcome and let them figure it out. This would be in the spirit of delegating outcome, not process (keeping a balance with earned trust and “safety”)
- Supervisors should be particularly careful not to complain or “whine” about senior management, the “system”, etc. There should be consistent attempts to help Millennials understand the bigger picture and learn strategies to best negotiate frustrations.

Strategies Going Forward

- Supervisors should be clear about how Millennials will be evaluated and how that is measured
- Programs should make efforts to have more “social” type atmosphere and events
- Explore and consider the idea of flexible schedules
- Consider the idea of Millennial Affinity Groups
- Consider discussion groups that encourage creative thinking across the generations
- Give thought to the idea of “reverse mentoring” situations, where Millennials can teach others skills and share ideas

Strategies Going Forward

- Define things like “self care” together. A Millennial may have a very different understanding than you do
- Be clear about what is clearly out of bounds and unacceptable and discuss why. Don’t assume it is known
- Provide Millennials training in the “soft skills” (communication skills, protocols, etc.) of the workplace, critical thinking, and other areas that will help assimilation into the agency culture
- Provide supervisors trainings that focus on cross-generational issues and communication
- Start preparing for “Generation Z”!!!!

Response to Baby Boomers from Millennials

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C1a6M3dBNwc>

Reflections...

- I Learned....
- I Re-learned....
- I Discovered....
- I Realized....

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