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Generational Changes in Workforce Priorities and The 30 Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials

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Generational Changes in Workforce Priorities &
The 30 Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials

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Abstract

Throughout history, generation' values and behaviors have changed depending on the political, economic, and social events that occurred in that generation's formative years. Now that Millennials make up the majority of the US workforce, it is crucial that managers understand the differences between each generation and are prepared to adjust their management strategies accordingly.

Keywords: Generational Theory, Generational Differences, Managing Millennials, Productivity, Performance

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Introduction

Throughout history, generation's values and behaviors have changed depending on the political, economic, and social events that occurred in that generation's formative years. Sociologists and historians have found that the more impactful events were in a generation's formative years, the larger the gap in values between generations became. It is crucial that managers understand how Millennials are unique in comparison to past generations in order to continuously manage a productive multi-generational workforce. This paper will focus on how managers' perceptions of their Millennial workforce priorities affect Millennial performance and satisfaction.

Managers currently feel unprepared to manage Millennials due to the negative stereotypes and myths that have become synonymous with the generation. These perceptions of Millennials have created a barrier that prevent managers from effectively engaging with their workforce. Though employee engagement is of high importance to managers in the United States, there is low engagement across the United States demonstrating a fragmented relationship between managers and their Millennial workforce. If a workforce becomes less engaged, they become less productive and more costly. Therefore, it is crucial for businesses to position their policies and support their managers so they can engage their Millennial workforce. If successful, companies will be better equipped to sustain productivity and a competitive advantage.

Using a meta-analysis of the literature review, information from case studies, and data from interviews, The 30 Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials was developed. The guide is an infographic, a quick, visual reference of the information in this thesis. It guides managers without the time to spend hours reading over the literature on managing generations or resources to spend on going to school, workshops, or bringing in consultants. The guide will aid managers

in examining how their perceptions of their Millennial workforce affects Millennial performance and satisfaction.

Literature Review

Literature Review: The Study of Generations

Generations began being described as Generation X and Baby Boomers in the twentieth century when Wallace (1956) explored patterns in social movements following deliberate social change. MacLoughling (1981) continued the study of generations by identifying five cyclical periods in Anglo-American history that have led to cultural stress or social reform. Following the 1980s, Hazlett (1992) found that historians have looked to generational studies to provide scientific standing for forecasting social change. Cyclical periods in Anglo-American history are largely formed from a “generational self-consciousness,” a term coined by Wohl (1981), used to differentiate a particular cohort apart from those before and after them. Generational self-consciousness forms collective identities to be adopted by those who want to have a sense of belonging in a historical cohort, feel part of a community larger than themselves, and express their own identity. Hazlett (1992), as well as other early twentieth century theorists, postulated that the more impactful events were, the larger the gap in values between generations became. This is why generational self-consciousness was particularly strong for those whose formative years occurred during the periods of World War I and the Vietnam War. Both of these cohorts’ cultural and social values greatly differed from that of their parents (Hazlett, 1992). Throughout history, generations’ values and behaviors have changed. As a result, it is pertinent important that managers understand the differences between generations and can adjust their management strategies accordingly to avoid periods of strain.

Generations are not set in stone and do not have a universal start and end dates. However, to place parameters around the data employed in this paper, the Pew Research Center's definition of Millennials, also known as Generation Y, and the three generations prior will be used

(Dimock, 2018).¹ Dimock (2018) explores the importance of studying generational trends and attitudes, as well as characteristics of "Millennials." Dimock (2018), current president of Pew Research Center, argues that the appropriate cutoff for Millennials is 1996 due to significant political, economic, and social events that occurred in the formative years of that cohort. Examples of events include being able to remember the 9/11 attack, being born in the aftermath of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, Barack Obama's election as President of the United States in 2008, the Great Recession of 2008, and rapidly increasing technological advancements (Dimock, 2018). These major events shaped the generation of Millennials' perceptions, priorities, and how they make choices. It is crucial that managers can understand how Millennials are unique in comparison to past generations in order to continuously manage a productive multi-generational workforce. Without understanding millennials they are more susceptible of forming negative preconceptions of Millennials that are not supported by data. The study of managing Millennials is especially important as by 2020 the cohort of Millennials are projected to represent 75% of the total workforce in the United States (Winograd & Hais, 2014). This paper will focus on how managers' perceptions of their Millennial workforce priorities affect Millennial performance and satisfaction. Millennial performance and satisfaction will be examined by investigating how engaged and productive they are at work.

Deloitte's study dives into why companies need to focus on the current US Workforces' engagement and passion in order to increase employee retention and obtain a sustainable competitive advantage (Hagel et al., 2017). The Adkins' study found that only 29% of Millennials are engaged at work (2016), which is 5% less than their previous generation counterparts. To implement effective strategies to engage with their workforce, companies must

¹ The Pew Center of Research has defined Millennials as being born between 1981 and 1996. See Appendix A for the definition of Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation.

understand the shifting needs of Millennials. When managers do not understand their workforce needs and are unable to shift their strategies to accommodate, managers will feel unready to engage with their workforce. This is why, as of 2017, only 11% of managers felt “ready” to manage Millennials in the workplace (Hagel et al., 2017). This paper will prove that part of the reason managers feel unprepared to manage Millennials is due to the negative stereotypes and myths that have become synonymous with the generation.

Literature Review: The Data Behind Millennial Myths and Stereotypes

Millennial myths and stereotypes hinder managers' abilities to understand and engage with their Millennial workforce. In a survey of 1,000 adult Americans by Reason-Rupe Poll, the results found that 70% of Americans believe Millennials to be "selfish," while 65% of them believe Millennials to be "entitled" (2014). The following are six recurring myths that the adult American public has of Millennials, which have been gathered from the corresponding cited sources:

1. Millennials need constant praise and believe they are entitled to positive recognition no matter their actual performance. (Reason-Rupe Poll, 2014; Baird, 2015)
2. Millennials are self-absorbed, selfish, and considered the “Me” Generation. (Reason-Rupe Poll, 2014; Norton, 2017)
3. Millennials do not have a good work ethic. (Norton, 2017)
4. Millennials are lazy. (Norton, 2017)
5. Millennials will not do what they are told at work. (Norton, 2017)

6. Millennials are disloyal and will easily leave a company if it is not perfect. (Baird, 2015)

Though the majority of Americans believe Millennials are entitled and selfish, there is little data to support these as well as other myths.

Myth 1: Millennials Need Praise and are Entitled

IBM's study found that Millennials are no different from the two generations before them when it comes to acclaim and praise (Baird, 2015, pg. 4). Baird found that receiving recognition of accomplishments by a superior was placed sixth in desired attributes for a perfect boss by Millennials, with only 29% of Millennials agreeing (2015, pg. 4). The findings for Millennials were not that different from Generation X and Baby Boomers where 26% and 23% respectively agree in the desire for recognition from their boss (Baird, 2015, pg. 4). What was valued more by Millennials was that an ideal manager would embrace ethical, fair, dependable, consistent, and transparent attitudes (Baird, 2015, pg. 4).

Myth 2: Millennials are the “Me” Generation

Though Millennials are perceived as the generation of narcissism, Norton (2017) points out that the concept of the “Me” generation began with Baby Boomers. Therefore, Baby Boomers and every generation that has succeeded them, which includes Generation X and Millennials, are all considered a part of the “Me” cohort (Norton, 2017).

Myth 3: Millennials Do Not Have a Good Work Ethic

In one of the largest generational studies ever conducted in a business setting, Finn and Donovan (2013, pg. 9) disproved the perception that non-Millennials work harder than Millennials. The study found that Millennials are as equally committed to their work as non-millennials (Finn, Donovan, 2013, pg. 9). [WHAT IS THE DATA THAT SUPPORTS THIS?](#)

Myth 4: Millennials are Lazy

Millennials are perceived as wanting to do the least amount of work as possible and that they are not looking to push boundaries (Norton, 2017). However, this misperception of Millennials is not supported by data. According to a CEB Inc. poll of their 90,000 American employees, the company found Millennials to be their most competitive cohort (Norton, 2017). CEB reported that "59% of them, in the latest poll, said competition is 'what gets them up in the morning,' compared with 50% of Baby Boomers" (Norton, 2017).

Myth 5: Millennials Do Not Follow Directions

People perceive Millennials to have a lack of compunction about not following their superiors' instructions (Norton, 2017). However, this assumption contradicts the *Economist's* study which found that 41% of Millennials agreed to comply with their manager's instructions, regardless of reason. Whereas only, "30% of Baby Boomers and Generation X" would say the same (O'Malley, 2016).

Myth 6: Millennials are Disloyal

Millennials are perceived as disloyal and willing to leave their job at a moments notice if they are upset or presented with the possibility of something better. Though this may be true for some Millennials, the data shows that Millennials are switching jobs just as frequently as Baby Boomers were at the same age (O'Malley, 2016). In O'Malley's *Forbes* article, he reminds readers that the "U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that Baby Boomers changed jobs just as frequently, holding an average of 11.7 different jobs between the ages of 18- 48" (2016). The frequency of job switching is, therefore, more of a reflection on where Millennials are in their life cycle than on the generation as a whole.

Generalizing a Generation

Though Millennials may be perceived as the most entitled and selfish generation to date, these negative biases of an incoming generation are not new. O'Malley, a partner at Accel, dated the negative generalization of an entire generation all the way back to 4th century AD, when Socrates said, "Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, disrespect their elders, and love talking instead of exercise" (2016). O'Malley argues that there has hardly been a time throughout history that the generation entering the workforce has not been criticized. As a result, these negative stereotypes are more telling of where the generation sits in its life cycle than the generation itself. Organizations are wasting time and effort typecasting Millennials as "unmotivated, lazy, or disloyal" instead of looking at the data and larger trends (O'Malley, 2016). The data previously discussed in this section outlines that there is a lack of data to support myths and stereotypes, and that Millennials are similar to Generation X and Baby Boomers when they were around the same age.

Literature Review: Understanding and Management

Employee engagement is crucial to a productive and innovative workforce, and this sentiment has been a cornerstone of Business Management literature for decades (Harvard Business Review (HBR, 2014). This is why corporate and mid-level managers alike understand that the more engaged a workforce is, the more innovative and productive they are, consequently reducing costs as a result of lower turnover and absenteeism (HBR, 2014, pg. 1). If a workforce becomes less engaged, they become less productive and more costly. Gallup found that when organizations have more engaged teams, “profitability increased by 21 percent, sales productivity by 20 percent, and output quality by 40 percent” (Harter et al., 2016). In parallel with cutting costs, the same study found that when teams are more engaged, absenteeism decreases by 41% (Harter et al., 2016).

Though 71% of respondents in HBR's study found that employee engagement is "very important to achieving overall organization success" (2014, pg. 1), Adkins found that only 29% of Millennials are engaged at work (2016). As a result, Gallup estimates that turnover due to managers' inability to engage with the Millennial workforce has cost the U.S. Economy 30.5 billion dollars annually (Adkins, 2016, pg. 8).

As the landscape of the United States' workforce shifts, it is essential that managers can engage with and adapt to incoming generations. Jones' dissertation, *Changing Of The Guard: Influence On Organizational Culture Of Millennials Surpassing Baby Boomers As The Largest Generational Cohort*, explains how such a large shift can potentially lead to a cessation of corporate leadership knowledge, rendering the organization less effective in managing personnel (2018, pg. 8). It is crucial for businesses to position their policies and support their managers so

they can engage their Millennial workforce. Companies will then be better equipped to sustain productivity (Jones, 2018, pg. 9).

Literature Review: The Data Behind Millennial Priorities

In a similar meta-analysis to the previous literature review section, the following are four shifts in the Millennial workforce priorities that differ from previous generations. These changes in workforce priorities will be further developed in the section Research Findings, Analysis, and Recommendations. The following are four workplace priorities that are more prevalent in Millennials than previous generations, which have been gathered from the conducted interviews and the corresponding cited sources:

1. Purpose (O'Malley, 2016; Baird, 2015)
2. Development & Mentorship (Baird, 2015; O'Malley, 2016; Finn, Donovan, 2013)
3. Flexible Work Environment (Norton, 2017; Finn, Donovan, 2013)
4. Two-Way Communication with Managers (Baird, 2015; Finn, Donovan, 2013)

Dissenting Literature Review: Simon Sinek

In December of 2016, Simon Sinek was interviewed by Tom Bilyeu on Inside Quest. In the recording that was later published on Sinek's Youtube channel, Sinek spoke about what he considers to be the "Millennial Question." Sinek is a British-American author, speaker, professor, and consultant focusing on leadership and motivation (Sinek, 2018). Sinek has written five books, the second of which *Start with Why* was on the Wall Street Journal and New York Times bestseller list (Sinek, 2018). Additionally, Sinek has spoken at the UN Global Compact Leaders Summit as well as TEDx Conferences (Sinek, 2018).

In the Inside Quest interview, Sinek argues that corporate leadership is confounded by Millennials² because they are “entitled and narcissistic, self-interested, unfocused and lazy” (Sinek, 2016, 0:26). Sinek continues to explain that Millennials’ entitlement is a consequence of “failed parent strategies” (Sinek, 2016. 1:30) and Millennials’ addiction to technology. As a result, Millennials have become reliant on instant gratification in corporate environments (Sinek, 2016). The following are a sample of Sinek’s arguments that were made without any cited evidence that reinforce millennial myths and stereotypes.

Sinek’s first assertion is that Millennials grew up in a classroom setting where, “some of them got into honors classes not because they deserved it but because their parents complained” (Sinek, 2016. 1:50). Sinek infers that Millennials have not had to work for anything, and instead were handed praises and affirmation regardless of performance. However, Millennials have worked harder for the same education than previous generations have before them. 70% of Millennials were working while attending school as a full-time undergraduate college student, while in 1960 only 25% of the full-time undergraduate Baby Boomer students worked (Harris, 2018). The data supports the conclusion of a strong Millennial work ethic rather than Sinek’s assertion. Sinek’s second claim presents the logic that Millennials’ are subject to parenting techniques that have created a culture of instant gratification. Sinek proposes that when Millennials join the workforce, they are too fixated on instant gratification to work for longer than a couple months or years. However, there is more data to combat the claim that Millennials are likely to leave a job that doesn’t instantly satisfy them than support it. While Sinek states that Millennials will leave a company or job the moment they do not receive instant gratification, the fact of the matter is Millennials are no different from Baby Boomers or Generation X

² Sinek defines Millennials as anyone born after 1984

(Baird, 2015, pg. 9). For all three generations the top reasons for changing jobs is to "enter the fast lane," "shoot for the top," "follow my heart," and "save the world" (Baird, 2015, pg. 9). For example, the reason for changing jobs in order to assume more responsibility ("shoot for the top") applies for 24% of Millennials, 19% of Gen X, and 28% of Baby Boomers. See the full table from Baird's report in Appendix B. More data is representing the similarities than differences between generations in regard the intentions to leave a company.

Summary of Literature Review

In summary, the study of generations focuses on how events in a generations' formative years impact their behavior and outlook. Millennials must be understood as a group shaped by economic, social, and technological events and not by a label defined by the years they were born or their myths and stereotypes. There is an inherent lack of data to support myths and stereotypes of Millennials that the majority of American adults concur with.

These perceptions of Millennials have created a barrier for managers to engage with their workforce. Though employee engagement is of high importance (Hagel et al., 2017), there is low engagement across the United States (Adkins, 2016) demonstrating a fragmented relationship between managers and their Millennial workforce. The dissonance between manager and worker will only obstruct a company's ability to cultivate a culture for passionate workers to drive sustainable competitive advantage.

Case Study: Creating a Purpose-Driven Organization

In July of 2018, Robert E. Quinn and Anhan V. Thakor published the case study *Creating a Purpose-Driven Organization* on Harvard Business Review (2018). Quinn and Thakor discuss

how identifying and communicating a company's purpose to its employees drives employee retention. The authors followed DTE Energy's President, Gerry Anderson, processes in connecting the company's purpose with its employees by learning from companies such as USAA, KPMG, Hampton Inn, and so on (Thakor, Quinn, 2018). From this case study, employee engagement and retention must be strengthened by communicating purpose through the following eight steps:

1. Envision a motivated workforce.
2. Discover the purpose.
3. Recognize the need for authenticity.
4. Turn the authentic message into a constant message.
5. Stimulate individual learning.
6. Turn mid-level managers into purpose-driven leaders.
7. Connect the people to the purpose.
8. Unleash the positive energizers.

Research Methodology

In order to support claims drawn from the literature review section of this thesis, seven interviews were conducted with managers of the Millennial workforce as well as with Millennial workers. See Appendix E for the table outlining each interviewee. Each interview provided enriched data on themes, such as Millennial myths, differences between generations, and approaches to managing a multigenerational workforce. Additionally, the interview sessions provided results that were specific to this particular thesis, Millennial myths, as well as the shifts in Millennial priorities. Each interview was conducted in-person or on the phone and ranged

from thirty minutes to an hour in length. The interview process was written with the intent to be informal and conversational in order to impart narratives and details to the overarching themes of the data. The questions and prompts posed to each interviewee include but are not limited to the following:

- Word association game with the following: Millennials, Baby Boomers, Generation Z
- How do you think Millennials perform in the workplace compared to their Baby Boomer, and Gen X counterparts?
- How do you think Millennials' use of technology has affected their productivity in the workplace?
- What are the benefits of working with a Millennial majority workforce? What are some of the disadvantages?
- What do Millennials value? What are their career goals and expectations?
- How would you, or would you not, adjust your management style when managing Millennials?

See Appendix C for the full interview guide. Every interviewee consented to the recording of the interview by either signing a consent form, see Appendix D, as well as provide verbal consent at the beginning of the recorded interview. Though there was a strong structure and set of questions, follow up interview questions would often be based on the interviewee's previous answer. For example, if the interviewee had a strong negative perception of Millennials the interview may focus more on the myths and stereotypes and less on the importance of shifting management styles to engage with Millennials. However, if the role of the interviewee is more management-driven, they may focus on the impact of engaging their workforce and less on the behavioral distinctions between generations.

Research Findings, Analysis, and Recommendations

Myths & Stereotypes

Millennial myths and stereotypes have been refuted with case studies and data. However, the prevalence of these perceptions is evident in interviews with Millennials as well as non-Millennial managers. N. Scher, a Millennial Senior Manager of City & Sustainability at a sustainable energy technology startup, was quick to offer examples of common Millennial stereotypes. N. Scher mentioned that as a Millennial, "We are an age group that is often made fun of" (personal communication, November 8, 2018). However, she also pointed out that she does not often feel personally stigmatized by others, but rather she frequently noticed these myths on the internet. N. Scher highlighted some of the common myths previously discussed in this paper, such as entitlement, that Millennials "believe everything should just be handed to" them and "laziness" (N. Scher, personal communication, November 8, 2018). Similarly, S. A. Kemp, a Millennial attorney practicing at her firm, explained that older generations believe Millennials to be all "freeloaders," living in their parent's basement, and don't work because they do not want to (personal communication, November 13, 2018). These strong myths and negative impressions of Millennial are likely the reason S. A. Kemp did not want to be labeled as a Millennial. She continues to explain, "Everybody thinks that we all got medals for participation, our generation thinks we are all special, but that is far from the truth" (personal communication, November 13, 2018).

Not surprisingly, negative generalizations of a generation do not just come from previous generations to newer generations. The interview with S. A. Kemp brings to light the resentment that some Millennials harbor towards previous generations. S. A. Kemp discusses how the 2008 recession left her generation with fewer opportunities for employment. S. A. Kemp clarifies her,

"qualms with Baby Boomers" in stating, "for my generation, I think we got screwed because the Baby Boomers have not been fired" (personal communication, November 13, 2018). S. A. Kemp feels that "there is a weird discrimination that is going on" between the various generations. In the later sections of this thesis, it will explore opportunities, and strategies managers can implement to evade and overcome the conflict between generations.

Interviews from Millennials are not the only cohort that present examples of Millennial myths and stereotypes. An interview with I. Gross, a Silent Generation former Executive Director to a non-profit dedicated to educating students through art, communicated a negative conception of Millennials. Working in the same company throughout several decades, I. Gross noticed a distinct change when Millennials started to join her workforce. I. Gross recounts Millennials to be entitled and selfish by describing one of her employees that was an exception to her other Millennials as, "She didn't think she knew everything, she is extremely ambitious, but she understood that you had to start somewhere and that you couldn't be the head of the organization" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). I. Gross continues to explain, "It was not just that they had their own ideas, but they were really angry if they had to use yours" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Finally, another common myth about Millennials that she hit on was selfishness, I. Gross commented that "at the very end they each saw themselves for me, me, me" (personal communication, December 3, 2018).

When asked why she thinks Millennials are so different from previous generations, I. Gross believes the reason is due to technology and parenting techniques. If this sounds familiar, it is because Simon Sinek proposed the same reasons in his interview. Both Sinek and I. Gross argue that technology and parenting strategies have created a culture of isolation, technical dependence, and entitlement. I. Gross found that Millennials have not been as productive as her

Generation X and Baby Boomers, in part because of the way Millennials have been parented. She explains, "that kids have fewer responsibilities, they are glued to the telephone all the time." As a result of developing relationships through social media platforms and technology, I. Gross argues that Millennial relationships are "almost isolated from human emotions" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Not only does she notice the impact technology has in her personal life, but at work "we use to sit around and chat in the office, and then suddenly everyone is looking at their phones waiting for a message to come in" (personal communication, December 3, 2018).

The interviews with Millennials as well as with non-Millennials supports data from the literature review, demonstrating how the American population negatively generalizes Millennials. Additionally, it provides accounts of how the generalization of a generation can incur unnecessary costs, generate conflict, and create a less productive environment. These interviews strengthen the reality that managers' perceptions of their Millennial workforce priorities affect Millennial performance and satisfaction, which in turn influences cost, turnover, and the bottom line.

Analysis of Technology Use in the Workplace

One common theme throughout each interview was how the advancement of technology plays a crucial role in shifting workforce priorities. Many of the shifted priorities for Millennials parallel the rapid advancement of technology. For example, the ability to work remotely directly ties into how technology has made telecommuting possible for the average employee. Though there are distinct differences between each generation, the majority of interviewees felt technology was a more critical catalyst for workplace change than its employees than

generational differences. Since Millennials were born in a more technologically-integrated environment, they are often able to adapt to new technology faster. S. E. Kemp, the Deputy Undersecretary at the US Department of Commerce, felt that for the most part Millennials and older generations have no significant differences or varying traits, and none that affect productivity and satisfaction. However, she mentions that younger generations more easily adapt to digital and technological changes, whereas older generation often feels more threatened. Findings the interview it was evident that there was a strong trend between how tech-driven a company is and how infrequent Millennial myths and stereotypes are. B. Kemp, President, and CEO, and C. DaSilva, Financial Officer, both work at an embedded software company. When prompted to answer if they have experienced any differences between each generation in their workforce, they found nothing that couldn't be explained by where Millennials sit in their life cycle. For example, B. Kemp expressed that "the old folks know the stove is hot so they will not touch it, the young folks will go ahead and touch it, and sometimes it is not hot" (personal communication, December 2, 2018). In other words, Millennials are more curious and risk-taking than previous generations, but so were Generation X and Baby Boomers when they were the same age. B. Kemp explains that for the most part, the technology industry has already incorporated stereotypical Millennial workforce priorities to stay competitive and adjust to an ever-integrating global economy. Not only does this appeal to Millennials, but B. Kemp has noticed it "works well with everybody." B. Kemp and C. DaSilva alike do not believe that Millennials have different priorities from previous generations, but rather "because of technology, to make it much easier to obtain" (personal communication, December 2, 2018). An example of technology's impact on workplace structures is evident in the ability to telecommute and join video conference calls with ease. Prior to hardware that allowed employee's access to

work collaboratively with their coworkers from anywhere and software to easily track the progress of projects, working outside of the office was not effective, productive, or possible.

B. Kemp and C. Silva's take on how technology impacts productivity and the Millennial workforce is in stark contrast to I. Gross's observations. I. Gross found that "the latter end of the Gen Xers and your Millennials believed that with a computer you could solve every problem" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). However, she did not find that it improved productivity or increased efficiency. I. Gross mentions that, "using data does not always save you money, because you have to hire people to input the data still" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). In review, I. Gross found Millennials to be more challenging to work with, leaving her to assume they were entitled, selfish, and not as hard working as a result of how technology influences Millennial behavior.

Companies and organizations need to integrate technological advancements in the workplace, as technology changes at a faster pace, managers need strategies to ensure each generation can effectively adapt to those changes. Similar to how B. Kemp and C. DaSilva view technology and Millennials differently to I. Gross, S. A. Kemp and E. Reyes also have opposing views because of the industries they work in.

S. A. Kemp shares her experience with a gap in knowledge of technology between Millennials and older generations. She explains, "I have had jobs where I have had to show senior attorneys who have 40 years of practice, how to open up Microsoft Word" (personal communication, November 13, 2018). S. A. Kemp is in a field where managers are not required to be re-educated on technological advancements. E. Reyes is a Millennial Community Growth Coordinator at a sustainable energy technology startup. Technology companies require teams to be frequently retrained on new technology to stay competitive. As an individual who onboards

and trains new team members, E. Reyes feels that knowledge of technology does not have “to do with their age, I think it has to do with their previous company” (personal communication, November 9, 2018). This sentiment matches Baird’s findings that “many employees—not just Millennials—are eager to adopt new technologies at work” (2015, pg. 15). Managers need to implement tools, procedures, and structures to continuously re-educate personnel regarding new technology in order to avoid conflict between generations and increase productivity.

Structuring the Manager's Guide

Each of the seven interviews was crucial in tying datasets and case studies on Millennial myths to individual narratives. Additionally, each interview provided examples of how to overcome negative generalizations and address shifting workplace priorities to create synergy between generations. Many of Millennials’ workplace priorities can be incorporated into management strategies to increase productivity and satisfaction for multiple generations.

Each of the four priorities³ is used as a framework to analyze the data-driven differences between generations. Moreover, the discussion of each priority will identify the underlying issues that prevent companies from utilizing each priority to create synergy in the workplace. Finally, this paper will present solutions drawn from interviews, previous literature, and case studies that can be employed by managers that have access to varying amounts of resources and capital.

Priority 1: Purpose

Millennials are not the only generation that desire purpose out of their work. However, Millennials are more purpose-driven than previous generations before them. E. Reyes spoke to

³ Purpose, Development & Mentorship, Flexible & Engaging Work Environment, Two Way Communication with Managers

how impactful it is to work for a company whose purpose aligns with her own. E. Reyes works for a startup tackling the issue of climate change in a continent “not often advocated for,” and remarks that “I know it is impactful work and that gives me drive” (personal communication, November 9, 2018). Similarly, N. Scher who works for the same technology startup explains that it is “important for me to work for a company that was reversing climate change, and a company that is environmentally focused” (personal communication, November 8, 2018). However, I. Gross found her Millennials to be less purpose and passion-driven than her Generation X and Baby Boomers. I. Gross explained that her Millennials would complete each task but just to pay the rent; they did not have “any passion for their students” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Of the seven interviewees, I. Gross was the only one who found Millennials to be less purpose-driven than previous generations. Everyone else saw Millennials to either be equally or more purpose-driven. The same sentiment for being purpose-driven also applies for Millennials in companies that are not environmentally or socially focused. S. A. Kemp mentioned that as a Millennial lawyer and substitute teacher, “I know my generation focuses on what does this company stand for, what is the end goal here, what is the product I am putting out in the company and is that something I agree with” (personal communication, November 13, 2018).

These interview answers are not surprising as O’Malley’s article found Millennial investors to be twice more likely than any other generations to invest in companies with a stated social or environmental impact (O’Malley 2016). Millennials are driven by purpose, not only as employees but also as consumers. A Boston Consulting Group report shows that 48% of Millennials try to support brands that are actively socially responsible (O’Malley, 2016). However, to engage Millennials or any generation with a company’s purpose, that purpose needs to be communicated.

From the IBM Institute for Business Value, Baird found that over 50% of Millennials do not understand their organization's purpose, strategy, and brand (2015, pg. 10). Not only is 50% a significant portion of a company's workforce, but it is also 10% higher than their Generation X colleagues (Baird, 2015, pg. 10). Therefore, the issue in engaging Millennials through purpose is not that companies do not have aligning purposes, but rather they are not communicating their purpose effectively to their workforce. Failure to properly communicate may correlate and possibly explains, why only 29% of Millennials are engaged at work, which is 5% less than their previous generation counterparts (Adkins, 2016).

It is a common misperception that Millennials prefer online and digital communication to face-to-face (Finn, Donovan, 2013). This view was noticed in the interview with I. Gross. I. Gross mentioned that Millennials “are glued to the telephone all the time” and as a result, the cohort’s “relationship is through a machine to another person” (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Not only does I. Gross mention how digital communication has affected Millennial’s personal lives, but also her employee’s professional lives, stating “We use to sit around and chat in the office, and then suddenly everyone is looking at their phones waiting for a message to come in”(personal communication, December 3, 2018).

However, Millennials prefer face-to-face communication just as much as their non-Millennial counterparts. From the report by PWC, the report found that "96% of Millennials want to talk face to face", which is a 1% increase compared to their non-Millennial counterparts (Finn, Donovan, 2013, pg. 9). S. E. Kemp, a Generation X manager, working for the U.S. Government, found that weekly one-on-ones and two-way communication built a more collaborative relationship with her Millennial and non-Millennial workforce. S. E. Kemp noted that Millennials especially were responsive to open communication, "because of both the role

they are in and where they sit in a hierarchy as well as the generation they are in" (personal communication, October 30, 2018). The underlying issue of communication will be further developed in the Priority 4: Two-Way Communication with Managers sub-section.

To better communicate the purpose of an organization and how it aligns with the workforce, managers should implement any of the following solutions:

1. Celebrate teams and individuals who exceed the norm
2. Ask what drives your workforce
3. Reinforce the collective identity
4. Hold open forums to speak to and hear feedback regarding the company or team's direction and purpose

Priority 2: Development & Mentorship

Millennials have very similar turnover rates to Baby Boomers and Generation X when they were the same age. In "debunking" Millennial myths, Norton drew from the Journal of Business in Psychology to report that Millennials have similar levels of turnover intentions compared to Generation X and Baby Boomers (2017). However, that does not mean that Millennials are leaving for the same reasons. Gallup estimates that turnover due to the inability to engage with the Millennial workforce has cost the U.S. Economy 30.5 billion dollars annually (Adkins, 2016, pg. 8). One of reasons organizations are unable to engage with Millennials stems from an inability to offer avenues of development. S. E. Kemp has noticed that Millennials are leaving for, "better job opportunities and different government entities," and even more so than previous generations (personal communication, October 30, 2018). S. E. Kemp believes this to be a result of Millennials larger "attention to a career ladder and more of an expectation that they

should have the ability and opportunity" to reach higher positions (personal communication, October 30, 2018). Finn and Donovan found that development and opportunities were the second most important factor in driving employees' emotional connection and retention with the firm (2013, pg. 10). In order to create avenues for development, the work itself must be interesting and full of meaning, and there must be opportunities to provide people with more and/or different responsibilities. O'Malley found that 69% of Millennials see themselves in managerial roles in 10 years (2016). One of the ways companies can develop their employees is through coaching and mentoring programs. This information aids to explain why I. Gross found that a personal mentorships program was the only way to engage with Millennials. I. Gross and her organization had put in place a "personal mentoring program" and found it was "the only way to get them (Millennials) to make changes" (personal communication, December 3, 2018). Prior strategies such as less frequent meetings, paying Millennials to attend, and using younger individuals to lead the meetings did not work as effectively.

Coaching and mentorship is often used as a strategy to develop teams and provide individuals with more experience. According to Candice Frankovelgia, a coaching portfolio manager at the Center for Creative Leadership, as of 2010 82% of organizations use or plan to use internal coaching (Frankovelgia, 2010). More and more companies are using coaching as a tool to engage, inspire, and motivate their workforce. Millennials' desire to be coached and mentored was discussed by E. Reyes who would prefer a direct mentor over a salary increase (personal communication, November 9, 2018). E. Reyes explained that she would rather grow than be paid more, but recognizes that as her career develops, she will not always need a mentor as much (personal communication, November 9, 2018). S. E. Kemp, a Generation X manager, had similar reflections on mentoring and coaching Millennials, that "when you start in your

career you need more mentoring, more oversight, more coaching" (personal communication, October 30, 2018).

Though coaching and mentorship may not be more prioritized by Millennials compared to Generation X and Baby Boomers, Millennials are more engaged by inspirational leadership than any other previous generation (Baird, 2015, pg. 3). See Appendix F for the table from Baird's study. Additionally, going back to the first priority, Millennials are more purpose-driven, and coaching creates a community to drive purpose. Finn and Donovan found that developing a sense of community to drive purpose is crucial for employee productivity and retention, it is the third most important factor in driving a commitment to the firm (Finn, Donovan, 2013, Pg. 10).

Though on paper development strategies may seem straightforward and simple, not all companies have the resources to bring in specialists or hold workshops as well as expand quickly enough to create more positions to be promoted into. Moreover, other development and experience does not always have to come from formal channels, outside sources, a salary increase, or with a new job title. Opportunities for career and personal development can alternatively come from leading collaborative projects or informal leadership. To create additional avenues for development and growth, managers should implement any of the following solutions:

1. Boss-employee coaching and mentorship
2. Create and provide other forms of leadership roles, such as captain of a company sports team, championing certain responsibilities, and recognizing their expertise in a niche talent or skill set
3. Switch project leads
4. Train individuals cross-departmentally

5. Create an internal workshop setting

Priority 3: Flexible and Engaging Work Environment

Work-life balance is a term heard frequently in business management, and businesses are increasingly changing their daily work schedule to accommodate for changing work environment trends. According to Norton, Millennials value paid time off, freedom and flexibility, location autonomy and result driven work environments over a 401k (2017). When each interviewee was prompted to discuss how Millennials feel about their work-life balance, the responses were uniform. S. E. Kemp mentioned that Millennials "are more focused on work-life balance, at least in talking about it. But I think my Millennials work just as hard as my Baby Boomers regarding the number of hours they put in" (personal communication, October 30, 2018). Though Millennials value work-life balance more, they appear to be just as productive and work just as many hours as their Baby Boomer or Generation X counterparts. Both N. Scher and S. A. Kemp agreed. Over the phone at her work, N. Scher whispered that "better work-life balance" was a priority of hers (personal communication, November 8, 2018).

From a management standpoint, S. A. Kemp mentioned that "Work-life balance is important to Millennials" (personal communication, November 3, 2018). Similarly, C. DaSilva found that instituting core hours "where you (employees) had to be available between the hours of 10 am to 4 pm" provided a better work-life balance for their teams. C. DaSilva saw Millennials to be a form of trendsetters, coming to the workforce insisting on having a good work-life balance, value in the workplace, and time-off benefits, eventually attracting older generations to request the same. B. Kemp had a similar view, stating "Millennials enjoy the freedom to do their job well when they want. That is something that everyone wanted. It is just

now we have the ability, because of technology, to make it much easier to obtain " (personal communication, November 3, 2018).

These interviews match findings from the PwC report by Finn and Donovan, where they found that “71% of PwC Millennial employees (vs. 63% of non-Millennials) say that their work demands interfere with their personal lives” (2018, pg. 8).

The list below are examples of changes that managers from various industries and companies could implement to provide opportunities for a more flexible and engaging work environment:

1. Introduce core working hours
2. Re-frame projects and tasks to be deadline and results-driven
3. Hold meetings at off-site locations, such as coffee shop

Priority 4: Two-Way Communication with Managers

It is imperative for managers to effectively communicate with their teams. Though technology has reshaped the way teams communicate with each other, it does not inevitable solve communication errors. 96% of Millennials prefer to talk face to face with their managers similar to their non-Millennial colleagues, where 95% prefer face to face communication (Finn and Donovan, 2018, pg. 9). As of 2015 nearly half of all respondents in an IBM report said that "their leaders do not communicate their vision for the business" (Baird, 2015, pg. 11). Not only do Millennials feel they are not being properly communicated to, but the same IBM study found that Generation X leaders overrate how well they inspire confidence and recognize employees' accomplishments (Baird, 2015, pg. 11). Knowing that Millennials are more motivated by inspirational leadership, it is no surprise Millennials are less engaged in the workplace (Baird, 2015, pg. 3). The need to communicate was also established in the interviews. S. E. Kemp

utilizes two-way communication to build a more collaborative relationship in peer-to-peer workgroups. She has noticed that this communication strategy is particularly important with Millennials (personal communication, October 30, 2018).

Two-way communication is particularly important as it enables transparency and the opportunity for managers to listen to their teams. S. E. Kemp notes that in her meetings, "Millennials want to be heard, they tend to take up more of the conversation" (personal communication, October 30, 2018). As Finn and Donovan point out, Millennials want to provide input for the projects they are working on with the support of their supervisors" (Finn and Donovan, 2018, pg. 8).

Though it may sound easy to ask managers to communicate more openly and listen to their subordinates, it is more sustainable to implement procedures to shift workplace culture regarding communication. Below are examples of strategies managers can use to foster a culture of two-way communication:

1. Weekly in-person one on ones
2. Question and discuss employee preferences to communication

The 30-Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials

There are apparent differences between Millennials and previous generations resulting from rapid advancement in technology as well as events occurring in Millennial's formative years which molded their behavior. Though this thesis primarily looks at Millennial priorities, the discusses management strategies will create a more productive environment to benefit all generations within the workforce. Baird's IBM report specifically invites managers to, "eagerly look for ways to embrace Millennials and create the work environments where top talent can flourish—across all generations" (2016, pg. 17).

However, emerging management strategies must be accessible for managers with varying amounts of resources and capital whether that be a small non-profit, fortune 500 enterprise, or startup company. Finn and Donovan exercises bottom-up strategies by actively and attentively listening to its employees" (2018, pg. 11). However, active listening is a general strategy that needs to be refined to steps, structures, and procedures in order to be applied across multiple management tiers, context, and styles. Drawing from the data in the Literature Review as well as the Research Findings, Analysis, and Recommendations section, Appendix G, acts as a reference guide for managers to engage with Millennials.

The 30 Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials is a tool for managers to engage with their Millennial workforce. The guide takes the form of an infographic as a quick, visual reference of the information in this thesis. It guides managers without the time to spend hours reading over literature on managing generations or resources to spend on going to school, workshops, or bringing in consultants. Additionally, it is a resource that is easier to reference and possess. The guide will aid managers in examining how their perceptions of their Millennial workforce affects Millennial performance and satisfaction. Finally, the purpose of this guide is to provide a step by step approach to onboarding Millennials into an organization to embrace the change that comes with Millennials and create a sustainable environment of productivity.

Limitations to the Study

The interviews conducted are used to confirm conclusions and support analysis from other existing literature. Each interview is a collection of an individual's opinion used to draw inferences about the larger populous. However, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of the interview process that may have influenced the interpretation data. Though the interviews

collected qualitative data, the sample size was six interviews, and the interviewees consisted mostly of females living in urban areas. However, according to Huberman and Miles, “sample sizes are typically smaller in qualitative research because, as the study goes on, acquiring more data does not necessarily lead to more information” (1994, pg. 428-444). As a result, the information gathered does not accurately represent assumptions made outside of that scope. However, the use of meta-analysis from existing literature aids in expanding the scope and verifying any findings.

Areas for Further Study

The study of managing a multigenerational workforce is ever evolving. Though this paper provides a foundation for analysis, further interviews must be conducted in order to obtain larger datasets to draw conclusions from. Specifically, interviews should be conducted to determine what new policies and processes are implemented as a result of emerging technology versus adapting to new generational behaviors. Given the opportunity to expand upon this paper’s findings, up to 100 interviews should be conducted with interviewees ranging between Generation Z through to the Silent Generation. Additionally, to gather a more diverse sample set, people who reside outside of metropolitan areas should also be interviewed.

There are various practical applications to the research conducted and the analysis drawn from this paper. The 30-Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials is one of the many ways to apply the knowledge of this paper to procedures and processes. Further research and work can be done to apply this work to industry, role, or company specific works. For example, from the stated Millennial priorities of purpose, development and mentorship, a flexible work

environment, and two-way communication with managers, a separate guide can be created specific to engaging Millennials in the metropolitan hospitality industry.

The above proposed practical applications are just a select few examples of ways the information in this paper can be used by all managers. However, it is important that further primary data is collected to support the analysis stated in previous sections.

Conclusion

Millennials have been predominantly perceived through myths and stereotypes, evident from polls, case studies, and interviews of the American public. However, there is insufficient data to support the negative generalizations of Millennials as entitled, selfish, lazy, unable to follow directions, and disloyal to the company. Instead, the data trends advise that these traits are more telling of where Millennials are in their life and career cycle than the entire generation. For example, this paper found that Millennials are switching jobs just as frequently as Baby Boomers were at the same age. Many of the myths associated with Millennials are more telling of where Millennials are in their life cycle than the generation as a whole.

However, although there are similarities between Millennials and their previous generations, they are not identical. Significant political, economic, and social events such as Barack Obama's election as President of the United States in 2008, the Great Recession of 2008, and rapidly increasing technological advancements have shaped the Millennials generation. These same events are used to determine a generation's cut off point and are the catalyst for the differences between each generation's workforce priorities. As a result, Millennials have different priorities in the workplace such as purpose, development and mentorship, a flexible and engaging work environment, and two-way communication with managers. Only by

understanding what the differences between generations are and utilizing shifting priorities in the workplace can managers achieve synergy. Though these workforce priorities are more evident in Millennials than previous generations, the underlying catalyst for these shifts are more likely to be a result of rapid technological advancement than Millennial behavioral changes. Millennials simply have an advantage, having grown up with technology integrated into their lives.

Companies and organizations need to integrate technological advancements in the workplace, as technology changes at a faster pace, managers need strategies to ensure each generation can effectively adapt to generational changes in workplace priorities.

Now that Millennials make up the majority of the US workforce, it is crucial that managers understand the differences between each generation and are prepared to adjust their management strategies accordingly. By implementing adaptive management strategies, organizations will be able to keep their Millennials and non-Millennials alike more engaged and productive, all while reducing costs as a result of lower turnover and absenteeism.

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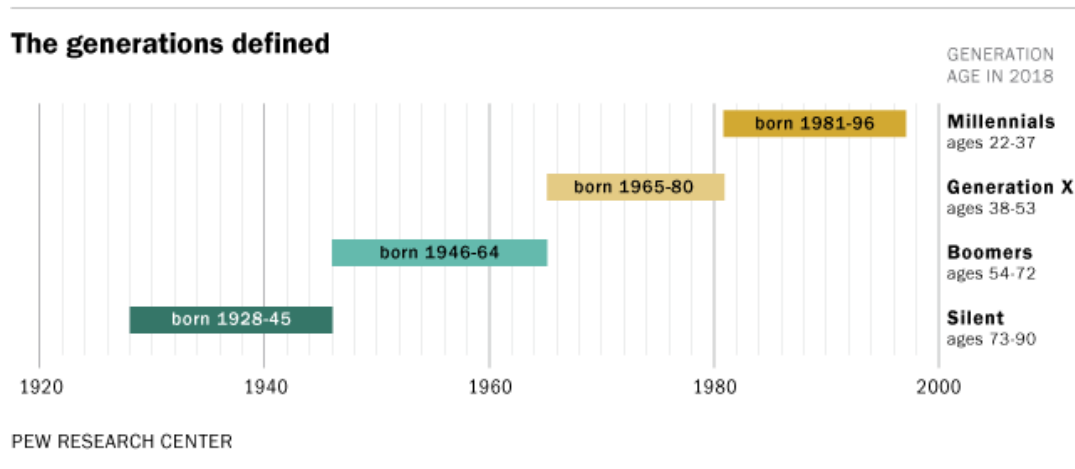
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Appendix A: Pew Research Center's Definition of Generations




Table 1: Defining Generations



Source: Pew Research Center (Dimock, 2018)

Appendix B: Carolyn Heller Baird and IBM's Reasons for Changing Jobs Table

Figure 8*Employees of every generation have much the same reasons for changing jobs*

Reasons for changing jobs	 Millennials	 Gen X	 Baby Boomers
Enter the fast lane (make more money and work in a more creative, innovative environment)	42%	47%	42%
Shoot for the top (assume more responsibility in an organization with a first-rate reputation)	24%	19%	28%
Follow my heart (advance my career while doing work I'm more passionate about)	21%	24%	16%
Save the world (make a positive social/environmental impact and have more job security)	13%	11%	14%

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014, Millennials n=1,153, Gen X n=353, Baby Boomers n=278. Q26: Why would you leave your current job for a job with a different organization?

Appendix C: Interview Guide

Introduction to the Interviewee:

- Can you describe your role as a manager at your company?
- How often do you work with Millennials in your position?

Discussion Interview Questions:

- Word association game with the following: Millennials, Baby Boomers, Generation Z
- How do you think Millennials perform in the workplace in relation to their Baby Boomer, and Gen X counterparts?
- How do you think Millennials' use of technology has affected their productivity in the workplace?
- To what extent is work-life balance important at the start of your career?
- What are the benefits of working with a Millennial majority workforce? What are some of the disadvantages?
- What do Millennials value?
- How would you, or would you not, adjust your management style when managing Millennials?

Appendix D: Consent & Recording Release Form – Template

Consent & Recording Release Form – First and Last Name

I agree to participate in the study conducted and recorded by Sidney Hong in regards to her Pforzheimer's Honors College Senior Thesis.

I understand and consent to the use and release of the recording by Sidney Hong in regards to her Pforzheimer's Honors College Senior Thesis. I understand that the information and recording is for research purposes only and that my name and image will not be used for any other purpose. I relinquish any rights to the recording and understand the recording may be copied and used by Sidney Hong in regards to her Pforzheimer's Honors College Senior Thesis without further permission.

I understand that participation in this usability study is voluntary and I agree to immediately raise any concerns or areas of discomfort during the session with the study administrator.

Please sign below to indicate that you have read and you understand the information on this form and that any questions you might have about the session have been answered.

Date: _____

Please print your name: _____

Please sign your name: _____

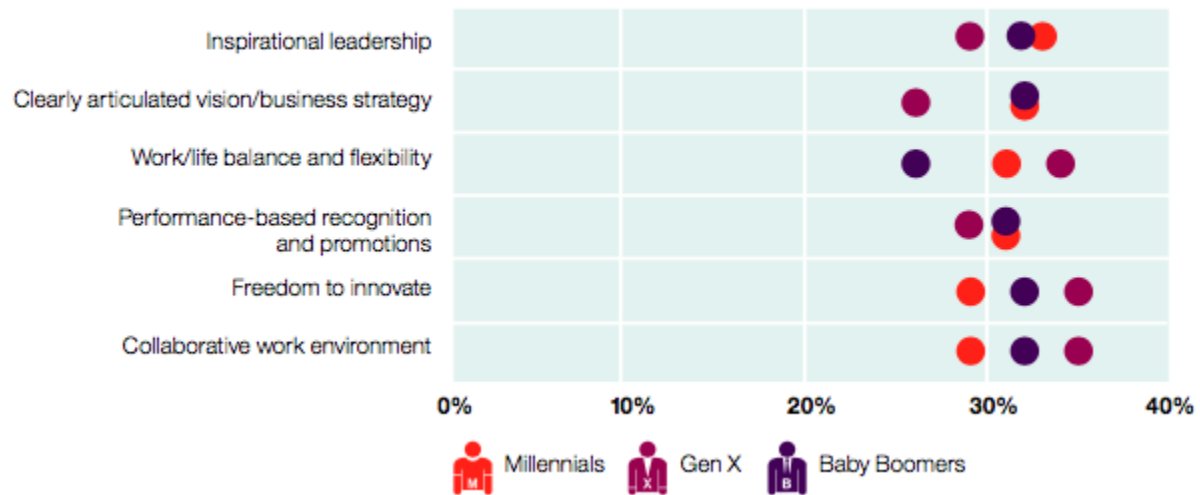
Thank you for your participation.

Source: Usability.Gov, & U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). Consent & Recording Release Form (Adult). Retrieved October 1, 2018, from <https://www.usability.gov/sites/default/files/consent-recording-release-form-adult.docx>

Appendix E: Table of Interviewees

NAME	ROLE	INDUSTRY	GENERATION	TYPE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
B. KEMP	President and CEO	Embedded Software	Baby Boomer	Phone	12/2/2018
C. DASILVA	Financial Officer	Embedded Software	Baby Boomer	Phone	12/2/2018
E. REYES	Community Growth Coordinator	Renewable Energy Tech Startup	Millennial	In-person	11/9/2018
I. GROSS	Executive Director	Non-Profit Education	Silent Generation	In-person	12/3/2018
N. SCHER	Senior Manager of City & Sustainability	Renewable Energy Tech Startup	Millennial	Phone	11/8/2018
S. A. KEMP	Practicing Attorney at Own Firm	Law	Millennial	Phone	11/13/2018
S. E. KEMP	Deputy Undersecretary	Department of Commerce	Generation X	Phone	10/30/2018

Appendix F: How Millennials' Priorities Align with Other Generations

Figure 2*What does it take to engage employees at work? Millennials' priorities align with those of other generations*

Source: IBM Institute for Business Value Millennial Survey 2014, Millennials n=1,153, Gen X n=353, Baby Boomers n=278.

Q18: Which attributes does an organization need to offer to help employees feel engaged at work? Select your top three

Appendix G: The 30 Day Manager Guide to Engaging Millennials



THE 30 DAY MANAGER GUIDE TO ENGAGING MILLENNIALS

ENGAGING MILLENNIALS

Compared to previous generations, Millennials are more focused on:

- Purpose
- Development and Mentorship
- Workplace Flexibility and Engagement
- Two-way communication

Managers should also develop quarterly opportunities of your team's choice to give back to the community. This connects your workforce to a purpose while developing two-way communication. Finally, utilize technology to implement core hours or telecommuting to offer a more flexible and engaging workplace environment.



DAY 1

Communication & Transparency

Learn about what your new team member is expecting and what is important to them in regards to their role, relationship with their managers, and the company.

Have them read Harvard Business Review's "Managing Your Boss" to encourage two-way communication. ¹

DAY 3

Mentorship & Community

Assign mentors to the new team member based on their role and what they are looking for from the company. Have them shadow the mentor(s).

Use mentorship as an opportunity to engage the new team mate as well as recognize existing employees who perform above expectations.



"Millennials are more engaged by inspirational leadership than any other previous generation." ²



DAY 5

Engaging Work Environment

Be sure that new team member has gotten coffee or lunch with each existing team members.

Take time to explain and see how your new team member feels about the company's purpose, strategy, and/or brand. It is important to ask and focus on what they connect with the most.

"Over 50% of Millennials do not understand their organization's purpose, strategy, and/or brand." ³



"Millennials prefer face-to-face communication just as much as their non-Millennial counterparts."⁴

DAY 10

In-Person Communication

Be sure to schedule bi-weekly or weekly in-person one-on-ones. Determine how to conduct the meeting based on each person's meeting-style preference.

Formal vs. Informal. Decision Making vs. Brainstorming. Prior Brief vs. Follow Up Email. Etc.

DAY 15

Utilize Technology

Millennials are often more tech savvy than previous generations and it is important to take note of how familiar they are with software, programs, and relevant systems.

Incoming team members are assets that can be used to help train existing team members, ensuring everyone has the same tools to be set up for success.



Implement weekly workshops that include how to using emerging apps, software, platforms, and more!



"Millennials value freedom and flexibility, location autonomy, and result driven work environments over a 401k."⁵

DAY 30

Cultivate an Engaging Environment

Discuss what your new Millennial teammate requires of an environment to best be engaged and productive at work.

E.g. Core hours, later start and end time, working towards deadlines and not schedules, taking meetings at coffee shops, etc.

SYNERGY

Managing a Multigenerational Workforce

It is crucial that managers are able to understand the differences between each generations in their workforce. However, with Millennials projected to represent 75% of the total US workforce by 2020, it is imperative for managers to adjust their management style to Millennial's priorities.

By implementing adaptive management strategies, organizations will be able to keep their Millennials and non-Millennials more engaged and productive, all while reducing costs as a result of lower turnover and absenteeism.

2 of 2

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⁴ Finn, D., Donovan, A. (2013).
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⁵ Norton, R. (2017, January)
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