

# *Leading the Millennials*

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## **Leading the Millennials**

WWW-6410

Do you have Gen Ys in your workplace? As employers, we often associate Generation Y (Millennials) with their use of technology, but while technology is an essential part of their lives, there is much more to know about Gen Y. This course provides you with a profile of the Generation Y and how they relate to supervision and other generations in the workplace. We will look at generational behaviors; the forces that shaped Generation Y; their language and communication style; and their work ethic. Strategies for engaging the Gen Y in the workplace while building on their contemporary abilities and how to communicate effectively with them will be covered. Additionally, supervisors of Gen Y workers will discuss ideas and techniques that can be used to help them to develop their Gen Ys into dedicated and productive employees. Leading Millennials is easier than you think!

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Identify behaviors that characterize the four major generations.
2. Identify myths about Gen X and Gen Y and understand why they have developed.
3. Describe the societal forces that contribute to the generational, personality of each generation.
4. Discuss the relationship of societal forces and the values, goals, and motivators for each generation.
5. Discuss strategies for how to communicate effectively with Gen Xers and Gen Yers.

### **Agenda:**

Generational behaviors and interpret their meanings correctly (1 hour)

Language of members of the Gen X and Gen Y generations (45 minutes)

Communication style (1 hour)

Forces that shaped generations (45 minutes)

The relationship between changes in the broader society and the shaping of generations (45 minutes)

Work ethic between different generations (45 minutes)

Communicate more effectively with Gen Xers and Gen Yers (1 hour)

How to be successful in working with people in the Gen X and Gen Y generations (1 hour)

## LEADING THE MILLENNIALS

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### Generational Outlook

The amount of adversity each generation experiences in its formative years determines, more than any other factor, it's general outlook on life

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### Each Generation

- Consists of approximately a 20-year span (not all demographers and generation researchers agree on the exact start/stop dates)
- Has a unique set of values
- Reacts to the generation before them
- Looks at their generation as the standard of comparison
- Looks at the next generation skeptically "these kids today..."
- Those born on the "cusp" may have a blended set of characteristics
- They are either idealistic, reactive, civic or adaptive

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### **Generational Perspective**

Silent = Born prior to 1946 / 92 - 75

Boomers = 1946 to 1964 / 74 - 56

Gen X = 1965 to 1980 / 55 - 40

**Millennials = 1981 to 1996 / 39 – 24**

Gen Z = Born after 1996

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### **Generational Themes**

<i>Silent</i>	<i>Baby Boomers</i>	<i>Generation X</i>	<i>Millennials Y</i>
Hard Work	Personal Fulfillment	Uncertainty	“What’s Next”
Duty	Optimism	Personal Focus	On My Terms
Sacrifice	Crusading Causes	Live for Today	Just Show Up
Thriftiness	Buy Now/ Pay Later	Save, Save Save	Earn to Spend
Work fast	Work Efficiently	Eliminate the Task	Do Exactly what’s asked

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### **Millennial Demographics**

- Born 1981 - 2001
- 1 in 3 is a minority
- 1 in 4 grew up in a single parent home
- 1 in 10 has an alternative lifestyle
- 14% speak a language other than English at home

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## Slide to “GEN Z”

Today's young people differ from yesterday's.

	<b>B</b> Baby boomer 1940-59	<b>X</b> Gen X 1960-79	<b>Y</b> Gen Y (millennia) 1980-94	<b>Z</b> Gen Z 1995-2010
Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Postwar</li> <li>Dictatorship and repression in Brazil</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Political transition</li> <li>Capitalism and meritocracy dominate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globalization</li> <li>Economic stability</li> <li>Emergence of internet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mobility and multiple realities</li> <li>Social networks</li> <li>Digital natives</li> </ul>
Behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idealism</li> <li>Revolutionary</li> <li>Collectivist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Materialistic</li> <li>Competitive</li> <li>Individualistic</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Globalist</li> <li>Questioning</li> <li>Oriented to self</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undefined ID</li> <li>“Communitaholic”</li> <li>“Dialoguer”</li> <li>Realistic</li> </ul>
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ideology</li> <li>Vinyl and movies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Status</li> <li>Brands and cars</li> <li>Luxury articles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Experience</li> <li>Festivals and travel</li> <li>Flagships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniqueness</li> <li>Unlimited</li> <li>Ethical</li> </ul>

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## Some “Gen Z” Facts

Estimated population by 2026 – 82 million

- The average Gen Z got their first smartphone just before their twelfth birthday. They communicate primarily through social media and texts, and spend as much time on their phones as older generations do watching television.
- The majority of Gen Zs prefer streaming services to traditional cable, as well as getting snackable content they can get on their phones and computers.
- Gen Z is the most ethnically diverse and largest generation in American history, and eclipses all other generations before it in embracing diversity and inclusion.

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## Some “Gen Z” Insights

- Digital Natives:** While Millennials grew up in a technologically savvy and connected world, younger members of Generation Z cannot remember a world without the Internet. They grew up swiping an iPad before they learned how to talk and are the first generation to be raised in the era of smartphones. Teenage members of Gen Z are connected nearly every waking hour of the day.
- Diverse:** This is the last generation that will be majority white (52%). Between 2000-2010, the country's Hispanic population grew at four times the rate of the total population. The idea of a black president is not exceptional to them—it's normal. Gen Zers have grown up experiencing diversity, and they feel overwhelmingly positive about it.
- Overwhelmed:** In her interviews with teens for her article in *Time* magazine, Susanna Schrosdorff says that “there was a pervasive sense that being a teenager today is a draining full-time job that includes doing schoolwork, managing a social media identity and fretting about career, climate change, sexism, racism—you name it.” 68% feel overwhelmed by everything they need to do each week.
- Lonely:** 3 million adolescents 12-17 have had a “major depressive episode” in the past year. There has been an increase in anxiety and depression among high school students since 2012. And this upsurge cuts across virtually all demographics—suburban, urban, and rural.
- Individualistic:** Anne Fisher captures the forces that have helped create an individualistic emphasis among this generation: “Gen Z is used to having everything personalized just for them, from playlists to newsfeeds to products features of all kinds. They've grown up expecting that.”

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## Millennial Icons

- Barney vs. Sesame Street
- Virtual Pets vs. Pet Rocks
- Britney Spears vs. The Brady Bunch
- Thumb drives ⇔ CD's ⇔ Cassette Tapes
- Blu-ray ⇔ DVD ⇔ VHS
- Beanie Babies vs. Cabbage Patch Kids

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## Technology

- This generation has been plugged in since they were babies.
- They grew up with educational software and computer games.
- They think technology should be free.
- They want and expect services 24/7.
- They do not live in an 8–5 world.
- They function in an international world.



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## Cell Phone Technology

- They all have cell phones and expect to be in contact 24/7.
- Not a phone – a lifestyle management tool
- Staying “connected” is essential.
- Communication is a safety issue for parents.
- Communication has become casual (IM, email and cell phones).



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### What Millennials Want

- Ability to work whenever and wherever they want.
- Variation on the job
- Continual feedback from supervisors
- Opportunities to learn, retool and reinvent themselves
- Challenge, new problems to solve
- To be in charge of their lives and their future

Marston, Cam, *Motivating the "What's In It for Me" Workforce: Managing Across the Generational Divide and Increasing Profits*, 2007

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### What They Are Not Interested In

- Time-honored traditions
- Doing things the way they have always been done
- Paying their dues
- How their managers got to where they are (rank)
- A work ethic that requires a 10 hour day
- Unquestioning loyalty to a company

Marston, Cam, *Motivating the "What's In It for Me" Workforce: Managing Across the Generational Divide and Increasing Profits*, 2007

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### Skepticism

The two younger generations (X & Y):

- Have been given ample reason to question authority
- Don't believe their leaders tell the truth
- Question the motives and truthfulness of institutions across the board
- Invest their loyalty and trust in individuals and therefore, the right boss is critical otherwise they change jobs, #1 reason they quit

Marston, Cam, *Motivating the "What's In It for Me" Workforce: Managing Across the Generational Divide and Increasing Profits*, 2007

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### **Millennial Influence**

- Beliefs in family and society have been compromised by various events
- Media has taught them that they can challenge any convention or individual
- Born into cell phones, blackberries, internet, software and voice recognition

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### **Influential Events for Millennials**

- Windows introduced by Microsoft
- Oklahoma City Bombing
- O.J. Simpson Trial
- Columbine Active Shooter
- The digital age (internet, wireless technology)
- Clinton/Lewinsky scandal
- Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001
- U.S. led War on Terror

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### **Millennial Values**

- This generation is civic-minded
- They are collectively optimistic, long-term planners, high achievers with lower rates of violent crime, teen pregnancy, smoking and alcohol use
- This generation believes that they have the potential to be great
- Will provide us with a new definition of citizenship.
- Individualistic but like groups/teams
- Hate drudgery – too boring
- Ambitious yet aimless
- Looking for a mentor (like mom and dad) not a boss

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### **Millennial Employment**

- Enter the job market with a lack of basic skills; yet, they navigate software programs that intimidate previous generations
- Where it is best to delegate to Xers on the basis of outcome rather than task, the opposite is true for millennial (Y)

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### **Issues – Employment**

- ☞ Ambitious but not entirely focused. Look to the workplace for direction and to help them achieve their goals.
- ☞ Individualistic yet group oriented
- ☞ “Me First” Attitude in work life
- ☞ Open to new ideas
- ☞ Strong sense of entitlement
- ☞ Seek responsibility early on in their roles

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### **Millennials: What to Remember**

- Conditioned to live in or for the moment
- Are use to immediate technology and expect everything with it
- Earn money for immediate consumption
- Have grown up learning to question everything
- Want clear and consistent expectations
- Demonstrate respect after being given respect

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### **What to Remember - Specifically**

- Raised to feel valued and very positive about themselves. (No Losers)
- They see as a sign of disrespect any requirement to do things just because this is the way it has always been done or to pay one's dues
- Provide rationale for the work you've asked them to do and the value it adds.

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### **Millennials - The Issues**

- **Lack of Maturity**

This is not necessarily related to age but is more about life's experiences. They tend to be self absorbed (I/Me), fail to accept criticism or discipline. They complain that everything is either too hard, unfair or you don't understand.

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### **The Issues - Maturity**

- Inexperienced – Work and Life experiences
- Need supervision
- Need structure
- Lack discipline
- High expectations
- Lack of skills for dealing with difficult people
- Impatient

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Character**

Some lack moral and/or ethical strength, have a reputation which indicates a lack of honesty, integrity or caring for others. They are indecisive and dependent, following the crowd where ever that takes them.

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Unacceptable Workplace Conduct**

Can be disrespectful, especially to their supervisors, exhibit bad behavior, and occasionally are abusive, hostile and intimidating to co-workers. Bullying, harassment and workplace violence are trademarks.

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Workplace Conduct**

- Respond poorly to those who act in an authoritarian manner and/or who expect to be respected due to higher rank alone.
- Rigid, traditional cultures don't match the mindset of this generation.
- Gen Y workers are less tolerant of work environments that don't reflect personal values, opinions and/or feelings toward change.

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Reliability**

This generation is sometimes inconsistent, undependable, indecisive and disloyal. Their attendance and punctuality are suspect and their work quality, work efficiency and overall job performance can be less than desirable.

Remember, it's the task not the outcome for these guys.

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Responsibility**

The millennial, at times, is less than accountable, lacks motivation, has no conception of task orientation and has no duty beyond minimum standards.

*"Close enough for county work"*

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### Millennials - The Issues

- **Social**

This demographic lacks interpersonal skills, can be biased, judgmental and display a bad attitude. Also, they can be impulsive, have no self control and are civil to no one. As a result, you may find them to be the most disliked co-worker who can't seem to along with anyone.

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## Millennials After Employment

I/Me!

Why me?

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## Counseling The Millennials

- Listen to their point of view – remember where they are generationally
- Don't misinterpret their defensive response – refocus them to the issue at hand
- Answer their questions directly & specifically – avoid vague or tenuous responses
- Collaborative solutions – mitigate any adversarial attitude – “I want to work with you”

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## Counseling The Millennials

- Let them share any disagreement – don't misinterpret tone for genuine disbelief
- Be honest & direct with any assessment – are we causing or contributing to the problem?
- Ask them for a plan – maybe different roads to the same end location
- Don't misinterpret a positive response – not always a passive kiss off

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## What Can Managers Do?

### 1. Mentor their employees

- About how the department runs, what makes people of different generations work well together. Teach people skills not just business processes.
- Great leaders can motivate all people by balancing processes and people's needs for the good of the department

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## What Can Managers Do?

### 2. Communicate with employees:

Encourage them to develop trust with others and empower people to do their jobs. Ask for input rather than telling them what to do. Open communication reduces resistance.

### 3. Value their values:

Want work-life balance. They value family and friends and want to work their eight hour day and go home. Older workers think long hours show your loyalty and productivity. Younger workers often get things done faster. They value efficiency and effectiveness and doing things faster.

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## What Can Managers Do?

### 4. Focus on Retention

- People leave for several reasons: older workers retire but younger workers often leave feeling unvalued.
- Have strategies to retain both groups.
- Older generations like monetary rewards, younger generations like time off work.

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## Questions

- What are the implications of leading millennials?
- What type of leadership/supervision are they looking for?
- What types of things are they most likely to challenge? Support?
- How can you be most successful as a leader/supervisor based on these generational characteristics?
- How do you best prepare for the transition between Gen Xers and the Millennials?

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“We spend entirely too much time discussing the challenges presented by our young generation. They are exceptional in their approach to problem solving and understanding technology. They value the importance of workplace happiness and thrive in positive environments where opinions matter. Previous generations simply did what was asked with little debate. Young people have been raised demanding to know why. So tell them why and be amazed at how well they get on board. Most importantly, when their actions or comments are inconsistent with the organization’s mission, tell them to **‘knock it off’**. They are counting on you to ‘raise your expectations’ and hold them accountable. Regrettably, many before you allowed this challenging generation to wear them down. Our focus today should be to improve our leadership skills by visibly leading from the front and intervening more often with a good old fashioned **‘Knock it off’** so that they may reach their amazing potential.”

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