

Time to Collaborate with Millennials

By Donna Rawady

Generation Y refers to individuals who were born anywhere from the late 1970s to the early 2000s. GenY consists of 80 million people (i.e., Millennials) in the U.S. alone — a population that has been tagged with generating the biggest workplace shift in 100 years, as they enter and populate our multigenerational employee teams.

Google “Millennials” and you’ll find close to 3 million links, many of which offer stereotypical profiles that include many of the following attributes:

- Millennials value things like life-balance and flexibility over all else.
- They are thought to be attached to their parents in ways prior generations struggle to understand.
- They’ve been raised to expect immediate gratification, whether it follows a click of the mouse, a text message, a sent email or a job well done.
- They are freedom-, science- and technology-minded, media-saturated, ambitious, confident and passionate.
- Even though they were raised with the fear of at-home terrorism, they remain optimistic.

Although their idea of a work day may not fit the established 8-to-5 culture of their predecessors, Millennials are committed, and they’ve learned to accept and thrive on uncertainty and change. Looking for new skills and new thrills, they are often creative and innovative.

Millennials are often labeled as tough-to-manage as they’re judged by their more seasoned leaders and/or co-workers who may be holding on to traditional ways of doing business. Yet today’s evolving workplace and the workplace of the not-so-distant future share a crucial need for every attribute mentioned here. Perhaps in addition to mentoring young professionals, it’s time for seasoned professionals to collaborate with and learn from Generation Y.

Regardless of the year we were born, or how experienced or inexperienced we may be, we have a great deal to learn from one another.

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