

New Synergist Insights

Managing “*Millennials*”

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In last months **New Synergist Insights** I described some diversity myths that may be derailing diversity programs. One area of diversity I did not spend much time on is age, specifically millennials. The group referred to as millennials were born between the mid 1980s until about 2000.

A generation is defined by significant shared events and experiences they were exposed while growing up. These events and experiences help shape the attitudes and motivations of a generation’s members. This group of Americans we call millennials will continue to have a significant impact in the workplace for years to come.

Millennials grew up in a world where more information was available to more people than at any time in human history. This fact translates to communicating information at work. “Need to know” or “you do not need to know why” are typically not acceptable. This group desperately wants to know what is going on and how they fit into the organization.

Millennials are typically tech savvy and their preferred method of communication is anything “instant”. Text and chat vs. power point and email are millennial preferences. This trait helps to blur traditional boundaries between work and personal life. Telework, childcare, and mobile technology are more than just nice perks for this group. These and other “perks” are considered to be essential.

There are many traits that make millennials a great resource that can jump start organizational productivity. Their affinity for the Internet and tech translates to improvements as multi-taskers. Millennials are also comfortable at networking and love to work in groups or teams. They want a fun workplace, especially when you take into account their blurring of work and personal lives.

Of course the more than 75,000,000 millennials who are joining or preparing to join the workforce are first and foremost individuals. They have a variety of likes, dislikes, and desires regarding work and life. The traits listed above are typical of millennials as a group. Organizational leaders who understand and take advantage of these traits are likely to create and sustain more productive firms.

Technology, continued globalization, and millennials are redefining work. Where, how, and when we work is rapidly changing. For instance, “According to Cisco’s Internet Business Services Group, the company’s global strategic consulting arm, the company has generated an estimated annual savings of **\$277 million** in productivity by allowing employees to telecommute and telework.” How much can you save?

Questions?

Contact New Synergist Consulting,
don@newsynergist.com

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