



## I Lack Experience, Can I Borrow Your Imagination? How Millennials Minimize Occupational Stress

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Occupational stress, emotional exhaustion, and employee burnout can create significant manpower and productivity obstacles for any organization. Today's dynamic and competitive market is a breeding ground for occupational stress. Its ubiquitous nature is relentless, and unless you simply don't give a damn about yourself or your organization, you are eventually going to feel the effects. Although you may not be able to eradicate it all together, there are 5 things we can learn from Millennials to help reduce occupational stress.

## **THEY HOLD THEMSELVES IN HIGH REGARD**

In general, Millennials tend to have a strong sense of self-regard. Whether it is warranted or not, being confident in your capabilities can help reduce the effects of occupational stress. Feelings of ineffectiveness can lead to burnout. When obstacles arise, recognize your weaknesses but acknowledge and exploit your strengths. Remember, you were hired for a reason!

## **THEY KNOW HOW TO SAY “NO”...AND MAKE DEMANDS**

Millennials are often recognized for their ability to “emotionally express themselves”. In turn, they are not afraid to say “No” (or at least discuss alternatives to saying yes). This may stem from a strong sense of self-regard, but none the less, being able to recognize that there is an appropriate time to say “no” can be a very useful tool in minimizing occupational stress. If you’re feeling overwhelmed as tasks keep piling up, accept the fact that everything cannot be a priority. If everything is a priority than nothing is a priority. Distinguish between those tasks that can be accomplished with an 80 percent solution and which ones require you to give it your all. Additionally, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation (2016) noted that “Gen Xers tried to achieve work-life balance; Millennials demand it.”

## **THEY HAVE A NOTEWORTHY CAUSE**

Despite a strong sense of self-worth, nearly 80 percent of Millennials also believe in a greater cause (which may certainly play a role in Millennial self-worth). In general, Millennials recognize the value of volunteerism and the fundamental importance Corporate Social Responsibility plays in the larger scheme of things. Concede to the notion that you are part of a greater and larger cause. You are not Atlas, so stop trying to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders.

## **THEY ADAPT...OR THEY DON'T**

Change is constant. Staying ahead of technological change is one of the greatest challenges organizations face in a world of innovation. There is no greater tech generation than the Millennial generation! Millennials seem to have an uncanny ability to understand, identify, manage, exploit, market, and adapt to technological innovation. The ability to adapt to change (in this case technological change) is a vital tool for minimizing occupational stress. Likewise, sometimes change is necessary. Other times, it is a waste of time and energy. Change for the sake of change can be counter-

productive. Furthermore, recognize who owns the systemic problem. Don't wear yourself out trying to end world hunger because your co-worker forgot his lunch.

### **THEY LACK EXPERIENCE...SO THEY BORROW YOURS**

Millennials lack experience, but their ability to ask questions and seek guidance is exactly what links them to the experience of others. This willingness to elicit the advice of others to solve problems is a brilliant manifestation of generational convergence and forward momentum in the workplace. Millennials are not afraid to ask questions or for that matter, ask for help. They are a creative and innovative generation and value the creativity and innovation of others. You don't have all the answers, or at least all the best answers. Ask for help or just ask for input. Diverse team dynamics, knowledge sharing, and cross-functional collaboration are invaluable means of solving problems and developing new and improved ideas.