

Managing Millennials

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I was in a meeting with a group of managers the other day, and they began talking about work ethic, specifically how frustrated they get with the younger generation of employees. "When I started my career I understood that if my manager needed me to work nights and weekends, I would," said one, adding, "and often it was at the expense of my family and friends. What I am finding is that while younger workers want to contribute, they just don't see that same sense of "do or die". I don't get it. "These young workers don't think like that – in fact, they think that when they come to work they're doing you a favour."

"Millenials still look to management for constant feedback, reassurance and guidance."

Yup, this man was talking about Millennials, people born between 1980 and 2000. They're self-confident, clever, resourceful, collaborative and ubiquitous. As a matter of fact, it's predicted that by 2010, Millennials will out-number both Boomers and Gen-Xers. They'll be entering the workforce en masse and businesses, in response, are re-addressing and re-focusing their recruiting and retention strategies in an effort to integrate this generation into their rank and file.

Millenials may have terrific confidence in themselves and their abilities, but they still look to management for constant feedback, reassurance and guidance. To get the most of your working relationships with Millennials and to manage them effectively, keep these points in mind:

Millenials are accustomed to working and networking with others.

They're used to working in teams – they want to contribute to their own success and the success

of others, so encourage their enthusiasm, comfort and ability to collaborate.

Millenials are technologically savvy.

They've grown up with computers, so take advantage of their comfort level with technology and their abilities – heck, they can probably text message faster with two thumbs than some of us can type with two hands.

Millenials are great multi-taskers.

They can have a conversation on the phone while checking their email and responding to incoming instant messages. Give them lots to do and tasks that will challenge them – boredom is anathema to them.

Millenials want structure and guidance.

Establish goals, agendas and deadline dates. Millenials want to know exactly where they're going and how they're going to get there. Be prepared to provide constant feedback as they value it and are accustomed to receiving it.

Millenials want to be heard.

They're used to giving their opinions and expressing their ideas and they like to be appreciated and respected. Enthusiasm for their talents and admiring and encouraging their work will go a long way toward a winning relationship with them.

Managing Millennials isn't as difficult as you may think. All it takes is a bit of a *re-think* in terms of how they've been raised, where they're coming from and where they're headed. Just remember that Millennials don't know a world without computers; that to them, the tragic loss of a Kennedy centres around a plane crash and not an assassination; and that Bono is band member and political activist, not the little guy who was married to Cher...Am I the only one who's feeling ancient right now?

