# A New Look at Millennials

## Keep these employees challenged and reap the benefits

BY JENNIFER SPENCER

**I recently attended an IRWA class called Introduction to Presentation, Instruction, and Facilitation. Although it was an awesome class, I quickly realized I was the "greenhorn" in the room, and the only one not there to become an instructor. All of my classmates were seasoned veterans, many of them working in right of way for longer than I've been alive. Fortunately, this worked in my favor, as I not only learned a lot from the instructor, but also much about the industry just from hearing the experiences of my peers.**

During the class, our instructor mentioned how frustrating it can be to have Millennials in the classroom because they "sit in the back with their heads down playing on their phone the entire time." Well, being 24 years old and a Millennial myself, my ears perked up. Before I knew it, the entire classroom was talking about how Millennials are impatient and feel entitled. Naturally, I had to defend my generation!

So the next day, when it was time for each of us to do a presentation in front of the group, I spoke on how to maximize what the Millennials bring to the workplace. I was determined to show my peers that we are more than just a bunch of entitled, impatient brats.

The reality is, despite being independent in nature, Millennials work better in teams with little supervision. We are more enthusiastic and passionate about our work than most people realize, which helps us to be more productive. We are the generation that grew up with the Internet at our fingertips and might even be the most resourceful generation to date. And being tech savvy, we require less training on databases and different software programs, ultimately saving our employers time and money.

What many people don't know about us is that we are entrepreneurial and optimistic about the future. Focused on working smarter, not harder, we take an innovative approach and try to find more efficient ways to do things. We seek leadership and guidance, while still feeling the need to be respected. Millennials have a an innate desire to see not just where our careers are going, but how we're going to get there.

According to statistics, there will be 64 million skilled workers retiring in the near future, leaving a gaping hole in the workforce. My generation has some pretty big shoes to fill. Having paved the way for us, we need you to lead us. So how do you train, lead and manage Millennials? The generation that is seemingly impatient, entitled, and "playing on their phones the entire time?"

The good news is that we're hungry to learn, so go ahead and take advantage. The old saying, "Give an inch and they'll take a mile" works in your favor here. With some structure and a little guidance, you can rely on our independent and resourceful nature to get things done. We aim to please. All it takes is a little encouragement, and our "can do" attitude will surprise you.

While many employees are fine with getting performance reviews on an annual basis, Millennials seek ongoing feedback and derive a great deal of satisfaction from it. If you can, give feedback often, as regular communication will result in a hardworking and loyal employee. Take advantage of this group who is comfortable working in teams. After all, two heads are better than one, and your group or department will become more unified by working collaboratively. Listen to what your employees are saying and challenge them to do more. Boredom can lead to disengagement, so if you keep them challenged and allow them to work on multiple projects, more work will get done and you will have a better employee for it.

I am a Millennial led by a Millennial Supervisor. In my current position I handle revenue, renewals, 1099's and even help pay rental checks when necessary. Needless to say, I have my hands in a lot of different pots, and I jump from project to project several times within the day. But I wouldn't have it any other way, because it keeps me challenged, helps me stay organized and I am never bored! I hope that more managers will take advantage of the energy and optimism that Millennials offer and work to maximize their talents. ✪

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