



GUIDE TO THE MODERN EMPLOYEE



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INTRODUCTION

As expected, when a new generation replaces its predecessor, workplaces will change. As more millennials become leaders and managers in their organizations, we should expect a shift in values, motivators, and expectations. Be prepared to hire, manage, and collaborate with the modern employee using this guide.

MASTER THE ART OF MANAGING MILLENNIALS

GIVE REGULAR FEEDBACK

Proactive millennials will likely ask you for feedback before you even have the chance to give it to them. Make ongoing feedback a regular practice for all of your employees. Here's how:

- Set up weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly meetings to not only discuss current projects, but to also give feedback.
- Give real-time feedback – in addition to providing employees with feedback during your 1-on-1 meetings, give real-time feedback as work is completed, so it can be tied back to examples.
- Focus on the content of your feedback – feedback is more effective when it is task-focused and simple. Furthermore, being specific to the task can increase learning because employees can envision how to make effective changes.
- Give feedback relative to a neutral standard, rather than in comparison to peers.

BE FLEXIBLE

Even your non-millennial employees are valuing flexibility more than ever, many thanks to the technology that enables us to blur the line between work and life. As long as your employees aren't abusing the privilege of occasionally running personal errands during the workday or sometimes working from home to save valuable time on commuting, allow them that freedom. If they feel like you trust them to appropriately balance their life with their work, they will likely reward you by being more dedicated to their job.

FOCUS ON DEVELOPMENT

Create a culture that prioritizes training and development. These efforts do not have to be time-consuming and expensive. A simple yet effective way to incorporate employee development into your work is to schedule a monthly meeting with your direct reports that solely focuses on development. Together, come up with a training need, and devise a plan for how you will help your employees get that training. Make sure that you follow up, and hold your employees accountable for their own development as well.



DON'T PUT TOO MUCH STOCK INTO GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

At the end of the day, try to see beyond generational boundaries. Although a lot has been written (by us, too!) about differences between generations, it's important not to focus too much on these distinctions. We're all at least partly products of our time, but some characteristics that have been attributed to millennials are probably simply a factor of them being young. For example, according to the [Bureau of Labor and Statistics](#), the baby boomer generation had just as many different jobs in their 20s as millennials.

UNDERSTAND HOW MILLENNIALS MANAGE

THEY WILL PROVIDE FEEDBACK OFTEN

Again, millennials value feedback. Expect to give and receive feedback on a regular basis.

THEY WILL PROMOTE A FLEXIBLE WORKPLACE

We expect millennials leaders to be comfortable with the blending of work and personal obligations and to extend this flexibility to those they manage, too.

THEY'LL FOCUS ON METRICS

With millennial managers supporting flexibility and allowing individuals to work remotely, metrics will become even more important. In many professional jobs, face time was once part of the currency with which job success was measured, but now managers and leaders must find new ways to judge employees' productivity. Enter: Metrics. If a leader can't judge his/her employees by whether they're showing up to work on time and working straight through the day at the office, the leader will likely turn to objective productivity and efficiency metrics to judge performance.



INTERVIEWING/HIRING FOR REMOTE TEAMS

When millennials are looking at careers and jobs, one aspect they are looking for is flexibility with a good life/work balance. Many organizations are hiring employees who work remotely more often. Because this job aspect is appealing to millennials, your organization needs to be prepared to interview remotely and to hire employees who possess the right skills to work well remotely. In this section, we will discuss how to conduct an effective remote interview, what competencies are necessary for working remotely, motivational fit, and how to manage remote teams.

CONDUCT EFFECTIVE REMOTE INTERVIEWS

Can remote interviews, conducted via Skype or a similar program, work? They can, as long as they are structured and consistent, which becomes even more important when you're using a non-traditional interviewing method like Skype. There are four key components of a structured behavioral interview process:

1. Gathering Background Information

This phase of the interview usually comes at the beginning. Once you decide to do a Skype interview with a candidate, he/she has typically already been screened. Even so, gathering more information about work history is a good way to confirm what's on the resume and to ask about any red flags. In order to make the most of this part of the interview, preparation is important. Make sure that you have reviewed his/her resume (and previous interview notes from the process, if possible) and have two to three questions or areas on which you want to focus.

2. Motivational Fit Questions

Motivational fit has to do with how well the candidates fit in terms of their interests and desires in a position aligning with the target role, as well as with the organizational culture. This section typically comes towards the beginning of the interview also. Simple questions such as, "Tell me about the one job you've had where you enjoyed the actual work the most," can tell you a lot about whether or not the candidate would be a good fit for your open position. For example, if the candidate says that the best part of the job he/she liked the most was that there was a lot of travel involved, and you know that your position will have no travel, this may be a negative for the candidate. After hearing this, your next step would be to inform (or reiterate to) the candidate that the position will not have any travel involved, and ask how he/she feels about this.

3. Competency Questions

Competency questions should be the meat of your interview. What are competency questions? They are questions that probe into specific characteristics that are important to the job, and help you discover how the candidate has behaved in past situations. Attention to detail is an example of a competency. If this was important to the role, you would want to ask questions that get at the candidate's attention to detail by asking him or her to describe a situation in a past job where this played an important part in what he or she was doing. During this section of the interview, you are trying to collect complete examples of previous situations so that you have a full picture of how the candidate has demonstrated the competency in the past.

4. Train the Interviewers

Interview training is so crucial because it ensures that the standard process that you've put in

place will be used consistently. You could have the best interview guide in the world, but if your interviewers don't know how to use it, the guide becomes meaningless. This is even truer when you're using a medium like Skype. If the interviewer isn't prepared and comfortable with the interviewing materials, the interview can more easily become jumbled and derailed.

ASSESS FOR KEY COMPETENCIES

Working remotely requires heightened levels of certain competencies, such as dependability, integrity, and initiative. Make sure that your hiring process takes these characteristics into account.

HONE IN ON MOTIVATIONAL FIT

Candidates may be highly qualified to do a certain job, but that doesn't necessarily mean they have the motivational fit to do that job. This is true of any work environment, but remote work can present unique challenges for some people. It's important to assess and be aware of the motivational fit aspects of the relevant job, and then to be prepared to ask interview questions related to these.

MANAGING REMOTE TEAMS

USE NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Using chat programs as part of your workday can be an effective way to have quick conversations with your colleagues when you can't simply walk to someone's work area to ask a simple question. Casual conversation around the office is something else you miss out on when you're working remotely. Social networking services like Yammer can inject your workday with a personal touch. Our company uses this and we have some fun groups like "Our Pets" and "Cute Baby Tuesdays" where we can post photos and comment on our co-workers' photos.

USE OLD TECHNOLOGY, TOO

And don't forget an older, but not-to-be-overlooked technology: the telephone. Picking up the phone to talk with your employees can be a very effective way to communicate. A lot of us spend the day typing emails, and speaking over the phone can be refreshing and feel much more personal than using a chatting program. Complicated issues or problems can also be easier to talk through on the phone instead of exchanging long emails.

ENCOURAGE REMOTE EMPLOYEES TO USE CO-WORKING SPACES

If it's feasible and desirable to do so, allow your remote employees to look into shared office spaces in their regional area. Co-working spaces are growing

across the country. By the end of 2016, there were over 10,000 of these spaces in the U.S., and just in the past two years, the number of people using these spaces has increased by 50%. Benefits include increased collaboration, productivity, and support. And they can even be more cost efficient than setting up a dedicated office space in your own home.

BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER IN PERSON

Even if it's just once a year for a company meeting and a holiday party, spend the money and time to bring all of your remote employees together in person if possible. Make sure that the time together is well spent by planning team-building activities and covering topics that may be easier to digest in person.

WHAT'S NEXT? LOOKING TO GENERATION Z

The next generation has recently moved into the workforce. What do we know so far about this group, born in the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, and what can we expect from them?

EXTREME COMFORT WITH TECHNOLOGY

Although millennials began heavily using technology as children and teenagers, Generation Z was born into a world where the internet, email, and smartphones already existed. Social networking is very natural, and very important, to this group, and most of their socializing happens through their phones. Texting and apps like Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat are more popular than Facebook and email. In terms of what this means for the workplace, we can expect that they will be comfortable using all kinds of technology.

RISK AVERSE AND PRACTICAL

They've been shaped by the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the Great Recession, and are therefore thought to be more risk-averse than the generation before them. Whether this will translate into less job-hopping remains to be seen, especially since they also are reported to be very practical. If one job doesn't suit them for one reason or another, they may decide that finding a new job is the most practical thing to do.

Recognizing and preparing for the workplace change caused by technology advancements and generational shifts will position HR professionals for success. Understanding how the modern employee is motivated, communicates, and leads, as well as being open to new technology, is key. The channels and frequency of communication may change, but as long as those communication channels remain open, generations spanning from baby boomers to Gen Z can continue to work together effectively.