

4/5 Millennials and their skills.

Millennial Heartbeats.

Five explorations of the attitudes, abilities and potential of today's Millennial leaders.

It can make them powerful agents for change and fearless interrogators of the status quo, if you foster that spirit.



Exceptional leaders

How do businesses get the best out of Millennials?



**Is your business getting
the most from its
Millennial leaders?**

What have we established about Millennials so far? They're not especially loyal and they want promotion fast. They'll absolutely let you know if they disagree with what you're doing (no prizes for tongue holding in this cohort...). They're collaborative, they act fast, they multi-task and they're indigenous in the digital world, though all that promise can equally be a handicap if not properly guided.

They can also make exceptional leaders but how do businesses get the best out of them and extract leadership gold from the Millennial mindset? Here are three thoughts...

**1. Millennials like to move on swiftly.
Get them moving through your own organisation.**

Millennials are less attached to the concept of a traditional career path; changing course, significantly and serially, presents no dilemma for them. As Matt Grinsted said in one of our earlier pieces, they're naturally inclined to see the positives in change ahead of the negatives.

When someone does a job well, a common business convention is to leave them where they are so they do more of it (perhaps a level or two higher). With Millennials - not all, but many - exactly the opposite approach can play out better. Pick them up, shift them to another bit of the business, see how they get on, move them again, and be prepared to do it more rapidly than custom might tell you.

“Pick them up, shift them to another bit of the business, see how they get on, move them again, and be prepared to do it more rapidly than custom might tell you.”

They'll thrive on the diversity, it will answer their inner quest for advancement and recognition, and may well extend their stay with you. If they do stay, they will have gained a wealth of experience on the way. If they don't, well at least you've made use of their 'get-things-done' energy in more parts of the business.

There is another advantage too. When a talented Millennial leader is regularly promoted through several levels but always in the same silo we've seen how they can fail when they hit the highest level. (We can prevent that happening, but the trait remains one to watch for.) It's not because they've lost their talent, but because they haven't built a broader network that respects and supports them. Their roots are weak. Touring the business can help fix that.

**2. Millennials are ever ready to disagree with you
Welcome the challenge and put it to use.**

Several of the experts we've previously quoted have mentioned the careful handling Millennials sometimes need to get them onboard and avoid a wholesale taking of umbrage. Why are they so ready to voice an objection to the way you're running your business? Because they can afford to. The strictures of today's economy have nudged Millennials away from home ownership (sometimes even car ownership...) and delayed the onset of family responsibilities. That gives them much less to lose than the generation before them, and they're consequently readier to rock the boat. However, it can also make them powerful agents for change and fearless interrogators of the status quo, if you foster that spirit.

“It can make them powerful agents for change and fearless interrogators of the status quo, if you foster that spirit.”

With encouragement (and perhaps a little gritting of teeth on your behalf) they can also be strong on thinking laterally when given their head. That doesn't mean they always come up with the perfect solution straight away, and they will require time to get it right, but they do appear to set up home 'outside the box' more comfortably than Baby Boomers or even Generation X-ers. Hard to say definitively why that should be the case, but they've certainly been exposed to more diversity in the media - social or otherwise - which is continually searching for the next creative solution to keep them interested. Millennials are also less tied to hierarchy generally, and that includes hierarchy of thinking. It's a talent we've seen blossom in our development sessions; solutions that cross boundaries and regularly surprise, seemingly popping out of nowhere with the right provocation.

3. They're fully paid up members of the digital world **Why would that be a problem?**

Millennials are known for their adoption of social media, and for many businesses that presents a magnificent....danger. Stereotyping. If your first reaction to a young Millennial joining your organisation is 'great, someone to sort out our Twitter feed' you risk missing a great swathe of their potential. They are more than their medium.

A shrewder way of interpreting their technological accomplishments is to see them not as digital natives but change natives. They have grown up in a world of unparalleled and ever accelerating change and transition. Yes, that's been driven in large part by the digitisation of so much of what we do, but this is a hothouse stoked by more than the Internet and Mark Zuckerberg, and Millennials have grown tall within it.

It's a skill to be able to think, act and react at that pace. If you have a short term project that needs to be got on with really quickly, with results in a time frame that would make an older generation's eyes water, give it to a Millennial.

“If you have a short term project that needs to be got on with really quickly, with results in a time frame that would make an older generation's eyes water, give it to a Millennial.”

Ok, so it may not be a deeply layered and sophisticated piece of work. We've already explored how Millennials don't have the greatest of attention spans and they sail a sea of distractions. Yet this can often mean they are not obsessed with perfection where perfection is the enemy of the good. In fact they can be very good at being just good enough, and if you're looking for agile project management that needs to slip under the radar of strict controlling mechanisms in order to Just. Get. Done., these are the people to call.

In fact some organisations can struggle to move fast enough to keep up with Millennial leaders and their warp-drive teams. But if you let them - and if you can hang on - those leaders can push the accelerator to the floor on business growth.

Personal development, mentoring and leadership training are the elements that will keep your Millennials loyal.

And they'll tell you that themselves.

Speak to an expert.



If you don't listen, you can't lead, so we place great importance on hearing what our clients tell us and adapting our approach, programmes or solution to suit.

For a free consultation contact us on [01989 767667](tel:01989767667)
or email info@leadershiptrust.co