

5/5 Millennials and communication.

Millennial Heartbeats.

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

Can your Millennial leaders communicate the ideas that will grow your business?



Look upon Millennials as your ‘Ground Truthers’.
They’ll tell you what they think you need to know...
not what they think you want to hear.



**If you want a truly
agile business,
listen to your Millennials.**

The ground truthers. With the Millennial generation rising through the workplace, this is a fantastic opportunity to revisit information flows and organisational structures.

Millennials were born into an era of communication that has no equivalent in human history. Faster, wider, further, instant (and sometimes instantly forgettable too). So shouldn't that also make them history's greatest communicators?

Apparently not. While digital technology has honed some skills, in our view it's dulled others; skills that are essential to business, and in truth skills that every generation of leaders needs to work on.

Technology has its own etiquette, and mastering it is important, but it's just one aspect of communication. There's a lot more involved in human-to-human interaction than any keyboard can apprehend.

Within organisations Millennials are a fearless bunch. They have scant patience for the hierarchical mannerisms of nudging suggestions up through a chain of benumbed superiors. When they have an idea, they want it out in the world quickly, and they see no issue with taking it straight to the top. (As many CEOs tapped on the shoulder in the queue to the lift might tell you.)

If you want your business to be agile and 'conversational', where ideas flow freely and from every direction, you need to embrace that. Look upon Millennials as your 'Ground Truthers'. They'll tell you what they think you need to know, not what they think you want to hear. To get the best out of the encounter listen, pay attention, and then say: "That's great. Get me a draft of how that could work in a few days." Don't ask for a full analysis in a month. The Millennial way is to get something up and running quickly; not perfect, but good enough to see what happens next.

Unfortunately Millennials are not great at recognising such a direct approach can backfire.

"We often simply expect people to be mindful of the impact their actions have on others," says Leadership Trust CEO Léa Cléret. "But self-awareness is a learnt skill."

"Some of us will have picked it up through life experience, but it's unfair to think that a younger generation would instinctively know what will irritate others, or understand how speaking directly to the big boss undermines the authority of the supervisor, and how that in turn has an impact on the entire workplace."

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CEO

The Leadership Trust

This can place organisations in a leadership double blind. If you can't help your Millennials enhance and master their communication skills, you'll either miss the unique insights they can deliver, or you'll get them, but at the cost of irritating other strata in the hierarchy (potentially torpedoing those insights en route).

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One of the other communication fables around the Millennial generation is its ability to juggle multiple conversations at once - talk, text, instant message and more. So why do they often have trouble getting their ideas across in a business?

Some argue that this capacity to multi-converse in the digital world is a talent to be cherished. But we just don't see it. Humans may have come a long way from picking berries and grunting at bison, but we have absolutely not evolved to the point where we are prepared for someone to have divided attention while we are talking to them.

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One of the exercises we run in our communication modules requires delegates to do nothing but listen to a colleague with complete, unswerving and highly-focused attention for a good ten minutes. And it is utterly transformational. People come away both realising how poor and disruptive their own lack of attention can be, and how extraordinarily motivating is the simple act of being listened to closely. As one delegate said: “it allowed my thoughts to come out of hiding.”

Ironically, those conversation-juggling skills may be the very things holding back communication in your business, and which need to be realigned among your Millennial teams. We often see more dramatic and empowering changes in this subject than in almost any other module we run.

“With the Millennial generation rising through the workplace, this is a fantastic opportunity to revisit information flows and organisational structures.” Concludes Léa Cléret. “Millennials question the traditional hierarchy and how relevant authority power still is today – exactly the area where bosses can be called out in public on social media.

“So you should thank them for stopping you hiding on the top floor, and give them the tools to keep you on your toes. Your business will be better for it.”



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So you should thank them for stopping you hiding on the top floor, and give them the tools to keep you on your toes. Your business will be better for it.

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CEO
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The Millennial generation is rising through the workplace.

Take this opportunity to give them the tools to keep you on your toes and your business will be better for it.

Want to ground your ground truthers? – Leading with Impact



This three day intensive residential programme will help your Millennials try out their leadership, in a challenging environment with constant review and feedback where they will:

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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.

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