

Redefining leadership for the Millennial workforce

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The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey released last year analyses millennial behaviour in ways better than those previously explored. As a ‘generation disrupted’, the survey points out how they are breaking away from traditional ‘success markers’ like raising a family or buying a house to traveling the world and serving their communities. And like everything else, their attitude to jobs and organisations is also no different.

In the survey report, Michele Parmelee, Deloitte Global Chief Talent Officer says, “Millennial uncertainty is reflected in their personal views on business, government, leadership and the need for positive societal change agents. As business leaders, we must continue to embrace the issues resonating most with these generations, or risk losing out on talent in an increasingly competitive market.”

Engaging millennials at the work front has become crucial because of their direct impact on revenue. Leaders, or specifically, traditionalists, should opt for different strategies and redefine their leadership skills when it comes to leading this generation of a smart, confident, ambitious, tech-savvy and purpose-oriented bunch of talents who believe in saying and doing things unapologetically, inside or outside the workplace.

An increasing number of leaders across the globe are now turning their attention to these young patrons of change. Their expertise and experience in AI, data, technology, and healthcare sciences have given them an edge over other generations, making them enablers of change in fast-growing businesses. There are a number of practices that leaders can adopt to transform the age-old ‘art of managing’ into ‘the art of mentoring’.

Workplace Fulfillment & Making Them Stay

If organisations are not fulfilling workplaces, there are plenty of opportunities out there for them. The millennial generation is spoilt by choice, not just because of the digital age

they were born into but due to the vast opportunities that startups and the gig economy provide. There are also flexi-contracts with companies, enabling young talents to even harmonise their work-life and academic life. Leaders might want to note here that making a millennial stay for over a year or two (which is the basic amount of time they would spend at a given organization) has a direct bearing on what companies offer them. Opportunities to learn, grow and innovate are pretty appealing, much as their desire for faster promotions, newer projects and outbound assignments.

Engaging, Caring and Connecting

Back in the day, managers were seen as cold, authoritative figures who sat mostly in their cabins and addressed their teams only on special occasions like an AGM or a farewell lunch. Much of that is obviously obsolete now with peers demanding more engagement and communication on a day-to-day basis. Millennials base their ratings on how experiential and connected their workplace was to them, whether it's the team or the team leader. Having a genuine, caring and communicative leader is always encouraging, not just for millennials but for everyone.



Social Circles, Teams & Leadership

Being connected on the internet and on social media amplifies the importance of social connections for this generation. With offline occurrences also appearing online in the form of Instagram photos, Twitter announcements, YouTube stories and LinkedIn achievements, millennials do not disconnect themselves from their online lives. They also prioritise team relationships outside work and love building meaningful bonds. This feeling extends in the way they look at peer relationships and why they don't believe in corporate hierarchies. Millennials work their way through a network of close friends and associates, the same technique they use to navigate cross-functional and agile work environments.

Feedback, Success & Empowerment

Executives leading millennials should learn well to adapt to the changing roles they themselves are in. From being the bad boss shouting at team members for target misses, leaders need to become encouraging mentors who are available for one-on-one's, friendly coffee breaks, career discussions, and also give them 'the straight talk'. Feedback for this generation is an existential issue and needs to be done in real-time. Leaders need to know what motivates his or her people and match their roles to their strengths. Often, listening to your talents attentively, praising them for their efforts and celebrating their milestones with them create lasting impressions. By capitalizing on their passions, leaders can drive better results and have happy faces who feel confident and empowered when they turn up for work every morning.

Millennials often lead lives dictated by purpose and the fact that they can make a difference means the world to them. And only smart leaders can help them navigate this complex corporate jungle gym and help them achieve their goals in life.