

A Hoopla publication

5 Keys to

Managing & Motivating
MILLENNIALS



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Introduction

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Born between 1980 and 1994—which puts them between the ages of 20 and 34—Millennials are expected to make up more than half of the workforce by 2020. They are your new sales force, so there is no question that sales managers need to understand what makes Millennials tick, how to manage this new generation of employees, and what motivates them in the workplace.

Provide Strong, Involved Management

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There are many myths about Millennials. A recent study by Bentley University found 25 percent of managers felt that Millennials had a worse work ethic compared to the previous generation, while 89 percent of Millennials rated themselves high in work ethic. Some researchers also predict that the average job tenure of Millennials will be half that of the previous generation.

As companies like Xactly have discovered, Millennials could very well become the most productive generation we've ever seen, if they are managed and motivated in a way that aligns with their unique characteristics. These include:

- **Limitless thinking:** Believing they can achieve their goals and dreams
- **High expectations:** Wanting more from a job than just a paycheck
- **Very tech savvy:** Having grown up on games, social media, videos
- **Social conscience:** Having the desire to make an impact

Many managers mistake the fact that Millennials don't seem to appreciate hierarchy and authority as a sign that they don't want to be managed. Yet, this generation grew up with a high level of involvement and management from their parents in every aspect of their lives. Since they are used to very involved parenting, they will not appreciate the sink-or-swim approach in their work life. They want to have regular check-ins and get feedback on their performance.

Provide Strong, Involved Management

Make sure you are clear about the results you expect from employees, and the steps they need to take to be successful. For example, if the career path from sales development to salesperson is 18 months, make sure you state that clearly. Don't let them think they can get there in three months. Provide a pathway to success. Show them the specific actions they need to take, and metrics you'll be measuring them by, that will guide them to a win.

Connect Work to a Higher Purpose

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The Millennial generation is a walking contradiction in many ways. Various studies show them to be simultaneously jaded and optimistic. They want to be well-compensated, but they don't want their jobs to be just about making money. They are willing to work, but on their terms.

Millennials reject the “greed is good” concept celebrated in movies like “The Wolf of Wall Street”. Instead, they prefer to have meaningful jobs that provide opportunities to effect positive change in their communities and the world at large. According to a study by Callingbrands.com, employees feel 64 percent more loyal to companies that aim to do more than just earn a profit.

A study by The Intelligence Group reports that 64 percent of Millennials would rather earn \$40,000 a year at a job they love than \$100,000 a year at a job they find unfulfilling. The Intelligence Group's Jamie Gutfreund studies generational trends and differences. She says, “Millennials were raised with a different perspective.” They need to see how the companies they work for are making the world a better place, and how they can contribute to those efforts.

As a manager, you need to reinforce your company's mission and emphasize the ways in which your staff can make a positive impact on the world. You need to show your employees—particularly the Millennials—how their specific jobs can help accomplish this. Barry Salzberg, global CEO of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, writes in his Forbes.com article, “We need to do more to connect the dots for



Connect Work to a Higher Purpose

Millennials, showing them the deeper global dynamics of the business enterprise.”

Which of society’s challenges is your business helping to solve? For example:

- If your customers are in the health care industry, how does your company help them do a better job? How many more patients can they serve because they do business with you?
- Maybe your business is helping to decrease the unemployment rate. Has your company created jobs in a new market?
- How is your company contributing to social causes and nonprofits? Do you have a donation or volunteer program in place?

It’s not necessary that your company cure cancer or end world hunger. But, think about how you’re helping those customers that are more directly serving people’s needs.



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Make
Recognition
Impactful

Make Recognition Impactful

Millennials' formative years were largely spent in an environment where they received trophies simply for showing up. Youth sports leagues stopped keeping score out of fear that kids on the losing teams would lack confidence and develop low self esteem. School districts attempted to overhaul the grading system in order to make students feel better about their academic performance. According to gradeinflation.com, the average college student's GPA in the 2006-7 school year was 3.11—up from 2.35 in the 1930s.

As a result of this everyone-gets-a-trophy upbringing, Millennials in the workplace are commonly perceived as needing constant approval and praise, just for doing the jobs they were hired to do. There is some truth to that, but it's not just Millennials; employees of all generations require recognition for their achievements.

According to Bersin Associates, organizations that do a good job of recognizing employees perform 14 times better than those that don't. In other words, recognition, praise and celebration are good for all employees—even more so for salespeople.

We've often said that salespeople are a lot like athletes. They are highly competitive, love to win, and want to be in the spotlight. Picture the football player that does a flip in the end zone just so he can get on the Sunday evening highlight reel. Or, think about the pro athlete who negotiates to get the top salary in the league just to prove that he's the best.

Make Recognition Impactful

The trick to getting the most out of any recognition initiative is to execute it well. Here are a few secrets we use here at Hoopla:

1. Recognize meaningful things

Don't just recognize the incredible or once-in-a-lifetime achievements. People need to be praised for meeting expectations and exceeding them a bit. But, don't trivialize the recognition by rewarding "pay to play" behaviors. I mean, don't celebrate an employee for simply showing up for work and meeting the minimum job requirements. Figure out which key activities and milestones are leading indicators to overachievement, and celebrate the progress made along the way.

2. Make sure recognition is timely

Too often, employers wait for formal events like company meetings to provide recognition. Or, they don't say anything until after the accomplishment has been analyzed and confirmed. By the time the accolades come, everyone in the company has already heard about the accomplishment through the grapevine, and the recognition becomes lackluster. While you don't want to practice "premature celebration," you do want to ensure that recognition is given in a timely manner. Use objective, data-based systems to set thresholds and automate the process of alerting people to key events before it is too late.

Make Recognition Impactful

3. Make recognition highly visible and public

People love an audience. In order to get the full impact out of the recognition you provide, make sure it is very public and visible for all to see. Imagine the Super Bowl being played with no fans and no TV viewing audience. Do you really think the athletes would perform as well? Make sure that you broadcast accomplishments in big ways with lots of fanfare. Bersin recommends a multi-front offensive of recognition. Send an email, broadcast a public video, post to social networks, announce it in front of everyone. The more channels through which you can celebrate, the better.

4. Make sure recognition is fair and consistent

Recognition loses its value if it's not seen as fair and objective. People like to know what it takes to get ahead and what specific activities are required to receive recognition. It is important to first define the key metrics and minimum standards, as well as the definition of overachievement. Once those things are clarified, ensure that your recognition is consistent, fair and predictable. This often requires an objective, data-based system that tracks metrics predictably.

While Millennials may require more recognition and praise to do their best, making the necessary investments in creating an environment that rewards and recognizes the achievements of all of your employees is critical to keeping them motivated, engaged and performing optimally. Leveraging the secrets of recognizing meaningful accomplishments in a timely, public, visible, fair and consistent fashion can yield huge improvements in employee morale, retention and performance.



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Make Work Challenging, Engaging and Fun

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There is plenty of research available showing that an engaged workforce is more productive, and that companies with engaged employees are more profitable. Everyone seems to agree that employee engagement is a desirable goal, yet it remains an elusive one. In a recent Forbes article, contributor Josh Bersin says his firm's research shows that 79% of businesses are worried seriously about engagement and retention (it is their #2 issue after leadership) and two-thirds of business leaders cite "the overwhelmed employee" as a top business challenge.

With Millennials projected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025, managers want to know, "How do I engage this new generation of employees?" As it turns out, at a high level, what Millennials want from their work is not all that different from what other generations want. They want to:

- Feel appreciated by their managers
- Have colleagues they enjoy working with
- Have clear direction about what it takes to be successful

What is different for Millennials is how they want those common sense principles to be applied. Millennials grew up playing games, often spending hours engrossed in highly realistic, 3D video games with multiple online player communities. You can argue over the merits of video games in developing young minds. However, games do have several key characteristics that employers can apply in the workplace to make work more fun, challenging and engaging.

Make Work Challenging, Engaging and Fun

These characteristics include:

- **Clear Rules:** Players know how the game works.
- **Clear Objectives:** Players understand what it takes to get ahead and to win.
- **Instant Feedback:** Players know how they are progressing towards their goal at any moment in time.
- **Challenge:** the game offers a perfect balance between being so easy it's boring, and so difficult that players give up in frustration
- **Competition:** multiple players who can compete for the best score, bragging rights, or just the thrill of winning

As Millennials enter the workforce, a work environment that offers them a similar experience will resonate strongly and encourage engagement. So how do you bring these gaming principles into your workplace, without turning your office into an arcade?

As you look at how you are coaching and managing your team, here are the questions you should be asking yourself:

1. **Have I provided clear objectives?** Do employees know what they need to do to be successful? Many managers think they have done this. Don't take your own word for it; ask your employees.

Make Work Challenging, Engaging and Fun

2. **Are the rules clear?** Do your employees know where they fit into the organization and have clearly defined roles and responsibilities?
3. **Are we providing feedback often enough?** Are you recognizing the “small wins” along the way that make up the larger win? Most managers want to give more feedback and recognition, but simply don’t have the time. Today, there are tools that can help automate this process and make it much easier, and more fun.
4. **Can we focus on micro-goals?** How can you break long-term projects up into shorter, more manageable goals and activities to ensure a sense of accomplishment? Having an annual revenue goal is fine, but what goals can you set to get your team fired up today?
5. **Is the work boring?** Are there ways you can inject fun and creativity into common routines? For example, take a look at how you hold meetings. Can they be shorter, or held somewhere other than the typical conference room?
6. **Does my team thrive on friendly competition?** Look for opportunities to introduce contests and create challenges. Allow employees to challenge each other to “duels” to see who can meet a goal or deadline first.

Make Work Challenging, Engaging and Fun

7. Have we optimized our rewards strategy? Are you still relying on the annual bonus plan? Rewards don't have to be monetary. One of our customers offers a VIP parking spot to their salesperson of the month. Another provides a much sought after "royal chair" to their top performer.

The key is not to try and overhaul your entire work environment all at once. Pick one or two ideas and get started. If those don't work, try a different one. You'll soon figure out which ideas work for your team and company culture.



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Leverage Modern Technology

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Millennials' facility with technology goes well beyond video games. This generation grew up in a world where high-speed Internet is widely available, and smartphones are omnipresent. For Millennials, technology is an integral part of their lives.

Here are just a few statistics to remember when thinking about how you use technology to engage Millennials:

- 60 percent of Millennials (vs. 29 percent of non-Millennials) are engaged in uploading videos, images and text to the Internet.
- Email usage among Millennials has declined approximately 27 percent in the past year.
- 43 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds say that texting is just as meaningful as a vocal conversation with someone over the phone.
- 56 percent of Millennials won't accept jobs from companies that ban social media.

The lesson: Learn to embrace and use modern technology at work if you want to attract and retain your Millennial employees.

Older generations may remember the way technology has transformed their entire world. Baby boomers began life in a lo-fi world, where black and white TVs with foil-wrapped, rabbit ear antennas, tape players and boom boxes were novelties. Millennials grew up surrounded by much

Leverage Modern Technology

more sophisticated technology as part of their everyday lives. They are used to high-quality, HD and 3D graphics, surround sound audio, lifelike CGI animation and immersive video. The Internet puts a world of information at their fingertips. Want to know more about a person or topic? Google it. Want to learn how to do something new? Check out YouTube videos. Need directions? Ask Siri.

But, what happens when a Millennial enters the workforce and walks into our corporate offices? He or she enters an alien world full of walled off conference rooms with white boards for brainstorming, clogged email inboxes and endless PowerPoint presentations. Instead of instant feedback, we provide annual reviews and bonuses. Instead of fluid project teams, we insist on rigid management hierarchies.

So how can you use technology to make your Millennials more engaged and productive? Here are a few suggestions:

1. Get app-savvy.

Consumer technologies and mobile apps are increasingly being used in the workplace, whether your IT department approved them or not. So why not take the opportunity to learn from Millennials the devices and apps they find most useful? In the same way Basecamp revolutionized project management, there are apps that can help your employees better collaborate, communicate and get work done. Hint: many of them are free or low-cost web and mobile applications that bypass traditional security and financial hurdles.

Leverage Modern Technology

2. Rethink your communication style.

Rapid-fire communication is a part of life for most Millennials. From Instagram and Twitter to Tumblr, Snapchat and Vine, this generation is constantly sharing information on social networks. They get their breaking news from Twitter and read opinions on blogs. They share pictures and video with friends. They grow their professional networks on LinkedIn. If you're still relying on email and phone to communicate, chances are your message is not getting through. Which brings us to our next point.

3. Get visual.

Millennials increasingly communicate in pictures. The ability to take a photo or shoot a video on a smartphone, and share it anytime, anywhere is quickly replacing text as a primary form of communication. How can you do the same? Can you tell a story with video instead of text? Can you create an infographic to communicate important information? Create a dynamic leaderboard instead of a static dashboard? Get creative with visuals, and get your message across faster and more effectively.

Leverage Modern Technology

4. Recognize often.

Understand that Millennials have much higher expectations for recognition and success because of the technology world they inhabit. In today's digital universe, the barriers to entry are lower than ever before. Anyone can start a blog and find an audience. Shoot a creative video that goes viral. Write a book and self-publish.

So, what are you doing to make sure your employees are getting the recognition that keeps them motivated and engaged at work? Discovering what makes Millennials tick and learning to appreciate their unique potential is the first step in motivating peak performance. With some minor adjustments to your management approach, proactive communication and recognition, and investments in modern technology, you can unlock the potential this generation has to contribute to your company's success.

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