

# How Millennials are transforming business

The new generation of workers does things differently, says David Dumeresque, of executive search firm Tyzack

MILLENNIALS ARE WITHOUT doubt the most analysed generation yet. That's partly because they have a very different view of employment to Generation X and the Baby Boomers.

Many companies, however, are simply not prepared for the challenges involved in managing Millennials. While business leaders accept the need for change in terms of technology and new routes to market, the prevailing attitude is that there is no need to change human capital strategies, because everything has worked well enough to date. This approach is doomed to fail, especially as Millennials will comprise more than 50% of the workforce by 2020.

Tyzack interviewed business leaders and Millennials to find out what high-flying talent in the new generation of employees seeks from companies, cross-referencing our findings with existing data.

## Brand ambassadors

In our research, an interesting phrase kept recurring: 'personal brand'. Millennials see their organisation's brand as intrinsically linked with their own. They will do whatever it takes to protect that brand, provided they continue to feel valued and the respect is mutual.

Thanks to social media, Millennials have the innate ability to build communities around shared interests rather than geographical proximity. Millennials habitually share information online and seek their peers' validation for everything, including employers. Since bad press spreads quickly, they don't want to be associated with a company that appears in the headlines for the wrong reasons.

As the labour market becomes more flexible, it



also becomes increasingly easy for Millennials to leave if they lose respect for their employer. It will be interesting to look at the effect that the Volkswagen scandal has on the company's ability to attract new graduate talent.

## Opportunists knock

Millennials don't go looking for a job so much as they go looking for an opportunity. One HR director told us that, at recent university recruitment fairs, more graduates were interested in a work placement than a permanent position. Another HR leader

had suggested scrapping their firm's graduate programme altogether, as, by the time the investment would start paying off, the graduates would have left the company.

Large, hierarchically structured organisations tend to be a turn-off for Millennials, even when they start their careers in top graduate schemes. In our research, they often said they joined these companies "because everyone else did".

Those who joined top graduate schemes often

claimed that working life was very different to how they had expected. They are not afraid of hard work, but the common expectation from management seems to be to work 60 to 80 hours a week.

Generally speaking, Baby Boomers happily accepted the hierarchy as

an essential part of their organisation throughout their careers. Millennials, however, have grown up in a consumer economy with rapid advances in technology. They have been given the freedom to make their own choices.

Current management styles tend to be transactional and authoritarian, but Millennials work better under a more democratic and participatory style of management, typically focusing on relationships and creating a positive working atmosphere.

## Round pegs, square hole

Conflicts will arise if business leaders try to fit a non-traditional workforce into a traditional workplace. The key objectives must be to understand the strengths and differences of each generational group, and to manage their expectations and the emotions that drive their behaviour. Companies need to harness cross-generational strengths and create a work environment that values differences.

Only then will organisations succeed in attracting, engaging and retaining new and increasingly talented generations of employees, with potential high-flyers among them.

## KNOW THY STAFF

45% of Millennials will choose flexibility over pay

28% of Millennials feel their current organisation is making full use of their skills