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Blue Papers



# Managing Across the Generations – Millennials

## When “Generation Y” comes knocking

What have Google, Tesco and the law firm Eversheds got in common? The answer is that they all not only understand, but embrace the Generation Y workforce and actively tailor their recruitment processes to appeal to this exciting young talent pool.

As the hugely popular website [bravenewtalent.com](http://bravenewtalent.com) demonstrates, recruiting the Millennial generation is very different to the traditional routes of recruitment consultants and newspaper advertisements. A professional networking site, BraveNewTalent allows its members (and membership is free for jobseekers) to follow top employers, such as Google, Accenture and IBM with an option to receive Tweets and alerts on their Facebook account without the employer becoming a contact of theirs (which would enable the potential employer to see all their social activity and photos).

Use of social networking and computers is second nature to this generation so it makes perfect sense to adopt similar practices when seeking to attract their attention.

What BraveNewTalent understands is that Generation Y is unique. It is a generation of 76 million<sup>1</sup> that responds differently to mainstream media and marketing tactics than those preceding it. It is a generation that thrives on excitement, making a difference and being a part of something bigger.

And, most importantly, Generation Y’s infiltration into the world’s workplace is happening now, not a few years down the road. Rather than run for cover or use same-old communication and management techniques on this budding group of employees, it’s time to face their presence head on and foster a mutually beneficial relationship.

## What makes Generation Y different?

Generation Y, often referred to as “Millennials,” are individuals born roughly between the years 1980 and 1995. This generation has been dubbed everything from “entitled” to “self-serving,” but recent studies have painted quite a different – and, more accurate – picture of this group as employees. We’ll go into these points in greater depth later, but here’s a snapshot to get everyone on the same page:

- They are tasks- and results-driven, thriving to be evaluated by

<sup>1</sup> Portuesi, Anthony. “Gen Y in the Workplace.” Sparxoo. Driven Leaders, 31 Mar. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://sparxoo.com/2009/03/31/gen-y-in-the-workplace/>>.



- performance rather than other attributes.
- They reciprocate loyalty with employers.
- A healthy work-life balance is one of their most important life values.
- Meaningful work takes greater precedence than earnings.<sup>2</sup>

A deeper understanding of Generation Y can also be gleaned by weighing them against other, more familiar generations in the workplace. Results from a recent Yahoo! Hot Jobs survey found that, when compared to older generations, Millennials are:

- 15% more likely to have frequent job changes.
- 10% more focused on family life.
- 9% more educated.

Keeping these statistics in mind, one can see how communicating with, managing, motivating and connecting with Generation Y requires an evolved skill set. You may have to change the “normal” way you’d approach employee relations, but it will definitely pay off in the long run for your team and the organisation as a whole.

## Contemporary values

Understanding what Generation Y holds dear can help organisations in harnessing their full potential and making the most of their employment. Gone are the days when talented individuals put in a 12-hour working day for little pay, simply because they needed to support their family or felt a deep obligation to their employer.

Although Millennials are willing to give 100% toward their careers, there has to be some sort of payback – and, not necessarily a monetary one. Generation Y values work that is rewarding to the soul. They’re looking to make a difference in their career and wish to see what difference they’re making on a daily basis.

In general, Generation Y maintains a higher social conscience than generations preceding it. This relates to their search for work that feels rewarding – to themselves *and* to the bigger picture around them. Millennials have a deep connection to social issues that will affect future generations and are often willing to go above-and-beyond normal work expectations to satisfy the greater good.

A healthy work-life balance is another important value to Generation Y. They expect to put their all into their job and, in return, be given the freedom to maintain a healthy personal life while out of the office. They are committed to their careers and



<sup>2</sup> Pinchev, Michelle. “Finally! The Facts About Gen Y at Work.” Brazen Careerist. Career Edge Organisation, 04 Nov. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.brazencareerist.com/2009/11/03/finally-the-facts-about-gen-y-at-work/>>.

reciprocate loyalty with employers as long as they feel they are personally valued as an individual with unique needs beyond that of their employment duties.

These core values relate to specific characteristics that Millennials look for in employers. In general, Generation Y marks the following as important when selecting the perfect organisation to work for:

- Consistent, constructive feedback from management and colleagues. They look for an immediate reward for a job well done. (We'll touch on feedback and rewards later!)
- A genuine bond with their colleagues and bosses – one that makes them feel comfortable enough to approach them with any given issue or opinion.
- Valuing their work and contributions equally to that of more senior employees.
- An organisation with a strong moral backbone and ethical business practices.

## The laws of attraction

Even with the likelihood of major organisational shift in demographics, you might be wondering at this point, "What's in it for me, and why should I put the extra effort and resources into recruiting Generation Y employees?"

Millennials are worthwhile to your organisation for a number of reasons. Overall (because we can't speak for every Millennial!) talented and committed Gen Y employees are:

- Passionate about their work.
- Willing to bring a fresh perspective and diverse opinions.
- Ready to work hard for their employers' respect.
- Loyal to their employer, as long as they feel valued.
- More educated than previous generations.
- Technologically savvy.
- Easily adaptable to new policies, procedures and changing organisational structures.



To attract them to your vacancies, it takes a lot more creativity and out-of-the-box thinking than may have been necessary to recruit their older cohorts. Consider trying a few of these ideas the next time a position opens up that would be perfect for a Millennial:

## Go tech

Life without the Internet is a faint, probably non-existent, memory to half of Generation Y. It is a generation that has grown up surfing the Web and using it as a resource to uncover information and connect with their peers. What better way to find the brightest talent than to go where they congregate?

Try taking the lead of Tesco and Eversheds and going social to recruit leads. Rather than going through the usual procedure of posting the open position to job boards and online career banks, release it using social media channels only. Such channels may include Facebook™, YouTube™, Twitter® or LinkedIn®. Release the vacancy from your corporate accounts in these mediums. If you don't have a corporate account, have your employees release it. Either way, you'll be sure to weed out individuals who are not utilising every possible touch-point to connect with your organisation *and* honing in on those potential employees who are tech-savvy and willing to go the extra mile.



## Emphasise emotions

Although Generation Y thoroughly enjoys their employer perks (more on those to come), it's important to highlight the intangible benefits they will receive when working for your company. How will they feel rewarded by their work? How will you make them feel valued? These emotional benefits can be equally as important to tangible benefits when Millennials are selecting an employer.

Specifically, try answering these questions within job descriptions aimed at attracting Gen Y applicants:

- How will their work make a difference – for themselves, their team, the organisation as a whole and its target audiences?
- What are the emotional benefits they can expect from the company's work environment? (i.e. team camaraderie, personal relationship with bosses, free time to foster creativity)
- How does the organisation ensure a positive work-life balance for its employees? Here, name exact programmes and perks already in-place. According to Elizabeth Harrin, writer for The Glass Hammer (an online community designed for women executives in financial services, law and business); Gen Ys believe they have more choice about work-life balance than previous generations. So, if they don't have it at your company, they are likely to look for it elsewhere!<sup>3</sup>
- What social or nonprofit organisations does your company take a special interest in? What will the organisation do to support the interests of its employees?
- How does management ensure employees feel truly valued in their positions?

Consider tying these answers into your online job pitch materials, too. They may be the extra, stand-out pieces that woo Millennials to your organisation over a competitor vying for their attention.

<sup>3</sup> Harrin, Elizabeth. "10 Tips for Managing Gen Y." *The Glass Hammer*. 02 Sept. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2009/09/02/10-tips-for-managing-gen-y/>>.

## Show rather than tell

Among their many other characteristics, Generation Y is quite skeptical toward mass media advertising and marketing tactics. Many Millennials will often go out of their way to battle mass messaging aimed toward “understanding” their generation.

So, rather than talking (or, writing) until you’re blue in the face about all the great things your organisation has to offer Gen Y-ers, *show* them.

Film a short online video, or series of videos, and post them to your corporate Web site or Facebook page to showcase the organisation’s unique culture and energetic environment. Ask current Gen Y employees to regularly document – via Web cam or audio only – why they love working for your company and what specific ways they grow as an individual and an employee in their career. Take and post photos online of company events, day-to-day activities and the like – anything that gives potential employees a sneak preview as to what they can expect while happily employed there.

## Perks to fall head-over-heels for

Another way to naturally attract Millennials to your organisation – and keep them around – is by offering plenty of perks aimed specifically at them.

According to October 2009 research from Brill Street + Co., an online organisation that pairs job seekers with employers, Generation Y is looking for a variety of interesting perks – some of which are new to the scene, while others are more familiar. Topping the list includes: Flexitime, the ability to work from home, plenty of holidays, access to social media, opportunities for advancement, company-sponsored social events, generous health benefits, the payment of on-going tuition or training fees, employee empowerment and evidence of social responsibility.<sup>4</sup>

Many of these perks directly relate to values discussed earlier, while others are more traditional in nature. Let’s walk through a few of these perks in more detail, giving you the information needed to add them to your benefits package should you deem appropriate:

**Flexible working schedule, including telecommuting options.** Generation Y is always on-the-go, and most Millennials expect their employer to support their desire for variance and freedom. You don’t have to go the whole nine yards and offer an all-the-time



<sup>4</sup> Meyer, Ann. “Firms boost workplace benefits to attract, retain, tech-savvy workers.” *Chicago Tribune*. 26 Oct. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://archives.chicagotribune.com/2009/oct/26/business/chi-mon-minding-perks-1026oct26>>.

telecommuting perk, but allowing even the occasional work-from-home or coffee-shop days can go far when recruiting top Gen Y talent.

Another prediction of Healy's is that the idea of working on-the-clock or punching in will continue to disappear as Gen Ys' presence grows in the workforce.<sup>5</sup> If this vision holds true, you want to be prepared now to make the shift less dramatic for your entire organisation. Plus, we'd be willing to bet that older generations wouldn't mind a more flexible, less regimented schedule sometimes, too.

**Supporting professional development opportunities.** As Millennials feel they are in constant change mode, they desire to work for an employer who is willing to support this need and contribute to their growth as a young professional. They view professional development as a benefit to their own personal brand, career and the entire organisation. If there's a way for them to grow into a more successful employee for you, they'll take it.<sup>6</sup>

**Competitive salary and benefits.** Although Generation Y may often be more about intrinsic reward than traditional merits, they still expect to receive a salary and benefits that reflect their skill level and expertise. Depending on your geographic area, salary expectancies will vary. However, you should prepare to pay professional positions no less than £18,500 per year – possibly with health benefits too – to qualified Gen Y employees.

Also, tenure does little to faze Millennials: If they are qualified for a position within your organisation, regardless of age or past experience in comparison to other employees, they will not stand to be underpaid or given less benefits.

**Ability to utilise social media tools as part of their job.** Many organisations – especially within the last five years – have taken to blocking social sites on all in-office computers. We understand that, depending on your industry, this may be a necessary precaution to maintain high levels of privacy standards. However, if these sites have been blocked for productivity purposes only, this may be a deterrent to qualified applicants in applying.

Generation Y are connectors at heart and are used to blurring the lines between personal and professional life. They will thrive the most in their positions when they're allowed to foster relationships within boundaries of your trust. Plus, social media channels are a



<sup>5</sup> Healy, Ryan. "10 More Ways Generation Y Will Change the Workplace." *Employee Evolution. Brazen Careerist*, 26 Feb. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010.

<http://www.employeeevolution.com/archives/2009/02/26/10-more-ways-generation-y-will-change-the-workplace/>.

<sup>6</sup> Harrin, Elizabeth. "10 Tips for Managing Gen Y." *The Glass Hammer. 02 Sept. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010.*

<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2009/09/02/10-tips-for-managing-gen-y/>.

great means to showcase employee ambassadorship and organically spread the good word about your organisation's happenings to the public! <sup>7</sup>

**Casual dress code.** Now, we understand that this may not be an option in some organisations. However, if you can swing it – try it - even if it's only a dress down day on a Friday. Having a semi-lax dress code says to Generation Y employees that you value their mind and related contributions more than their appearance. Then, when there are times that professional dress will be required, Auby recommends to focus on the benefits of dressing professionally: "Let them know dressing better will help defeat 'slacker' misconceptions, build credibility with execs, and help their career in the long run—especially in a weak economy," she advises.

**Increased holiday or flexitime.** Generation Y is a generation of travelers and thrill-seekers, consistently looking for the next way they can achieve excitement and make a difference in the lives of others. By offering the perk of increased holiday time, you're showing your commitment to them by helping them achieve their goals in life – even if it doesn't necessarily relate to their position with you.

This perk relates back to their value of a healthy work-life balance as well. By providing additional holiday time than the norm, they view you as an employer who is willing to go the distance to foster happiness in and out of the office. If additional holiday time is not feasible, consider a flexitime option. Rather than setting their schedule for them, allow it to ebb and flow according to their needs. If they can't work a Friday, let them make up for it with extra hours in the preceding days or by working on Sunday instead. Generation Y values flexibility, and such a perk most definitely speaks to that need.

With the right perks in place and a killer recruitment strategy, you'll likely have oodles of qualified Gen Y applicants at your fingertips. But, just because they may require a bit more wooing, don't be fooled into thinking they're entitled or lazy. Specializing in Gen Y workplace habits, Driven Leaders' Anthony Portuesi says it best: "They are obsessed with productivity and have no problem working longer hours as long as it fits into their schedule." <sup>8</sup>

After you've roped in talented Millennials, you might be wondering about the next step: How to think like them and communicate successfully.



<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Portuesi, Anthony. "Gen Y in the Workplace." Sparxoo. Driven Leaders, 31 Mar. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://sparxoo.com/2009/03/31/gen-y-in-the-workplace/>>.

## Talk the talk

Communicating with Millennials is easier than you imagine or have heard. This may be due to negative stereotypes that exist in relation to Generation Y – as with most generations – that paint an inaccurate picture of their communication skills.

Banish the images in your head of 20-something young adults who are too busy texting to listen intently or get any real work done. Rather, think of Generation Y as the most communicative, open generation yet, often willing to share pieces of their personal life with others that you may find far too private.

Millennials are unique when it comes to communication in that they are constantly connected and *always* communicating. From tweets to texts, Facebook wall posts to video messaging, they're open about their lives and feelings – something you will find valuable when they become your employees.

When communicating with and managing Generation Y employees, keep these tips in mind:

### **Tip 1: Don't beat around the bush.**

If you have something to say – whether it be a concern with their job habits or a piece of constructive criticism – simply come out and say it, rather than attempting to deliver it softly or inadvertently. Passive-aggressive behaviour should be avoided at all costs (as with all other generations of employees, too), as well as telling others about the issue before them. Generation Y is a generation built upon the value of openness in communication and expects it from their employers.

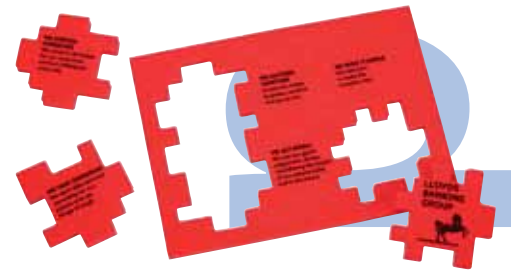
This same tip holds true when it comes to their expectations of employment. Be very clear regarding their roles and responsibilities. Because, according to Ron Alsop, author of [The Trophy Kids Grow Up: How the Millennial Generation is Shaking Up the Workplace](#), "They want the freedom and flexibility of a virtual office, but they want rules and responsibilities to be spelled out explicitly."<sup>9</sup>

### **Tip 2: Use fun and humour to your advantage**

And, by "humour," we don't mean knock-knock jokes. Generation Y has a sense of humour quite different than generations preceding it, often inciting laughs from irrelevance, randomness and dry sarcasm. Just hop on YouTube for a few minutes, and look in the "humour" category. You may not find these videos hilarious, but they speak to what Millennials find funny.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*



Millennials are here to stay

Apply this knowledge to workday communication by mixing in random fun that is unrelated to work activities.<sup>10</sup> Treat Generation Y employees as your friend, joking with them about day-to-day happenings as a break from the usual workday monotony. They'll appreciate your efforts, and it will energise them to keep moving through the real work at-hand.

**Tip 3: Be open to technological communication as often as in-person or on-the-phone.**

Generation Y and younger are much more accustomed to communicating via e-mail or other online social means than over the phone or in-person. This translates to their work as well. Although you may be used to picking up the phone to solve a customer issue head-on, Generation Y's first instinct is likely to send a text or e-mail. Neither is wrong per se, but they are most definitely different ways of approaching in-office communication that you need to be prepared to adapt to.

Consider creating a set of guidelines that details how your organisation prefers certain issues be handled – whether that means in-person, over the phone, via e-mail or even Twitter. This will help mitigate issues straight away, while still showing that you're committed to understanding their needs and helping them feel comfortable communicating with your audiences.



**Tip 4: Be their mentor, not their boss.**

Although you may *technically* be fulfilling the same role, Generation Y look to their workplace superiors as sources of advice and feedback, more so than sources of rules, procedures and reprimanding. Most Millennials grew up constantly receiving feedback from attentive parents, a need that has transitioned into their professional lives.<sup>11</sup>

Bruce Tulgan, head of consulting firm Rainmaker Thinking, counsels Fortune 500 companies on how to attract, motivate and retain young employees. In regard to mentoring them rather than managing them, he adds, "They need all-day, every-day coaching, and it has to start as soon as they walk in the door."<sup>12</sup> We would add that it has to be maintained for as long as they're an employee, too – not just for the first few months while it's fresh in your head.

Approach all situations – good or bad – as a learning opportunity. What went well? What could be improved upon? How will goals be measured? If you give Millennials what they deem "feedback," versus a lecture, your management relationship will be much stronger and fruitful in the long run.

<sup>10</sup> Harrin, Elizabeth. "10 Tips for Managing Gen Y." *The Glass Hammer*. 02 Sept. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2009/09/02/10-tips-for-managing-gen-y/>>.

<sup>11</sup> Portuesi, Anthony. "Gen Y in the Workplace." *Sparxoo. Driven Leaders*, 31 Mar. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://sparxoo.com/2009/03/31/gen-y-in-the-workplace/>>.

<sup>12</sup> Fisher, Anne. "How to Work Better with Gen Y." *FORTUNE. CNN Money*, 28 Apr. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://money.cnn.com/2009/04/28/news/economy/gen.y.fortune/>>.

In addition to these tips, we recommend assessing your current organisational communication policies to determine if they are still relevant to younger, Millennial teammates. You may need to tweak them to be applicable to a multi-generational workforce – a topic we'll look into next.

## When generations collide

Depending on your organisation's current generational makeup, the wake of Generation Y entering the workplace will vary in size. The impact of mixed generations will also depend on your industry, as well as cross-organisational culture.

It is likely that combining generations will make for some interesting team dynamics. Boomers view their jobs very differently to Generation Y, Gen X-ers have varying values from Boomers and Millennials communicate differently to both these generations. When so many forces are working against each other, you need to be prepared to mitigate issues and diffuse potential conflict before it occurs.

The first step is to help all the generations to understand the benefits of having different ages and levels of experience in the office. When generations work together, it makes for a unique learning environment for all employees to benefit from. Not only should younger generations expect to learn from their older counterparts, but vice versa as well. Boomers have career and life wisdom to share that cannot be matched by Millennials, whereas Millennials have an intense understanding of emerging technologies and youthful optimism that can successfully motivate even the most long standing employees.

Whether you're just beginning to add Millennials to your organisational mix or already have a decent spread of generations among team members, consider keeping waters calm by mixing a few of these ideas into everyday operations:

**Welcome teams.** Build internal project teams that consist of multiple-aged workers. Although it may seem easier and less stressful to pair like-minded individuals together from the same generation, your organisation *and* employees will benefit more from the diverse opinions and discussions. You'd be surprised at how quickly varying perspectives can evolve an idea from good to great (and, not to mention, make it more appealing to your customers who are likely to be from different generations).

**Reassess job descriptions.** Tweak your employee roles and responsibilities to better reflect all employee ages. This will not only make your job easier in holding teammates equally accountable, but also make them feel that the playing field is level between them and other-aged workers.



Related to job descriptions, also take a look at how your organisation dictates salaries. Millennials will expect to be compensated equally to longer term employees if they are performing the same duties. Healy, founder of Brazen Careerist, predicts that in the near future most companies will have complete transparency in how much they pay all employees – as both a motivator and component of an overall shift to a no-secrets corporate climate.<sup>13</sup> Look into this issue today, before you're forced to by employees in the future.

**Embrace diversity.** Publicly celebrate employee differences. Consider holding regular (weekly, monthly, etc.) recognition “ceremonies” that celebrate what makes your organisation’s employees unique and what specific contributions have positively impacted the company. By publicly shining the spotlight on employees of all ages, you’ll foster camaraderie between teammates, regardless of generational differences. Additionally, it helps everyone to recognise that age diversity in the workplace ultimately carries benefits rather than adversity.

**Address any issues head-on.** Organisations with multiple-aged workers cannot tolerate any brooding conflict between employees. Such situations can quickly spiral out of control, creating an even larger office fiasco. If you sense a potentially debilitating situation brewing between employees, approach the issue assertively and attempt to get to the root of the problem as quickly as possible.

Business Week’s Karen Auby recommends approaching workplace gossip situations more subtly with Generation Y, especially if it deals with differences in technological knowledge. She advises, “Say something like, ‘True, Bob doesn’t know much about search marketing but he’s negotiated some of our best deals and is pretty well respected around here.’ They might just need a reminder that not everyone grew up with technology.”<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the employees at-hand don’t understand each other’s work or concentration habits. Or, maybe there’s a communication barrier at the core of their relationship woes. Whatever the problem, by intervening swiftly you’ll be more likely to salvage the relationship and proactively work towards a solution that all are comfortable with and can learn from.

Keeping relationships cool between Boomers, Gen X and Millennials is only one step to retaining Generation Y employees. Keeping them happy and motivating them takes an



<sup>13</sup> Healy, Ryan. “10 More Ways Generation Y Will Change the Workplace.” *Employee Evolution*. Brazen Careerist, 26 Feb. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010.

<http://www.employeeevolution.com/archives/2009/02/26/10-more-ways-generation-y-will-change-the-workplace/>.

<sup>14</sup> Auby, Karen. “A Boomer’s Guide to Communicating with Gen X and Gen Y.” *BusinessWeek*. 14 Aug. 2008. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <[http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08\\_34/b4097063805619.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/08_34/b4097063805619.htm)>.

open mind and willingness to rethink many current reward programmes and modes of employee review.

## Keeping Gen Y here to stay

It's a fact: Young people change jobs, on average, every 18 months.<sup>15</sup> Having said that, motivating them while they are employed is crucial to retaining their talents and recouping recruitment costs.

Retaining Millennials starts with applying their values to your organisation's motivational techniques. As you can guess, this means that you're likely to have to try a few new incentives for loyalty than you have in the past.



Here are a couple ideas inspired by Founder of Brazen Careerist Penelope Trunk's suggestions in a 2009 column for BusinessWeek online.<sup>16</sup> We hope they get your brain thinking like a Millennial and, in turn, help you connect with them on a level that satisfies their employment needs and keeps them around for the long haul (or, at least longer than 18 months!):

### Focus on their development

As you may have noticed throughout this Blue Paper™, many of Generation Y's values, ways to attract them, perks they're looking for, and management techniques deal with giving them the support needed to strengthen their careers. From being the best mentor you can be, to encouraging professional development, to treating all mistakes as learning opportunities, Millennials are looking for employers who are willing to help them grow into an employee who can perform even better for the company.

Another way to develop their interests and careers is through a rotation programme. Trunk mentions the success that companies like Proctor & Gamble and GE have had in moving employees around to various related departments to help them find their niche more efficiently and effectively. If feasible, try a similar programme within your organisation. Let Gen Y-ers try their hands at many different tasks that interest them and spark different parts of the brain. You never know if that spark will lead to the fire your company needs to move forward in a new venture.

### Focus on less-traditional benefits to work

We mentioned this as an important thing to keep in mind when attracting Millennials and it's important to act on once they're employed, too. You're already well-aware that they value many more things than a high-paying salary. As Trunk puts it so perfectly,

<sup>15</sup> Trunk, Penelope. "Motivating Gen Ys in a Downturn." *BusinessWeek*. Brazen Careerist, 09 June 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <[http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/jun2009/ca2009069\\_851860.htm](http://www.businessweek.com/managing/content/jun2009/ca2009069_851860.htm)>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*.

“Gen Y knows money isn’t the most important thing in life, and they are not going to sell their 20s in order to get money.” She goes on to say that:

*“Also, they saw their parents working insane hours—no generation has worked longer hours than the baby boomers—and their parents were rewarded with redundancies, corporate ladders pulled out from under them, and crashing retirement funds. Gen Y wants no part of that deal. They want to learn. You can’t retain a young employee with money. They’ll take a lower-paying job with better learning opportunities.”*

So instead of making their merits all about a salary increase, keep in mind all the other reasons why they’ve chosen to work at your organisation (because, that’s how they view it – *they chose* to work for you, not the other way around), and use related elements to motivate them and keep them happy.

### **Go reward-happy**

Although annual reviews and similar types of drawn-out feedback may have been successful with previous generations, the same does not hold true for Generation Y. Millennials do not understand why they must wait for an annual review to find out if they’re fulfilling job expectations.<sup>17</sup> It is not a motivator to their excellence and often leaves them feeling under-appreciated.

Workplace rewards for Millennials don’t necessarily have to be monetary though. Bonuses and raises are still popular motivators for Gen Y, but it’s more about frequency of reward than what it is. They expect and value day-to-day “review” of their work and are consistently open to constructive criticism if they feel it will make for a better finished product.

Generation Y author Jason Ryan Dorsey explains Millennials’ consistent need for reward and feedback stems from their upbringing: “Generation [Y] grew up with everything fast: Instant meals and instant messaging. It wants, and expects, fast grown-up rewards: Jobs with titles, decision-making power, control of their schedules.”<sup>18</sup>

As Dorsey touches on, “reward” to them can mean anything from daily praise for a small job well-done, a change in their title, or involvement in a monthly or quarterly incentive programme that recognises them for reaching goals. Just make sure it’s a regular occurrence that they can look forward to and work toward. The more successes they feel (small or big), the better for their employment length and happiness!



<sup>17</sup> Harrin, Elizabeth. “10 Tips for Managing Gen Y.” *The Glass Hammer*. 02 Sept. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <<http://www.theglasshammer.com/news/2009/09/02/10-tips-for-managing-gen-y/>>.

<sup>18</sup> Crowley, Matthew. “Gen Y wants lessons, not lectures, author argues.” *Las Vegas Business Press*. 14 Dec. 2009. Web. 05 Jan. 2010. <[http://www.lvbusinesspress.com/articles/2009/12/14/news/liq\\_32918521.txt](http://www.lvbusinesspress.com/articles/2009/12/14/news/liq_32918521.txt)>.

Hiring and managing Generation Y employees is no easy task. Neither is communicating with them successfully, motivating them to succeed or fostering positive relationships between them and older colleagues. But, the payoff is worth the investment – we promise! Once you've mastered Millennials, you'll be well on your way to reaping the benefits of having them on your team. From their enthusiasm and passion to their unbridled commitment to making a difference in the world, you'll be happy you made the effort today. Plus, you don't want to be scrambling to cater to them 10 years from now ... by then, there will be a whole new generation knocking at your door.



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