



The Generational Shift Facing Leaders in America Part 2: Engaging the Millennial Generation

[November 17, 2017 Greg and Debra Buschman](#)

by Greg and Debra Buschman

There is a misconception that millennials are oversensitive, lazy and uncommitted. Instead, I will show how they are passionate, hard workers and are dedicated to social causes. A 2007 titled “Generational Differences in Leader Values and Leadership Behaviors” set out to separate the myth from reality and how the generational differences affect the workplace. The study showed that millennials make learning a priority and find happiness in their families.¹ While millennials may not be as independent as GenXers, they are full of confidence and sensitive.² Leuenberger and Klüver found that the younger generations desire more frequent feedback than what is provided in annual evaluations. Executive leaders through mentoring managers should select senior employees who are trained to provide the desired feedback.³

By engaging Boomers and GenXers in diversity training managers can address the “needs, interest, and values of the emergent workforce.”³ Employers should take this opportunity to bridge the gap between the generations through training to foster engagement and collaboration. This will increase the employee’s motivation and commitment by giving them a sense of community. In our diverse workforce, values will differ among the generations based on their “beliefs, values, goals, work attitudes, worldviews and attitudes toward leadership.”¹ These values shape their attitudes and willingness to adapt to change.

Developing Leadership: Each Generation has Value

Each generation has value and is important to the growth of each other. In the public sector, it is important to facilitate effective communication, progressive human resources and create a work-life balance that will ensure professional development, increase productivity and retain and attract personnel. This is done through leadership training. In order to gain credibility, a leader

must be real, relevant, and respectful of this generation sub-cultural needs. Millennials are not as forgiving as other generations for ineptitude and lacking leadership skills.²

Millennials are not a disconnected group of people that only have their sights set on fulfilling their own needs. They are passionate, adventurous, and sympathetic individuals who had Boomers and GenXers as the major influence and role models growing up. Parents of millennials used nurturing methods in their upbringing and lead by example. The strengths of millennials outweigh their weakness and as leaders we must harness their creative power, enthusiasm and ability to work in teams.⁴ “While money is important to millennials, their key motivator is maintaining a work-life balance, seeking out companies that foster strong workplace relationships, promote a sense of purpose or make a difference.”²

When leadership and management are open to new ideas that come from the younger generations they build trust and ensure that communication and respect are bilateral resulting in a high probability of knowledge transfer and trusted relationship.

[Read Part 1 here.](#)

1 Green, D. D., & Roberts, G. E. (2012). Impact of Postmodernism on Public Sector Leadership Practices; Federal

2 Government Human **Capital** Development Implications. 41 (1), 79-96.

3 Hinote, S. C., & Sundvall, T. J. (2015). Leading Millennials. Air & Space Power Journal, 131-138.

4 Kapoor, C., & Solomon, N. (2011). Understanding and managing generational differences in the workplace. Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism **Themes** , 3 (4), 308- 318.

5 Sessa, V. I., Kabacoff, R. I., Deal, J., & Brown, H. (2007). Generational Differences in Leader Values and Leadership Behaviors. The Psychologist-Manager **Journal** , 47-74.

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