

7 Ways Millennials Are Changing Traditional Leadership

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The “immature” millennials actually want to be in charge. According to a survey conducted by Virtuali and Work Place Trends, 91% of respondents expressed a desire to lead. Nearly 50% of them also said that they believed leadership is the empowerment of others.

From the same survey more than half indicated they believed they had strong leadership skills in the areas of communication and relationship building. However, many also indicated a lack of confidence in industry experience and technical expertise.

Perhaps what really stands out is that millennials seem to approach leadership in different ways than previous generations. They also have different expectations of the leaders they work under. For example, while 76% believe corporations are doing some social good, the majority also believes that international companies are not doing enough.

Clearly, whether they are seeking to become leaders themselves, or responding to the

leadership styles of their employers, millennials are causing some disruption to traditional leadership. Here are seven ways they are influencing leadership today.

They're showing a willingness to leave when leadership doesn't meet standards.

This is very simple but also very powerful. Millennials will leave jobs much more readily than their predecessors if they do not believe leadership meets their expectations and needs. This, combined with the sheer numbers of millennials in the workforce right now, is driving leadership change.

Millennials are expressing different needs regarding leadership training.

Millennials who are interested in leadership aren't just aware of their strengths and weaknesses, they also know how they wish

to improve their skills. The Millennial Leadership Survey mentioned above indicates that this generation of emergent leaders prefers to develop their careers through a combination of mentorship programs and online training.

They embrace a flat management structure.

A flat management structure appeals to millennials for two reasons. First, as employees they dislike the idea of having to navigate through multiple layers of management in order to do their jobs. Also, as potential leaders, they value an organization where movement within the organization doesn't simply go 'up the ladder'. A flat management structure facilitates both communication and career development both upward and laterally.

Millennials value leaders who seek feedback from all employees.

As an extension of their desire to work and lead in companies that have adopted a flat management structure, millennials want to work with leaders who value feedback from all employees. To millennials, it simply doesn't make sense that only the thoughts and experiences of those in management should be the only factors in organizational decision making.

This is because millennials are often keenly aware that the further up the corporate food chain people are, the more they tend to lose understanding of the challenges other employees face. They also tend to dismiss

the validity of their experiences.

They push back against policy for policy's sake

As a whole, millennials are actually willing to comply with and embrace policies that they see as being beneficial to the organization and the employees. However, they are also questioners and disruptors by nature. If policies don't make sense to them, or if it's clear that policies no longer add value, millennials are quick to challenge them.

As millennials progress into positions of leadership, they may be more willing than previous generations to delve into policies and begin making changes. As employees, they have high expectations that leaders will be willing to examine and adjust policies that don't add value.

As leaders they seek to empower and transform

Because millennials work best when they feel empowered to make decisions and take action to help consumers and benefit the organization that they work for, it should come as no surprise that they embrace empowerment when they enter leadership positions. It should also come as no surprise that they believe they can most benefit their teams and the organization as a whole by identifying ways to improve policies and processes, whether that's providing better employee welfare, facilitating drug rehab for employees who need it or providing more work flexibility.

They seek and support flexibility and work-life balance

As leaders or team members, millennials see the value in flexible hours, telecommuting, location independence, even the option to select the devices they will use on the job.

“Millennials place a high value on self care, convenience and time with loved ones,” said Aleksandr Korotkov, CEO of Uservice Blockchain Technology. “They believe that work life balance is good for happiness and emotional health. Because of this, workplace flexibility is very important to them. As a CEO, I’m happy to give it to them, and it’s paid off for my business. My team is happier and more productive for it.”

Some may be tempted to say that millennials should simply comply with the traditional leadership that has worked for the generations before them. The issue with that is that it’s short sighted. Much of what millennials want from and as leaders truly works for them, and helps them to become more engaged in the work they do. Further, now that they are a larger part of the workforce, it’s inevitable they will be the ones who influence leadership. Ultimately, the companies that are able to change with these new expectations are going to be most successful.

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