DALE CARNEGIE® TRAINING

IGNITING MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT
Supervising Similarities, Distinctions, and Realities

The New Boom. Millennials. Echo Boomers. Call them what you will, the generation born between 1980 and 1996 are influential by virtue of their sheer numbers, but also because of their remarkable cultural and technological impacts on society. By 2015, millennials were projected to eclipse the baby boomer generation in size.[1] It's no wonder, then, that organizations and their leaders are realizing the importance of understanding how to engage millennials in the workplace. According to a recent report, millennials could become the most productive generation with the right combination of management and motivation.[2]

Engagement is the employee's commitment to his or her organization and the willingness to perform beyond expectations.

www.dalecarnegie.com

DALE CARNEGIE®
TRAINING

Decoding Engagement

Over the course of two years, Dale Carnegie Training and MSW Research undertook a sequence of studies to build a deeper understanding of employee engagement, beginning with an introductory study in 2012. In May 2013, a follow-up study focused on the banking industry, while later that same year, two studies engaged a more in-depth analysis of issues and realities that affect employee engagement. The overall focus for each of these studies was the realization that engagement has profound effects on both the organization and the individual employee. On one level, employee commitment to the organization and willingness to perform beyond expectations extends far beyond the feeling of job satisfaction. Further, the key to unlocking employee engagement is ultimately the key to organizational improvement in retention levels. It also impacts the bottom line.

In 2014, a new study examined comparative trends among Dale Carnegie graduates in the United States and in Canada, to see how these graduates measured against the general population. More recently, the research turned to the question of how millennials compare to the "older" members of the workforce (non-millennials) and to understanding how managerial millennials interact with non-managerial millennials and non-millennials. This more recent research informs this paper.

Millennials are:

- born between 1980 and 1996
- over 75 million strong
- racially diverse
- often politically, religiously, and conjugally unattached
- linked by social media
- affected by debt
- optimistic

DALE CARNEGIE®
TRAINING

Why Millennials?

The question is: Why this interest in the millennial generation? One series of reports notes that millennials have had immediate and long-term effects on society and have caused massive shifts in opinion on social issues over the past decade. Other research points to their distinct generational identity when it comes to how they interact with each other and with other generations.[3]

Millennials—those born between the years of 1980 and 1996—were projected to number 75.3 million by 2015. The generation continues to grow through additions to the population through immigration. Trends that are discussed in relation to millennials include the facts that they are racially diverse, relatively unattached to organized politics and religion, linked by social media, burdened by debt—especially student loan debt—distrustful of people, and in no rush to get married, but otherwise they're optimistic about the future.[4]

Understanding the differences between millennials and non-millennials in the workplace and how to engage employees who are part of the millennial generation can lead to increased effectiveness in supervising and mentoring, which in turn can lead to workplace satisfaction, retention, motivation, and ultimately greater productivity. This white paper answers these and other questions, providing managers of multigenerational teams with ways of thinking that can inform management strategies when dealing with both millennials and non-millennials. The findings of this study point to specific insights that are instructive in this way.

Specifically, our study set out to look at:

- Whether the drivers of employee engagement vary by generational differences
- If there are generational differences in the drivers of engagement, whether management and communication styles should be adapted accordingly

DALE CARNEGIE®
TRAINING

Summary of Findings

From the findings of this study, we also examined:

- Whether millennials are more or less engaged with their companies than non-millennials

- Whether and why millennials are more or less satisfied with their jobs, immediate supervisors, and senior management, compared to non-millennials

- What millennials are looking for in training and development

Our findings pointed to important generational distinctions within our participant population, providing insights about important factors for engagement and what it takes to engage people born in different eras.

Here are some of those findings:

Of the 300 study participants, 50 percent were millennials, with the other 50 percent being older non-millennials.

- o Also, 100 worked for companies with between 50 and 499 employees, while 100 worked for companies with between 500 and 999 employees, and 100 for companies with 1,000 or more employees.

- o All participants worked full time.

- o And the population was made up of 50 percent men and 50 percent women.

Millennials differ from older, non-millennials in important ways, including:

- o They are significantly more likely to be fully or partially engaged than older non-millennials (with 86 percent of millennials versus 75 percent of non-millennials).

- o Millennials who were also Dale Carnegie Training graduates were significantly engaged.

- o Millennials feel less valued, confident, and connected.

Summary of Findings Continued

But while millennials chart their own courses on multiple levels, they also share several noteworthy commonalities with non-millennials:

o   Millennials and non-millennials share a similar likelihood to recommend their workplace to friends as a possible place for employment. See Figure 1 below.

o   BUT the research revealed another key generational difference in engagement: Millennials are much more likely to recommend their company for purposes of doing business than non-millennials, with 85 percent of millennials saying they would be likely to make such a recommendation versus 74 percent of non-millennials.

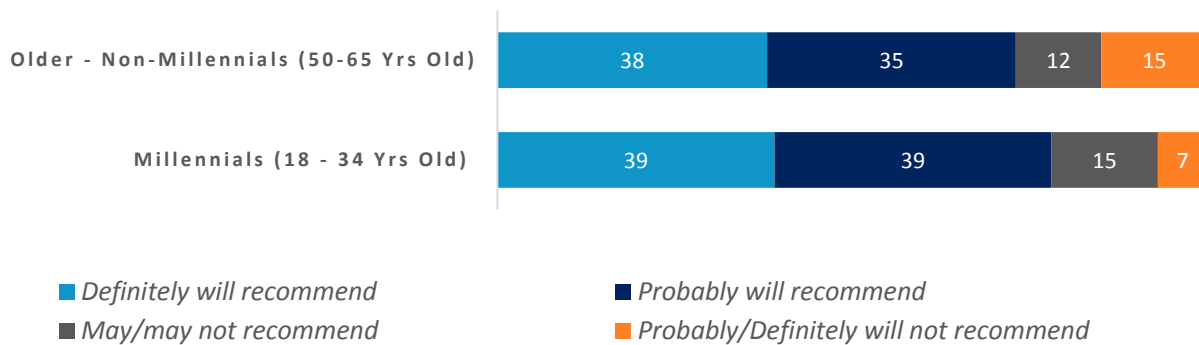|	Definitely will recommend	Probably will recommend	May/may not recommend	Probably/Definitely will not recommend
Older - Non-Millennials (50-65 Yrs Old)	38	35	12	15
Millennials (18 - 34 Yrs Old)	39	39	15	7

Figure 1. Employee Likelihood to Recommend Company to Friends as a Place for Employment (Basis for Deriving Employee Engagement)

The significance of this finding seems to point to a recurrent theme often indicated in millennial-focused research: a desire for balance between individualism and loyalty. This present study suggests that for millennials, engagement might be linked more effectively to both personal gain (derived from recognition for bringing business to their employer) and a sense of fulfillment (derived from helping others find a good business partner) and loyalty. These emotional and functional attributes important to millennials are addressed in a later section of this report.

DALE CARNEGIE® TRAINING

Training Makes a Difference

When it comes to addressing feelings of inferiority and incompetence, the research indicated that training substantially increased positive trends among participants.

- Perhaps in an effort to help them feel more valued, confident, and connected, millennials want courses in leadership, public speaking, self-confidence building, and team management.

- Also, millennials specifically want online training courses that offer flexible hours, and content that keeps participants engaged.

The research also uncovered functional and emotional attributes that were above average in importance to respondents who were millennials, including:

A **workplace environment** in which

- they are given help or support when needed
- there are incentives for higher performance
- there are flexible hours to allow a work-life balance
- they can look forward to going to work
- they are trusted to do their work and more
- they can work with limited oversight

A **supervisor** who

- communicates openly and honestly
- recognizes their contributions
- is trustworthy and trusting
- treats them with respect
- helps them learn a lot
- sets a good example
- gives them reason to have confidence in that supervisor because of his/her leadership ability
- demonstrates interest in the personal lives of people on his/her team

The importance of these findings cannot be overstated. For employees across generational divides, the findings are similar and indicate a desire to work with a leader who is a person of integrity and sincerity. The ideal leader, for millennials and for workers representative of other generations, is someone whose leadership is as much about professional competence as it is about interpersonal connectedness.
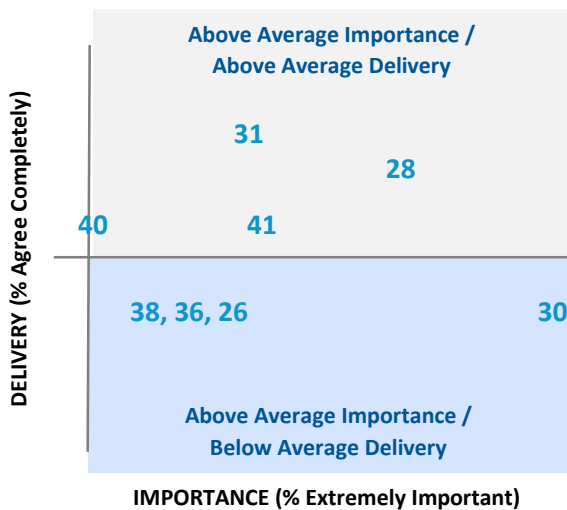
DALE CARNEGIE® TRAINING

How Employers Can Bridge the Gap

The research also pointed to several functional and emotional attributes that millennials expressed as important in their work environments but missing from their employers. See Figure 2 below. Millennials want:
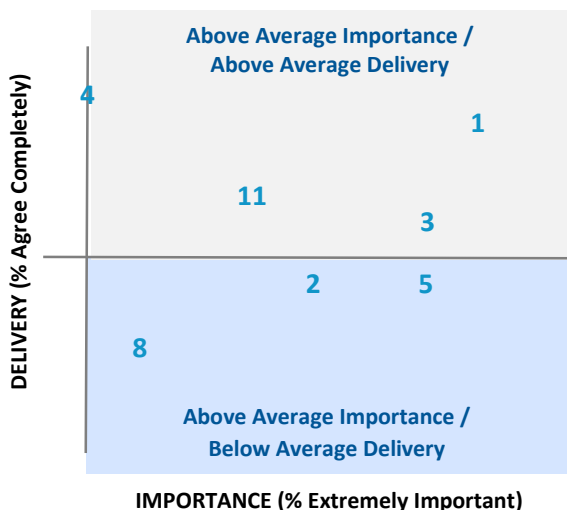
- to be able to do work that's varied and interesting
- to work with senior management members who are honest with employees
- to work for a company that encourages open communication between employees and management
- an immediate supervisor who cares about their personal lives and the effects that has on their work
- a good work-life balance

Functional Attributes

DELIVERY (% Agree Completely)

**Above Average Importance /
Above Average Delivery**

31

28

40   41

38, 36, 26   30

**Above Average Importance /
Below Average Delivery**

IMPORTANCE (% Extremely Important)

28. I am given help or support when I need it.
31. My immediate supervisor communicates openly and honestly.
32. My immediate supervisor recognizes my contributions.
41. My company provides incentives for higher performance.

26. I do work that varies and is interesting.
30. Senior management is honest with its employees.
36. The company encourages open communication between employees and management.
38. At my company I am able to learn and develop beyond my current job.

"Me"-Related Emotional Attributes

DELIVERY (% Agree Completely)

**Above Average Importance /
Above Average Delivery**

4

1

11

3

2   5

8

**Above Average Importance /
Below Average Delivery**

IMPORTANCE (% Extremely Important)

1. I have flexible hours in case I need to take care of personal responsibilities.
3. I trust my immediate supervisor.
11. I look forward to going to work.

2. I have confidence in the leadership ability of my immediate supervisor.
5. My immediate supervisor cares about my personal life and the effects it has on my job.
8. I am satisfied with the amount of input I have in the decisions that affect my work.

7

The good news is that supervisors and senior managers can make a big difference by seeking to close the gap on things that are important to millennials but that they find missing in the workplace. This can include helping ensure they are doing work that varies, and providing them with the ability to learn and develop beyond their current job. It can also involve ensuring there is focus on honesty and open communication among all levels of employees and senior management and that supervisors share a genuine interest in the personal lives of all team members.

The findings of this research also point to a list of important approaches and initiatives that a company can undertake to keep both millennials and non-millennials engaged. Among these, are:

- Establishing an environment characterized by effective employer-employee communication
- Building a system of incentives, employee perks, awards, and recognition
- Ensuring value in employee compensation and benefits packages
- Developing challenges and an interesting slate of diverse tasks for team members
- Building an environment in which there are friendly interactions among team members
- Providing training and development

The Significance of Millennial Engagement

Earlier research by Dale Carnegie Training and MSW Research points to drivers of engagement in the broader workplace, including employee feelings about their relationships with their managers and whether they feel proud of their employer organization. These common trends bear similar significance among both millennial and non-millennial employees but take on additional meaning and relevance among millennials.

The reality is that while statistical trends relating to multigenerational workforces are important, equally important is the insight that pathways to engagement often transcend generational differences.

If you are looking for ways to build employee engagement across multigenerational teams, Dale Carnegie Training can help build effective workplace environments typified by effective communication, value recognition, and motivation.

www.dalecarnegie.com

[1] Based on population projections by the U.S. Census Bureau in December 2014.
[2] See the 2014 ebook, *Motivating Millennials* by Hoopla Software.
[3] See the NPR Special Series *New Boom* and the story, "Why You Should Start Taking Millennials Seriously."
[4] According to the Pew Research Center's 2014 article, "Millennials in Adulthood: Detached from Institutions, Networked with Friends."