

5 Tips for Hiring and Retaining Millennial (Generation Y) Employees

A Millennial or Generation Y employee is an employee who was born between the the 1980's and the early 2000's. Millennial employees are poised to make up the majority of the workforce within the next few years, so it is of the utmost importance to attract and retain Generation Y talent. Yet millennial employees are also attached with the stigma of being difficult to manage, entitled, and unloyal. But could this stigma also be a result of a lack of understanding for the Millennial employee? These 5 tips could be instrumental in your ability to hire and understand your Generation Y candidates.

1. **Communication** - Although millennial employees don't enjoy taking direction or being micromanaged, they believe open communication is a must for any environment that they join. They need to know that at any point in time, they can come to you with an idea, a problem, or any other questions or concerns they may have. Having these open channels of communication help reassure millennials that they are an important piece of the greater company puzzle, and everything they do helps to benefit the company.
2. **Strong Employer Brand** - Millennials are known to hang out on social media with their tablets or iPhones ready for action at any moments notice, so having a strong online employer brand is a must for attracting them to come work for you. You can build your employer brand by being active on the relevant social media channels and displaying individual worker accomplishments and fun company outings. Millennials have grown in age of Google and Facebook, and these companies have instilled the values in their mind that work shouldn't be boring. Just because they're at the office doesn't mean they have to be miserable all day. Highlighting office foosball tournaments, a cool couch work lounge, happy hours, etc. can be the difference-maker in attracting generation Y talent.
3. **Manage Employee Morale** - To hire Millennial employees, you have to make them understand that you will constantly do what you can to make sure that they are happy. Offering them workplace flexibility is one example of helping to keep their spirits up. Just because they love their work does not mean that being in the office day-in and day-out won't take it's toll on their morale. Try offering them weekly privileges to work from home or even take your team out on a nice day to brainstorm at a park, these little perks can help you lure generation Y talent and keep them happy and sane over time.
4. **Foster Development** - Millennials may seem like they are all over the place, but this stems from their desire to learn and to be challenged. They're not the type of employees that are happy doing the same tasks every day. Offer employee development programs where they can learn new skills or give them a few days out of the month to work on a project of their choice for the company. By offering millennials the freedom and opportunity to learn and develop their skills, you can ensure that that you hire the best millennial talent and keep them happy for a long time. According to Dan Pink, a motivational and best-selling author, an Australian Software company decided to give their programmers a 24-hour period to

work on any project that they wanted. The result was a whole range of new ideas to fix bugs, or drive their product development. The company was able to see innovations and ideas that it otherwise would not have seen, and the employees were able to be more engaged and happier than ever with the autonomy the company provided.

5. **Promote from within** - One of the biggest reasons why you see Millennial employees jump from company to company every year or two is because of their fear of being trapped in the same position with no possibility of moving up in the corporate hierarchy. It's not enough to just offer them learning development, fun times and work flexibility. If you want to hire Generation Y talent, then you have to sweeten the pot by letting them know there's opportunity for them to move up the corporate ladder quickly. And if you showcase to your Millennial candidates that 90% of your workforce has been promoted from within, and you present a clear path of career development you may even be able to melt their stubborn little hearts.

While these tips may seem like "too much work" to just hire Millennial employees, just think about this, by 2020 Millennials will comprise 50% of the workforce. While you may think your company is perfectly fine now, eventually you'll need to bring in Millennials for your business to continue to grow and evolve with today's fast-paced environment.