

Millennials want openness, balance, opportunity and fun

To appeal to the best and the brightest, businesses must understand what millennial job candidates and employees look for in an employer.



Cynthia Joyce

This generation is distinct from its predecessors in many ways, so if employers hope to attract and retain this talent pool – and what employer doesn't? – examining millennial characteristics and preferences is a prudent endeavor.



Davis Barry

According to the Census Bureau, millennials (those born between 1980 and the mid-2000s) account for one third of the U.S. population, making them our nation's largest generation.

Having come of age during the Great Recession, when unemployment soared, millennials found it challenging to join the labor market. When jobs were hard to come by, many opted for more education. And for some, this education resulted in substantial student debt.

In 2014, a Bureau of Labor Statistics report found that the average student loan debt for those under 30 was

\$21,000, as compared to \$13,000 in 2005. (Fortunately, millennials with bachelor's degrees earn average annual incomes that are \$17,000 higher than their peers with only high school degrees.)

Increased student debt may contribute to millennials' desire for stability and longevity in the workplace. While this generation has been widely misperceived as being quick to jump ship and change employers, it is more attached to its employer than its Generation X predecessors.

A 2014 White House Council of Economic Advisors report states that "millennials are less likely to have been with their employer for less than a year than Generation X workers were at the same age, and they are more likely to have been with their employer for a fairly long period, like three to six years."

What specifically, then, are millennials looking for in the workplace and what makes them want to stay?

■ CLEARLY-DEFINED JOB EXPECTATIONS AND FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

Millennials appreciate having an honest discussion about what their average day will "look like" prior to signing on to a new job.

They like to accept positions with their eyes wide open. And once hired, they appreciate having opportunities for advancement clearly delineated and communicated.



Millennials seek work/life balance, including the flexibility to work from home.

■ WORK/LIFE BALANCE

As has been widely reported, research on millennials indicates they seek work/life balance.

Since these young employees are rarely sick, they prefer paid time off over traditional sick/vacation time. They like to work for businesses that do not categorize time off so that they can use their allotted days for vacation and travel experiences.

Additionally, their desire for flexibility and availability to family makes work-from-home options and paid maternity/paternity leave attractive to them.

■ ACCESS TO CONTINUED EDUCATION

This well-educated generation values access to continued education provided by its workplace. Reimbursing tuition and industry certification expenses is a great way to engender loyalty from millennials.

■ A SENSE OF COMMUNITY (AND A BIT OF FUN!)

A strong sense of community at the workplace appeals to millennials.

Adding levity and fun to the work culture builds community and commitment within a business. Work-sponsored happy hours, birthday lunches and sports outings provide the opportunity for co-workers to get to know one another more personally, creating greater camaraderie.

In addition, organizing teams to participate in charity races and events together satisfies the millennials' well-documented desire to give back to their community and fosters office team spirit and pride.

Hiring and retaining millennials by adopting these practices enables businesses to create a culture of trust and cohesiveness. And when millennials stay with a job for longer periods of time, their employer is able to offer greater consistency to clients and partners, which, of course, is good for business.

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BUSINESS BOOK REVIEW

Break on through to the happy side – in business and life

The board is all set up.

All of your pieces are ready for play, the cards are split, and the moderator again has gone over the rules. Once around the board, try not to get behind, keep all your pieces, and you win.



Terri Schlichenmeyer

Isn't that the whole reason for the game of business? Maybe – but read "Profit from

Happiness" by Jake Ducey before you roll the dice.

Centuries ago, when various economies were created, there were "secrets to winning" them. The goal was wealth, and you worked for it. Climb the ladder, work some more, "the bubble burst," you work harder, then you work again.

Ducey says that "three-quarters of us are spending most of our waking hours doing something we do not like or care about" just so we can win.

Shouldn't games be fun?

Yes, he says, but instead, "We are doing ourselves a disservice by perpetuating a

society where the majority ... would like to quit their jobs."

BE MORE VALUABLE

Ducey offers "six creeds" to fix this problem; use them, and you won't have to worry about money.

First, offer more value to the people around you. Exude "positive energy" and understand that a paycheck isn't based on per-hour pay; it's based on "the value you put into" each hour.

Be more valuable, less replaceable, and you'll be successful. Secondly, don't be too busy that you don't appreciate people. Smile at them, even if you're not feeling it, and make them feel appreciated.

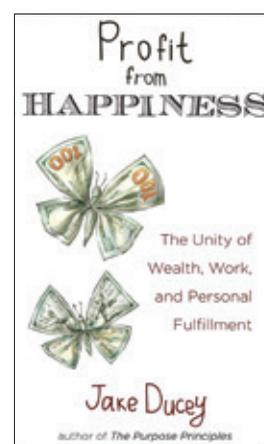
That could make you happier, and besides, "What's the worst that can happen?"

BE OPEN – AND LISTEN

Put yourself in someone else's shoes. Be present for them, reach out and ask how you can make their life better. Listen with your whole brain; practice that superpow-



Ducey



Published by TarcherPerigee, 'Profit by Happiness' by Jake Ducey is 132 pages and sells for \$15.

er by starting a conversation with a total stranger and pay attention.

Understand that things aren't always about you. The grump you're dealing with may have a legitimate issue that has nothing to do with you.

Remember that, "it is not what a person says or does [to you] that affects you, but your reaction to what is said or done."

And finally, be genuine and open. Don't build walls. Don't be afraid.

INEXPENSIVE TO DO

Sounds a little new-agey-huggy? Yeah, I thought so, too. There are things in this

book that may be just too much for button-down C-suiters.

Then again, maybe "Profit from Happiness" isn't for them.

Someone who's in a less formal position, perhaps, or a newbie in business might find plenty of usefulness in Ducey's words.

His ideas and advice should be easy to implement – it's all low- or no-cost – and his personal, unique success is hard to argue with.

BIG PAYOFF

The payout could be big: For the properly attitudinal employee, this book could result in a huge paradigm shift personally, if not professionally. Habits readers might build could be invaluable.

Like most business advice books, there are things to discard here, and things to embrace. But if you're willing to try it, "Profit from Happiness" might slide you over into the winner's circle.

It's your move.

Terri Schlichenmeyer of Wisconsin writes reviews of business books. Reading since she was 3, she owns 13,000 books and can be reached at bookwormsez@yahoo.com.