Top 20 Things Employers Can Do to Attract Millennial Workers

Summary: Millennial workers are hard to find. Here are 20 ways to hire and retain them.

- Millennials comprise a workforce never before seen in the working world.
- While they may seem lazy or uninterested, millennials seek a different work experience than the working generations before them.
- This means older companies and firms must rethink their work environments as something other than a business for profit.
- In other words, a company must have meaning beyond making money to attract and keep the millennial worker.

To some employers, millennials are a mystery. They stroll into offices, expecting good pay, benefits, and rewarding work right off the bat, and they leave in one or two years if they don’t feel satisfied. This new way of working leaves some older management scratching their head, mistakenly believing that this young workforce is entitled or even lazy. However, millennials, the 80 million people born between 1981 and 2001, are not entitled; they just think differently than Generation X and beyond. And with Baby Boomers retiring and Generation X aging, companies need to utilize this young group if they want to keep their businesses running. So how can employers attract and retain millennials?

First, employers need to examine what makes millennials tick. For one, they value experiences over possessions; and two, they want to feel passion for their work. They care more about purpose than money. Employers who recognize
this change in values are the ones who can successfully attract and retain millennials.

A perfect example of the millennial mindset can be found in a recent ad from Northwestern Mutual. A young woman, Anna, works at an architecture firm. As we see a montage of her slaving away for her boss only to not get any appreciation, a cover of the Dolly Parton tune “9-to-5” plays, a testament that corporate life sucked even back then. However, unlike the past, Anna doesn’t stay with her miserable job, where her boss doesn’t even say hello to her. By the end of the commercial, she is now the head of her own firm, and living her best life.

See video below:

That commercial embodies the millennial spirit. Young workers want to contribute to the world and work, but they want to feel a part of their organization and not just a cog in a machine. If Anna had been acknowledged, maybe she wouldn’t have hated her job so much; but because she was not valued, she moved on.

Forbes states that in 2025 millennials will make up 75% of the workforce. So if you’re an employer, you can’t avoid to not have this generation working for you. Thus, if you don’t want to lose your own Anna, you should heed the following:

20 Ways to Attract and Retain Millennial Workers

1. **Forget the traditional 9-to-5 schedule.**
   Unless you need someone to run a brick and mortar store or something similar, it no longer makes sense to be strict with office employees on what hour they come in and what hour they leave. That old time-sheet way of life is a turn off to millennials, and modern companies have found that if they focus on their employees’ output and not their schedules, then they create engaged workers and not clock-watchers.

2. **Use social media to find candidates.**
   Word-of-mouth is one of the best ways to find job candidates, but in the digital age, more people are using the internet to spread it. Since millennials love social media, employers who want to find them should consider putting job listings on social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter. Not only will candidates see the listings, but they will also be influenced to apply based on their peers’ recommendations.

   “In addition to word of mouth, the best way to find great millennial candidates is via social media,” Mitchell Sexner, founding partner of Sexner & Associates, LLC told Employment Crossing. “Millenials seem to trust social media and social media reviews for not only great places to eat dinner, but for great places to work at as well.”

3. **Use websites to find candidates.**
   In addition to social media sites, younger candidates like to use job search engines or other online methods to get their resumes out there. When it comes to attracting that demographic, employers should convey in
their listing and subsequent interview process what it will be like working for the company, not just what the duties are.

“To hire and retain the millennial that has the core competencies and values that ‘fit’ with the job, most organizations and managers must shift how they interview and engage the employees,” Bruce Mayhew wrote on The Huffington Post. “They also need to consider what strong millennial candidates look for in an employer and what their organization has to offer.”

4. **Promote diversity.**
Millennials value diversity, not only with race but with gender, sexuality, and other identities. Companies that hire and promote diverse individuals are attractive to most millennials, and these companies also send a message that they value people’s uniqueness and do not expect them all to act one way.

5. **Have a brand millennials connect to.**
As mentioned earlier, millennials value purpose over money. If your company does something that adds value to the world, millennials will be interested in working for you. For instance, technology companies create innovation, and nonprofits help others. According to Business Insider, millennials most want to work at Google, followed by Apple and Facebook. These are brands that they know and respect, and these brands also have a broad appeal.

6. **Offer remote work.**
Thanks to the internet, people can now communicate with anyone in the world from their living room. Employers who want to attract talented millennials should consider offering them the chance to work remotely, which is an attractive perk that can benefit both parties. Employers can save money on office overhead, and employees can avoid traffic and enjoy working from their home office. This is especially good for parents or others who need flexible scheduling.

7. **Offer meaningful work.**
Grunt work like filing, answering phones, and getting coffee has to be done by someone. But if one’s job is only that and nothing meaningful, then you aren’t going to keep a millennial at your company. Even if you are hiring an entry-level position or offering an internship, find a consequential project for the millennial to do or they’re not going to stay.

8. **Hire the best people.**
Millennials want to feel inspired at work, so surround them with others who are talented and enthusiastic.

“Most superstars are focused on the quality of two things: the people they work with and the opportunities they are given,” Bill Sigler, Hiring Partner at Fisch Sigler LLP, told Employment Crossing. “An environment filled with other superstars doing significant work remains our best retention tool.”

9. **Create a safe environment.**
There are laws that prohibit harassment, discrimination, and retaliation; but some managers allow their work environments to become toxic anyway. These types of workplaces are unappealing to everyone, but millennials especially will not tolerate abuse long-term.

10. **Foster a collaborative environment, not a competitive one.**
People in general want an enjoyable place to work. For millennials, that means a place that is not cutthroat. According to The Intelligence Group, 88% of millennials prefer a collaborative environment to a competitive one. To create this, management must set the tone, and HR should focus on hiring team players.

11. **Promote work-life balance.** The Intelligence Group also found that 88% of millennials value work-life balance. Giving 60+ hour weeks to a company for no equity no longer appeals to the young workforce. They want to work to earn money to live fulfilling lives, and they’ll balk at companies that expect their time without allowing them a life of their own.

12. **Offer competitive salaries and benefits right away.**
Many millennials grew up watching their parents struggle financially, and then they were told to go to college and graduate school, only to come out with high debt and few high-paying job options. Because of this, millennials care about money. They will no longer accept lowball offers, and if they do, they won’t stick around long.

“I’d say some of the most significant trends I’ve seen are that millennial employees, or simply younger employees in general, want a higher salary and better benefits immediately,” Lou DeVoto, founding partner of Rossetti & DeVoto, PC told Employment Crossing. “Now this isn’t always the case, but I think there is less
of an acceptance of the apprenticeship phase now than there used to be.”

13. **Offer creative perks.**
   We have all heard about Google offering nap pods, free sushi, a casual dress code, and ping-pong tables; but millennials don’t require this. Instead, they just want benefits that will add to their work-life balance and career advancement such as:
   - Free gym memberships
   - On-site daycare
   - Flexible hours
   - Unlimited paid time off
   - Work-from-home
   - Mentorship programs
   - Continuous education

   All generations want healthcare benefits and retirement plans. But clever employers lure millennials with creative perks.

14. **Recruit talented students.**
    When employers are seeking millennials, they shouldn’t forget that there are millennial students who are interested in work and who will appreciate employers who make the effort to connect with them.

    “Networking with law schools, going in to speak, etc. is a great way to find newer, younger employees,” Lou DeVoto, founding partner of Rossetti & DeVoto, PC told Employment Crossing.

15. **Appreciate your employees.**
    In the Northwestern Mutual commercial, Anna’s boss never seemed to listen to her or show her any respect. And like in real life, that lack of acknowledgement leads to attrition.

    If you want to keep your young workforce, you should show appreciation by awarding employees with fun team events or by publicly acknowledging people for their good work. These public accolades, such as a website write-up, can also attract others to your company if they see that you are doing meaningful work.

16. **Offer continuous education.**
    Another way to keep millennials at your company is to offer free training to help them grow in their career. Whether this is a new writing class or an introduction to management seminar, your young workforce will appreciate that you are investing in them.

17. **Maintain transparency.**
    It’s the internet age, which means that people can find out anything online. Because of this, millennials expect transparency at their jobs as well. They won’t tolerate leaders who keep them in the dark or who continue the gender pay gap. If you want to attract and keep this demographic, then be as open as your employees are on their social media.

18. **Ditch corporate hierarchy.**
    Millennials are turned-off by corporate hierarchy, that feeling of obvious us versus them between lower-level employees and management. While companies still need leadership and leaders should have titles, modern companies have succeeded at keeping millennials by removing boundaries. Examples include having open office spaces where management sits beside support staff or having a communication system where any person from any level can pitch ideas or give feedback.

19. **Have bosses act more like mentors than bosses.**
    Different versions of the terrible boss in “9-to-5” still exist today, but he or she won’t keep millennials for long. Millennials are not against being led, but they want a leader who leads by example, not follow-me-because-I-said-so. Many young workers value independence and entrepreneurship, but that does not necessarily mean they won’t stay at a company. Managers who mentor but allow their young workforce to thrive will likely retain those mentees.

20. **Allow employees to use social media at work.**
    The idea of paying someone to work for you, and then they hang out on Facebook or Twitter all day sounds crazy. Some companies have banned social media at work, thinking that it is a time waster. However, companies that want to attract and retain millennials should allow them to use social media while in the office. Not only because they’re addicted to it, but also because they use it to send and receive information that could be useful to your organization. For example, your employees can tweet fun information about
your company, which will give authenticity to your brand and is free marketing. Or they can use social media to get real-time updates about your industry, such as if someone is complaining about your brand online or if there’s breaking news.

What ways do you recommend companies attract and retain millennials? Let us know in the comments below.

See the following articles for more information:

- The Rise Of The Millennial Workforce
- The New Age Of Worker Productivity
- Tips For Hiring And Welcoming Younger Workers