

**A SWOT ANALYSIS ON MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE:  
INCREASING MANAGER SUCCESS WITH MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES IN  
THE HOTEL INDUSTRY**

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## **SIGNATURE PAGE**

**PROJECT:** A SWOT ANALYSIS ON MILLENNIALS IN THE  
WORKPLACE: INCREASING MANAGER SUCCESS  
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INDUSTRY

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## **ABSTRACT**

As the baby boom generation (born 1946-1964) is phasing out of the workforce, more and more millennials will take their place. This younger generation (born between early 1980's-2000) has differences and unique characteristics that help to define what this generation has to offer their employer. These differences also mean that what they value and find motivating in the workplace will differ from any of the generations that came before them. This project will explore millennial employees in the hotel industry, the differences they bring to the work environment and give suggestions to managers that may help with the transition of this new type of employee. This study will also perform a SWOT Analysis to analyze their strengths and weaknesses, as well as, the opportunities and threats that pose to this generation in the workplace.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Now more than ever before generations are colliding in the workplace. As the baby boom generation is phasing out of the workforce, this will result in more and more millennials taking their place. Labor statistics indicate that nearly 80 million Boomers will exit the workplace in the next decade—retiring at the rate of 8,000 per day or more than 300 per hour, which will be an unprecedented loss of skilled labor (Wiedmer, 2015). Millennials are different from their predecessors in terms of what motivates them in the workplace. Within the next decade, Millennials are on track to account for over half of the U.S. workforce (Pew Research Center, 2010). Research has demonstrated that good work–life balance (Twenge, 2010), meaningful work (Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Ng, 2010; Yang & Guy, 2006), and sufficient attention/recognition (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005; Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Ng et al., 2010) can contribute to Millennial loyalty and retention. Motivation is operationally defined as the inner force that drives individuals to accomplish personal and organizational goals (Aworemi, Abdul-Azeez, & Durowoju, 2011). Research has shown that managers can help to motivate their employees, but they need to be cognizant of the fact that the desire to do the job must be internally driven by each individual employee (Simons, 1995). Any individual, in order to perform a task, must have adequate ability or knowledge, be motivated, and have opportunity (Keller, 1999). The purpose of this paper, through a thorough literature review, will be to identify what motivates the millennials to perform, what provides satisfaction and what can help to retain the millennial generation in the workplace, more specifically in the hotel industry. To help managers of different generations understand

their millennial employees, this paper will use SWOT analysis to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of this generation. Gathering this information could help to attract and retain the best of this young generation.

In order to understand the millennial generation, it is very important to understand the preceding generations and their differences. Kupperschmidt (2000) defines a generation as an identifiable group, or cohort, which shares birth years, age, location, and significant life events at critical developmental stages. These groups develop a unique pattern of behavior based on these common experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2000). The eldest of the current working generations, referred to as the Baby Boomers, were born between the years 1946 and 1964 (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Westerman & Yamamura, 2007; Dries, Pepermans, & DeKerpel, 2008; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Hubbard & Singh, 2009). Loretto (n.d.) and Kane (n.d.) characterized Boomers as being extremely hard workers and very committed to their personal and professional goals. The middle cohort of current working generations, referred to as Generation X, was born between the years 1965 and 1979 (Egri & Ralston, 2004; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007), and it has the least amount of people of the three generations under review. At work, Gen X are pragmatic and direct, expect change, and also require some flexibility in rules and workplace regulations. The newest generation to enter the workforce was born between the years 1980 and 2000 (Weingarten, 2009; Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Sayers, 2007). Generation Y is also referred to as Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Millennials or Millennials, Generation We, Internet Generation, Connect 24/7, and Leave No One Behind (Schroer, 2015). This paper will reference this generation as Millennials. Martin (2005) describes Millennials as



independent, confident, and self-reliant. Gen Y generally seek independent learning that implements thorough and comprehensive online research; and, when recognized as students or employees, they prefer certificates or monetary rewards to indicate that they and their work are supported and valued by supervisors and employers (Wiedmar, 2015). As with all generations, they have their stereotypes based off of their experiences and different approaches to life. However, caution is given to stereotyping individuals based on generational values and characteristics (Weingarten, 2009). It would be beneficial for management to capitalize on their strengths and to understand their weaknesses in order to make the most out of their young workforce.

A SWOT analysis is a well-known and frequently used business tool for assessing major factors impacting on business performance (Helms & Nixon 2010). SWOT, as a business-assessment tool, help management analyze its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (Berg & Pietersma, 2015). Chermack and Kasshanna (2007) noted the use of SWOT by organizational decision-makers who seek ways to manage uncertainty and direct their organizations through difficult, challenging times. Earlier, Panagiotou (2003) acknowledged the value of SWOT for decision-makers in assessing an organization's environment in a rapidly changing, highly diversified, competitive world. Although, SWOT Analyses have typically been used to assess a business, this paper will be using SWOT as a method to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the millennial generation and their impact on the workforce.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Generations in the Workforce**

Karl Mannheim (1952) defined a generation as a group of individuals who share a similar world view, resulting from exposure to common social and historical events occurring within the same times throughout their formative years. These groups develop a unique pattern of behavior based on these common experiences (Kupperschmidt, 2000). Not every member of a generation has necessarily personally experienced each of that generation's defining events (Howe and Strauss, 1992). Howe et al. (1992) describes that all members of a particular generation are typically recognized as having a shared awareness of or an appreciation for the events common to that generation. Generational groups may also share values and attitudes based off of the life events they have shared. Values are common to groups of people who were exposed to similar social forces during their formative years (Rokeach, 1973). One generation's rank-ordering of values may differ significantly from that of another generation (Williams, 1979). An individual's attitudes are formed by personal development and interactions with others (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Thus, these shared values and attitudes can be used by managers to help them understand employee behavior. The differences between generational values and attitudes are listed in a table by Bernstein, L., Alexander, D., & Alexander B. (n.d.) (Table 1).

Table 1

*Generational Workplace Values And Attitudes*

<b>Generational Workplace Values and Attitudes</b>				
	Veteran/Traditionalist	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Generation Y
<b>Dominant Values</b>	-Benevolence -Loyalty -Conformity -Custom	-Tolerance -Power/Authority -Achievement -Stimulation	-Stimulation -Self-direction -Achievement -Hedonism	-Stimulation -Self-Direction -Hedonism
<b>Stereotypes</b>	-Old-fashioned/ rigid -Autocratic -Do not want to learn new ways of working	-Workaholic -Political -Self-Centered	-Cynical -Lazy -Selfish	-Spoiled -Technology-dependent - Scatterbrained
<b>Work Ethic</b>	-Disciplined -Duty before play -Adhere to the rules	-Efficient -Logical -Do what it takes	-Task-oriented -Self-reliant -Independent	-Multitasking -Group-oriented -Explain why
<b>Communication</b>	-Formal -Written -Chain-of-Command	-Face time -One-on-One -In-Person	-Direct -As needed	-Email/voice-mail -Instant Messaging -Lots of cc's
<b>Feedback</b>	-Avoid conflict -No news is good news	-“Show me the money” -Promotion/Title	-Direct—“Tell me how I am doing”	-Instantaneous -Seek approval/praise
<b>Leadership</b>	-Command and control -Take charge -Authoritative	-Collaborative -Team Player	-Entrepreneurial -Participative -Wants to know why	N/A
<b>Authority</b>	-Follow authority figure -Hierarchical -Chain-of-command	-Question Authority	-Skeptical of Authority	-Lines are blurred -Why must I follow
<b>Family and Work</b>	-Family and work are always separate	-Work takes priority over all else	-Work-life Balance	-Work-life Balance -If must choose, will select family and friends
<b>Rewards</b>	-Appreciate Recognition for a job well done -Opportunity to mentor	-Appreciate promotion, title, money -Opportunity to build consensus	-Appreciate autonomy and flexibility	-Appreciate the opportunity to provide input -Technical Wiz

## **Traditional Generation**

Research varies on the birth range of this generation. Roughly, they are considered anyone who was born before 1946. Clause (n.d.) defined Traditionalists as people who were born 1900-1945 and comprise the oldest generation in American culture. The term “Traditionalist” is often associated with a variety of other generational terms, including Radio Babies, Builders, Industrialists, The Silent Generation, and World War II Generation (Buahene & Kovary, 2003; Kane, n.d.). Historically, Traditionalists lived through Hitler's 1941 Russian invasion, the United States' 1941 World War II entry with the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the 1945 end of World War II in Japan and Europe, and the beginning of the 1950 Korean War (Wiedmer, 2015). According to Kane (n.d.), Traditionalists describe themselves with two words—loyal and disciplined—and view education to be a dream. Traditionalists generally prefer to work in conservative, hierarchical places where there is a clear chain of command (top-down). Wiedmer (2015) describes them as generally motivated by money and position like their Baby Boomer children, Traditionalists take pride in being self-sacrificing and thrifty. Traditionalists are also considered to have a strong work ethic, to value and seek respect and inclusion and to have a desire to leave a meaningful legacy (Eisner, 2005). Traditionalists have generally aged out of the workplace through retirement and thus constitute a mere 5% of today's workforce (Wiedmer, 2015).

## **Baby Boom Generation**

Human resources expert Heathfield (2015) defined Baby Boomers (Boomers) as the generation of Americans born in a baby boom following World War II, 1946-1964. Robinson (n.d.) noted that Boomers grew up in a time of prosperity and an absence of

world wars, although they experienced the Cold War era of living in fear of a Russian nuclear attack, building bomb shelters, and hiding under desks at school as drill practice. The turbulence of the 1960s defined the world for Boomers from many different perspectives, including the music; Vietnam War; and the assassinations of President John Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, and Martin Luther King (Wiedmer, 2015). Baby boomers grew up in a relative prosperity, optimism, and safety— and were often the center of their parents' attention (Segal Special Report, 2001). At work, baby boomers are generally described as highly competitive micromanagers who disdain laziness and have a “do-whatever-it-takes” attitude toward personal and professional growth (Clausing, Kurtz, Prendeville, and Walt, 2003). Wiedmer (2015) states they are motivated by perks, prestige, and position (3Ps), Boomers are described as work-centric, independent, goal-oriented, and competitive, typically equating their work and positions with self-worth. Loretto (n.d.) noted that leading, administering, or supervising Boomers is tricky because they are competitive and are angered by any perceived threats to their authority or prestige. Adcox (n.d.) estimated that there are approximately 76 million Boomers. When Boomers retire, they will leave a vast gap in the workforce as they have typically worked their way up the ranks through their career focus and work ethic (Wiedmer, 2015).

## **Generation X**

Robinson (n.d.), owner, author, and creator of Career Planner.com, defined Generation X as the generation born after the Western Post-World War II Baby Boom; birth dates range from 1961-1981, and current ages range from 34 to 54. Originally called “Gen Bust” (Schroer, 2008) because their birth rate was vastly smaller than that of the preceding Baby Boomers, Generation X is associated with a variety of terms

including Gen X, Gen X 'ers, Post-Boomers, Twenty-Somethings, and Baby Busters. Gen X experienced the 1976 Arab Oil debacle, the first U.S. gas shortages, the price of gold soaring to \$1,000 an ounce, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the splitting apart of the Soviet Union, and the tragedy of Tiananmen Square in China (Robinson, n.d.). Mothers of Generation X children often delayed childbirth to pursue a career, resulting in a generation of latchkey kids, who learned independence and self-reliance early (Conroy, 2005). In 2012, "The Generation X Report" (based on annual surveys used in the Longitudinal Study of today's adults) found that Gen X are highly educated, active, balanced, happy, and family oriented (Swanbrow, 2012). Schroer (n.d.) confirmed that, with 29% of Gen X obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher, this is arguably the best-educated generation. At work, Gen X are pragmatic and direct, expect change, and also require some flexibility in rules and workplace regulations (Wiedmer, 2015). Gen X workers resist micromanaging bosses and find them to be distasteful and undesirable; they find informal policies on dress codes and workplace habits or formalities to be fun and motivating. Gen X expect freedom and balance in their personal and workplace lives—work is only a portion of the quality of the life they possess and seek to achieve (Grimes, 2011).

### **Millennial Generation**

Although authors differ as to when Generation Y either begins or ends (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Kupperschmidt, 2000; Hess & Jepsen, 2009; Westerman & Yamamura, 2006; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Broadbridge, Maxwell, & Ogden, 2007; Sayers, 2007), prevalent literature agrees on Generation Y beginning in 1980 (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Weingarten, 2009; Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007; Essinger, 2006) and ending

in 2000 (Clark, 2007). Some of the historical events that occurred during Gen Y's lives include the prison release of Nelson Mandela, Princess Diana's death, the World Trade Center attacks, Columbine High School shootings, beginning of the Iraq War, Oklahoma City federal building bombing, and two weather-related happenings: Hurricane Katrina and the Asian Ocean tsunami (Wiedmer, 2015). Millennials have generally been raised in environments that are rich with feedback, individual attention, praise, guidance, and direction (Hershatte & Epstein, 2010; Ng et al., 2010) and a focus on outcomes over process (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). They are generally less independent, more inclusively community oriented, and seek a sense of meaning in greater contexts (Wiedmer, 2015). Gen Y had parents who were more available to them than Gen-X individuals; however, Gen Y expect more supervision and feedback, clear goals, structure, and mentoring (Gibson, 2013). As a result, they expect the same level of feedback, praise, and guidance, as well as a focus on their individual development in the context of work (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Managers essentially fill the role of the guiding parent once Millennials enter the workforce (Hershatte & Epstein, 2010; Ng et al., 2010).

Millennials saw older employees who had "paid their dues" shown the door and were asked to significantly increase their own productivity (Bauerlein & Jeffery, 2011) while compensation was flat at best (Krantz & Hansen, 2010). These factors likely served to cement what many Millennials already believed: the psychological contract is dead (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). "The current empirical evidence suggests that GenMe (Millennials), and to a lesser extent Gen X, employees may be difficult to motivate. Across several studies, they see work as less central to their lives, are more likely to value

leisure, and say they are less willing to work hard. Viewed positively, this generation places a high importance on work–life balance beginning in high school, long before they have children. Viewed more negatively, the work ethic has declined and productivity may follow” (Twenge, 2010). Because of their comfort with technology, multitasking for members of Generation Y (e.g., talking on the cell phone while typing on the computer and listening to music through an i-Pod) is considered a norm (Rowh, 2007). Gen Y generally seek independent learning that implements thorough and comprehensive online research; and, when recognized as students or employees, they prefer certificates or monetary rewards to indicate that they and their work are supported and valued by supervisors and employers. Hershatter and Epstein (2010), for example, in their college student sample, found that participants expected a great deal of support from any future employer, including job security, a good work environment, sufficient but not excessive challenge, and good communication with one’s supervisor/mentor. Thompson and Gregory (2012) believe some of these traits will endure and, therefore, argue that successful organizations and managers will need to adapt their practices and expectations if they want to attract, motivate, and retain top Millennial talent.

### **Hospitality Industry and Millennials**

The hospitality industry is characterized by, “[...] a poor reputation as a source of permanent employment, offering low pay, anti-social working hours, menial work, and limited opportunities for career progression” (Barron, 2008). Because service plays an important role in hotels, the industry has unique characteristics of employment and workforce that include high labor costs, high labor turnover, unskilled and semiskilled nature of most jobs and a high proportion of seasonal part-time employees (Kusluvan *et*



*al.* , 2010). In a study to identify the most troubling issues for managers in hospitality, HR issues were the most frequently identified area of concern by managers (57 per cent) (Enz, 2009). Amongst the list of nine HR concerns, the two most important areas of concern were attraction and retention of employees (Enz, 2009). Hospitality enterprises have traditionally relied on large pools of young labour to fill their frontline staffing requirements (Magd, 2003). That being the case, in this day and age, it will most likely be the so-named ‘Generation Y’ (Gen Y) who are out there serving hospitality’s customers (Solnet & Hood, 2008). Attitudes and characteristics germane to Generation Y candidates, such as increased desire for work-life balance, participatory versus results focus, task variety seeking, immediate and continual need for recognition, limited commitment and extreme technology literacy, present a unique challenge for the hospitality industry, demonstrated in the softening supply of trained and motivated candidates (Barron, 2008). As ‘radical’ as Gen Y’s attitudes may or may not be, these attitudes are nonetheless fundamental in determining the service orientation of a hospitality organization [*SIC*] and should, therefore, be given serious consideration (Solnet & Hood, 2008). Many studies have been conducted to explore perceptions of working life in the industry, such as Wood’s (1997) analysis of employment in hotels and catering, which revealed a list of negative themes that were quite common in the industry, including long and antisocial hours, low levels of pay, low status and high staff turnover. Studies have shown that, typically, up to 64% of a hotel’s employees are engaged in operational and unskilled positions, which signifies that promotional opportunities are limited relative to the amount of employees that may desire them (Cheng & Brown, 1998). The industry is a large employer with high levels of turnover, so demand for

training does not match the supply (Gee, 1997). In a series of studies, high turnover in the industry has been attributed to work–family conflicts, as a result of the poor working conditions and constant emotional labour [*SIC*]from customer contact (Karatepe & Kilie, 2007; Karatepe & Baddar, 2006). Therefore, based on the existing research, millennials values and expectations conflict with the hospitality industry’s human resource practices. The timing of Gen Y’s entrance is combined with the rise of tourism as the world’s largest and fastest growing industry (Milne & Ateljevic, 2001), accounting for 10% of global employment (Baum, 2002) and with demand increasing exponentially (WTO, 2000). Given changing employee demographics and attitudes, supply–demand imbalances in the workforce, as well as ever-growing demand for hospitality businesses, it would appear that new paradigms for understanding employee values, attitudes, and behaviours are needed if hospitality organisations are to sustain a competitive advantage through service.

### **SWOT Analysis**

The origin of the term ‘SWOT’ is unknown (Helms & Nixon, 2010). On-line wikis credit SWOT’s origination with Stanford University Professor Albert Humphrey who led a research project in the 1960s and 1970s based upon the United States’ Fortune 500 companies but no academic references to support this claim can be found (King, 2004). Haberberg (2000) stated SWOT was a concept used by Harvard academics in the 1960s while Turner (2002) attributed SWOT to Igor Ansoff (1987). Panagiotou (2003) explains that some of the weaknesses of the SWOT analysis are that the framework is vague, oversimplified and has many limitations. However, Glaister and Falshaw (1999) agree SWOT analysis is one of the most respected and prevalent tools of strategic

planning. Piercy and Giles (1989) demonstrated that besides its underlying simplicity and usefulness in providing comprehensive information, SWOT analysis is accessible to managers independently with no requirement for computers or management scientists. Pickton and Wright (1998) suggest other advantages of SWOT analysis are that it improves strategists' understanding of the situation and factors affecting the companies' performance; and it directs strategic planning for the business.

SWOT Analyses have been used for many different types of disciplines.

Although, widely known for its use in assessing a business' current state, SWOT analyses have also been used in many types of research projects. For example, Addams and Allred (2013) encouraged professors to use a personal SWOT as a strategy for students' career application, Finley and Esposito (2011) used this technique to analyze Barack Obama's potential to be a Human Rights President, Agrawal (2012) used this technique to analyze the important factors needed to manage a diversified team and Ames and Runco (2005) used the SWOT analysis framework to determine why certain entrepreneurs were successful.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This paper analyzes the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) in regards to the Millennial generation as employees in the workforce. Data for the SWOT Analysis came from scholarly journal articles discussing the Millennials values, attitudes, motivations, challenges and expectations in the workplace. Finley and Esposito (2011) describe that “When used in psychology, SWOT analyses generally consider strengths and weaknesses as being specific to the individual, group or policy under evaluation. Opportunities and threats are external considerations that might have a significant impact on the individual, group, or policy under consideration”. This SWOT Analysis of the millennial generation in the workplace focuses on the potential that this new generation has a lot to offer the workforce if better understood. The strengths and weaknesses components of the analysis focus on the characteristics and experiences this generation have from growing up in the timeframe they did. The opportunity and threats portions look at outside factors that may enhance or hinder their experience in the workforce.

The strengths of a SWOT analysis are its ability to identify important management and strategic information on influencing factors resources and capabilities, simply, quickly and economically (Pearce 2007, DeSilets 2008, Helms & Nixon 2010). The main limitation of the SWOT tool is the brevity, breadth and depth of responses; meaning that causes, explanations and solutions are not examined in depth (Lippitt 2003, Novicevic et al. 2006, Hoff 2009). Another potential issue is that SWOT responses are participants’ self-reported perceptions that are not supported by evidence (Lippitt 2003).

“Typically, managers first consider internal strengths and weaknesses (at the top row of the 2 X 2 grid) which can include image, structure, access to natural resources, capacity and efficiency, and financial resources. At the bottom row of the SWOT grid, external opportunities and threats including customers, competitors, trends in the market, partners and suppliers, social changes and new technology, and various environmental economic, political and regulatory issues are included” (Helms & Nixon, 2010). A SWOT Analysis grid is represented below in Table 2.

Table 2

*SWOT Analysis Grid*

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
<b>Internal</b>	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>External</b>	Opportunities	Threats

Panagiotou (2003) acknowledged the value of SWOT for decision-makers in assessing an organization’s environment in a rapidly changing, highly diversified, competitive world. Chermack and Kasshanna (2007) noted the use of SWOT by organizational decision-makers who seek ways to manage uncertainty and direct their organizations through difficult, challenging times. Therefore, this paper utilizes SWOT Analysis as its methodology to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of millennials, in order to gain perspective of the uncertainty and highly diverse

generation in the workforce. It will examine all factors found through peer reviewed articles and journals and put into one of the four quadrants. It will then analyze these factors and give suggestions (based off literature) on how to maximize the strengths and improve the weaknesses of the millennial employee. Berg & Pietersma (2015) suggest approaching the SWOT Analysis by using strengths vs. opportunities (SO), weaknesses vs. opportunities (WO), strengths vs. threats (ST), and weaknesses vs. threats (WT) (see table 3).

Table 3

*The Four Main Combinations of SWOT Analysis (Berg & Pietersma, 2015)*

	<b>Strengths (S)</b>	<b>Weaknessess (W)</b>
<b>Opportunities (O)</b>	<p>SO Strategies</p> <p>Use strengths to take advantage of opportunities</p>	<p>WO Strategies</p> <p>Take advantage of opportunities by overcoming weaknesses or making them relevant</p>
<b>Threats (T)</b>	<p>ST Strategies</p> <p>Use strengths to avoid threats</p>	<p>WT Strategies</p> <p>Minimize weaknesses and avoid threats</p>

This paper uses Berg & Pietersma's method of SWOT analysis to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Millennials. Table 4 is a representation of the SWOT analysis of the millennial generation in the workplace.

Table 4

*The SWOT Analysis of the Millennial Generation in the workforce*

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement Motivated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May Be Difficult to Motivate</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outspoken</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of Loyalty</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for Immediate Gratification and Reward</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology Savvy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously Seek Feedback, Guidance and Direction</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work-life balance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narcissism</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby Boom Generation Retiring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with Immediate Managers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly Educated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of Skilled Workers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uniquely Skilled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby Boomer Holdouts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brand Ambassadors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive Job Market</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Asset</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Reputation</li> </ul>

## **Strengths**

### **Achievement Motivated**

Kane (n.d.) states that Gen Y's are achievement oriented and benefit from mentors who help guide their professional growth. Millennials are intrinsically motivated by factors such as interesting/meaningful work, development and opportunities to advance. Intrinsic motivation has been found to positively affect behavior, performance, and well-being (Ryan and Deci 2000). It is associated with enhanced performance, improved conceptual and creative thinking, superior memory recall, positive affect, and subsequent willingness to engage in other tasks (Deci and Ryan 1992). In a study done by Barford and Hester (2011) they surveyed Baby Boomers, Gen X, and Gen Y employees and focused on their values for importance and level of happiness for each of the five motivational factors: free time, advancement potential, work environment, compensation, and responsibilities. They found that gen y ranked advancement potential higher than gen x and baby boomers. It was also found in their study that gen y was more satisfied with their advancement potential than gen x and bb. If managers can nurture their achievement based work ethic and sustain their satisfaction with interesting work, the workplace can have a huge benefit from this generation.

### **Outspoken**

Generally outspoken in communication and workplace involvement, Gen Yers are not shy about having their opinions known (Francis-Smith, 2004; Hurst & Good, 2009; Josiam et al., 2009; Lowe et al., 2008). Gen Yers have been taught by their parents to express their voice, ideas, and opinions (Barron, 2008; Flowers et al., 2010). "Employee voice is defined as proactive and constructive "speaking-up behavior," in which



employees express their ideas, information, and opinions. Employee voice provides employees the opportunity to communicate their opinions and instills the belief that their contributions are respected” (Kim, Knutson, & Choi, 2016). Positive voice behavior is primarily used for benefitting the organization as a whole, making contributions to the organization, and proposing ways to improve individual or organizational functioning (Dutton & Ashford, 1993; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Employee satisfaction is often the result of their voices being properly acknowledged and their opinions being respected by their place of employment (Kim, Knutson, & Choi, 2016).

### **Confident**

Having high self-esteem and confidence are attributes that have been used to describe the millennial generation. The confidence, strong belief in self, and desire for a life that includes leisure displayed by Generation Y is markedly different from the high regard for moderation, hard work, and authority preferred by Traditionalists (Cogin, 2012). Martin (2005) describes Millennials as independent, confident, and self-reliant. This may be due to the extensive protection and praise given to them throughout their formative years (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). In fact, a review by Alexander Stajkovic and Fred Luthans of empirical research studies of perceived self-efficacy (the academician’s term for self-confidence) has found that increased self-confidence can translate into significant performance improvements (Hollenbeck & Hall, 2004). Hollenbeck and Hall (2004) argue that those with higher self-confidence work harder in approaching a task and exert more effort while at it; they will keep at the task longer without feedback and will stick to it longer in the face of problems and difficulties.

## **Technology Savvy**

Possibly the most significant difference this generation possesses over others is the integration of technology into their daily lives and the omnipresence of how technology has always been in their world (Oblinger, 2003; Martin, 2005; Weingarten, 2009). Their world has always included computers, cell phones, instant messaging, the Internet, etc (Oblinger, 2003). They prefer to communicate through e-mail and text messaging instead of face-to-face and opt for webinars and online technology instead of traditional, lecture-based presentations (Wiedmer, 2015). Because of their exceptional exposure to information and communication technology (ICT) they are not as reliant on the older generation for support because when they need answers, they seek them from the internet (Weston 2006). The older generation clearly appreciate the expertise of the Y Gen in ICT and are inclined to seek support from them for guidance in its use (Weston, 2006). Gary Small's (neuroscientist) research shows significant difference in brain functions among generations, a difference he defines as the "brain gap." For example, digital natives (millennials) are more effective in some arenas, like multitasking, responding to visual stimulation, and filtering information, but less adept in terms of face-to-face interaction and deciphering nonverbal cues (Small, 2008). There are many organizations already using Millennials' proclivities for creating online content to their advantage (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

## **Work-life Balance**

Work-life balance could be considered as a strength or weakness depending on your personal perspective. We have decided to list it as a strength based on the benefits it offers its employees. Compared to members of other generations, Gen Y tend to be more social and confident as they seek personal and work-life balance (Gibson, 2015).

Millennials are more likely than previous generations to make career choices that provide a balance between security and stability and healthy work–life balance (GMAC, 2007).

Millennials were only 60% as likely as Boomers to describe themselves as “work-centric,” and were 9% more likely to describe themselves as “familycentric” (American Business Collaboration & Families and Work Institute, 2002). Qu and Zhao (2012) found that work interference with family life reduces job satisfaction and life satisfaction as a whole. Availability of WL (work-life) balance policies may create a sense of assurance for employees that their organization/employer is concerned about their well-being according to perceived organizational support theory (Baral and Bhargava, 2011).

Research has also pointed out that achieving a WL balance within organizations has more to do with changing organizational culture than increasingly offering more benefits (Hatton, 2005). Similar conclusions were found by other research, which related supportive cultures with higher benefit usage, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employer citizenship and lower conflict and turnover intentions (Haar and Roche, 2010; Behson, 2002; Allen, 2001; Clark, 2001).

## **Weaknesses**

### **May Be Difficult to Motivate**

Studies have found that millennials may be harder to motivate more so than any other generation because of their view on work-life balance. Across several studies, they see work as less central to their lives, are more likely to value leisure, and say they are less willing to work hard (Twenge, 2010). In a time-lag study Twenge et al. (2012), drew data on work values from the nationally (U.S.) representative survey Monitoring the Future (MTF), which has surveyed high school seniors every spring since 1976. In the MTF time-lag study, 2006 participants (GenMe also known as millennials) were more likely than Boomers to agree that “If I had enough money, I would not want to work” (Twenge, 2010). The MTF study also found that 2006 GenMe respondents, compared to Boomers in 1976, were more likely to disagree that “I expect my work to be a very central part of my life” (2/3 of GenMe expected work to be central, compared to 3/4 of Boomers at the same age) and more likely to agree that “To me, work is nothing more than making a living” (GenX was again in the middle; 1/3 of GenMe agreed, compared to 1/4 of Boomers at the same age) (Twenge, 2010).

### **Lack of Loyalty**

The millennial generation has been stereotyped to be less loyal because they jump from company to company. Because Gen Y seek happiness in their work and life, the notion of one job, one career mindset is no longer valid (Wiedmer, 2015). Generation Y workers tend to view their "career" as a sampling of different jobs in which they have opportunities to learn new skills while providing services or expertise (Hira, 2007). Millennials do appear to be especially prone to switching jobs or careers, and nearly 60% of employed Millennials have changed jobs at least once already in their careers (Pew Research Center, 2010). These issues may arise even before the first day on the job; 44%

of Millennials in a Michigan State MonsterTRAK study agreed that even if they had committed to an offer, they would renege if a better one came along (Alsop 2008). To Millennial employees, loyalty means that organizations assure that there are ample opportunities, offer professional development and training, and provide coaching and mentoring (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2008). Millennials will expect organizations to continually re-engage them and remind them of why they should stay; As a result, we believe Millennials are much less likely to stay with employers simply because they think it is the “right thing to do” (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Having fulfilled the basic expectations that have, in the past, paved the way for successful careers (e.g., college, internships, etc.), it should come as no surprise that this cohort would feel jaded or disloyal toward a job market they feel has left them high and dry (Thompson & Gregory, 2012).

### **Need for Immediate Gratification and Reward**

The socialization of members of Generation Y reflects parental nurturing, protection and praise above and beyond each of the previous generations' (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Millennials are perceived as having inflated self-esteem, unrealistic and grandiose expectations for prime work, promotions, and rewards, and a general lack of patience and willingness to drudge through unglamorous components of work (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Parents, and in some cases society at large, have moved toward rewarding children for participation, rather than performance— leading some to refer to this generation as “trophy kids” (Alsop, 2008). As trophy kids who spent their childhood receiving gold stars and shiny medals just for showing up, Millennials were indoctrinated from their earliest moment to seek approval and affirmation (Hershatter &

Epstein, 2010). Hershatter and Epstein (2010) also stated that millennials' trust in institutions assumes and relies upon an equitable system, one that assures that industriousness and accomplishment will be rewarded with acknowledgment, encouragement, and access. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) noted that Gen Y workers also expected to be promoted more quickly, to earn high pay, and to receive frequent rewards.

### **Continuously Seek Feedback, Guidance and Direction**

Another descriptor of the millennial generation is that they are in constant need of structure and guidance from their employers, more than the preceding generations. Changes in education, namely a focus on outcome-based education, could help to explain this stereotype; Millennials have become accustomed to this hyper-feedback, and come to work with the expectation that their managers will not be any different (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Millennials have generally been raised in environments that are rich with feedback, individual attention, praise, guidance, and direction (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010; Ng et al., 2010) and a focus on outcomes over process (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Millennials seek ample feedback because it provides assurance that they are continuing to move along a linear, progressive path (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Younger workers, notably members of Generation Y, benefit by having their needs met in that they have the opportunity to receive the feedback they expect and crave, to engage in meaningful communication and to have an avenue for providing their own input into improving or contributing to their work environment (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007). Thompson and Gregory (2012) note at work, this typically translates to a high need for feedback and a desire to be told (or “spoonfed”) exactly how to tackle a certain problem or complete a task. Any elements of ambiguity, or any project or exam that requires

Millennials to work without guidelines, templates, or examples, results in a great deal of angst, because they have not had much practice producing without explicit instructions, well defined criteria for success, and specific deadlines set by others (Hershat & Epstein, 2010).

## **Narcissism**

Narcissism is characterized first and foremost by a positive and inflated view of the self, especially on agentic traits (e.g., power, importance, physical attractiveness: e.g., Campbell, Rudich, & Sedikides, 2002; John & Robins, 1994). Time-lag studies consistently show increases in individualistic traits over the generations, with younger generations scoring higher on both positive individualistic traits such as self-esteem and assertiveness (Twenge and Campbell 2001, 2009; Twenge 2001) and more negative individualistic traits such as narcissism (Twenge et al. 2008; Twenge and Foster 2010). This sense of entitlement has been shown to stem from the way in which Millennials were raised (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005; Ng et al., 2010; Twenge, 2006). The appearance of an entitlement complex is largely fueled by Millennials' lack of hesitation to be vocal about their expectations and ask for what they want (Levenson, 2010).

Narcissism is associated with other benefits to the self as well, such as short-term (but not long-term) likeability (Oltmanns, Friedman, Fiedler, & Turkheimer, 2004; Paulhus, 1998), enhanced performance on public evaluation tasks (Wallace & Baumeister, 2002) including being selected for reality television (Young & Pinsky, 2006), short-term victories in competitive tasks (e.g., Campbell, Bush, Brunell, & Shelton, 2005), and emergent (though not successful) leadership (Blair, Hoffman, & Helland, in press; Brunell, Gentry, Campbell, & Kuhnert, 2006). Narcissism also has many costs to the self,

such as distorted judgments of one's abilities (e.g., Paulhus, Harms, Bruce, & Lysy, 2004), risky decision making (Campbell, Goodie, & Foster, 2004), potential addictive disorders including alcohol abuse (Luhtanen & Crocker, 2005), compulsive shopping (Rose, 2007), and pathological gambling (Lakey, Goodie, & Campbell, 2006).

## **Opportunities**

### **Baby Boom Generation Retiring**

Traditionalists (mature generation) and Baby Boomers are nearing retirement which means that there will be a lot of opportunities for the millennial generation in the workforce. Traditionalists who were born from 1900-1945 are a mere 5% of today's workforce (Wiedmer, 2015). Today, the oldest Boomers are considering their retirement options and are seeking ways and opportunities to make their elder years personally meaningful (Wiedmer, 2015). Kane (n.d.) describes Baby Boomers retiring at the rate of 8,000 per day or more than 300 an hour. This presents a tremendous opportunity for millennials who are entering the workforce. According to Crumpacker and Crumpacker (2012) within the next decade, Millennials are on track to account for over half of the U.S. workforce (Pew Research Center, 2010). Sheahan (2005) argues that the Y Gen understand the significance the size of their generation has towards our future workforce and therefore know that they are needed.



## **Highly Educated**

The millennial generation has had education instilled upon them from an early age. “In 1983, four years before the first Millennials entered kindergarten, a national commission report on education, also positioned as “an open letter to the American people,” described an educational system in crisis and a “nation at risk.” There is no question that “A Nation at Risk,” thrust educational policy into the national spotlight, legitimized a heightened role for the federal government in school systems, and spawned two and a half decades of reforms, ranging from the accountability movement to the No Child Left Behind Act” (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Therefore, Millennials have been programmed to view education as important for their success. In society there is a general assumption that having a degree will improve an individual’s job prospects and this is shown to be true (Helyer & Lee, 2012). According to Pew Research Center (2014), Millennials are the nation’s most educated generation in history in terms of finishing college. This will provide them with possibly more job opportunities and a higher chance at higher level positions.

## **Uniquely Skilled**

Millennials have the unique aspect of growing up with technology most generations had to learn about. As a result they are comfortable with all kinds of technology such as social media, internet, blogs etc. While these pathways can be developed later in life, and there are clearly many extraordinarily proficient developers and users of the latest technologies in every generation, a marked neurological difference exists between embracing it and embodying it (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). This ease with technology gives millennials a competitive skill when looking for jobs while having

little to no work experience. As technological devices, web-based search capacities, and web enabled mash-ups continue to evolve, Millennials, as early adapters of emerging technologies, may have an advantage in instinctively understanding and building upon their potential applications (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010). Tapscott (2009) points out that Millennials have developed unique abilities as fluent visual thinkers who are extraordinarily gifted at scanning and multi-tasking, but who also have retained, and even honed, the ability to engage in serial focusing.

### **Brand Ambassadors**

A well-known stereotype of millennials is that they are well acquainted with social media and other online outlets. In fact, 28% of teens age 12–17 are likely to create a blog, as are 20% of 18–32 year-olds, while only 10% of Gen X workers 33–44 years old are likely to do so (Jones and Fox 2009). Thus, employers have the opportunity to make great use out of their millennial employees as sources of good word of mouth through online platforms. Millennial employees if given the opportunity could share good working experiences such as great development opportunities, benefits, fun environment etc. through social media platforms. This helps to promote the organization without any further effort on the employer part. As well as, help to recruit potential employees as their ‘friends’ see them having such a good work experience. SM can be a helpful method for generating referrals with respect to recruiting the candidate (Smith and Kidder, 2010) and has surpassed online job boards as the preferred way to acquire talent (Brotherton, 2012). HR managers are maximizing the function of SM through the use of their employees' social networks as a cost-conscious approach known as "social recruitment" (Doherty, 2010). A survey commissioned by Deloitte (2008) found that 86% of Millennials and

73% of Gen Xers regularly watch or listen to user generated content. While the time and the desire to fully embrace creative digital outlets might be a function of age, at the moment, companies wishing to build loyalty among Millennials may find that experiential co-creation is a particularly effective means of doing so (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010).

### **Consumer Asset**

The majority of the millennial generation is already at the age of being a potential buyer for most products. This generation consists of 26% of the total US population, or approximately 80 million citizens and comprises the most racially diverse generation ever with approximately one-third of the group being of minority descent (Cone Inc., 2006). Organizations could use their millennial employees as a competitive advantage towards understanding consumer behavior. This generation is arguably the largest and could have the potential at making the biggest consumer impact. According to Dunne and Lusch (2008), three out of four Millennial consumers come from families with working mothers and have already demonstrated more liberal spending patterns than any previous generation accounting for more than 4% of annual household spending. With a spending power of roughly \$172 billion, Millennials have enormous influence and buying power behind them (Strauss et al., 2006). Organizations who hire millennials could very well take advantage of their knowledge and opinions of buyer tendencies for this generation. As previously mentioned, millennials are outspoken, opinionated, and enjoy feedback. Managers could put this to great use in asking for their thoughts on the companies product/service. Marketing departments could also preview their marketing message to millennial employees to gauge the effectiveness it has on that demographic. If given the

free time from their main duties to assist in these areas, organizations may have a competitive advantage to gain more market share without having to add another cost for additional market research.

## **Threats**

### **Relationship with Immediate Manager**

Due to the fact that millennials highly value feedback, guidance and direction their relationship with their immediate manager is vital. The manager is the one who decides how assignments get disseminated, how their employees get supervised (e.g. micromanaged) or even what vacation days get approved. In addition, Managers essentially fill the role of the guiding Therefore, relationships with immediate managers may be the key to fully leveraging, motivating, and retaining Millennials (Hershatte & Epstein, 2010; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Ng et al., 2010). It is clear that as Generation Y gains a foothold in the workplace, organizations will need to change to accommodate their norms instead of expecting young workers to change to accommodate existing organizational norms. Current management, however, has shown signs of being ineffective or slow at adopting new strategies to manage Gen Y employees (Cairncross & Buultjens, 2007; Timo & Davidson, 2005). The trouble of ineffective management causes a threat to both the organization as well as the millennial employee. Stereotypes such as the appearance of a sense of entitlement, the high need for feedback and guidance, the expectation for personalized attention, and the proclivity for informal interactions and work relationships likely embody some managers' worst nightmares (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). These and other stereotypes suggest that some employers consider Millennials to be "unmanageable" (Warner, 2010). Getting branded "unmanageable"

could cause difficulty for millennials who are trying to disprove this stereotype while on the job hunt. On the other hand, as mentioned previously, millennials will be over half of the workforce within the next decade. If organizations are going to succeed, managers need to adopt leadership and management styles that complement their young employees' work styles (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Especially since research has shown for years that people don't leave jobs, they leave managers (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999; Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002).

### **Loss of Skilled Workers**

With the oldest of the Baby Boomers already retiring and the rest of the generation nearing retirement, there will be an undeniable loss of skills and experience in the workforce. Many corporations will have to deal with the risk of losing experience, information and identity in the process (Appelbaum, Gunkel, Benyo, Ramadan, Sakkal & Wolff, 2012). For example, aware of an ageing workforce, a north east engineering company employs some of their specialist/more experienced workers (who have retired) on a part-time basis to mentor newer/less experienced staff, "these specialists are some of our most valuable staff and we will do our utmost to retain them and utilize their skills" (Helyer and Lee, 2010). There was also a study done by Appelbaum et. al (2012) which looked into a succession plan for their organization since 50 percent of their employees were baby boomers. Their study found a negative correlation between pre-retirees and their lack of motivation as they approach retirement; Also, it was found that senior employees possess a willingness to share and transfer knowledge to younger generations (Appelbaum et al, 2012). Millennials may have the education to enter the workforce, but as the baby boomers retire they will be taking their knowledge and skills with them

creating a panic for organizations to try and retain that human capital. If adaption to this kind of change is forced by management, the organization risks expansive repercussions such as conflict between management and employees, and moreover conflicts between the next generation of employees and the pre-retirees in their last years in the company (Appelbaum et al, 2012).

### **Baby Boomer Holdouts**

Members of the Baby Boomer cohort are predominant in senior positions in most well-established organisations and have been the prevailing influence for the last decade; This trend will continue for the next decade or so, with most retiring between 2010 and 2020 (Jorgensen, 2003). However, many seniors are postponing retirement and going back to work for personal or financial reasons (Appelbaum et al. 2012). A number of workers who would typically be considered to be near the later stages of their work lives are continuing to seek upward mobility opportunities and new assignments instead of slowing down (Frauenheim, 2006). The decision of many older workers to delay retirement, whether for financial or other reasons, has significantly affected the workforce (Frauenheim, 2006). As the Baby Boom generation stays in the workforce longer this will continue to cause the generation gap that has become so familiar. “Growing numbers of mid-career workers are expressing interest in stepping back from their current scope of responsibility, be it line work, administration, management or leadership, in order to slow the pace of their work life and spend more time on non-work activities. At the same time, younger workers increasingly are expecting fast track progression into management and leadership roles” (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007).

These factors threaten employability for millennials and could cause them to further struggle in such a highly competitive market.

### **Competitive Job Market**

As previously mentioned the millennial generation is the biggest generation since the Baby Boomers, estimating at around 80 million (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Although Baby Boomers are retiring at an accelerated rate, the positions becoming available are not at the rate millennials are entering the workforce. Recent graduates are emerging from four years of college saddled with debt and unable to find gainful employment (Lee, 2011). This threatens the millennial generation because with limited jobs available the unemployment rate will rise with millennials being the majority out of work. According to the Pew Research Center (2014) they describe that millennials are “The first in modern era to have higher levels of student loan debt, poverty and unemployment, and lower levels of wealth and personal income than any other generation at the same stage of life.” Millennials may come to find that the positions they were seeking may not be available and will have to change their standards on what they’re looking for. To quote Paul Angone from his book, ‘All GROAN up: Searching for Self, Faith, and a Freaking Job!’, “The job hunt has become the millennial version of the Hunger Games – without the cameras or any interaction with Jennifer Lawrence”.

### **Online Reputation**

Most millennials have some sort of digital footprint, whether it’s a blog, social media profile, or emails sent. In fact, in a survey done by Deloitte (2008) they found that 70% of Millennials report creating content for others to see. Social media (SM) is changing human interaction and the way in which individuals access personal

information in the expanding online environment (Gibbs, MacDonald, McKay, 2013). Millennials must be careful at the information they make available online as employers are now searching the internet to assist in employee selection. Stamper (2010) found that 45% of 2,600 hiring managers in the United States reported searching for information on applicants on social networking sites, and 35% of that group did not hire at least one applicant based on the information they found. A senior manager for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission noted that approximately 75% of recruiters are required to do online research of applicants, and 70% of recruiters surveyed reported rejecting individuals as a result (Preston, 2011). Millennials must understand that pictures, quotes, and groups supported may be viewed by employers and have the possibility of affecting their decision. This is yet another hurdle that millennials must keep in mind when entering the workforce.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

After dissecting the millennial generations' characteristics, values, motivations etc. and putting them into the categories of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats we can now see what millennials can do to further their potential in the workforce. Using Berg and Pietersma's (2015) methodology of focusing on using strengths to take advantage of opportunities (SO), opportunities to overcome weaknesses (WO), strengths to avoid threats (ST), minimizing weaknesses and avoiding threats (WT) we can give suggestions on how millennials can increase their potential in the workplace and how managers can be successful with this new generation of employees.

#### **SO Strategies**

One of the major strengths that everyone can agree on is millennials ease with technology. If companies use this skill to their advantage they will have quite a few opportunities for growth. Hotels can easily use millennials' tech skills by utilizing them towards being brand ambassadors for them. When millennials use social media sites or other platforms such as blogs, they have the capability of spreading good word of mouth for the hotel. As many people are using social media because of the ease of accessing it through lap tops, tablets and phones this is an easy no cost advertisement for potential customers. Not only can employees help to market for the hotel, but they can utilize their social media platforms to help attract future potential employees. By current employees bragging about their company's development programs, time off policies, rewards etc. they are helping to positively market for new talent.

Many millennials are achievement oriented as this has been instilled in them by growing up in sports, performing arts and other activities. As being the most educated generation in history, millennials can exploit their education by showing managers they are continuously trying to improve themselves. As opposed to employees just coming to work and leaving, managers can take advantage of their employees' willingness to develop to try and improve the current environment that the hotel is in.

As previously mentioned the millennial generation tends to be very vocal with their opinions. By nurturing their vocal tendencies, employees will feel they are able to not only speak around the workplace, but most importantly outside of the workplace. Again this is an opportunity for hotels to make use of good word of mouth from each employee's inner circle. Hotel employees are their brand ambassadors not only when they are at work, but when friends and families are asking for suggestions on where they should stay when they are away from home. Employees have the opportunity to positively influence the people around them on company's brand. Utilizing their employees' tendency to be vocal they can use their employees to try and gain a perspective from the millennial market as a consumer. In the next few years millennials will be 40% of the U.S. population (Kravetz, 2015). Employees can help their hotel to try and understand what their market segment are looking for and how they are most influenced by marketing. Good word of mouth is known as being one of the best marketing tools for a hotel and when employees positively view their company it is free marketing for that hotel brand.

## **WO Strategies**

One stereotype of the millennial generation is that they may be difficult to motivate. This may be because they view work-life balance very important and don't see work as a strong factor in their life. However, millennials are more inclined to enjoy their jobs if they find their work meaningful. If managers can align the positions of millennials with their unique skills i.e. team oriented and enjoyment of meaningful work they may be more inclined to work harder if they see they are making a difference. Another unique skill this generation has is the ease with technology. If companies can offer opportunities to work from home and allow employees to use video calling (i.e. skype) or even provide chat rooms or other online employee portals they can utilize their enthusiasm for technology while motivating them.

Another weakness of this generation is that they tend to be viewed as less loyal to organizations. Many Baby Boomers will be retiring in the next few years and this will open up many job opportunities for millennials to pursue. Once employers attract and hire these millennial employees it is important for them to feel their job is secure. Despite the fact that they tend to change jobs often, millennials have an expectation of job security (Kravetz, 2015). Helping millennial employees to feel they are irreplaceable in the workplace will help them to feel appreciated and are more inclined to stay with an employer/manager.

Two characteristics that have been often viewed as weaknesses of this generation are their need for immediate gratification and their constant need of feedback. Managers can try and combat these characteristics when they utilize their millennial employees as

consumer assets. When they are used as such they are giving feedback to the company whether it is their manager or marketing team from a consumer's perspective. This forum of discussion can help to make the employee feel at ease of giving and receiving feedback from their manager while at the same time receiving gratification for their help as a "target market consumer". So although this type of feedback is more useful for the employer, it can also help in the transition of feedback from the manager to the employee as they are already in this kind of discussion.

### **ST Strategies**

One major threat to the millennial employee is the relationship they have with their manager. The manager has control over the employees' work-life balance, their developmental opportunities, and their feedback and rewards. More than any other generation the relationship with their immediate manager has a huge impact on whether or not the millennial employee will be happy with their position or not. By using one of their strengths such as vocal tendency it may help to decrease the chance of unhappiness. Millennials can voice to their managers what they expect, what is working for them and what is not. This will help both the employee and manager because they will know what obstacles they are having instead of working with uncertainties. If managers have the capability of changing their approach on the way they deal with their millennial employees they may be more successful at retaining millennial talent.

Another major threat is that hotels will be losing a lot of skilled workers once Baby Boomers completely retire out of the workforce. Companies are currently trying to figure out how they are going to retain this human capital. One way could be to take

advantage of how millennial employees are constantly trying to develop and achieve more. A strength that millennials possess is their constant motivation to develop. Currently, companies are having their older employees train younger employees in an attempt to transfer their knowledge. For example, Coca-Cola maintains that, “older employees are valuable for their mix of skills and as mentors to younger staff” (Little, 2011). Therefore, millennial employees are an essential part of this transition of knowledge.

There will be many jobs available as Baby Boomers retire, but they will not be at the rate millennial’s are entering the workforce. With approximately 80 million millennial’s in the workforce within the next few years it will be a highly competitive job market. If millennial employees highlight their skills with technology it might help to give them a competitive edge over other generation employees. Millennials need to showcase this skill in order to help them attract reputable organizations.

### **WT Strategies**

With threats like competitive job market and the relationship with their immediate manager millennial’s may have obstacles in securing jobs in the workforce. Then when millennial’s do land a job their weaknesses such as narcissism, non-loyalty and difficulty being motivated may impact their success in their position. Millennial’s and their managers should instead look at the opportunities and strengths to minimize their weaknesses and threats. The millennial generation are very achievement oriented, technology savvy, vocal, confident and value work-life balance. They can focus on their strength of technology and put forth their confidence in order to try and combat the

competitive job market. Managers can focus on providing feedback, showing appreciation and providing developmental opportunities to help motivate and retain millennial talent.

### **Other Recommendations for Managers**

In order for hotels to succeed in coming years they will need to train their managers on leadership and management styles that will understand how to effectively manage this new generation. Managers who can adopt a leadership style rooted in the individual consideration domain of transformational leadership—one that promotes relationships and meeting individual needs—are the managers who will most successfully attract, motivate, and retain their Millennial employees (Thompson & Gregory, 2012). Managers who adopt an individual consideration approach to working with their employees will offer the personalized, development-orientation attention (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003) that seems to align with millennials expectations and values. Hershatter and Epstein (2010) note that Millennial employees who feel looked after and like they are receiving ample personalized attention cultivate loyalty to the organization and, particularly, to their manager. Thompson and Gregory (2012) have compiled a list of recommendations for managers gathered from existing research:

- Engage in behavior that builds mutual trust with their employees. Trust has been shown as a critical factor for establishing strong relationships with employees (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Gregory & Levy, 2011) and also has

significant implications for how inclined employees are to accept and further seek feedback (Ilgen et al., 1979; Steelman et al., 2004).

- Adopt a coaching approach to working with their employees. While we are not advocating coaching as a blanket solution, we do believe that a coaching approach centered on developing, growing, and giving decision rights and personal responsibility to employees will appeal to Millennials' desires for feedback and autonomy. We also suggest that Millennials who are simply "looking to be given an answer" will gain new skills in critical evaluation and seeking out answers on their own with frequent coaching.
- Assume an individual consideration approach to working with their employees. Specifically, managers should work to tailor their relationships and interactions to the unique needs of their individual employees. Previous research has shown that managers who lead with individual consideration cultivate more effective coaching relationships with their employees (Gregory & Levy, 2011) and have employees who are inclined to seek more feedback on their performance (Levy et al., 2002).

More specifically Kravetz (2015) has compiled a list of recommendations for hospitality managers to be successful with the millennial employee:

- Social Media: While it is important to embrace technology, hospitality employers need to implement clear, specific social media policies. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has found that most social media policies are overly broad and unlawful. Social media policies cannot constrict free speech or prevent an employee's right to organize. Thus, if your employee takes to LinkedIn or

Facebook to complain about what he or she perceives to be an unfair work policy, it is considered protected speech and cannot be cause for retaliation.

- **Diversity:** While having a diverse workforce is ideal, hospitality management needs to ensure that they are providing routine training on harassment and discrimination in the workplace.
- **Flexible work schedules:** Veering away from standard shifts in the hospitality industry can potentially lead to problems. Hotel and restaurant management face off-the-clock exposure, and unorthodox schedules could also make it difficult to track hours. Overtime, meal and rest-break violations are fertile ground for class-action lawsuits and employers should be careful to keep accurate records with their timesheets and payroll.
- **Managing versus coaching, consistent feedback:** Written documentation is imperative when it comes to employee feedback. Hospitality management should treat all feedback as if it were a performance review, and document all comments noting both exemplary and poor performances.
- **Job hopping:** Hospitality employers need to continue to recruit, harness and retain talent, while acknowledging that most members of this generation change jobs quite regularly. Hence, it's important to have solid confidentiality and non-solicitation agreements in place to protect trade secrets and prevent improper customer solicitation, should an employee leave to work for a competitor.



- Continuing education policies: Those hotels and restaurants that offer continuing education in hospitality management for interested employees need to ensure that these policies do not have a discriminatory impact on a protected class of employee.
- Job security: Management should always convey from the outset that the employer-employee relationship is “at-will” and can be terminated at any time and for any reason.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

Millennials are coming into the workforce with a set of expectations, values and attitudes that are different from the generations before them. They value family and having a work-life balance is very important to them. They have been coined to be narcissistic as they are also known as “Generation Me”. The fact that they are vocal of their expectations and their opinions, as well as showing they are confident are some of the reasons other generations see this stereotype to be true. Millennials believe that the work environment should be casual and that text messaging and chat rooms are fine ways of communication.

Millennial employees will also bring a new enthusiasm to the workplace. They are highly engaged in any meaningful work that aligns with their passions, and are socially conscious and are loyal to organizations that value a culture of caring (VanGorp, 2015). Other strengths this generation possesses are their ease with technology, achievement driven and team oriented. These strengths will not only help to ensure they are successful in the workforce, but will also help their employer thrive as well. Taking advantage of the characteristics this generation holds will provide opportunities for the organizations who hire them. They are able to provide feedback of your brand from their view as a millennial consumer, help to spread good word of mouth and attract new talent through their social media platforms.

It is up to the organization and immediate managers to try and embrace these differences and turn them into opportunities. By taking a more personal role as a manager and becoming a “coach” to their employees, the need of feedback from their millennial

employees could be positive and turn their uncertainty into a developmental opportunity to improve the organization. If managers engage in behavior that builds trust with their employees and make them feel secure they will be loyal to the company and therefore negate the stereotype of this generations “job hopping”. Companies should pair up older employees on the verge of retiring and assign them millennial employees as their “mentees” to take advantage of their development-orientation. This will help to counteract the loss of skilled workers while fueling millennials need of development and feedback.

Taking the time to prepare your organizations and managers of the influence from the millennial employee would be a sound investment as this generation is not going to slow down any time soon. As stated by VanGorp (2015) “Whether or not you agree that millennials are poised to be the next great generation, they are a great talent pool for your lodging company. Tapping into their limitless reserves of energy, technical skill, collaborative tendencies and “entrepreneurial” zeal can drive your business forward.”

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