

the kids MILLENNIALS are all right



ALTHOUGH WE ARE WELL INTO RECOVERY AND THE MOST RECENT JOB NUMBERS ARE THE MOST OPTIMISTIC IN YEARS, IT SEEMS THE ECONOMIC CRASH OF 2007 IS STILL CAUSING PROBLEMS FOR HR. ACCORDING TO *BOOMERS AND RETIREMENT*, A NEW SURVEY BY TD AMERITRADE, THE AVERAGE BABY BOOMER IS ABOUT A HALF-MILLION DOLLARS SHORT ON RETIREMENT SAVINGS, FORCING MANY TO STAY IN JOBS WELL PAST THE AGE OF 65. AN ASSOCIATED PRESS POLL SHOWED THAT 1 IN 4 BOOMERS STILL WORKING SAY THEY WOULD NEVER RETIRE.

the problem

Boomers' delayed retirement means they are continuing to occupy many of the executive, senior-, and middle-management positions that would have transferred to Gen X, leaving Gen Xers stuck in the middle- and lower-level management positions into which companies would have

likely moved the oldest set of high-potential Millennials. A PayScale survey showed that almost 20 percent of Gen X workers are managers, as are 21 percent of Boomers. However, only 12 percent of Gen Y held management roles in 2013, *down from 15 percent in 2012.*

THERE ARE MORE THAN 80 MILLION MILLENNIALS IN THE U.S.; ABOUT ONE MILLION MORE THAN THERE ARE BABY BOOMERS. EXPERTS PREDICT THAT INDIVIDUALS BORN BETWEEN 1980 AND THE EARLY 2000s WILL MAKE UP MORE THAN 40% OF THE LABOR FORCE BY 2020. THAT'S A LOT OF HIGH-POTENTIAL MILLENNIALS STUCK WORKING AS INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTORS, AND THAT'S A BIG PROBLEM.

the new skills gap

ALTHOUGH IT TEMPORARILY ALLEVIATES THE SKILLS GAP HR MANAGERS EXPECTED, BOOMERS' LAGGING RETIREMENT IS CREATING A NEW KIND OF SKILLS GAP: A GAP IN SOFT SKILLS.

Even though they have been widely criticized as lazy and entitled, Millennials are some of the most educated, ethnically and culturally diverse, and technologically advanced individuals ever to enter the workforce. However, success, especially as they move up the corporate ladder, requires more than the right education and experience.

“Success depends on three things: being able to do your job, being willing to work hard at your job, and

being rewarding to deal with,” said Dr. Robert Hogan, founder of Hogan Assessments. “Being rewarding to deal with is a reflection of your interpersonal skills – the more developed your interpersonal skills, the more rewarding it is to interact with you.”

Unfortunately, interpersonal skills seem to be the area in which young employees lack most severely. A recent survey of top UK graduate recruiters revealed that there are

not enough graduates with adequate interpersonal skills to fill the jobs available. In this challenge, however, lies an opportunity.

“Young people typically have less-developed interpersonal skills than their more mature, more experienced peers,” said Dr. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic. “Fortunately, soft skills can be learned, but where organizations used to rely on experience – as team leaders, low-level managers, etc. – to improve high-potential employees’ interpersonal skills, now they have to be innovative in their approach.”

Fortunately, there are thousands of articles, research papers, books, and self-proclaimed experts offering organizations advice on how they can offer meaningful development opportunities to a growing number of young employees on a limited budget. Unfortunately, that makes it hard to cut through the noise.

WE COMBINED HOGAN'S EXPERIENCE DEVELOPING EXECUTIVES AT MORE THAN HALF OF THE *FORTUNE 500* WITH RESEARCH ON MILLENNIAL LEARNING STYLES TO COME UP WITH FIVE KEYS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES.

Start with science

“The starting point in any coaching process is to achieve some level of self-awareness,” said Trish Kellett, director of the Hogan Coaching Network. “Tools like valid personality assessments and 360-degree feedback from not just a supervisor, but a peer and subordinate level can give participants a realistic view of their strengths and hidden blind spots. Without a basis in objective, scientific assessment, any type of development program will experience very limited success.”

Allow for self-guidance

Compared to Boomers, who are considered digital immigrants, Millennials are digital natives. They grew up with Google, Facebook, and Twitter – tools that provided instant access to an enormous breadth of information. In his *Huffington Post* article “Education in the Age of Information”, Dr. Gino Yu wrote that Millennials have a distaste for traditional classroom learning. According to a University of North Carolina survey, Gen Y switches their attention between media platforms like laptops, smartphones, tablets, and television an average of 27 times an hour, so forget about in-person courses and workshops. Instead, development tools should provide mobile, anytime access to a broad, but targeted library of resources that participants can work into an action plan.

Provide constant feedback

For better or worse, Gen Y came of age in the era of social networks – ideal tools for receiving instant feedback.

However, the workplace isn't designed the same.

“A lot of managers are just doing one annual performance review, which works for Boomers,” said Courtney Templin, co-author of *Manager 3.0: A Millennial's Guide to Rewriting the Rules of Management*. “Millennials want more than that.”

In the UNC survey, 80% of Millennials said they prefer frequent, on-the-spot feedback to a formal review. A well-designed development tool should provide real-time feedback as participants work through resources.

Allow comparisons

In addition to instant feedback, tech entrepreneur Daniel Gulati points out in his *Harvard Business Review* post that social networks made Gen Y accustomed to posting their accomplishments and comparing themselves to their peers. Development platforms should allow users to compare their progress with their peers, superiors, and prominent individuals in their field.

It should be scalable

“The people who get the most out of soft skills development and perform the best are those who are always striving to improve themselves,” he said. “They draw on their strategic self-awareness and constantly reflect on the insights they gained.”

Investment = Engagement

In addition to a skills gap, Boomers' delayed retirement is causing another problem for companies trying to grow their Millennial talent – lack of opportunity. According to *The Fiscal Times*, more than 61 percent of Gen Y think workers should be promoted every two to three years if they aren't doing a good job. Given that 91% of Millennials

expect to stay at a job or position for fewer than three years, that's a recipe for turnover.

However, in a survey by Bentley University's Center for Women & Business, 65 percent of Millennials reported personal development was the most influential factor in their current job.

"ENGAGEMENT IS ABSOLUTELY THE ANSWER TO EMPLOYEE RETENTION, AND THE BEST WAY TO ENGAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES IS TO LET THEM KNOW YOU'RE INVESTED IN THEM," SAID RYAN ROSS, VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL ALLIANCES AT HOGAN. "TELL THEM YOUR PLAN FOR THEM WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION, ASSIGN THEM MENTORS, AND GIVE THEM LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES."