

MULTIGENERATIONAL CONFLICT

Take a look on any HR or business review website these days and you're bound to come across an awful copy dedicated to Millennials.

This new generation of workers seem to be amassing a lot of press – and almost none of it is positive.

They are viewed as being tough to manage, entitled, unfocused, lazy and impatient. They are labelled as wanting instant gratification in their career, with none of the hard work and dedication it takes to get there.

Understanding Millennials' attitudes and needs will prove to be even more pressing in the future – especially since, by the year 2025, 75% of the workforce will consist of this particular generation of workers.

Naturally, in workplaces that consist of a mix of Millennials and Generation X (those born between 1961 – 81), this can lead to some clashes of culture.

In fact, 59% of employers have experienced intergenerational conflict in the workplace due to dissimilar values, beliefs and expectations. The workplace is constantly changing, and young workers expect different things from their place of employment.

The biggest generational difficulties are:

1. Company culture – Not being able to suit everyone e.g. 9-5 versus flexi working and 'fun days'
2. Communication styles – Generation X prefer phone and email whereas Millennials prefer Whats App, Snapchat, Facebook (more animated non-verbal communication).
3. Negative stereotyping – Both Generation X and Millennials have negative stereotypes attached to them and this can mean that judgement is created internally, causing a divide.
4. Cultural expectations - Millennials are also prone to wanting to quit when things get hard, as they have grown accustomed to being able to have things instantly as well as the feeling that they are not making an impact and they become frustrated.

Granted, Millennials need to learn patience. But, equally, employers who have Millennials in their organisation need to learn how to manage the traits.

This new generation of employees also like to be able to exercise influence at work, as this makes them feel engaged and like they are adding value. However, the tradition is that older workers are held in much higher regard internally.

One of the ways which can help overcome any generational conflict and increase engagement and retention levels of Millennials is 'reverse mentoring' where a younger employee mentors an older employee in an area where they are lacking skill and then vice-versa.

This can encourage better working relationships internally as well as allowing for creation of a new culture where everyone's opinion is valid.

The working world – right down to the hours we put in – is changing. It's so important that a HR department can offer skilled advice when it comes to bridging the generational gap between workers.

Creating a calm and open atmosphere where learning is encouraged at all ages could be the key to this. Of course, a healthy respect for other's opinions is always a good starting point.

If you would like to hire highly skilled HR employees, I would love to help you source reliable and knowledgeable candidates. My contact details are listed below.

