HR Playbook

From Matures to Millennials
Effectively Managing Multiple Generations at Work

Jennifer Carsen, JD
This book provides practical information concerning the subject matters covered. It is sold with the understanding that neither the publisher nor the author is rendering legal advice or other professional service. Some of the information provided in this publication contains a broad overview of federal and state law, which changes regularly. You should consult a competent attorney if you are in need of specific legal advice concerning any of the subjects addressed in this book.

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Matures to Millennials: The Challenge of Multiple Generations

Multiple generations in the workplace, Millennials and Boomers, Gen X and Gen Y (and don’t forget, it’s only a few years until Gen Z joins the parade); what important differences exist between these generations, and what do the differences mean for employers? Do different generations need to be treated differently? And if they do, how?

Of course, some suggest that there aren’t any real differences, and that today’s Gen Y will slowly become Traditionalists or Matures over the next 30 or 40 years. Will they? No one knows the answer to that question, and it’s not easy to predict what the workplace of the future will be like.
Remember that today’s Traditionalist (or Mature) generation grew up without computers, answering machines, or smartphones. What did Gen Y grow up without? We’ll know in about 30 years.

Author Carsen starts with an overview of these issues, and provides detailed descriptions of the generations and what behaviors, needs, and desires they stereotypically exhibit.

Carsen carefully reminds readers that it’s a mistake to judge employees by their generations alone.

- Generation is only one factor affecting an individual. Other factors, such as family background and personal experiences, interests, aspirations, abilities, and personality traits may be more important.

- Furthermore, the line between one generation and the next is not crystal clear. Generations are approximations. People born at the end of one generation may have more in common with the next generation than with their own.

- It’s important to be careful to avoid stereotyping or pigeonholing employees because of their generation. Generational diversity is only one of many factors you need to consider when supervising employees.

Carsen covers extensively the two generations that most employers are concerned about: the Boomers, who may cause challenges when they retire and when they don’t retire, and the Millennials, or Gen Y, who are now taking on key jobs at your organization.

In between, appropriately, is Gen X, the Sandwich Generation.
Throughout the book, you’ll get tips about dealing with all generations, plus a special “sneak peek” at Gen Z—those born about 1995 and later, who will be entering the workforce in droves over the next 10 years.

Ready to deal with the generations at your workplace?

Stephen D. Bruce, PhD, PHR, SHRM-CP

Editor, *HR Daily Advisor, HR Decisions* Magazine
BLR’s HR Playbooks provide current, practical advice for HR managers trying to keep up with the times. HR is ever-changing and ever-challenging. Outside influences like the development of technology that claims to be able to do whatever we need and the ceaseless march of new regulatory requirements keep the ground shifting.

And the internal requirements are getting softer (culture, retention, engagement, talent management), which makes the job all that much harder.
Look for “Smart Strategy” sections throughout the book to spotlight some straight-from-the-trenches examples of what works in the real world.

In our playbooks, we intend to eliminate some of the haze and clutter, and point readers in reasonable directions as they seek the strategies that will carry their organizations—and them—to success.
Jennifer Carsen, JD

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Dedication

To my family.
Introduction

Growing Pains in the Modern Workplace

Talk about growing pains—your Millennial workers, far from being the new kids on the block, are now moving into leadership positions at your organization. Or they’re trying to, anyway—but there’s no room for them to advance with the large numbers of Boomers still working past traditional retirement age. You may even have some Matures (born before 1945) still on the payroll.

Meanwhile, your Gen Xers are caught betwixt and between. Many of the older members of this generation are starting to think about winding down, work-wise, while the younger members are firmly sandwiched between the stress of simultaneously caring for their children and caring for their parents.
The generational stereotypes are just that—stereotypes—and there are outliers of all ages at work these days, from highly tech-savvy Matures to luddite Millennials. But there’s no question that managing and motivating multiple generations at work is a challenge for even the most experienced HR professionals.

In this Playbook, you’ll learn a little more about what makes each of these generations tick, and what to do when generational goals collide. We’ll talk about how to keep your high potential employees (HiPos) engaged—and advancing—when they run up against the “gray ceiling,” and how to create a succession plan that works. You’ll also learn how to speak to each group effectively and how to design a compensation and benefits package that is appealing across the board.

Finally, you’ll learn the overarching things that all employees, regardless of age or generation, need at work in order to thrive and succeed.
The workplace has always been a place where different people of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities have come together to work and make things, provide services, and help our economy grow. The workforce is diverse in many ways, including race, gender, cultural and religious background, educational and economic background, age, and ability. Generational diversity focuses on differences among employees based on the generation in which a person grew up.

Recognizing and understanding differences among the different generations in the workforce can help you better supervise your employees. Generational diversity can have an impact on the way employees perform, the way they perceive you and the organization, and the way they interact with one another.
Although generational differences are only one way the workforce is diverse, and although generation is only one factor affecting employees’ attitudes and behavior, you need to understand the influences, experiences, and concerns that shape your employees so that you can work well with employees of all ages and encourage them to perform at their best.

In order to lead your workforce effectively, you must be able to:

- Define generational diversity;
- Identify the different generations in the workforce;
- Understand differences among the generations that can affect the workplace;
- Appreciate the impact of generational diversity in communication, feedback, teamwork, motivation, training, and development; and
- Use knowledge of generational diversity to improve supervision of all employees.

A generation has been defined as a period of roughly 20 years. So, for example, all people born between 1960 and 1980 would be of the same generation.

**Four Generations Comprising Today’s Workforce**

There are four commonly defined generations in today’s workforce. They have been called different things, and the exact dates of their generations vary from report to report. However, the following names and dates will help identify the different groups and their approximate ages.
1. The **Matures**, also known as Traditionalists, were born in or before 1945. There are few of them left in the workplace, and the numbers are decreasing annually. But there are still some Matures who work full- or part-time, or come back to work part-time or as temps after retiring, so you need to be aware of this group and the generational issues associated with them.

2. The largest generational group in the workplace today is the **Baby Boomers**, born from 1946 (post-World War II) through the early- to mid-1960s.

3. The next-largest group is the **Generation Xers**, born from the early- to mid-1960s through the early 1980s.

4. The final group is the **Millennials**, also known as Generation Y. These workers were born from the early 1980s through the early 2000s.

Before proceeding, it’s important to offer a few caveats concerning generational diversity.

- Generation is only one factor affecting an individual. Other factors, such as family background and personal experiences, interests, aspirations, abilities, and personality traits may be more important.

- Furthermore, the line between one generation and the next is not crystal clear. Generations are approximations. People born at the end of one generation may have more in common with the next generation than with their own.

- It’s important to be careful to avoid stereotyping or pigeonholing employees because of their generation. Generational
diversity is only one of many factors you need to consider when supervising employees.

To understand the differences among the generations in the workforce, it’s important to look at the influences and experiences that shaped their formative years.

**The Matures**

- The Matures came of age in the late 1930s and early 1940s. They were a generation that grew up on radio rather than TV.

- They lived through the Depression and the New Deal, or at least felt the effects of those times and heard about the hardships from parents and grandparents—something they would never forget.

- These workers were also shaped by World War II, a war in which many of them fought and were injured.

- The younger Matures may have fought in the Korean War, or have fathers who did.

**The Baby Boomers**

- The Baby Boomers were the TV generation. Most of them grew up with “Howdy Doody,” “Gunsmoke,” “I Love Lucy,” and all the other shows of the fifties.

- They also grew up during the Cold War and lived under the threat of nuclear annihilation.
The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was also a powerful influence for this generation.

Other influences were the assassinations of President Kennedy, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and Senator Robert Kennedy.

Perhaps one of the biggest influences was the Vietnam War and the protest movement that grew as a result.

This generation also experienced the effects of the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, Woodstock, the sexual revolution, and the drug culture in the late sixties when many of them were coming of age in their late teens and early twenties.

Many of them watched the TV footage of the early astronauts circling Earth in their spacecraft and walking on the moon in July 1969.

Boomers were also influenced by ecological concerns here on Earth and were responsible for launching the environmental movement.

**Generation X**

The Generation Xers were the first computer generation, and by the time they got to the workplace the technology boom was just beginning.

Women’s liberation was becoming an issue in the late sixties and was really taking off in the seventies when many women liberated themselves from the home and entered the workplace in numbers unprecedented since World War II.
• Watergate, the winding-down of the Vietnam War, and the energy crisis were the big issues in the seventies.

• And, in the late seventies, the big issue was the hostages in Iran—an incident that foreshadowed modern-era terrorism. The Middle East was at war in the early years of the seventies, but by the Carter Era in the late seventies, Egypt and Israel were meeting with President Carter at Camp David to talk about peace.

• The Reagan Era in the eighties was a major influence on many Xers. The “Evil Empire” of the Soviet Union, covert wars in Central America, and high inflation at home were big issues of the time.

• And, of course, while the Boomers had their Woodstock and hippies, the eighties ushered in the Yuppies and “Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous.”

The Millennials

• The Millennials were the first true Internet generation. That same technology boom also included cell phones and computers at school and in nearly every middle-class home.

• The Millennials have also been affected by war—first the Gulf War and then the Iraq War. As young teens, Millennials also watched military actions involving the U.S. in Ethiopia (unsuccessful) and Kosovo (successful).

• Millennials were also influenced by the dramatic fall of Communism in Europe and watched as young Germans tore down the Berlin Wall in 1989.
They also watched the horrific scenes of terrorism on TV—first the Oklahoma City bombing, and then 9/11. And they saw video of the first school shootings by and of members of their own generation.

This earlier part of the generation also grew into their teens and early twenties in a time of economic prosperity. The stock market was booming in the nineties, and just about everybody who wanted to work or could work could find a job—even teens could easily find jobs in the service sector.

Values and Attitudes of the Different Generations

We’ll now turn to a quick look at the values and attitudes of the different generations, beginning with the Matures.

Matures were brought up either in hard times or with parental memories of hard times. For the most part, this led them to a strong work ethic, loyalty, and dedication to their employer. They tend to focus on responsibility, duty, and sacrifice in terms of their employment and their families. These employees have respect for authority and rules.

Additionally, they’ve been willing to “pay their dues” over the years by putting in the hours and doing the hard work to get promotions and raises. They never expected to be given a free lunch or a free ride. However, they did, for the most part, expect to keep their jobs for life if they chose to. Many members of this generation are solid union supporters who believe in seniority rights, the power of unions to protect jobs, and the gratitude of their employer for their loyalty, dedication, and hard work.
The Baby Boomers, on the other hand, grew up in a time when the concept of individual rights was a big issue—in schools, voting booths, housing, and workplaces. They came to work with the notion that they had rights as employees and employers had to respect their rights. Boomers also brought with them the optimism of the sixties and the belief that change could and should occur and, at work, as everywhere else in their lives, there were lots of possibilities within their grasp.

This generation has been more interested in career and personal growth than the previous generation. They have also tended to value self-gratification and self-interest more than loyalty and dedication to the organization. However, Boomers, for the most part, have been big on teamwork and participation. And when they moved into positions of power in the workplace, they put an emphasis on these strategies, which have been widely adopted and have proven very successful in American enterprises of all kinds.

Generation Xers tend to be independent and self-reliant, and may consider rules as guidelines rather than absolutes. They are also pragmatic rather than dogmatic. They use what works, and they work with what they have at hand. Xers are also growth-oriented and interested in career advancement. They’re comfortable with technology and keep up to date on workplace changes. Many of them need challenges to keep them interested and performing at their best. They also value flexibility in their jobs—particularly now, when many of them are simultaneously juggling caregiving responsibilities for their children and their parents.

The Millennials are still fairly new to the workplace, so it’s hard to be definitive at this point about their values and attitudes. But for the most part they appear to be confident, optimistic, wired to every
kind of technology, adept at multitasking, and respectful of diversity. (We’ll explore the Millennials in more depth later in the Playbook.)

**What Are the Generations’ Big Concerns at Work?**

The current concerns of the generations vary from individual to individual, of course. Some Matures, for example, may be concerned about continuing to work as long as possible—either for financial reasons, or because work is an important part of their lives and the prospect of retirement is not a wholly pleasant one. Others, on the other hand, may be looking forward to and planning for retirement right now. Their minds are already on the golf course or on spending more time with the grandchildren.

Most Matures, however, will be concerned about healthcare benefits—at least until they qualify for Medicare. Some might be concerned about remaining active after retirement. They may be interested in coming back to work part-time or on a consulting basis. Some might be interested in earning extra money after retirement by working part-time, or on a temporary or contract basis.

Baby Boomers are also interested in healthcare benefits. Statistics show that people in their fifties and sixties begin to experience more health problems and disease. Boomers are generally also concerned about retirement—some of the older ones are already retiring. The younger ones are busy saving for retirement. Many of them are empty nesters; they’ve finally gotten their kids through college and are now looking to pump up their 401(k)s. Baby Boomers may also be concerned about keeping up with workplace changes and new technologies.
Boomers are also often concerned about maintaining their status and position as they face more and more competition from the up-and-coming Generation Xers. And, finally, many Boomers are also concerned about having more leisure time. They’ve been working for a long time, and many have put in long hours on the job over the years. Now they want a little more free time to enjoy themselves.

Generation Xers are concerned about advancement and raises; they also care about achievement and recognition for their various achievements. They want challenging, interesting work, but they also want job security so that they can continue to provide for their families. With children headed for college, mortgages, and lots of other expenses, they can’t afford to lose their jobs. They also need their healthcare benefits—if not for themselves, then for their children and possibly their spouses as well.

Millennials are most concerned about learning. They want to learn all about their jobs and the organization—and, whether you like it or not, they are also squirreling away as much knowledge as possible that could be useful to them while working for a different employer in the future.

While money is important to them (raises are likely to be a big issue), they are also concerned about career opportunities. Millennials are generally also concerned with recognition and feedback from their supervisors. Being respected is also very important to them.

**The Changing Workforce**

Major demographic shifts in the United States since 2001 have led to a workforce that looks quite different today than even a few years ago, according to a recent report from CareerBuilder.¹
The report, “The Changing Face of U.S. Jobs,” explores how an increasingly diverse population is affecting the composition of nearly 800 occupations by gender, age, and race/ethnicity. The analysis is based on data from Economic Modeling Specialists Intl. (EMSI), CareerBuilder’s labor market analysis arm that pulls from more than 90 government and private sector resources.

The most dramatic demographic shift in workforce composition is age. The teenage workforce is 33 percent smaller than in 2001, while the aged-55-and-older workforce grew 40 percent. Jobs for young professionals (age 22–34) grew only 4 percent, while employment for workers aged 35–54 shrank by 1 percent.

Millennials are losing a share of employment in 69 percent of all occupations (averaging $25.85/hr) and gaining share in 29 percent of occupations (averaging $19.82/hr), including many jobs previously held by teenage workers such as cashiers, fast food cooks, and dishwashers.

Moreover, workers 55 and older make up 25 percent of the workforce in 210 occupations. There were only 86 such occupations in 2014.

“The implications of the aging workforce boil down to a simple question: As workers retire, will there be enough qualified candidates to fill the vacated jobs?” asks Matt Ferguson, chief executive officer of CareerBuilder and coauthor of The Talent Equation. “When employment growth projections and replacement needs are taken into account, millions of high- and middle-skill occupations will be available in the next decade. This will require workforce planners and talent acquisition executives to evaluate succession plans and candidate supply chains.”
Different Generations Mean Different Workplace Dynamics

As Lori Hock, Hudson Americas’ CEO, notes, “Generation Y is no longer the baby, Generation X is no longer the middle child, and Boomers are no longer the parent. Everyone is moving up a step, and business leaders must begin to address the looming leadership implications of this shift.”

Recent research by Hudson provides data on the personality traits that drive Generation Y, Generation X, and the Baby Boomers. By understanding their corresponding traits, managers will gain a clearer idea as to how the nature of leadership is changing, and be better able to comprehend, predict, and manage the behavior of people in each of the three groups.

The Boomer generation, concludes Hudson, is strong on traditional leadership traits such as making decisions, leading, motivating, and strategy. The X generation is both independent and capable of straddling the divide between the young and the mature-aged. The Y generation is defined as people-oriented and ambitious, with an entirely different approach to leadership. And then there is the impending Z generation’s workplace style, about which we yet know little.

“More than ever before, it is imperative that organizations understand the profound psychological differences in how the various generations think, act, and lead,” Hock says.

“Organizations need to understand what it is that motivates their employees and connect the dots between the motivational drivers of those in different ages and stages. Out-of-the-box thinking, inno-
vation, and a focus on strategic risks require a new kind of leader. Organizations should decide whether their leaders of today are the right leaders for tomorrow.”
As Matt Ferguson of CareerBuilder points out, finding a sufficient amount of qualified candidates to fill the roles of retiring Boomers is a looming concern. More immediately, however, many employers are struggling with issues related to Boomers’ not retiring just yet.

The Problem in a Nutshell

The generations below the Boomers are ready and eager to move up to the Boomers’ jobs, but the Boomers aren’t leaving (because their 401(k)s are now 201(k)s, jokes consultant Shira Harrington, founder and president of Purposeful Hire, Inc.). The problem is compounded, Harrington says, because although Gen Xers do want to move up to the Boomers’ jobs, they don’t want the stress that goes
with the jobs. They also want work/life balance, and that creates a conflict.

Harrington suggests that you consider an early retirement program when you:

- Have a highly paid, aging population.
- Have HiPo Gen Xers demanding career mobility.
- Need to reduce retirement payout.
- Can consider paying medical insurance until 65.

Be sure to structure your program to avoid legal pitfalls. Harrington advises the following:

- Consider the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, and plan to avoid adverse impact.
- Avoid coercing employees.
- Make a plan based on a uniform retirement age rather than performance.
- Obtain a release from legal claims.
- Comply with the Older Workers Benefit Protection Act when framing severance agreements.
- Consider the expense of implementation since many will choose not to opt in.
- Consider whether a reduction in force might be a better option.
Many organizations are looking at alternatives to early retirement that will satisfy workers’ needs while still retaining their knowledge and skills. For example:

- Phased retirement (e.g., a reduced schedule of 3 days per week).
- Transition period (e.g., providing help with establishing, or training for, a new career).
- Part Time/On Call (PTOC). As attrition thins the ranks, instead of hiring full-time replacements, hire retirees for 6-week stints.
- Position downgrades (e.g., an executive moves back to the technical level). Moving top people down the ladder, Harrington says, can be a win-win when they end up with less stressful jobs but are still available to mentor.
- Executive transition programs.

### Developing a Strategy for Success

- **Do a cohort analysis.** First, conduct a cohort analysis, says Harrington. How do your employees spread out, age-wise?

- **Analyze attrition trends.** Who is leaving in the first 6 months, who after 2 years, 5 years, and so forth?

- **Review talent annually.** Consider the readiness factor of potential successors (first and second successors), and check their development plans.

- **Determine who is eligible for retirement.** Note that with defined benefit plans, employees often leave when the plan
is maxed. However, with defined contribution plans, they may stay until they are 80.

**Resource Planning vs. Workforce Planning**

Resource Planning involves the whole workforce, says Harrington, and generally looks 6 months to 24 months out.

Workforce Planning is more specific and involves plans to fill critical roles. It looks at supply and demand over 2 years to 5 years. Concentrate on:

- Jobs that are difficult to fill externally, such as STEM jobs (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics);
- Jobs with a long learning curve; and
- Jobs with a high level of impact on the business.

**The 6 “B’s” of Creative Talent Management**

Decide where you will find your talent. Harrington offers the 6 B’s:

- Build—Internal and external professional development.
- Boost—Promote from within.
- Borrow—Use contract, short-term, and offshore labor as appropriate.
- Buy—For critical needs only, hire externally.
- Bounce—Shrink the workforce.
- Bind—Retain “A” players.
You sort this out by determining how critical the position is, how soon someone must start, and how long the need is. For example, for short-term needs and an immediate start date, you’ll probably want to borrow. For long-term needs with a future start date, you can build.

How to Keep HiPos Engaged When Boomers Stay On

- **Increase risk and reward.** This might mean giving more at-risk salary in the form of bigger bonuses or incentive pay for outstanding performance. Having more say over final take-home pay can allow HiPo employees to feel more in charge of their career outcomes, even if job titles aren’t changing immediately.

- **Provide development opportunities.** This might include training programs, conference attendance, certification opportunities, and more. The key is to ensure that there are continual opportunities to gain new skills and grow. Look both externally and internally within the organization for ideas.

- **Give them a mentor.** There are people in the organization who can help these employees learn, grow, and better understand the organization as a whole. Be sure to choose the mentor wisely—he or she should be a good match on an individual level, not just chosen at random. This can be difficult to implement, but it pays off when done well.

- **Keep a performance review schedule.** Even in organizations with a performance management system firmly embedded, it’s easy to let employee performance reviews...
take a back seat. Don’t let this happen. Especially for HiPo employees, getting feedback on performance can be invaluable when it comes to staying motivated. Performance management can include discussions about career progression and development as well, as noted above.

- **Ensure the HiPo employees’ supervisors are on board with these efforts.** Many of the above programs will fall apart without the active management by the direct supervisor of the HiPo employee. Work with your supervisors on all of these steps to ensure everyone is on the same page. If necessary, move HiPo employees outside of the standard organizational system, and allow them to report to someone else in the organization when doing so makes sense for that individual.

The crux of all of this is showing HiPo employees how much they matter to the organization. By following some of the above strategies, employers can make a big impact and reduce the likelihood of turnover amongst HiPo employees, even without fast career progression.

In all aspects of your HiPo employee program, from choosing the employees to designate as HiPo employees to doling out plum opportunities, keep in mind your diversity goals and your antidiscrimination programs. HiPo status is high-profile and eagerly sought.

**Boomers in Transition: The Benefits of Partial and Trial Retirement**

If employers could consult a crystal ball to see what the workplace will be like 10, 20, or more years down the road, they might see an older workforce in their future. ⁵
As many aging Baby Boomers decide to continue working for a few—or several—years past the traditional retirement age, employers see a mixed blessing. On the positive side, they get the benefit of more years from their most seasoned and experienced workers. But delayed retirement also is seen as delaying the entry of younger people into the workforce and complicating how employers deal with workers who, for health or other reasons, should retire.

All in all, the later-retirement trend forces employers to give more thought to how they handle what’s becoming a new model for retirement. It used to be that workers would set a date to retire and then quit the workforce cold turkey. Now, instead of a here-today-gone-tomorrow event, retirement is likely to be a transition.

The transition can take different forms. Sometimes, in preparation for full retirement, older employees mentor newer workers. Others heading toward retirement work part-time for a while, and some leave the regular payroll but stick around on a consultant basis as they enter retirement.

When retirement comes in phases rather than as a single act, employers need to consider how they can get the most from workers heading toward retirement and ease the transition for their employees—all while making sure they reduce the danger of age discrimination.6

Approximately 10,000 Baby Boomers will reach age 65 every single day until the year 2030, according to the Pew Research Center. As discussed in the previous section, Boomers in your organization may not be heading for the door anytime soon, but preparation will be essential when this labor exodus begins.7

Are you prepared? A recent poll jointly released by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) along with retiree advocate organization AARP showed that 72 percent of the human resource
professionals surveyed called the loss of older workers “a problem” or “a potential problem” for their organizations.

The HR managers said the actions their organizations have taken to prepare for Boomer retirement include:

- Increasing training and cross-training (45 percent);
- Developing succession planning (38 percent);
- Hiring retired employees as consultants or temporary workers (30 percent);
- Offering flexible work arrangements (27 percent); and
- Designing part-time positions to attract older workers (24 percent).

The poll also found many employers unprepared for the loss of retiring older workers. Roughly 71 percent of those polled hadn’t conducted a strategic workforce planning assessment to analyze the impact of workers aged 50 and older who will leave their organizations.8

As the U.S. workforce continues to see an entire generation reaching retirement age, the issues surrounding transition into retirement become more and more prominent. Finding ways to make this significant milestone easier can benefit employees and employers alike. Let’s take a look at some retirement transition options and what both the employer and employee can gain from them.
Retirement Transition Options

For employers, assisting with retirement transition can mean many things. In the end, it often means that the employee will begin working a reduced schedule in some capacity and eventually progress into full retirement. However, there are many ways this can work in practice, and there are also other benefits employers can offer during the transition. Here are some examples of options employers may implement. Employers may:

- Offer part-time schedules, such as working only a limited number of hours per day or days per week.
- Allow the employee to retire but continue to work as a contractor on a project-by-project basis. The total number of projects can be reduced gradually over time.
- Allow remote work, thus transitioning the employee into staying home.
- Change the employee’s benefits package, such as offering perks like financial planning or memberships to retirement organizations.
- Reduce restrictions on time off, and allow the use of either paid or unpaid time off to let employees transition into spending time working on their passions, such as volunteering.
- Allow long stretches of time to be taken in a given year, even weeks or months at a time (this could be paid or unpaid, depending on the circumstances and accrued paid time off).
Offer early payment of partial pension benefits (if a pension exists) while the employee is still working part-time.

Provide opportunities for older workers who wish to do so to transfer to jobs with reduced responsibility and pay.

Provide alternative career tracks for older workers who are no longer interested in competing on the fast track.

Offer a phased retirement program that gradually reduces work schedules and hours.

Design bridge jobs. These may be part-time or short-term jobs, either in the employee’s field or a new line of work. This allows older workers to move gradually from full-time employment into retirement.

Encourage older workers to become mentors and share their experience, skill, and knowledge with younger workers so that this expertise isn’t lost when the older worker retires.

Ask older workers to help with training new and inexperienced workers.

Regardless of which aspects of phased or partial retirement the employer implements, it’s a good idea to decide on eligibility parameters up front. For example, consider the minimum age at which the employee will be eligible, as well as the minimum number of years he or she needs to have been with the organization before being able to participate in the program. Create the plan options up front. Doing so will increase uptake and reduce instances of employees attempting to push for custom solutions that are more difficult to track or implement consistently.
Employer Benefits to Offering Partial or Trial Retirement

Offering these types of solutions can benefit employers as well as employees:

- Employers get to keep productive, resourceful, satisfied employees on the job longer.

- A gradual transition gives time for the retiring employee to fully train his or her successor. The retiring employee may also be asked to participate in an employee mentoring program, which will effectively transfer knowledge. This will slow the “brain drain” that occurs when older workers have been with the company for a long time, acquiring years of organizational knowledge that departs with them if they do not take steps to transfer this knowledge before leaving.

- For employers that offer the option of taking extra time off in the years leading up to full retirement, their financial liability can be reduced when the employee reaches the final day of work with the organization—there will be less total accrued vacation time that has to be paid out upon the employee’s departure.

- Starting the employee retirement transition paves the way for other workers to advance and gain new skills, which benefits both employees and employer.

- Retirement transition programs can be seen as an incentive for nonretiring employees to stay longer with the organization in order to partake of the benefit themselves later on, thus encouraging employee loyalty.
This type of benefit can improve the image of the organization, both to the public and to potential employees.

A partial retirement program can be a good incentive for your workers to stick around longer than they would have if continued full-time employment were required. Employees who are inspired to be loyal will, naturally, be retained, and the program may also help to drive engagement. In this way, programs that benefit the employee are good for the company.

“Preserving critical knowledge is vital to the longevity of any business,” says Susan Nordman, owner of Maine-based Erda, quoted recently in the New York Times. Nordman employs many workers over the age of 55 at her small artisan handbag company. “[Y]ou have to accommodate older workers’ needs,” she says, “but they’re an asset, and you have to take care of an asset.”

**Employee Benefits of Taking Partial or Trial Retirement**

Employees benefit from these types of programs for many reasons, including:

- Partial or trial retirement programs can make the life transition easier. There is an element of psychological stress that accompanies any major life change, including retirement. Phasing in this transition eases the stress. Anything that eases the transition can help to stave off anxiety and depression that may accompany retirement for some employees.

- Partial retirement can provide a little bit of additional income (as opposed to full retirement where active income disappears) so that the employee requires less immediate
drawdown of his or her saved retirement funds. This can ease financial difficulties for those who may not have a large amount saved.

- Working part-time can allow individuals to remain productive while dealing with health concerns as they age.
- The arrangement typically offers a lot of flexibility, allowing the employee to pursue other paths at the same time, such as hobbies or time with family.
- If extra time off is used by the employee to volunteer or take on other new roles, valuable connections can be made to ease the transition to full retirement later.

Talking About Retirement with Boomers: Best Practices and Pitfalls to Avoid

How to Start the Retirement Discussion

Cal Keith, a partner in the Portland, Oregon, office of law firm Perkins Coie LLP, says when an employee indicates he or she is thinking of retiring, the employer should begin a discussion instead of carrying out a rigid process. “Talk to them rather than impose it top down,” he says. “Say, ‘Let’s talk about how to transition.’”

If the employee isn’t involved in how the transition goes and then he or she changes his or her mind, it can look like the employee is being forced out because of age. By involving the employee, “you avoid the situation where you’re going one way and they’re going another,” Keith says.
The process becomes a joint transition. “If you’ve developed with them a plan about how you’re going to off-load work . . . they can’t complain. They’re part of the plan,” Keith says.

The prospect of so many workers retiring in the near future puts many employers on edge. “It’s nerve-racking for the employer not knowing when somebody’s going to leave,” Keith says. But there are solutions. For example, a retiring employee may go part-time while working out of the business. “That’s a win-win,” he says. “The employee gets the advantage of slowly working out. The employer gets the advantage of retaining that knowledge during the transition time.”

With the process of retirement changing, employees can benefit from an employer’s planning related to transitioning workers into retirement.

Chris Butler, a partner in the Atlanta office of law firm Ford & Harrison, says employers might consider posting retirement-related publications and articles in company newsletters and intranets. Designating a go-to person to address retirement-related inquiries also can benefit the retiring employee and the employer preparing for the future.

“Larger, more structured employers might also consider investing in retirement coaching and consulting, providing employees nearing retirement with professional guidance in working through the often-times confusing and emotional process,” Butler says.

Watch Out for Legal Landmines

Can you ask employees outright if they’re thinking about retiring? Federal and state laws give employers reason to think carefully before asking the question.
The federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) makes it unlawful to take adverse action against an employee or applicant simply because he or she is 40 years old or older. Instead, employment actions should be taken for business-related reasons rather than because of a bias against people who have reached a certain age. In addition to federal law, some states have laws that impose further restrictions.

Although asking an employee about retirement plans can put the words “age discrimination” on an employee’s radar, it’s not unlawful to inquire.

“Yes, you can ask,” says Keith. “In fact, a bunch of courts have looked at it, and there’s nothing unlawful about asking.” But it’s important to ask the right way, he says. Done wrong, the question can become evidence of age discrimination. When a supervisor or manager keeps asking, pushing, or treating someone badly for giving a “wrong answer,” that’s when age discrimination becomes a serious threat.

Butler agrees. “There is nothing inherently unlawful or particularly risky about asking an employee what his or her long-term goals and future aspirations are with the company,” he says. “However, the employer should always seek to avoid the appearance of age discrimination and should not limit these types of inquiries only to older employees. Rather, seek this information from all employees—whether or not approaching retirement age.”

Keith recommends that a trained HR professional ask the retirement question. It also should be someone who has a decent relationship with the person being asked. He suggests opening the conversation by explaining that the question of retirement is being asked because the business needs to plan for the future.
“If the answer is no, you’re done,” Keith says. Don’t push any harder because it can look like an employee is being harassed into retirement. You can ask again maybe a year later. “You can also say, ‘If you do decide to retire, let me know for planning purposes.’” If an employee answers that he or she is thinking about retiring, you can then begin the conversation about how to make the transition.

Although it’s lawful, and even advisable, to find out employees’ retirement plans, it’s easy to venture into a legal minefield. “Sometimes it’s how, not what, you ask,” Butler says.

“When having retirement-related conversations, avoid using comments and descriptors such as ‘age,’ ‘old/older,’ ‘young/younger,’ ‘Generation X and Y,’ ‘Baby Boomers,’ and the like. While seemingly innocuous and usually well-intentioned, these words can easily become direct evidence in an age discrimination lawsuit should an employee conclude—correctly or erroneously—that he or she has been unlawfully phased out by a younger employee,” Butler says.

Note that it’s not just the questions employers ask that can raise the age discrimination danger. Your actions are just as important.

When employees see a difference in the way they’re treated—maybe they feel they’re being phased out before they’re ready, or they’re suddenly placed on an improvement plan—they can see themselves as victims of age discrimination.

Regardless of how well-trained employers are, just the huge numbers of people approaching retirement indicate that the opportunity for age discrimination is growing.

“I don’t know if we’ll see more lawsuits, but employers are certainly going to face the issue more,” Keith says.
How to Effectively Address the Needs of an Aging Workforce

Develop Strategies Specifically Geared Toward Older Workers

It’s clear that many Baby Boomers plan on staying in the workforce past traditional retirement age for a variety of reasons: money, stimulation, to try something new, or because work is a big part of how they define themselves.

What’s the best way for employers to maximize this talent pool and to make Boomers feel like the essential part of the diverse workforce they are? Here are some suggestions, courtesy of attorney Isabella Lee.

Currently, only 18 percent of U.S. employers have a recruitment strategy geared toward older workers. To address a potentially serious shortage of skilled labor, corporations will need to do more to attract Baby Boomers and prevent losing the current pool of skilled and experienced laborers.

Any initiative to attract and retain older employees must be supported by the organizational culture and reflected in the attitudes of company leadership. Ageist remarks and discriminatory practices not only act as tremendous barriers to retaining an older workforce but also open employers to legal liability.

Stereotyping remarks such as calling someone an “old man” should be avoided. Above all, ensure that managers are setting an example for the organization that shows that neither overt nor subtle age bias will be tolerated.
Additionally, you must keep older workers engaged in order to retain them as viable contributors. With U.S. companies facing a talent shortage, you can avoid the brain drain by fostering a collaborative work environment that offers older workers opportunities to use their wealth of knowledge, history, and experiences.

Frustration between older workers and management frequently stems from poor communication and a mutual feeling that one doesn’t respect the other. Managers can often avoid those issues and help older workers feel valued by taking time to listen to them voice their concerns.

To further foster a better working relationship, managers should receive diversity training on understanding the needs of and communicating with an older workforce. Your workforce also should receive training on how to communicate with its managers, work within a diverse team, and adapt to technological changes.

HR consultants suggest incorporating teamwork and diversity measures into employees’ performance evaluations at all levels of the organization. By doing so, you have documented records of how an individual is performing as well as a forum to open discussions about working with an older workforce.

Maintaining a mature workforce offers many advantages such as loyalty, strong work ethic, and stability. Additionally, successfully combating a skilled-labor shortage will allow you to maintain an edge over competitors. As with any initiative, a commitment to fostering an age-friendly work environment must be embraced and adopted by upper management.
Supervise Them Effectively

Many organizations are bringing back retired employees as consultants or hiring them back part-time—your company may be one of them. And it can be a great idea, as older workers make valuable contributions in the workplace:

- They have years of experience to draw on.
- They have developed and honed numerous important work skills over the years, making them highly competent workers.
- They have a substantial knowledge of the job and the organization.
- Older workers also bring different perspectives to the job, and contribute to workplace diversity.

At the same time, older workers may have special concerns you should be aware of:

- Like many other employees, older workers may be concerned about having more flexible hours and work schedules to accommodate personal and family needs.
- Senior-aged workers who are reentering the workforce after a period of retirement may lack confidence in applying for and starting a new job because they haven’t gone through the process recently. They may also lack confidence with recent technology.
- A few older workers may be a little uncomfortable at first reporting to a younger supervisor. Handled with tact and sensitivity, this concern is easily overcome.
Some senior-aged workers reentering the workforce may need training or retraining to adjust to a new work environment.

If a senior-aged employee is disabled, he or she may need reasonable accommodation to perform a job.

Some seniors returning to work may be concerned about a reduction in their Social Security benefits.

There are many myths about older workers. For example, that they:

- Tend to stifle creativity in an organization with their old-fashioned ideas.
- Have a harder time grasping new ideas, concepts, procedures, and techniques.
- Have higher rates of absenteeism than younger workers.
- Tend to be less flexible than their younger coworkers.
- Are most costly to train.
- Are less likely to keep abreast of new developments in their field.

The truth is that none of those assessments is accurate. In fact …

- Older workers tend to be more reliable than younger employees.
- They generally show a higher level of loyalty and commitment to the organization.
- As a group, they tend to be highly motivated to do their work and do it well.
Older workers often have excellent attendance records.

They are usually highly productive and work carefully, making fewer errors.

Combined with their experience and knowledge, all this means that older workers often require less supervision than younger workers.

Now let’s take a look at a hypothetical scenario: A young supervisor was asked to head up a high-profile project team. The project involved selecting and introducing some highly sophisticated new technology to the organization. This supervisor was on a career fast track, and he knew that this project was just what he needed to show top management what he was capable of.

The supervisor was assigned a project team composed of employees who were all much older than he was, and he didn’t like the idea one bit. He went to his boss and asked if he could make some changes to the project team. He wanted to replace the older workers with young fast-trackers like himself. “These old guys are out of date and out of touch,” he told his boss. “What I need are some young go-getters who are up on all the latest technology.”

But the supervisor’s boss disagreed. “Your team has a lot of experience,” he said. “They are all highly qualified. They’ve been working here for years and understand how the organization works and what it needs. I want you to keep them on and make it work.”

Here’s what this supervisor did next:

Although he still wasn’t happy about the situation, the supervisor put aside his prejudices and decided on a plan of action to make the project a success using the team he was
given. First, he explained the team’s mission and answered team members’ questions about the project.

- Then he decided to take advantage of all those years of knowledge and experience in the room. He asked his team members for ideas about how they could best accomplish their goals.

- Instead of planning the work himself, as he usually did, he involved the team in the planning.

- He even let them divide up the work and decide who would do what.

- When the planning was complete and they were ready to launch the project, the supervisor told his team that he was relying on them to do a good job, and that he would hold each one of them accountable for the success of the project. Then he let them go to work.

The project was extremely successful, and the supervisor realized how lucky he was to have had such a great team. He also realized his bias against older workers had been based on myths, not facts. From that day on, his attitude toward older workers changed completely.

If you have younger workers who appear to be displaying overt or subtle prejudices against their older colleagues, training—and discipline, if needed—are needed to nip the problem in the bud.

**Watch Out for Age Bias (Intentional or Unintentional)**

When your workforce includes older workers, you must be careful not to violate age discrimination laws. Under both the federal Age Discrimination in Employment Act and state age discrimination
laws, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person because of his or her age with respect to any term, condition, or privilege of employment.

The law protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age, and those protections apply to both employees and job applicants. It is also against the law to retaliate against an individual for opposing employment practices that discriminate based on age, for filing an age discrimination charge, or for testifying or participating in any way in an investigation, hearing, or litigation under the age discrimination law.

Included under the broad umbrella of “terms, conditions, or privileges of employment” are a number of prohibitions against discrimination in employment because of age:

- Discrimination in firing is prohibited, as is laying off older workers before laying off less-qualified, younger employees who perform the same jobs.

- Discriminating against older workers when it comes to promotions is prohibited as well—for example, choosing a younger worker for a promotion over a more-qualified, older person.

- Discrimination in compensation is prohibited. Older workers must be paid the same as younger workers doing the same work.

- Older workers must receive the same or comparable benefits as those given to younger workers.

- Discrimination in training is also against the law. For example, you can’t decide to deny training in new technology or equipment to older workers because you assume that they
couldn’t or wouldn’t want to face the challenge. And you can’t deny older workers training opportunities because you expect that they’ll only be around another few years, and it’s not worth investing training dollars on them.

You don’t have to be age 40 or under to be guilty of age bias. Almost everyone has been guilty of age-biased thinking at some point or other. For example, have you ever …

- Excluded an older worker from training because you figured “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks”?

- Lost patience with an older worker who didn’t know how to use new equipment or technology, or who was having trouble learning?

- Hired a younger job applicant over an older one simply because you didn’t want to invest the time and money to train someone who might work for the company for only a few years? Or promoted a younger worker instead of an older one because you figured the older one had plateaued and was no longer interested in advancement?

- Hesitated to ask an older worker to team up with younger coworkers on a special project or problem-solving mission because you figured he or she wouldn’t fit in or be interested in a challenging job?

- Encouraged an older worker to “start thinking” about retirement?

- Made or listened to jokes about mental or physical problems associated with aging?
To avoid age-biased thinking and actions, remember these compliance tips.

- When advertising for employment, avoid any expression that states a preference for younger applicants (for example, “recent college graduates” or “vigorous”) or older applicants (for example, “mature” or “semiretired”). Instead, focus on the special skills or experience necessary to do the job.

- Avoid using age-related humor or references on the job (e.g., calling an older worker “Grandpa”), even in a joking way—that could be viewed as evidence of age bias, so don’t allow your employees to engage in this behavior.

- Avoid marginalizing older workers or making assumptions about their aspirations and abilities. Don’t, for example, assume that older workers are less flexible or less willing to learn new skills and adapt to workplace changes, such as adapting to new computer systems or changes in work procedures or schedules. Also, don’t assume that they aren’t interested in advancement or new challenges.

- Document employees’ performance honestly and consistently. A record of poor performance, preferably documented in prior performance appraisals, should be used to form the basis for termination of an employee of any age.

- Do not try to force older employees out of the workforce by making unjustified negative comments in their performance evaluations.

- In addition, provide older workers with opportunities for training and advancement commensurate with their skills, responsibilities, and career plans. Do not cut them off from
job-related training, career development, or promotional opportunities.

- Apply discipline consistently throughout your organization, regardless of age.

- Do not try to pressure older workers into early retirement. Also, do not hire younger people to take over primary responsibilities of workers in their late fifties and early sixties because you assume that they are going to retire soon. In most cases, the age discrimination laws allow people to continue working until 70 years of age or longer if they choose and if they continue to perform in a satisfactory manner.

- Always remember that older employees have the right to the same employment opportunities as their younger coworkers. This includes the opportunity to compete for promotions, to receive job training, to be given meaningful performance appraisals, and so on.

- And finally, to avoid even the appearance of age discrimination, always base all employment decisions on objective, job-related criteria.

**Training Tips for Older Workers**

Training is important for all employees regardless of age. Here are some important things to keep in mind about training older workers.

- Don’t stereotype employees based on their age when it comes to determining training needs.

- Don’t assume that an older worker is less likely to understand new technologies. Many older people have computers at home and are quite knowledgeable and skilled. Others
may require training, but there is no reason they can’t learn as well as a younger employee given time and practice.

- Don’t assume that because of their experience older workers don’t need any training. They may lack required skills or need refresher training.

- When training older workers, allow for self-paced learning when possible. This may require:
  - Smaller training modules.
  - Training schedules that take part-time or flexible schedules into account.
  - Providing employees with written materials and allowing them to take these materials home for studying.

- Create the opportunity to build on prior knowledge and experience, and relate the unfamiliar to the familiar.

- Be patient and respectful with all employees, regardless of age, during the training process.

**Set a Strong Example from the Top**

As a senior HR professional, you are in an ideal position to influence the attitudes of your employees and colleagues:

- Make a point of talking to your colleagues in management about age discrimination, issues related to older workers, and successful strategies for using older workers more fully and productively.
○ Remind younger employees of the valuable contributions made by their older coworkers. Encourage them to interact and learn from their older, more experienced coworkers.

○ Talk to older workers regularly about their attitudes toward the job and their plans for the future. Let them know you value their contributions to your department and to the organization.

Safety for Older Workers

The aging of the Baby Boomers has led to the graying of the American workforce. In fact, the number of Americans over 65 is expected to double in the next 50 years. This demographic trend is a challenge for employers.

According to Dr. Earl Hagman, president of Ergotech Incorporated, two-thirds of workers over 50 have had to postpone retirement due to the recession. As a result, the workforce is aging rapidly, with one-third of the U.S. labor force turning 55 by 2015.

Writing for the website Manufacturing.net, Hagman says this demographic shift can be a boon for manufacturing employers, but also presents significant risks to workers.

Many of these older employees are working in environments with exposure to hazards, lifting, carrying, and other injury triggers. And even though over-50 Americans are healthier than ever, Hagman says their functional capacity remains compromised. With aging comes changes to muscle strength, vision, and cognitive abilities. Loss of range of motion and flexibility may cause difficulties with tasks that require precise movements and dexterity.
In general, older workers have less strength than their younger counterparts, which forces them to operate closer to their maximum strength level. This makes them more prone to sprains, strains, and other musculoskeletal injuries.

While employers are becoming aware of what Hagman calls “the Gray Shift,” few companies have taken steps to prepare for it. Those that do take action often wait until after injuries have occurred.

Hagman says you can prevent injuries and save on related expenses by adjusting the environment to fit older workers. Modifications may include more automation and mechanization, the use of product designs that offer ergonomic benefits, and the input of specialists to identify and eliminate hazards.

Consider these tips to keep seasoned workers safe, compiled by the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation:

- Keep walking surfaces free of water, oil, and ice.
- Provide handrails on inclines or stairs.
- Encourage older workers to get a vision exam to identify any problems.
- Place signage in places easily seen.
- Minimize sources of background noise as much as possible.
- Ensure that equipment warning devices are loud, properly working, and recognizable.
We’ve been talking a lot about Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials—where does the sandwich generation come in? The answer isn’t as simple as a generation defined by birthdates; the “sandwich generation” refers to the group of people (generally between the ages of 30 and 60) who are caring for their aging parents while supporting their own children at the same time.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving, there are more than 24 million Americans who represent the sandwich generation today—a number that will increase due to the growing population of Americans 65 or older, which is expected to double by 2030. One of every 8 Americans aged 40 to 60 is both raising a child and caring for a parent, according to the Pew Research Center, and an additional 7 million to 10 million adults are caring for their aging parents from long-distance. While there are exceptions, most of the current members of the sandwich generation are also Gen Xers.
Additionally, according to the 2000 U.S. census, nearly one-third of families had at least one family member with a disability, and about 1 in 10 families with children under 18 years of age includes a child with a disability. This represents millions of Americans with caregiving responsibilities, such as caring for aging parents; minor children; a disabled spouse, partner, or child; or a family member with a serious health condition.

Flexible workplace arrangements, discussed in more detail later in this Playbook, can help these “sandwich” employees remain productive and engaged at work. But there are legal considerations you need to be aware of as well. Attorney Jamie Rudman of Simpson, Garrity, Innes & Jacuzzi, PC explains why this group of caregivers sometimes files claims, and what you can do to minimize your risks.

Sandwich Generation and Caregiving: Are Caregivers a Protected Class?

The statistics aside, you may be wondering where the claims issues come into play. Are caregivers a protected class? The short answer is no, but, that said, they may have valid claims under state and federal laws, including Title VII, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This list isn’t comprehensive—other regulations have provisions that may trigger protections as well—but these are some of the examples where there have been claims.

As Rudman puts it, “Being a caregiver per se is not a protected class, but the things that you do as a caregiver may bring an employee within a protected class.”

While caregivers are not a protected class, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and state and federal courts are
increasingly recognizing claims for discrimination related to or based on an individual’s family responsibilities. As such, family responsibility discrimination claims are on the rise. According to Center for WorkLife Law, the number of employees claiming they were treated unequally due to their caregiver status increased by approximately 400 percent from 1996 to 2005.

**Sandwich Generation Caregiving Claims: 6 Best Practices to Minimize Liability**

With these situations on the rise, what can you do to minimize your liability? Here are six best practices to follow:

1. **Check policies and forms.** Ensure you have an equal employment opportunity policy with a goal to hire the best candidates for each job solely on the basis of qualifications. Also check your antidiscrimination policy, antiharassment policy, and FMLA certification forms to ensure they comply with the law.

2. **Be careful of bias in the recruiting and hiring process.** Rudman notes: “The best way to avoid problems in recruiting is to be aware of all the areas where hidden bias can crop up.” Do this by applying application procedures equally to all applicants, asking only what’s relevant to the job, and by asking similar questions of all applicants. Also, write down your questions, and be sure if you are taking notes that they are factual, include no opinions or personal biases, and include job-related information only. If you do keep notes, keep them on file for at least 1 year.

3. **Train your supervisors and managers.** Be sure your team is educated regarding various leave rights and antidiscrimination training. Your managers and supervisors do not need
to be experts in every detail, but they do need to recognize potential issues and know when to talk to HR.

4. *Be consistent.* This is especially important when applying company policies, when taking corrective action, and when applying criteria for promotions, raises, or transfers. Be sure to recognize each person as an individual, and do not make assumptions. Treat everyone with respect and courtesy. Last but not least, be aware of and try to correct your biases.

5. *Remember to document.* Your documentation must be able to articulate reasons for employment decisions such as termination, discipline, or promotions. It is even better when those reasons have been recorded in notes, e-mails, or memos since claims may be brought well after a decision was made and after memories have faded.

6. *Take employee complaints seriously.* Never ignore a complaint; conduct an investigation if necessary. Employer investigations do not need to find the “right” answer, but they do need to be conducted in good faith.
The Millennial generation—also known as “Generation Y”—is typically defined as consisting of those born between 1980 and 2000. Millennials are vastly different from previous generations in many ways when it comes to workplace strengths, preferences, and expectations—and, whether you’re ready or not, they are the future of your workplace.

What’s a Millennial?¹⁶

Susan M. Heathfield, HR expert for About.com, offers the following characteristics of Millennials, saying that they:

- Have developed work characteristics and tendencies from doting parents, structured lives, and contact with diverse people.
- Are used to working in teams and want to make friends with people at work.
- Have a “can-do” attitude about tasks at work, and look for feedback about their performance frequently—even daily.
- Want a variety of tasks, and expect that they will accomplish every one of them.
- Are positive, confident, and ready to take on the world.
- Seek leadership, and even structure, from their older and managerial coworkers but expect that you will draw out and respect their ideas.
- Seek a challenge and do not want to experience boredom.
- Are used to balancing many activities, such as teams, friends, and philanthropic activities.
- Want flexibility in scheduling and a life away from work.
- Need to see where their career is going and exactly what they need to do to get there.
- Are waiting for their next challenge (and there had better be a next challenge!).
- Are connected all over the world by e-mail, instant messages, text messages, and the Internet (and thus can network right out of their current workplace if their needs are not met).
The Conflicting Perceptions of Millennials

A recent survey from Beyond.com shows a disconnect between how HR pros view Millennials and how Millennial workers view themselves. This national survey gathered responses from 6,000 jobseekers and veteran HR professionals.

Here are a few examples:

- **Are Millennials tech-savvy?** A majority of HR professionals (86 percent) said yes, while only 35 percent of Millennials felt they were tech-savvy.

- **Are Millennials team players?** Just over half of Millennials (60 percent) thought they would work well with a team. But only 22 percent of HR professionals believed this age group would make good team players.

- **Do Millennials have strong interpersonal communication skills?** Sixty-five percent of Millennials say they relate well to others, while only 14 percent of HR professionals thought young workers are strong communicators.

- **Are Millennials hard workers?** Most Millennials (86 percent) identified themselves as hard workers, a perception not shared by HR pros, with only 11 percent believing Millennials would work hard.

- **Are Millennials able to lead?** Only 9 percent of HR pros say that this age group has the ability to lead. Millennials were more confident in themselves, with 40 percent identifying themselves as leaders.
Are Millennials loyal to employers? In general, Millennials perceive themselves as being loyal to an employer (82 percent). However, only 1 percent of HR professionals believe this to be true.

Challenges Posed by Millennials in the Workplace

The Millennials are here to stay, and they will become an increasingly larger part of your workforce. With the right training and motivation, they can be great assets to your company. But like any other generation, they also pose unique problems. Here are some of the challenges they present to employers and how to deal with them, courtesy of attorney Stephen J. Stine.¹⁸

Too much tech use. Having grown up on e-mailing, texting, Internet surfing, file-swapping, blogging, and digital downloads, Millennials may be insistent when it comes to using personal technological devices, such as PDAs, iPods, and smartphones, at work.

In fact, in a study conducted by Symantec in March 2008, nearly 70 percent of responding Millennials said they would use a computer application, technology, or device regardless of the corporate IT policy. That’s a little unsettling, given how easy it is to copy sensitive data and trade secrets.

If Millennials’ parents gave them their outlook on life, then technology fueled them to live their lives in the Information Age, Stine notes. No generation has ever been so plugged in to the rapidly evolving Internet technology and other communication media. They are as comfortable with iPods, flash drives, text messaging, and smartphones as their parents were with digital watches, Walkmans, and tape cassettes.¹⁹
As a result, Millennials have surpassed previous generations in their ability to seamlessly assimilate technology into their lives. Not surprisingly, they try to adapt their technological savvy into workplace assets.\(^{20}\)

Some Millennials may find it hard to resist the temptation to “play” on the Internet at work. They are so technologically savvy that they might want to download software, music, and even movies onto their work computers. Not only does that pose a security risk to your company, but it wastes time as well. Just as problematic, some Millennials may be inclined to surf the Internet endlessly, again wasting company time.

Of course, some companies strictly curtail Internet use to work-related sites or otherwise monitor Internet use. You may want to add such restrictions to instant messaging, text messaging, and cell phone use. You should also make it a point to emphasize the company’s rules and consequences for violations when hiring and training Millennial employees.

**Attendance/business hours policies.** One of the more frequent complaints about Millennial employees is that they often show up late for work or don’t stay for the entire business day. Most of the time, these aren’t egregious violations. Usually, the infraction involves the employee regularly arriving to work 10 minutes to 15 minutes late or leaving a little early at the end of the day.

Millennial employees should be firmly told that those types of infractions won’t be tolerated. You should emphasize to your younger workers that keeping regular business hours is meant to ensure their availability to the company and its clients, not simply to make sure they are completing their regularly assigned job responsibilities.
**Dress code.** Many Millennials wear appropriate work attire without complaint. If you experience any problems, it will probably be along the lines of an employee wearing clothes that are a bit too casual, failing to wear socks or a belt, or neglecting to tuck in a shirt. Because the image your company projects to the public is important, you should reexamine your employee handbook to make sure that dress code violations are appropriately addressed, and emphasize those provisions to your younger employees.

**Feedback requirements.** It’s especially important to conduct regularly scheduled performance reviews for your Millennial employees. You should use evaluations as a time to emphasize the work ethic and professionalism of your company. Generally, Millennials work hard and want to know that their efforts are appreciated.

Just as important, they crave feedback and evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses. They’ve been critiqued their whole lives—in the classroom, on the sports fields, and in performance halls. Don’t shy away from offering constructive criticism to your Millennial employees; they need it and want it.

Millennials are poised to become a large and very successful part of the American workforce, notes Stine. Their idealism, wealth of knowledge, and energy can be great assets to their employers. Many of them need guidance and structure, however, to adjust to the realities of working as a professional. With the right amount of understanding and oversight, you can make sure your Millennial employees are contributing to your company’s continued growth and success.

There’s another challenge you need to be prepared to address when working with Millennials—one so unusual, from the standpoint of
working with other generations, that we’ve devoted the entire next section to it.

An Unexpected Addition to Your Workplace: Millennials’ Parents 21

Not so many decades ago, a vocal segment of the youngest members of the adult population warned their peers to never trust anyone over 30. They were eager to leave the nest and make the world their own. But today, not so much—at least among a noticeable group.

Human resources professionals are noting a change in the youngest and brightest they’re bringing into the workforce. They’re seeing young adults much more tolerant—even encouraging—of parental involvement. And in many cases, they’re meeting those parents personally.

“Helicopter parents,” those who hover over their offspring in school, sports, and all kinds of adolescent activities, have graduated to the workplace. The anecdotes are getting more frequent. HR professionals swap stories of parents submitting resumes on behalf of their children, sometimes without the children’s knowledge. Others relate stories of parents sitting in on interviews, trying to negotiate salaries, and even intervening in disputes with their kids’ coworkers.

Is the phenomenon limited to a few stories of over-involved parents, or is it a sign of a new normal in a young person’s transition to adulthood? The answer may not be clear, but employers are facing the question head-on.
The Ubiquitous Helicopter Parents

JoAnn Corley, an employee training and development specialist, author, and coach, says she sees the subject of helicopter parents in the workplace come up in seminars where she speaks. A parent coaching a child is one thing, she says, but it can go too far. “When do you cut the umbilical cord? That’s what I want to know.”

Corley sees the transition to adulthood being extended a few years as parents stay active in their children’s college life and on into the workforce. She says young adults need to be allowed to navigate for themselves as they enter the world of work. Sometimes young adults are “not allowed to develop professional muscles because the parents are doing it for them.”

HR has a role to play, Corley says. She believes there comes a point when HR needs to instruct parents on the value of creating a professional boundary. “If there’s not a cutting of the umbilical cord, all of a sudden that person becomes a very dependent, entitled employee, not empowered,” she says. “We want our kids to be empowered professionals. Where does that start?”

Corley says employers struggling to navigate in a challenging economic marketplace need tough go-getters who are motivated and resilient. She asks, do employers want employees “who can take a hit and bounce back, or take a hit and whine and complain?”

Parents Fighting Millennials’ Work Battles

Megan Huffnagle saw the issue firsthand when she was the human resources manager for a theme park in Denver, a job that gave her a lot of experience with a young workforce. In that job, she dealt with the mother of a 20-year-old who called to negotiate her son’s salary. She also saw parents regularly attend disciplinary meetings and call
to complain about their son’s or daughter’s coworkers. One father even called about a paycheck issue for his 33-year-old daughter.

Huffnagle also saw parents come to interviews with applicants. “When one such applicant was called back, his mother cornered the interviewer and promptly gave him a list of reasons why he should hire her son,” she says.

Huffnagle says it didn’t surprise her when parents got involved, particularly when they came to disciplinary meetings. Many employees at the theme park were young and experiencing their first jobs, and she says as an employer, she felt a responsibility to teach them work and life skills such as “coming to work on time, proper grooming standards, how to work in a team environment, how to follow direction, [and] how to respond to coaching.” But she said it’s equally important to show young employees “the same amount of professionalism and respect we do for any adult or seasoned employee.”

“I know parents were taken aback when HR would look at the child directly and ask the employee if it was all right that the parent attend the meeting,” Huffnagle says. We did this for disciplinary meetings for those under the age of 18 years old.”

It’s not just HR that has to deal with employees’ parents. Huffnagle says she had a mother who called weekly to negotiate her son’s schedule with the department manager. She said she believes it was a learning experience for the managers, who also were often young, in their twenties or thirties, since they had to learn “to stand their ground and to clearly outline their communication expectations with the employees.”
Can Parental Hovering Ever Be a Good Thing?

HR professionals can trade stories of parents that most would agree have stepped over the line, but parental involvement can be a positive. Some companies even reach out to parents, inviting them to job fairs and sending them information packets with the hope that such actions will give them an edge in the recruitment process. After all, young job candidates are likely to seek their parents’ advice.

Professors from West Virginia University tackled the subject of parental involvement in job searches in a 2010 paper. They acknowledged it can make sense to involve parents, but employers also have concerns about employees who are accustomed to so much parental support.

“With the hypercompetitive customer-oriented markets in which most companies find themselves today,” the researchers wrote, “they need to hire employees who can think on their feet and make sound decisions quickly, effectively, and often independent of direct supervisors. The fear is that the constant doting and intervention by parents throughout their childhood may leave the Millennial without the ability to cope in such an environment.”

But the researchers also found “a few employers who accept the philosophy that they want the best and the brightest and are going to actively recruit Millennials and their parents simultaneously.” Such employers reason that those young people “have had strong support from their families as they grew up and are therefore well-adjusted, have attended the best schools, and thus are the best job candidates.”
Getting Millennials Aboard and Acclimated

Get Tech-Savvy

Take advantage of technology in your recruiting. Millennials expect it, and may be turned off if your website and application process are archaic. Worse still, they may not even discover your job openings in the first place.

Find out where the people you want to hire hang out. Visit and interact with those sites. And take advantage of various search aids to use networking systems to spread the word about your openings.

Enhance your image, says Giselle Kovary, a consultant at n-gen People Performance Inc. Her best example of enhanced recruiting is Starbucks: Do you want to sell coffee? No. But do you want to be a barista? Oh, yes!

Be forewarned if you like to ask the question “Where do you see yourself in 5 years?” Generation Ys will most likely answer, “Well, not here,” Kovary says.

Get Nimble

In today’s employment marketplace, it isn’t just the IT, sales, and product departments that need to be agile and strategic. In order to compete for the best talent in a tight marketplace that favors the jobseeker, HR must also adopt a nimble approach to recruiting.

Recruiting expert Miranda Nash, cofounder and CEO of qeople and former president of Jobscience, has worked as a hiring manager, entrepreneur, and C-suite executive—positions that have given her a thorough knowledge of the art of recruiting. Here, she offers some strategies for effective long-term staffing.
Nash notes that, for most HR professionals, hiring is primarily a reactionary effort: A position opens up, and it’s time to get to work filling it. If you’re lucky, you have the luxury of a 2-week notice, a 1-month-long notice in advance of retirement, or preplanning ahead of new department expansions or other new hiring needs.

But in most cases many HR teams can only dream of having time to plan ahead for hiring. They’re simply too preoccupied with other responsibilities, like benefits administration, compliance training, tracking personal time off, payroll coordination, and other duties.

Unfortunately, this quite often puts the organization behind the eight ball with no way to be strategic in its hiring efforts, writes Nash. This means the company could be at a severe disadvantage when it comes to finding the best talent at the right times to fill critical positions.

In order to prioritize and plan ahead, recruiters instead must take a more strategic, forward-thinking approach to hiring. By looking beyond immediate vacancies to longer-term staffing needs, HR pros can anticipate needs, maintain a full pipeline of candidates, and give their organization a more strategic and agile competitive advantage for recruiting new employees.

Here are Nash’s tips for your long-term staffing:

1. **Assess each position based on its strategic value vs. tactical value.**

   Most organizations make the mistake of treating every job as though each is of equal importance to the organization. Certainly, we all know intuitively that this is not the case, but from an HR perspective, this is how they’re han-
dled: An opening emerges, and we seek to fill it with the best-qualified candidate that we can afford.

But, this focused approach ignores the importance the role plays within the larger organization. Instead, start by examining every position within the organization, from the C-suite to entry-level, and determine whether each job is strategic or tactical—whether the role is to lead the organization with vision, creativity, and insight, or to implement and execute those strategies. Identifying this distinction will help build a foundation for a more-strategic approach to staffing prioritization.

2. **Identify the ideal candidate.**

Of course, each job will have specific qualifications and skills requirements that any worthy candidate must possess. But beyond these qualitative factors, finding the right fit for the job is only half the battle.

You must also find candidates who fit with the company culture, values, and principles. Candidates who “look good on paper” and are otherwise equal in skills and qualifications may be very different in their “soft skills” that determine whether they’re truly a good fit for the organization.

Just as sales professionals know they have to go beyond demographics to the qualitative details that are the hallmark of their ideal customers, HR teams should also identify the personality characteristics and nuances that the ideal candidate for any job role should possess for the entire organization but, most importantly, for those strategic positions.
3. **Conduct supply and demand research.**

Here again, intuition often guides HR pros in knowing what types of jobs will be most in-demand and how this will impact their hiring efforts. But, it’s critical to conduct formal, early-stage research on the supply and demand, especially in the most highly competitive industries.

Each year, the strategic HR team should identify in-demand positions and the competitors who are also looking to fill them, and plot these on a competitive matrix. Visualizing the challenge can help you see more clearly how difficult or easy it may be to fill those positions. Tools and research are one way to gain access to this real-time labor market intelligence.

4. **Build a pipeline.**

Taking another page from the sales professional’s playbook, strategic HR teams know that building a pipeline of qualified, ideal candidates is critical to meeting long-term staffing needs. Don’t make the mistake of waiting for vacancies to occur before starting the process of filling them.

It’s flat-out impossible to cram 4 to 6 months’ worth of work into just 4 to 6 weeks. By building relationships with potential candidates now, you can establish yourself as the employer of choice, promoting your superior company culture and value proposition. This makes your organization attractive even to passive candidates who may not actively be looking for a job right now, but could be lured away from their current employer by the right opportunity.
5. **Plan for Millennials.**

The majority of this newest generation of jobseekers have never lived in a time without the Internet, cell phones, and 24/7 access to media—social and otherwise. They search for jobs in new ways, want different things from their careers and employers, and are more concerned about having a purpose vs. just a job than their predecessors.

Long-term strategic HR planning requires that you meet their needs, regardless of how you or your organization may feel about them. Engage them over social media as a real person and not just a corporate identity, and offer a motivating atmosphere with a career path that both challenges them and helps them feel as though they’re making a difference.

**Additional Smart Recruiting Strategies**

Here are some additional smart—and nondiscriminatory—recruitment strategies to attract workers of all ages.

- Include pictures of both older and younger workers in print ads, brochures, and posters.

- Use a testimonial approach in advertising to address workers’ concerns. For example, “I was bored in retirement until I found a new challenge at the XYZ Company.”

- Ask both older and younger current employees for referrals.

- Use demographic information services to identify newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, and Internet jobsites that appeal to both younger and older people.
○ Work in cooperation with organizations that cater to both younger and older workers by having an open house or job fair—or by simply posting job openings with these organizations.

○ Do not request age-related information on job applications or during job interviews.

○ Do not favor younger job applicants over older, better qualified ones (or, conversely, assume that a younger applicant is incapable of performing the job).

○ Before making a job offer, do not make any inquiry concerning an applicant’s physical capacity, health, or current benefits.

○ After a job offer has been made, you may make job-related inquiries about these concerns, but only if you make the same inquiry of applicants of all ages competing for the same position.

Be Widely Inclusive in Your Employee Orientation Programs²⁵

As Millennials start to come aboard at your workplace, it’s important to remember that your orientation program must support, more generally, this younger generation’s entry into the business world. Ys often don’t know what they don’t know, says Kovary. HR has to help them navigate the business environment.

For example, they show up for work in shorts and flip-flops and, if you call them on it, they’ll say they feel they are dressing appropriately for the workplace. They are used to dressing casually in all aspects of life.
During the first 90 days, says Kovary, HR must help managers seal the psychological deal with new employees by showing them that your organization lives up to its promises.

Remember that Ys expect daily feedback. However, they haven’t had much criticism. You’ll have to prepare them for that and give them the time they need to reflect, Kovary notes.

**Tips to Help Millennials Adapt and Thrive**

Susan Heathfield offers the following recommendations for helping Millennials adapt and thrive in your workplace:

1. *Provide structure.* For example, reports with monthly due dates, jobs with fairly regular hours, certain activities scheduled every day, meetings with agendas and minutes, goals that are clearly stated, and assessments of progress.

2. *Provide leadership and guidance.* Millennials want to look up to you, learn from you, and receive daily feedback from you. They want “in” on the whole picture, and to know the scoop. They want, and deserve, your best investment of time in their success.

3. *Encourage the Millennials’ self-assuredness, can-do attitude, and positive personal self-image.* Millennials are ready to take on the world. Encourage—don’t squash them or contain them.

4. *Take advantage of the Millennials’ comfort level with teams.* Encourage them to join, as they are used to working in groups and teams. Millennials gather in groups and play on teams; you can also mentor, coach, and train your Millennials as a team.
5. *Listen to the Millennial employee.* Your Millennial employees are used to loving parents who have scheduled their lives around the activities and events of their children. These young adults have ideas and opinions, and don’t take kindly to having their thoughts ignored.

6. *Provide challenge and change.* Boring is bad. Millennials seek ever-changing tasks within their work. “What’s happening next?” is their mantra. Don’t bore them, ignore them, or trivialize their contribution.

7. *Expect multitasking.* Millennials are multitaskers on a scale you’ve never seen before, says Heathfield. Talk on the phone while doing e-mail and answering multiple instant messages? Yes—it’s a way of life.

8. *Take advantage of your Millennials’ electronic literacy.* The computer, cell phone, and other media capabilities of these employees are amazing. You have a salesman in China? How’s the trip going? Old-timers call and leave a message in his hotel room, Heathfield says. Millennials text him in his meeting for an immediate response.

9. *Capitalize on the Millennials’ affinity for networking.* Not just comfortable with teams and group activities, your Millennial employees like to network around the world electronically.

10. *Provide work/life balance.* Your Millennial employees are used to cramming their lives with multiple activities, Heathfield says. Although they work hard, they are not into the 60-hour workweeks defined by the Baby Boomers. Balance and multiple activities are important. Ignore this at your peril, advises Heathfield.
What Do Millennials Want at (and from) Work?

Millennials Want Collaboration and Meaning

How should companies manage this new workforce, given their familial, educational, and technological background? Here are some tips for successfully managing Millennials and acclimating them into your company, again courtesy of attorney Stephen J. Stine27:

Take advantage of their team-oriented focus. Millennials have been taught that collaboration is a plus. They are eager to work within an organized group to accomplish challenging tasks. That’s not to say that they can’t think and act individually, but these young people are used to working together.

They have experienced team success, whether it was on a sports team or on a school group project. Try to use their ability to think collectively—especially when paired with older, more experienced workers. A Millennial’s “team-first” approach may be a refreshing addition, and he or she likely will provide unique insight.

Give them meaningful work. One of the best (and sometimes worst) attributes of the Millennials is their need for constant stimulation and purposeful challenges to motivate them at their jobs. They want to make a meaningful contribution immediately, and they want their input to be taken seriously.

While this is an admirable trait in many ways, there are pitfalls to consider. Millennials aren’t the type of workers who expect to “pay their dues.” If unsatisfied with his or her substantive job duties, a Millennial will try to find another, more challenging workplace rather than stick it out with a job in which she has lost interest.
Listen to their opinions. Millennials want to have their opinions seriously considered. They aren’t shy about voicing their ideas because they’ve been taught that their views are valuable. That attitude may annoy and even alienate your older, more experienced workers. But Millennials aren’t really arrogant; they’re just results-oriented. They try to think creatively to solve workplace challenges, and they want honest feedback for their input.

Use their electronic literacy. Unlike some of your older employees who may be more set in their ways and less willing to adapt to technological advances in the workplace, Millennials will likely be adept at using a variety of computer software programs, conducting Internet research, and communicating with their smartphones.

They also tend to be good at multitasking, and can easily talk on the phone while checking e-mail and answering instant messages. Look for diverse opportunities during the workweek that let them exploit their technological prowess.

Interpersonal Relationships May Carry More Weight

There is no question that Millennials are changing the workplace, and a new study conducted by LinkedIn helps illustrate why. The “Relationships @ Work” study examines different workplace behaviors and concludes that Millennials and Baby Boomers have very different reactions to relationships in the workplace.

“Workplace relationships are ever-changing and an important factor in shaping both office dynamics and individual job development,” says Nicole Williams, LinkedIn career expert. “This means that creating an office culture that resonates across generations, roles, and personalities is a critical factor in building a successful working environment.”
One area this study looked at was career advancement. Most Millennial participants felt that being happy was an important part of their jobs, but climbing the proverbial career ladder was far more important than work friendships.

One in five says that having coworkers as friends makes them more competitive on the job. While the younger generation may be quick to stab friends in the back, many of them feel that work friendships are a positive aspect in the work environment.

Having friends at work is important to Millennials because it affects their working environment in a positive way. According to the study, 57 percent of Millennials say that having friends at work makes them happy, while 50 percent say it helps them feel motivated to come to work and be productive.

Additionally, Millennials are more likely to share intimate, private information with their coworkers than their older Baby Boomer counterparts are.

Communication in general is very important to Millennials; more than half of the Millennial survey participants report being more open to sharing relationship advice with coworkers, compared to 23 percent of Baby Boomers. Millennials are also more comfortable discussing salaries with their coworkers, while the Baby Boomers feel it’s taboo to discuss personal earnings.

**Keep It Light and Fun, When Possible**

Generations at Work, the online home of Claire Raines Associates, says the following are Millennials’ six most-frequent requests of management:

1. *You be the leader.* This generation has grown up with structure and supervision, and with parents who were role
models. Millennials are looking for leaders with honesty and integrity.

2. *Challenge me.* Millennials want learning opportunities. They want to be assigned to projects they can learn from.

3. *Respect me.* “Treat our ideas respectfully,” they ask, “even though we haven’t been around a long time.”

4. *Be flexible.* The busiest generation ever isn’t going to give up its activities just because of jobs.

5. *Let me work with friends.* Millennials say they want to work with people they click with.

6. *Let’s have fun.* A little humor, a bit of silliness, even a little irreverence will make your work environment more attractive.

**Millennials and Management**

Given that Millennials’ views on work relationships tend to differ greatly from their predecessors’, it’s not surprising that they also have their own take on managing others and being managed.

A new survey on managers in the workplace was recently conducted to examine the qualities various generations prefer in managers, how generations perceive the importance of the managerial role, and Millennials’ appetite for leadership. The survey was conducted by Kelton, a global insights firm, and the results were released by Addison Group, a provider of professional staffing services.\(^{30}\)

Different life events, market circumstances, and economic priorities have impacted the way each generation of workers has evolved.
The manager/direct-report dichotomy that exists within generations (Millennials to Millennials) as well as across generations (Boomers to Millennials) is an area of focus for employers as they work to retain top management talent and ensure collaboration regardless of age.

“The generational makeup of today’s workforce is complex and continuously evolving,” says Addison Group CEO Thomas Moran. “The more managers can understand what Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials need and want in terms of managerial style, rewards, and leadership opportunities, the more successful employees can be, not to mention the benefits employers can reap from an employee retention standpoint.”

The survey was commissioned with the goal of gaining better insight into the wants and needs of managers who fall within each generation, and to help employers better understand how to provide a work environment that addresses these needs.

**The Manager-Employee Relationship: Traditional Setup Is Preferred**

To understand how managers can better serve employees, the survey examined how managers hope they are perceived as well as the qualities employees find valuable in a manager. Managers who foster growth and well-being are preferred over those that exhibit authoritarian tendencies.

As managers, people would hope to be perceived as mentors (63 percent), teachers (35 percent), supervisors (34 percent), and coaches (34 percent). Interestingly, Millennials are twice as likely to hope to be perceived as a best friend to their direct report (20 percent), compared to Boomers and Gen Xers (10 percent).
Most workers agree that some of the most important qualities for the ideal manager include the ability to give them honest feedback (63 percent) and to trust them (56 percent). Many also note an ideal manager makes time for them (37 percent), is collaborative (36 percent), and has experience in his or her field (58 percent).

**Millennials Are Eager to Lead**

Millennials are increasingly stepping up to managerial roles, a trend that will only continue over time. Of note to employers, 70 percent of workers prefer to oversee someone younger than themselves.

Although 76 percent of Millennials are hesitant to manage an older colleague, Millennials are eager to lead. Members of this age group are particularly apt to display some level of interest or excitement in being a manager (82 percent vs. 57 percent of other age groups).

**What Managers Mean for Professional Development**

To attract new candidates to an organization while retaining top talent, employers should work to create a work environment that encourages career development and collaboration. Professional development opportunities are a top consideration for employees in the job search today, and managers are expected to play a role in the process.

For businesses, it’s important to ensure managerial staff is trained to foster professional and career growth for employees. This is especially crucial for Millennials, who value a manager’s role in their professional development (36 percent) more than other age groups (26 percent). Nearly one-third (29 percent) of all workers tie their professional growth to having a manager.
Tips for Young Leaders Who Want to Bridge the Generation Gap at Work

Tommy Beyer, CHA, is currently the Director of Financial Analysis at Newport Hospitality Group, Inc.—and is a Millennial himself. In his white paper, *4 Best Practices to Help Young Leaders Bridge the Generation Gap at Work*, he offers several tips for Millennials who are looking to lead.31

“One of the largest issues facing these new leaders is learning how to lead a team of older and more experienced members,” Beyer says. “I would like to lay a framework—for a young leader in any industry—for successfully building and leading a team of people who are, in some cases, twice your age.”

1. Respect, Respect, Respect

“The worst mistake a young leader can make when leading team members who are their seniors—one that virtually guarantees your team will be more difficult to lead—is not giving them enough respect,” Beyer says. “By giving respect, I mean respecting their age, years of experience, and ideas. If you expect them to respect your position and you personally, you must make giving respect a top priority.”

2. Leverage the Experience of Older Workers

“The number one advantage someone who is older than you has will most likely be the experience they have garnered over the years in the industry,” notes Beyer. “Usually, with more experience comes a level of certainty in the work they are performing. I found that many of the team members that I began leading knew much more about the industry and property management systems than I did—however, I was still promoted over them.
“I had to leverage the experience they had and use it to help me through some tough situations. I was able to build a team that had years of experience and was willing to share what they had learned to help me become a better leader. My team began to trust me more and, in turn, I was able to get them to want to perform at a higher level. I saw it as a resource that many leaders were too prideful to tap into.

“Once they realized that I respected them and appreciated the experience they had, they became willing to explain how they had dealt with various issues in the past. As a college student, I may have had 'book knowledge’ that they didn't, but I was certainly lacking in the on-the-job experience they possessed.”

3. Help Team Members Feel Included

Once you have earned the respect of your team members and have capitalized on their experience, Beyer advises, “you can begin to shift your attention to making your team members feel included. Since you are a new leader, you are still developing your leadership style and gaining on-the-job experience every day. I came to the realization that I should not be afraid to include my team in some of the decisions I was making and ideas I was considering.”

This process, Beyer says, generates buy-in and great ideas. It’s also important for Millennials to watch out for negative stereotypes—not just about other generations, but about theirs as well: “I saw that the generalized perception of younger leaders is that they are very prideful and arrogant to the point where they would frequently fail to include their team in large decisions that affect the way they perform their jobs. Many young leaders have the tendency to feel threatened by the experience and age of the older members of their
team, when in fact they should have confidence in their position and include the team in the process.”

4. Share Knowledge

“Once I was able to earn the respect of my team and include them in some key decisions, I was comfortable enough with them to begin sharing some of the book knowledge I possessed,” Beyer says. “While they were teaching me the things they had learned while working in the industry, I in turn was able to teach them some of the knowledge they didn’t have the time or opportunity to acquire.

“The majority of the knowledge that I was able to impart related to some technological advancements made over the past few years. My older team members enjoyed learning how to fully utilize programs like Microsoft Excel and Outlook to their advantage. If younger leaders take their time to build a solid rapport with their team, they should be able to impart the knowledge to the older generation without making them feel less valued.”

Carol Hacker is an HR consultant and seminar leader who ranks among the experts in the field of recruiting and retention issues. She’s also the author of 13 highly acclaimed business books. Here, she offers some additional suggestions for younger bosses managing older workers.32

If you are a younger manager with responsibility for managing people who are older than you, you know what a challenge it can be. One of the biggest challenges for younger managers lies in how they are going to supervise people who are older than them, have more experience than they do, and in some cases are perceived as intimidating. According to a 2008 survey by staffing firm Randstad USA, one-fifth of employed adults are older than their managers.
The following tips will help you succeed in managing older workers.

1. *Don’t misuse your authority.* You may be the boss, but if you take an arrogant approach to managing others, you’ll quickly find yourself in trouble. It’s obvious that you are in charge, so don’t push it by constantly reminding your staff that you are commander in chief.

2. *Value their experience.* Don’t overlook the fact that older employees have more life experiences than you do simply because they have lived longer and, in most cases, worked more than you have.

3. *Motivation is an inside job.* You won’t be able to get inside of their heads and force them to be motivated, but you can build a workplace culture in your department that is motivational in nature. Don’t hold back on recognition and rewards, which are meaningful to people from all generations. Just make sure that what you have to offer is something they would like to have. If you don’t know what they want, ask them.

4. *Provide plenty of training.* Don’t assume that just because they are older, they know everything and that they don’t want or need training and development. And don’t hesitate to ask what they need in terms of additional skills. They know themselves better than you do, and they may have something in mind that would benefit them as well as the department.

5. *Don’t underutilize them because you’re afraid of them.* If you fear your older employees or give the impression that you do, you have lost your ability to manage effectively. Get the
coaching that you need from your boss or even a mentor if this is a problem. And don’t be afraid to give them assignments and put their talents to good use because you are unsure of yourself.

6. *Remain flexible.* Anyone who is employed, regardless of their age, appreciates a supervisor who is flexible and open to creative work arrangements. If you have a need to tightly manage your employees and not allow for some flexibility, you won’t be the kind of manager that anyone would want to work for. This is the 21st century, and your job is to lead like you are in sync with the times, and that includes being open-minded and flexible.

7. *Include them in decision-making.* One of the best strategies for getting “buy-in” is to include your employees in decisions that affect them. Making all the rules and decisions will be a turnoff for creative minds and experienced personnel. Sometimes, younger managers think that they are getting paid to make all the decisions, so they don’t allow their employees to have any input—that’s a huge mistake!

8. *Don’t assume anything.* If you believe that age defines qualifications, energy level, personalities, skills, and abilities, you’re short-changing yourself. Age is relative. You will find younger employees who are mature and wise beyond their years and older workers who can run circles around your entire team with their energy, know-how, and willingness.

Whether you are a Boomer managing seniors, Generation X managing seniors or Boomers, or Generation Y managing any of the above, you have a responsibility to your employees to lead with respect, set a good example, and put forth
your best effort. You may have some rough days, but they are not insurmountable if you make a solid effort to learn as much as you can about managing from your more experienced employees as well as your superiors.

Creating an Appealing Compensation Package for Millennials and Beyond

While quite a few employers continue to think of Millennials as the “young whippersnappers” of the office, the oldest among them are now in their mid-thirties.

For this reason, understanding what motivates them—and how to pay them in comparison to other generations—becomes even more important. With a fixed compensation budget, you need to know how to best direct your dollars where they will give you the most bang for your compensation buck, so to speak.

Customized Tiers Are Crucial, Expert Says

Mykkah Herner, head of expert services at PayScale, Inc., contends that strong compensation plans are tiered, with pay philosophy providing a solid foundation for the other tiers.

On the foundation is base pay, followed by variable pay, and topped off with individualized rewards and recognition. No matter the size of the overall compensation budget, companies are wise to consider the way they allocate the budget among these tiers, Herner suggests.

In contrast to Baby Boomers and Generation Xers—who often desire work/life balance and value stability—Millennials are willing to put a greater percentage of their pay at risk in exchange for strong upside potential. They also value the environment at work, which means
employers should pay attention to the branding of their workplace as a means of attracting and retaining these younger workers.

The generations also react differently to differing means of communicating about pay. In fact, they are nearly polar opposites when it comes to the amount of information they want others to have about their pay.

As noted above, the older generations tend to keep pay information very private, while the younger group—whose members were raised in an age when every piece of information is easily accessible online—are OK with sharing it. Striking a balance is important in order to avoid alienating either end of the spectrum, according to PayScale.

5 Actions You Can Take to Meet Generational Needs

To develop an effective pay plan that can meet the needs of each generation, PayScale suggests the following five actions:

1. Identify and quantify which generations are prominent in your workforce. Think about how that may change in the future, and try to anticipate the generational makeup of your workforce 5 years from now. “Some predictions show nearly half of the workforce will [comprise] Millennials in 5 years,” Herner says. “By understanding what your workforce looks like today and is likely to look like in 5 years, employers can establish a forward-thinking, strategic head start on defining a compensation strategy that will carry their business into the future.

“We’re no longer in a situation where employers can sit passively with the belief their employees will remain at the organization for decades to come. The Millennial genera-
tion is a new kind of worker that demands a new kind of employer—one that is both responsible and proactive.”

2. **Assess your current compensation mix and how well it aligns (or doesn’t) with your workforce.** Remember that it may not necessarily be tied just to generational differences; the mix of pay that works best for the various segments of your workplace population may have just as much to do with function as with generations. “What types of compensation does your organization currently use to pay employees?” Herner suggests asking. “Perhaps more importantly, how competent are you in putting together the right compensation mix for your workforce?” Millennials are good at grasping the big picture. For them it’s not about fixed costs like base pay. Rather, they seek opportunities for “potential pay,” a win-win for employers and employees alike.

3. **Review your open positions, and identify what skills are needed for those jobs.** Are those skills trainable? Is there someone internally who might be able to fill that position given adequate training? Is yours an organization that has struggled because of the actual or perceived skills gap?

   “If so, maybe it’s time to get real: Which of the skills you are seeking are trainable? What programs do you have in place to train internal staff so you won’t be in the same position again in the future? Transition is here to stay, so even if an employer finds ideal candidates now, there is no guarantee they’ll stay with the organization forever,” Herner says.

4. **Consider which of your Baby Boomers may be retiring in the short- or long-term.** Have you identified folks in Generation
X or in your Millennial population who may be groomed for those leadership roles? “Companies should develop a formalized succession plan that recognizes leadership skills the organization values, and identify internal employees with leadership potential, then foster those skills in your star performers,” Herner advises.

He recommends asking a number of questions throughout the process: “What is the likelihood each will retire or move on in the next 5 to 7 years? What are the leadership skills that matter most in your organization? Do you need leaders with a strong vision? Which employees are charismatic and able to build enthusiasm across the employee population? Which ones are more pragmatic? Which have a strong business sense? Or, is it more important for your leaders to be able to sell your organization to outside investors or customers?”

5. *Begin a conversation with your executives about the appropriate level of transparency relative to your pay plan in the organization.* “After taking an inventory of the workforce, employers should think about the organization’s culture and industry. Some more traditional industries (e.g., banking and manufacturing) avoid full transparency, while other value-driven organizations (nonprofits, for example) lean towards a high level of transparency. Newer, more innovative industries, such as progressive marketing firms and technology companies, may also adopt fairly high levels of compensation transparency,” Herner says.
Boomers Have a Different Perspective on Pay

“Baby Boomers tend to focus on base salary and short-term bonus compensation. Why is that? Because they’re close to retirement, and they want to have cash to put away,” explains Laura Fries, managing director and executive vice president at Baker Tilly.

“But the trend overall—and the Hay Group did a study on this—is that compensation is leaning much more toward long-term incentive compensation. There are good reasons for that, including that it really focuses more on the goals of the company. It also acts as a retention tool for employees, in that it isn’t an every year bonus where someone can just wait for the bonus then leave for the next opportunity.”

If the senior executives, who are overwhelmingly still Baby Boomers, prefer cash compensation, changing the structure could be an effective way to keep them in the workforce to mentor the next generation, at fewer hours and a lower rate of pay. “On paper, this is a great idea,” Fries continues. “Having people move into this mentor/coach situation really seems like a great concept.”

But she admits she hasn’t been asked directly about changing a pay structure based on this concept. “I’ve had a lot of questions that are right around it,” she says. “I think we’ve gone past the point of wanting to create a culture that motivates people of different generations within the workplace, but really getting down into the nitty-gritty of finding out if they actually respond to financial incentives differently is sort of new.

“In my opinion, right now we are being driven more by legal changes and other constraints that affect compensation,” Fries says. “But I think we are not very far away, as more and more Baby Boomers
retire, until we will go beyond that. We will need to really answer the question of how to retain the best talent.

“We’ve talked for years about the war for talent, and there have been times when it has been very tight. But the Baby Boomers were always a part of the talent pool. Now, it’s only about 15 years until most of them will be in retirement. So the war for talent is going to define the future in terms of how companies and their management will look, much more than ever before.”
Chapter 5
Communicating Effectively with an Intergenerational Workforce

Communication with and among employees is one of the most important issues any senior HR professional has to manage—and generational diversity introduces some extra considerations (and complications).

The cost of communication failures related to generational diversity is high. For example, failure to maintain efficient communication with and among employees of all ages and failure to provide sufficient and efficient feedback can lead to:

- Morale problems and conflict;
- Higher turnover;
- Increased recruitment, hiring, and training costs;
- More complaints and grievances; and
More disciplinary problems.

Here are some strategies for success:

General Communications

- Make sure you communicate with all groups of employees regularly, from the youngest to the oldest and everybody in between.

- Make an effort to understand generational differences to make your interactions with employees more effective. By recognizing and accounting for possible generational differences, you can target your communications more accurately and successfully.

- At the same time, use language and references you’re comfortable with and that anyone can understand and relate to when communicating to all your employees. In other words, be yourself, but be aware of your own generational influences so that they don’t negatively affect your interactions with employees.

- Always listen carefully to ensure mutual understanding with any employee of any generation. Clarify your understanding, and ask questions if you don’t understand others’ words or meanings.

- Take steps to ensure that workers communicate effectively with one another, regardless of generational differences.

- Use mentoring and team-building strategies to improve relationships between younger and older workers.
Be alert to generation-specific (and worker-specific) stresses, and make sure employees are aware of company benefits geared to their needs, such as employee assistance programs.

Feedback

Generational differences also have an impact on feedback. For example, views about feedback among employees from different generations can be quite different. Although all employees need positive and corrective feedback from you regardless of their age, you should be aware of possible differences.

- Matures may not rely much on feedback to perform well. They grew up in a time when hard work was expected, and nobody gave you a pat on the back just for doing your job. So, they may not need or expect as much feedback from you as the other generations. That’s not to say, of course, that they don’t need any feedback—because they do, even if it doesn’t get a big rise out of them.

- Boomers may figure that they get most of the feedback they need from you during performance appraisals. In between, they’re happy to get along on their own and appraise their own performance.

- Xers generally need to know how they’re doing. They want your feedback often, and they want to know all the specifics—positive or negative.

- Millennials grew up hearing their parents and teachers tell them “good job” every time they did something right. They
also grew up in an age of instant communication. So, they want lots of feedback, and they want it right now.

- Make employees feel valued and important—even those who have been with you for years.

**Teamwork**

- Try to ensure that work teams reflect generational diversity to get a diversity of views and experience.

- Encourage team members to value one another’s differences. Help them recognize the strength provided by their combined talents and perspectives.

- Support and encourage work relationships among workers from different generations. This may involve team relationships, mentoring relationships, or simply cooperation and respect between two employees who have to work together every day.

- Don’t forget to do something about conflict. Conflicts between and among generations are not unlikely, so it’s best to be prepared. Teach employees conflict resolution methods, and be ready to step in and mediate disputes if necessary.

**Motivation**

Think about your work teams and the potential impact of generational diversity on team success. Motivational strategies for employees from different generations depend on understanding their needs, concerns, and goals.
You must recognize that different employees respond to different motivators. One size rarely fits all. Generational diversity is one of the factors that can affect the motivators you use. For example, Boomers may be motivated by participation, while Xers are motivated by challenges, and Millennials are motivated by instant feedback.

It’s important to demonstrate interest in everyone’s performance and achievements. Because older workers often require less supervision, it’s easy to forget that older workers still need to feel that the boss is interested in their work.

It’s also important when motivating a diverse group of employees to hold all of them to high standards of performance. When you expect everyone to perform at their highest level, not just your best employees, then you’re likely to motivate the best performance from all your employees.

Recognizing and awarding achievement is a universal motivator for all the generations. Everyone wants and needs recognition for effort and success.

Seek new and different ways to motivate employees. Realize that what motivates a young worker at the beginning of his or her career probably isn’t what motivates an older worker approaching the end of his or her career. Tailor your motivational approach to individual personalities and circumstances.

To motivate all employees you also need to provide opportunities for all those who want them, not just for a chosen few.
And, to get the best performance from workers of all ages, you must emphasize performance goals and help employees reach their goals.

**Training and Development**

Training and development are other important issues related to generational diversity.

- Be sure to assess group and individual training needs. For example, younger workers may need basic skills training, whereas older workers might need training to update skills or acquire new competencies required by technological or other changes in the workplace.

- Make sure employees of all ages get training mandated by government regulations or organizational policies.

- Use training techniques that appeal to all types of learners and generations. For example, Xers and Millennials will take naturally to computer-based training, whereas older workers might be more comfortable with discussions and lectures.

- Enlist the assistance of older, experienced workers as trainers and coaches. That way, they’ll be able to share their knowledge and expertise with coworkers, and you’ll be able to conduct more training more often.

- Work with employees to set realistic performance goals, and then hold them accountable for achieving these goals.
Finally, help all employees learn, grow, and develop. All workers need to keep growing and developing in their jobs, not just the young, up-and-coming ones.

Conflict Resolution

When you have two workers who just don’t see eye to eye, whether due to generational or other differences, effective teamwork becomes impossible. Other workers’ morale and productivity is often undermined as well.

According to three studies reported on by Tony Fiore, PhD, at businessknowhow.com, management spends from 24 percent to 60 percent of its time dealing with workplace conflict. Here are some strategies for stopping a chronic conflict in its tracks:

- First, bring the conflicting parties together. Never meet with them alone, as this will immediately be seen as taking sides.

- Let each tell his or her side, without interruption. Grievances need to be aired before they can be resolved. And, allowing interruptions will again be seen as taking sides.

- Identify the true motivation behind the conflict. The antagonists will bring up every slight or perceived slight that’s ever happened in their relationship, but you need to ask yourself: “What’s really holding up the show here? What’s really at the heart of this disagreement?”

- Realize that even in conflict, there is the seed of compromise. No one really likes living under hostile conditions. If you can find common ground between the parties, there will be a predisposition to settle the matter. But it may take a lot of time, talk, and patience.
Ask each party to identify actions that the other could take to resolve the conflict. If the parties identify their desired outcomes in a hostile way, restate their positions in a more positive manner. “Edit their script,” says professional mediator Jeffrey Krivis, author of the 2006 reference on the topic, *Improvisational Negotiation.* “Literally [give] them words to see their options.” Then draft (orally or on paper) what the parties agree to do.

Don’t resolve the conflict too quickly, Krivis also suggests. A quick settlement often leads to doubts by the parties about the outcome, and a feeling that “someone’s pulled the wool over my eyes.”

Use managerial power to promote a settlement. Tell the parties that you expect them to work this out, but that if this disruption continues, disciplinary action will be taken against both sides.

Set a follow-up meeting to monitor progress on the agreement.

Finally, remember that workplace conflicts almost never resolve themselves; they only get worse if left unmediated. And some conflicts can never be resolved. The best you can do is separate the parties within the organization, or from the organization.
Traditionally, succession planning focused on an orderly transition at the top of the company. Companies would plan for the time when a chief executive officer, president, chief financial officer, or other key manager would retire or move on to new opportunities. The focus would be on a smooth transition to new leadership, making sure the company stayed on track during the transition.

Succession planning has taken on a whole new level of importance today as companies anticipate changes in the workforce. One of the most notable is the aging of the workforce and the significant brain drain many companies will experience as Baby Boomers begin to retire.
The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that over one-third of the civilian employees working for the federal government are eligible for retirement, and 34 percent are over 50 years of age. The same situation exists, but to a somewhat lesser degree, in the workforce as a whole. Therefore, employers can expect that federal and state governments will be hiring large numbers of replacements from available employees to fill positions in both the private and public sectors.

In this new environment, succession planning has a broader focus. Companies must plan not only for staffing needs at the top of the company but must also identify and plan for future human capital needs at all levels—planning for the future growth and success of the company. If the company is not prepared or has not invested in its key employees, when the need to fill a position arises, the company will likely find itself looking outside the organization in competition with other public and private employers.

The ideal scenario, of course, involves an ongoing process of developing talent in-house so that crucial vacancies can be filled quickly and effectively. This is good not only for your organization, but also for your HiPos’ career paths as well. If your Millennials know and trust there is room for upward mobility—even if not immediately—they are less likely to leave you for another employer.

**Developing a Succession Plan**

In many organizations, a succession plan is a document developed by the human resources department, distributed to managers, and then put on a shelf. This type of plan is of little value to a company.
To be of real value, the plan must include input from senior management, an analysis of the company’s current and future needs for talent, a plan for identifying employees who will be trained and mentored to fill key roles in the future, and a plan for recruiting outside talent to make sure the company has the skills and experience it needs. Once this is done, the plan must be implemented, and managers and supervisors at all levels of the company must be evaluated on their work in developing employees.

- **Study the demographics of the company.** Early in the process, it is important to analyze the current workforce. Is brain drain going to present a significant problem for the company and, if so, when and in what areas or jobs? Knowing when and where there will be key vacancies or a need to replace accumulated skills and knowledge will help focus on future needs as well as current vacancies when new employees are recruited and hired.

- **Link strategic goals with human capital needs.** Identify the talent, skills, and experience the company will need over the next 5 to 10 years in order to achieve goals and continue to be successful. This will include the knowledge, skills, abilities, experience, education, core competencies, and even personality traits that will be needed to fill top management positions and other positions that will be important to the company’s long-term success.

- **Senior management must play a role.** As noted above, a succession plan document that sits on a shelf is not helpful. Armed with demographic information and information on the talent, skills, and experience the company will need over the next 5 to 10 years, human resources managers
need to involve senior managers in the planning process so that succession planning and the development of employees are adopted as strategic goals. Senior management will be more likely to participate in the process if it is linked to its own strategic goals and the long-term strategic goals of the company.

Senior management must play a central role both in developing the plan and making sure it is properly implemented, including:

- Reviewing and adjusting the 5- to 10-year analysis of talent, skills, and experience to make sure it is aligned with the long-term goals of the company;
- Identifying key positions and the skills and experience necessary to fill them;
- Using data that are readily available and can be gathered at regular intervals;
- Identifying high achievers or HiPos already working for the company who will be targeted for mentoring and cross-training so that they can fill key positions in the future;
- Providing project work to targeted employees in order to expand their knowledge and experience, and prepare them for future leadership roles;
- Supporting recruiting efforts aimed at hiring individuals with the skills and experience needed now and in the future; and
- Evaluating managers and supervisors at all levels of the company on how well they develop and mentor employees.
Notifying Employees

Critical to the effectiveness of any succession plan is employee awareness of such a plan. Employees who are aware of the employer’s succession plan and program will be more likely to self-identify through performance. Employees who fit within the employer’s succession plan will derive comfort and security from a tangible, well-laid-out plan for their future.

In order to establish a written succession plan and policy, the employer should consider the purpose of the plan (i.e., to identify employees with skills and potential to succeed within the organization and to ensure that outgoing employees are replaced with high-quality candidates from within) and any procedures for succession planning (e.g., schedule for review of plans, identification of critical positions, past plan performance, and future modifications of plan).

Identifying Key Positions and Skills

A critical step in the process is to specifically identify the key positions that will be targeted in the succession plan. This usually includes management-level positions. It may also include highly specialized jobs that are essential to the company’s ability to meet current or future goals.

When the positions are identified with the help of senior management, it is important to understand what the knowledge, experience, training and education, skills, personality traits, and other necessary requirements are for these positions. Once the company understands what it needs, it can look at current employees and identify individuals with the potential to fill these key positions. In addition, the company can identify gaps in the skills and experience of current
employees and then make a concerted effort to fill those gaps when hiring employees from outside the company.

**Identifying HiPos**

Also critical to the succession plan is the process of identifying employees that will be targeted for training and mentoring so that they will be ready to step into key positions when openings occur. It is helpful to consider the following criteria:

- Work history, including progression into more responsible positions, and past experience that might be helpful in a future position
- Job performance over time
- Education and training
- Demonstrated willingness to take initiative on new projects and to suggest new ideas
- Employee’s own interests and career goals
- Personality profile if the company uses this type of assessment
- Ability to get work done and to meet deadlines
- Ability to work as part of a team and to motivate others
- Understanding of the company’s products and customers
- Training needs of the employee in order to be ready for more responsible management positions
Once an employee is identified through this process, the next step is to develop an individualized plan for the employee. The best development plans include a mentor relationship with a successful senior manager, cross-training, and project work that provides leadership opportunities for the employee.

Even though some classroom training may be appropriate, managers generally learn more relevant skills through observation and practice. The development plan should focus on making sure the employee has the skills, training, traits, and experiences necessary to fill one of the key positions if and when there is an opening.

**Setting Development Goals**

Once individual, high-performing HiPos have been identified, development goals should be set, including establishing projects or work activities for development, setting the time frames for development goals, determining the resources needed, setting measurements, and agreeing on the action necessary to set and carry out development goals. Once goals have been set, the individual’s career coach (usually the manager) should be assigned, and their role should be clearly established.

**The Role of Human Resources in Keeping the Plan on Track**

Human resources professionals play an important role in the development and implementation of the succession plan. They develop the information necessary to link planning to the company’s strategic goals in order to get the buy-in of senior management. Human resources will likely be responsible for facilitating the planning process and documenting decisions.
Once the plan is in place, HR has many roles, including:

- Identifying and providing training programs for mentors and HiPos
- Tracking the development of employees identified as high-potential
- Monitoring goals and objectives, trends in the market, and other strategic issues to make sure the plan remains relevant and is updated to meet the continuing needs of the company
- Making sure managers are evaluated on their work in mentoring and developing HiPos
- Keeping the focus on employee development across the company and at all levels
- Assisting employees with their own career planning and training goals
- Managing the recruiting process so that open positions are filled when possible with individuals who have skills and experience that may fill the gaps in the current bench strength of the company

Succession planning is not just the responsibility of the human resources department. However, as a strategic partner, you drive the process and keep it on track. You can also help develop and maintain a culture of employee development across the organization.
Retention Strategies

Succession planning that fosters in employees a sense that the company is committed to their development has benefits beyond simply making sure the company has the bench strength it needs to fill key positions. Employees who feel the company is making an investment in their development and career planning are more likely to be committed to the organization long term. It is important that these key employees understand the broader process so that they do not become frustrated because it appears that there is not a traditional line for advancement for their current position.

Measuring Success

One way to keep the focus on succession planning and developing employees is to track and measure the success of the plan at the department and company level. This can be done through the use of metrics. Another method is to base a portion of managers’ evaluations on how well they implement the plan. Suggestions include:

- Measuring the total number of open positions identified as key positions in the succession plan that were filled by HiPos
- Using 360-degree reviews for evaluating the mentoring process by having the mentor evaluate the employee and vice versa
- Conducting regular surveys of employee satisfaction, including questions regarding employee development and “role” in the organization
Chapter 7
What Every Generation Needs to Thrive at Work

So far in this Playbook, we’ve taken you through the various generational differences that exist within your current workforce. While these differences should not be underestimated, it’s important to remember that, in some important ways, all employees are more alike than they’re different. And if you neglect these baseline factors, all of the generational sensitivity in the world won’t get you very far.

To that end, this section is devoted to helping you create a workplace that engages and challenges across generations.
The 6 Universal Drivers of Employee Engagement

“Six factors need to be present for true employee engagement,” says consultant Keith Branham. Highly engaged workplaces score highly on all six drivers, and tend to have “signature” drivers—that is, drivers for which they are particularly known. Branham is founder and principal of Keeping the People, Inc. He offered his expertise at a recent WorldatWork Total Rewards Conference and Exhibition.

Driver #1: Caring and Committed Senior Leaders

Branham points to the following differences between low-scoring and high-scoring employers on engagement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low-Scoring Employers</th>
<th>High-Scoring Employers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolated and self-interested management</td>
<td>Servant mindset management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Devalue employees</td>
<td>Value employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give ’em an inch, and they’ll take a mile.”</td>
<td>“If we give, they will give back.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee engagement is desirable.</td>
<td>Employee engagement is critical for our business success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Result: Burned out employees giving poor service</td>
<td>Result: Nurtured workers giving great service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driver #2: Manager Effectiveness

Twenty-five percent of employees would fire their boss, says Branham. Consider this table of traditional coaching vs. a more contemporary approach:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Partnering</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manager-driven</td>
<td>Employee has input</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-to-child</td>
<td>Adult-to-adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR exercise</td>
<td>Manager’s tool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personality</td>
<td>Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vague goals</td>
<td>Specific objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly event</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets compliance</td>
<td>Gets commitment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Branham points to Winchester Hospital, a Best Place to Work in Boston company that started to focus on good feedback and engagement. Nurse turnover went from 20 percent to 7 percent, and the nurse vacancy rate plummeted from 19 percent to 2 percent.

Make a simple grid to rate your managers, says Branham:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Makes the numbers</th>
<th>Doesn’t make numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Treats people right</strong></td>
<td>Keep these managers.</td>
<td>Coach these managers; if they don’t improve, take them out of management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Doesn’t treat people right</strong></td>
<td>Coach these managers; if they don’t improve, take them out of management.</td>
<td>Eliminate these people.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Driver #3: Teamwork (Not “Us vs. Them”)

Teamwork is an important element of engagement, says Branham.

In one recent survey, he says, in which employees scored their reaction to the statement “I feel loyal to my immediate team or work group,” employees from Best-Place-to-Work winners scored significantly higher than did those from nonwinners.

Driver #4: Job-Learning-Career

Today’s employees value job enrichment, learning, and the ability to see a future. One company, faced with few promotional opportunities for HiPos, has embraced horizontal transfers. Critically, the company has made it clear that managers cannot stand in the way of employees who want to change jobs.

Branham points to four differing generational views of learning:

- **Traditionalists** “I learned the hard way … you can, too!”
- **Boomers** “Train ’em too much, and they’ll leave.”
- **Xers** “The more they learn, the more they stay.”
- **Millennials** “Continuous learning is a way of life.”

At the beginning, Branham says, employees are overwhelmed. Then there’s a period where they are happily challenged, followed by a period of smooth sailing. But then boredom sets in, followed by indifference. New challenges are required. (Source: Rob Bennett, *Passion Saving: The Path to Plentiful Free Time and Soul-Satisfying Work*)
Driver #5: Feeling Valued and Respected

Branham notes 10 ways employees may feel devalued:

1. Lack of simple appreciation
2. Unfair recognition
3. Too-little, too-late recognition
4. Reward wasn’t meaningful
5. Insufficient/unfair pay
6. Being ignored (not listened to, kept informed, or taken seriously)
7. Being micromanaged, over-controlled, not trusted, not challenged
8. Unacceptable physical surroundings or conditions
9. Not provided with the right tools or resources, including staffing assistance (overworked)
10. Nonperformers tolerated and rewarded

And, again, says Branham, Best-Place-to-Work companies scored higher on recognition than did non-Best-Place-to-Work companies.

Driver #6: Personal Well-being and Work/Life Balance

There’s a mixed message being delivered to employees, says Branham. Studies say that half of employees are burned out (some studies say it’s more like three-quarters), yet the companies are offering wellness programs.
Here is Branham’s partial list of well-being practices at top-scoring companies:

- 4 weeks’ paid vacation for all
- Childcare subsidy
- Eldercare services
- Annual weeklong financial and health fairs
- Free on-site breast cancer and blood pressure screenings
- “College Coach” program for parents
- Meeting-free days
- Discounts on fitness club memberships or weight-loss programs
- Nutrition consultations

Work/life balance is crucial for employees of all generations. In the next section, we’ll delve more deeply into what flexible work arrangements look like in actual practice.

**Creating a Flexible Workplace That Works**

It may be a cliché to say employees are an employer’s greatest asset. But, if that wasn’t true, it wouldn’t be a cliché—and employers wouldn’t focus so much attention on retaining their best and brightest. The reasons behind an employee’s decision to leave a job depend on each individual’s situation, but new research identifies minimal wage growth and a lack of flexibility as chief culprits.
Unsatisfactory wages tops the list of reasons full-time workers quit, according to research from EY, the global organization that refers to one or more of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited. The other four reasons rounding out the top five are: lack of opportunity to advance, excessive overtime hours, a work environment that doesn’t encourage teamwork, and a boss that doesn’t allow for work flexibility.

The research says other leading factors in an employee’s decision to quit a job are related to that lack of flexibility. A “flexibility stigma”—the perception that people who work flexibly or take leave will suffer career consequences—is one factor prompting employees to leave their jobs. Others quit because their workplaces offer no flexibility at all (including no option to telecommute), according to the research. Too much overnight travel is another reason identified in EY’s research.

The study’s conclusions were drawn from an online survey of nearly 9,700 full-time workers at companies of various sizes in eight countries: the United States, Germany, Japan, China, Mexico, Brazil, India, and the United Kingdom. The research shows that one-third of the workers surveyed claim managing work and life has gotten harder in the last 5 years. Millennials are particularly affected, according to the research.

“One key area of focus for the survey globally and in the U.S. is Millennials,” according to an EY statement on the survey. “Millennial parents who are full-time employees in the U.S. are facing increased responsibilities at work and home, such as moving into management and having children before age 30.” This increased responsibility at work and at home has created what the researchers labeled a “perfect storm” for the Millennial generation.
Not only are today’s younger workers increasing their work hours after becoming parents, they “are seeing more of a backlash in working flexibly than older generations,” according to EY’s report on the research. “One striking finding, likely compounded by the lack of a U.S. paid parental leave policy, is that 38 percent of Millennials said they would ‘move to another country with better parental leave benefits.’”

The research also found that about one in 10 U.S. workers says they have “suffered a negative consequence as a result of having a flexible work schedule.” The rate is even higher for Millennials, nearly one in six.

The research also shows that Millennials highly value increased flexibility and paid parental leave. They say they would be more likely to recommend a company offering those benefits to others, be more engaged, less likely to quit, more likely to join the company, and work longer hours if they had paid parental leave and flexibility.

The EY survey lines up with another couple of surveys from last fall. Specialized staffing firm Robert Half separately polled chief financial officers and employees on the reasons workers quit.

The research shows that both the CFOs and the workers named inadequate salary and benefits as the top reason for quitting (28 percent of CFOs, 38 percent of employees), followed by limited opportunities for advancement (22 percent of CFOs, 20 percent of employees), and unhappiness with management (14 percent of CFOs, 16 percent of employees).

Twelve percent of the CFOs and 9 percent of the employees said being overworked is the most likely issue to cause people to quit. Twelve percent of CFOs and 6 percent of employees named a lack of recognition as the most likely cause. Eight percent of CFOs and
10 percent of employees cited being bored with their job as the most likely reason to quit.

**Flexible Workplace Programs Promote Work/Life Balance**

“Work/life balance” is one of the most popular HR buzz phrases. Yet until a few years ago, work/life concerns were relatively unheard of. Nontraditional workplace and scheduling alternatives like working from home were considered a perk available to a fortunate few or as a temporary accommodation for a stressed-out employee.

Employer programs like the flexible workplace, designed to promote work/life balance, are no longer time-limited exceptions to the traditional notion of working “9-to-5.” Work/life balance programs have gained acceptance as a component of strategic planning and management; use of such programs promotes employee engagement, productivity, and overall job satisfaction. It’s estimated that 75 percent of U.S. employers offer flexible workplace options.

This section focuses on various aspects of flexible workplace programs, reviews some of the legal obligations imposed on employers, and outlines suggestions to help you recognize and respond to potential liability issues associated with the flexible workplace.

The increased interest in work/life balance is directly related to a shift in priorities in the workforce. “The New Workforce Reality: Insights for Today, Implications for Tomorrow” is a collaborative study by Simmons School of Management and Bright Horizons Family Solutions. According to the workplace survey of 2,000 employees, 95 percent rated their lives away from work equally or more important than their jobs.
When asked to identify the characteristics of the ideal job, the leading responses (from both men and women) included working for a company and supervisors that respect personal and family concerns. When asked about the gaps between their current job and their ideal job, the majority of participants wanted an opportunity to work some of their scheduled work hours at home, more control over their work schedule, and to work for a company with flexible work policies and programs.

The survey results indicate that work/life balance and greater flexibility in work scheduling are critical issues to today’s workforce.

In addition, workplace demographics (“Baby Boomers,” “Generation Xers,” and “Generation Yers”) affect the significance of and need for work/life balance. The “sandwich generation,” a Baby Boomers’ subgroup, is distinguished by its dual caregiving responsibilities to its children and its aging parents. A flexible work schedule allows this generation to fulfill those responsibilities, which promotes greater focus and productivity during work hours.

Often, Generation Y, or Millennial, employees are characterized as idealistic, socially conscious, antiestablishment, and concerned about job stress, among other things. Increased earnings and overtime pay may not motivate them as much as time off from work. Generation X employees are characterized as socially conscious “free spirits.” In an employment setting, they are motivated by benefits and time off for recreation. A flexible work schedule and sensitivity to work/life balance issues are necessary to recruit and retain Generation Xers and Yers.

“It’s unclear what an organization loses by having people work elsewhere from time to time,” writes time-management and careers
author Laura Vanderkam. “Millennials especially don’t seem to view location-independent work as a perk; it’s the starting assumption.”

The flexible workplace is also a reflection of the times. Advances in communications technology have made it possible to be connected to the office from almost anywhere in the world. Being “at work” is no longer defined as being in the office. Here are a few popular—and effective—flexible workplace alternatives:

- **Flextime.** A flextime work schedule is a departure from the traditional 9-to-5 work schedule. Within defined limits, employees are allowed flexibility with respect to the time their workday begins and ends.

  For example, employees who work 8-hour days may begin work between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., and end the workday between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Using flextime scheduling, you can establish “core time” (e.g., 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) when all employees are required to be physically present at work.

  Some of the advantages of flextime scheduling include a reduction in absenteeism; employees can schedule personal and family appointments without missing work. It also allows you greater flexibility in handling uneven workloads, and customer service is increased by the extended work hours.

  Flextime scheduling may be particularly beneficial for employees with caregiving responsibilities. It’s being used in metropolitan areas to address rush-hour traffic delays and other commuting issues. Some of the disadvantages of flextime scheduling include increases in recordkeeping
requirements and supervisory demands to accommodate the extended work hours.

- **Compressed workweeks.** In a compressed workweek schedule, full-time employees work fewer than 5 days per week and more than 8 hours per day. Workweeks of 4 10-hour days or 3 12-hour days are common examples of compressed workweek schedules. Employers operating 7 days per week, like hospitals and nursing homes, lend themselves to the compressed workweek scheduling option.

  A compressed workweek allows greater flexibility for personal or family-time activities and for scheduling personal appointments. Like flextime scheduling, the compressed workweek improves employee job satisfaction and morale, reduces absenteeism, and aids in recruiting new employees.

  The primary disadvantages include increased recordkeeping requirements and a greater potential for overtime in the event of unexpected employee absences.

- **Job sharing.** Job sharing is simply a flextime schedule that allows two part-time employees to share one full-time job. The option enables employers an opportunity to retain qualified employees who can’t or don’t want to work a full-time schedule. Job sharing can also be used during a reduction in force to limit laying off otherwise qualified employees.

  Clear and open communication between the two workers is required for job sharing to be effective. In some cases, both individuals may be scheduled to work overlapping days periodically to facilitate better communication.
Telecommuting. Telecommuting, or the “virtual office,” is perhaps the most controversial of the alternative work schedule arrangements. It allows employees to work away from the office, usually at home, using remote access software and other telecommunications equipment.

Certain jobs lend themselves to telecommuting. An employee responsible for responding to customer questions via telephone or Internet may be an ideal candidate for telecommuting. On the other hand, telecommuting is impractical for a job that requires face-to-face interaction with coworkers, customers, or clients. A successful telecommuting program requires trustworthy, efficient employees.

Supervising telecommuting employees can be a logistical challenge. Progress on an assigned project is difficult to monitor on a day-to-day basis. Job evaluation processes may need to be revised to accommodate the distinctions of the virtual office.

Under the right circumstances, telecommuting has numerous advantages for the employee: It allows very flexible work hours, more effective use of time, and cost savings due to reduction or elimination of a daily commute. It also has its disadvantages: Telecommuting can make an employee feel isolated, alienated, and expendable.

Any successful telecommuting program starts with employees who are motivated and qualified to work independently. It’s important that telecommuters have open and consistent communication with the home office, which might require the telecommuter to attend periodic meetings in person.
Managers of telecommuting employees must be comfortable giving advice and direction by electronic communication. They also must be organized, patient, and have management skills that focus on results.

Workplace standards must be developed to address ergonomics and safety concerns. Like other flexible workplace options, administrative recordkeeping (particularly with respect to recording time worked) is more complicated. You likely will need to equip the remote work site with telecommunication equipment and then maintain that equipment.

**Legal Considerations When Creating a Flexible Workplace**

An employer’s response to work/life balance issues and flexible work scheduling requests involves a number of legal obligations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the ADA, and the FMLA. Here are some steps you can take to fulfill those obligations and reduce the liability risks inherent in the process.

**Create a policy.** A carefully drafted, flexible workplace policy should set out the standards and process requirements of the program, outline the specific work schedule alternatives, and include the following:

- **Eligibility requirements.** Determining eligibility for a flexible work schedule is a two-part process that begins with the position in question. The essential job functions will determine whether the position is appropriate for some or all flexible work schedule options. For example, a customer service position responsible for receiving returned merchan-
dise and documenting the basis for the return isn’t well-suit-
ed for telecommuting.

Once eligibility criteria are established for the position, eligibility requirements related to employee performance are reviewed. Well-defined, measurable, objective written standards should determine employee eligibility. Duration of employment, discipline history, performance record and history with regard to accuracy, and timely reporting of hours worked are some of the objective criteria you should rely on when determining eligibility for a flexible work schedule.

○ **Decision-making authority and process.** The policy should identify the specific process required to submit a flexible work request and the company representative authorized to grant the request. Although a direct supervisor may have input into the process, the ultimate decision should be delegated to a front-line manager or the HR director.

Employees must clearly understand the company’s process in making the determinations for the position in question, the amount of interaction with other employees, customers, clients, and vendors required, the amount of day-to-day supervision recommended, the type of flexible work schedule being requested, the business needs of the company, and the availability of others when the employee won’t be available or will be available only remotely.

Likewise, employees should clearly understand their obligations to the employer if the flexible work schedule request is granted.
○ **Effect on other terms and conditions of employment.** A flexible work schedule shouldn’t affect the other terms and conditions of employment, including the employee’s at-will status. The policy must acknowledge the applicability of all other company policies and procedures. A specific reminder regarding reporting workplace injuries, confidentiality of company information, and (lack of) workplace privacy is recommended for employees who will be telecommuting. Nonexempt employees should be reminded of the requirement to accurately document and report all hours worked.

○ **Monitoring and evaluation.** As stated above, supervising an employee on a flexible work schedule can be a challenge. Monitoring and evaluation procedures must be established and applied in a manner consistent with those applied to all employees. By policy and practice, you must clearly retain the authority to suspend, amend, or terminate the work schedule arrangement if the established eligibility requirements aren’t met.

**Wage and hour issues.** Under the *Fair Labor Standards Act*, nonexempt employees must be paid for all hours worked, and all hours worked must be reported accurately. Failure to report all hours worked is a risk associated with nonexempt telecommuting employees in particular. A user-friendly reporting mechanism with remote monitoring capabilities is invaluable. Whatever system is used, telecommuting employees must understand that accurate reporting of all hours worked is mandatory. Similar risks exist for the nonexempt employee working a flextime schedule.

**FMLA and ADA.** If an employer meets the requirements under the FMLA, the FMLA-eligible employee on *intermittent leave* may be
entitled to a reduced or otherwise flexible work schedule. An employer’s obligations under the ADA require consideration of flexible work scheduling as a *reasonable accommodation*, absent undue hardship, even if it doesn’t allow such scheduling for other employees.

An undue hardship argument is unlikely to succeed if the company has allowed other employees to work a flexible work schedule. The EEOC recognizes flextime, job restructuring, and telecommuting as possible accommodations for a disabled employee.

There are many reasons to adopt work/life balance programs such as a flexible workplace policy. Employees will be more engaged at work, exhibit greater commitment to their employers, and view the workplace as supportive. Employers benefit from having happier and more engaged employees, reduced absenteeism, increased retention rates, and potentially lower healthcare costs.

“Companies can do a lot to encourage a reasonable workweek, and flexibility,” says Vanderkam. “When they do embrace flexibility, organizations often find that people will work unreasonable hours, and be quite happy about it.”

### 10 Elements of an Effective Performance Management System

Many organizations will most likely say they utilize a performance management system, but far fewer will admit that it’s not actually achieving its original goals. Namely, performance management systems often fail in motivating better employee performance.

Why is that? The short answer is that it’s too simple to *not* follow through with the very components required to make the system work well.
In order to actually motivate employees to perform at their best, a performance management system should be tied closely to organizational and personal goals and should be a means for employees and managers to stay continually on the same page. It can also house employee development plans.

So, where does it all go awry? There are several ways that a well-meaning organization can miss out on the benefits of a performance management system. Here are 10 of the biggest mistakes.

1. Not Giving Employees Timely Feedback

If the only time an employee hears of how he or she is performing is once per year, there are bound to be some surprises in there. Many managers use the existence of a performance management system as an excuse to delay giving feedback until the formal review period—but this is a recipe for disaster. The formal review period should be just that: a formal summary of status. There should be no surprises at that time if employees are given feedback at appropriate times throughout the year. In other words, this should not be the first time an employee hears how he or she is tracking against goals and expectations.

2. Setting Inappropriate Goals

For example, consider these simple missteps:

- **Not tying employee goals to company goals.** If employee goals are set randomly, they may help individuals achieve their goals but may not bring the business any closer to achieving its organizational goals or mission. Ideally, individual goals should be clearly linked to company goals.

- **Failing to set stretch goals.** Goals that are set at levels that are easily achievable without any extra effort don’t mo-
tivate employees to perform at their best. Goals should be realistic, but they should require some effort to achieve and maintain—otherwise, the system isn’t helping to motivate behaviors.

- **Creating goals that are not measurable or objective.** There should be a clear understanding of what it looks like to achieve a goal and how it will be measured. Goals need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (commonly referred to as “SMART” goals). Goals should not be vague.

Also, remember that goals should be updated as needed for changes in the business’s situation. They should also be reviewed often to see whether you’re on track.

3. **Failing to Follow Through on the Performance Appraisal Schedule**

Even worse than not providing timely feedback is not providing feedback at all. If managers cannot be bothered to treat the program with the respect it warrants, then why bother even having a system? Employees will get discouraged if they’re never given feedback.

4. **Not Explaining Clear Paths to Improvement**

Even if a performance management system is used well and employees are given appropriate feedback, the system can go awry if an employee needs to improve but does not understand how to do so. The performance management system should have a clear path for employees to meet expectations as well as a clearly communicated plan for when they don’t.
5. Not Documenting the Process

The rating of employees should be justified, and that justification should be put into writing. The appraisal should be clear, complete, and easily interpreted (that is, able to be correctly interpreted) by a third party.

6. Ignoring Problem Employees

This is a problem on multiple levels:

- It decreases employee morale because others don’t feel like problems are being addressed.
- It can make other employees resentful that they cannot get away with the same actions as their coworkers.
- It fails to solve productivity problems. Managers often mistakenly think that giving a performance review that is better than the employee deserves will be a motivator—but instead it sends the signal that the poor performance is acceptable.
- It can be a legal nightmare if the employee is later let go for poor performance, and there is no record of performance reviews indicating any problem at all.

7. Not Recognizing Star Employees

On the other hand, if an employee is performing well above average, he or she should get the deserved recognition. If every employee is given a “satisfactory” (or equivalent) rating, even if some are going above and beyond expectations, star performers will lose faith that their efforts are being recognized.

Managers should understand how important it is to use the system to give appropriate ratings across the full spectrum of options—they
should not be trying to avoid tough conversations, and they certainly should not be simply giving everyone the same rating because they don’t (or won’t) have the time to put real thought into it.

8. Not Being Clear

During a performance appraisal, managers must be clear. This is tougher than it seems; managers often want to soften bad news, which can result in employees not getting the message. Managers may also be vague in explaining expectations, leading to miscommunication and other problems later. Give specific recommendations and examples for improvement.

9. Using the System Inconsistently

When different managers or departments are inconsistent in when and how they implement the performance management system, this can set up situations in which employees perceive unfairness or favoritism. This can negatively impact both productivity and morale—and can appear discriminatory in some cases. A related issue is when managers intentionally give ratings that are inaccurate.

For example, a manager may inaccurately rank someone highly in order to move them to a new (undeserved) role, just to get them out of the department. Another example is falsely ranking someone too low, which can happen if rankings are forced, rushed, or implemented with personal bias.

10. System Design or Implementation Failures

Such failures might include:

- Lack of buy-in from senior managers, which often means they won’t require their teams to use the system properly. Change management is a difficult process and
should not be taken lightly. Management buy-in is a key component.

- **Failure to fully assess the best design that meets the needs of the organization.** A system that seems to be designed for another company isn’t likely to have much support from those who must use it.

- **Incompatibility or duplication of other systems.** Employees and managers alike will be reluctant to use a system if they feel their efforts must be duplicated from other systems still in place. Ideally, the performance management system will be integrated with all related systems, such as employee development programs and other Human Resources Information Systems (HRIS) programs.

- **Lack of a mechanism to elicit feedback** and continually improve the system.

- **Failing to designate who is responsible** for each component of the implementation and follow-up.
A Sneak Preview: Looking Ahead to Gen Z

You may just be starting to get your head around the Millennials, but wait—Gen Z is right around the corner and getting ready to enter your workforce! Here are some suggestions on how you can prepare, courtesy of Jayne Mattson, senior vice president of Keystone Associates.

Gen Z Overview

- Employers must recognize that workers from Generation Z will be more free-spirited and independent thinkers than previous generations, so be sure to allow time for brainstorming activities included with tasks. They will be the most tech-savvy generation, more connected, flexible, and open-minded about various cultures.
Companies should strive to keep different generations of workers working closely together—the closer you can keep generations working together, the more cohesive and productive your workforce will be.

All generations communicate differently. As with Millennials, don’t assume—communicate!

Employers may find Gen Z to be more steadfast than previous generations, as Gen Z expects to have fewer employers over their lifetime. This generation does expect a workplace where the hours are flexible and technology is extreme, allowing projects and people to be more important than where the work is completed.

Gen Z workers will also want to define their career paths earlier and expect workplace hierarchies to be level, rather than the traditional chain of command.

Gen Z Basic Personality and Workplace Needs

Gen Z workers have mission-driven career paths, and are interested in meaningful work. The Gen Z workforce:

- Has grown up with technology;
- Is extremely independent;
- Wants the workplace to be more casual; and
- Is able to express individualism.
The ‘New’ Gen Z Social Skills—More Tech Than Interpersonal

Gen Z workers will be more flexible with tech communication styles/platforms. They will be more accustomed to communicating using different technology platforms. Therefore, employers will need to be flexible on how they communicate, and not depend on one method to get their message across (such as e-mail).

Having grown up with a smartphone or a tablet in their hands, and often communicating via text, Generation Z will have difficulty realizing the value of using social skills to build relationships, such as having interactive conversations, knowing how to resolve conflict, or writing an e-mail with formality.

Employers will need to work differently to communicate their needs to Gen Z workers, and should clearly outline the expectations versus assuming the Gen Z worker knows what to do.

How to Recruit, Retain, and Motivate Gen Z

There are four areas—flexibility, development, coaching, and respect—around which employers can build workplaces that support company objectives. It is necessary for employers and managers to build company cultures around these vital topics now and in the future, and to incorporate all of the generations into their strategy to ensure their company grows every day.

- **Provide mission-driven opportunities.** Advancement and meaningful work are high on Gen Z’s list of must-haves, so defining career paths and having mission-driven community service programs will position companies higher on a Gen Z’s prospect list.
- **Educate the incoming workforce.** Have focus groups on college campuses for juniors and seniors with your HR staff so Gen Z workers can hear what HR hiring managers will be looking for in the world of work before they begin hiring.

- **Set up summer internship programs** to begin the blending of multiple generations working together. As Steven Covey said, “Seek to understand, then to be understood.”

- **Provide mentoring.** Include mentoring in the onboarding process for new hires where companies match a Generation Z worker with a mentor(s) or “buddies” to help shepherd them through the organization.

- **Listen—youth speaks.** Listen to their ideas and implement them, too, so Gen Z workers know they have value.

- **Don’t generalize.** Treat them as individuals rather than stereotyping them. Avoid using the term “Generation Z”; a more descriptive term is the “Independent Thinker Generation.”

### Set the Stage with Other Generations to Work Well with Gen Z Workers

Instill an “air of possibility.” As with every new generation coming into the workplace, there is always a “this is how we do it” attitude. Instead of having Generation Z think and do like current workers:

- Instill the possibility of change for them.

- Solicit more feedback on how things are done and why; offer more ways to learn new things.

- Try to connect what they are doing to some bigger cause in the world.
It’s a fact of the modern workforce that employees of different generations sometimes have trouble seeing eye to eye. The Boomer on your board of directors may dismiss the “slovenly” young guy in sneakers, not realizing that he is looking at the future of the company’s skyrocketing digital business. The guy in sneakers, on the other hand, can’t see past the fact that “the suit” isn’t interested in the finer points of Snapchat.

Motivating and managing multiple generations is never easy, but it’s crucial for employers to know the sweet spots of different ages and stages, as well as the factors that will make the best talent stay, play, and over-perform. And it’s your job, as a senior HR professional, to keep the whole machine running smoothly.
Understanding what makes each generation tick is an essential part of effective workforce management these days. It’s also important to keep looking several steps ahead—even if you have a structure (and staffing) that is working well right now, you will likely have some personnel changes over the next few years.

By balancing generational differences and needs with the factors that are required to keep all employees motivated and successful, you can develop a productive talent pipeline over the long haul that will work well for generations to come.

As you plan for the future, keep the following overarching points in mind:

- Your Boomers possess valuable skills and institutional knowledge—while you shouldn’t be prematurely pushing them out the door, you should be proactively planning for their inevitable departure from your workplace over the next several years.

- Think of the Boomers’ departure as a transitional period that can extend over a long period of time. It can be counterproductive from your perspective, and theirs, to have a clean break between “employed” and “retired.”

- Many Millennials simply view the world differently than their older colleagues. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of motivation or professionalism.

- Millennials often require not only job-specific training, but also general training regarding appropriate workplace etiquette, dress code, expectations, and so forth.

- High-potential Millennials need to be nurtured and developed even if there is no immediate room for advancement.
Genuine appreciation, ongoing feedback, and workplace flexibility are key to attracting—and retaining—top talent of all ages.
Appendix A

New Business Bumper Sticker:
I Love My Millennials

From the HR Daily Advisor:

by Stephen Bruce, PhD, PHR

We’ve written a lot in the HR Daily Advisor about Millennials and their supposed challenging generational characteristics. However, I have to say I love my Millennial colleagues; they’re hardworking, earnest, productive, dependable, capable, and cooperative.

The Enthusiastic Employee Debunks Generational Characteristics

And that’s not just my opinion. In their recently published second edition of The Enthusiastic Employee: How Companies Profit by Giving Workers What They Want, David Sirota and Douglas Klein debunk the popular generational differences theories.
Generational depictions, the authors say, are based on anecdotes and a general confusion about age, tenure, and generation.

In fact, Traditionalists and Boomers’ supposed resistance to change is more tied to tenure than generation. Why would they want to trade what has worked well for them over the years for something untried? Before too long, the Millennials will take their turn as the Traditionalists, Sirota and Klein say.

According to the research, they say, Boomers and Traditionalists tend to be a little more positive about their companies, but that’s not surprising since their dissatisfied colleagues have likely moved on.

In the chart below, the authors show research that indicates that initially, most employees (85 percent to 87 percent) indicate satisfaction; this dips to a low of 72 to 76 percent by Year 6, but then over the next 10 years, it starts to come back up.
The Three-Factor Theory

The authors of *The Enthusiastic Employee* suggest that employees of any generation look for three things at work:

- **Equity**
- **Achievement**
- **Camaraderie**

**Equity** means being treated justly in relation to the basic conditions of employment. Equity can be physiological (a safe, comfortable work environment that does not damage physical or mental health) or economic (having a reasonable degree of job security, satisfactory compensation, and benefits) or psychological (being treated respect-
fully, enjoying reasonable accommodation for personal and family needs, having credible management, and getting a fair hearing of complaints).

**Achievement** is taking pride in one’s accomplishments, doing things that matter and doing them well, receiving recognition, and taking pride in the organization’s accomplishments.

**Camaraderie** is having warm, interesting, and cooperative relationships with others in the workplace.

**I ♥ My Millennials; How About You?**

*This article originally appeared in the HR Daily Advisor.*
Appendix B

Customizing Compensation for the Aging (?!) Millennials

While quite a few employers continue to think of Millennials as the “young whippersnappers” of the office, the oldest among them are now 35. This may come as a bit of a shock—not to mention the issue of how old this may make some of us feel. However, this means Millennials are now quickly moving into key leadership positions.

For this reason, understanding what motivates them—and how to pay them in comparison to other generations—becomes even more important. With a fixed compensation budget, you need to know how to best direct your dollars where they will give you the most bang for your compensation buck, so to speak.

Payscale recently released a report, Compensation Challenges for a Multi-Generational Workforce, which provides some helpful insights in this area.
Customized Tiers Are Crucial, Expert Says

Mykkah Herner, PayScale’s head of expert services and one of the report’s authors, contends that strong compensation plans are tiered, with pay philosophy providing a solid foundation for the other tiers.

Upon the foundation is base pay, followed by variable pay, and topped off with individualized rewards and recognition. No matter the size of the overall compensation budget, companies are wise to consider the way they allocate the budget among these tiers, Herner suggests.

In contrast to Baby Boomers and Generation Xers—who often desire work/life balance and value stability—Millennials are willing to put a greater percentage of their pay at risk, in exchange for strong upside potential. They also value the environment at work, which the report suggests should lead companies to give attention to the branding of their workplace as a means of attracting and retaining these younger workers.

The generations also react differently to differing means of communicating about pay. In fact, they are nearly polar opposites when it comes to the amount of information they want others to have about their pay.

The older generations tend to keep pay information very private, while the younger group—who were raised in an age when every piece of information is easily accessible online—are OK with sharing it. Striking a balance is important in order to avoid alienating either end of the spectrum, according to PayScale.
5 Actions You Can Take to Meet Generational Needs

To develop an effective pay plan that can meet the needs of each generation, Payscale suggests the following five actions:

1. **Identify and quantify which generations are prominent in your workforce.** Think about how that may change in the future, and try to anticipate the generational makeup of your workforce 5 years from now. “Some predictions show nearly half of the workforce will [comprise] Millennials in 5 years,” Herner says. “By understanding what your workforce looks like today and is likely to look like in 5 years, employers can establish a forward-thinking, strategic head start on defining a compensation strategy that will carry their business into the future.

“We’re no longer in a situation where employers can sit passively with the belief their employees will remain at the organization for decades to come. The Millennial generation is a new kind of worker that demands a new kind of employer—one that is both responsible and proactive.”

2. **Assess your current compensation mix and how well it aligns (or doesn’t) with your workforce.** Remember that it may not necessarily be tied just to generational differences; the mix of pay that works best for the various segments of your workplace population may have just as much to do with function as with generations.
“What types of compensation does your organization currently use to pay employees?” Herner suggests asking. “Perhaps more importantly, how competent are you in putting together the right compensation mix for your workforce?”

Millennials are good at grasping the big picture. For them it’s not about fixed costs like base pay. Rather, they seek opportunities for “potential pay,” a win-win for employers and employees alike.

3. **Review your open positions and identify what skills are needed for those jobs.** Are those skills trainable? Is there someone internally who might be able to fill that position given adequate training? “Is yours an organization that has struggled because of the actual or perceived skills gap?” Herner asks.

“If so, maybe it’s time to get real: Which of the skills you are seeking are trainable? What programs do you have in place to train internal staff so you won’t be in the same position again in the future? Transition is here to stay, so even if an employer finds ideal candidates now, there is no guarantee they’ll stay with the organization forever.”

4. **Consider which of your Baby Boomers may be retiring in the short- or long-term.** Have you identified folks in Generation X or in your Millennial population who may be groomed for those leadership roles? “Companies should develop a formalized succession plan that recognizes leadership skills the organization values, and identify internal employees with leadership potential, then foster those skills in your star performers,” Herner advises.

He recommends asking a number of questions throughout the process: “What is the likelihood each will retire or move
on in the next 5 to 7 years? What are the leadership skills that matter most in your organization? Do you need leaders with a strong vision? Which employees are charismatic and able to build enthusiasm across the employee population? Which ones are more pragmatic? Which have a strong business sense? Or is it more important for your leaders to be able to sell your organization to outside investors or customers?”

5. **Begin a conversation with your executives about the appropriate level of transparency relative to your pay plan in the organization.** “After taking an inventory of the workforce, employers should think about the organization’s culture and industry. Some more traditional industries (e.g., banking and manufacturing) avoid full transparency, while other values-driven organizations (nonprofits, for example) lean towards a high level of transparency. Newer, more innovative industries, such as progressive marketing firms and technology companies, may also adopt fairly high levels of compensation transparency,” Herner says.

*This article originally appeared in the HR Daily Advisor.*
Appendix C

Different Generations, Different Expectations

Are you more ambitious than a 12th grader? They may not be in the workforce as adults just yet, but as the next generation of workers, high school seniors have already formed solid opinions about life in the working world. A new CareerBuilder survey looks at how the next generation of workers compares to America’s current workforce in terms of work/life beliefs and expectations.

The national online survey, conducted on behalf of CareerBuilder by Harris Poll between May 14, 2015, and June 3, 2015, included a representative sample of more than 3,000 full-time, U.S. workers across industries and company sizes and more than 200 high school seniors.
"With the next generation of workers preparing to enter the workforce, now is the time for companies to adjust their recruitment and retention strategies to guarantee the success of all workers and strengthen the bottom line,” says Rosemary Haefner, chief human resources officer of CareerBuilder.

Haefner continues by saying, “While workplace expectations can vary widely among different generations, one thing they have in common is they want to be successful in their positions. Introducing programs that promote learning and collaboration—such as mentoring—can help workers of all generations achieve that together.”

**Money Matters**

When asked what salary they feel they need to earn to be successful, one in four current workers (25%) feel they would be successful making less than $50,000 a year, a sentiment shared by only 18% of high school students. In fact, high school students are nearly three times as likely as current workers to say they need to make $200,000 or more to feel successful (13% versus 5%).

**What Salary Do You Feel You Need to Earn to Be Successful?**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salary Range</th>
<th>Current Workforce</th>
<th>High School Students</th>
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<td>Under $50,000</td>
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<td>$50,000–$69,999</td>
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Defining Success

The majority of both current workers (76%) and high school students (81%) define success in a career as the ability to provide a comfortable life for themselves and their families. Both groups also agree that having a good balance between work and personal life is a defining factor in success (71% of current workers and 76% of high school students).

High school students, however, are more likely to associate success with a sense of accomplishment (78%, compared to 67% of current workers); the ability to make a positive impact on people’s lives (78% versus 47% of current workers); and making a lot of money (53% versus 33% of current workers).

The gap grows even wider when it comes to a loftier goal: High school students were more than twice as likely as current workers to define success as “making a mark on this world” (54% versus 22%).

The Ideal Work Environment

For the survey, CareerBuilder asked workers to give their attitudes toward eight commonly debated areas of workforce culture.

- **On office attire.** High school students and current workers have similar views on workplace wear. The vast majority of both groups (74% of current workers and 70% of high school students) feel one should be able to dress casually at work. Looking at specific age groups, 45- to 54-year-old workers (79%) were more likely to agree with this statement than workers aged 18–24 (67%) and aged 35–44 (72%).
On promotions. When it comes to earning promotions, high school students display more optimism than working professionals. Eighty-seven percent of high school students agree that one should be promoted every 2 to 3 years if one is doing a good job, compared to 73% of current workers. Workers aged 18–24 were closest to high school students’ level of agreement (81%), and 45- to 54-year-old workers were the farthest (65%).

On mobile usage. High school students (66%) are more likely than current workers (52%) to say it is okay to check one’s mobile device for work during a family activity. Workers aged 25–34 (61%) are more likely than workers aged 55 and older (43%) to agree with this statement.

On job-hopping. Though employers may expect younger workers to job-hop more frequently, only 16% of high school students believe one should only stay in a job for a year or two before moving on to better things (on par with 15% of current workers). Among individual age groups, however, responses were more varied, with workers aged 25–34 (22%) more likely than their older counterparts to say a worker should move on after a year or two.

On career expectations. Workers across all generations seem to have similar perspectives when it comes to switching companies. Nearly one in three high school students (32%) expect that they will work for 10 or more companies in their careers, similar to 28% of workers who say the same.

On emoticons and e-mail. Surprisingly, high school students appear to have more conservative views on electronic
communication than today’s professionals. More than one in four current workers (28%) believe it’s acceptable to use emoticons in e-mails and other electronic communication at work. Only one in five high school students (20%) say the same.

- **On meeting etiquette.** It may seem as if they are constantly on their mobile devices, but only 13% of high school students agree that it is okay to check one’s mobile device during a work meeting, versus 21% of current workers. Workers aged 25–34 (28%) are more likely than those aged 45–54 (18%), and workers aged 55 and older (16%) to be okay with checking a mobile device during a meeting.

- **On flexible hours.** It may come as a surprise that high school students (25%) were less likely than current workers (33%) to say it shouldn’t matter what time you arrive to work as long as you get your work done. Workers aged 55 and older were the least likely to say arrival time doesn’t matter (23%).

*This article originally appeared on HR.BLR.com.*
As Baby Boomers stay on the job longer, the phenomenon of four generations (4G) of employees in one workplace has appeared. And findings from new research point to the potential of a generational collision course.

The survey was commissioned by Ricoh UK and surveyed workers and students in the United Kingdom and Ireland. In a press release, the company explains that the results predict how well the four generations will coexist.

“Generation Zers” are unique. They have been strongly shaped by their individualistic Generation X parents, heard stories from their Baby Boomer grandparents, and witnessed the errors and successes of Millennials. Combining this with their appetite for all things digital means they have a more solid grounding to achieve and educate others in an ever-evolving and demanding business world.
So, what exactly does “Generation Z,” those currently aged 19 years and younger, want and expect from their careers? Do they deserve the label, given by some detractors, as overly demanding “screen-swipers” in search of instant gratification? The survey—spanning all four generations—answers this with an emphatic “No!”

The good news in the survey is that the majority of respondents (89%) from all generations believe that having a workforce of different ages is an asset to a company. However, the survey unearthed a key challenge that managers must overcome; nearly two-thirds (63%) of older employees expect workplace tensions to increase with the arrival of Generation Z into their companies.

The research also revealed that 64% of respondents agree there are fundamental differences in how employees from each generation work. The clearest contrasts emerged in their respective attitudes, expectations, and styles of working.

For example, face-to-face communication at work, while still the most preferred method across every group, is in generational decline. Preference for it drops from 75% among Baby Boomers to 56% among Generation Z.

With the next wave of technology-led change sure to hit the workplace soon, the need to establish environments that enable and encourage truly harmonious and productive working across the generations is paramount, says the press release.

Phil Keoghan, CEO of Ricoh UK & Ireland, says, “These findings indicate that there is much work to be done to accommodate such varied experiences and skillsets in the workplace.”
“The arrival of Gen Zers only emphasizes this challenge, while also presenting a huge opportunity to all businesses. As firms grow across the country, and indeed beyond, technology will become ever more important as an enabler of innovation and change, and Gen Z will play a critical role in this movement in the future.”

Keoghan added, “All employees are different—and generational variations only compound these differences. By forcing them to work in the same styles and with the same tools will always lead to problems. Employers should look for ways in which they can empower people to work in the manner they feel most comfortable—across all generations—to boost collaboration and creativity across the company.”

This article originally appeared on HR.BLR.com.
Contrary to popular belief, Millennials are as motivated by salary as their older coworkers, according to the *Staples Advantage Workplace Index*, a recent study of office workers in the United States and Canada, conducted by the business-to-business division of Staples, Inc. Almost one-third of Millennials (29%) report that higher salary is the biggest contributor to their loyalty, despite only 20% of the broader workforce reporting the same feelings.

“Millennials are becoming the largest demographic in the U.S. workforce—about one-third of all workers—so it’s critical for employers to understand how to attract and retain Millennial talent,” said John Burke, senior vice president and chief culture officer, Staples, Inc. “Our *Workplace Index* found that contrary to popular belief, salary is important to Millennials, just as it is to older workers.” The survey
also revealed that flexibility and office perks are, to Millennials, key to retaining.

5 Unconventional Factors That Attract, Retain Millennial Talent

As a whole, U.S. office workers consider title and work responsibilities (38%) and work/life balance (30%) as leading contributors to their loyalty. However, Millennials favor more nontraditional benefits in the workplace, as reflected in these five insights from the study that show what Millennials want:

1. **Flexibility in where and when they work.** Over half of Millennials report they work from home after the standard workday is over, compared to only 39% of all U.S. office workers. Given this, it is not surprising that Millennials say more flexibility will improve their happiness (49%) and their productivity (59%).

2. **Office perks that promote positive culture.** Office perks, such as on-site gyms and free lunches, are deemed valuable by Millennials. One in five (21%) define a good work culture as a place that offers incentives and perks, and nearly half (46%) say more office perks would improve their happiness.

3. **Improved breakrooms and encouraged break time.** Over one-third of Millennials (34%) say they feel like they can’t take a break due to feelings of guilt, compared to only 22% of all U.S. office workers. However, over half of Millennials (62%) say having break time to refresh themselves would increase productivity. Millennials also say a well-stocked breakroom leads to happier employees (57%), less stress...
(35%), more productive employees (35%), and a more social environment (33%).

4. **Concern for the environment.** “Eco-friendliness” appeals to altruistic Millennials. Eco-friendly practices in the workplace can provide benefits not only for the environment, but for recruiting Millennials as well. When making an employment decision, half of all Millennials indicated an eco-friendly company is important, compared to only 35% of the broader workforce.

5. **Trust in leadership and a relationship with a direct boss.** Millennials that are not expecting to change jobs note that trust in leadership and trust in their direct boss contributes to their loyalty. In addition, one in five Millennials report that their direct boss motivates them to do their best work, and over one-third (35%) believe that strong leadership defines a good work culture. Feedback from their boss is also important to this generation; nearly one-third of Millennials (28%) say feeling appreciated contributes to their loyalty, and 26% say recognition motivates them to do their best at work.

The majority of Millennials (70%) expects to be in a management position in the next 5 years, compared to 48% of the broader workforce. With more Millennials expected to rise to management positions in the coming years, Staples Advantage expects these non-traditional benefits to continue to become more prominent in U.S. workplaces.
Key Considerations That Drive Millennial Productivity

**Technology.** Millennials seem to be less concerned with technology issues than the broader employee base. While 72% of all U.S. office workers say poorly performing technology decreases their productivity, only 56% of Millennials reported the same. In addition, 49% of Millennials say limited IT support will decrease their productivity, compared to 62% of all U.S. office workers.

**Social media.** Millennials are also social media natives, and as such, it does not seem to negatively impact their productivity. In fact, they say the use of social networking sites and tools (28%) and apps that track to-do lists (42%) actually increase their productivity.

**“Digital age” mindset.** When asked how employers can help their employees combat overwork and burnout, the majority of the broader employee base (54%) said employers should decrease their workload or provide more time to complete tasks, compared to only 42% of Millennials. This difference could be attributed to Millennials having grown up in the “digital age” where the always-on mentality has dominated, so their threshold for information overload is a bit higher.

*This article originally appeared on HR.BLR.com.*


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11. http://www.hrhero.com/hl/articles/2012/06/05/asking-about-retirement-is-it-good-planning-or-a-legal-danger/


