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 **5 Tips for Hiring and Managing “Twenty-Somethings”**

Let’s get this out of the way first:  *Millennial*s have been such a frequent topic in hiring discussions recently that managers are admitting to being positively fatigued by the word*.*  If you’re in that camp, it may come as good news that soon it won’t even be the right word when we’re talking about younger, less-experienced workers. Some Millennials have been in the workforce for well over ten years, and—are you ready for this—you’ll be receiving job applications from Generation Z pretty soon. You may even have one or two as interns!

So, when you see the word “Millennial” in this article, think *twenty-something*. In fact, if you’ve hired inexperienced staff members recently, chances are you have a few twenty-somethings on your team. You’ve also probably encountered a lot of bad press about this age group, to the degree that there’s apprehension regarding how different generations can function in the same work environment. The aim of this article is to get past the negative connotations and discuss how to successfully hire and manage twenty-something employees.

Many leaders of older generations say it can be challenging to integrate younger people into the labor force. Armed with the right attitude and fresh knowledge, however, it doesn’t have to be difficult at all. Here are five tips to get moving in the right direction:

**1. Don’t make assumptions or believe stereotypes.**

A big shift has taken place in the world of work. The Millennial generation—those born roughly between 1980 and 1998—is now the largest in the workforce. This trend will continue, with immigration adding more numbers to this group than any other. The Millennial population is projected to peak in 2036 at 81.1 million.

In addition to overtaking the Baby Boomers in population size, Millennials are more racially and ethnically diverse than the other adult generations. Once you factor in the diversity of life experiences, along with the intrinsic personality variations that occur across all populations, it becomes clear that members of this generation are far from a homogenous group sharing collective goals and motivations. Managing individuals *as individuals* is always the wisest approach.

**2. Know who *you* are and how you are wired to manage.**

Just as individual contributors bring their own intrinsic motivations and experiences to work with them, so do managers when interacting with and leading their staff members. The better awareness you have of your own management style, the more effective you will be working with your team members. Instead of thinking, “I’m from Generation X/a Baby Boomer and am different from the younger generation,” think “I have my own set of motivations, strengths, and inhibitors, just like this person who is new to the workforce. How can we best work together and complement each other’s styles?”

**3. Learn as much as possible about your applicants.**

A whole industry has sprung up around helping job seekers shape resumes and cover letters to conform to keyword searches, and they are seldom written by the applicants themselves, so you’re often looking at a product rather than at a document that gives insight into the person’s potential. The good news is that tools exist to balance things out in your favor. Behavioral interview guides give you a legitimate preview of how applicants will look on the job, and pre-employment personality assessments uncover intrinsic motivators like detail focus, customer service orientation, and self-direction. Knowing this information not only helps you make informed hiring decisions, it enables you to develop targeted and productive coaching and development plans. Just make sure you are using an assessment instrument that has been scientifically validated.

**4. Evaluate your job descriptions, and be detailed about entry-level responsibilities.**

It may sound like a silly question, but it’s worth asking: When was the last time you updated the language in your job posting? Business is in a constant state of flux thanks to rapidly changing technologies and consumer demands. It follows that jobs themselves evolve and requirements change. Younger applicants may not have the experience you’re looking for, but they might be just who you need in terms of skill sets. However, no one will know if the job requirements haven’t been updated in 12 years.

Also, thinking back to intrinsic motivation, be sure to spell out exactly what is expected, task-wise. You’ll attract more appropriate applicants with accurate breakdowns of job duties than with arbitrary demands of experience.

**5. Share your company’s culture and work environment.**

We hear a lot of chatter about “what Millennials want,” which should be viewed as a false narrative. No group of people so vast and diverse can possibly be put in one box. People of all generations are different from each other, twenty-somethings included. Therefore, there’s no need to wonder, “How can I rejigger things so this company looks more appealing to the new generation of workers” and go chasing after an elusive, all-purpose explanation of what such people want.

A better approach is to take a serious look at your company culture and your work environment and highlight it when you promote the company. Is it a supportive, collegial setting that emphasizes teamwork? Or a competitive one where self-reliance and independent thinking is valued? If your options are A) sifting through thousands of applicants trying to figure out which ones are viable candidates and B) Taking an honest look at your culture and sharing your insights, choosing the second option is the most effective way of hiring people who will fit your environment.

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