

# Millennial Mindset: Attract & Retain the Next Generation

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Roger Courville is executive chaplain, multi-company entrepreneur, award-winning business author, and speaker/facilitator. His topical focus centers on “connectorship” — how to reach, teach, and lead in a technologically-extended world — and the way that massive cultural shifts affects strategy, communication, and leadership, especially with younger generations looking for a sense of purpose in their work.

Of course, all that and four buck will get you a double foofiat at Starchucks.

Roger has spoken to tens of thousands of people, and he’s reached tens of thousands more writing for publications such as diverse as Fedex, Colgate of Switzerland, U.S. Bank, Meeting Professionals International, Outdoor Power Equipment Association of Australia, and of course, SW Washington Contractors Association.

Roger is a Certified Speaking Professional, the highest earned credential awarded by National Speakers Association, past president of National Speakers Association of Oregon, and certified John Maxwell leadership coach.

And he loves habaneros.

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My commitment to you

As a service to SW WA Contractors for graciously bringing us together, our dialogue doesn’t stop here. If you think of something you should have asked or want to otherwise chat about this stuff, give me a shout, no invoice involved.

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## Situation

### The world is changing in unprecedented ways

Better than four decades ago in a book called *Future Shock*, businessman and futurist Alvin Toffler predicted that the rate and scale of change would create a sense of shock not unlike what we might experience if we go to a strange place that has odd customs and food.

I will argue that day is today. That future is right now. And it’s a whole pile of distraction and noise that not only is pummeling us, it’s pummeling those we’re trying to reach, teach, and lead. Why should we care? Because what’s happening “out there” is transforming what’s happening “in here.” What is (re-)shaping *every* generation affects the attitudes and skills and preferences they bring to work. And as Toffler put it, “*The illiterate of the twenty-first century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.*”

### Content and access to it are disrupting how people relate to everything

Just in the last decade the world has transformed unimaginably:

- In 2010, Google CEO Eric Schmidt noted, “Every two days we create as much information as we did (in all of human history) up to 2003.”

- In 2011, analyst firm IDC predicted in their Digital Universe report that “Overall data will grow 50X by 2020.”
- In August 2012, Coursera, only one of the growing number of online courses referred to as “MOOCs” (massively open online courses) hit one million students from 196 countries. Coursera was founded in January of that year.
- In 2011 smart phone sales surpassed the sales of PCs.
- Increasingly, the line is blurring between “phones” and computers. The 2019 “App Annie The State of Mobile” report found that 194 *billion* were installed *just in 2018*.

Now it’s 2020. I could go on and on.

Hear me correctly here: Data, information, knowledge, and wisdom, learning are not the same things, but the point is that increasingly the way our organizations’ offers are perceived, valued, and delivered is shifting. And this is before we get to talking about the nature of relationship and communication in multi-generational workforces.

## The riskiest thing we can do might be what we’ve always done

An always-on world holds the promise of infinite possibilities, but if content and access to it are ubiquitous, it is also likely there will be *increasing deficits of attention, meaning, and connectedness. And expectations of both employees and customers, even for local companies, is shaped by a global, if not idealized, sense of what “should be.”*

For those who reach, teach, and lead, success will require finding new answers to being present, resonant, valuable, and trusted. Even when technology is involved. Or perhaps *especially* when technology is involved.

The rate and scale of change in the world right now has little or no historical precedent. We’re not going to have all the answers, but that doesn’t mean we can’t apply timeless principles that have always and will always apply to people.

Here’s to being on the journey together.

## Critical ideas

Challenges	Better
Personal experiences are not (necessarily) normative	Research of a population
Making assumptions	Getting to know an individual who doesn’t fit ‘in a box’
Stereotyping	Use tendencies to increase “others awareness”

Stereotyping occurs because:	Problems with stereotyping:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to understand and anticipate the behavior of others.</li> <li>• Is a shortcut that allows us to fill in missing information.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be unconscious.</li> <li>• Can be difficult to prevent the activation of stereotypes.</li> <li>• Does not accurately describe all the people in a social category.</li> <li>• Causes us to ignore or misinterpret information that is inconsistent with the stereotype.</li> <li>• Can result in unintentional discrimination when we have preconceived ideas about ideal persons for particular roles in an organization.</li> </ul>

For additional reading in this area see: Lancaster, L., & Stillman, D. (2002). *When Generations Collide*. New York: HarperBusiness.

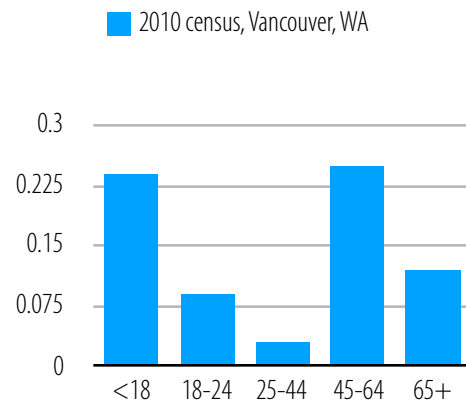
## Complication

### “Old World” rules vs “New World” rules

Old World Rules	New World Rules
Employers got <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- hard work</li> <li>- dedication</li> <li>- loyalty</li> <li>- predictable payroll</li> </ul>	Employers get <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- minimum loyalty</li> <li>- no expectation of job security</li> <li>- guarantee of change</li> <li>- few promotions</li> </ul>
Employees got <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- job security</li> <li>- lifetime employment</li> <li>- regular, predictable raises</li> <li>- chance of promotion</li> <li>- second family</li> </ul>	Employees get <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- challenge</li> <li>- recognition</li> <li>- high wages</li> <li>- chance to learn</li> <li>- help with personal issues</li> <li>- leverage</li> </ul>

### Key demographic shifts

- 44 million Boomers still working, 10,000 retiring per day
- Expected shortage of workers, 2017-2027: 8.2 million
- Labor force participation: 62.8% (lowest % since the 1970s)
- Millennials now the largest living adult generation; largest % of workforce
- Record number of Americans live in multi-generational households
- Broad trend towards shared living



### How & why do generations differ?

Family structure & influences Education “Work ethic” Preferred leadership style	How they prefer to receive feedback Work/life balance (hours, location, etc.) Relationship to technology Communication and collaboration preferences
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### Complications

Older workers about their younger colleagues	Younger workers about older colleagues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inappropriate dress (55%)</li> <li>- Poor work ethic (54%)</li> <li>- Informality (38%)</li> <li>- Need for supervision (38%)</li> <li>- Inappropriate/excessive use of technology (38%)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Resistance to change (47%)</li> <li>- Lack of recognition of others' efforts (45%)</li> <li>- Micromanagement (44%)</li> <li>- Aversion to technology (31%)</li> </ul>

“Most managers (48 percent) believe that Millennials are primarily focused on money to determine career success, whereas the majority of Millennials (30 percent) identified *meaningful work* as the most important factor defining career success.”

~ Ryan Jenkins, *The Generation Z Guide: The Complete Manual to Understand, Recruit, and Lead the Next Generation*

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Exercise #1 (P\_\_\_\_\_):

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Exercise #2 (P\_\_\_\_\_):

## Overview

	GI Generation	Silent Generation	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
(Approximate) Birth years	1900-1927	1928-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980	1981-1997	1998-TBD
Peak population	60M	56M	75M	51M	76M	68+M
May be known as	The Greatest Generation	Builders, Traditionalists, Lucky Few, Postwar Cohort	Me Generation, Generation Jones	Baby Busters, Gen Bust, The Lost Generation, Latchkey Generation	Gen Y, Echo Boomers, Generation Me	iGen, Centennials, Globals, Homelanders, Post-Millennials, Founders
Shaped by:	Great Depression, WW I & II	WW II, Vietnam War, Korean War, Introduction of broadcast media	Woodstock, civil rights, economic prosperity, Kennedy assassination, rock & roll	Watergate, layoffs, family instability, <b>Challenger</b> explosion, MTV, digital tech	9/11, Columbine, Y2K, internet, Great Recession, technology	Terrorism, mobile tech, social media, cyberbullying, artificial intelligence, gig economy
Tendencies	Hard-working, patriotism, respect authority, conservative savers	Veterans, conformists, loyal, follow rules, non-protesters	Driven, question authority, optimistic, efficient, team players, consumerism	Latchkey kids, self-reliant, skeptical, independent	Ask why, creative, optimistic, collaborative, entrepreneurial	Pragmatic, cautious, tech dependent, individualistic

## Communication

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	Formal and direct	Informal and flexible	Authentic and fast	Transparent and highly visual
View	Face to face	Email, text, and Facebook	Text, Instagram, Skype, Slack	Snapchat, FaceTime, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitch
Attitude	Need background info and details	Keep professional	Efficient and mobile first	Mobile only and voice

## Technology

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	Some tech	High tech	All tech	What tech? (Human and tech are merging)
View	Enhancer	Balancer	Amplifier	Extension of self
Attitude	Want to master it	Want to enjoy it	Need to employ it	Have to manage it

## Work

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	A place	A means to an end	A vehicle	Life (the lines between work & life blurred)
View	Responsibility	Drive outcomes	Fulfilling	Earn and learn
Attitude	Loyalty is rewarded	Work hard, play hard	Work smart	Work fluidly

## Leadership

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	Authoritative	Hierarchy	Coaching	Networked (trade concentrated for collective knowledge)
View	Sage (sharing experience and wisdom)	Sherpa (raising up new leaders)	Soldier (leading in the trenches)	Student (learning more about leadership)
Attitude	No news is good news	Semiannual reviews	Routine check-ins	360-degree realtime feedback

## Learning and Development

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	One to one	One to many	Many to one	Individualized and communal
View	On the job and classroom	E-learning	Micro and on-demand	Mobile, just in time, and virtual reality
Attitude	Refine niche expertise	Formal and top-down approach	Way to get ahead	Constant and continuous

## Purchasing

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Summary	Credibility matters	Value matters	Co-creation matters	Social impact and narrative matter
View	Word of mouth; brick-and-mortar	Online	Social media and mobile	Voice & chatbots
Attitude	Proximity, timing, and relationships	Cost-and-value conscious	Social proof	Networks weigh in

## Drilling in

### Millennials vs Gen Z

	Millennials	GenZ
9/11	Defining moment	No memory of 9/11
Internet	Grew up with dial-up	Mobile-tech natives
Debt	High student debt is a burden	Wary of debt, exhibit frugality
Multitasking	Pros	Afficionados
Money	Purpose over paycheck	Money and job security
Motivators	Personal development	Rewarding experiences
Leadership preferences	Coaches, not bosses Feedback as ongoing, collaborative dialogue Develop strengths (don't 'fix' weaknesses)	Mentors, honest leaders Feedback as gentle wisdom Give them tools to win
Team style	Collaborative teamwork	Very competitive, independent

### Transforming relationship by transforming assumptions about Millennials & GenZ

Stop	Start
Assuming they know your communication preferences	Clearly communicate
Assuming they're not working if not in the office	Managing output
Assuming they want to be led like previous generations	Adapt your leadership style
Assuming they have little to offer	Expect more to get more
Assuming top-down or authoritarian command	Collaborate, be curious, consider reverse mentoring

### Turning differences into strengths

- Seek to understand how differences can be a competitive advantage.
- Commit to continuous learning.
- Initiate conversations about differences.
- Ask people about needs and preferences.
- Offer options
- Personalize your style.
- Build on strengths.
- Ask about how the lines between online and offline worlds are blurring.
- Technology is a lifestyle and language, not a tool.
- Authenticity trumps excellence, so turn excellence into story.
- They follow relationship, not authority.
- Lead from authority, not with authority. How would you lead if you had no authority?

Exercise #1 "Problem"	Exercise #2 "Promise"

Exercise #3 (P\_\_\_\_\_):

Want more info? My friend Lisa Ryan has an ebook you can receive for free: *Manufacturing Engagement: 98 Proven Strategies to Attract and Retain Your Industry's Talent*. Text "engage" to 66866 or email [lisa@grategy.com](mailto:lisa@grategy.com)