

HOME | BUSINESS

## How to Manage and Retain Millennial Employees

Keep in mind that millennials aren't just here for a paycheck; most are hardworking, driven and want to feel purpose at their jobs.

Feb 18th, 2020 | By Rachel Kossman



Ah millennials. Maybe you belong to that generation or consider the label a dirty word; either way, you've likely heard a whole lot about the type of workers millennials tend to be. The growing feeling that they're taking over isn't in your imagination either: In seven years, millennials will comprise 75 percent of the workforce.

Whether you're struggling to manage millennial-age employees or are simply looking for ways to get a leg up as a manager of a younger workforce, there are plenty of ways to ensure your spa staff stay happy, hardworking and loyal.

### Who are millennials?

There's no shortage of myths and generalizations about this group, so here are some important facts that will help set the record straight:

- Born between 1981 and 1996, the oldest millennials are turning 40 next year; the youngest are almost 25.
- They tend to be more educated than previous generations.
- In 2017, millennials accounted for 56 million workers or jobseekers in the U.S. alone.
- They're internet natives and the first truly tech savvy—and tech dependent—generation.
- Millennials are very dedicated to their jobs. They think about and highly value their work, and they also tend to be perfectionists.

"At the end of the day, millennials want to feel valued and have a voice, as well as more flexibility," says Joshua Ostrega, chief customer officer of employee engagement platform [WorkJam](#). "They also want to feel that their workplace experiences are equally (if not more) valued than the financial rewards." In other words, they want to have a say, but they also want to feel respected and made part of the team just as much as they want that next pay raise.

"Millennials understand that businesses must generate a profit to exist, but they want to see their employers prioritize a more balanced set of objectives," adds Christine Selph, who led the development of the 2019 Deloitte Global Millennial Survey. That, she explains, means they want companies to focus on "enhancing the livelihoods of its employees, as well as improving society through education and diversity initiatives."

On the flip side, and according to the same Deloitte survey, the main reasons millennials want to leave or have left their jobs—besides dissatisfaction with pay—include a lack of advancement, learning and development opportunities; not feeling appreciated; and poor work/life balance.



### Voice(s) of Reason

It's human nature—most of us just want to feel heard. Giving millennial employees the ability to communicate their expertise, opinions and feedback is crucial for making them feel appreciated and keeping them engaged.

There are a number of ways to accomplish this, from regular face-to-face check-ins to digital platforms like [WorkJam](#), which allows them to relay messages to the entire staff. For example, a front desk representative could post about a customer who commented how much they loved a new service. "Everyone else can now participate in that conversation and comment with other customer feedback. It might even inspire new services that are

similar," says Ostrega, noting that it's these types of things that make workers feel like they're part of an organization and have a voice. "It's empowering them to feel that they can shape the direction of the business," he says.

Another way to help employees feel heard is to implement simple post-shift surveys. "By asking them how their shift went today, you make them feel valued, you stay updated about how the spa is running and you can make the necessary adjustments," explains Ostrega.

#### A Sense of Purpose

Keep in mind that millennials aren't just here for a paycheck; most are hardworking, driven and want to feel purpose at their jobs. "Get your employees excited about your organization's goals, and show them their roles in making those goals happen," advises Felicia Brown, LMT, spa business consultant and owner of A to Zen Massage in Greensboro, North Carolina. "Give people small areas of responsibility that they can oversee, like keeping a certain area organized. I also make a point of recognizing performance and loyalty with various events, bonuses and contests, in addition to individual praise and rewards."

She adds that by allowing staff members to bring their own talents into the workplace and then encouraging them to use those talents, you foster drive and excitement. At A to Zen, for instance, there are a number of artistic individuals working the front desk. "They've made it a contest to create unique images for our monthly calendar. They love doing it, and it's something our clients notice and comment on" enthuses Brown.

The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey also reveals that millennials show deeper loyalty to employers who tackle the issues that matter most to them. "People want to stay with companies that both help their employees grow while showing them that their job is more than just a job," adds Selph.

Another motivating factor is training and continuing education. Workshops, certifications, trade shows and other opportunities to advance skill sets are all extremely enticing to this generation. Plus, you build a stronger team by encouraging new behavior, pushing customer service objectives and refreshing basic skills.

But at the end of the day, remember that millennials are still individuals. "It helps to find out what drives each person rather than make assumptions about how a group is motivated based on their age," points out Brown, who coaches her employees one on one to foster their personal and professional development.

#### Tech-Savvy Staff

Technology—and choosing how and when to utilize it at your spa—may be something you are consistently weighing, and millennials will likely have an opinion on this topic as a "tech native" generation. They're quick learners and technology-based knowledge comes naturally, which makes them ideal in-house resources, notes Brown. On the other hand, they may have weaker in-person communication skills and be more compelled to check their personal devices throughout the day, which can sometimes translate to having lower attention spans.

Regardless, there's no escaping the fact that technology is something most millennials live and breathe—and utilizing digital platforms that allow for more ease and flexibility at work is certainly something they'll value. "Spas have the ability to use different technologies to dramatically increase both productivity and enjoyment in the workplace," says Ostrega. That tech can vary widely, from simple booking software to apps that let them easily switch shifts, or even on-the-go training programs and videos that can be completed between client appointments.

However you decide to approach this generation of employees, Ostrega has some words of wisdom after years of being asked how to properly manage millennials: "At the end of the day, yes, a lot of these things about millennials tend to be true. But in my experience, it's not just millennials who have these demands—it's everyone who's in the workforce today."

— by Rachel Kossman

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*This story first appeared in the February 2020 issue of DAYSPA Magazine. To receive the magazine, [subscribe here](#).*



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