



THE POST MILLENNIAL WORKFORCE

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What is the generation after the Millennials called and what will they be like at work? As an expert on the impact of generational differences in the workplace, I am often asked this question. As companies struggle to acclimate and flex to the Millennial generation's attitudes and behaviors in the workplace, many are also realizing that they must ready themselves for the next generation of employees that is fast approaching.

In the Wake of the Millennials – a New Generation of Workers

The children of America's youngest generation are roughly 0-15 years old. They are predominantly the offspring of Generation X (born ca. 1963-1981) but many will have parents from the Millennial generation (born ca. 1982-2000) as time goes on. Demographers use a variety of names to refer to this generation – Generation Z, The Pluralists, the Homeland Generation – but none of these titles has yet to stick. And while it is clear that the members of this generation will be the most technologically savvy in history, most of their other values and characteristics have yet to crystalize. Here are some of the predictions for this upcoming generation and the implications for the workplace.

- **Self-Directed** - In reaction to the "helicopter" parenting style of the Baby Boomers, "slow" or "free range" parenting styles of Gen Xers and Millennials will emphasize unstructured time over overachievement and result in the ability of this generation to be self-directed in the world of work.
- **Adaptive & Resilient** - Not having experienced or remembered the years of prosperity prior to the "Great Recession," this generation will come of age accustomed to living with less and working with what they have. As employees, they will be less aggressive than their Millennial counterparts in seeking promotions and raises and more accepting of critical feedback about their performance.
- **Conforming** - Growing up in the wake of 9/11, Columbine and mobile surveillance technology will produce a generation of children highly tolerant of protective environments and imposed rules and boundaries. As adult workers, they will conform to existing company protocol and norms.
- **Inclusive** - This generation's child- and young adulthood will be marked by political polarity, global instability and deepening divides between the rich and poor. As a result, they will adopt values of fairness and due process in an effort to right the inequities they see around them. In the workplace, they will reinforce the Millennials' values of inclusivity. They will support efforts to equalize wages and opportunity and reject divisive language and behavior.



The Workplace of the Future

Because a generation is shaped by the first 15-20 years of life, we will need more time to monitor all the influences (e.g. family upbringing, school systems, world events) on today's youth. Their values and behaviors, however, will begin to shape the workplace of the future within the next five years as the first wave of this generation enters the workforce. Companies that ready themselves now for this new influx of talent will have the competitive advantage for years to come.