10 Ways Millennials Are Creating The Future of Work

By Dan Schawbel; December 16, 2013

Millennials are going to make major shifts in corporations over the next decade and most people aren't ready for the amount of change that's coming. By 2025, millennials will account for 75% of the global workforce and by next year, they will account for 36% of the American workforce. At some companies like Accenture and Ernst & Young, they already account for over two thirds of the entire employee base.

Relative to boomers and Gen X'ers, millennials have a different view of how work should get done and come into the workforce with a different set of expectations. We are already see changes happening as companies try to prepare for this emerging demographic and it's just the beginning. Here are 10 ways that millennials are creating the future of work:

1. They will force companies to be transparent. Transparency is one of the top four qualities that millennials look for in leaders so it's no surprise that when they become leaders that is something they will focus on. They don't trust CEOs and politicians because they don't feel like they are honest, especially how they are portrayed in the media. They want to create honest and open culture where there aren't barriers between workers of different levels and everyone knows what's going on in the company. As social networks penetrate the workforce, they will help open up companies even more.

2. They will choose corporate culture and meaningful work above everything else. 30% of millennials say that meaningful work is important versus only 12% of managers. Furthermore, only 28% of millennials feel that high pay is important versus 50% of managers. They want to know that the work they are doing is having an impact on their co-workers, on their manager and on the company at large. They won't stay at a company long if they are doing busy work the whole time. When they become the leaders of organizations, they will try and align projects with employees better.

3. They will build a collaborative organization. Millennials like to work in teams, on projects to accomplish goals. It's less about what company they work for and more about who they are working with and the types of projects they work on. In arecent study by IdeaPaint, they found that 38% of millennials feel that outdated collaboration processes hinder their company's innovation and 74% prefer to collaborate in small groups. They are used to using wiki's, social networks and other technologies to share ideas and innovate so when they become leaders, they will take those behaviors with them and spread them across their organizations.

4. They will make working from home the norm. In the next 9 years, 41% of the workforce will be working from home and currently over 13.4 million people work from home in America alone. While some employers are hesitant to allow their employees to work from home, Gallup reports that remote workers log more hours and are more engaged. In a study I did with oDesk, we found that 92% of millennials want to work remote and 87% want to work on their own clock, instead of the confined of a 9 to 5 workday. I know many millennials that would rather work from home than receive higher salaries. They value work life integration, not separation like older generations. When they are leading companies, everyone will be dispersed yet highly connected through the technology they are already using regularly.

5. They will recruit based on results over degrees. Currently, if you don't have a degree it's almost impossible to get a job at brand name companies because they filter you out in their HR databases if you don't. Smaller companies are starting to review your online presence over your resume and startups care more about work ethic and experience over education. currently, college degree holders have a 5.2% unemployment rate compared to 10.3% for those who only have a high school diploma. Over the past few years, we've seen more college alternatives, from Udemy.com to Coursera to Khan Academy. Millennials are graduating college with $45,000 in debt, totaling over $1 trillion overall and that number keeps increasing. Millennials care more about what you achieve than your education level. When they are in

leadership positions, they will recruit based on the results that person has achieved rather than the classes they took.

6. They will change the meaning of "face-time". Older managers prefer in-person meetings over everything else when it comes to communication. That's how they grew up and were originally trained so it's what they are comfortable with. Millennials, on the other hand, grew up with technology and graduated college with social network profiles. There is no doubt that millennials will redefine "face-time" as more work from home each year and fewer want to pick up the phone or go into an office. This year, Cisco did a study of millennial executives and found that 87% believe video has a significant and positive impact on an organization. Millennials will embrace video conferencing over face-to-face interactions in the future, especially as video conferencing technology becomes better. Of course, if technology is going to facility the majority of interactions it will further hurt their soft skills, but there are always drawbacks to any major workplace shifts.

7. They will encourage generosity and community support. While millennials are often stereotyped as being selfish and narcissistic, the story that goes untold is their involved in supporting their communities. This trait will end up benefiting the image of corporations and force them to have a "why" instead of just a "how", as Simon Sinek would say. Currently, millennials shun corporations and as a result, 60% of college students aren't considering a career in business. They view corporations as being greedy, having no equality (especially at the CEO level where only 5% of CEOs are women), and at fault for causing the financial crisis. Deloitte found that 92% of millennials believe that business should be measured by more than just profit and should focus on a societal purpose and 83% of millennials gave to charities in 2012 (up from 75% in 2011).

8. They will eliminate the annual performance review. In a study that I did with American Express, we found that only 48% of companies give an annual performance reviews. Millennials often ask "why do I have to wait a whole year to get feedback?" They want feedback to be given in real-time just like they receive tweets from those they follow. It's the instant gratification and learning that drives them and pushes them to improve. Adobe took a stand last year and abolished their annual performance review system. They now have check-in conversations that encourages ongoing feedback. To date, they've saved over 80,000 hours of their managers time by removing the annual performance review from their regular procedures.

9. They will turn work into a game instead of a chore. Millennials grew up playing video games and with their parents complaining about their jobs. They don't want to settle and don't want to work in an environment that isn't fun and exciting (can you blame them?). One of the big trends that reflects this is the rise of gamification application. In a recent interview I did with Adam Penenberg, he explained the growth of gamification and how companies are using these applications and techniques to engage millennials (and the entire workforce). Gartner predicts that by 2014, more than 70% of companies will have at least one gamified application. As Penenberg notes, Cisco developed "myPlanNet", an application where employees become CEOs of service providers to enhance its vitual global sales meeting and call center.

10. They will level corporate hierarchies. While older generations view organizations in the context of hierarchy, millennials are more focused on collaboration and equality. At the 2012 SHRM Annual Conference, Malcolm Gladwell said that millennials are more about "the network" than "the hierarchy". They care less about titles, status and salaries. They are more drawn to projects that connect with their strengths and abilities and favor managers that support them through training and development. Menlo Innovations has built a strong culture in part because they don't have managers, only leaders and thus have eliminated the "command and control" environment that millennials dislike.

http://www.forbes.com/sites/danschawbel/2013/12/16/10-ways-millennials-are-creating-the-future-of-work/