

Managing Millennials

2019 Great Place to Work® Study on
the Best Workplaces for Millennials





Michael C. Bush
CEO, Great Place to Work®

Even though they're the most talked about generation of all time, we're missing the mark on millennials.

Most of today's workplaces are letting them down. Our survey of millennial employees uncovered that just 44 percent of millennials in all U.S. businesses are having a positive experience at work—the lowest figure of any generation.

But we also found that the Best Workplaces for Millennials are doing something really different that transforms work for this generation. Eighty-seven percent of millennials at those organizations are having a great experience.

And when millennials have a great experience, they will stay. In fact, they are 50 times more likely to plan a long-term future with your company if you provide them with a high-trust culture. (By the way, this makes them more loyal than their parents' generation.)

This report gives you new ideas for how to meet the unique, very real needs of this critical generation. You'll also find good news about the kind of leaders that millennials are seeking: we call them "For All" leaders.

For All leaders are great at fostering genuine human connections, developing their teams on a continual basis, solving complex problems, and enabling every employee to bring their unique selves to work. They ensure that everybody can create, everybody is connected and everybody can contribute their best. Who doesn't want a workplace like that?

In short, millennials are here and ready to lead in new and dynamic ways. Their unique superpowers can take your organization to the next level by creating a great workplace for all that's better for people, better for your business and, we think, better for the world.

So thank you, millennials. Please keep doing this thing called work in the way you do it. We can't wait to see what you come up with next and how the workplace will continue to evolve because of you.

Michael C. Bush

Great Place to Work's 4th Annual Study of the Best Workplaces for Millennials

Great Place to Work® conducts one of the largest studies on millennials in the U.S. workplace annually.

Survey Methodology

Employees responded to more than 60 survey questions on our Trust Index® survey. We analyzed the data and recognized the winners as the 2019 Best Workplaces for Millennials.

Great Place to Work's data science team used machine learning algorithms to uncover the most significant set of written phrases, Trust Index® survey statements and demographics that collectively explained why some millennials experience more positive workplaces than others.

We also analyzed millennials' experiences compared to other generations, capturing trends unique to millennials and experiences that are common regardless of age. The analysis also considered other key factors such as organization size, workforce make up, and industry norms.



1,000
U.S. Companies

WITH

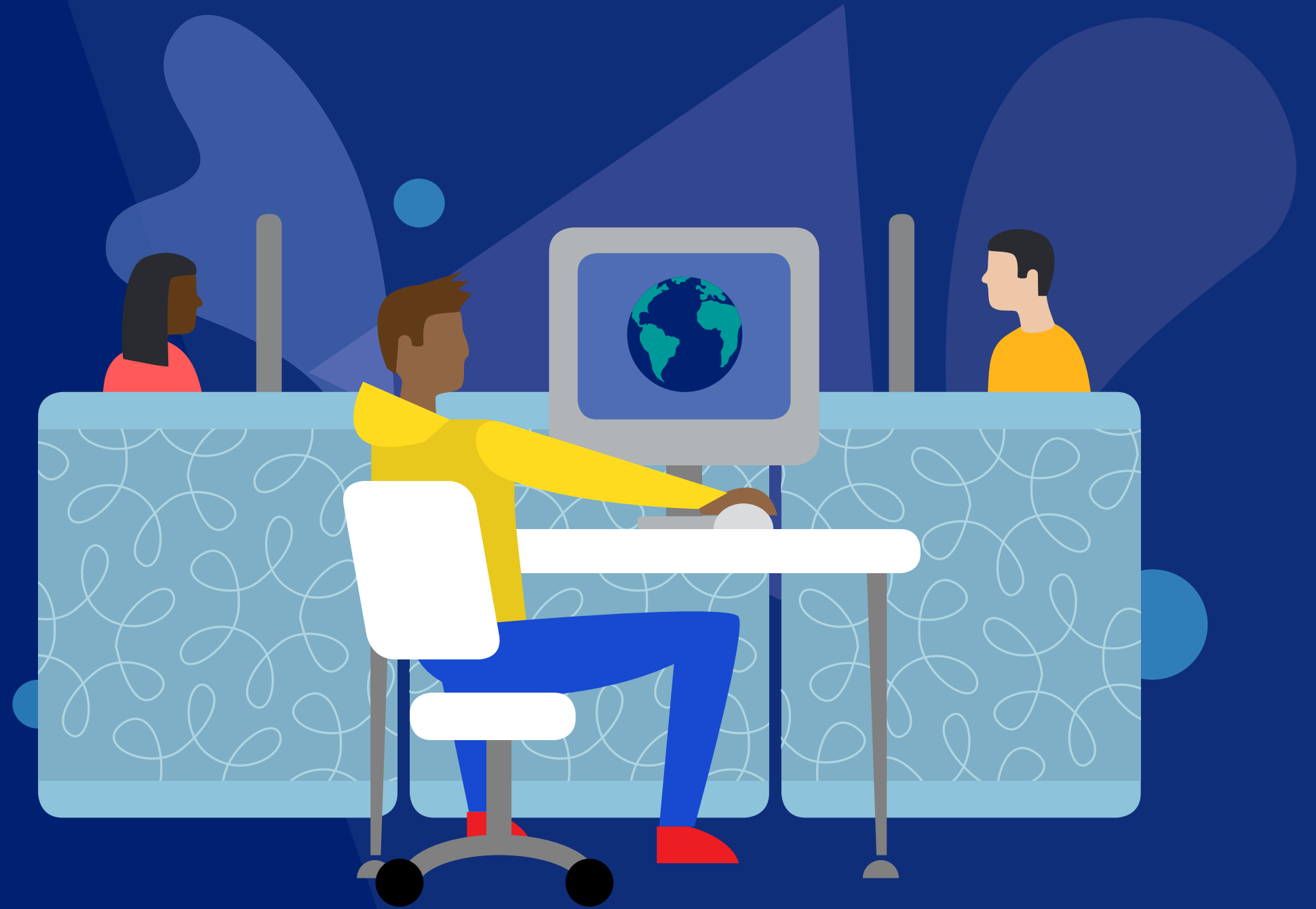
4.5 Million
Employees

626,615
Survey Responses

OF WHICH

253,869
Were Millennials

Millennials in the World and at Work



Who are millennials?

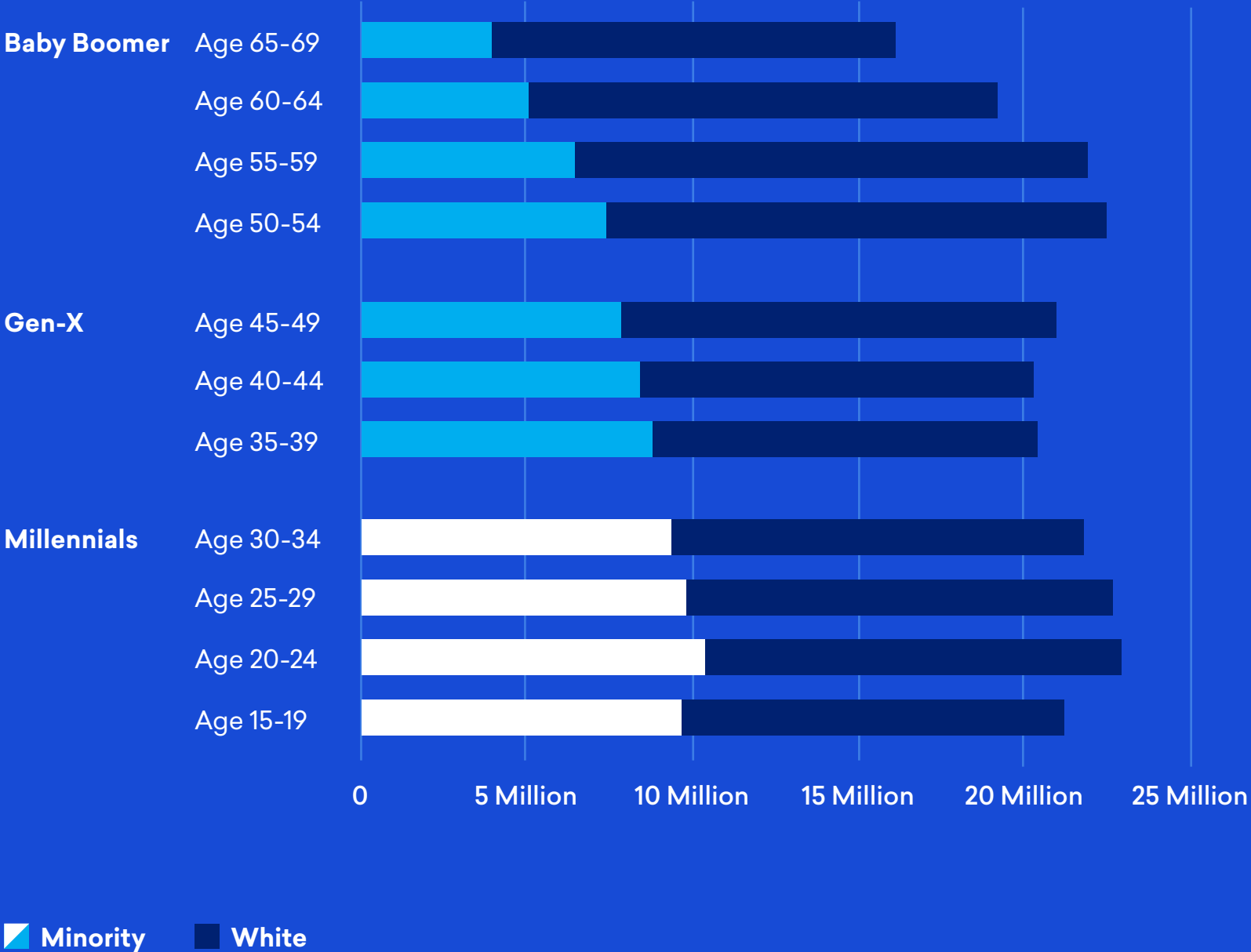
Born between
1981-1997

Currently
Age 22-38

In the U.S.
75 Million¹



More racially and ethnically diverse than any other generation¹



Who are millennials at work?

56 Million in the workforce

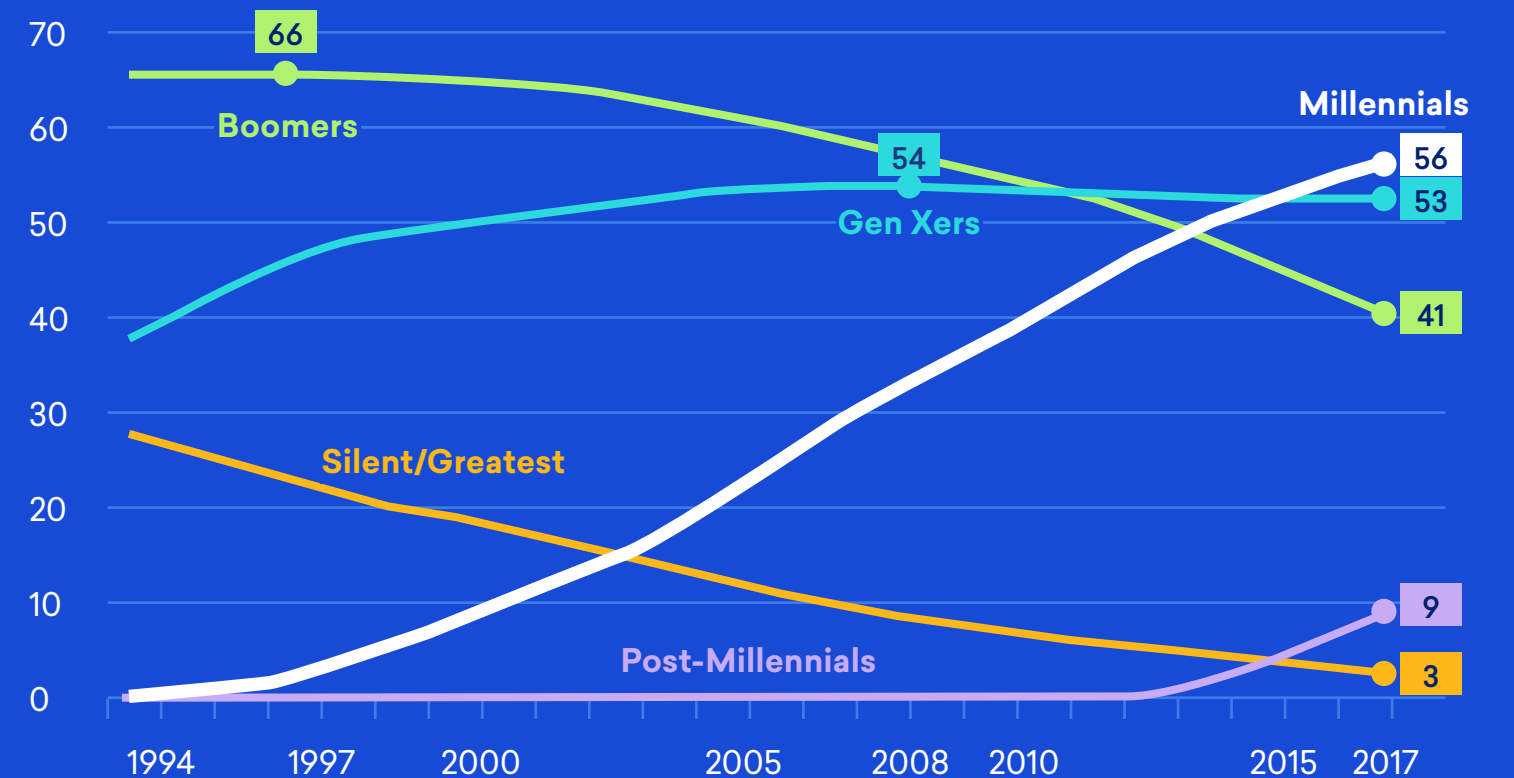
By 2025, millennials will be 75% of the global workforce³

Our 2019 study shows this is the first generation to have more women managers than men



Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016²

U.S. labor force, in millions



Note: Labor force include those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

What's affecting millennials today?

We know that millennials have been affected by serious economic, political and social changes in their lifetimes.

They've also ushered in new ways of doing things and created new ways of being in the world. Much has already been written about these trends⁴, so we will summarize them here.

Crushing student loan debt burdens (\$1.56 Trillion)

Unemployment, underemployment, and the gig economy

Living at home longer, by choice and necessity

Delaying or skipping marriage and children

Care more about community, environment, neighborhoods and giving back

Moving to big cities =

- Good jobs, diverse populations and access to prized experiences
- Outrageous rent and cost of living hinders home ownership and family

The U.S. workplace isn't really great for most employees, but millennials have it worse than any other generation.



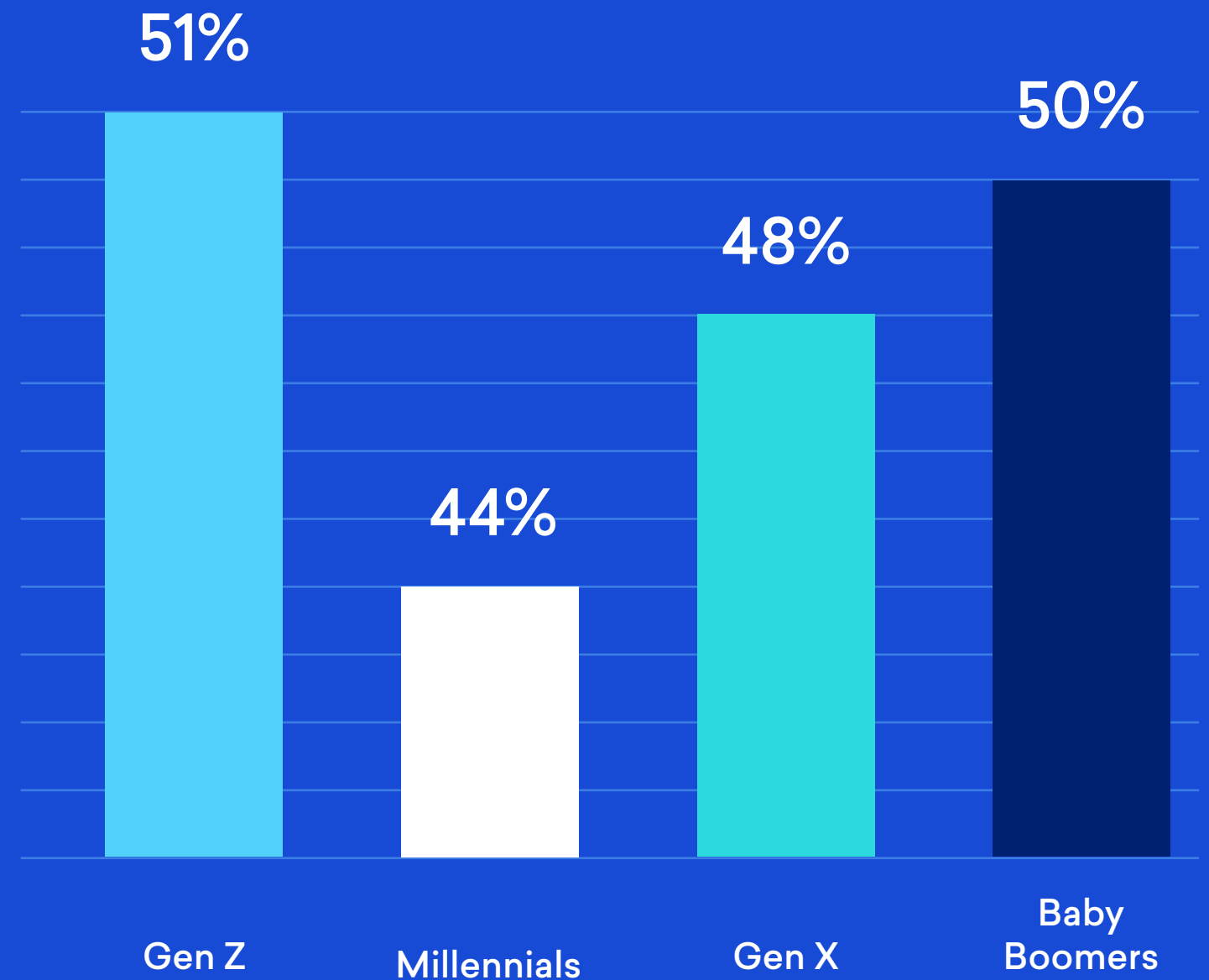
Only 44%

...of millennials are consistently experiencing key aspects of a great workplace, the lowest figure across generations.

In their written comments to our Trust Index[®] survey, millennials describe unique challenges. They are trying to build financial stability, overcome student loan debt and balance caregiving for both children and elders.

Millennials are also generally disappointed in their relationship with management and their sense of collaboration in the workplace.

% of U.S. Employees having a positive experience at work

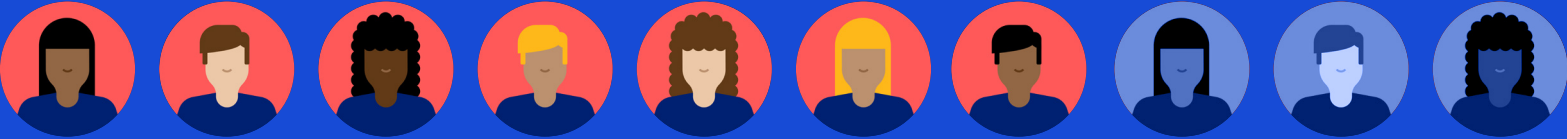


Source: Great Place to Work[®] 2018 U.S. National Employee Engagement Study

More so than other generations, millennials lack faith in their leaders.



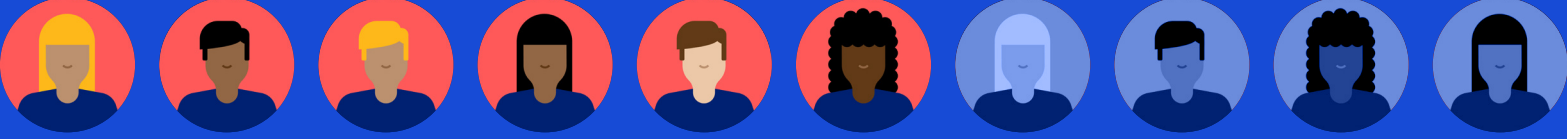
70% Believe managers play favorites



67% Do not believe management's actions match its words



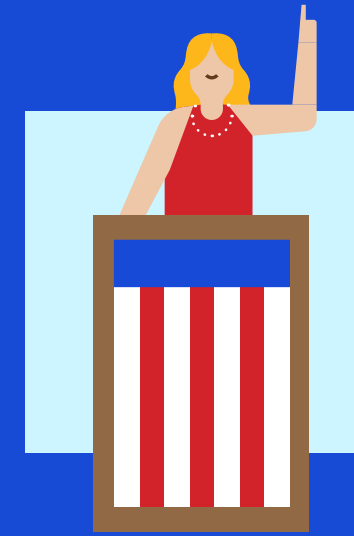
56% Do not believe management is competent



Most millennials experience work as cutthroat, close-minded and uninspired.

These experiences undermine collaboration and community in the workplace.

Millennial turnover costs the U.S. economy an estimated \$30.5 billion annually.⁵



People use politicking and backstabbing as a way to get things done.

64%



My ideas and suggestions are not heard.

63%



People are not willing to give extra to get the job done.

63%

It's not about avocado toast.*

Here's what millennials
really want at work.



*In our study data, avocado toast was only mentioned twice... by Gen Xers

Millennials care about paternity leave and elder care support.

One new theme emerged this year: millennials are talking about caregiving responsibilities, especially paternity leave, more than other generations.

We collected over 267,000 unique survey comments about what makes workplaces great and what could make them better.

More Gen Xers report that they have caregiving responsibility for both children and elders overall. But **millennials mention these issues three times more than any other generation in their comments.** Millennials in managerial positions in particular voice a strong desire to take paternity leave. Dads now want to be sure they have time to participate and support their children, partners, and families.

Millennials with extensive caregiving duties can feel excluded from coming up with new and better ways of doing things at work. Those with elder care responsibilities are nearly 25 percent less likely to feel they can contribute fully to innovation activities.



“During the birth of our second child, my wife experienced a medical emergency and had to undergo two surgeries along with several weeks of recovery. During this time, I was able to leverage paid paternity leave to be there for my family. My team took care of all my responsibilities while I was out, to enable me to focus fully on supporting my family.”



Millennial Employee
Father

Michael Dill • 2nd
Regional Account Manager, Greater Philadelphia
2d • Edited

My life changed in an indescribable way when my wife and I welcomed our son into the world on June 2, 2019. I want to thank my employer, [Novo Nordisk](#) for the generous [#paternityleave](#) which allowed me to focus entirely on bonding with my son and helping to support my wife in recovering from the birth and beginning the arduous task of breastfeeding. I have a tremendous amount of respect and admiration for new Moms who give so much of themselves throughout the pregnancy and postpartum process. It's an incredibly selfless sacrifice that they make for the entire family and the least we can do as husbands and fathers is to be present and supportive every step of the way. This organization means what they say when it comes to supporting its employees and their families. I couldn't be more grateful for my leadership, immediate team, and cross-functional colleagues who supported me in preparation of and during my leave [#novonordisk](#) [#novonordiskway](#) [#marketaccess](#) [#publicaffairs](#) [#family Fortune Magazine](#) [Great Place to Work US](#)

332 • 102 Comments

“Some new parents in our organization must return to work 6-11 weeks after the birth of their newborn baby because our organization does not pay once the short-term disability ends. New parents are faced with the tough choice of receiving a paycheck or caring for their baby.”



Millennial Manager
Healthcare Organization

Millennials need fair base pay and student debt loan repayment support.

While other generations talk about stock options, 401(k)s and yearly bonuses, millennial comments about compensation focus on fair competitive base salary rates and student loans.

They are far less likely than other generations to believe they're getting a fair salary or share of profits. With a collective debt of \$1.56 trillion in student loan debt burdens, and a lower real income level than any other recent generation at their age, having a steady income isn't a nice-to-have, it's absolutely essential.

Most mentioned compensation terms in comments by generation.

401k contribution

Boomers yearly bonus

bonus program

pay fair

student loan competitive pay

base pay **Millennials** Low pay

severely underpaid

feel underpaid

adequate pay

stock options

Gen X merit increases

compensation package

“I’d like to see a benefit that helps out employees with paying back their student loan debt. I have them, they are such a burden, and I would be thrilled if there was some kind of annual match/ assistance I could get in paying back my student loans. I also believe it would help attract + retain a lot of great young employees who are looking for this benefit from their future employer.”

Millennial Manager
Financial Services organization

“Better pay. I’m struggling paycheck to paycheck and I’m not on the ground floor. I can’t imagine buying a house or having kids soon. Having to deal with the insurance copay taken out of my check takes food off my table. I often stress with a student loan and car payment about not having enough financial security to continue working here. It’s very distracting from my work.”

Millennial Manager

“I really LOVE the Student Loan Reimbursement benefit, it’s been fantastic and I don’t hear about other companies doing that for previous schooling.”

Millennial Employee
Retail organization



Translating “Leader” Across Generations

Using natural language processing techniques, we analyzed over 267,000 employee comments to find the cluster of words that each generation most commonly used in association with the term “leader.”

It turns out that each group has a unique take on how they expect leaders to model values, show up in critical moments (or not), and connect with their teams.

Connectors



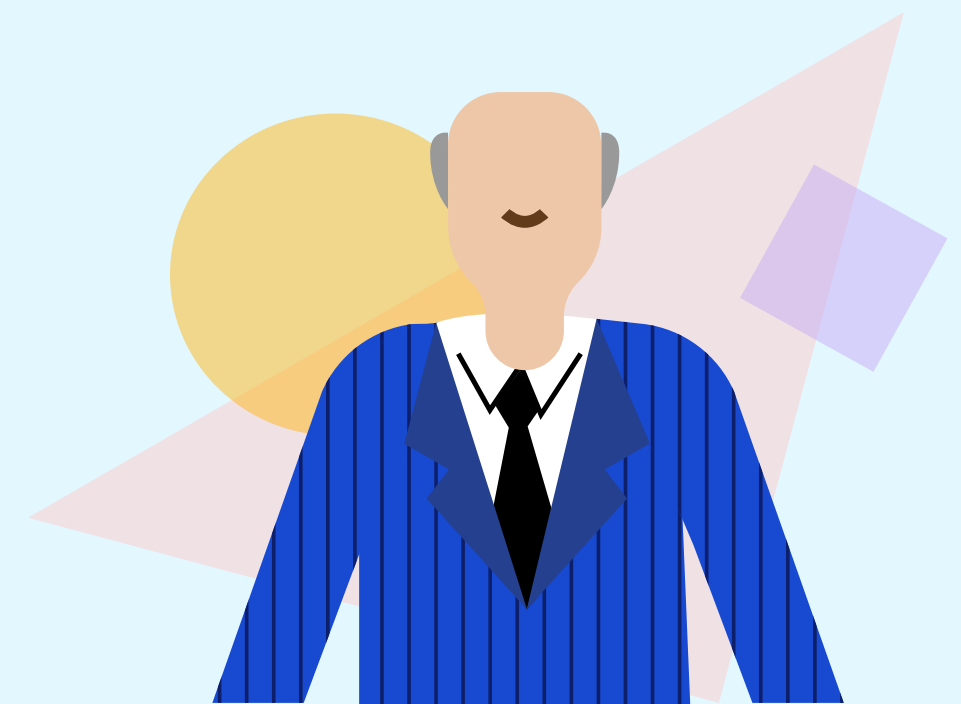
Millennials identify leaders as Connectors - people who connect diverse workforces to a common purpose, have their employees' long-term growth and personal interests in mind, and show up during critical moments in their personal life or career.

Role Model



Ask Gen Xers what they see and they'll describe a Role Model, a leader who exemplifies the company's values with their actions, who is always ready to jump in to help solve problems and lead the business through transition and change.

Culture Beacon



Boomers describe their leader as a Culture Beacon, a bright, strategic person who ensures values permeate the organization. They're admired, yet distant.

Generations define leaders differently.

By translating “leader” in this way, we can all better understand what our colleagues hope for and better meet those implicit needs when possible.

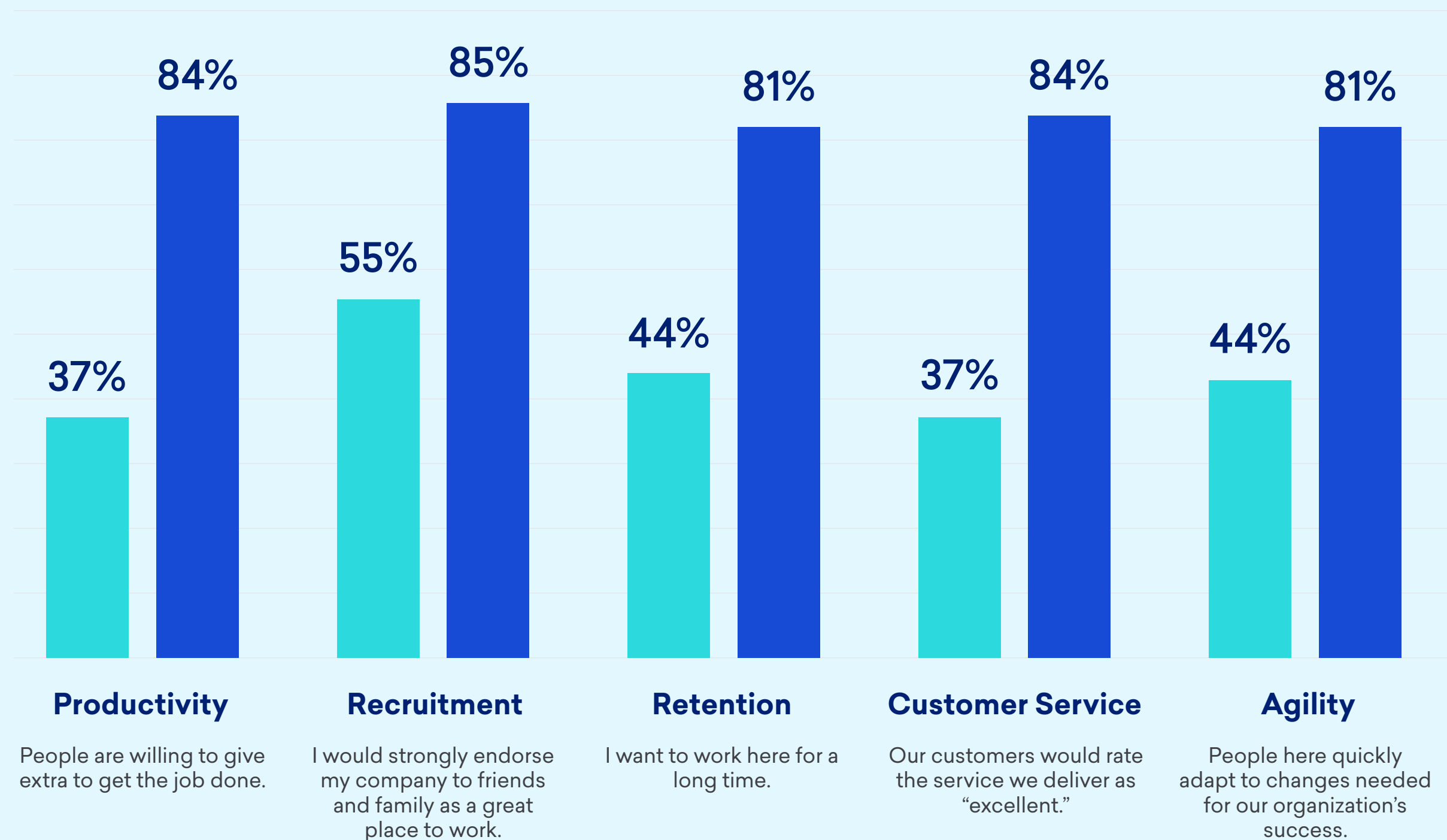
Key terms are bolded.

	Millennial	Gen X	Baby Boomer
	The Connector	The Role Model	The Culture Beacon
Setting a Vision	Creates connections, alignment and shared purpose across teams, layers , and diverse workforces	Clearly and transparently conveys strategy that delivers results .	Committed to a strong organization focus that they authentically believe improves society for the greater good .
Style	Seen as sharing the best interests of employees, particularly in their long-term growth	Seen as being genuinely engaged with work, engaging to work with, and being approachable and open	Seen as bright and strategic , leading a company that's innovative in the market
Values	Seen as embracing ambitious goals and consistently leading with a distinct mindset	Definitive and consistent role model of values and behaviors of company	Ensure the culture permeates everywhere
Critical Moments	Shows up strongly in critical moments to help individuals grow or deal with personal lives	They show up strongly in critical moments that lead to the organizations future or during transitions	(Did not mention in comments frequently enough to define)
Collaboration	Hearing from or being heard by leaders when it matters, like addressing poor performance, answering tough questions, or key projects	Creates a place where all levels can participate, across the board . Willing to advocate for anyone's ideas	Creates environment that's inclusive of multiple points of view and empowers people and teams
In Action...	Share clear, consistent, and empathetic messages, supporting culture and information trickling down in a consistent and clear way	Solves problems or enables them to get solved across organization	(Did not mention in comments frequently enough to define)

Companies that better recruit, retain, and inspire millennials will reap significant competitive advantages today and years into the future.

% of Millennials Reporting Positive Experiences

■ 2018 Certified Companies ■ Average U.S. Workforce



Turns out a lot of people got millennials wrong.

Far from being selfish job-hoppers, they're just searching for a position with great leaders, fair base pay, and support for their real life needs.

And when organizations deliver on those requests, **millennials deliver big time for their organizations.**



A Few Superpowers of Millennials

Super Loyal



Innovation Heroes



Top Recruiters



When millennials find a great workplace, they are super loyal.

Members of the generation have been accused of being casual, careless job-hoppers. But our study suggests millennials simply aren't willing to stay at bad jobs.

When millennials find a great workplace, they want to stay. Millennials who experience a great workplace culture are 50x more likely to plan a long-term future at their company compared to millennials who don't experience a great workplace culture.

While their competitors continually lose productivity and profits to turnover, companies with happy millennials retain their best talent and drive business results year after year.

Millennials say they intend to stay a long time

50x

more when they believe their company is a great workplace.



Millennials at Best Workplaces & Certified Companies are eager innovators. They wildly exceed the innovation capacity of their competitors.

Our Innovation Velocity Ratio (IVR) shows the number of millennial employees who feel they have a lot of opportunities to innovate, versus those who feel blocked, stuck, or burnt-out with other concerns.

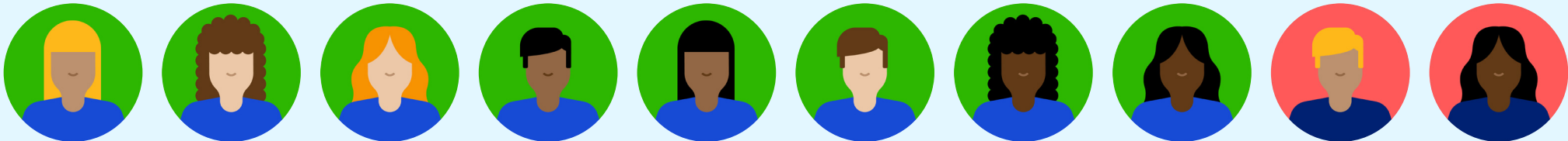
The higher your ratio, the faster your organization can achieve its business goals, innovate and adapt to changes.

For more detail on the IVR, read our paper [Innovation by All](#).

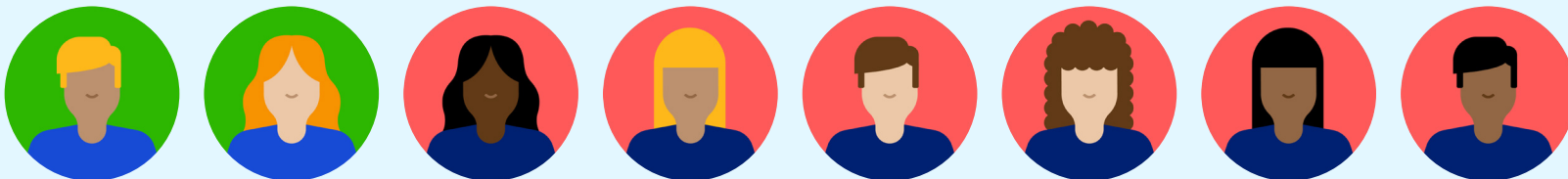
11:2 Best Workplaces for Millennials



8:2 Great Place to Work Certified Company



2:6 Average U.S. Workplace



■ Ready to Innovate ■ Experience Friction

Millennials are powerful recruiters and brand ambassadors.

Companies must have a strong employer brand and recruitment marketing approach in order to attract top talent. Candidates are now able to search quickly for any mention of an organization on social media, job sites or news outlets, so positive and credible reviews are essential to fill open positions.

Seventy-five percent of millennials turn to friends and family when making job decisions.⁵ Where's the easiest place an applicant can find valuable employer recommendations? Social media!

Millennials are social media savvy and passionate about workplace culture, making your employees one of the most valuable marketing assets you can activate within your organization.

Millennials at Best Workplaces are 149x more likely to strongly recommend their company as a great place to work to friends and family.

That's a free recruiting team you can't afford to ignore!

Millennials are 149x more likely to strongly recommend their company to friends and family when it is a great workplace

149x



Pulte Mortgage
 3,277 followers
 1w • Edited

PulteGroup is Great Place to Work® Certified! Learn why our employees love calling #PulteGroup home: <https://bit.ly/2xBYdID> #GPTWcertified #GPTW4ALL #PultePride Great Place to Work US PulteGroup




27

Marisa Froio • 3rd+
 Manager, Global Sales Development at ServiceNow
 1mo • Edited

Celebrating a great 4th year at **ServiceNow** and many more to come - We are now officially a **Great Place to Work US** certified company!

We believe in our purpose, "make work, work better for people", it's ingrained in everything we do each day... and that's just one of the reasons working here is great.



29 • 5 Comments

Brett Seidl • 3rd+
 Assistant Director Of Development at Kansas State University Foundation
 1d

Kansas State University Foundation has been certified by **Great Place to Work US!** I'm proud to work for the only institutionally-related foundation in the country to receive this distinction (and one of just seven organizations in KS).



Kansas State University Foundation
 greatplacetowork.com

29 • 5 Comments

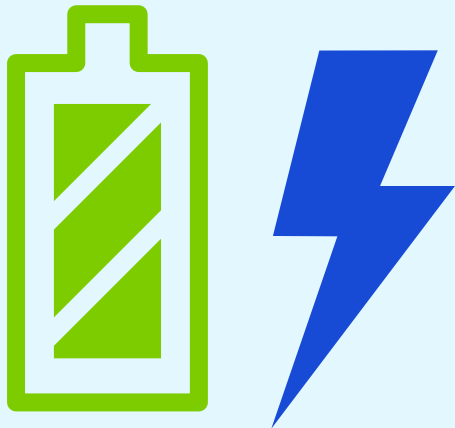
It's time to realize
the full power of
millennials at work.

Here's what
you can do today.



Leaders at all levels can...

Supercharge your frontline leaders



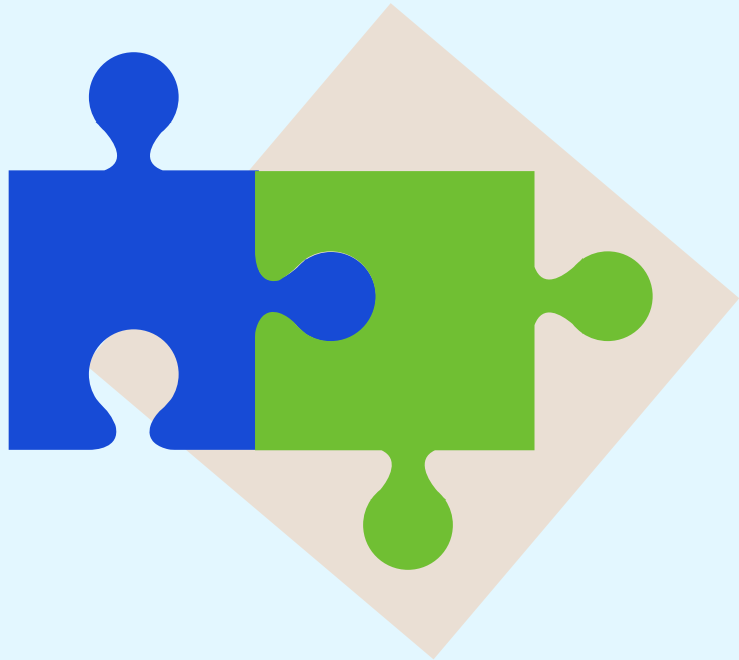
A key difference between good workplaces and the best are the experiences of their frontline millennial leaders. Best Workplaces ensure those leaders have a fun, psychologically and emotionally healthy environment with managers who involve people in key decisions and deliver on their promises.

Create genuine involvement



All generations want to be involved in decisions that affect them. It's particularly powerful for millennials. When they feel involved, they're 4 to 64 times more likely to give extra, stay longer, recommend their workplace, and contribute their best to their workplace.

Care for unique needs



Millennials are asking for more support with paternity leave, elder care, and financial wellbeing. Listen to and act on your millennial employees' genuine needs – you'll enable them to bring their best to work when they feel supported and you'll get the most from your people program investments.

HR Leaders

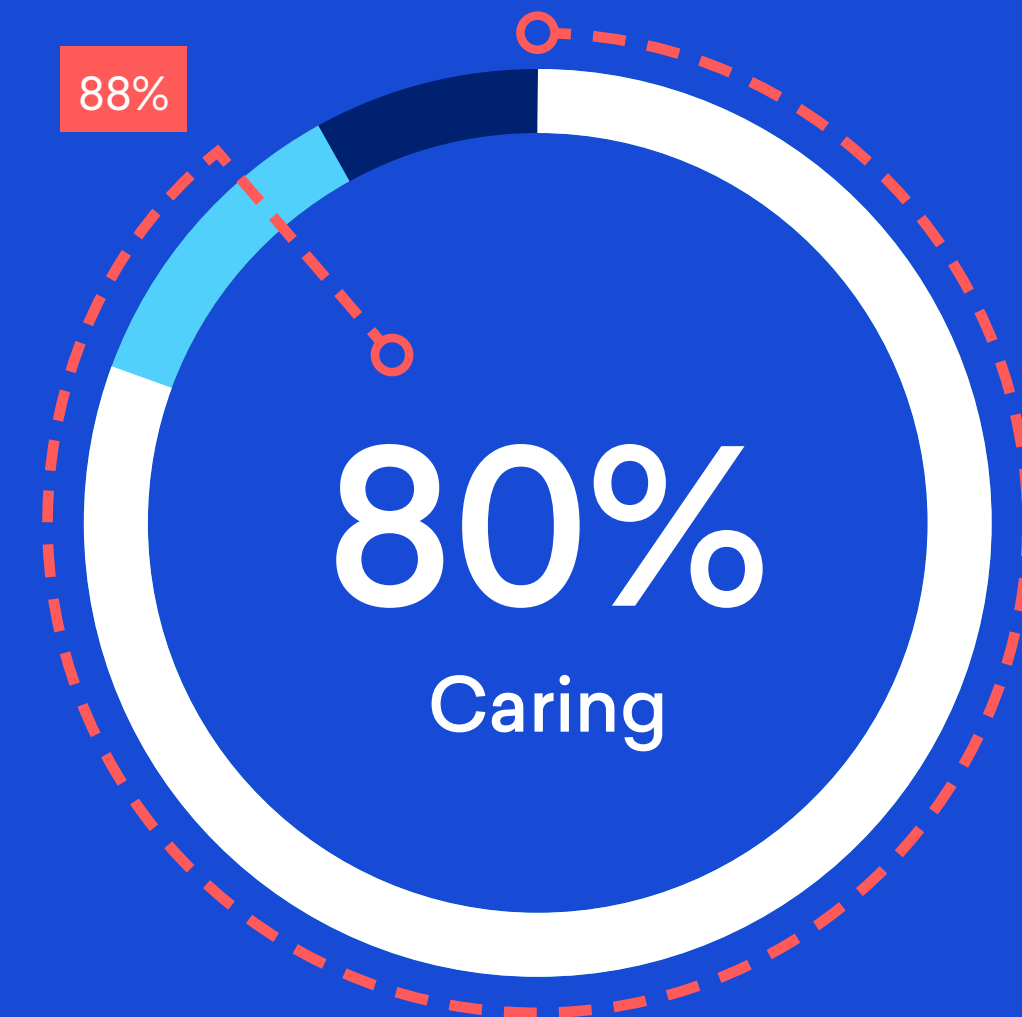
- Don't guess. Ask if your programs care for the real needs of your millennial employees.

With so much noise about millennials, it's hard to pin down what your employees actually need and want and which programs are the right investment. Ask your employees if they see their benefits as special and unique, and whether there is an experience of caring in the workplace. When those are present, it means you're offering the right programs, and creating a deep sense of loyalty and commitment. Most importantly, take action on their feedback.

- Check in with your frontline millennial leaders

Millennial frontline leaders are key in creating the day-to-day experiences that bring out their teams' full potential. To lead this charge, millennial leaders need to consistently feel that they're informed, involved, and clear on expectations. As an HR leader, you can ensure managers are hitting these marks by measuring their teams' experiences. When and where gaps exist, develop coaching and development programs to ensure that all managers have the skills to build a high-trust experience for all leaders, especially the essential front line.

Are you caring for your employees' real needs?



Sample Empirising Survey Results: Focus Area and Best Workplace for Millennials Benchmark

Marketing, Recruitment, and Employer Branding Leaders

□ Empower and encourage millennials to share their stories

Sometimes just letting everyone know it's okay to share is important. Create your own hashtag (Like our #GPTWcertified) so your employees can customize their posts and you can quickly and easily track promotional posts. Empower millennials by regularly providing them easy, sharable content they can promote themselves. Encourage people to share photos, videos and stories about why they love working for your organization. They'll tell your culture story, give highly trustworthy reviews, and get the word out about what an amazing workplace they're part of.

□ Turn on the talent beacons and recruit

When millennials love working somewhere, they feel proud to tell others about their company and strongly recommend it as a workplace—both key factors that drive positive brand recognition and recruitment of great new talent. Find out who's already engaged in your organization and get them a megaphone! Post positive employee comments from your Great Place to Work Trust Index survey on your jobs page or in Instagram posts and get ready to see top talent apply in droves. The easier you make it for your employees to boast about their great workplace, the more they'll show it off.



TAKE ACTION TODAY

Diversity, Inclusion, Equality and 'For All' Leaders

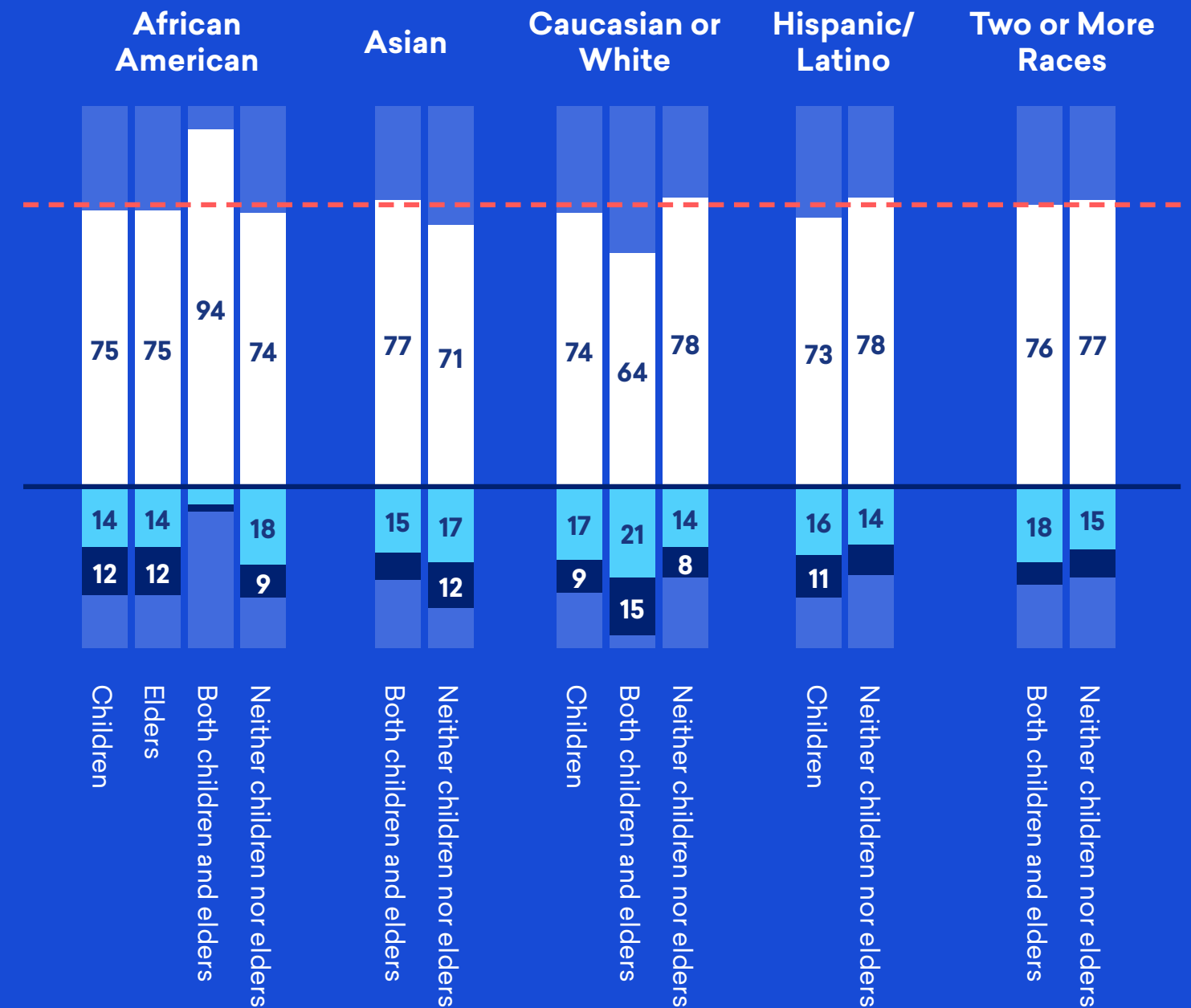
Find the untapped talent waiting to get involved

While all millennials value being involved, not all millennials are the same. They experience different needs and barriers to feeling included, particularly in innovation. Make sure you're inspiring the innovation of all millennials by looking at key experiences driving innovation and inclusion to help ensure everybody has a chance to innovate, regardless of who they are or what they do for your company.

Engage the natural connectors among millennial leaders

More so than other generations, millennials see leadership as embracing the potential of connecting diverse people. They're natural proponents of creating better experiences for all employees and making sure each and every person can bring their full, best self to work. Finding ways to engage with the millennial leaders in your organization can amplify your D&I efforts and help build a great workplace for all.

Where are your missing innovators? We can help you pinpoint the groups being left out



Sample Emprising Survey Results: Demographic Breakout

Executives

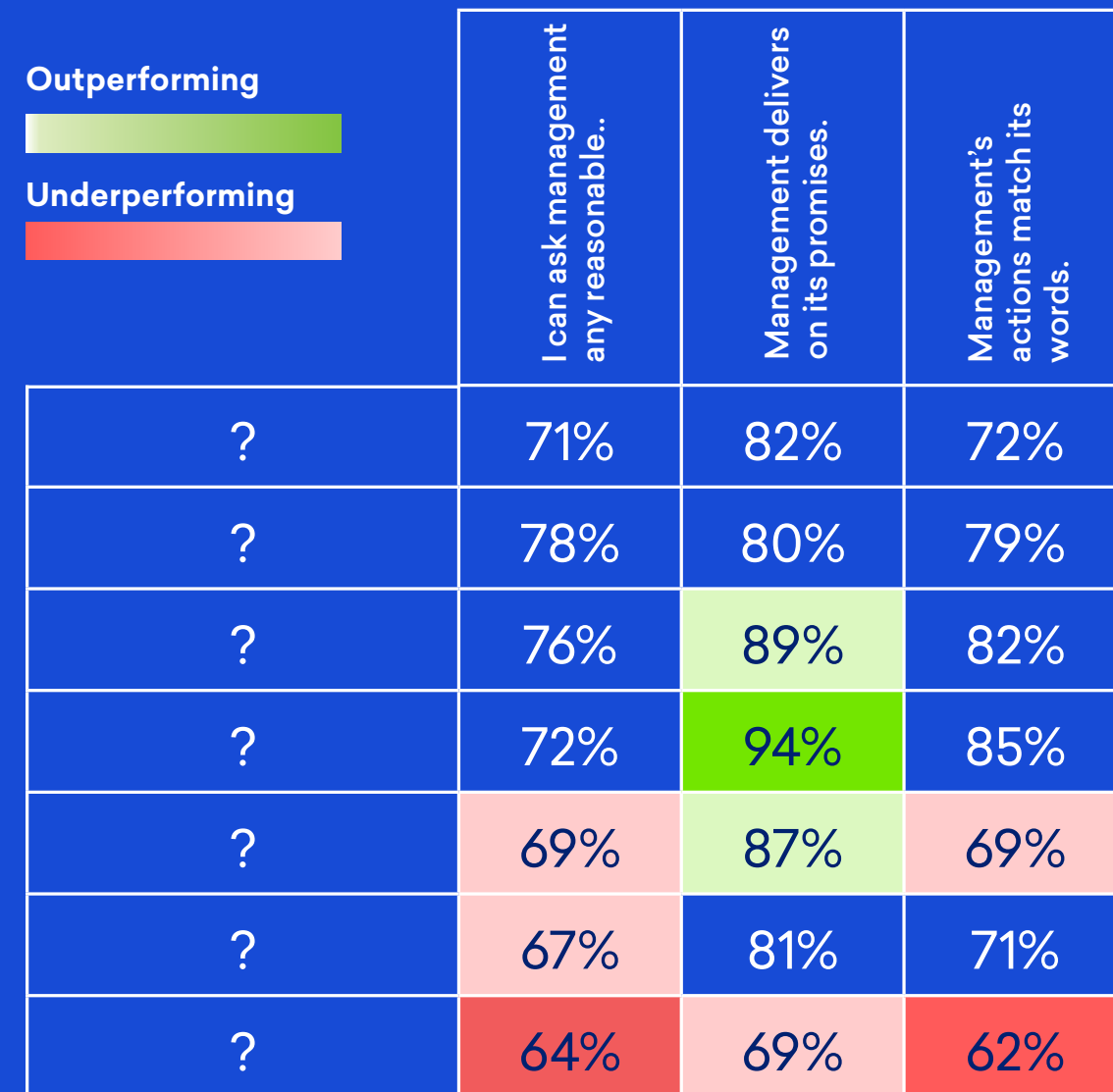
- Answer the tough questions honestly and completely, every time

It's not easy work when hundreds or thousands of employees look to you for answers. Some of their questions can be really tough to answer. Those are the ones that make or break employees' faith in their leaders and companies. When leaders give straight answers in those moments, millennial employees know their leaders are deeply trustworthy, whether they get the answer they were hoping for or not.

- Get diverse input on your 'promise' blind spots

Confidence and faith in organizations is a key driver of millennials' experiences. When employees think promises are broken, those promises are usually implied ones, not explicit. Often, these are tied to your business's brand, mission, or values. Despite executives' best intentions and efforts, missteps and misunderstandings happen. The only way to address them is to cast a wide net to know where the breakdowns are happening, so you can tackle them head on.

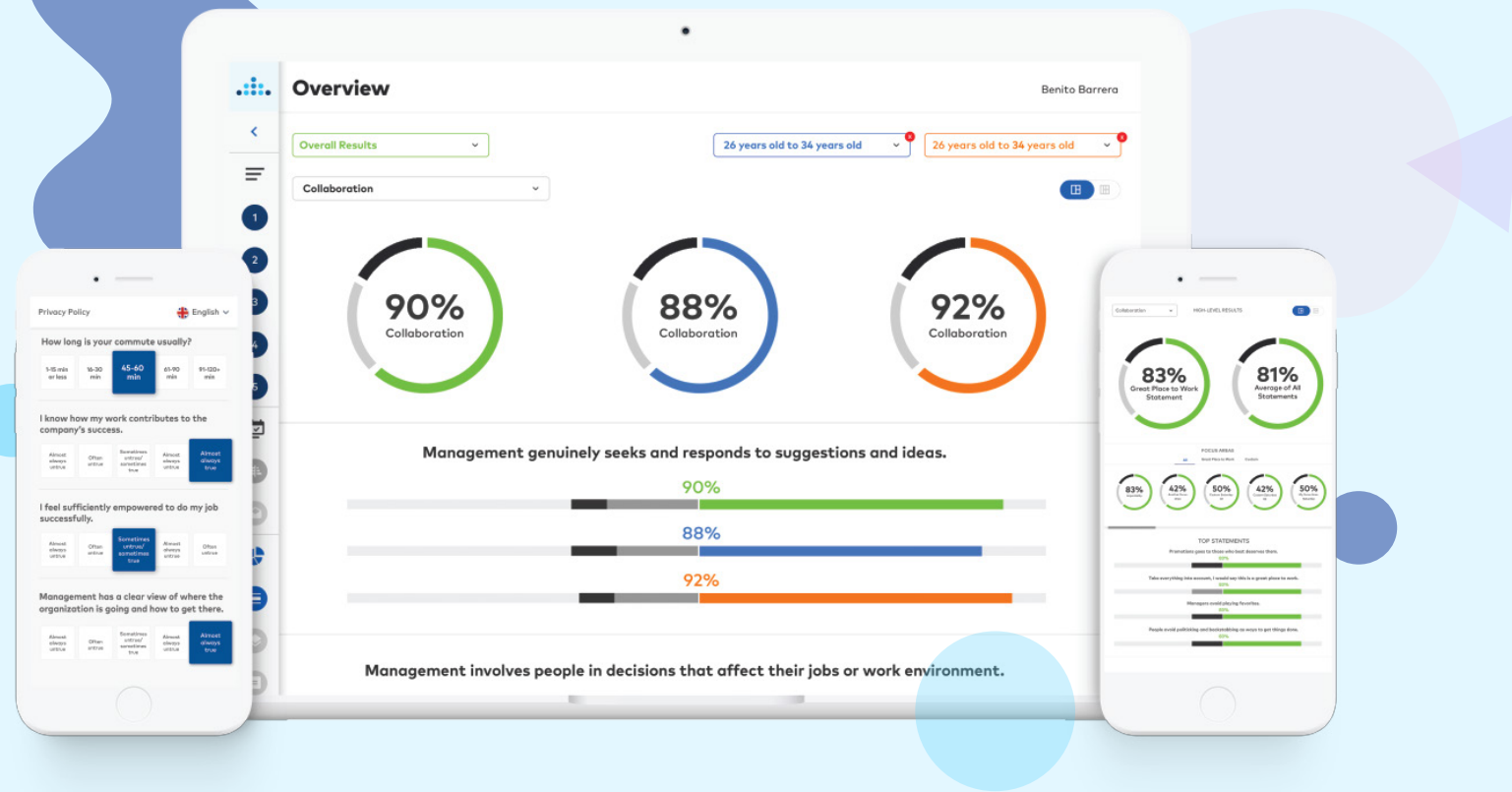
Where are your blind spots? We can help you find the teams where your message isn't connecting.



Sample Emprising Survey Results: Heatmap Visualization

Ready to do more?





Realize the power of millennials with our culture management platform, Emprising™

We empower leaders like you with the surveys, real-time reporting, and insights you need to make data-driven people decisions.

You can easily find the untapped pockets of millennial talent waiting to get involved. Get diverse input on your leadership promise blind spots. Gather employee comments that you can use in your recruitment and branding efforts. Ask which of your benefits programs are meeting the real needs of your millennials. You can even compare your survey results against the 2019 Best Workplaces for Millennials list benchmark.

[Contact us](#) to learn more about how you can quantify your culture and uncover actionable insights that will help you build a high-trust workplace for all.



Get Recognized

If you've built a great culture, get Great Place to Work-Certified™ and use your badge to recruit great millennial talent.

We'd also love to be able to recognize your organization on the next [Best Workplaces for Millennials](#) list.

[Contact us](#) today to get started. The application deadline for the next list is March 2020.

Resources

To learn more about the Innovation Velocity Ratio (IVR), read our [Innovation Insights Series](#).

Check out our [Content Library](#) for daily culture insights, new episodes of our podcast [Better](#), and cutting-edge research and insights.



About Great Place to Work[®]

Great Place to Work[®] is the global authority on workplace culture. Since 1992, we have surveyed more than 100 million employees around the world and used those deep insights to define what makes a great workplace: trust. We help organizations quantify their culture and produce better business results by creating a high-trust work experience for all employees.

Emprising[®], our culture management platform, empowers leaders with the surveys, real-time reporting, and insights they need to make data-driven people decisions.

We use our unparalleled benchmark data to recognize Great Place to Work-Certified[™] companies and the Best Workplaces[™] in the U.S. and more than 60 countries, including the 100 Best Companies to Work For[®] list published annually in Fortune.

Everything we do is driven by our mission: to build a better world by helping every organization become a Great Place to Work For All[™].

To learn more, visit greatplacetowork.com, listen to the podcast [Better by Great Place to Work](#), and read [“A Great Place to Work for All.”](#) Join the community on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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