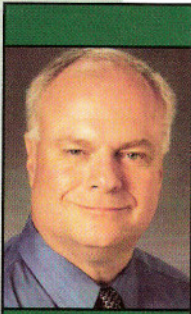


Growing Your Future Talent



Jim Welch

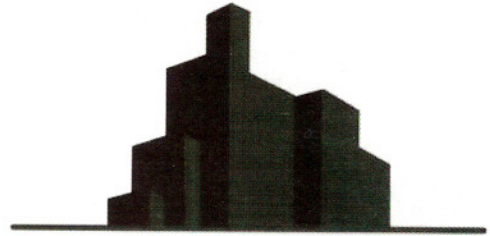
It is critical that the Practical Growth Leader understands the critical leadership differences across the generations. This will be even more important in the next 24 to 36 months as the available labor pool continues to get smaller. Understanding these differences will be critical to leading diverse teams to victory. It is also an important tool to help find, acquire and retain the best leaders across each generation. This article focuses on the unique perspective of the Millennial

Generation that is currently migrating into the workforce.

The Millennium Generation (1980-2000) experienced Princess Diana, the Gulf War, the Oklahoma City bombing, Columbine, www., cell phones, September 11th, computer games and they lived in a child-focused world. The Kennedy tragedy was a plane crash to this group and not an assassination. They have always had pin numbers and made their purchases through scanners. They do not remember much about life before on-line. Google has always been a verb. Laptops have always fit into backpacks. The presidency has almost always been about someone named Bush or Clinton. NASA has experienced as many failures as successes. Schools are no longer a safe haven for children. A Tab is the heading on a computer file and not a diet drink. This generation values higher social consciousness, intellectual problem solving, teamwork, holistic lifestyle ("work is only part of life"), technological dependency, respect for diversity and being achievement-oriented. This generation was raised by "helicopter parents" who hovered around their kids and gave them constant feedback and support. They have little long-term loyalty to any music artist or style, and tend to feel the same way about the companies they work for every day.

This is the first generation that made lists of goals and activities beginning in elementary school. This is a positive relative to being goal-oriented. They can also become restless more quickly to move on to the next thing on the list as they cross off their accomplishments.


What does all of this mean to the practical growth leader? You must recruit as well as retain the best leaders from this



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generation by emphasizing work/life balance, appealing directly to their key influencers (including parents and significant others) and by emotionally connecting Millennials to the higher level mission of your industry. When you lead Millennials, you must also provide them with a dynamic team environment that is collaborative, encouraging, and rewarding. They are used to winning and losing as a team.

As a leader, you must also provide very frequent performance feedback and support to Millennial team members. You must give supportive, ongoing feedback individually, (just like the "helicopter parents") and recognition publicly to this generation. If you do not, the best will leave you. If three weeks go by and they haven't heard from you, they assume something is wrong. The good news is that this generation will join your optimistic view about the future and the role they will play in shaping it.

Note: Beloit College mind set list was utilized as a source for several of the Millennial perspectives. 

Jim Welch is president and founder of "The Growth Leader, Inc.," and brings over 25 years of marketing leadership passion working for Hallmark and Procter & Gamble, two of America's most iconic brands. Jim has hands-on senior vice president and chief marketing officer leadership experience and a consistent track record of utilizing proven techniques to effectively lead teams that achieve winning top line and bottom line results. For more information on this columnist or to book him for your next speaking event, contact FIVE STAR Speakers & Trainers at 913-648-6480 or contact lturec@fivestarspeakers.com.