

Do the Millennials Have it Right After All?



George Louris
Director of IT Staffing and Support
Custom Computer Specialists

A recent conversation with some industry peers raised the topic of why the current generation are often labeled as “difficult” to work with. After discussing the topic at length, I am not sure I agree with this assessment. Often, I find myself wondering if “we,” as the more seasoned generation, are the problem, as opposed to “them,” the Millennials. In recent times I have come to think that perhaps we are really the ones that are difficult to work with.

As I have gotten older and progressed through my career and had children of my own, I have come to appreciate the often talked about – but still elusive to many – “work-life balance.” Early on in my career I spent many years working 70-80 hour work weeks. I would come into the office every Saturday, work from home at nights and constantly be “on call” via my cell phone for whenever the boss needed me. I had settled into the mindset that this approach was the only path to success.

My experience however contradicts this thought process. I have come to learn that the current generation defines success differently. For them it is the journey, not the destination, that defines whether or not they are successful. To have

fun while working, to bring a greater focus to the experience and the interactions they have with their peers.

With this in mind, I challenge you today to look around your organization and ask yourself the following questions:

- Do your employees enjoy their work? What about their work environment?
- Are your employees comfortable socializing with each other?
- Are they comfortable approaching leadership within your organization, or are they scared that they will not be taken seriously or their input not be considered?

I encourage you to be honest with yourself and consider these questions carefully. If you cannot emphatically answer “yes” to these questions, then I suggest that it is time to consider (re)building your culture to allow employees to be challenged and productive, all while having fun in the process. Finding the perfect work-life balance has become the American dream and is heavily sought after by Millennials who have recognized, and perhaps kick-started this trend. As companies begin to recognize that this is becoming more and more of a desirable trait among employment-seeking individuals, many are striving to create a work culture that can fill this gap. Consider major companies like Google and Apple and how desirable they are in the eyes of Millennials seeking employment. These companies are well-known for their exceptional work cultures, having gotten the work-life balance just right.

So perhaps the Millennials are to blame for this “problem.” This doesn’t mean they are difficult to work with. Rather, I believe this is an opportunity for the rest of us to learn from their example.