

UDEMY IN DEPTH

2018 Millennials at Work Report



Learning to Work, Working to Learn

Millennials, the generation born roughly between 1981 and 2000, get painted with a pretty broad brush as entitled know-it-alls who want all the praise without any of the effort or sacrifice. While there have always been tensions between “kids today” and their elders, millennials have entered the workforce at a particularly fraught time. They face the same newcomer challenges as Gen X and baby boomers did before them but with the added stresses of rapidly changing technologies, uncertainty among interconnected global economies, and the very real possibility of living and working longer than humans ever have.

Udemy wanted to understand how millennials are faring and what they’re feeling as they’ve transitioned from formal education to professional life. What emerges is a picture of a generation that wants to control their own destinies, finds satisfaction in a blend of professional and personal pursuits, and is willing to put in the hard work to reach their goals.

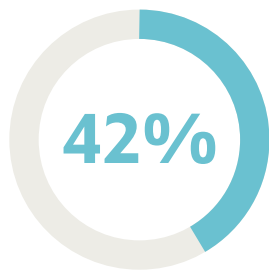
In other words, millennials aren’t that different from anyone else. What sets them apart in a work setting, however, may be their insistence that the working world is overdue for change. As the largest generation currently active in the workforce, they have the numbers and the power to stand up for what they think they deserve, and employers hoping to attract and retain millennial talent would be wise to take heed.



The Truth About Millennials

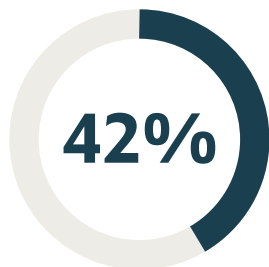
The message to employers wanting to engage and retain this generation is: invest in us, help us keep our skills current, and offer us flexibility, and in return, we will stick with you, rise to the demands of a changing workplace, and use our native comfort with technology to work smarter for you.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



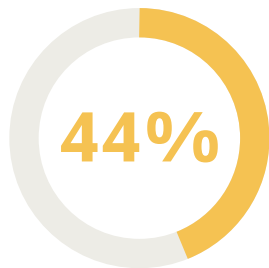
Less than half said their current employers provide learning, development, and training opportunities

They give their educational preparation high marks but also recognize they'll have to continue gaining new skills. They're ready to do what it takes to keep their skill sets relevant.



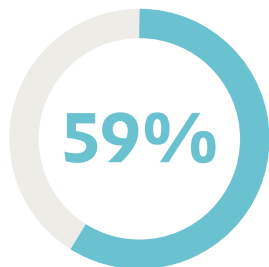
Say L&D is the most important benefit when deciding where to work

"Fun" office perks may grab media headlines, but millennials actually want substance from their employers, including learning & development opportunities.



Say a flex schedule is their ideal work arrangement

They want greater flexibility in how, when, and where they work—not because they're spoiled but so they can work smarter and more efficiently.



Have been in their current jobs for more than three years

They want to be loyal and stay with a company, not hop from job to job, but they need employers to show they're equally committed.

School-to-Work Transition: Millennials Say, "We're Ready!"

Most millennials in full-time jobs feel their education prepared them well, with 79% rating their schooling "excellent" or "good". However, they may give themselves more credit than they give their fellow millennials, as a smaller percentage (64%) believe college, in general, is effective preparation for the challenges and opportunities of a 21st-century career.

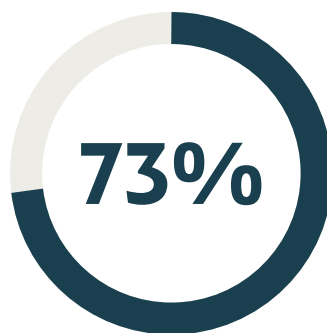
Contrast this with a recent [American Staffing Association/Harris Poll](#) survey of American adults of all ages, where 75% of respondents said schools are failing to educate students for the 21st century and 93% said high schools and colleges aren't doing enough to make graduates more employable. Clearly, older workers don't cut much slack for newer entrants to the workforce.

The views of older generations may explain why so many in our millennial survey (60%) feel that employers have unreasonable expectations of the skills and experience young employees should bring to the table. An even greater percentage (67%) think there's a gap between what they're capable of and what employers believe they're qualified to do. These responses were fairly consistent by both gender and level of education.

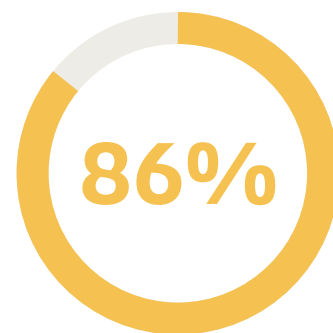
HOW MILLENNIALS FEEL ABOUT LEARNING



Rate their schooling
"excellent" or "good" in
preparing them for work



Expect to need additional
education or training to
advance in their careers



Express confidence in their
ability to gain new skills and
learn new technologies

When we asked millennials whether they're compensated fairly, responses broke down along gender lines.

While 69% of male millennials think they receive fair pay, only 52% of millennial women say the same. When asked directly whether there is pay inequality between men and women, most agreed overall, but, again, there were clear gender disparities. Overall agreement also rises with education level.

We were also curious to see how the millennial generation feels about the #MeToo movement, and responses were consistently strong in saying that sexual harassment is a serious problem in the workplace. Not surprisingly, women were more emphatic in their agreement.

MILLENNIALS, GENDER & WORKPLACE PERCEPTIONS

Do you believe there is wage inequality between men and women?

	Overall	Men	Women	Men 21-29	Women 21-29
Yes	67%	63	72	59	71
No	33%	38	28	41	29

Do you believe sexual harassment is a serious problem in the workplace?

	Overall	Men	Women	Men 21-29	Women 21-29
Yes	69%	65	73	63	76
No	31%	36	27	37	24

What Motivates Millennials: Hunger to Learn

When it comes to compensation, more than half (60%) believe they're paid fairly, a data point that increases with age and education level; 77% of those with a post-grad degree think their compensation is fair.

But millennials can't be won over with money alone. They also want skills training and career development, a healthy and productive work environment, and supportive managers. They are well aware they have more to learn in order to maintain job performance, and they're prepared to put in the work.

Are employers prepared to meet them halfway? Millennials overwhelmingly believe employers share responsibility and should offer robust learning & development (L&D) opportunities; however, less than half (42%) of our millennial survey respondents said their current employers provide learning, development, and training opportunities.

HOW WILL YOU MAINTAIN OR ENHANCE YOUR SKILLS?

Learn on my own with online courses, books, etc.

46%

Go back for another degree, continuing education

35%

Rely on training provided by my employer

34%

Attend industry conferences, webinars, etc.

27%

Do an apprenticeship, internship

26%

I don't think I'll need more training

14%

Attend bootcamp-style program

13%

Thinking about the future, 73% of millennials said they expect they'll need to pursue additional education or training to advance in their careers, dispelling the notion this generation wants a prize just for showing up. Fifty-five percent of millennials say employers have primary responsibility for paying for upskilling/retraining, while only 25% think the government should fund it, and 20% said individuals should pay their own way.

They're not worried about being able to keep up to speed either, with 86% expressing confidence in their ability to gain new skills and learn new technologies. Still, this age group hasn't quite gotten the message about the importance of soft skills. While 73% think they'll need to pick up new tech skills, only 69% think they'll need to work on their soft/people skills, though that percentage does rise with education level; 74% of respondents with post-grad schooling agree they'll need to gain soft skills.

Millennials may be digital natives, but they're not exactly rushing to embrace automation and artificial intelligence, though they don't see a serious, imminent threat either. One-third believe new technologies will improve efficiency and productivity; 23% believe there will be no meaningful impact from automation; and 21% think technology will create jobs. On the negative side, 27% think technology will eliminate jobs.

HOW DO YOU THINK AUTOMATION WILL AFFECT YOUR INDUSTRY?

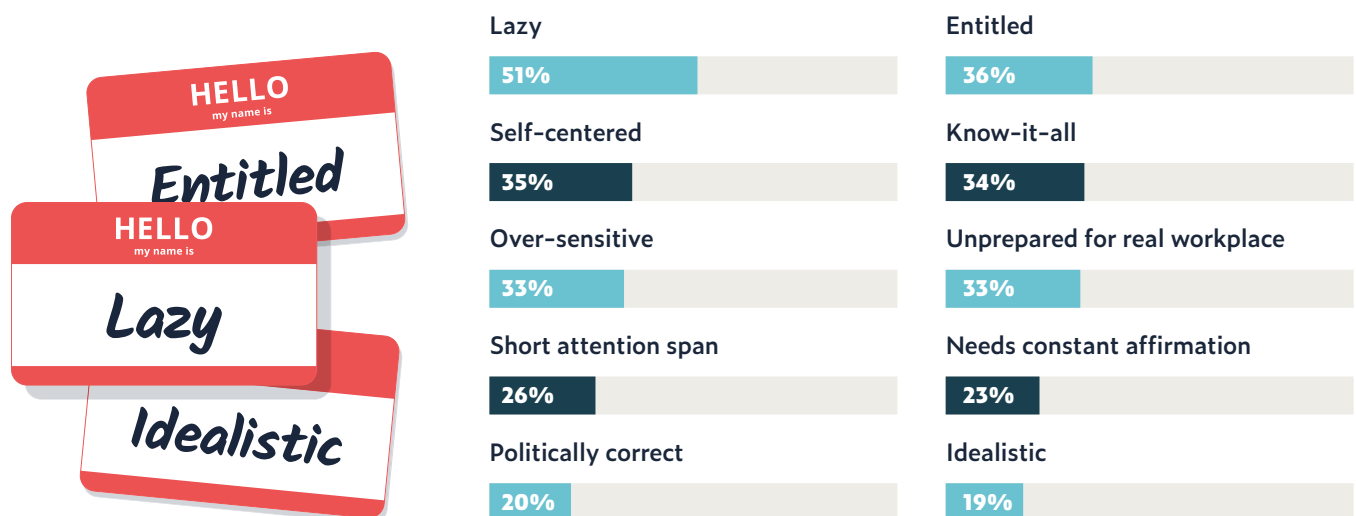
	All	Men	Women
Will deliver improvements	30%	32%	27%
Little or no meaningful impact	23	18	29
Create jobs	21	21	20
Eliminate jobs but will take a while	17	18	15
Eliminate jobs within 5 years	10	12	8

Millennials to Employers: Give Us Training, Flexibility, Respect

L&D (42%) was ranked only second to healthcare (48%) as the employee benefit millennials consider most important when deciding where they'll work. Other highly valued benefits include flexible schedules and remote-working options as well as 401(k) or other investment programs. Among older millennials, a generous vacation package was also cited as important. Respondents were less attracted to health & wellness benefits, student loan assistance, and office perks like abundant snacks or being able to bring pets to work.

These findings align with a [recent Deloitte report](#) that found millennials care about much more than salary when evaluating job options. While starting salary may bring them in the door, retention is more closely tied to values like diversity, inclusion, and flexibility. Almost half of our survey respondents (44%) said their ideal work arrangement would be a flexible schedule; 30% want to work remotely full time. Men were more likely to prefer remote work, especially among the older millennial cohort. While 41% of men ages 30-37 would opt to work remotely, only 25% of women in that age group felt the same. Fewer than half (44%) said their current employer permits flex schedules or working from home.

WHICH WORKPLACE STEREOTYPE OF MILLENNIALS BOTHERS YOU MOST?



Millennials of all ages, education levels, and genders chafe against negative stereotypes, with 86% feeling undermined by myths and misconceptions about their generation. Which labels do they hate the most? "Lazy" topped the list, followed by "entitled" and "self-centered." Women, especially younger ones, also disliked being perceived as "unprepared for a real-world workplace." Younger men were more bothered by being called "over-sensitive" or "know-it-all."

When we asked millennials the biggest factor that would make them quit a job, the top response was "toxic environment," especially among millennial women. Not getting enough professional growth and development and having a bad manager tied for second. In other words, as that Deloitte study suggests, L&D and company culture are definitely key when it comes to retaining millennial talent.

Career Expectations: Millennials Seek Stability

Our survey findings also cast doubt on the generalization that millennials are job-hoppers, always chasing after the next shiny object. Fifty-nine percent of respondents have been in their current jobs for more than three years, and among those ages 30–37, 22% have been with their current employer for more than seven years. Moreover, their vision of the future doesn't involve countless job changes.

When we asked how many jobs millennials expected to have over the course of their careers, 43% answered three to five jobs. Another 38% only think they'll have one or two jobs! Only 6% thought they'd have more than 10 jobs in a career. This is at odds with the [Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS), which says the average across all age groups is 10 jobs. [Baby boomers accusing millennials of switching jobs too frequently should actually look in the mirror](#); the BLS found that people born between 1957 and 1964, the later end of the baby boom, held an average of 11.9 jobs from age 18 to age 50—and half of those job changes happened between ages 18 and 24.

Millennials' dreams for retirement aren't wildly idealistic either. In fact, they're completely in line with other generations, according to [Gallup](#). In our survey, most millennials both want and expect to retire in their 60s. After that, most would like to retire in their 50s, but realistically, they think it probably won't

happen until their 70s. Few expect “never” to retire, though women ages 30–37 and those with only a high school education were most likely to choose that response. Finally, only 8% think they’ll retire in their 40s. So, no, millennials aren’t delusional, believing they’re destined to strike it rich and cash out early.

In the meantime, millennials are hustling. Almost half (43%) currently have a side hustle for extra income, while another 20% think they’ll need one in the future to make ends meet.

Conclusion

Older generations have always found fault with younger ones, and they’ve continued the trend with the current crop of millennials. But contrary to the stereotypes of being coddled and entitled, millennials in our survey are looking for stability, loyalty, and opportunities to learn and grow. They’re motivated to do the work but also expect employers to share the load, both by providing relevant training and funding their employees’ ongoing learning needs.

This generation also expresses frustration at the slowness of companies to adjust to new realities about how people work today. As the largest generation currently active in the workplace, millennials have power to demand and effect change. It just makes sense to them that work should fit into the way they want to live, not the other way around. Older generations have wanted the same changes when they were starting out; they just didn’t feel empowered to speak up about it. Millennials won’t be silent.

Will millennials stay true to these values as they age, move into the highest levels of leadership, and become answerable to shareholders? That remains to be seen. At a time when unemployment is at record lows and technology is driving rapid workplace changes, companies can close their own skills gaps and groom future leaders by investing in this generation now.

The survey was conducted online by Toluna Group on behalf of UdeMy in May 2018 among 1,000+ U.S. adults ages 21–37. Complete survey methodology available upon request.

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