

# Philadelphia CEO: How to engage and retain your millennial workforce

Two generations that get more attention these days than any other are certainly the "baby boomers" and the "millennials." I am frequently asked about both because our clients are often baby boomers (setting up our service for themselves or their parents) and almost half of our 160 employees are millennials. Most people wonder why a smart 20- or 30-something professional would have any interest in working for a business that deals with "seniors" all day. Wouldn't they rather be at an ad agency or the hot new tech company on the block? The truth is, recruiting and retaining millennials is all about making your company "the place to be."

It may be contrarian to say this today, but millennials are really not all that different from other generations in the workplace. For the most part, other than the association with their tech-savvy brilliance, they get a bad reputation in the media. I've read so many articles portraying millennials as entitled, lazy, unable to work in an office, constantly distracted and not as motivated as preceding generations. In my experience, these descriptions are just not accurate. Millennials have their noses to the glass as much as seasoned workers, and to get them engaged, employers need to create a culture that resonates with the modern workforce.

Attracting and retaining smart, hard-charging millennials is often associated with having a sharply designed office space and endless perks. We built our Philadelphia headquarters with lots of glass, color, views galore of Center City and collaborative spaces throughout. We bring in omelet stations, have a pool table, take the entire company to a Phillies game and host a Holiday Party that rivals most weddings. Yes, these things help, but they are not what drives millennials to want to come and work for us. The frills are simply a cherry on top of a larger game plan. To really cultivate the best this generation has to offer, businesses should consider these five tips:

## **1) Have a mission that matters**

If there is one single area that millennials differ from other generations in the workplace, it's mission. Simply put, they are mission-driven! Businesses need to be chasing something greater than just the bottom line. At [Medical Guardian](#), our mission is to protect older Americans living independently in their homes and help them maintain their daily lives. From the entry-level admin to the C-suite, we are all 100 percent behind being the best at what we do and going after it every day. We developed company fundamentals as a guiding force toward our mission. Additionally, a mission backed by philanthropy and community giving can be very important to a millennial staff. We have tremendous engagement from our millennial employees when we volunteer at community centers in Philadelphia each quarter.

## **2) Be transparent**

“Knowledge is power” is a common misconception. Rather, with millennials, I find that truth builds trust. They want a workplace where leadership shares openly on the happenings within the business. Millennials want to know where they stand. If they are performing well, let them know and reward them. If they are underperforming, tell them why and how to improve. On big company decisions, share information with everyone. If there is a significant deal made, share why it was done and how it’s going to help the company. On the opposite side, if something goes wrong it is received much better when communicated directly with a clearly defined explanation and a game plan for moving forward.

## **3) Gain a good reputation and give them a voice**

In the internet age, there is nowhere for companies to hide anymore. Sites like Glassdoor and Indeed make it easy for prospective millennial employees to research how current and past employees perceive the business and culture firsthand. This generation does its research more extensively than others did just 10 years ago. When they are part of the team, give them a voice. They will fill out the job site reviews on their own, but give them a chance to voice their opinions. At Medical Guardian, we provide the opportunity to speak at company huddles, contribute to our newsletter and participate in our diverse assortment of company videos.

## **4) Hire leaders, not managers**

It’s common to read about millennials being adverse to micromanaging. It’s true, millennials don't want to be told what to do, they want to be shown how to do it. If you lead instead of just manage your teams and allow your millennial workforce the ability to make important decisions, they'll be empowered to do work you didn't know they were capable of. Bringing positive energy to the office is one thing, but finding ways to energize your millennial workforce to be creative and make decisions will take your business to a new level.

## **5) Develop a “winning” culture**

Millennials are most certainly competitive. Give them the opportunity to be on a winning team, and not only will they be banging on the doors to get in, they won't want to leave! This generation sure likes to have fun, and it’s not just on social media and at the bars. Nothing is more fun or fulfilling than knowing the work you are doing is helping build a great business and positively impacting the world. Business is one big game, and when you make that game fun for your team to play in, you create a culture of winning!

At Medical Guardian, we’re constantly looking to improve our company culture and build upon our mission. Not only does this help engage our team members, but it makes us better at our jobs and benefits our customers. By adapting our daily practices to attract and retain the newest generation, we’re setting ourselves up for success in the future.

