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# MILLENNIALS & GEN Z



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## SOLVING THE TALENT CHALLENGE:

Millennials and Gen Z in the Workforce  
from a Manufacturer's Perspective



## NEW FACE OF

# MANUFACTURING

Understanding employees and accepting generational differences have always been important elements of success for manufacturers. For the last decade or more, these efforts have focused on understanding millennials (ages 24-39), who now surpass the number of baby boomers.<sup>1</sup>

As millennials move into leadership roles, attention is turning now to Gen Z entering the workplace, as the eldest of this generation turn 23 this year.

Together, these groups have an instrumental voice in addressing pressing issues, including the pandemic and calls for social justice.

## THEY ARE ALSO THE ANSWER TO THE SKILLS GAP

As the industry looks to resolve the talent shortage that threatens to slow manufacturing's growth, insight into the motivations and understanding of the workstyles of both of these generations is vital to recruiting, retaining, and training these individuals.

This report is designed to help manufacturers acknowledge the shifting role of Millennials in the workforce, and to provide insight into up-and-coming Gen Z employees. A greater understanding of these individuals will help manufacturers thrive into the future.



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# Solution for Manufacturing's Talent Shortage

Millennials and Gen Z are essential as the manufacturing sector addresses the talent gap. Over the next decade, a deficit of up to as many as 2.4 million unfilled jobs by 2028 could put \$2.5 trillion of U.S. gross domestic product (GDP) at risk, according to Deloitte and The Manufacturing Institute.<sup>2</sup> With the addition of hiring complications from COVID-19 combined with baby boomer retirements, pipeline challenges, and the rapid rise of new technologies (automation, artificial intelligence, analytics, robotics) there is a greater need to address the workforce now.

**Fact: 50.7% of U.S. residents were under age 40, as of July 2019.**<sup>3</sup>

## The Why Generation

Both millennials and Gen Z are sometimes mislabeled as “**difficult.**” However, Mark Perna, founder of TFS Results and author of *Answering Why: Unleashing Passion, Purpose and Performance in Younger Generations*, sees it differently.

He calls them, collectively, “**The Why Generation,**” because in the classroom and at the workplace, it’s the question they ask most often.

For example:

“**Why** do we need to do it this way?”

“**Why** is this important?”

“**Why** can’t we try doing it differently?”

**Perna explains it this way:**

In general,...they’re not asking why in order to stall, show off, or flout authority. Their constant ‘**Why?**’ is an honest question. They need to know the background information so they can forge a new path forward. Because they’ve been raised to believe they are unique, special, and important, they care about making their mark on whatever they are involved in. They ask about the why because they want to innovate the what. They want to improve the outcome and take pride in their contribution to something bigger than themselves.”

With this perspective in mind, let’s take a closer look at these generations.



“ Like the Greatest Generation who won World War II and built America into a global superpower, the **Why Generation** is intelligent, adaptable, inventive, and determined to make a positive difference.

— Mark Perna, founder of TFS Results and author of *Answering Why*



## OK, BOOMER

Complaints between generations have run rampant nearly since the beginning of time.

**We were all young at one point.**

**Why** the lack of empathy?

“**Kids These Days: Why the Youth of Today Seem Lacking,**” a paper in *Science Advances*,<sup>4</sup> offers an explanation of this phenomenon. “Two mechanisms contribute to humanity’s perennial tendency to denigrate kids: a person-specific tendency to notice the limitations of others where one excels and a memory bias projecting one’s current qualities onto the youth of the past. When observing current children, we compare our biased memory to the present and a decline appears.”

Keeping an open mind and approaching each employee individually will help avoid generational bias for all ages.

MEET THE

# MILLENNIALS



## NEW LIFE CHALLENGES

### COMPARED TO OTHER GENERATIONS

- Less wealth
- Less property
- Lower marriage rates and fewer children<sup>5</sup>
- Millennials' student debt is higher

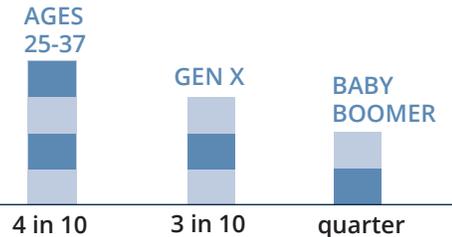
Some economists say that entering the workforce during the recession yields **lower earnings for life**.<sup>6</sup>

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

## BETTER EDUCATED



### THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS



## TECHNOLOGY

71%

Feel positive about their personal use of digital devices and social media.

64%

Would be **physically healthier** if they reduced the time spent on social media, and **six in 10** said it would make them happier people.<sup>8</sup>

## VALUE EXPERIENCE

“Experience is everything” for this generation.

57%

**Travel** and seeing the world was at the top of their aspirations list (vs. owning a home at 49%).

46%

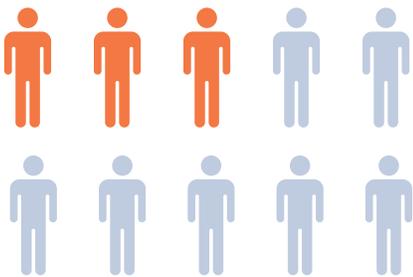
**Attracted** to making a positive impact in their communities/society (vs. 39% who said having children/starting family).

**Born** 1981-1996 | **Age** 24 to 39 in 2020

**Heavy student loan burden** of millennials: one recruiting incentive could be contributing to debt reduction.

## JOB SATISFACTION

Nearly three in 10 millennials are very often or always burned out at work.<sup>9</sup>



## OPTIMISM ON THE DECLINE

Millennials grew up in a time of uncertainty — and they are still feeling uneasy about the economy, likely intensified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic impact.

- According to the Deloitte Millennial Survey 2019 (pre COVID-19), millennials have bleak expectations for the economy — the lowest since they began the survey six years ago.<sup>7</sup>



Business has a positive impact on society, down from 61% in 2018.



More millennials than ever, would, if they had a choice, quit their current jobs in the next two years.

Millennials want a purpose.

“Successful manufacturers will communicate their mission and show how each individual job ties to it. It’s important to allow employees to see how their talents and skills fit into the big picture.”

# MEET GEN Z



## MOST RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE GENERATION<sup>10</sup>

- Bare majority of 6 to 21-year-olds (52%) are non-Hispanic whites

## WELL EDUCATED

- Oldest Gen Z are enrolling in college at a significantly higher rate than millennials at a comparable age
- Parents of Gen Z are better educated than parents of previous generations
- High school dropout rate for the oldest Gen Z (ages 18 to 20 in 2017) is significantly lower than that of similarly aged millennials

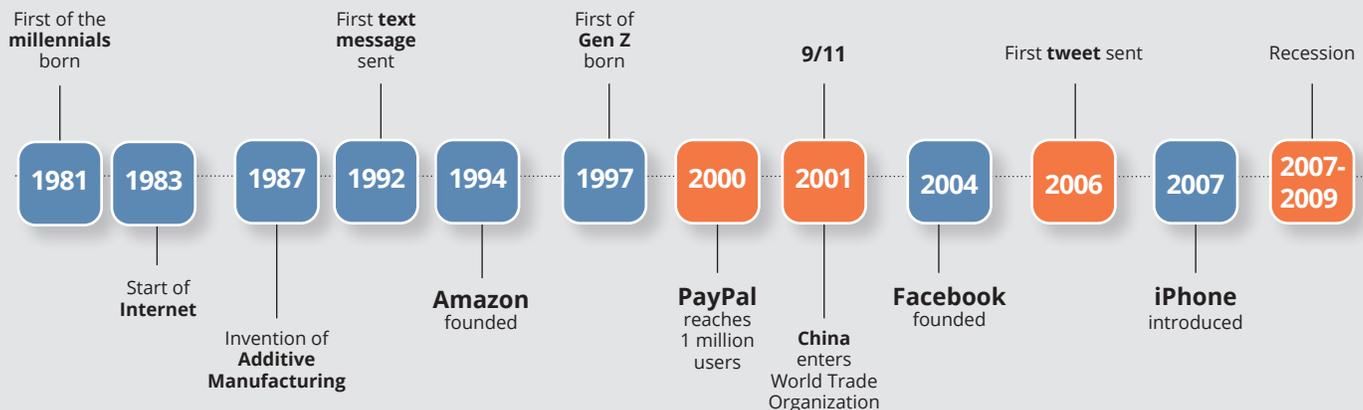
## FEWER IN LABOR FORCE

- Only **58%** of today's 18 to 21-year-olds worked in the prior calendar year; this compares with **72%** of millennial 18 to 21-year-olds in 2002
- Employment among Gen Z is less likely to be full-time compared with earlier generations. This is due, in large part, to the fact that these young adults are more likely than their predecessors to be enrolled in college

**Having Gen X parents, and with the current political/economic climate, Gen Z has a different outlook:** They are less likely to take risks; seeking stability and security in jobs/finance.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Millennials and Gen Z share experiences that shape their outlook, such as living in a world of economic uncertainty, terrorism, and digital dominance that shape their outlook. Still, different life events have an impact on their psyches. For instance, while millennials lived through the tragedy of 9/11, most of their younger counterparts were not even born in 2001. Millennials were the first to see active shooter drills at school; these are now commonplace for Gen Z. Now they are dealing with the effects of the pandemic.



**Born** 1997-2012 | **Age** 8 to 23 in 2020

## TECHNOLOGY IS SECOND NATURE/DIGITAL NATIVES

- While millennials adapted to new technology as they came of age (social media, on-demand entertainment, apps), Gen Z has found that this was always part of their lives.<sup>11</sup>



## STUDENT LOAN DEBT PLAYS INTO CAREER CHOICES<sup>12</sup>

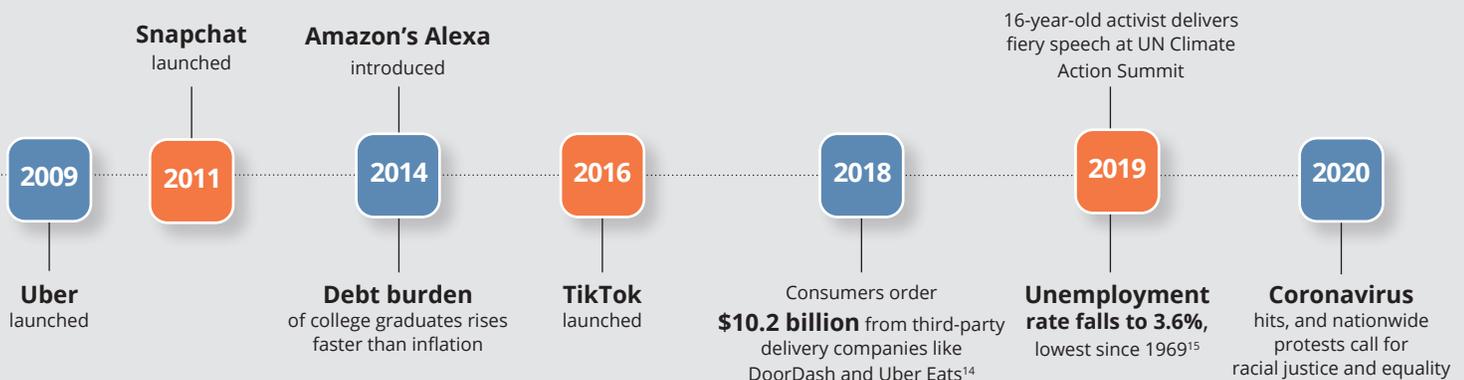
- In one study, three-quarters of Gen Z said they will have debt upon graduation.
- Of the students who will be graduating with student loan debt, **44%** anticipate a repayment period of five to 10 years.
- Due to the pressure to pay off their student loans, **61%** of college students would take a job they are not passionate about.



Gen Z views on key social and policy issues are similar to those of millennials (progressive and pro-government, most see the country's growing racial and ethnic diversity as a good thing).<sup>13</sup> Young workers expect to see diversity and inclusion initiatives at their workplace.

Gen Z grew up on smartphones, using Alexa and Uber, and sharing their lives on Snapchat and now TikTok. Technology is second nature to them, and this knowledge can help these up-and-comers innovate for their companies while also supporting older generations as they adapt to the digital world.

Additionally, both groups were brought up in a world addressing issues such as social justice and climate change. With this background, it's not surprising that many in these age groups question the status quo and desire change.



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**PANDEMIC  
REWIRES**  
—

# MANUFACTURING



By mid-March **2020**, most of the country had put some type of stay-at-home order in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. Businesses, including manufacturers, scrambled to rethink their day-to-day operations.

In SME's COVID-19 Future Outlook Study,<sup>16</sup> manufacturers said the pandemic will shift how their companies operate in the future. For instance, slightly more than half of respondents (52%) indicated that their companies will be allowing some employees to regularly work remotely. One-quarter of respondents indicated their company plans to reshore production to the U.S.

Training will be based on the safety of employees and more companies will transition to blended and flexible technology-based options like elearning, virtual reality, augmented reality, and more.



## ECONOMIC CHALLENGE

Once again, millennials are taking an economic hit. Many entered the workforce during a recession. With COVID-19, they again face a tough job market.

While only 8% of companies were completely shut down due to the pandemic, manufacturing did see layoffs and furloughs that impacted millennials and others.

For many Gen Z students hoping to gain industry experience, internships and summer jobs were cancelled and/or postponed.

Sadly, nearly 60% of young Americans say COVID-19 derailed their journey to financial independence.<sup>17</sup>

There is some encouraging historical perspective, however. Generation Xers (then ages 27 to 42) recovered the wealth they lost during the Great Recession as home and stock prices rebounded.<sup>18</sup> Perhaps it is this uncertainty that led to more employer loyalty among this generation.<sup>19</sup> Time will tell if this commitment will be a by-product for younger generations too.

### A positive result of the disruption?

A forced reliance on technology is accelerating the move to Industry 4.0. Three in five companies indicated they plan on investing in at least one technology — such as additive manufacturing/3D printing, robotics, video and cloud services, wireless connectivity, and digital security — post-COVID-19, with most planning to invest in two.

All of this will be second nature for millennials and Gen Z workers who grew up with technology in hand.

# MILLENNIALS

## AS THE BOSS

More than a third of the workforce is comprised of millennials<sup>20</sup>

Many are moving into leadership roles, with a recent Zapier study indicating that **62%** of millennials now have direct reports.<sup>21</sup> According to Perna, millennials are exceeding expectations in this new role. One example of millennial leadership is Finland's Sanna Marin, the millennial who is now the world's youngest prime minister.

**"Here at home in the business world, the 2019 Global Family Business Survey<sup>22</sup> found that family businesses led by Gen X and millennial CEOs tended to perform better than those led by older-gen CEOs,"**

Perna said.

Here's what to expect from **"Boss"** millennials:

### FLEXIBLE

Having grown up with technology, they see different options in the workplace. For instance, work or training may be able to be completed online at home. As bosses, they understand the importance of work-life balance.

### NAVIGATING/MANAGING OLDER EMPLOYEES



of millennial leaders say they don't fear older staffers.



say they relate to their older subordinates as equals.<sup>23</sup> Hire carefully to make sure new

hires are comfortable with a younger supervisor.

### MANAGING GEN Z



of millennial leaders favor job seekers who

are eager to learn,<sup>24</sup> which bodes well for the inquisitive Gen Z crowd, intent on self-improvement.

### FACE-TO-FACE

Millennial leaders say they like face-to-face contact.



say they prefer to communicate in small-group conversations.

“Smart, techy, and resourceful, millennials have an inherent ability to grasp the important facts, see the interrelations and brainstorm big-picture solutions — all important traits in management.

— Mark Perna

## RESEARCH INSIGHTS

Tooling U-SME's Generation Pulse Check,<sup>25</sup> conducted just before the pandemic hit, provides insights about millennials.

### FOCUS ON RETENTION



### Ways to Appeal to Millennials

When comparing job features that millennials want from their employers with what they currently have, it is evident that there is opportunity when it comes to supporting and rewarding employee performance.

DESIRED JOB FEATURES FOR MILLENNIALS	Have	Want
Clear career pathway	49%	91%
Mentor or coach	56%	84%
New work experiences to expand my skills	75%	96%
Raises when new skills are added	36%	91%
Promotions based on competency, not just tenure	59%	98%
Access to formal training	64%	84%
Regular performance feedback	68%	84%

**Training** is essential to ensure these millennial managers are ready for their new leadership roles.

Millennials thrive when **learning new skills**. Implementing new training and development programs around these “**wants**” can help employees develop and remain satisfied in their jobs.

Employers must lift up all generations in the workforce to ensure that they are considered for development opportunities, promotions, and other benefits. That way, contributors of all ages feel appreciated and rewarded, and ultimately stay with the company.



“ For millennials, work must have meaning. Their compensation is important and must be fair, but they’re motivated more by mission and purpose than paycheck.

— Gallup

# PRIORITY: CREATE A COMPELLING VISION

## MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z WANT A MISSION.

According to Gallup,<sup>26</sup> **“For millennials, work must have meaning. Their compensation is important and must be fair, but they’re motivated more by mission and purpose than paycheck.”**

These younger generations expect companies to demonstrate a strong sense of purpose and want to be part of that.

Successful manufacturers will communicate their mission and show how each individual job ties to it. It is important to allow workers to see how their talents and skills fit into the big picture.

**“Today, it’s all about creating a compelling purpose and vision and then communicating that message in both the recruitment process and the ongoing retention strategy,”**

Perna says.

## BEST APPROACH TO TRAINING:

A robust employee development program is the new must-have perk for millennial and Gen Z workers, according to Perna.

**“YouTube and the availability of video courses has changed how young people learn. Anything that piques their interest is open to explore,”** he says.

**“They would rather look something up themselves and glean what they can from others’ knowledge than wait to be told what they should learn.”**

Both millennials and Gen Z are always looking to add skills and develop themselves personally and professionally, so employers should take advantage of this desire for self-improvement by designing opportunities to build skills that take employees to the next step on a career path.

One way is to offer perks like:

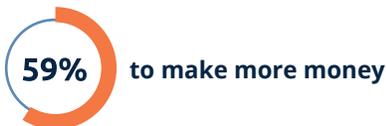
- Tuition Reimbursement
- Structured Mentoring Opportunities
- Online Training

## Attracting Younger Generations

Getting younger individuals in the door is the first step; however, they may not have the skills you need as they first enter the workforce. Look for those with a curious and open mindset and be prepared to train them. Fortunately, for this generation, that builds loyalty and morale. Here are some tips on attracting these important entry-level individuals.

### FORMAL TRAINING PROGRAM

A methodical and visible training program will appeal to younger generations who thrive on continual learning. According to a LinkedIn Survey,<sup>29</sup> the top three reasons Gen Z cited for wanting to learn are:



85%

### GO VIDEO

Eighty-five percent of Gen Zers say they use YouTube.<sup>28</sup> Take advantage of it for recruiting. Solicit help from Gen Zers who are already on your team to create fun videos that show the new face of manufacturing. Quickly highlight cutting-edge tech, clean facilities, growth opportunities and giving back. Video is also an important tool for training a younger workforce.

### CLEAR CAREER PATHWAY

Demonstrating your company's commitment to professional development is essential, as younger workers want to know they will advance in their careers — and specifically how.

### COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Millennials and Gen Z are eager to contribute to the success of their company. To do that, they need to be heard. Let young talent know you want and respect their feedback and ideas, and create forums to help them share.

34%

### TECH FIRST

One-third of companies say a top challenge to implementing smart manufacturing solutions is finding skilled people.<sup>27</sup> Recruiting young people who are comfortable with technology is a first step. Manufacturing today means robotics, automation, 3D printing, cobots, augmented reality and more, appealing to younger generations. Dangle this tech-forward agenda when recruiting.

# MILLENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

## Kyle Riegel

SME Member Since 2008

Age: 30

B.S. in Electromechanical Engineering, MBA

Field Sales Engineer

Schunk Carbon Technology, Waterloo, Iowa



**Years at current employer:** "2.5 years"

**Best parts of job:** "Connections with supervisor and team. Freedom to work on large projects, not just simple tasks. Ability to work remotely when not traveling (no daily commute). Work/life balance. Training."

**Team:** "I have a good relationship with my supervisor, who regularly connects and wants to hear how I am doing. I really value the team of five that I work with."

**What do millennials want in a job:** "Fair market compensation and benefits. We also want to be challenged, to learn and grow."

**Training philosophy:** "Some companies ask, why would we train up employees when they just leave? A better way to look at it is: What if you do not train them and they stay?"

**Advice for Gen Z:** "When you are younger, you are impatient for experience and exposure. This truly does only come with time but use that drive to your advantage. Get involved wherever possible and help other departments. It is important to do a little of everything to find out what you like and don't like as well as to discover more about the industry. Hopefully, you will find a company that encourages that."

**61%** of learning and development leaders believe Gen Z will need extra support for the development of soft skills. Gen Z thinks hard skills are more important.<sup>30</sup> Competency models help close the gap by clearly and precisely identifying needed development areas, defining training requirements, and guiding development for current and future roles.

**43%** of Gen Z preferred a self-directed and independent approach to learning.<sup>31</sup> Implementing a flexible elearning program taps into this desire to learn how and when they want.

## Bringing Together a Multi-Gen Workforce

For the first time ever, the manufacturing workforce comprises five generations — at once.

Bringing together a diverse workforce — age, race, gender — provides different perspectives, driving innovation, productivity, and growth.

This all starts at the top. Senior management must be committed to creating a collaborative environment that values ongoing learning and development.

For more ideas, check out the Tooling U-SME report, **6 Ways to Build a Cohesive Multigenerational Manufacturing Workforce** at [toolingu.com](http://toolingu.com)

# 7 TIPS for Working with Millennials and Gen Z

## 1 DON'T GENERALIZE

Like all generations, these individuals share similarities and differences. The broad swath of this workforce is made up of individuals with different life experiences that impact their approach to work and careers. This report covers trends but, remember, each worker is different.

## 2 COMMUNICATE YOUR CORPORATE MISSION

Millennials and Gen Z expect companies to demonstrate a strong sense of purpose and want to contribute. Be sure to communicate your mission and show how each individual job adds value. Allow them to see how their talents and skills fit into the big picture.

## 3 SHOW THEM THEIR FUTURE

Millennials and Gen Z want to see their (near) future. Provide room for growth within your company so they do not feel they need to grow elsewhere. Ask about their career aspirations. Institute clear steps young employees can take to develop skills they might need for future positions within your organization. Ensure there are clear milestones along the way with rewards in the not-too-distant future. Competency models help provide the specificity they crave. Provide recognition with each success.

## 4 PROVIDE CONTINUAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Millennials and Gen Z have a strong desire to learn. For instance, in addition to traditional education, some Gen Z are self-taught in areas of interest through online courses and earning certifications. They also enjoy face-to-face time. Host a lunch session with management to encourage conversation. Pair Gen Z entry-level employees or new millennial managers with your own organizational mentors (coaches) or those outside the company. All of this should fit into a formal continuing education program.

## 5 GO DIGITAL

These new generations grew up with technology. Move away from paper. Much hiring and training can be optimized with virtual platforms. For example, online courses allow individuals the flexibility to complete training at any time of day or night. Different learning styles are easily accommodated through the use of video or ability to have text read to the student. Online training offers the added benefit of providing instant feedback with automated grading and tracking, saving considerable administrative time for employers. Allow millennials and Gen Z to share their technical talents with older workers, which can create new peer connections. With training, these younger workers can lead the way with technology, increasing productivity and innovation.

## 6 ALLOW THEM TO SHARE THEIR IDEAS

More than six in 10 millennials (63%) say their "leadership skills are not being fully developed,"<sup>32</sup> so provide them the opportunity to show what they can do. Gen Z wants to share opinions. Arrange dynamic brainstorming sessions allowing them to contribute ideas. Their fresh perspective can complement that of more senior employees. These sessions also help Gen Z and millennials see the big picture so they know where they, and the organization, are headed. From there, assign them meaningful missions. You — and they— may be surprised at what they can accomplish.

## 7 PROVIDE REGULAR AND IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK

Millennials grew up with constant feedback from their parents, teachers and coaches. They expect it from you, their leader. And while Gen Zers were brought up by Gen X parents, they still look to their parents for support and coaching. While Gen Z team members like independence in the workplace, they also want a support system. They also expect their boss to be more like a coach, helping them develop and grow, than a taskmaster. Regular feedback sessions can help — and they don't have to long. Just five minutes of clear, direct feedback on a regular basis, will keep both millennials and Gen Z motivated and engaged. Consider quarterly merit increases vs one annual raise to demonstrate career movement in response to feedback. And remember, training managers to adapt to different needs is an important piece of the training puzzle.



To ensure employees feel like they are part of something bigger than themselves, design formal and informal learning and development experiences that reinforce the company's mission and how each employee contributes to fulfilling it.

# MILLENNIAL SPOTLIGHT

## Melissa Dochter

Age: 31  
 B.S. Industrial Engineering  
 Strategic Marketing for Electro Intensive Segments  
 Schneider Electric, Baltimore, Md.

**Years at current employer:** "9 years"

**Ideal work environment:** "Helpful and caring co-workers; manager that helps to guide you and not micro-manage (values your input); flexible hours that promote work/life balance; ability to advance and move within the company; tools and software that are user-friendly and work; ability to work remotely and in an office."

**Most important incentives:** "My company does a good job at providing incentives (bonus, good benefits, 401(k), wellness incentives, family leave, etc.)."

**How important is having the opportunity to learn and grow?**

"Essential. I learn something new every day, and I am afforded the opportunity to grow not only in my day-to-day job but also as a leader."

**Advice for companies hoping to recruit and retain millennials/Gen Z employees:**

"Do your best to create an atmosphere where employees can grow and develop:

- Provide opportunities to be paired with a good mentor
- Design ways to grow leadership skill sets
- Show employees that in their roles they are contributing to the greater good of the company
- Create training programs that are not so involved that they drag out
- Offer new challenges."

## BEST PRACTICES

# TRAINING

Keeping these insights in mind, companies can build high performers and future leaders by focusing on industry best practices that help all employees feel valued from the moment they walk in the door.

### STRONG ONBOARDING PROCESS

#### A STRONG ONBOARDING PROCESS STARTS FROM DAY ONE.

Onboarding is accomplished typically in a 90-day period, where an individual gains knowledge and skills before being on their own.

Onboarding is about developing the behaviors that will be the foundation of employees' performance for their tenure with the organization. By creating opportunities for new employees to immediately immerse themselves in an engaging task, meet their co-workers, begin building relationships and address lingering anxiety, companies start to create the foundation that can lead to long-term employment.

Remember, millennials and Gen Z want to fully understand their role and why it is important to the organization. They also want to impact the world and expect the same from their companies. Teach them about your company's mission and share initiatives, such as those related to community or environmental programs, where new team members can be involved.



# FORMAL

## TRAINING PROGRAM

Based on feedback that millennials and Gen Z want/need to see clear career pathways, it is important to create and administer a formal training program tied to competency development and career growth — and communicate that it exists.



### ORGANIZATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

The informal passing along of company policy and procedures by more senior employees is not an effective method of training.

Millennials and Gen Z desire documented expectations and plans to help them reach those expectations and beyond.

A number of current best practices can help manufacturers create or adapt their current programs. For example, competency models are increasingly used to provide a structured system to develop the needed knowledge, skills, and abilities for specific jobs. This common “language” allows productive conversations related to performance management and individual development plans.

A standardized learning and development program that is structured and visible can eliminate some of the struggles faced by manufacturers training a younger workforce. Frequent rewards and recognition should also be built in.

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## CONTINUING

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# EDUCATION

Millennials and Gen Z want to continue learning and developing at all stages of their career and expect employers to offer resources to do so. It is in a manufacturer's best interest to invest in continuing education for employees to build the future leaders the company needs and wants.

## STREAMLINE THE PROCESS

Some manufacturers are partnering with educators to keep the pipeline flowing and help retain and develop workers. Apprenticeship and internship programs are examples of how companies are educating their high-potential future leaders.

Leadership development is also an essential part of a satisfying career pathway. Helping strong workers develop into trusted managers and supervisors by teaching them important soft skills builds the next generation of leadership.





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## TRAIN THE

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# LEADERS

Engagement studies often declare that employees' reasons for leaving are tied to unhappiness with direct supervisors. Making sure that those responsible for training the younger generations have the knowledge and skills to develop and nurture them is critical to building and maintaining a stronger manufacturing workforce.

## PREPARE MANAGERS

Managers — many of whom may be millennials — should be held responsible and accountable for building, developing, and retaining all employees. Metrics can be built into annual performance reviews with financial incentives, for instance. Ultimately, this will lead to greater job satisfaction. In addition to financial incentives, managers will feel better equipped to deal with the next generation as well as have the added reward of being appreciated and respected by their teams.

# Time to Celebrate Millennials and Gen Z

Millennials and Gen Z are manufacturing's solution to the pressing skills gap. Yet, these younger generations are often misunderstood. This report has explored the shifting role of millennials as they age and takes a look at the newest members of the workforce: Gen Z. Offering tips and insights, the report will help manufacturers gain a greater understanding of these individuals and provide actionable ideas on how to develop and celebrate them. To grow, prosper and thrive into the future, manufacturers will need to attract, retain and train these important — and inspiring — individuals to thrive well into the future.

Tooling U-SME delivers versatile, competency-based learning and development solutions to the manufacturing community, working with thousands of companies including more than half of all Fortune 500® manufacturers, as well as 600 educational institutions across the country. Tooling U-SME partners with customers to build high performers who help their companies drive quality, profitability, productivity, innovation and employee satisfaction. Working directly with hundreds of high schools, community and technical colleges, and universities, Tooling U-SME is able to help prepare the next-generation workforce by providing industry-driven curriculum.

A division of SME, a nonprofit that connects all those who are passionate about making things that improve our world, Tooling U-SME can be found at [toolingu.com](http://toolingu.com) or on Facebook ([facebook.com/toolingu](https://facebook.com/toolingu)), Twitter ([twitter.com/toolingu](https://twitter.com/toolingu)) and LinkedIn ([linkedin.com/company/toolingu-sme](https://linkedin.com/company/toolingu-sme)).

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