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*Compiled by Daniel C. Simmons, CPC*

# Recruiting in a Multi-Generational Talent Pool



**The Art and Science of Recruiting.**

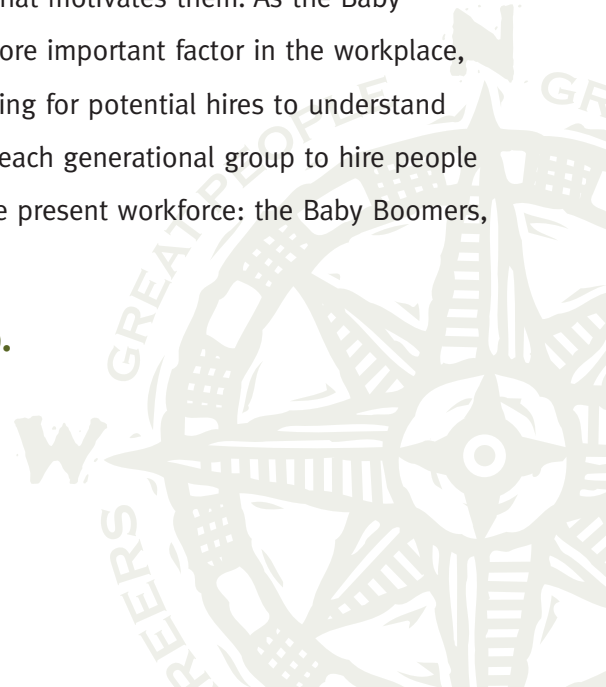
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## Introduction

Recruiting is a delicate process. It's more than just finding someone who has the necessary skills, who lives in the right town, and will work for the budgeted compensation. It's important to consider the "fit" of an individual into a company and vice-versa to ensure long-term success. After 25 years as an independent recruiter, I can assure you that retaining the right people is more important than identifying and hiring them. I propose the key to retaining them is to understand who they are and what motivates them. As the Baby Boomers retire at an ever-increasing rate and the Millennials become a more important factor in the workplace, I have prepared this e-book to help both employers and recruiters searching for potential hires to understand who is in today's employment marketplace and what normally motivates each generational group to hire people who will stay with them for the long-term. Three generations make up the present workforce: the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and the Millennials.

**Let's begin by reviewing the characteristics of each group.**







## Who is Who?

### Baby Boomers

“Baby Boomer” is a term that refers to individuals born between 1946 and 1964. They are also called the “Me” Generation. According to [Investopedia](#), they make up at least 20% of the North American population. They are a great group of people, though I may be biased, since I’ve been one all my life.

The term refers to the spike of births after the end of World War II. This is attributed to all of the U.S. soldiers coming home. During this span of time, there was a population increase of about 77 to 80 million, hence the term “boom.”

The arrivals of the 77 million bundles of joy stimulated the post-war economy. This may also be attributed to the G.I. Bill, which allowed military personnel to buy affordable homes around the edges of cities. In those days, it was common for men to be the sole providers, while women were tasked to stay at home and tend to the children.

During this period, there were more divorces and second marriages. The Baby Boomers were shaped by events like the Civil Rights Movement, the Sexual Revolution, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, and space travel.

The Baby Boomers were the first generation of children raised in front of the television. These post-war children became the radicals of the 70s and the yuppies of the 80s.

They grew up being promised the “American Dream.” They were considered greedy, ambitious, and materialistic. However, we must remember that they grew up differently in comparison to those who came before them. More of the Boomers could go to high school and even college, paths that were once reserved for only the elite.

WORKAHOLICS  
STRONG WORK ETHIC  
BIG SPENDERS 77–88  
SPACE TRAVEL MILLION  
AMERICAN DREAM  
**BABY BOOMERS**  
ME GENERATION GOALS  
GOLDEN DEDICATED  
GENERATION PASSIONATE  
MATERIALISTIC G.I. BILL  
GREEDY

## Generation X

“Otherwise called Gen-X, Post Boomers or the 13<sup>th</sup> Generation, these individuals were born between the years 1965 and 1980. Generation X is a term that comes from a novel published in 1991 *Generation X: Tales for an Accelerated Culture* by Douglas Copeland. They are children of the Silent Generation, individuals who were born between the years 1925 and 1945.

These individuals are 51 million strong, according to a WFMC chart. Just like their parents, they are considered “in-betweeners.” During this period, there were more single-parent families, and mothers began to work, perhaps due to the increased divorce rate.

Certain events shaped the Gen Xers as individuals. These would include the end of the Cold War, the Energy Crisis, activism in general, Y2K, and the downsizing of many corporations.

This generation had it bad, due in large part to the Great Recession, which lasted from December 2007 to June 2009. There was a global recession in 2009.

The website [ValueOptions.com](http://ValueOptions.com) put it well when they described this group: “Whereas Baby Boomers came to understand that the future was theirs for the taking, Generation X felt the future had been given to their parents and older siblings and found the future disappointing and somewhat unappealing. While Baby Boomers whined about the long lines for gas in the mid-1970s, Gen Xers watched from the back seat wondering what the future held. Just like the malls, shopping centers, and office buildings they would come to work in and the videos they would rent, everything appeared secondhand and pre-viewed.”

The site goes on to describe this group as wanting a balance between life and work. They see themselves as a marketable commodity and a free agent. They are comfortable with authority, but not impressed by titles. They want time with their managers, feedback, and autonomy in their work.



## Millennials

Millennials are also called Generation Y, Echo Boomers, Generation Next, and Generation Me. They were born between the years 1981 and 2000. They make up roughly 92 million of the population as of 2015, hence the term Echo Boomers. They also are considered “me” people, being born in the age of economic expansion.

According to an article on the website “Management is a Journey,” Millennials were shaped by factors like AIDS, diversity, TV talk shows, school shootings, terrorist attacks like 9/11, schedules or planned family interactions, Operation Desert Storm, video games, and the rise of digital media. Most Millennials are children of divorce or

single-parent households. This group was the first to grow up with computers and are typically quite tech savvy.

Many people consider them to be too sheltered, since they were born to a very “child-focused” world. Millennials are products of doting parents in most cases.

This is an idealistic generation and a creative one, as well. Growing up to be told that each of them are special, they all feel entitled to achieve the greatness that they believe they deserve. Being products of parents and grandparents who have survived countless wars, they were largely protected from the evils in the world.



**Baby Boomers****1946–1964 • 77 million**

- Ambitious
- Materialistic
- Career Focused
- Want the American Dream

**Generation X****1965–1980 • 51 million**

- Balance Life/Work
- Wants Time with Manager
- Desires Autonomy
- Free Agent Mentality

**Millennials****1981–2000 • 92 million**

- Idealistic
- Creative
- Tech-Savvy
- Sheltered

## Core Values

According to Your Dictionary, core values are fundamental beliefs. They are guiding principles that people live by and that dictate both their behavior and actions. Core values are not set in stone. They evolve through time, and their differences are clearly based on the shift in core values of each generation.

WFMC and Vertex Solutions Group provided this data.

### Baby Boomers

The Baby Boomers do not believe in war. Most do not even support the government. Both beliefs might be caused by parents or close family members dying during military service.

Most Boomers believe in equal rights and opportunities. They are extremely loyal to their children and are optimists who believe anything is possible. They value personal growth and gratification. They want to make a difference in or by what they do.

Boomers are inquisitive and team-oriented. They are hard workers who have the tendency to become workaholics. This generation is adaptive to learning styles, but will also question authority when necessary. Due to their strong work ethic, they expect to receive rewards that show that their efforts are valued.

Because they were raised in a prosperous period, they are said to be big spenders and worry about finances later.

### Generation X

Growing up in the shadows of the optimistic Boomers couldn't have been easy. Generation X is like the proverbial middle child, in the sense that they can be skeptics and quite cynical.

Individuals of this period were molded by what they saw and experienced. They witnessed many Boomers get laid off when large corporations downsized.

Generation X seeks life balance, diversity, and fun. These highly-educated individuals have equally high job expectations. They are independent, pragmatic, and entrepreneurial. Many Gen-Xers seek out informality, as well. Most don't do so well with protocol.

Gen Xers communicate in a direct, fast, and technology-based way. Although they are said to have a short attention span, the Gen X crowd can multi-task. They can learn and process things in a different way.

The older generations may regard them as self-centered, as they say this generation lacks organizational loyalty. However, they are a force to be reckoned with in the workplace. Many Gen Xers have their own thriving businesses, thanks to their entrepreneurial spirit and technological know-how.



**Baby Boomers**

- Anti-War
- Most not Pro-Government
- Workaholics
- Believe in Equal Rights
- Inquisitive
- Big Spenders

**Generation X**

- Cynical
- Seeks Diversity
- The Middle Child
- Seeks Work/Life Balance
- Direct Communications
- Entrepreneurial

**Millennials**

- Globalized
- Sheltered
- Goal-Oriented
- Tech-Savvy
- Tenacious
- Avid Consumers

**Millennials**

Millennials are avid consumers. They have a strong sense of civic duty and value achievement. Raised in a sheltered and loving environment, they exude self-confidence. Their ego and sense of self-worth make them highly competitive individuals.

They believe in diversity, love personal attention, and crave fun. While they have great morals, they are also highly tolerant of others, as they are less judgmental than the previous generations.

Most Millennials are from or grew up with friends from multicultural households. This may be another reason why they are more tolerant of ethnic and religious differences.

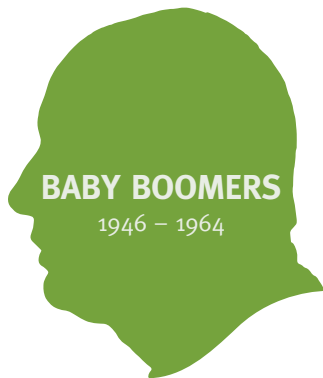
Millennials were raised “glued” to their computer screens. Many are currently “glued” to their cell phones. They are tech-savvy and socialize more in the digital realm. They are members of the global community with friends in many continents, many of which they have yet to meet personally.

This street-smart generation wants instant gratification, but are also realists despite the optimism. They are used to a schedule-based life and some prefer to be micro-managed. They crave praise because of their upbringing.

Although they might have enjoyed a sheltered life, they are not useless in the workplace. They are tenacious, entrepreneurial, and goal-oriented. Most of them would rather have a boss who leads in a motivational manner. The communication style of this generation is different. While Gen X will pick up their phone and talk to clients, Millennials prefer emails and text messaging to talk to co-workers and bosses.



# Generations at Work

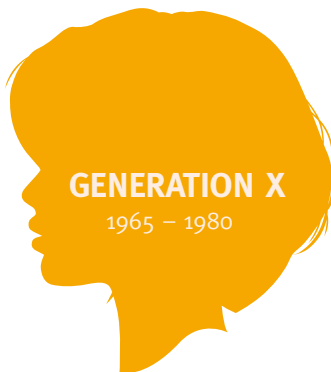


## Pros

Productive  
Hardworking  
Teamplayers  
Mentors

## Cons

Less Adaptive  
Less Collaborative



## Pros

Managerial Skills  
Revenue Generation  
Problem Solving

## Cons

Less Cost-Effective  
Less Executive Presence



## Pros

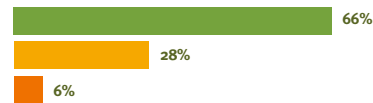
Enthusiastic  
Tech-Savvy  
Entrepreneurial  
Opportunistic

## Cons

Lazy  
Unproductive  
Self-Obsessed

## Generations in the Workplace

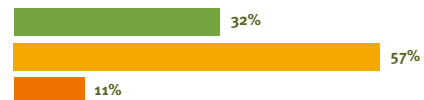
### Executive Presence



### Tech-Savviness



### Generating Revenue



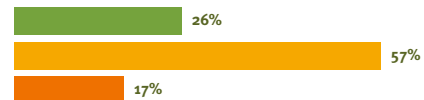
### Relationship Building



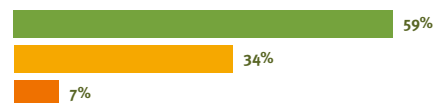
### Adaptability



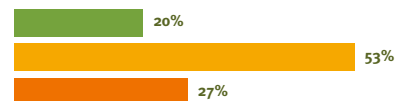
### Problem Solving



### Cost-Effectiveness



### Collaboration



Based on a survey of 1,200 workers across different generations. Data from: UXC Professional Solutions

In 2016, the American workplace looked like this:

45%

Baby Boomers

40%

Generation X

10%

Millennials

Each generation brings something to the table. While it might sound like generalizing, the differences in their work ethic rings loud and clear.

**Baby Boomers**

- Team Players
- Respects Seniority
- Focused Workers
- Demands Respect from Younger Generations
- Wants Flexible Road to Retirement
- Fears Taking Time Off Work

**Generation X**

- Project-Oriented
- Career Butterflies
- Works Smart
- Skeptical
- Wants to Make a Difference
- No Job Loyalty

**Millennials**

- Ambitious
- Thrives on Technology
- Effective Workers
- Gravitates to “New”
- Prefers Flexible Hours
- Charitable

**Baby Boomers**

Boomers are usually workaholics. They invented the 50-hour work week and believe that being visible is the key to success. They are undoubtedly driven and swear by long work hours, which they equate to fulfillment and self-worth.

Because Boomers fear taking too much time off work, as they believe it will make them lose their place in the corporate world. While they might be skeptical about authority, they respect those who have stayed longer in a company than they have.

Boomers are process-oriented. They value teamwork and collaboration. While they value youthfulness and ambition, they demand respect from younger co-workers. Their work style is efficient and focused. Boomers are also known to take risks.

Since Boomers are older, most of them look forward to retirement and long for a flexible route to it. Many of them are looking towards the younger generation for someone worthy to mentor to one day take their place.

**Generation X**

Generation Xers are productive individuals. Unlike the Boomers who are driven by advancement, most of Gen X would rather have their ideal work/life balance.

This generation does not necessarily believe in working hard. They would rather work smart, cutting out all tasks they deem unnecessary if they achieve their desired goals. While they want direction and structure, they are also quite self-reliant.

Ever the cynics, they will test authority repeatedly and are skeptical of individuals who represent authority. This generation is project-oriented. They believe in getting paid to get the job done.

They are “career butterflies,” moving from one company to the next and are often criticized for having no job loyalty. They want their role at work to make a difference and expect to influence the terms and conditions of their employer/job.

**Millennials**

Millennials are ambitious. These creative individuals are also relentlessly in search of “new.” These will include start-ups and pioneering accounts. They are global people who operate with a network of acquaintances all over the globe.

Millennials thrive on technology, anything that makes it easier to get their job done. Thanks to technology, most of them believe they can work anytime and anywhere. They believe their results should speak for them. Therefore, the company should not bother with how they go about their process.

While they are effective workers, they log-out as soon as their work hours are over. They see work to fill in the week while they wait restlessly for the weekend. Most crave sabbaticals and flexible hours.

While Gen X wants a work/life balance, Millennials also want to add community involvement to the equation. Many Millennials support at least one charitable cause, whether financially or physically.





## Workplace Expectations

Each generation has a preferred work environment. They look for something to meet their lifestyle expectations. This is a generalization; some individuals may have preferences that deviate from the norm.

### Baby Boomers

Baby Boomers prefer a workplace that provides its workers with equal opportunities to succeed. They want a warm and friendly company that lives by democracy and is humane. Boomers are accustomed to organizational hierarchy.

This generation wants to contribute to the welfare of future generations. They want to work in a company of good standing, one where they believe in the vision/mission.

Baby Boomers would like their role in the establishment to be clearly defined. Boomers work best in a team. They value the efficiency that teamwork brings. However, they want each person they work to work as hard as they do. They also prefer an environment without any conflicts.

### Generation X

Gen X adapts well to change. Their consumer mentality makes them valuable in marketing. They will tell you what they think in a direct manner. This can be good or bad.

Most of them do not want a workplace that has rigid requirements. They prefer cutting-edge technology to simplify tasks and gravitate towards forward-thinking companies with dynamic leaders.

This generation values experience and will expect a leader who can answer any questions they have about

a task or project. They are impatient and may ignore unnecessary steps in the process so long as they can achieve the results they want.

Generation X wants to feel motivated. They want a job that allows them to have fun at work, too. They are happiest in environments that provide them with access to the latest technology and does not expect them to stick to rigid regulations.

### Millennials

The Millennial expectations echoes that of Baby Boomers in many ways. They are tenacious and work well in a team. They have high expectations of their bosses and want their efforts to be recognized.

This generation wants to feel valued in the workplace. They want an environment where they are surrounded by bright and creative people. They seek out workplaces teeming with individuals who have a positive outlook.

Since they crave recognition and want to feel valued, they long for a workplace where they are respected. Millennials like having a familiar face or two at work. They are happiest when they work with friends. They also want a company that will allow them to choose their lifestyle and help them grow.

**Baby Boomers**

- Wants Equal Opportunities
- Needs to Believe in Company
- Prefers Warm and Friendly Workplace
- Prefers Clearly Defined Role
- Wants to Contribute to Future Generations
- Values Teamwork

**Generation X**

- Wants to Feel Motivated
- Adapts Well to Change
- Craves Fun at Work
- Values Experience
- Expects A Lot from Bosses
- No Rigid Regulations

**Millennials**

- Wants to Feel Valued
- Prefers a Positive Environment
- Happiest Working with Friends
- Wants to Choose Their Lifestyle
- Seeks Growth
- Teamplayers

## Hiring and Retaining Millennials

I decided to dedicate one whole chapter of this e-book to discuss recruiting and retaining Millennials. That's because as of 2015, they make up 92 million people in the workforce and because we've already had years of experience recruiting the other two generational groups. Millennials are our future, and companies need to find ways to keep them interested. Our data comes from [ICIMS](#) and [TalentBlog](#).

While 41% of Baby Boomers believe that one should stay with an employer for a minimum of 5 years, only 13% of Millennials agree. By the age of 30, many in this generation have made almost twice the amount of job and/or organizational changes than Gen X. That means 3 times as many job changes as the loyal Baby Boomers and Traditionalists. This also means they outdo the "career butterflies" of Generation X and are now officially the "career butterflies" of the workforce.

Knowing their employer cares about their career development is important to Millennials. They also want to know the purpose of their job. Unlike other generations who compartmentalized, keeping job and personal life separated, Millennials want both their personal and work life to work harmoniously together.

68% of hiring managers will agree that Millennials are valuable because they have unique skills that older generations do not possess. However, 53% say they have difficulty hiring and retaining Millennials.

**Never afraid to leave and start fresh, Millennials will make a job change if they don't feel satisfied with their jobs.**

43% of them were active job candidates in 2015, busy searching for a workplace to call home. Since they are the future, it is important for companies to devise ways to hire and keep them.

Reaching out to Millennials is easy. They are on social media most of the time. To recruit this group, either build your recruiting platform on social media or partner with a recruiting firm that can take the hiring process to this generation. It is important to know the best times to post on social media and to consider proper branding, as Millennials want to belong to a company that fills them with pride.

Taking industry insights, job postings, and events to social media platforms will get this elusive generation interested. Studies show that 62% of them will visit the social media sites of a company to learn about the jobs they offer. Branding does wonders, as well. 60% of them join a company if they believe in its vision and mission.

This generation needs to know they are valued. They want upper management to hear them out and help them "walk the path to success." Millennials are interested in what waits for them around the bend. The next opportunity calls to them, and sometimes they move too quickly.

Millennials care about belonging. They want to fit into the company culture. They want to feel free to be themselves and develop a lasting and comfortable relationship with their managers or bosses. If you let your Millennials dress, think, and speak as they want, you will keep them for a longer span of time.

Other generations might think Millennials are entitled and vapid, which they believe explains the reason for the fast career changes. The truth is that this generation craves what they desire and are in a rush to find a company that can give it to them.

Millennials think stability is important. They might not like corporate bureaucracy and may be drawn to startup companies but at the end of the day, they will stay with a company that is considered stable.

### **Growing up in the recession period, Millennials understand the need for financial security.**

This is why 67% of them are happy to leave their job for one that is similar to it but has better retirement benefits.

This generation cares about professional development. They want to be in a company that will help them realize their true potential. They want to grow in their company and dream of advancement. Therefore, the employer should provide them with ways to go from A to Z. They will climb the ladder and enjoy the challenge of besting others for a coveted spot.

## **Who to Hire?**

There is no right or wrong generation to hire. Each generation possesses special attributes. However, by assessing your organization's needs, you should be able to determine your focus. Right now, most start-ups will only hire Gen X and Millennials because these people are their target market. Other companies lean heavily towards Baby Boomers because they have more experience or the desire to mentor.

This e-book was created to help companies hire and retain employees of all generations. Hiring and retaining talent are two different things. Hiring superstars can be tough, but retaining a potential superstar requires your workplace meets his or her expectations, and this might be tougher yet. I hope this e-book has provided you with useful tips on how to attract and retain the talent your organization needs. If you have comments and suggestions, you can reach me at [dan@consearch.com](mailto:dan@consearch.com).







## About the Author

**Daniel C. Simmons is the founder and owner of Continental Search.** Dan has 25 years of recruiting experience. He attributes his longevity in this demanding field to resourcefulness, his willingness to evolve, and the ability to spot a good fit when he sees it.

Dan currently leads a team of 5 recruiters, and together they have placed many high-ranking leaders and solo contributors in animal agriculture. He has recruited in this field since 2002.

**Continental Search** remains one of the leading animal agriculture recruitment firms. To find out more about the jobs that Dan and his team fill, feel free to browse through the [company page](#). You can also connect with him on [LinkedIn](#). Dan can be reached at **(888) 276-6789** or at **[dan@consearch.com](mailto:dan@consearch.com)**.

## Other E-books by Author

Dan has written several **FREE** e-books over the years. Below are links to each one.



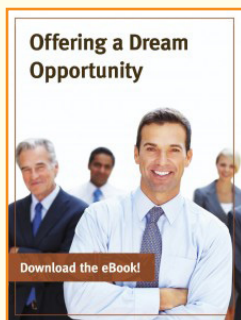
### Simple Steps for a Successful Interview

This e-book is helpful for people who are looking for material to guide them through the entire interview process. This is the perfect read for people who are about to enter the workforce and those who haven't gone through this process for quite a while.



### Hunting the Headhunter

This is an excellent read if you want to leverage the recruiter to get you the best hire. It debunks 7 common myths that are associated with recruiters and provides helpful tips, as well.



### Presenting the Complete Job Offer

How do you get an A-player? This e-book will tell you how to do it. Get that superstar candidate by presenting the complete job offer!



### Evaluating an Employment Offer

So you received an offer. Is it worth the bother or should you stay at your current job? This e-book provides the workforce with a common-sense way to determine whether a job offer is good. It's a great read for people who are "on the fence" about their current career options.