

# Technology & the Emerging Modern Workforce

Kellee Ireland, 7 July 2018

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A few weeks back I attended a conference in Sydney. At that conference I saw presentation by a young man (26) who had worked his way up within his organisation to be the facility manager. He was passionate and enthusiastic about millennials and in particular millennials working in aged care and health. He inspired me. What an eye opener! It seems that the health & ageing sector is not mostly made up of generation x and baby boomers. That is, people 35+. He talked about how care services can never be replaced by robots - unlike many other areas of work.

## Job Hopping

His company played to the 'millennial job hopping' quality by providing him with internal opportunities, thus he has been job hopping within the organisation. Such a smart strategy to attract and retain millennials within their organisation. Last year this passionate young man made an internal move from internal policy to front-line management of three pioneering cottages for people living with dementia. He describes his career so far as being "immensely challenging and rewarding".

## Emerging Cohort

This Emerging Modern Workforce, that is, the millennials are the modern participants and they are driving the way the health and ageing industry is using technology. Technologists are increasingly adapting and changing their solutions in order to be more appealing to the modern workforce. Can your organisation flex and change so as to attract and retain the modern workforce?

So, who are the millennials and what is so different about them? When it comes to this cohort, what are your organisations aims? Do you have operational strategies in place align your business and the technology you use to appeal to this emerging workforce?

The smashed avocado, on October 15th, 2016 an article written by demographer Bernard Salt connected the dots between the rise of the expensive café culture amongst the young and the ever-growing chorus of complaints that housing was too expensive.

### Exactly Who are They?

So, who are the millennials? The term Millennials is usually considered to apply to individuals who reached adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. They are also known as generation Y, the net generation and the generation that directly follows Generation X. For the purpose of this article we are using the definition by Howe and Strauss will defines the Millennial cohort as consisting of individuals born between 1981 and 1997. According to Margaret Rouse from [www.whatis.techtarget.com](http://www.whatis.techtarget.com) they make up 23% of the population.

Generalising; Millennials want to be owners and entrepreneurs. Millennials have gone through post-secondary education only to find themselves employed in unrelated fields or underemployed and job hopping more frequently than previous generations.

Millennials have grown up in an electronics-filled, increasingly online and socially-connected in a digital world.<sup>1</sup> They are our first digital natives. Technology is second nature to them. They have grown up with computers in their homes and smartphones in their hands, students and young professionals are talking about and are well aware that the Fourth Industrial Revolution that is upon us and that, the very nature of work is changing rapidly.

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<sup>1</sup> Millennials (Generation Y), <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/millennials-millennial-generation>, 7 July, 2018

Recently my daughter was playing a video game. I walked in to check on what she was doing. She was online with her friends from school. They were collaborating and working together in this game, in real time and online. I looked on in awe and said, “isn’t that just amazing” and she looked at me for a second and replied, “not really”.

Millennials are the most ethnically diverse generation yet and they are very tolerant of difference. They are not homophobic and not xenophobic. They have experienced being constantly praised by their parents. They are told that they can be anything they want. They have been raised under the mantra “follow your dreams” and told they are special. As a result, they tend to be confident. While this can largely be a positive trait, the Millennial generation’s confidence, it could be argued that this can spill over into the realms of entitlement and narcissism.<sup>2</sup> “You can be anything you want.” “You can be the Prime Minister.”

Millennials stay at home longer. Maybe they stay home longer because they eat too much smashed avocado? Let’s put all the selfie-obsessed and avocado smashing aside for minute and take a moment.

## In Practice

Millennials are the future workforce for health and aged care. Our industry needs qualified and knowledgeable workers. Millennials are qualified and knowledgeable.

Millennials have a strong desire to *improve* society – and that along with technology drives their decision-making process when choosing employment. There is actual research that shows that millennials seek fulfilling work that reflects a fairer and more ethical outlook on the world. With 70 per cent saying it was more important to be fulfilled than to earn a lot. 2018 NZ Deloitte Millennial Survey says that young workers are eager for business leaders to be proactive about making a positive

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<sup>2</sup> Millennials (Generation Y), <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/millennials-millennial-generation>, 7 July, 2018

impact in society—and to be responsive to employees' needs.<sup>3</sup> Given this information, it makes sense that they will gravitate to aged care and health industry. They have a practical, social conscience.

What are your organisation goals? There are many organisation goals including but not limited to, profit and sustainability. A highly desirable goal is to reduce employee churn rate. Some studies predict that every time a business replaces a salaried employee, the associated cost is between six and nine months' salary (on average). For a manager making \$40,000 a year, that's \$20,000 to \$30,000 in recruiting and training expenses.<sup>4</sup>

## Employer of Choice

Be the employer of choice; you want people to want to work at your organisation because it is great. When the millennial workforce is happy they will tell their friends that they are happy, and they will do it in a very public way - through social media.

You want and need an efficient and effective workforce; qualified staff who follow process, are innovative and offer suggestions or ways to do things better. You want your staff to provide exemplary client driven customer service.

You want positive noise about your organisation. The only noise you want to create for your organisation is through positive social media. You need to make profits. Even if you are officially a “not-for-profit”.

So what business strategies can we put in place to embrace and support this emerging workforce? Millennials want to be owners and entrepreneurs, they want to feel accountable and contribute. Have you thought about offering company shares,

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<sup>3</sup> The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018, Millennials' confidence in business, loyalty to employers deteriorate, <https://www2.deloitte.com/nz/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennialsurvey.html> (7 July 2018)

<sup>4</sup> Employee Turnover is Costly, Jim Cox, 14 May 2016, <http://www.priorityhr.com/blog/entry/employee-turnover-is-costly> (7 July 2018)

options or a profit share scheme? Give the millennial the choice to be able to grow within their role and be more accountable.

They are educated and qualified, nurture this through encouraging research and helping them become more capable. Draw on their expertise and energy to drive decisions behind the organisation's technology. In a recent poll by Gallup, 87 % of millennials surveyed said professional development was an important part of their job.<sup>5</sup> The desire to learn and grow is a key trait that separates millennials from past generations in the workforce.

Being diverse and tolerant is such an important quality in health and ageing services. It supports a much happier work place and job satisfaction.

## Strategies

They stay at home longer but are mobile. Does your organisation have scope to offer variety? Perhaps a posting in an interstate or international office?

Offering relocation, can solve that job-hopping trait through opening up other roles and opportunities within your organisation. Give them opportunities to job hop within your organisation. Offer cross divisional roles.

Millennials have been using modern technology from an early age. They have grown up in an age where having wifi in their home is as common as having a TV. Tech savvy employees lowers your training costs. They know how to use most technology and if they don't, they pick it up quickly. Investigate the costs of offering data plans and products as an incentive via salary sacrifice. Align your tech with their tech, their expectations.

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<sup>5</sup> The Millennial Expectation of Technology in the Workplace, 8 March 2017, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paycom/2017/03/08/the-millennial-expectation-of-technology-in-the-workplace/#398fd9734a50> (7 July 2018)

With an elevated view of themselves, they crave attention and they are used to instant feedback through technology or otherwise; Eg. text messaging and social media.

All their lives, their parents have told them that they are great. They have had their tyres pumped! Turn this into a positive through formal and informal feedback loops. They want constructive and critical feedback and they want it straight away. Help them understand who their superiors are by providing clarity of reporting lines and role definition.

Give them ownership of the tech. Digital applications and instant communication are changing the way we work. We all now have different social dynamics and mindsets.

Align your technology in your business. It is important that organisations have the right technology to attract and retain millennial talent.

## Alignment

What type of technology supports millennials? They are used to using apps, cloud software that is device independent, any device, anywhere, anytime. Apps are updating and eliminating many old or outdated workplace processes and procedures and changing the way we access technology.

Millennials are looking to use newer, mobile friendly tools or communication methods that are more transparent and instant.

They are familiar and comfortable with uberisation (disruption). They already expect price elasticity (surge pricing) and alignment at a social level. Millennials don't ask for technology in their workplaces, they expect it. The surge towards modern, cloud based, web app technology is being driven by Millennial demand

The 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey shows that the growth of Industry 4.0 technologies—from robotics and the internet of things to artificial intelligence and cognitive—has altered the nature of work. Industry 4.0 is characterized by the

marriage of physical and digital technologies, such as analytics, artificial intelligence, cognitive computing and internet of things technology.<sup>6</sup>

There is technology out there that supports these expectations. Health Metrics' ([www.healthmetrics.com.au](http://www.healthmetrics.com.au)) technology is intuitive, cloud based and app ready. Health Metrics' software systems and processes such as rostering, timesheets, instant messaging and direct note taking. Intelligent software uses algorithms that can be used to align supply and demand...This is where technology is going. Health Metrics incorporates Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to establish patterns that enhance the customer (residents, clients, et al) experience.

The Provider (owner) can define their own algorithms with respect to supply and demand matching...that is, Customer focused and better meeting the needs of the care recipients.

## Handling the Future

Be the technology leader. Look for opportunities to be the first. Make your organisation technically attractive.

Health Metrics eCase solution is built for the cloud and addresses the many cultural and social needs of the emerging workforce. It future proofs your organisation's technology landscape.

Technologies borne of the millennial mindset are more likely to give an organisation more flexibility, agility and mobility. Millennials are no longer up and coming. They have already grabbed the wheel and are driving today's workforce and with today's

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<sup>6</sup> The fourth industrial revolution is here. Are you ready? <https://www2.deloitte.com/nl/nl/pages/consumer-industrial-products/articles/industry-4-0-readiness-report-2018.html> (7 July 2018)

technology. According to Macquarie Research, by 2030 two out of every three dollars will be earned by Millennials.<sup>7</sup>

Companies need mobile-friendly solutions and policies to attract and retain younger workers. As one Millennial commented in a news article on the topic — mobile technology is the generation's lifeblood.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> How Millennials will shift Australia's spending habits: Macquarie, Myriam Robin, 19 June 2017, <https://www.smh.com.au/business/markets/how-millennials-will-shift-australias-spending-habits-macquarie-20170619-gwtskf.html>, (7 July 2018)

<sup>8</sup> Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace – Millennials shape the status quo, Modo Labs Team, 20 July 2017, <https://www.modolabs.com/blog-post/technology-in-the-21st-century-workplace-millennials-shape-the-status-quo/> (7 July 2018)