

Why You're Losing Millennials and Gen Z



Maybe you're at the tail end of the Baby Boomer or Gen X generation. You've put in your time, climbed the corporate ladder and are finally at or near the top. Retirement is on the horizon, but you've still got a few demanding years left. Ultimately, you're largely responsible for the company's continued growth and success. That means acquiring and retaining younger talent. You're a mentor to a select few individuals and hope they'll follow in your footsteps. There's a problem though. You can't seem to keep anyone around for more than a couple of years. You're frustrated and can't put your finger on why retaining folks is so hard. If any of this sounds familiar, read on.

Feedback

The corporate model of old dictates that it's company policy to have a review once, maybe twice a year. You sit with the boss for a half hour and talk about your performance, strengths, weaknesses and what your job looks like going forward. When you're done, he or she checks off some boxes and rates some aspects on a scale of one to five. The form goes in your file in the HR office and you move on.

This doesn't work for Millennials and Gen Z. Employees in both generations demand consistent feedback whether it's praise or constructive criticism. They need to see that there is room to grow and yearn to acquire the skills to do so. This phenomenon strikes at the core of how these generations were brought up. In school and at home, they received constant positive reinforcement and honest critiques weren't the norm. For this reason, frequent feedback, positive or otherwise, is needed to remind these generations that there's no such thing as

participation trophies in the real world.

Lack of Flexibility

While their parents are used to the nine to five, Monday through Friday routine, Millennials and Gen Z aren't as structured. The way they see it, why can't they work seven to three instead? Being able to leave an hour or two earlier might allow these employees to pick their kids up from school, saving them a second mortgage payment in the form of childcare.

You knew it was coming so here we go... Working remotely. Millennials have taken to the idea of working from home like fish to water. They place more of an emphasis on work-life balance than any generation before them. It's estimated that nearly 50% of the modern workforce sees working remotely at least some of the time as "standard operating procedure."

Bottom line, if you want to retain talented people, flexibility is a MUST.

Learning and Development

Even though their elders might call them lazy or entitled, the truth is that Millennials and Gen Z have an insatiable appetite to learn and grow. So, what does this look like? Technology. Webinars, online classes and apps are the way to a younger employee's heart. The days of traveling to Vegas for a weekend sales training are much less attractive now than they used to be. The generations of today want to be able to learn on their own time and within reason, at their own pace.

The second component is mentoring. Even though Millennials and Gen Z love their screen time, there's still no substitute for face-to-face coaching and mentoring. Interacting in person bridges the generational gap and allows for thoughts and ideas to be shared freely and collaboratively.

If you want to get especially creative, you might consider implementing reverse mentoring. This occurs when junior employees mentor those their senior. If the older guard is struggling with the influx of technology in the workplace, have a Millennial or Gen Z employee help with training. Not only will this make them feel valued, your senior employee won't feel discouraged or obsolete.

Opportunity for Advancement

Millennials and Gen Z like it when they can see a clear path forward. Call it instant gratification or whatever you like, it isn't going anywhere. This is why younger people change jobs or careers so frequently. Even if opportunities for advancement are available, they're not usually communicated to employees.

When you communicate a path forward up front, and clearly state the expectations to get there, you allow new employees to see the value in staying with your company for more than a year or two.

If you're in your 40's or 50's and reading this article, you've heard plenty of talk about how Millennials and Gen Z are lazy and entitled. While there's some merit to that statement, the reality is most of them are hungry and willing to work hard to achieve their goals. They just aren't going to do it sitting in a cubicle by themselves from nine to five. The dynamics of how and where people work are changing, and there's no stopping it. If you want to recruit and retain quality people, you'd best jump on board sooner than later.

As a high quality and regulatory recruiter for the [life sciences industries](#), I help companies in the Bay Area build teams the maximum potential. Contact me, Jeff King, at rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

The Fine Line of Being a Boss and Friend



A lot has changed in the workplace since your father spent his 30 years being a company man. It used to be that bosses were just that, bosses. They commanded respect, called all the shots, were imposing and held your livelihood in their hands. The boss was the last guy you wanted to piss off.

While some things remain the same, there's a lot that's changed too. Sure, the boss is still the person in charge. But, if you're in a position of leadership, you've probably realized that how you go about your business and interact with the people you manage is vastly different from the model of old. Instead of barking orders, handing out disciplinary actions and leading by fear, you now have to play the part of mentor, friend, confidant and communicator. If it sounds like you have to be both a boss and friend in order to be an effective leader in the modern workplace, it's because it's true.

Honesty

If you think about your closest friends, it's expected that you're honest with each other. The same goes for your relationships at work. If an employee isn't making the grade, they need to know. Keep in mind that when you deliver constructive criticism, you need to both be tactful and not beat around the bush. Your employees want honesty and transparency and it's your job to deliver it.

The same holds true for [communicating with employees](#) when they go above and beyond. If you notice someone performing exceptionally well, by all means let them know. At the end of the day, you're expected to be candid with your feedback both positive and constructive.

There's No "I" in Team

You're the one in charge, that's a fact. But guess what? You're in charge of a team. In order for your organization perform optimally, it has to be a total team effort. That means creating the space for everyone's voice to be heard in the decision-making process. When issues arise, it's imperative that you solicit feedback from everyone. Sure, some people's ideas won't be realistic, but the mere fact that they had a chance to be heard means the world and also helps them get on board with the final decision. At least they were heard.

Hang Out

There's an ongoing debate about crossing professional lines when it comes to socializing and recreating with colleagues. The old guard maintains that work should stay at the office while the new school of thought encourages social interaction outside the office. While there's no defined line, studies have shown that engaging with your colleagues in a relaxed environment humanizes the experience and can actually be a catalyst for innovative ideas and candid conversations without fear of reprimand. So, maybe that Friday happy hour isn't such a bad idea after all.

BUT, the terms change when it comes to social media. It's absolutely fine to endorse someone for a skill on LinkedIn. However, overly engaging and Facebook and Instagram is never a good idea. First, doing so can be seen as an invasion of privacy. Second, if you're the boss that "creeps" or "pries," you liable to stir a hornet's nest and open yourself up to all sorts of negative accusations and outcomes. It can become an HR nightmare.

Keep it Professional

We've all heard stories about working relationships becoming more... And by more we mean romantic. Though it goes without saying, this is something that's worth repeating. Even if there's an energy, mutual attraction, shared interests or whatever, mixing work with pleasure is never a good idea. The conflicts of interest, propensity for office rumors and not to mention people's lives are at stake. So please, don't let interoffice romance ruin your career or someone else's.

Be Supportive and Empathetic

Everyone that works for you is human. And with that experience comes hard times on occasion. If someone on your team is going through a tough divorce, the loss of a loved one or any other personal struggle, you need to be there for them. Maybe you're the only one they can talk to in a moment of need. Just the simple act of listening can be more meaningful than you might think.

If someone you manage comes to you and asks for help or advice, it's your duty to assist however you can. Not only is it the decent thing to do, it can often be the difference in the employee continuing to perform or not making the grade, or even deciding to stay with the company or look for other opportunities.

It's a fine line you're going to have to walk as a leader. The line between boss and friend. There's no plug-and-play formula that shows you exactly how to do it. With that being said, if you make a conscious effort to stay within professional bounds while showing everyone on your team that you're a human just like them, your entire organization only stands to benefit.

Methods to Get Your Team to Follow Your Lead



At some point in your career you've either managed or been part of a team where there was a noticeable disconnect between the person at the top and everyone

else. Sure, objectives and responsibilities were explicit, but when it came to getting things done and maximizing productivity, it was a constant struggle. Any number of factors can cause a team to not function at its best, but employee engagement is almost always part of the problem. So, if you're struggling to get the results you want from your team or feel like you're struggling to get everyone on the same page, read on.

It Starts with You

If you want to get the most out of everyone on your team, you need to show them that you're 100% invested. Sure, you've got your own set of responsibilities, but you have to demonstrate that you're not afraid to get your hands dirty too. Whether that means carving out time every week to help with the more menial activities or just checking in with folks on an individual basis, the people you manage need to see you as one of them.

Never Lose Sight of the Bigger Picture

When work becomes repetitive and the members of your team focus are just getting through the day, you're headed for trouble. Before you know it, productivity begins to slide along with the quality of work being done. All of sudden, doing the bare minimum becomes arduous and it's all you can do to meet deadlines and basic operating goals.

This is why it's important that everyone on your team feels like they are working for something bigger than themselves. When you're able to connect day-to-day tasks with a grander plan, your team members take pride in their work and become more productive as a result. Even though it might not happen overnight, there are plenty of ways to motivate your employees to get behind your mission. Bonuses, paid time off and team bonding activities are just a few.

Make Collaborative Decisions

You have the final say when it comes to making big decisions. But if you want to get the most out of your team, their input needs to be considered before you make a final call. When people feel like they're empowered to share their thoughts and ideas, they automatically become more invested in the process. While your

meetings with managers and higher-ups aren't going anywhere, regularly scheduling all hands-on deck meetings with your team fosters an environment of inclusion. And the best part is you'll often find that some of the best and brightest ideas come from the folks that are in the trenches on a daily basis.

Recognize Strengths and Delegate

No one wants to work for a boss that feels like they have to do everything themselves in order get things done right. That's why recognizing people's strengths and delegating responsibilities accordingly is so powerful. Do you have an entry-level employee whose attention to details are impeccable? Great, charge them with reviewing documents or procedures all follow up communication with those involved. Not only will you have more time to focus your attention in other areas, you'll make that team member feel valued as well.

Make Your Strategy Visual

Everyone has different learning styles. Some people need to learn by doing while others just want a set of directions. There's no underestimating the power of seeing something in action, however. That's why video has become so prevalent in the workplace. When people are able to see what success looks like with their own eyes, it becomes cemented in their minds. Seeing is believing and when you're able to make your words come to life, your ability to lead and influence grows exponentially.

In order for your team to reach its full potential, it's paramount that they follow your lead. If you're the type of leader that spends all day in his office shouting orders and circulating company memos, you don't stand on a chance. On the flip side, if you make a conscious effort to lead by example, give people the freedom to utilize their strengths and involve them in the decision-making process, your team can become an unstoppable force capable of achieving the kinds of results you've only dreamed of.

Why Body Language Matters for Leaders



As a leader you're no stranger to making crucial decisions, inspiring others, giving tough love and talking in front of individuals and big groups. Think about the last time you prepared for a presentation or spoke in front of the entire team of organization. Doing this is old hat, but you still went through your normal routine of practicing in front of the mirror and memorizing important talking points. You can do this in your sleep, but you're disciplined enough to not cut any corners. But when was the last time you stopped to think about your body language? The fact is, even if your words are the most compelling ever, they only go so far. When people listen to you speak, they aren't just listening to your words, they are subconsciously reacting to your body language. So, what exactly does that mean?

First Impressions Count

When you first meet someone, they will immediately make a judgement about you as a person. Sure, you shouldn't judge a book by its cover but unfortunately, it's human nature. Whether someone sees you as warm and trustworthy or standoffish and questionable, every interaction from that point forward will be judged through that initial filter.

In order to make that initial interaction a positive one with everyone you meet, there are some important things keep in mind.

Eye Contact

When you meet someone the last thing you should be doing is checking email on your smartphone. If your attention isn't wholly focused on the individual, you'll immediately send signals that you don't have time for them or they're unimportant. Instead, as you approach a stranger, make eye contact. Right away this conveys that you're open and friendly.

Smile

It's no secret that happiest people are the ones that smile the most. There's nothing that exudes warmth and openness like a genuine smile. When you smile, you put others at ease and allow them to let down their guard.

Lean In

Have you ever heard of Brene Brown talk about leaning in? She's talking about vulnerability. And there's a reason she chose the phrase leaning in. When you lean into someone upon meeting them, you show them that your guard isn't up and you're vulnerable, just like they are. So, when you go in for that initial handshake, meet the person you're greeting halfway.

Handshake

Speaking of shaking hands... How you shake someone's hand tells them a lot about you. If your handshake feels like someone grabbing a dead fish, you portray disinterest and lack of confidence which are huge turnoffs. On the other hand, if your handshake is firm and solid, it lets the other person know that you are genuinely excited to meet them.

Talking with Your Hands

Think about the most memorable speeches you've ever heard. Whether it was at a company event with a large group of people or just a meaningful conversation with a friend or colleague, think about what the speaker did with their hands. Chances are they weren't resting in their pockets or glued to the side of a podium. In order to add meaning to their words, great speakers use their hands to express the message they're trying to get across. So, next time you're talking with someone you want to make an impression on, don't be afraid to use your hands. This isn't something that's mechanical or that you should think too much about.

Just let it happen naturally and your listener is sure to see you in a favorable light.

The Importance of Face-to-Face

Even though the majority of modern communication occurs over text messages, emails or video, there is no substitute for face-to-face. Sure, our ability to share information quickly and easily has made our lives easier, but the fact remains that it takes talking to someone in person to develop a real connection and build rapport. This kind of communication allows you to both send and receive so much more information than what is being said. Things like tone of voice, open body language, hand gestures, pacing and eye contact can shape someone's opinion of you even more than the words you say.

As a leader, it's your job to communicate with people. You wouldn't be in the position you are if you didn't know what to say. But, what is often forgotten is that words only tell half the story. People read body language more than they listen to words. With that in mind, if you can become a master of using positive body language when communicating with others, your potential to lead and inspire is unlimited.

As a recruiter for the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), I would work with business leaders to improve internal company processes through hiring the right employees. If you are looking for a new employee in the [pharmaceutical, medical device, or biotech industries in the Bay Area](#), contact me, Jeff King.

Steps to Setting Clear Expectations at the Office



If you're a part of an organization of any size, you know the importance of setting and maintaining expectations. Whether expectations are placed on you or ones you set for the people on your team, they need to be made clear and are understood by everyone involved. Whenever ambiguity is present, you run the risk of poor communication, people cutting corners and diminished productivity. So, just how should you go about setting expectations? Try some of the following steps.

It Starts With You

People expect you to lead by example. If they see you taking shortcuts or giving anything less than your best effort, you can't expect them to give everything they've got. This is why setting expectations for yourself is a crucial first step. It's a good idea to write them down on paper and post them somewhere you can see them on a regular basis. Having clear expectations in your head is one thing. Putting them on paper is much more effective, however. Not only do you have a visual reminder, you allow others to see the standard you've set for yourself as well.

Where in Your Organization Do Expectations Need to Be Made Clearer?

Before you go off reinventing the wheel, put in the effort to examine every aspect of your organization to see where improvements can be made. Is there a breakdown in communication between production and quality assurance? Are there issues with people showing up late? How can the regulatory department meet deadlines more consistently? By identifying gaps, you can hone in on where expectations need to be adjusted or made clearer.

Communicate

Once you've identified where expectations need to be made clear, the next step is to [communicate](#) them to everyone involved. Whether you're addressing an individual or an entire group, meet everyone on their level. Instead of telling them they aren't doing what's expected, frame the conversation in a way that makes them feel empowered to raise the bar. Explaining why changes are being made in the context of how the entire company benefits is also a great strategy.

Make Everyone Part of the Conversation

When you're setting new expectations, always remember that people have expectations of you as a leader too. This is why it's important to have a dialogue. By asking people what they need from you helps both parties become clear on what's expected. Are there supplies or tools that your group need to make their jobs easier? Are there antiquated processes that need to be updated? When you make everyone part of the conversation, they feel appreciated and the results will show in their work.

Write Them Down

After you've communicated what's expected going forward, people will be enthused. After a while though, the hype fades and it's easy for people to forget or just go back to the old way of doing things. If you write down what's expected and post it somewhere visible, you provide clarity and a constant reminder for everyone.

Agreement

After you've had a mutual conversation and identified what everyone expects from each other, all parties have to buy in. That's why it's important for everyone to read, understand and come to agreement on what's been written. If you have any dissenters, the chances of your expectations being met decrease dramatically. If you're dealing with an individual that has disciplinary issues or isn't otherwise making the grade, you may want to have them sign a written contract that clearly states what's expected.

Take Time to Re-evaluate

In the age of technology, workplaces of all types have to be constantly evolving to be successful. Just because the expectations you set and the systems you implemented last year were working, doesn't mean they still are. Take time to check in with your people on a regular basis. Is there a policy that no longer makes sense? Does the IT department have everything they need to keep your systems running their best? By doing this, you not only keep a pulse on what's going on with your organization, you show people that you care. This goes a long way in determining how effective you can be as a leader.

It's no secret that the most successful organizations have clear expectations for both leadership and employees. They open channels of communication, set boundaries and define responsibilities. But how you go about setting those expectations is what makes the difference. Instead of sending out a company-wide memo that most people won't even read or barking orders at your team, go through the steps listed above. Doing so provides you an in-depth look at where improvements need and makes everyone feel like part of the process.

How Public Speaking Can Help Your Career



It's something even the brightest minds in business fear. Something you avoid at all costs. Even those that do it for a living never get truly comfortable with it.

We're talking about [public speaking](#). And you're going to have to do it at some point in your career. Whether it's giving a presentation to your team or delivering a speech in front of the entire company at the Christmas party, developing the skill of public speaking is a must. Sure, it's not your favorite thing in the world but believe it or not, developing this difficult skill can be a great benefit both personally and professionally.

It Makes You Memorable

When you speak in front of any number of people, their focus is on you. For however long the stage is yours, you have everyone's undivided attention. Great public speakers know this and instead of fearing the opportunity in front of them, they see it as a chance to have influence and make a lasting impression. When you have a chance to speak in front of a group, they are going to look to you as their leader.

There's Scarce Competition

Most people avoid public speaking at all costs. Whether it's giving a best man speech at a wedding or delivering a sermon at church, there aren't many people in the audience that have the courage to share their thoughts and wisdom in front of a crowd. If you're able to become even an average public speaker, people will look to you with respect because you possess a skill most of them don't.

You Connect with People

If you think about some of the most memorable speeches ever given, names like Martin Luther King Jr., John F. Kennedy and Winston Churchill come to mind. So, what made all these names great public speakers? Their ability to show empathy and connect with people. If you're able to speak in a way that conveys passion, vulnerability and inspiration, your audience can't help but be drawn to you. In short, you will be their champion.

You Can Be a Catalyst for Change

Think about the last time you received that email that was circulated to everyone

in the organization announcing a new direction or change in policy. You read it and talked about it with your colleagues but probably didn't give much more thought. Now think about the last time someone at the top gave a speech in front of everyone. Even if it was last year, it still sticks out in your mind.

The fact remains that listening to someone speak always has a greater impact than a voiceless note sent electronically. If you want to enact change in your life or your organization, do it by speaking to people, not through a form letter or email.

Leaders Get Promoted

Have you ever found yourself stuck in a rut? You want to advance in your career, but you keep bumping into that glass ceiling. You know that people with leadership qualities get promoted but you just can't figure out how to break through. Developing the skill of public speaking is a great place to start. If you're able to speak in front of people, you have the power to change their minds. It's no secret that leaders have the ability to influence others and there might not be any greater way to have influence than the spoken word.

You Become More Confident

Everyone is afraid of something. Maybe it's heights, needles or tight spaces. One fear that is shared by more people than any other however, is public speaking. Getting over this fear takes some practice but if you're able make it an asset, you'll feel empowered both personally and professionally. Even more, when you're able to connect with people, it's a great reminder of your value and worth to everyone around you.

What if You Mess Up?

No one is going to deny that there are more enjoyable things than public speaking. Being the center of attention makes you nervous and what will people think if you screw up? Believe it or not, the best public speakers in the world will tell you that they make mistakes all the time. The best part is most of the time, nobody notices. And when mistakes do happen, it brings about a moment of levity that reminds the audience that whoever they're listening to is a human just like

them.

Most people aren't born as great public speakers. Fortunately, it's a skill that can be learned and a fear that can be overcome. If you're willing to step outside your comfort zone and put in the work, you'll be setting yourself apart both personally and professionally. Not only will you have developed a skill that makes you more valuable to your organization, your confidence and sense of self-worth will grow in other areas of your life as well. It can even help you improve your everyday communication skills as well. Challenge yourself and give it a try.

If you work in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), I am a recruiter that can help you advance in your career. Contact me, Jeff King, at jking@rqfocus.com or (541) 639-3501.

Essential Skills for Leadership



You consider yourself a leader. After all, you've spent most of your career managing employees and overseeing large teams of people. Sure, you've made some bad hires and dealt with difficult situations just like everyone else, but you have a track record of success. Maybe you've always been a leader, or you developed the skills to become one in recent years. Whatever the case may be, the time has come for you to pursue a new leadership opportunity. You've dusted off your resume, started hunting for jobs and even landed a couple of interviews. If you hope to find the opportunity you're looking for however, you'd best be sure some of the skills mentioned below are polished.

Communication

There's been no shortage of articles written about the [importance of communication](#) but that's for good reason. It's a vital skill for any leader. We've all had that boss at some point that is more of a dictator than a leader. You constantly find yourself second-guessing the job you're doing and wondering if your performance is above board or lacking. Working for this kind of superior is no fun and now you make it a point to communicate with those around you in every sense of the word.

It's also important to remember that not all communication is verbal. When you're interviewing for a new job, the hiring manager is going to scour your resume for grammar and word choice. During the interview they will also pay attention to non-verbal communication cues like body language, how you shook their hand and how actively you listen with your eyes as well as your ears.

Vision

In order to be successful, companies are always looking for ways to increase the bottom line, save money and make their processes more efficient. They know you can't do business the same way forever. For this reason, you'd better be armed with some real-life examples of how your vision improved a company's prospects in the past. Did you implement a new marketing campaign because the old one wasn't working? Maybe you re-wrote the policies and procedures manual because the one from 2002 was no longer relevant.

Assertiveness

Anyone in a position of leadership is going to be forced to make decisions at some point. There's no avoiding it. Hiring managers will want to see evidence of this skill too. They will surely ask you about important decisions you made in the past. Not only that, they are going to want to know how you arrived at the decision and what the outcome was. Your ability to highlight your decision-making skills in a favorable light could be the deciding difference in whether you get the job or not.

Ability to Adapt

Even if your resume screams that you're the most qualified candidate for the job, you have to be able to adapt. After all, you're applying for a job at a new company where chances are the culture, values, and ways of doing things aren't what they were in your previous post. If your plan is to come in, clean house, and do things the way you've always done them, chances are you won't get the job. On the other hand, if you can demonstrate that your eager to learn, listen, implement necessary changes and receive input from all sides, you'll quickly set yourself apart from other candidates.

Influence

When the word influence comes to mind, you probably think about the ability to get others to do what you want. While this is certainly a large part of it, how you go about influencing others is important too. Sure, you can influence people through fear, intimidation and barking orders, but it probably won't last long as people will quit or fail to respect your authority. Conversely, if you're able to lead by example, portray confidence, keep a level-head and meet your subordinates on their level, your chances of being a successful leader are much greater.

[Effective leadership](#) is more important now than ever in the workplace. Without the right people in place to make decisions, the chances of an organization succeeding are slim to none. That's why hiring managers spare no expense in finding the perfect fit for each and every position of leadership. Even if you consider yourself a seasoned leader and have the track record to back it up, you're going to have to demonstrate all the necessary skills to do the job effectively. Before you step into that next interview, take a moment to give some of the qualities above some serious thought. Doing so will provide honest insight and just might be what puts you over the top.

If you are an experienced leader looking for a job in the [Life Sciences industries in the Bay Area](#), or an employer seeking a high-quality employee to fill a leadership position, contact me Jeff King at (541) 639-3501. I serve the [pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical device fields](#).