

Focus on Millennial Generation Needs

Understand how millennials work to optimize the workforce.

by *Kasey Brown*, associate editor

The millennial generation often gets a bad rap, being described as feeling entitled, lazy and self-absorbed. However, millennials will make up about 46% of the workforce, so it's good to understand more about them. Cassie Lapaseotes of Lapaseotes Feedyard, Bridgeport, Neb., explained some differences among generations and how to best handle millennials in the workforce to attendees of the Range Beef Cow Symposium, which had several events to attract millennial cattlemen to Colorado in November.

Lapaseotes highlighted a few general characteristics of each generation. Traditionalists, 70-90 years old, are known as the "greatest generation." They lived through World War II and the Great Depression, are fiscally conservative, loyal and respect authority.

Baby Boomers, 51-69 years old, eclipse the traditionalist generation by 17 million people. They grew up in a healthy postwar economy and are workaholics, top-down managers, micromanagers, enjoy systems in place and understand the big picture. Age-wise, the average rancher is a Baby Boomer, Lapaseotes noted.

Generation Xers, 35-50 years old, are independent, self-reliant, work to live (not live to work like Baby Boomers) and thus think of jobs just as jobs, want flexible schedules and have less respect for authority figures.

Millennials, 15-34 years old, are 80 million people strong. They possess a sense of entitlement and are diverse, confident and tech-savvy. They want to feel valued, are



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susceptible to change, are multi-taskers and are individualistic yet group-oriented.

"Change is difficult, but not changing is fatal," Lapaseotes shared. She listed millennial characteristics in the workforce.

- Millennials love a challenge and the opportunity to be creative to meet that challenge. They want to do things their own way on their own time.
- Millennials want quick feedback if they make mistakes.
- Millennials need to know the "why" behind tasks, and they want to feel valued.
- Millennials want immediate results.
- Millennials need praise. She added that "helicopter parents" were always quick with praise while millennials were growing up.

Fig. 1: How do I like knowledge transferred?

Traditionalists Observational and oral	Baby Boomers Observational and oral
Generation X Oral and written	Millennials Written and video

► Millennials are loyal to managers, not to a company.

"Agriculture is a traditional industry, and we're trying to fit a nontraditional generation in a traditional workplace," she noted.

She concluded by sharing optimal training methods for each generation. Traditionalists and baby boomers prefer observation and oral directions. Generation X prefers written and oral instructions. Millennials prefer written and video instructions. She gave the example that many millennials will learn new things by watching YouTube videos to figure something out.

Editor's Note: This summary is part of the Angus Journal's online coverage of the 2015 Range Beef Cow Symposium hosted Nov. 17-19, 2015, in Loveland, Colo. For additional coverage, to review this presentation's PowerPoint or to listen to the presentation, visit the Newsroom at www.rangebeefcow.com. The Angus Journal's coverage of the event is made possible through collaboration with the event committee and sponsorship of LiveAuctions.tv.

80-million strong
Most diverse
Confident
Tech-savvy
Multi-taskers
Self-centered
Individualistic
Group-oriented
Don't expect to pay their dues
Want to be valued
Susceptible to change
Youngest in workforce
Entitled

Generation Y — Millennials