# 7 Tips for Resonating With Millennial Employees & Their Desire to Do Good

By Kaitlin Carpenter, Carousel30 and Sarah Ford, America's Charities

# 1. Share Your Cause Work During the Hiring Process

"More than 50% of Millennials were influenced to accept a job based on that company's involvement with causes." *– 2014 Millennial Impact Study*



Good news for your company: when Millennials initially apply for jobs, they're focused on what your company does, sells, and what salary/benefits you offer.

But **when it comes to deciding between accepting a job with your company or with your competitors, cause work matters.** So make sure you share your company's community involvement with prospective employees. It could make or break the deal!

In the 2014 Millennial Impact Study, of the Millennials who heard about cause work in the interview, 55% of them said the company's involvement with causes helped persuade them to take the job. *(Only 39% of Millennials said the company discussed cause work during the interview process.)*

Once they choose you, make sure you initiate new employees into cause work throughout the onboarding and orientation process. Don't wait a year after they're hired before giving them the chance to participate.

# 2. Be Authentic

"One of the top motivations for Millennials to stay with their current company for a long time was belief in the company's mission and purpose."
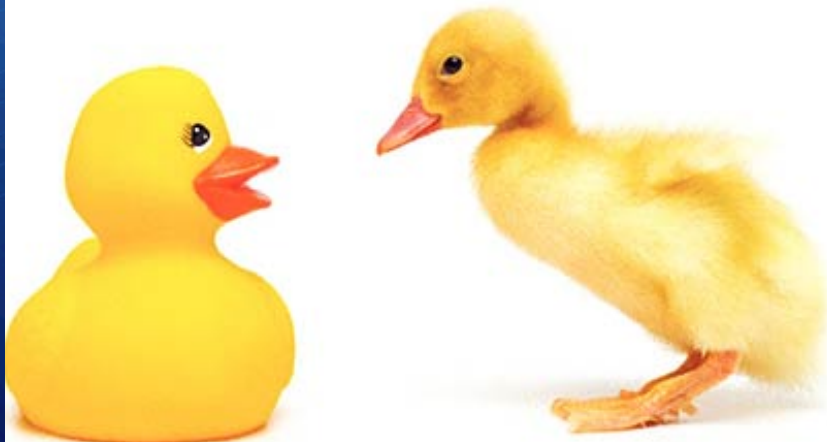*— 2014 Millennial Impact Study*

Engender the Millennial spirit throughout your company culture and values.

Millennials expect companies to help out the community, and to be genuinely compassionate, trustworthy and ethical. They will see right through you if your company is doing good work just to say your company does good work.

Cause work shouldn't just be part of what the HR or CSR department does either. **Companies that are most successful at hiring and engaging with Millennials have made cause work part of the company's DNA.**

Take a look at Panera Cares, a pay-what-you-can cafe model, or Harry's which gives a percentage of their sales and at least 1% of their time to organizations that prepare people for personal and professional success. Not only do the employees at these companies share the company missions and get to be involved in putting company values into action, but those values are embedded in each company's products, services and beliefs.

# 3. Involve Employees

Building networks and professional skills, and being involved in your company's work is important to Millennials.  According to the 2014 Millennial Impact Study, "They are more likely to stay at your company when they perceive their talents and passions are being used and fulfilled."

But before Millennials commit to your organization's projects and cause work, they need to internalize it and rationalize their own involvement.  That's why it's essential that you empower this generation and give them a vehicle to feel a sense of ownership.

**To involve this group and get them onboard with your initiatives, help them do good things.**
- Give them leadership roles in your cause work initiatives to help develop their skills and encourage them to fulfill their individual passions by serving on advisory committees or providing pro bono services for causes important to them.
- Not only will this help them develop professionally (keeping your pool of talent strong), you can also use Millennials' passion and enthusiasm to inspire employees from older generations at your company to get more involved.



"More than half (53%) of respondents said having their passions and talents recognized and addressed is their top reason for remaining at their current company."
*– 2014 Millennial Impact Study*

# 4. Build an Environment that Empowers Millennials

No matter where they work, Millennials are influencing change. If you create the right environment, you can empower them to bring that passion to the workplace.

During the MCON14 conference, Jean Case shared that she is personally inspired by Millennials, and at the Case Foundation they actively seek to encourage Millennials in the workplace. Some of the ways you can create the same environment include:

"Research shows it: millennials work WITH causes, not FOR them."
*– Derrick Feldmann,*
http://mconideas.tumblr.com

**Embrace Millennials' passion:**
- Allow them to "bring the whole person" into the things they care about, whether that's donating time and skills, spearheading a corporate cause work project, or something entirely new.

**Foster inter-generational collaboration:**
- Foster open dialogues where everyone can contribute their perspective.
- Create a place for Millennials in places of leadership, such as having at least one board member or trustee be a Millennial.

**Give ownership:**
- Make Millennials ambassadors for cause work. If you enable them to support what they're passionate about, they'll share it both inside and outside the workplace.
- At the Case Foundation, employees are given the opportunity to create a business pitch for a cause the organization will support. This kind of project gives employees ownership of the giving process and allows them to determine where they'll have the most impact.

**Create a safe space for failure:**
- Case stressed that taking risks is necessary for change, but that means your organization needs to "Be Fearless" (a Case Foundation campaign).

# 5. Create Multiple Touch Points & Opportunities

When it comes to giving, you can't take a one-time, one-way, one-option approach with Millennials.

According to the 2014 Millennial Impact Study,
- 97% of Millennials prefer using their individual skills to help a cause,
- 78% of Millennials prefer performing cause work in groups vs. independently (and 62% prefer to volunteer with people in their department rather than people they don't work with daily),
- 87% of Millennial employees donated to a nonprofit organization in 2013,
- And although 87% of Millennials enjoy company-wide days of service [now], the longer an employee is at a company, the less they enjoy company-wide days of service and the more likely they are to give money through employee giving campaigns.

**Give Millennials a variety of ways to give, at multiple times throughout the year.** When they've been at your company for three years or more, expect their preferences for participating in your cause work to change. And when they do, have programs in place to accommodate those changes.

"Offer a range of cause work actions. Allow Millennial employees to perform both small actions from their desks, as well as larger projects with others, possibly off site."
*— 2014 Millennial Impact Study*

# 6. Use Technology Creatively

As we learned from the 2013 Millennial Impact Study, Millennials prefer to connect via technology. From information-gathering and sharing, to finding volunteer opportunities, to donating online, they use websites, search engines and social media. Leverage this preference by using technology to communicate with employees and facilitate participation in your company's cause work initiatives.

**Online Giving:** Make it easy for Millennials to donate to causes they care about, as well as to your company's cause, anytime and from anywhere (inside and outside of work) by offering a mobile-friendly online giving solution.

**Sharing & Connecting:** Use your intranet and employee newsletter to keep employees informed about your company's cause work, impact and individual giving opportunities. If social media isn't an option, use your intranet, newsletter, or staff meetings to let Millennials share their giving experience with peers.

**Efficiency:** Millennials don't like to feel like their time and talent is being wasted or underutilized. And while corporate day-of-giving events are welcomed by charities, many of them don't have the type of projects that require a large quantity of employees in one sitting.

- Partner with charities based on your company's and employees' cause interests. Give charities a go-to source throughout the year for smaller projects that require employees' skills.
- Tell employees when new skills-based opportunities arise. This real-time model will engage Millennials in truly meaningful work throughout the year and works in favor of charities, too. A good example of how this concept can be implemented is challenge.gov. You don't have to offer prizes, but you should include a description of the project, skills needed, the time period for the project, how much time would be expected of employees, and a way for employees to quickly and easily sign up.
- After employees do the work, show a little praise and share their story in your blog (like CH2M Hill does) to inspire other employees to participate.

# 7. Bring Your Cause Work Full Circle

Take a page out of the nonprofit industry's book - nonprofits know they need to show donors how their donations make a difference. The same principle is becoming increasingly important for corporate cause work.

Millennials are interested in outcomes, not just outputs. Rather than be told how much employees raised or the number of hours they volunteered, **they want to know the impact of their cause work and contributions.** This is easier to show if employees are on-site or physically volunteering, but what can companies do to show employees how their financial donations made an impact?

- **For corporate causes:** Bring in a representative from the charity being supported and have them talk to employees about how their money will be used.  After donations have been made and the charity's project or program is complete or in process, invite them back to show pictures  or videos and share stories of the impact of donations.

- **For individual employee causes:** When offering employees the chance to give at work, make sure you give them a way to connect with the charity(ies) they're supporting.  Most charities use a variation of their website, newsletter and social media to share impact, but having a donor's contact information is equally important. It allows the charity to personally thank employees and communicate more specifically the impact that employee's donation made.

Cause Work Impact

"Don't let employees assume the differences their volunteering and giving made; show them who benefited from these actions and highlight individuals who made a difference."

*– 2014 Millennial Impact Study*