

The New Face of Data Collection

It's not yet a rival to the Gallup Poll, but a new player is entering the field of polling data—Facebook.



Entering the workforce at an opportune time, Millennials might be the most studied generation in history. It may have less to do with how interesting they are and much more owing to retiring workers and fierce competition.

If you want to find out what Millennials think about development opportunities in the office, training officials need to locate their preferred hangouts. One consulting agency, Career Systems International, decided to do just that.

Millennials, individuals born between 1978 and 1990 or thereafter, do bring unique characteristics to the workplace but once they enter the office, their aspirations are indistinguishable from more seasoned peers.

"In terms of what excites them about their careers, they're not all that different," says Michael Stromes, director of talent management and research at Career Systems International.

Stromes based his analysis on a survey of 2,000 responses from users of the social networking site Facebook.com. Stromes wrote the questions for the survey, and an IT staff member posted the survey on the site. The questions covered various topics ranging from

their opinions on diversity to receiving feedback to career motivations.

The bridge between fun and work is much narrower for the millennials. Younger employees demonstrate a greater sense of self-awareness, specifically knowing what they can and cannot do. They welcome feedback not

as a way to invite criticism but simply as a spur to improvement.

"They have a fresh honesty about what they do not know," Stromes says.

Stromes, a member of the baby boomer generation, says this attitude contrasts sharply with younger peers. Stromes believes that the Millennial attention span is not as sharp as previous generations.

"My generation believed feedback was synonymous with failure," he says.

Millennials have been exposed to sophisticated technologies during most of their adult life and can not only learn the mechanics of most positions quickly, they can also suggest innovative ways to use technology. It is almost a stereotype that Millennials are multitask addicts, but Stromes believes they shift gears more quickly from one task to another than colleagues from earlier generations.

Millennials are probably the first generation in the workforce to embrace diversity and demand social responsibility in the workplace. Many of them look to participate in volunteer initiatives during work hours.

Michael Laff is senior associate editor for T+D; mlaff@astd.org.

Millennials at a Glance

Currently in workforce	32 million
In the pipeline	46 million
Amount that express doubt that their managers know what matters most to them in a job72%
Amount that plan to stay with their current organization for the next one to two years51%

When it comes to thinking about your career, what are the toughest issues to address?

"Knowing what I do best and what's important to me"	40%
"Knowing how I'm viewed by others in the workplace"	9%
"Understanding how workplace changes can affect me"	7%
"Zoning in on the 'right' career goals"	23%
"Getting the support resources I need to make it"	21%

Source: Career Systems International