

Becoming A Change Agent: Understanding the Millennial Mindset

ypo.org/2017/05/becoming-change-agent-understanding-millennial-mindset

Mary Sigmond

May 23,
2017

Can we inspire millennials to change the world? Or will millennials inspire us to change ourselves?

“The leader of the future must be prepared to answer these questions and get through to the next generation via unconventional means, using social media as a resource and changing mindsets to achieve greatness and motivate others,” says Jay Shetty. An award-winning online personality, host, filmmaker and former monk, Shetty’s viral wisdom videos on his [Facebook channel](#) have racked up more than 200 million views across social media and gained more than 1 million followers globally.

Shetty was invited by members of YPO’s [Thriving Communities](#), [Women’s YPO](#), and [Social Engagement](#) networks to talk about why he thinks millennials are getting a bad rap and how today’s business leaders can be the change agents in working with the next generation.

The millennial mind

In 2020, millennials will make up 75 percent of the workforce and yet, Shetty explains, today’s leaders don’t know what to expect from the next generation. By selling millennials short, leaders may be missing a tremendous opportunity to change history. “As a generation, today’s leaders experience something called ‘Juvenoya’ — anxiety and confusion of the unknown — about the next generation. We can either write off what we don’t understand or begin to understand the millennial mindset and work that to our advantage.”

Here are a few of the misperceptions Shetty points to about millennials and how they actually are “perception” rather than fact:

- Life is easy. Not so: The medium income for people ages 18-32 has decreased 14 percent in the past 13 years. So actually, millennials are not making the income their parents made at the same age.
- They are lazy. False: Millennials are the most entrepreneurial generation, creating two-times the number of businesses their parents did.
- Job hopping is the norm. Nope: Millennials actually stay with their first job three to six years. Gen X only stayed one year or less.
- They don’t earn real college degrees. Untrue: There are slightly more millennials earning STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) degrees than Gen X.

- Saving for retirement is not important. Yes it is: Millennials are actually saving earlier beginning at 23 years old compared to age 26 for Gen X and age 32 for baby boomers.

How can we stop selling the next generation short?

Shetty believes today's business leaders have the opportunity to change the pattern of history if they learn to utilize the quality of humility. "Leaders who are more humble and look to celebrate and grow what the next generation has to share will be better off and more successful."

Here are four mindsets you need to have to lead the millennial generation:

- **Adopt community thinking.** Community builds gratitude, positive thinking, humility and service in life. People who have a greater depth and breadth of a network are able to serve as a leader of a millennial better. This connection is where we begin to grow as a community and see someone's potential rather than working off of your own ego.
- **Think like a coach.** Understanding that everyone plays a different role. Work to people's strengths when building your teams.
- **Get the mindset of a child.** Look at everything with fresh eyes. Leaders have to get rid of habits and approach the new generation with fresh eyes as opposed as to how it was done in the past.
- **Become a coder.** Leaders have to adopt the ability to tackle complex problem solving, utilizing critical thinking and creativity with regards to their people management. Coders traditionally mesh and blur the lines between what is physical and what is possible.

"Leaders will only become change agents when they unlearn what they have learned and don't take perception as fact," says Shetty. He points to companies such as Netflix and Amazon that tuned into utilizing social media to monitor millennial's patterns and behaviors and then adapted their services to address millennials need for instantaneous gratification and getting things done quickly.

"If you can begin to think like these companies rather than 'assuming' or trying to change the patterns of behaviors, you can not only become successful by connecting with their mindset, but also build better teams of millennials in your organizations."