



# Corporate Social Responsibility is a Key in Attracting Millennials

A Lumesse White Paper

## Introduction: Why Millennials?

**They've been labeled the "me-me-me" generation for their so-called narcissism, the Peter Pan Generation for their inability or unwillingness to complete traditional rites of passage and grow up in a traditional way, and even the "Entitled Generation" because of their refusal to place weight on the notions of seniority and on-the-job experience.**

The Millennials (aka Generation Y) are stereotyped and maligned perhaps more unfairly than any generation that has preceded them. Some of this bad rap might be due to misunderstanding, as this generation may just be seeking different things than previous generations. It's a generation that isn't as concerned with traditional and corporate values as it is with the values that its members personally hold dear. Despite all the negative "selfie" dubbing, the Millennials could arguably be the most socially conscious group in existence.<sup>1</sup>

Overgeneralization on what this or any generation is or is not seems too easy to accept. As an HR organization, it is important to remind yourself that this generation has majority size, time and talent on its side, and recruiters need to understand what makes these individuals tick and how to appeal to them in a broad but genuine way.

The Millennial Generation – ages 16 to 29 (*Forbes*<sup>2</sup>), or born from 1980 to the early 2000s, according to a report in *The New York Times*<sup>3</sup> – is the largest (most populous) generation we've ever had: 86 million in the U.S. alone. As such, it is an enormous consumer market, and soon its members will comprise the largest fraction of the workforce. Millennials will account for 50% of the workforce by 2020, according to a study by The 2020 Workplace.<sup>4</sup>

The generation is tech-savvy, using social media and mobile applications, and its members are generally better out-of-the-gate coders than previous generations. They grew up on technology, are intrepid, and can figure technical challenges out without a lot of training.

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And just spend some time on social media and you'll witness how Millennials generally loathe authority, preach individual differences, and care more about what their friends might think than what their boss thinks. To land this job, and work for a company that reflects their values, many recent grads are even willing to take pay-cuts.<sup>5</sup>

Millennials like to donate and participate in social causes and a reported 61% are worried about the state of the world and feel personally responsible to make a difference. Ambitious in their ideals, they are not restricted by corporate constraints. Hence, with their tech-savviness, ambition to change the world and their refusal to be grounded by traditional lifestyles and rapid changes that some say are impossible, it's no small wonder why Silicon Valley and other high-tech regions and industries crave these young professionals.<sup>6</sup>

Still, for corporations, this large generation with all its potential talent and buying power has been tricky to figure out, tricky to sell to<sup>3</sup>, and to successfully recruit them nowadays you can't just tell them that this will be your job and this will be your pay. It is important to understand that from the Millennial perspective they are seeking a company with purpose beyond turning profit.

According to a recent Deloitte study, 63% of Millennials donate to charity, and likewise want their employer to have a sense of purpose beyond profit.<sup>7</sup> If that sense of purpose matches the Millennial's purpose then the relationship can last beyond the generation's typical year or two, and blossom into a relationship that is fruitful for both parties.

The oft-cited Cone Millennial Cause Study (2006) found that 80% of 13-25 year olds wanted to work for a socially responsible company, while more than half would refuse to work for a socially irresponsible company.<sup>8</sup> When you consider that Millennials will comprise more than half of the workforce in several years, this is a significant consideration.

For Millennials, social responsibility is the new religion.<sup>9</sup> Corporations looking to recruit the best talent from this generation, take heed: Corporate social responsibility is one of the keys to connecting and maintaining relationships with this generation.

This report discusses why corporate social responsibility is such an integral part of your modern talent acquisition, talent management, employee retention and corporate branding strategies. It also offers best practices for leveraging corporate social responsibility into hiring and exciting this most recent generation of talent.

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## **Corporate Social Responsibility is Key**

Corporate social responsibility is a business management practice that incorporates social and environmental concerns into regular business activities. It encompasses many objectives ranging from the ethical treatment of employees and members of the supply chain, to safe and healthy ingredients, to environmentally friendly / sustainable product manufacturing. Like with “organic” and “Earth friendly” movement standards, a socially responsible company would have to meet certain standards such as fair wages for employees, charitable donations, and transparent reporting. Other socially conscious issues important to Millennials include open-mindedness on diversity and lifestyle choices and the aforementioned passion to volunteer and make a difference.

As consumers, Millennials expect a high level of corporate social responsibility, and not meeting those expectations can be a major turnoff.<sup>2</sup> Companies need to build CSR brand to get Millennials to put faith in them, invest in them, and in order to attract top Millennial talent.<sup>10</sup>

And this goes beyond the initial hire and “honeymoon” period. Millennials might be just as likely to switch jobs as they are to switch brands as a consumer, so realistically do what you can to engage these Millennials in your virtual and real-world community. Continuously grow the pipeline with new connections. Listen to them.

A PricewaterhouseCoopers study called “Millennials at Work: Reshaping the Workplace,” reported that 88% of Millennials prefer companies that emphasize corporate social responsibility and 86% would consider leaving if their employer’s “CSR” no longer met their expectations.<sup>11</sup>

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## Strategy for Recruiting and Career Planning

Millennials value companies with purpose, socially conscious missions and that aim to improve the world in some way. Employers that want to entice Millennials should demonstrate their commitments to their local communities and beyond by getting involved with philanthropic activities, fundraisers, nonprofits, and the like.<sup>12</sup>

So how do you tap your own company's social responsibility and translate that into recruiting results with this generation that seems so difficult with which to "click"?

- **Wear your social conscience on your sleeve.** Make it visible on your career site, Facebook page, and website. Go social and help people to discover your company's social conscience.
- **Brand it.** Salesforce founder Marc Benioff with his 1/1/1 branding has spawned a Silicon Valley movement. Branding works.
- **Recruit using corporate social responsibility as a benefit** vs. just the job and salary.
- **Align, align, align.** Make sure your recruiting pitch and your employer brand-related social promise are aligned. Nothing raises the flag of skepticism with the socially aware candidate faster than incongruous messages.
- **Publicly advertise the charitable activities you do** and dedicate time for your employees to participate (companies such as Apple, Starbucks, Salesforce and HID Global offer employees dedicated free time for opportunities to stretch both their limbs and souls).

In summary, make corporate social responsibility part of everybody's job and market your company's "good" to customers and more.<sup>13</sup>

Just like Millennials, organizations should use the Internet and social media to tell their story and connect with Millennials, but not by using phony attempts at speaking the new generation's hip language, which can backfire.

LinkedIn's 2015 Talent Trends Report shows that 62% of Millennials visit a company's social media sites to get information about jobs.<sup>14</sup> It is vital to ensure you're not just presenting a façade online; practice what you're preaching on your website and social media. Your efforts must be authentic and ongoing and you must commit toward the social movements your organization believes in versus just cutting one-time checks.

**Your efforts should include on-campus alma mater recruiting and sponsored charity events, where you meet Millennial candidates in the flesh, the latter which demonstrates you and the candidate are both sincere and willing to stand up for the cause.**

You need to know not only where on the Web and social media to connect, but how. On Twitter and Instagram try your skills at vines and linking to other video clips. On your website and social media, present and express your culture with photos of people balancing work with fun, for example. And, of course, also represent individuals as part of a team making a difference.

**Learn how to use hashtags** and use them well, because this generation you wish to connect with grew up on Twitter where hashtags became popular.

But a reminder: It's more than online activities. Your efforts should include on-campus alma mater recruiting and sponsored charity events, where you meet Millennial candidates in the flesh, the latter which demonstrates you and the candidate are both sincere and willing to stand up for the cause.

**Table 1: Notable Corporate Social Responsibility Cultures**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Promoted Activity</b>
<b>General Electric</b>	Giving Back section on its Culture page. GE also has a section on Volunteerism and Philanthropy.
<b>TOMS Shoes</b>	Career page seeks employees who want to change lives and be heart of the movement.
<b>Starbucks</b>	Section on Starbucks website about social responsibility which goes into its foundations, community service, ethical sourcing and the environment.
<b>Ben and Jerry's</b>	Company's career site states its values and issues company cares about including a fair global economy, social justice, the environment and sustainable food systems.
<b>Whole Foods</b>	Consistent focus on social responsibilities. Company encourages its staff to be part of the local communities and causes.
<b>Deloitte</b>	Gives unlimited PTO for volunteering in a charitable organization.
<b>Nova Nordisk</b>	Gives 80 hours PTO to volunteer in a cause that has positive social impact.
<b>NuStar Energy</b>	Gives 60 hours PTO for volunteering.
<b>PCL Construction</b>	Gives 50 hours PTO and has an annual goal of 18 hours per employee.
<b>Verizon</b>	Gives 50 hours PTO plus employees that use the 50 hours can apply for a grant of \$750 to be donated to the organization of choice.
<b>Autodesk</b>	Allows up to 48 hours PTO for volunteering and encourages employees to use 4 hours per month. For every 10 hours volunteered, an employee receives a \$100 to give to the charity of their choice.
<b>Salesforce</b>	Offers 48 hours PTO for volunteering. The company leverages 1% of all employee time to help improve communities around the world. It also uses an app to track employee volunteering.
<b>NetApp</b>	Allows 40 hours per year to work at a non-profit or school.
<b>Stryker</b>	Offers 40 hours PTO for volunteering.
<b>Cadence Design Systems</b>	Gives 40 hours PTO for volunteering.
<b>VMWare</b>	Allows 40 hours PTO for volunteering and all employees are given \$100 donation to a charity of their choice.

## Conclusion

Millennials, which will make up the majority of the consumer market and workforce in the very near term, are a generation of people with characteristics largely different than the Baby Boomers and Generation X'ers who preceded them. To know them is to understand them and with a combination of genuine corporate social responsibility and social media presence you can connect with them in a meaningful way.

Modify your talent acquisition and talent management strategies to embrace corporate social responsibility vs. just job and salary. Think creatively about reward strategies and what motivates Millennials. For example, decide if it is time to shift focus from cash bonuses to other things.<sup>11</sup>

Don't fake it, and make sure that you infuse your company with corporate social responsibility that it becomes part of everybody's job. Don't expect to agree with everything you see the Millennials standing for, but be open-minded and find common ground. Market your company's "good" to the world.

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It's more than just about selling to this young generation. It's more of a long-term collaboration. These are the people who will mature not only into your future customers, but your company's employees and leaders.<sup>13</sup>

## Sources

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<sup>5</sup> Lucas Group: "Recruiting and Managing Millennials, 8 Tips on managing Generation Y from a successful HR recruiter," <http://www.lucasgroup.com/recruiting-and-managing-millennials/>

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<sup>7</sup> Deloitte Purpose Matters infographic <http://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/about-deloitte/articles/millennialsurvey.html>

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<sup>9</sup> Crain's Chicago Business: "Corporate social responsibility is millennials' new religion," <http://www.chicagobusiness.com/article/20140325/OPINION/140329895/corporate-social-responsibility-is-millennials-new-religion>

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<sup>11</sup> PricewaterhouseCoopers: "Millennials at Work: Reshaping the Workplace," <https://www.pwc.com/m1/en/services/consulting/documents/millennials-at-work.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Recruiter: "Tips for Attracting Millennial Talent to Your Sales Team," <https://www.recruiter.com/i/5-tips-for-attracting-millennial-talent-to-your-sales-team/>

<sup>13</sup> CSRwire: "The One Thing Your Company Has to Do to Recruit Millennials," <http://www.csrwire.com/blog/posts/1434-the-one-thing-your-company-has-to-do-to-recruit-millennials>

<sup>14</sup> "LinkedIn, TalentBlog: "Don't Knock Millennials Until You Try Their Recruiting Ideas," <https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/2015/06/dont-knock-millennials-until-you-try-their-recruiting-ideas?u=0>

## Learn More

Transforming a workforce into a highly motivated and functional team may be the most daunting task for managers. With a general consensus that only 25% of workers are engaged and productive, there is a long way to go.

Technology joins top-down commitment to execution and a pragmatic method of transformation as the formula for an engaged workforce. Fortunately, this is one of those times where technology truly does enable and support the overall mission.

Mining a wealth of knowledge gained with 2500 customers over fifteen years, Lumesse has created a platform that enables employee engagement through a simple concept: **The Empowered Employee**. It is core to the company's philosophy and extends on two important levers to create engagement: "self-service" and "self-determination".

### Self-Service

is the usability lever and is what employee solutions should be at every level in the organization. They should be available anytime and anywhere and as easy to use as common consumer applications.

### Self-Determination

is the behavioral lever, and the outcome of usable and useful employee tools. They enable the employee to take proactive actions to shape a career, develop new skills and raise performance. They enable an employee to consciously engage.

To throw the two levers and deliver a platform that truly empowers employees to engage and take charge of their careers, Lumesse created four priority themes to guide product development:

- **UI/UX** where the experience is consumer-like and encourages adoption
- **Mobility** to ensure anytime/anywhere access when employees want to engage
- **Analytics** to enable insights-driven employee development
- **Integration and Extendability** to ensure flexibility and agility

Learn more about Lumesse ETWeb empower talent management solutions at [lumesse.com](https://lumesse.com).

## About Lumesse

Lumesse provides Talent Solutions to more than 2,400 organisations in over 70 countries enabling them to engage and nurture the best talent in an ever-changing and demanding global environment. With our unique and highly adaptable Talent Solutions our customers are well prepared to capitalise on the fast evolution of new technologies and disruptive business conditions, making talent management their business advantage.

Lumesse Talent Solutions are optimised around customers' best practises and can be deployed in the cloud, hosted internally or externally. They are designed to meet all their global and local business requirements, giving them the edge in the race for talent, wherever they do business.

Each year, Lumesse Talent Solutions provide over 4.3 million performance plans, process more than 51 million job applications and fulfil more than one million vacancies, in addition to having delivered 100 million learning courses.

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