How to
Succeed
Leading a Millennial Team Member

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Introduction

The workforce of most organizations today potentially includes people from four different generations—people of different ages with very different ways of looking at things and very different expectations of the workplace, of their colleagues, and of you as their leader. So what’s new, you’ve always had a variety of ages and styles to contend with, haven’t you? Absolutely right! The cycle of people leaving the employment pool as they retire and new ones entering the workforce ensures the natural churn of age and experience in the majority of teams. What is new, however, is just how different the most recent generation to join the workforce, Generation Y, or the Millennial Generation, is when compared to the previous generations.

The Millennials are a much written about generation. The media has had a field day building stereotypes—depicting them, in many cases, as disrespectful, lazy, narcissistic job-hoppers with a sense of entitlement manifesting as arrogance. Whether these things are true of the individuals or not, Millennials are certainly a breed apart, and leading these youngest members of your team means taking a very different approach to leadership. It means trying something new, taking a leap of faith, having the courage to take some risks. All of those things, by definition, are not easy. The purpose of this book is to introduce you to the Millennials—to help you understand them, to guide you in leading them, to assist you in fully leveraging all that they have to offer as the newest additions to the workforce. You may already feel you know what makes a Millennial tick, in which case, feel free to skip our introduction and get straight to the competencies that will help you lead them. If your understanding is only stereotype-deep, then read on…
The flip side of all of this for you as a leader is that Millennials can be challenging and frustrating. They can try your patience. They can antagonize the rest of the team. And they’ll certainly keep you on your toes. To help you lead your Millennial team members effectively and fully leverage everything they have to offer, we have chosen to highlight seven specific competencies for you to focus on:

- Developing Direct Reports and Others
- Informing
- Managing and Measuring Work
- Confronting Direct Reports
- Managing Vision and Purpose
- Patience
- Personal Learning

While there are other competencies that could be included here, we chose these seven for particular reasons. First, they draw from a broad spectrum of leadership behaviors, and devoting time to these will ensure that you are not only prepared for the specific challenges of leading a Millennial team member but also suitably well-rounded and balanced in your approach. Second, four of these competencies rank low in actual skill level in the manager talent pool, namely, Developing Direct Reports and Others, Confronting Direct Reports, Managing Vision and Purpose, and Personal Learning. Therefore, not only will these skills contribute to your ongoing success in leading Millennials, they will also differentiate you from many of your peers. Incidentally, all seven of these competencies are in short supply at the executive level, so if you’re at that level leading Millennials, you can really set yourself apart by developing strength in these. If you’re at the manager level, what great preparation as part of your journey to an executive position!
GETTING THE MOST OUT OF THIS BOOK
This book is designed to be a practical resource to not only provide insight but also to give you energy and direction to follow through and build skill. Each chapter is set up to take you quickly to the information you need most and keep you moving along in your journey. The basic structure for each competency chapter contains the following elements:

- A brief introductory paragraph that frames what the competency is and why it is relevant to leading a Millennial team member.
- A set of bulleted statements that defines what it looks like when a manager skillfully performs the competency.
- A short, heads-up list of possible causes that can contribute to making this competency a challenge to develop.
- A quick “reality check” to enhance your self-awareness as you move forward into development.
- Full-length descriptions of up to 12 development remedies, many of which can be put into action immediately.
- Suggestions of situations that can be sought out in your current role (or possibly outside work) that provide good opportunities for practicing and developing the competency.
- A list of suggested readings—including books and articles—that can further enhance your understanding and development of the competency.
- A relevant quotation as a source of inspiration and insight.

While you can start putting the information and guidance in these pages to work immediately, we recommend getting your bearings first. One of the most important and beneficial things you can do at the start is to seek feedback from others. The more aware and accepting you are of your strengths and weaknesses and the gap between your current skill level and where you need to be, the more efficiently and effectively you can move forward.

Make sure to seek feedback from a broad spectrum of people at different levels and in diverse roles so you can get as complete a view as possible of how you are perceived. Select people who will give you honest, unvarnished feedback and not err on the side of being overly positive or
telling you what you want to hear. You can seek this feedback the old-fashioned way by going up to people and asking for it, but you might also want to engage your current boss and HR person about participating in a formal 360° feedback process.

Once you have gathered feedback and sorted through it, the next critical step is to prioritize and narrow your focus. Few, if any, of the competencies featured in this book are easy to develop, so working on more than a handful at a time (we recommend no more than three) can lead to an overly challenging effort that will result in diluted outcomes. Instead, try to focus first on those competencies that appear to be more within your reach and where you have sufficient opportunity to gain practice.

Envision what it will look like when you perform this competency the way you want to and how that can be measured and tracked. Be specific and don’t make the scope of your goal so large that it can’t be broken down into manageable chunks.

As you start along your developmental path, make sure you are seeking out and finding situations that provide you with sufficient opportunity to put your new skills into practice and try out new things. Hopefully, this can easily be found or created within the scope of your current role responsibilities or off-work activities, but in some cases you may have to be resourceful. Where appropriate, seek the involvement of your boss, colleagues, or friends to brainstorm and secure the situations that will provide an appropriate venue for learning and growth. You will find that if you make seeking feedback a regular habit and respond openly and graciously to what people have to tell you, then the feedback will more regularly come your way unsolicited. This is a very important benefit that can serve you well over the course of your career.

Now, take a deep breath and let’s get started. Whether you currently have Millennial team members or whether you’re reading this in anticipation of them joining you, you can be sure that working with people of this generation is stimulating, extremely interesting, and also developmental for you as a leader. Get it right and it can be a great deal of fun!
organization, usually in a succession planning process, and arranging for developmental events for each person. Start thinking of yourself as a coach or mentor. It’s your job to help your people grow.

2. **DO YOU KNOW THE CURRENT STATE? START WITH AN APPRAISAL.**

You can’t help anyone develop if you can’t or aren’t willing to fairly and accurately appraise people. Sound appraisal starts with the best picture of current strengths and weaknesses. Then you need to know what competencies are going to be necessary going forward. You can find this out by looking at a success profile for the next possible job or two for the person. If there are no formal success profiles, you can ask the Human Resources group for assistance or ask someone you know and trust currently in that next job what he/she uses to be successful.

3. **PROBLEMS GIVING FEEDBACK? LEARN THE GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK.**

People need continuous feedback from you and others to grow. Some tips about feedback:

- Arrange for them to get feedback from multiple people, including yourself, on what matters for success in their future jobs; arrange for your direct reports to get 360° feedback about every two years.
- Give them progressively stretching tasks that are first-time and different for them so that they can give themselves feedback as they go.
- If they have direct reports and peers, another technique to recommend is to ask their associates for comments on what they should stop doing, start doing, and keep doing to be more successful.
- You have to be willing to be straight with your people and give them accurate but balanced feedback. Give as much real-time feedback as you have time for. Most people are motivated by process feedback against agreed-upon goals for three reasons. First, it helps them adjust what they are doing along the way in time to better achieve the goal—they can make midcourse corrections. Second, it shows them what they are doing is important and that you’re there to help. Third, it’s not the “gotcha” game of negative and critical feedback after the fact. If there are negatives, they need to know the negatives as soon as possible.
- Set up a buddy system so people can get continuing feedback.
THINGS YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW

You don’t have to have a formal role as a manager to exercise your skill at Developing Direct Reports and Others. Seek out situations such as the ones described below to get more practice and build your skills in advance. Don’t limit yourself to the workplace. Look for opportunities in your life outside of work to utilize and develop this competency.

➜ Manage a temporary group of “green,” inexperienced people as their coach, teacher, guide, mentor, etc.
➜ Manage a group of low-competence or low-performing people through a task they couldn’t do by themselves.
➜ Manage a group of people where you are a towering expert and the people in the group are not.
➜ Manage a group of people involved in tackling a fix-it or turnaround project.
➜ Assemble a team of diverse people to accomplish a difficult task.

SUGGESTED READINGS

These readings can add to your understanding of Developing Direct Reports and Others and provide additional ideas for development.


Additional Resources

**OTHER TITLES IN THE CAREER ARCHITECT® EXPRESS SERIES**

**Bridging the Generation Gap: How to Succeed Leading a Multi-Generational Team** delivers relevant, research-based guidance in helping you understand the people you are working with, introduces you to the benefits and potential pitfalls of leading a multi-generational team, and provides you with practical tips on how to lead them effectively.

**HOW TO SUCCEED LEADING A MULTI-GENERATIONAL TEAM IS FOR:**
- Leaders aspiring to fully leverage the opportunities generational diversity presents or seeking advice for navigating the complexities generational diversity brings to the workforce
- HR professionals looking to meet the needs of employees at the right point in their careers – whether aspirational or guidance-driven – helping ensure employees’ success, driving higher levels of engagement, and increasing retention
- Coaches, mentors, and feedback givers

**Bridging the Generation Gap: How to Succeed Leading a Team As a Millennial** delivers relevant, research-based guidance to help you understand why leading as a Millennial may be a challenging transition and provides you with practical guidance on how to make a success of leading a team, while at the same time navigating the various hurdles that being a young leader brings with it.

**HOW TO SUCCEED LEADING A TEAM AS A MILLENNIAL IS FOR:**
- Leaders who are Millennials aspiring to fully leverage the opportunities generational diversity presents or seeking advice for navigating the complexities generational diversity brings to the workforce
- HR professionals looking to meet the needs of employees at the right point in their careers – whether aspirational or guidance-driven – helping ensure employees’ success, driving higher levels of engagement, and increasing retention
- Coaches, mentors, and feedback givers
SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

The most effective learners seek insight from multiple sources. In addition to all the material provided in How to Succeed Leading a Millennial Team Member, you can access the useful supplemental resources listed below. Investigate these resources to help you gain additional insight, increase your self-awareness, and enhance your success on your job and in your career. All resources listed below are available at http://store.lominger.com.

FYI™ for Insight: 21 Leadership Characteristics for Success and the 5 That Get You Fired starts individuals on a path toward improvement by building self-awareness. FYI™ for Insight is used to help individuals gain awareness, get to acceptance, and take action to improve performance. In addition, take a FREE online self-awareness assessment at http://insight.lominger.com.

FYI™ For Your Improvement 5th Edition provides a deeper dive into developmental remedies for competencies that comprise the leadership characteristics. It is also an easy-to-use development and coaching tool for learners, managers, mentors, coaches, and feedback givers.

Career Architect® Development Planner 5th Edition was created to help with deeper and more expert development initiatives. Each chapter provides the same development content as FYI™ For Your Improvement with four additional learning sections that focus on long-term experiential development.

Voices® Multi-Rater 360° Feedback System is a Web-enabled, competency-based, and research-validated 360° feedback tool that provides learners with a powerful tool for development and improvement.
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