



ARE YOU A VIABLE CANDIDATE

IN TODAY'S WORLD?

BY SCOT MCCARTHY

All of us need to look in the mirror occasionally and ask ourselves an important question—“*Would I hire me?*” Do I deliver on the organization’s expectations on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis?

According to a recent blog from Direct Recruiters Inc., companies expect us to: show initiative to drive business performance, continuously look for and implement changes that improve processes and results, promote and display a positive attitude driving a collaborative, team-oriented culture... and the list continues.

I imagine it’s easy for bloggers to rattle off behavioral expectations of an ideal workplace. As a baby boomer who has worked for 30+ years within companies—from the world’s largest conglomerate to Central Virginia nonprofits—I’ll propose that it is easier to meet those expectations when everyone in the workplace approaches their work in the same way—with the same views and the same ideas. *Believe me, I’ve learned enough over the years to know that’s not possible.*

Sometimes our age gap creates distance in the workplace. We hear a lot of less-than-positive descriptors of the younger generation these days: entitled, lazy, impatient, social media addicts... to name just a few. But let’s face it, baby boomers... when we entered the workforce, the Greatest Generation was thinking similar thoughts about us—perhaps just swapping out social media references for sex, drugs, and rock and roll—*happy 50th, Woodstock!* So, if those generational assumptions about adding value in the workplace were off-base in our early careers, perhaps we are off-base today as well.

If we expect to meet the expectations noted above, it’s critical that we get the best out of everyone in the workforce—especially from our millennials

(born ~1981 to 1997) and those that follow. According to Ryan Jenkins, author of *The Millennial Manual*:

- millennials have officially become the largest US and global generation numbering 76 million, with Generation Z adding another 50+ million.
- 63% of millennials have bachelor’s degrees making them the most educated generation ever—yet 66% of them expect to leave their organizations by the end of 2020 costing employers an average of \$15,000 to \$25,000 to replace each one.
- Life-long connectivity to the world’s information has shaped the values, behaviors and expectations of this generation into a heightened desire to learn and contribute. This generation grew up teaching mom and dad about technology.

If we don’t leverage a millennial’s unique talents, someone else will, and all we are left with is the turnover costs. Success in the marketplace is about gaining and sustaining an advantage over your competition and delivering products or services that are faster, better or more convenient. Our younger generations naturally think this way, having grown up in an ever-changing world. They download a digital room key for their hotel instead of checking in or avoid checkout lines thanks to “walk out” technology. As Jenkins says, “Become a student of millennials (and Gen Z) and be rewarded with important indicators of the future work... and the marketplace.”

But how do we lead this younger workforce that is so different from ourselves? How do we create an environment where they will be engaged, put forth solid effort and share the skills they bring to the table? A mentor of mine told me years ago... “We have 2 ears and 1 mouth... we should use them in that ratio.” Nancy Kline offers a few more gems in her book, *Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind*:

- Seek out and encourage diversity of thought and perspective—this provides a broader and deeper range of ideas for consideration. (78% of millennials were strongly influenced in their employer choice by how innovative a company was compared to others in the marketplace.)
- Equality and treating each other, no matter organizational position, as thinking peers—this provides for equal turns, attention and consideration. (72% of millennials whose managers provide accurate and consistent feedback find their jobs fulfilling.)
- Incisive questions—by removing our assumptions and opening our minds to different ideas, we provide a more accurate picture of today’s reality and increased possibilities for tomorrow’s world. (88% of millennials say feeling like they are truly valued as part of a thinking organization is more important than professional recognition.)

We generally leave it to those in leadership roles to set the culture in an organization—including driving expected behaviors such as showing initiative, collaboration, and continued learning. But that responsibility should not rest on the shoulders of formal leaders. We all need to display leadership by practicing the Kline components to create a more effective and engaging environment for every generation in our workforce.

So maybe the question is not, *would I hire me?* But, *would the younger generation hire me?* **IBB**

What’s your answer—and what do you want to do about it?

After a fulfilling 25-year career in companies ranging from the world’s largest conglomerate to local financial services and healthcare organizations, Scot McCarthy founded StyleWise Partners and has been consulting in the Workforce Enablement arena since 2015. StyleWise helps organizations determine the “how” for key roles and provides engaging development experiences that help you hire and groom your unique DNA behavioral-based competencies. For a free consultation contact Scot at scot.mccarthy@stylewisepartners.com or check out www.stylewisepartners.com.

