

THE GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS STUDY

The Relationship-Building
Challenges of Millennials,
Gen Xers, and Baby Boomers

ANDREW SOBEL
a d v i s o r s



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Survey 5

Relationship-Building Skills & Challenges 13

Intergenerational Challenges in the Workplace 21

Internal Relationships & Collaboration 37

Social Media & Professional Relationships 43

Engagement at Work 47

Mentoring & Retention of Millennials 53

Conclusions 57





SECTION I
THE SURVEY

The findings have profound implications for both professional development and the organizational culture firms need to build.

THE GLOBAL RELATIONSHIPS STUDY

Few would argue that trusted professional relationships are critical to success, and that strong relationship-building skills can differentiate you and make you especially valuable to your employer.

There are many well-trained professionals who can competently execute the work they are given. But far rarer are those individuals who combine deep expertise with the ability to build strong client relationships and a robust internal network of supportive peers and supervisors. The former is an interchangeable expert—we use the term “expert for hire”—while the latter is a versatile resource who is a critical asset to any organization.

Those who thrive at work in the 21st century, in short, will combine valuable subject-matter expertise with the relational skills needed to create deep, personal connections with others and develop a powerful network of trusted relationships—both internally and externally.

The challenge is that many factors are making it harder than ever to build these essential connections. In a drive to increase the value they get from outside suppliers, many companies use procurement to buy products and services, which can reduce the value of relationships.

Frequently, over-stressed and time-starved executives don't have the time to mentor younger professionals—or worse, they figure their Millennial employees will only stay a few years and so they don't want to invest in them. And—both in our experience and according to many senior executives we interviewed for this study—quite a few Millennials have not yet learned the core relationship-building skills needed to build these supportive networks. They have some skills that older generations lack, such as a facility with technology, but they are weak in other areas of face-to-face relationship building.

Against this backdrop, we designed and executed the Global Relationships Study to identify the relationship-building strengths and weaknesses, needs, and challenges of each generation of today's professionals: Millennials, Gen Xers, and Baby Boomers. The findings have profound implications for professional development and the organizational culture firms need to build.

THE CHALLENGES

In this global study, we set out to better understand how to address a set of critical challenges faced by both Millennials and their employers.

FOR MILLENNIALS

Learn essential relationship-building skills and develop the trusted stakeholder relationships they need in order to thrive in their careers. Build their success network:

Internally - with colleagues, supervisors, and mentors

Externally - with clients and customers, thought leaders, and other influencers

FOR COMPANIES

Foster the internal collaboration, across business units and functions, and across generational cohorts, that fuels great client relationships and spurs innovation.

Engage, retain, and develop Millennial employees, many of whom plan to leave within three years.





“

Getting our young professionals to collaborate better—allowing us to connect and integrate the many silos within our organization—will be the key to successfully serving and adding value to our key clients.

”

James Bardrick
CEO, Citibank UK

THE SURVEY AT A GLANCE

A total of 2,676 professionals participated in the study during the winter/spring of 2016. This report emphasizes the results from 2,192 participants from the for-profit sector.

SCOPE

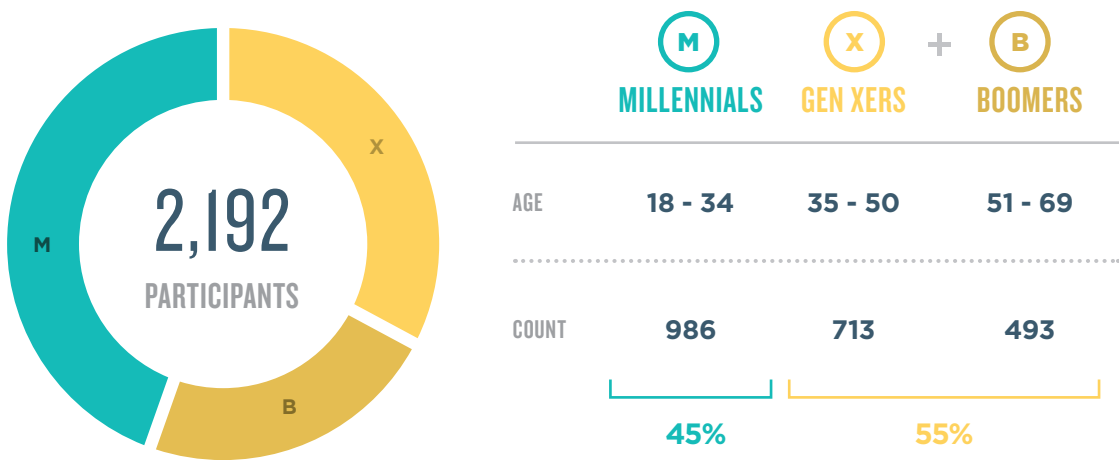
The majority of respondents came from companies and firms who asked their professionals to participate. As a result, we believe this data is rich and reliable, especially compared to surveys that rely on a self-selected group of paid survey-takers. That said, the respondent pool does over-represent higher-end service industries such as accounting, consulting, and banking.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Three specific generational groupings were used to frame comparisons.

- Millennials Born 1981-1997
- Gen Xers Born 1965-1980
- Baby Boomers Born 1946-1964

In general there were not significant differences between the responses of Gen Xers and Baby Boomers, and so we have usually combined these into a single group. Where we found no differences between generational cohorts, we have presented data for the entire sample.



Note: Ages are shown at the time of survey implementation

COUNTRIES

The majority of our survey participants (81%) live in the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand.

Other representative countries or regions included China and Europe. We did not find meaningful differences across countries, partly because beyond the five major responding countries (US, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand), which have strong commonalities, the sample sizes are small and the professional challenges are apparently relatively similar.

UNITED STATES/CANADA	57%
UNITED KINGDOM	12%
AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND	12%
CHINA	6%
NORTH/WEST/SOUTH EUROPE	4%
INDIA	3%
EASTERN EUROPE & RUSSIA	2%
ASIA	1%
AFRICA	1%
MEXICO/CENTRAL OR LATIN AMERICA	1%

SIZE OF EMPLOYER

Most survey participants work for medium-sized or large organizations. We did not break down the survey results by size of employer, as we didn't find large differences between large versus small organizations—for example, reported engagement levels for people who work for companies smaller than \$10 m in sales were the same as those for employees at billion-dollar corporations.

\$0 TO \$10 MILLION	16%
\$10 MILLION TO \$100 MILLION	18%
\$100 MILLION TO \$1 BILLION	15%
MORE THAN \$1 BILLION	26%
I DON'T KNOW	25%

INDUSTRIES

A large percentage of the respondents come from professional service firms, financial services companies, and other mid-sized to large corporations.

They represent a broad range of functions. Some of the job categories overlap, so the industry percentages are likely understated (i.e., someone who marked "Operations" could have also worked in Banking or Manufacturing).

ACCOUNTING	19%
CONSULTING	15%
OTHER	13%
SALES AND MARKETING	9%
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	9%
ADMINISTRATION	8%
OPERATIONS	6%
GENERAL MANAGEMENT	6%
HUMAN RESOURCES	4%
BANKING AND FINANCE	4%
HEALTHCARE	4%
ENTREPRENEURSHIP	2%
MANUFACTURING	1%





SECTION II

RELATIONSHIP- BUILDING SKILLS & CHALLENGES

THE RELATIONSHIP GAP

Everyone acknowledges the importance of trusted professional relationships.

How important are trusted professional relationships to your career success and job satisfaction?

% responding 'Extremely Important' or 'Very Important'

91% & **94%**
TO CAREER SUCCESS TO JOB SATISFACTION

But in contrast, only 30% of respondents are 'Very Satisfied' with their professional relationships.

Nearly all of our survey participants recognized how deeply important trusted professional relationships are to their career and job satisfaction.

There was no difference at all in the importance rankings that Millennials and older generations recorded for these two questions. Every age group acknowledged how essential these trusted relationships are.

Furthermore, 84% of Millennials and 90% of Xers and Boomers 'Strongly Agree' or 'Somewhat Agree' that having a strong relationship with a key individual has been important in their work or career.

However, there is a large gap between acknowledged importance and actual satisfaction. On average, only 30% of respondents said they were 'Very Satisfied' with the quality of their relationships. Another 41% said they were 'Somewhat Satisfied' with them—hardly a ringing endorsement.

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH THE QUALITY OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS?

	VERY	SOMEWHAT
COLLEAGUES AT WORK	38%	45%
YOUR CURRENT BOSS OR SUPERVISOR	39%	37%
SENIOR EXECUTIVES OR OTHER EXPERIENCED MANAGERS	25%	41%
MENTORS	30%	37%
THOUGHT LEADERS AND EXPERTS IN YOUR FIELD (OUTSIDE OF WORK)	19%	36%
CLIENTS & CUSTOMERS	28%	48%
AVERAGE	30%	41%

This disparity is probably partly due to the fact that our actual relationships may never quite match our ideal of what they should be. But there's more than just that.

Only

28%
OF MILLENNIALS

&

31%
OF XERS + BOOMERS

'Strongly Agree' they are able to make time to invest in building long-term professional relationships

When we ask participants in our workshops about this gap, we typically hear these reasons:

NOT A PRIORITY

Longer-term relationship building activities get squeezed out by short-term priorities

LACK OF DISCIPLINE

Relationship-building isn't a one-off event, and people don't engage in the daily and weekly disciplines required to create great relationships

LACK OF KNOWLEDGE

Some professionals simply don't have the right skills or exhibit the right behaviors

XERS AND BOOMERS ARE EVEN LESS POSITIVE THAN MILLENNIALS ABOUT GETTING COACHING AND MENTORING

At the beginning of the survey, we asked some baseline questions about professional relationships.

Not surprisingly, Xers and Boomers felt more strongly that older colleagues and supervisors respected their contributions.

The interesting result concerned mentoring and coaching, and this was a strong theme throughout the survey. Only 34% of Millennials ‘Strongly Agree’ that they had found experienced people to mentor and coach them (another 40% ‘Somewhat Agree’ that they had). In comparison, only 23% of Xers and Boomers said they ‘Strongly Agree’ that they had found mentors and coaches.

This tells us several things: First, many professionals are simply not getting strong mentoring and coaching support; and second, executives over the age of 34 feel even worse about the support that they are getting.

Employers need to help their Millennials build both internal and external networks. The lowest-rated statement was, “I am building a strong network with important contacts in my field of expertise.” While this may not seem essential—at least compared to other types of relationships—for today’s Millennials it is in fact very important. More than older generations, they view their current employment as one step in a long career. They want to know, “What are you doing to help build my skills, experience, and marketability – and my network?”

AREAS RATED LOWEST

We found the same pattern when we asked whether employers are helping people learn what they need to know to succeed at their job. 32% of Millennials ‘Strongly Agree’ with this statement, but only 24% of Xers and Boomers ‘Strongly Agree’.

Here’s a probable explanation for these results: Employers are not doing enough to help their young professionals learn what they need to succeed, but they are doing even less to help employees once they are over 34 years old.

% responding ‘Strongly Agree’	MILLENNIALS	XERS / BOOMERS
OLDER COLLEAGUES & SUPERVISORS AT MY CURRENT PLACE OF WORK RESPECT MY CONTRIBUTIONS	34%	42%
I HAVE FOUND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE IN MY COMPANY WHO ARE WILLING TO MENTOR OR COACH ME	34%	23%
MY EMPLOYER IS HELPING ME LEARN WHAT I NEED TO KNOW TO SUCCEED AT MY CURRENT JOB	32%	24%
I AM BUILDING A STRONG NETWORK WITH IMPORTANT CONTACTS IN MY FIELD OF EXPERTISE	25%	28%

Older professionals feel even worse off than Millennials in some key areas.

% of Respondents who are ‘Neutral’, ‘Disagree’, or ‘Strongly Disagree’



have an employer who is helping them learn what they need to know to succeed



found experienced people in the company who are willing to mentor or coach them

“

Just as an individual's power rises with the strength of her network (IWe), a company's power rises with the strength of its employees' networks. Value each person's network and her ability to tap it for intelligence; make it an explicit, acknowledged asset.

”

Reid Hoffman
Co-founder of LinkedIn



RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING SKILLS SELF-ASSESSMENT

Not surprisingly, our survey respondents generally rated themselves fairly high on a set of core relationship-building skills. We find this is not uncommon when we ask groups to self-assess. But in general we're not as good as we think we are! For some of these skills, many people are at the first stage of learning—"Unconscious Incompetence." In other words, they don't know what they don't know.

The lowest-rated (or least highly-rated) skills were asking good questions, developing rapport, resolving interpersonal conflicts, and influencing and persuading.

For every single skill—except one—Millennials rated themselves five to 10 points lower than Xers and Boomers. This makes sense—as people gain experience, mature, and grow older, one can argue their relational skills typically improve.

For "Being self-aware," however, 71% of Millennials rated their skill as 'Excellent' or 'Very Good', versus 67% of Xers and Boomers. We don't know whether Millennials are actually more self-aware than their older colleagues, or just think they are. (When you're 25, it's probably quite normal to feel you're a bit more savvy than your older peers).

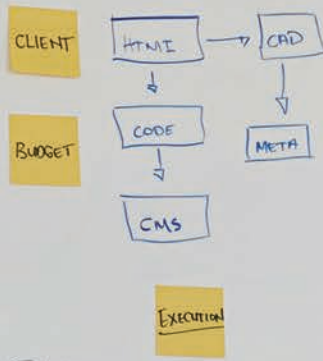
Those rating themselves 'Excellent' or 'Very Good' at relationship-building skills



LinkedIn co-founder and Silicon Valley entrepreneur Reid Hoffman has made helping his employees become more marketable a key retention strategy.

In fact, one of the appeals of leading organizations like McKinsey, Google, Apple, IBM, and many others is that working at them will increase your marketability. It's not just the name on your resume—it's the network of relationships you build, internally and externally, while you are there.

WEB PROCESS



- Spoke to
- CONTENT MANAGEMENT
- SYSTEMS & CODE
- ONLINE STRATEGY GOALS
- WRITTEN CODES (OPINIONS!)
- HTML PROGRAMMING
- GOALS & OBJECTIVES
- STRATEGIC WEB PRESENTS
- PROJECT SCOPE
- WIRE FRAMES & SITE ARCHITECTURE
- CREATIVE USER FONTS
- CMS PAGE PAGES
- CREATING VISUAL DATA & DESIGN
- ONLINE META DATA
- CORRECT KEYWORDS
- CORRECT ADD WORDS
- SOURCING COMPETITION

Man
 - 9am Check Email + Teams Join in group
 - 10am Print team

Files
 - 9:30 CLIENT PRESENTATION
 - 12:00 INFO SITE CALLS





SECTION III

INTERGENERATIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE WORKPLACE

CHALLENGES IN THE WORKPLACE

In our survey, we asked:

- Millennials about their challenges in working with older Xers and Boomers
- Millennials about their challenges in working with each other
- Xers and Boomers about their challenges in working with Millennials

The results are fascinating and indicate that both older and younger executives are often failing to meet the other's needs.

There are both misunderstandings and mismatched expectations. For example: 43% of Millennials say that “Earning the pay I deserve for the work I do” is ‘Always’ or ‘Frequently’ a challenge in working with Xers and Boomers. Yet, 34% of Xers and Boomers say that “Getting Millennials to deliver the on-the-job performance to merit the pay they want is ‘Always’ or ‘Frequently’ a challenge!” Who’s right?



MILLENNIALS

You won't pay me what I deserve, can't explain how I can get promoted, are lousy at coaching me, can't use technology properly, won't talk openly about important issues, and are disloyal to your employees!

You're entitled, can't take criticism, think you know everything, want constant promotions, ask me daily about your career, communicate poorly, and are disloyal to the firm!



XERS & BOOMERS

MILLENNIALS' CHALLENGES

WORKING WITH XERS AND BOOMERS

The top five challenges cited, that one-third or more Millennials said were 'Almost Always' or 'Frequently' a challenge, were:

1. EARNING THE PAY I DESERVE FOR THE WORK I DO.

It's quite possible today's Boomers perceived the same challenge when they were in their 20s and 30s. Yet, Millennials tell us that they face constant downward pressure on pay and a saturated job market, while working under older executives who seem to draw more than their fair share of the total compensation available to the organization. The message they hear, whether real or perceived, is, "You're dispensable."

2. HELPING ME SEE A CREDIBLE PATH TO PROMOTION AND CAREER.

Compared to their older colleagues, today's Millennials want far more specificity and granularity around their path to promotion and how they can succeed in their career. Hearing the old cliché "Work hard and keep your head down" during an annual review just doesn't cut it.

3. USING AND SHARING TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE OUR WORK MORE EFFICIENT.

This is not surprising: many professionals under the age of 35 are notably more adept than older generations at using technology to communicate, collaborate, and stay in touch. The counter-critique from Boomers, of course, is that they spend too much time staring at screens and not enough time building relationships with the people around them.

4. GETTING SPECIFIC COACHING FROM THEM TO IMPROVE MY PERFORMANCE.

The theme of inadequate coaching and mentoring runs throughout the Global Relationships Survey. When it comes to finding good coaches and mentors, the problems cited by younger professionals are legion. The criticisms include simply not getting adequate time and attention from supervisors and older executives who are themselves stressed and time-starved; a general lack of interest in them—perhaps based on a perception that they'll just leave in a year or two; and even outright territorialism and jealousy based on a fear that the older executive's job might be at risk.

5. BEING ABLE TO SPEAK OPENLY ABOUT WORK ISSUES.

Many Millennials told us that they find older executives unable or unwilling to discuss important workplace issues, preferring to push controversial topics under the table and ignore them.



MILLENNIALS' CHALLENGES IN WORKING WITH XERS AND BOOMERS

Those areas rated as 'Almost Always', 'Frequently', or 'Sometimes' a challenge by Millennials

EARNING THE PAY I DESERVE FOR THE WORK I DO	71%
HELPING ME SEE A CREDIBLE PATH TO PROMOTION & CAREER ADVANCEMENT	70%
GETTING THEM TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH ME	64%
GETTING SPECIFIC COACHING TO IMPROVE MY PERFORMANCE	64%
USING & SHARING TECHNOLOGY TO MAKE WORK MORE EFFICIENT	64%
GETTING DECISIONS MADE	63%
GETTING THEM TO GIVE ME IMPORTANT JOB RESPONSIBILITIES	63%
BEING ABLE TO SPEAK OPENLY ABOUT WORK ISSUES	62%
GAINING THEIR RESPECT	61%
GETTING HELP IN BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND/OR CLIENTS	59%
WORKING WITH THEM EFFECTIVELY AS A TEAM	56%
DEMONSTRATING TO THEM THAT I AM COMMITTED & LOYAL TO THE ORGANIZATION	49%

COMMENTS

Millennials told us that Xers and Boomers sometimes:

DON'T UNDERSTAND MILLENNIALS' DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS AND GOALS

"Getting them to embrace flexible working arrangements and to understand that I don't necessarily view my career path as linear...My definition of success includes being a well-rounded human being."

"Helping them understand that wanting to do something different at the firm does not mean that we don't value loyalty. We are often made to feel guilty about wanting to switch to a new group."

"They need to understand that Millennials want to work on meaningful projects."

CAN BE RIGID AND INFLEXIBLE

“There is a lot of resistance to change on the part of Boomers. They get bogged down in the ‘We’ve always done it this way’ mentality. It’s hard to effect change, because even if we create new documentation, they keep doing things the old way until they are disciplined for it!”

DO NOT PROVIDE STRONG MENTORING AND COACHING

“Many Boomers feel competitive and are reluctant to mentor us.”

“The ones you want mentoring from are too busy and won’t make time for a relationship.”

“It’s hard to get regular, constructive feedback.”

DON’T OFFER OR EXPLAIN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

“It’s hard to get a clear response about how to get promoted.”

“They don’t look at our potential and try to understand what drives us.”

SHOW GENDER, RACIAL, AND AGE BIASES

“I work with a lot of older men who are very challenged in working with young women.”

“They are very biased against young people and what they are capable of. They can’t conceptualize that a young ‘inexperienced,’ determined, well-connected, and eager-to-learn professional could come up with a solution apart from years of knowledge gathering.”

DON’T CULTIVATE AND ENCOURAGE RELATIONSHIPS

“It’s hard to connect with them on a personal level.”

“Managers and executives don’t support my development of other relationships in the organization.”

“We want to bring our ‘full selves’ to our work, and they don’t like that—there is none of the vulnerability that builds strong relationships.”

CAN’T USE TECHNOLOGY EFFECTIVELY

“They won’t engage with technology, instead passing it on to assistants and junior staff to ‘look after.’”

“Our older colleagues struggle with technology and adapting to new ways of doing things.”

WON’T INVOLVE YOUNGER PEOPLE OR CONNECT THEM TO THE BIG PICTURE

“It’s hard to get invited to client meetings and marketing events.”

“It’s a challenge to understand how our actions are linked to the strategic growth of the firm.”

MILLENNIALS WORKING WITH OTHER MILLENNIALS

We also asked Millennials about their challenges in working with each other. In fact, many younger Millennials in their early to mid-twenties have supervisors who are also in their demographic cohort.

While many of the issues were the same, one did stand out: “Getting specific coaching to improve my performance.” Many Millennials – perhaps not surprisingly – lack the experience and skills in giving employees helpful, constructive feedback.

This issue was also highly ranked as a challenge in working with Xers and Boomers, but it was number one for Millennials working with other Millennials.

Two other issues that were highly-rated problems in working with older generations—speaking openly about work issues and using technology effectively—were at the bottom of the list when it came to working with similar-aged colleagues. It appears young professionals don’t have a problem being candid with each other at work.

COMMENTS

Millennials thoughts on working with each other:

LACK OF COMMITMENT AND FOLLOW THROUGH

“Millennials are often excited about the challenges at hand, but are not prepared to invest the hours and work necessary to complete the project. They want everything now, and often don’t have the skill set to accomplish the task and rely too heavily on online resources for answers.”

“The main difficulties are a lack of motivation, inability to prioritize and juggle multiple tasks, failure to communicate when issues arise, or to set clear expectations around timing for delivery.”

UNREASONABLE CAREER AND PROMOTION EXPECTATIONS

“Managing their expectation on promotion and career development. A number of the ‘younger ones’ expect to be rapidly promoted, and sometimes it is unrealistic.”

“There is often a sense of entitlement to career development/promotion, but without having to put in the time or effort, amongst the younger staff.”

POOR PROFESSIONALISM

“Some of our graduates are immature and unprofessional at client sites.”

MILLENNIALS WORKING WITH OTHER MILLENNIALS VS. WITH XERS/BOOMERS

Millennials have some of the same problems working with other Millennials as they do with Xers and Boomers, but the relative importance is different. Millennials, for example, don't feel other Millennials are very good at giving feedback and coaching.

Rank is based on % saying it was 'Almost Always' or 'Frequently' a challenge

RANKED CHALLENGES: MILLENNIALS WORKING WITH MILLENNIALS VS. WITH XERS & BOOMERS	RANK	
	(M)	(X) (B)
GETTING SPECIFIC COACHING FROM THEM TO IMPROVE MY PERFORMANCE	1	4
EARNING THE PAY I DESERVE FOR THE WORK I DO	2	1
HELPING ME SEE A CREDIBLE PATH TO PROMOTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT	3	2
GETTING DECISIONS MADE	4	5
GETTING THEM TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH ME	5	5
GETTING HELP BUILDING STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND/OR CLIENTS	6	6

“I find it odd that when I work with younger Millennials, they never seem as if they have let anyone down when they mess up or get an incorrect answer. This is true even if it creates more work for others or creates an issue with the client.”

Millennial Survey Respondent

“A lot of times the response I get back when I let them know they have made a mistake is ‘Oh’. As opposed to, ‘Oh. I apologize for any inconvenience that may have caused the team or the client. What can I do to help in the future so that I learn from my mistake?’ There seems to be a lack of self-sufficiency, ability to deal with disappointment appropriately, and a lack of willingness to accept accountability that comes off as narcissistic.”

Millennial Survey Respondent



XERS AND BOOMERS' CHALLENGES

WORKING WITH MILLENNIALS

We asked Xers and Boomers about their challenges in working with younger Millennials. The executives felt strongly about the first three in particular—one third or more said these are almost always or frequently a challenge, with another third saying they are sometimes a challenge.

Those areas rated as 'Almost Always', 'Frequently', or 'Sometimes' a challenge

THE TOP CHALLENGES

GAINING THEIR COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY TO THE ORGANIZATION	70%
CONVINCING THEM THERE IS A CREDIBLE PATH TO PROMOTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT	68%
GETTING THEM TO DELIVER THE ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE TO MERIT THE PAY THEY WANT	67%
GETTING THEM TO MAKE DECISIONS	66%
GETTING THEM TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH ME	63%
GETTING THEM TO BUILD STRONG PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH COLLEAGUES AND/OR CLIENTS	62%

WORKING WITH MILLENNIALS

Xers and Boomers experience many frustrations with the Millennials they employ.

GAINING THEIR COMMITMENT AND LOYALTY TO THE ORGANIZATION

Many observers say that Millennials are not committed and loyal to their organizations. There is some truth to this view, but it is also true that organizations have not figured out how to fully engage Millennials and earn their loyalty. In our survey, for example, we found a very high correlation between strong mentoring and a much higher intent on the part of Millennials to stay with their current organization (more on this finding later). Millennials are also very project oriented, and sometimes view a term of employment with a company as revolving around a specific project or initiative—and when it's over, they move on to find the next interesting project—at another organization.

CONVINCING THEM THERE IS A CREDIBLE PATH TO PROMOTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT

This challenge is a fascinating one, because it is mirrored by the Millennials' assertion that Xers and Boomers aren't clearly communicating a credible path for their career development! Part of the disconnect is due to an expectations mismatch: Xers and (especially) Boomers grew up in a system of annual performance reviews where they would sit down once or perhaps twice a year to get feedback and advice. They also worked in more stable organizations, with well-defined career trajectories. Millennials face a very different and more unstable workplace. They are used to and demand frequent feedback about their performance. A full 42% of Millennials said this is 'Almost Always' or 'Frequently' a challenge, with another 28% saying it is 'Sometimes' a challenge.

PAY VS. ON-THE-JOB PERFORMANCE

The reality of this challenge undoubtedly has two sides. From the Xer/Boomer perspective, Millennials are somewhat entitled. They grew up being constantly praised and rewarded by their parents (ironically, the same Xers and Boomers who are now complaining!) and enjoying grade inflation at school and college.

Millennials, from their perspective, have in fact seen very low annual salary increases (albeit in a low-inflation environment). And, many of them have lived through relentless waves of cost-cutting. Complicating this debate is the fact that Millennials appear to value work-life balance more than, say, Baby Boomers, who relentlessly focused on professional achievement—even at the expense of their health and relationships.

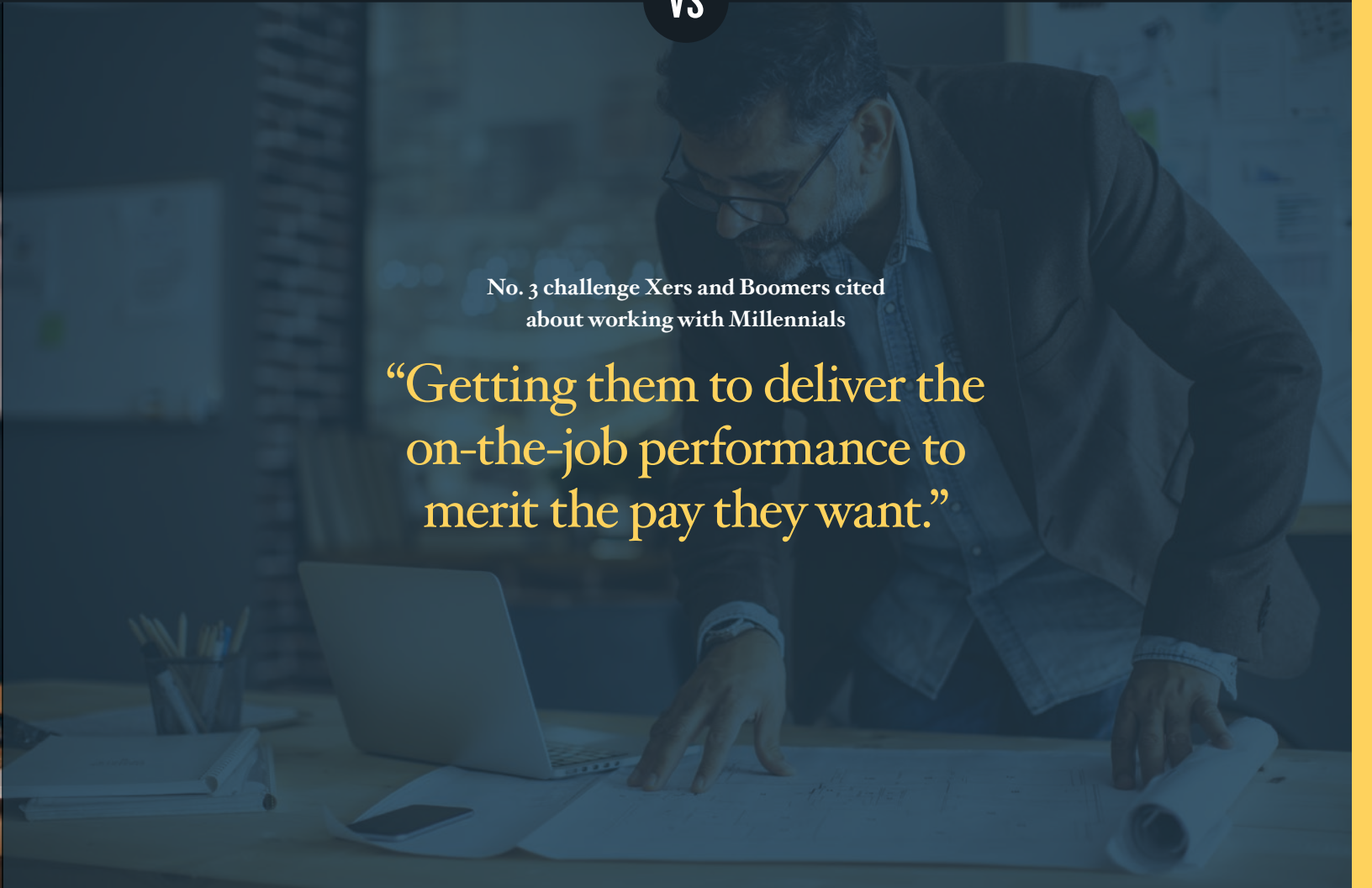


TWO SIDES OF THE SAME CHALLENGE

No. 1 challenge Millennials cited about working with Xers and Boomers

“Earning the pay I deserve for the work I do.”

VS



No. 3 challenge Xers and Boomers cited about working with Millennials

“Getting them to deliver the on-the-job performance to merit the pay they want.”




TWO SIDES OF THE SAME CHALLENGE

No. 2 challenge Millennials cited about
working with Xers and Boomers

“Helping me see a credible
path to promotion and
career advancement.”

VS



No. 2 challenge Xers and Boomers cited
about working with Millennials

“Convincing them there is a
credible path to promotion and
career advancement.”

COMMENTS

Xers and Boomers told us that Millennials sometimes:

HAVE INFLATED EXPECTATIONS AROUND PAY, PROMOTION, AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“They have a nine-to-five mentality with the expectation of exceptional performance reviews and commensurate rewards.”

“There is a sense that they are invaluable but do not have to meet the needs of the organization.”

“There is an attitude of entitlement. They want the rewards without having to do the hard work.”

“They don’t want to do less glamorous work, but sometimes it’s important to get the job done.”

SHOW A LACK OF OWNERSHIP

“They don’t take ownership of their work product. There is an attitude of ‘Someone else will take care of it.’”

“It’s hard to get them to work independently and with little guidance and instruction.”

ARE UNPROFESSIONAL AND LACK SELF-AWARENESS

“They lack professionalism, attention to detail, respect in their communications, and self-awareness.”

“They are too informal and use slang instead of communicating professionally.”

“They are chronically late, miss commitments, and don’t like the basic rules of professional interaction.”

WON’T MAKE LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS

“It’s difficult to gain their commitment and get them to see themselves as part of the long-term organization.”

ARE NOT WILLING LEARNERS

“They don’t feel they have anything to learn from older colleagues.”

“They are not open to feedback.”

“Getting them to understand that ‘admitting’ what they don’t know, don’t understand, or don’t have the skill set to accomplish is not a bad thing, but a learning opportunity.”

AVOID FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

“It’s hard to get them to understand the value of meeting with clients and building a relationship.”

“They avoid personal contact in favor of texting and email.”

“Technology has actually hindered their personal development and interpersonal skills.”





SECTION IV

INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS & COLLABORATION



“

None of the top-down, corporate initiatives that are aimed at improving teamwork and building internal relationships work very well at all. The one thing that does work is when managers and executives simply take an interest in you, get to know you, and help you out.

”

Millennial, age 28





COLLABORATION

Building strong internal relationships among employees and collaborating effectively is a major issue for both the employee and the institution.

As an individual professional, you succeed in large measure not just because of your own hard work and ability but by cultivating supportive networks with colleagues, supervisors, leaders at your firm, subject matter experts, and other key stakeholders.

From the company perspective, internal collaboration is not just important—it's utterly essential. Strong, supportive internal relationships increase the likelihood of employee retention. Organization-wide collaboration is also required to serve major client accounts effectively. Collaboration fuels innovation.

In the Global Relationships Survey, we asked Millennials to rate the effectiveness of 12 different types of activities that can help develop internal networks and increase collaboration. One practice in particular was rated vastly more effective than any of the others. It will seem obvious to you, but our survey also shows that many employers are not doing a very good job at it.

FOSTERING INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Internal collaboration is essential to reinforce corporate culture, spur motivation, and serve large clients.

% rating each effective activity 'Very Effective'

MILLENNIALS WEIGH IN ON EFFECTIVE PRACTICES TO PROMOTE INTERNAL COLLABORATION AND TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS



HIGHEST RATED

The highest rated practice was “Colleagues and supervisors who take the time to get to know me and help me.”

40% rated it ‘Very Effective’ and another 39% rated it ‘Somewhat Effective’. These results support a recurring theme in our survey, which is the desire for more mentoring and coaching from experienced colleagues and supervisors.

However, based on our interviews, young professionals are not asking for more top-down, formal programs but rather, they want a culture of mentoring. They want people to naturally take an interest in them, make introductions for them, and give them advice on how to excel at their job. For example, assigning mentors to Millennials can be effective (23% rated it ‘Very Effective’ and another 35% ‘Somewhat Effective’), but often these programs suffer from a lack of follow-through, mismatches between mentors and mentees, and a slightly forced quality to the interactions.

Informal social events, training and on-boarding programs, and working on a cross-functional team were also among the higher-rated practices. What surprised us was how poorly rated some other practices were.

LOWEST RATED

A number of practices and activities that common wisdom says are very helpful in encouraging collaboration were actually rated poorly. For example:

Using measurement and reward

In fact, there is little evidence that this fosters teamwork. People collaborate, fundamentally, not because they are paid money to do it but because they like and trust the individuals they are working with and share a common goal.

Technology

Over the last five years, collaboration technologies and platforms have been constantly talked about as the answer to seamless teamwork. Yet, both technology practices that we asked respondents about—the general use of technology and applications and also of specific web-based collaboration sites—were rated poorly. While all of our large clients have collaboration sites, their actual use seems very modest. Often, these sites lack a “center of gravity”—e.g., great content, the daily presence of senior leaders, etc.—that draws professionals in to use them on a regular basis.

Company-wide meetings

These are often thought of as key opportunities to build teamwork and trust, but they were not highly rated in our survey by Millennials. In our experience, some work well, while others are poorly designed. Interestingly, even fewer of Xers and Boomers (14%) rated company-wide meetings as ‘Very Effective’.





SECTION V

SOCIAL MEDIA & PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

SOCIAL MEDIA MISSES THE MARK

Millennials find Social Media more useful for building a broad network than for developing deep connections.

Just over 50% of Millennials said that Social Media was ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very Useful’ for building a broad network, but only 36% said that about its usefulness in “developing deep, trusted professional relationships.” Xers and Boomers, not surprisingly, rated Social Media even lower.

Put another way: More than half of our respondents—55%—said that Social Media was ‘Somewhat’, ‘Slightly’, or ‘Not at all Useful’ for building a broad professional network. And 66% overall said it was only somewhat, slightly or not at all useful for developing deep, trusted professional relationships.

There is no question that Social Media can help you broaden your network and stay in touch with people. And, it can help you get to know someone before you even meet face to face, thus accelerating the development of the relationship. However: there is a tendency of some people to confuse having Social Media connections, or having had someone “like” a post they made, with a real relationship.

Using social media to make connections

% responding ‘Extremely’ or ‘Very Useful’



find social media useful for building a broad, professional network



find social media useful for developing deep, trusted professional relationships

LINKEDIN SITS ON TOP

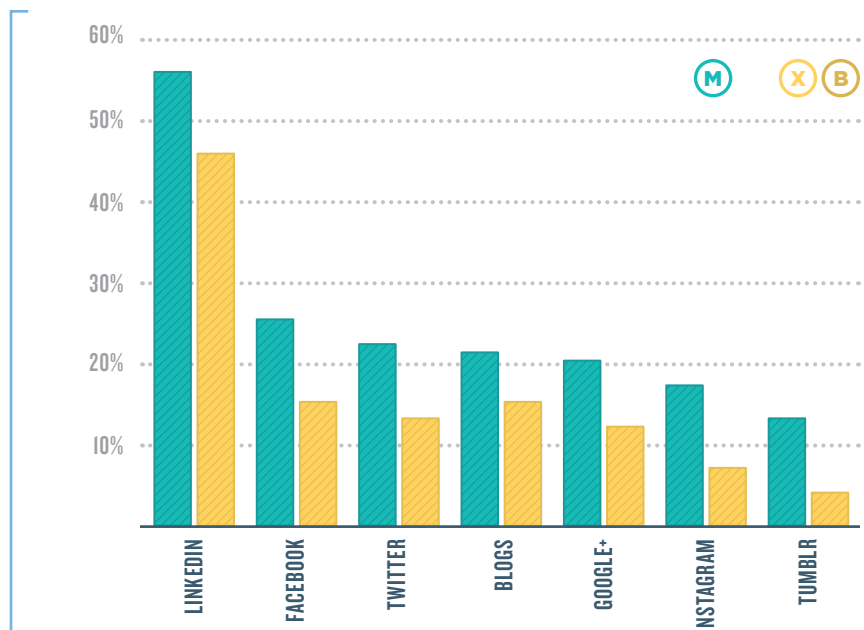
We asked survey participants to rate the usefulness of each major social media in building professional relationships. One and only one—LinkedIn—was highly valued. The rest were rated mainly as somewhat, slightly, or not at all useful.

Not surprisingly, Millennials consistently rated each social medium somewhat higher than did Xers and Boomers. Given the hoopla around social media, however, these results were somewhat surprising.

They show that all three generational cohorts—when pressed to actually rate each type of social media—are coldly realistic about how helpful it really is in developing relationships. Quite possibly, as Millennials mature and social media is used more in a business setting, these ratings may rise.

Social media can play an important role in building a network, but the trusted foundation for a real relationship must be built through shared experiences and face-to-face contact.

% rating each social medium as 'Extremely' or 'Very Useful' in Building Professional Relationships



To succeed at work and in life, you need a handful of strong, trusted relationships with individuals who will help you out, give you good advice, vouch for you, and recommend you to others—not hundreds or thousands of “connections” with people you have never met. Social media can play an important role in building a network, but the trusted foundation for a real relationship must be built through shared experiences and face-to-face contact.





SECTION VI

ENGAGEMENT AT WORK

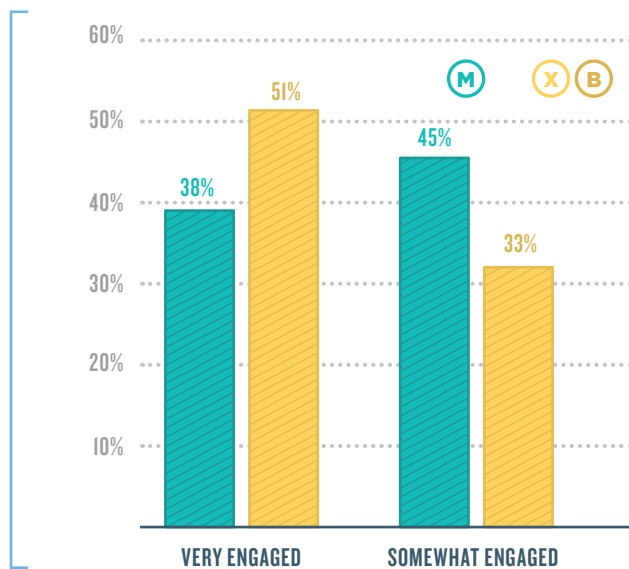
HIGH ENGAGEMENT RATES

Our survey respondents nearly all work at leading professional firms and corporations, and earn—for their age groups—high salaries. Consistent with these factors, they reported relatively high engagement levels.

We asked one simple question: “Overall, how engaged or disengaged do you feel at work?” Xers/Boomers, who have been at their jobs longer and overall earned higher compensation, not surprisingly rated their engagement as higher than Millennials.

On average, women’s ‘Very Engaged’ percentages were three points lower than those for men—for example, 39% of Millennial men said they were ‘Very Engaged’, versus 36% of Millennial women.

% rating their overall engagement at work



44%

OF MILLENNIALS plan to leave their employer within three years





In many surveys of Millennials, up to 60% say they plan to leave their employer within three years. Given the employment situation of most of our respondents—higher than average pay and working for well-run firms—this number was 44%. This is a high number, nonetheless, that many employers would like to bring down.

Even more worrisome, however, is the difference between how Millennial men and women answered this question. 50% of women, compared to 40% of men, say they plan to leave within three years. The women in our study are at much higher risk of leaving. We don't know exactly why this is true.

Other researchers have pointed to a variety of factors that make it tougher for women to thrive in organizations where most of the senior executives are still men and the flexibility of working conditions, while steadily improving, has a ways to go.

New research also shows, convincingly, that when men and women do the same work, the women's role is undervalued in terms of pay and recognition. So there are undoubtedly more "headwinds" in business organizations that can discourage women and may lead them to consider other options in greater numbers than their male counterparts.

% indicating they 'Expect to stay with their current employer for 3 years or less'

	 MEN	 WOMEN
 MILLENNIALS	40%	50%
 GEN-XERS + BOOMERS	30%	30%

KEEPING MILLENNIALS

Three of the top five factors that Millennials said would influence their desire to stay at their employer have to do with pay, promotion, and career/professional development.

Good mentoring also surfaces once again as being critical to engaging and retaining Millennials. And finally, work-life balance—consistent with many other studies—features prominently on the list of most important factors.

Again, there were differences between Millennial men and women in terms of how they answered this question. For example, the number one factor for women was “A direct supervisor/boss who believes in me and mentors me” (63% marking it ‘Extremely Important’), but this was only the number four factor for men (53% marking it ‘Extremely Important’).

% of Millennials rating each factor ‘Extremely Important’

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS FOR MILLENNIALS TO STAY

HAVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT	60%
A DIRECT SUPERVISOR/BOSS WHO BELIEVES IN ME AND MENTORS ME	58%
EARNING FAIR, COMPETITIVE PAY	58%
ABILITY TO ACHIEVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE	56%
MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS AND INTERESTS	49%

Rank based on % rating the factor ‘Extremely Important’

IMPORTANCE OF FACTORS

	FEMALE	MALE
A DIRECT SUPERVISOR/BOSS WHO BELIEVES IN ME AND MENTORS ME	1	4
ABILITY TO ACHIEVE WORK-LIFE BALANCE	2	3
HAVING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT	3	1
EARNING FAIR, COMPETITIVE PAY	4	2
MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO DEVELOP MY PROFESSIONAL SKILLS	5	5

WHAT MILLENNIALS SAID ABOUT HOW EMPLOYERS CAN INCREASE THEIR DESIRE TO STAY

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

“Provide more developmental opportunities for me to enhance my skills and experiences and prepare me for promotion.”

“More development, not just to get me promoted but to improve my skills.”

“Foster continuous learning.”

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

“A faster, more flexible promotion cycle.”

“Provide even greater flexibility in terms of how, when, and where I work.”

“Have flexibility to work on projects that interest me.”

MEANINGFUL WORK

“Make me feel like my work is important every day.”

“More day-to-day work that is meaningful, engaging, and rewarding.”

MENTORING

“Having a supervisor who really helps me grow professionally.”

“Give me access to great mentors and colleagues I respect.”

“Having a more caring attitude towards us.”

“Taking the time to converse with me about my goals and see how they can help me accomplish them.”

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

“Allow me to achieve greater work-life balance, while still being on track to get promoted.”





SECTION VII

MENTORING & RETENTION OF MILLENNIALS

INTENT TO STAY

On average, 44% of the Millennials in our study say they intend to leave their employer within three years.

If we analyze the data by those who strongly agree they have found experienced people to mentor and coach them—versus those who ‘Somewhat Agree’, are ‘Neutral’, ‘Somewhat Disagree’, or ‘Strongly Disagree’, the results are striking.

51% of those indicating weak mentorship plan to leave within three years, whereas only 28% of those indicating strong mentorship plan to leave in that same time period.

In addition, far more Millennials who report weak mentoring (19%) answered ‘I don’t know’ to this question, which is another sign of a lack of a clear and positive intent to stay.

% of Millennials who
‘Have found
experienced people
in their company
who are willing to
mentor and coach’

EFFECT OF MENTORING ON MILLENNIALS		INTEND TO LEAVE WITHIN 3 YRS	DON'T KNOW
STRONG MENTORING SCENARIO STRONGLY AGREE		28%	13%
WEAK MENTORING SCENARIO SOMEWHAT AGREE, NEUTRAL DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE		51%	19%

GOOD MENTORING AND COACHING IS ALSO CORRELATED WITH DRAMATICALLY HIGHER ENGAGEMENT SCORES

38% of Millennials report they are ‘Highly Engaged’, with another 45% saying they are ‘Somewhat Engaged’ at work. Again, when we compare the engagement levels of those perceiving strong versus weak mentorship, the results are striking.

Strong mentoring and coaching is correlated with a more than doubling of the ‘Highly Engaged’ scores for Millennials.

% of Millennials reporting they are ‘Highly Engaged’ at work

STRONG MENTORING SCENARIO

STRONGLY AGREE

58%

WEAK MENTORING SCENARIO

SOMEWHAT AGREE, NEUTRAL DISAGREE, STRONGLY DISAGREE

27%

THE COST OF EXCESS ATTRITION CAUSED BY POOR MENTORING AND COACHING IS VERY LARGE

There are many factors that influence an employee’s decision to stay or leave. However, both common sense and our survey data show that there is a very strong correlation between good mentoring and retention. Employees want to stay when they feel they are being looked after, cared about, and that the organization is taking the time to understand and facilitate their particular goals and development needs.

The total cost of both losing an employee and hiring a new one varies by position, but for college graduates in high-performance professional roles—which are the majority of our survey participants—some estimates put it at \$100,000.

If the stated intentions of the Millennials in our survey come to fruition, the cost of the “extra” attrition caused by anything less than good mentoring, for 1000 Millennials, would conservatively be over \$20,000,000 in three years.

This figure does nothing to capture the massive additional benefits that could accrue of higher productivity, increased innovation, better client and customer service, and a more positive organizational culture.

THE COST OF POOR MENTORING

	NO. OF EMPLOYEES	% REMAINING AFTER 3 YRS	TOTAL COST OF ATTRITION
STRONG MENTORING SCENARIO	1000	72%	\$28.0 M
WEAK MENTORING SCENARIO	1000	49%	\$51.0 M
EXCESS COST OF WEAK MENTORING			\$23.0 M





SECTION VIII

CONCLUSIONS

NEW AND DEEPER CONNECTIONS

If Millennials, Xers, and Boomers can bridge significant relational gaps, the impact on organizational culture, talent retention, innovation, and client relationships could be huge.

THERE IS A LARGE RELATIONSHIP GAP

There is a large relationship gap between the high perceived importance of trusted professional relationships and how satisfied people actually are with their relationships.

This is due to many factors, including: insufficient investment in building long-term relationships; a poor understanding of what it takes to create deep, trusted relationships; and a lack of the daily and weekly discipline that is required.

PROFESSIONALS OF ALL AGES WANT TO IMPROVE THEIR RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

Their highest priorities include:

- Influencing and persuading
- Listening
- Asking powerful questions
- Resolving relationship conflicts
- Developing rapport

THERE IS A SHORTFALL OF EFFECTIVE MENTORING AND COACHING

Millennials, Xers, and Boomers alike struggle to find willing and capable mentors in their organizations. This is a persistent theme throughout the Global Relationships Study.

Employers also fall short when it comes to helping employees learn what they need to know to succeed at their jobs, and in helping them build their external networks.

THERE ARE MAJOR GENERATIONAL CHALLENGES

Millennials and their older Xer and Boomer colleagues experience significant inter-generational workplace challenges. They still do not understand each other very well.

Many Millennials say Xers and Boomers don't understand their developmental needs, don't offer sufficient professional development opportunities, are inflexible, provide poor mentoring, don't connect them to the big picture at work, are not loyal to them, and don't encourage the development of internal relationships.

Many Xers and Boomers say Millennials have inflated expectations about career development and compensation, are unprofessional, lack self-awareness, have poor relationship-building skills, avoid face-to-face contact, won't make commitments, and aren't loyal.

TRADITIONAL APPROACHES TO PROMOTING INTERNAL COLLABORATION ARE NOT WORKING

The only strategy to promote internal collaboration and relationships that earned more than a 30% ‘Very Effective’ rating was “Colleagues and supervisors who take the time to get to know me and help me out.” All the rest earned low effectiveness ratings.

Collaboration technologies received unusually low effectiveness ratings: “Technologies to facilitate teamwork” and “Web-based collaboration sites” were ranked eighth and twelfth, respectively.

SOCIAL MEDIA IS OVER-HYPED AS A TOOL FOR RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Professionals from all generational cohorts acknowledge its limitations for creating real, trusted relationships, and rate LinkedIn as virtually the only meaningful platform for helping to build an extended network.

MILLENNIALS ARE LESS ENGAGED THAN XERS AND BOOMERS—BUT DON'T HAVE TO BE

On average, 38% of Millennials say they are ‘very engaged’ at work, versus 51% of Xers and Boomers. However, 58% of Millennials who report strong mentorship say they are ‘Very Engaged’ at work (versus 27% among those who don’t report strong mentorship).

MANY MILLENNIALS PLAN TO LEAVE THEIR EMPLOYER WITHIN THREE YEARS

42% of Millennials, versus 29% of Xers and Boomers, plan to stay with their employer for only three years or less (other studies show even higher percentages for intended Millennial attrition—up to 60%).

Millennial women are at even greater risk of leaving and have a 25% higher three-year intended attrition rate (50% versus 40% for Millennial men).

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MENTORING HAS THE POTENTIAL TO DRAMATICALLY DECREASE MILLENNIAL TURNOVER

Only 28% of Millennials reporting strong mentorship say they’ll leave within three years, versus 51% of all other Millennials. The factors that Millennials say would make them stay longer are:

- Having more opportunities for professional and career development
- Earning fair, competitive pay
- Better mentoring and coaching—having “a direct supervisor who believes in me and mentors me.” This is especially true for Millennial women.
- More meaningful work
- More work-life balance

Millennials,
Xers, and Boomers
need to develop
new strategies
and skills
to succeed together.

IMPLICATIONS

MILLENNIALS

Millennials need to improve their relationship-building skills and professionalism, in order to build better internal and external relationships with key stakeholders.

They are very adept at using social media and technology to connect with others and build large networks, but they need to develop their deeper relational skills, which are still essential in the workplace and in life.

XERS & BOOMERS

Xers and Boomers need to significantly improve individual mentoring and the career development paths for their young professionals.

This needs to be done less through formal programs than by creating a pervasive culture of mentorship that provides Millennials with the attention, care, support, and individualized career planning they crave.



ABOUT ANDREW SOBEL

Andrew Sobel is the leading authority on the strategies and skills required to build clients for life. He is the most widely published author in the world on this topic, having written eight acclaimed books on developing enduring business relationships. His bestselling books, which include *Clients for Life* and *Power Questions*, have sold over 250,000 copies and been translated into 19 languages. Andrew's consulting, training, and coaching programs have been delivered in 50 countries for over 200 of the world's most successful companies.

Andrew spent the first 14 years of his career with Gemini Consulting (formerly the MAC Group), where he became a Senior Vice President and Country Chief Executive Officer. He lived in Europe for over a decade and speaks four languages. For the last 20 years he has led his own international consulting firm, Andrew Sobel Advisors. He graduated from Middlebury College with honors and earned his MBA from Dartmouth's Tuck School. Andrew can be reached at AndrewSobel.com.

CONTACT

Andrew Sobel

Andrew Sobel Advisors, Inc.

Andrew@AndrewSobel.com

AndrewSobel.com

NEW YORK

229 W. 60th Street , No. 16P

New York, NY 10023

Tel: 212.706.1297

SANTA FE

10 Bishops Trail

Santa Fe, NM 87506

Tel: 505.982.0211

