

# Chapter 11

## Millennial Leadership Model

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### ABSTRACT

*Recent attention has been given to the attitudes, perceptions, and needs of the Millennial Generation both in the educational setting and the workforce. This chapter provides background and rationale for the development of a Millennial Leadership model benefitting teachers, administrators, and employers desiring to proactively address concerns attributed to individuals in the millennial generation, and positively influence their success. A brief overview of the past four generations events, both social and politically, that have shaped values and perspectives. Millennials at work and the effects of the economic recession on Millennials are also discussed. The chapter ends with a model for millennial leadership, which outlines clear expectations, open and respectful communication, consistent feedback, flexibility, involved decision-making and provided opportunities for growth.*

### INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to this chapter and disclaimer, it's important to recognize discussions on generations include broad generalizations and stereotypes that have been observed in the behaviors of people within different generations. These have been studied and explained according to shared formative experiences and cultural trends that differ over the course of time. Most of the shared experiences used in defining these generations are specific to people living in the United States at the time, and may not translate to other countries. It is always preferable to get to know people as individuals, recognizing that each individual is unique and may differ

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greatly from their peer group. Rhea Turteltaub, as quoted in Joslyn's article (2010) stated, "anytime we generalize about a group of people, we're probably missing an understanding of who they are as individuals" (p. 9). However, when interacting with large groups we do not know well, it may be helpful to begin by tailoring our approach to some generational expectations. This may require different behaviors and actions from what is a natural tendency based on personal life experiences. Additionally, it's important to stress that individuals only have the power to control themselves in order to improve communication abilities, leaders must examine themselves and consider making positive changes that will help interaction with others.

Until recently, most of the research and observations about the millennial generation have been reserved for the school environment between teachers and students (Carlson, 2005; Fisler & Foubert, 2006; Oblinger, 2003; Roberts, 2005; Skiba & Barton, 2006). However, as individuals in the millennial generation enter the workforce; more attention has been given to leadership in the work environment. Recently, in the *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, a junior faculty member published her reflections on experiences during the first three years of being a faculty member (Schuh, 2010). This article spawned quite a discussion about the needs of the millennial generation at work at a specific southern college (Petrelli, H., personal communications, June, 2010). Schuh's (2010) reflections as a junior faculty member included concern that she was assigned a mentor, yet the mentor never scheduled time to meet with her. Discussions about this article among faculty revealed differing expectations between older faculty of the Generation X and Baby Boomer populations and junior faculty members of the millennial generation (Petrelli, H., personal communications, June, 2010).

For example, it is the expectation of older faculty that junior members should take the initiative to schedule appointments and seek guidance from their mentor when needed. Furthermore, older faculty have the expectation that junior members recognize the unique roles of life in academe including working autonomously with little to no supervision, handling multiple priorities simultaneously, and utilizing effective judgment and problem-solving skills. Conversely, it is the expectation of junior faculty that clear, ongoing guidance is provided every step of the way with strong training programs (Ferri-Reed, 2010; Phillips & Torres, 2008). To the older generations, this is likened to "spoon-feeding" and to the younger generation it is simply a lack of understanding of what is expected (Hollon, 2008; Warner, 2010). Ultimately, there is a choice when working with individuals of different generations: one can choose to continue to complain and expect others to automatically conform to expectations without guidance, or one can learn about the needs of others and implement strategies that will eliminate confusion and anxiety and promote harmonious relationships. In the end, having students and employees perform well

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