

Top 5 Traits Millennials Share With Entrepreneurs

This is from Sue Hawkes - Sue and I went through EOS training together four years ago. Time flies!

Gene

Millennials get a bad rap, but are they really that different from any other generation of people?



When I stopped to think about the common millennial characteristics we hear about so often, I realized how many of those same traits are also prevalent among entrepreneurs. How we outwardly demonstrate these traits may look different, but at the core our values are shared. I believe this is an opportunity for tremendous results if managed from a place of shared values and effective communication.

Too often, we get bogged down by the way we've categorized others - in this case an entire generation. As a result, the differences become all we see. Let's begin instead from the common ground we share, while still acknowledging and appreciating the differences.

Only then will we begin to gracefully communicate through the tough stuff and fully realize the value we all bring to the table.

Common Characteristics

These are the top five attributes shared by millennials and entrepreneurs. Imagine beginning your exploration from one of these vantage points:

1. They desire to change the world: Both millennials and entrepreneurs are driven by a higher purpose. They want to change the world and are concerned about issues facing our communities and the planet as a whole. Because they have been globally connected their entire lives, millennials are aware of the challenges that need solutions. Like entrepreneurs, they are civic-oriented. They want to make a big dent in the universe and believe they have the ability to do so.
2. They want to design life on their terms: Millennials often get labeled as entitled for desiring to set their own hours, to have flexibility to work from home, and to be judged on results, not on the time spent doing their work. They do not believe in a clear distinction between work and home life, choosing instead to integrate the two. They bring their lives to work and their work back home to their lives. Entrepreneurs also function this way, wanting the freedom to make their own rules, set their own schedule, and create a career that fits the way they want to live their life. What entrepreneurs know that millennials may not yet realize is that this lifestyle is not easy. People who design their own life will often work longer and harder than people who choose a more traditional 8:00 am - 4:00 pm corporate career. Both groups do so willingly because they desire freedom - or the illusion of it!
3. They value relationships: The best business is done with those we know well, enjoy spending time with, like and trust. Millennials and entrepreneurs realize this, and often do business with friends or become friends with their clients. Again, there is no separation between "work colleagues" and "friends." Because the lines are blurred, doing business is easier. They also value the importance of relationships and enjoy investing in them. Most millennials and entrepreneurs place relationships above money or being right. Millennials are team-oriented and build relationships with colleagues; entrepreneurs are expert networkers and connectors of people and opportunities.
4. They don't accept the status quo: Neither millennials nor entrepreneurs enjoy following rules just for the sake of following rules, especially if they themselves didn't make the rules. They will ask why things are done the way they are, how things could be improved. They often challenge the existing structure if it doesn't make sense to them or move to innovate a new, better solution. Neither are satisfied with the status quo, and both dislike rules if they don't see the meaning behind them. Both groups are progressive thinkers, work to make things better, and see opportunities where others see obstacles.
5. They have an insatiable hunger to learn: Millennials are the most educated generation in history, and entrepreneurs are life-long learners. Both groups are eager to learn new things and master the skills that will help them improve and succeed. Appreciation for non-traditional learning is also common in both groups, whether it be through travel, self-teaching methods or apprenticeships. By continuously expanding their knowledge and skill set, millennials and entrepreneurs use new learning to innovate, create new opportunities, and grow.

Find Common Ground

Millennials and entrepreneurs share many traits. What's different, however, is the communication around them and how they are expressed in action. To work better together and capitalize on this common ground, it's important that we focus on our shared values, moving beyond generalizations and negative connotations of any group of people while remaining open and curious. We have more to gain by working together than we do by gathering frustration with how different we are.

How can we move from seeing the barriers between us to a place of common ground and opportunity? Begin with conversations; courageous, open-minded, open-ended conversations that expand what each person brings and maximizes that in concert with the others present.

The latest EOS book in the Traction Library, *What the Heck is EOS?* ends each chapter with questions that can be used to help start these important conversations between employees and their managers. This is how we begin to gracefully work through the tough stuff and drop our preconceived notions about others. We can change the world if we take the time to connect with each other and find common ground to begin the conversations.

Keep Moving!

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