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4 Ways Millennials and Nonprofits Are Perfect for Each Other

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Millennials have become the [largest generation](#) in the U.S. workforce, and employers that ignore the millennial influence do so at their own peril. Many millennials started their careers during the Great Recession, or during its repercussions, with huge [societal pressures](#): record-breaking amounts of student debt, a likelihood of earning less money than their parents, and a higher cost of living. Despite these obstacles, 60 percent of millennials want a sense of purpose in their work and 77 percent chose their job based on that desire, according to the [2015 Deloitte Millennial Survey](#). These factors create the perfect environment for nonprofits to attract, hire, and retain millennial workers; Nonprofits are starting to take notice. Below we make sense of some recent data that we think demonstrates four ways that millennials and nonprofits are perfect for each other.

Millennials Care

Millennials feel accountable and connected to the broader world and consider the workplace the primary environment for their impact. The [Deloitte Millennial Survey 2017](#) finds that within the smaller sphere of influence that the workplace offers, millennials can connect with their peers and those they serve more effectively. By

definition, charitable nonprofits are mission-driven organizations, and [one million-plus charitable nonprofits](#) in the United States give millennials the opportunity to explore the type of work that drives and inspires them. Working for the good of the broader world or local community fulfills millennials' desires to focus their energy and intellect on purposeful work. When working for a nonprofit, millennials can [feel their influence](#); seeing the fruits of their labors fuels their drive, that in turn helps their nonprofit employers achieve greater impact.

Millennials Want Flexibility

Work-life balance and flexibility are so crucial that these factors are cited as among the [top five reasons](#) millennials leave a job (source: [Ernst & Young's Global Generations Research](#)). The bottom line is that millennials want more than just work; they want the ability to enjoy the world in which they feel connected and accountable. Millennials are shifting the societal and cultural norms away from a world in which their parent(s) worked nonstop, to one where they [value work-life balance](#) for two working adults. Millennials are almost [two times](#) more likely than their parents to have a spouse or partner also working full time. Unlike previous generations where one partner may have primarily tended the home, millennials look for flexibility to allow for time to care for personal and family responsibilities. The NonprofitHR [2016 Nonprofit Talent Survey](#) found that the top culture and engagement priority for the nonprofit sector was to improve organizational culture. Offering and encouraging flex time promotes a work culture of trust and support, according to a recent [Future of Work Report](#) done at Boston University. Ultimately, incorporating the flexibility millennials seek in order to meet the priorities of the organization benefits both employer and worker. What we're seeing is that millennials are paving the way so that work-life balance becomes not only a cultural norm, but also a shared value by both employers and employees.

Millennials Want Stability

Stability and flexibility are not mutually exclusive and can be used as complements to promote loyalty and trust. Contrary to some common misconceptions, millennials are no more likely to jump from job to job as previous generations were, nor are they disloyal to a stable workplace as long as they feel connected. Using U.S. Department of Labor data, the [Pew Research Center](#) compared millennials to their

older colleagues, Generation X (Gen X), and found that millennials are just as likely to stay at their current place of employment as Gen Xers were when they were the same age. College-educated millennials are even more likely to stay at their jobs longer than their Gen X counterparts. If nonprofits can shed this stereotyped misperception, and provide connectedness and flexibility, an unwavering dedication to the nonprofit's mission can provide a stable environment to engage and retain millennial workers.

Millennials Don't Like Labels

Nonprofits are required to be nonpartisan, a condition that both encourages public trust in the sector and promotes comfort to millennials who do not want to be labeled as part of a specific political party. Charitable nonprofits are prohibited from electioneering and partisan political activities under the [tax code](#), which protects the nonprofit sector from partisan politics. [The 2016 Millennial Impact Report](#) studied how the 2016 presidential election influenced millennials' attitudes and engagement in causes they believed in. The report found that millennials are breaking away from traditional institutions, such as political parties, as they engage in efforts to effect changes in society. They shed previously used titles and labels, not wanting to identify as "liberal" or "conservative," as to avoid being construed as confrontational, whether in real life or on social media. While millennials are actively engaged in causes they feel drawn to, regardless of the political landscape, they do so while bucking the word "activist." Instead of a bullhorn, they use their business cards to show their commitment. Nonprofits can leverage millennials' desire for a less divisive government, which is consistent with the role charitable nonprofits play to find solutions to social and other problems in a nonpartisan manner. Millennials could be among a nonprofit's most effective policy advocates!

The great news is that millennials may already be moving towards choosing their [employment and careers](#) within the nonprofit sector based on their engagement in causes they believe in and belief in their ability to impact the world around them. By exploiting their own unique structures and mission-driven DNA, nonprofits are perfectly situated to provide a work culture that gives millennials the flexibility and stability they need, and in return enjoy the benefits of committed employees who find a sense of purpose in the mission.

Resources

- [Ernst & Young's Global Generations Research](#) (Ernst & Young)
- [Millennials aren't job-hopping any faster than Generation X did](#) (Pew Research)
- [Are Nonprofits the New Go-To Choice for Altruistic Jobseekers?](#) (Governing)
- [The Benefits of Flexible Working Arrangements: A Future of Work Report](#)
(Boston University)