

THE MILLENNIAL MERGER

HOW TO SELL, MANAGE, EMPATHIZE AND
COMMUNICATE IN A MULTI-GENERATIONAL WORKFORCE



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■ Introduction

Millennials: love ‘em, hate ‘em, idolize or demonize them it doesn’t matter; you simply can’t ignore them. We’ve already transformed life as we know it and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. There’s some who cringe at the very thought, but this book is about embracing and leveraging that transformation.

The millennial generation (commonly referred to as Generation Y) is the group of individuals born between (approximately) 1980-2000 who ushered in the age of technology. They’re sandwiched between Generation X, and Generation Z, who have their own unique perspectives about the world around them. Some researchers are even stating that there’s a “micro-generation” called Xennial’s who are born between 1977 and 1983. But, instead of focusing on specific birth dates, we’re going to focus on psychological frameworks that are used by the different generations.

For better or for worse, millennials were the first to have computers as a cornerstone of their primary and secondary education. Generations not even born yet will read this book and look at millennials as the generation that buffered society from “the good ol’ days” to “the new age. “With this new age of technology, a new way of thinking has evolved. This book is meant to outline the millennial ideology, which isn’t necessarily confined to birthdates as much as it’s tied to a way of thinking. The millennial philosophy affects politics, religion, business and communication as we know it. The following chapters will give insight to these shifts that have already changed the world.

We live in a society that’s obsessed with transformation. Companies that have been in business throughout multiple generations are no better or worse off than a startup today. Changing times call for changing measures 21st century

business is drastically different than the 'best practices' promoted in the 1900's. The playing field is as level as it's ever been, and it's all because of the rise of technology and the generation that's lived through it. Many big businesses think, *it's absurd to think that a generation will control how we do business*. Those companies are sadly mistaken.

If companies do not change and adapt to many of the new generations ideologies, failure will be a safe bet.

Some companies will adapt and thrive, and I hope that these insights help propel those organizations to new heights.

What *was*, what *is* and what *will be* are three different stories. Ever heard of the saying, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always gotten?" That statement doesn't necessarily hold true in this ever-changing economy.

Millennials don't adhere well to traditions. Just because it's always been done one way, doesn't mean it should still be done that way. Traditions are rules written by the ones before us. Although some traditions prove to be enlightening, there are those that only hold us back.

The path to success is based around our belief systems. And traditions within cultures create social constructs about what life should be – based on what was. What has proven to be successful in this modern era is the ability to change the beliefs that no longer serve us – to completely unleash from all social constructs and limitations in our lives. What we were told to believe, and what we need to believe to become successful may be two different stories. Most of our beliefs were installed into our brains when we were too young to make the choice for ourselves. We aren't born with political, religious, or corporate interests. Those beliefs were bestowed upon us by those who felt they were properly equipping us for the future. But, as we move forward, it's important we take a hard look at our beliefs to determine which ones drive us forward, which ones hold us back, and which ones fit into this modern world. We often forget that our perception shapes our reality. In this ever-changing

world, it's important we adopt an open perspective to truly understand and appreciate the ideologies of others. We can only challenge our perspective of society by seeking to understand how others view the world. It's only then that we can determine whether their ideology is a perspective worth adopting.

This book was written to help *anyone* adopt the millennial mindset. As previously mentioned, this is an ideology; a new way of thinking. If you're looking to sell to, market to, manage, empower, communicate or befriend a millennial, it's important that you empathize with who we are and what we stand for.

Just like generations before us, millennials think and act based upon biological nature, and how they've been nurtured throughout life. There have been significant events and advances within society that have shaped this ideology and how we interact with others. This book contains the foresight necessary to not just survive, but to thrive in a society that's always looking for "the next big thing."

At the core of the millennial ideology is the concept of individualism. All humans have the need to feel special. Millennials are looking to change the world for the better, and they don't like to be herded into generalizations that demean them. Judge a millennial for who they are as an individual, not what you may think of them as a group. You'll realize that behind every millennial is a unique story that makes us different. Understand those disparities and you're on the road to success.

The purpose of this book is to provide some insight as to how companies (and individuals) can plan and adapt for the changes millennials will cause. I can promise you now that you may not agree with all the statements in this book, and that's okay. I'm not here to impose my beliefs on you, but to shed some light on conversations that look different today than they did yesterday. As you read *The Millennial Merger*, think about how you will adjust your personal philosophy and embrace change. No ideology is perfect and there's

always room for improvement. Your perspective can help develop this way of thinking as it grows for years to come.

Generations (both present and future) all go through a “meeting of the minds” phase where collaboration feels unnatural. To improve your organization, *it's important to be able to understand this new age ideology, and empathize with the generation that helped segue society into the age of technological abundance.*

■ Change

In today's world, the only thing constant is change itself. Change is one of the most important parts of modern society it keeps the world on its toes. The millennial generation has welcomed change as part of societal growth and improvement. To fully embrace change, we must get comfortable with being uncomfortable. If we want to experience growth, we must become completely normalized with going outside of our comfort zone. How else can we expect to do more, be more, have more and achieve more? It all starts with that secret sauce called change!

Humans will always be fighting the double-edged sword between keeping consistent patterns and innovating new ones. Look, systems are great. They make us efficient, process-oriented and they create operational efficiencies (both personally and professionally). Implementing habits is how we attract success, but knowing when to change them is how we avoid failure. Challenging social norms from our past is what allows our society to thrive during times of change. Management techniques and company culture, as well as organized religion and politics have seen their traditions challenged to transform in the 21st century. What worked yesterday, what works today and what will work tomorrow are three things to be self-aware of at all times. Making the necessary changes in life is always a choice.

Every day we wake up, we make a choice a choice to live exactly as we did yesterday, or a choice to change and take a new action; a choice to let the external world dictate our internal world, or a choice to change and accept what we cannot control. The choices we make are based on the experiences we desire today, as well as our vision for brighter opportunities tomorrow.

Great executives don't just recognize opportunities, they create them. It's one of the most important characteristics of any successful company. To create opportunities in the 21st century, we must be willing to change. We can make a choice from the hand we've been dealt or we can develop a new opportunity to create a better hand. Millennials are always looking for ways to modernize the workplace, so organizations must make sure they're keeping up with the changing times.

Before we can implement change, we must become conscious of what needs changing. One of the most important steps we take in our lives is going from "not knowing what we don't know" to "knowing what we don't know." Some people face this step once a year, some once a week, some once a day and some once an hour. That curiosity to discover what we don't know will open the flood gates to change. But, the first step to change is discovering what we don't know.

Change can happen in an instant. Life is about constantly working to become the best version of ourselves at a specific moment. Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln these people stepped into the moment, and took *that* specific step forward. It wasn't the step they should have taken the day before, or the step they needed to take the day after. They made the decision in the moment to take the bull by the horns. The greatest leaders confront change, and become the light when there is darkness. In regard to change, timing is everything.

Millennials are always hearing older generations tell stories about their "decades of experience." The truth is that circumstances look a lot different today than they did even five years ago. Change is constant, and sometimes decades of experience can blind a company's leadership. Looking backward won't always give you the answers you need to move forward. Experience is only useful if it's used to give a means of perspective for actions to be taken today and tomorrow. For example, the Pew Research Center found that only 12% of young adults used social media in 2005. Just ten

years later, in 2015, the number of young adults using social media shot up to 90% (1). That statistic alone should give leaders insight to the actions they must take as our society becomes more technologically abundant.

The only thing in this world that *always* moves forward is time. Time only moves in one direction, and so should you. Moving back, looking back and stepping back will only give others the opportunity to step forward. Nostalgia is great on occasion, but don't be *that* person who's only living in the past.

I get it – taking that step forward takes bravery. Change isn't easy and that's why so few people do it. But all your fears will be eliminated once you take that step. All your inhibitions, all the little things in life that have stopped you – those things disappear when you step into the future. Companies will benefit from embracing and leveraging the changes that millennials seek. In 21st century business, the seven most dangerous words are: “because that's how it's always been done.”

Right now, you have the opportunity to take the next step in life. Whether you're 18 or 85 doesn't matter; the next step is what will give you the vitality to live another day. Taking the next step will put a smile on your face. And taking the next step will help you create the change you've always dreamed of.

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"I always thought
someone should do
something, until,
one day i realized i
was someone."

- John F. Kennedy



■ Differences

Contrary to popular belief, there are some similarities between millennials and our predecessors (I know, it's hard to believe). Millennials value having a successful marriage and being great parents (1). Personally, I can't see how any generation wouldn't value those things, but I've seen an increasing number of people who don't see themselves getting married and having kids. Since we value traveling and freedom, there's a segment of this generation that doesn't want what most Americans would consider a "traditional life." Although this isn't my line of thinking, I can empathize with the 21st century, free-spirited ideology.

Millennials, along with their elders, value helping others, especially those in need. I frequently tell others, "The most successful individuals are the ones who help the most people, no matter what your definition of success is!" People tend to think that's an oversimplification of a much more complicated issue, but it's not. Helping people will lead to a happy life full of relationships, money, fulfillment and opportunity. If you want to make a million dollars, start by helping a million people. No matter how you define success, helping people is the common denominator.

However, to completely empathize with the millennial generation, it's important to understand some of the key differentiating factors that have formed their new age ideology.

» Previous generations had a "leaning-back" type of attitude in the workplace, whereas millennials want to lean forward and engage in the experience. We want to participate! If you're not engaging a millennial, we're going to find an opportunity that's more enticing. This problem can be avoided by involving and allowing the millennial to participate in the decision-making process. If you include

millennials in the decision-making process, you're guaranteed to gain insight you would have never had otherwise.

» Previous generations were typically cliquish and judgmental, whereas millennials are inclusive and tolerant (2). The more seats at the table, the more opportunity there is for collaboration. Keeping conversations between executives is short-sighted and risky. If you implement a change that negatively impacts customers (or employees), you're shooting yourself in the foot. Creating a collaborative culture where all perspectives are valued will make a millennial feel at home, and prevent decisions that negatively impact customers and employees. Millennials embrace diversity, and we live lives of inclusion and equality.

» Previous generations were anti-corporate, whereas millennials believe in commerce with conscience. Corporations have a responsibility today to do things ethically, and in a way that benefits society, not just their bank accounts. The truth is, capitalism is evolving into an ideology that holds macro social, economic, and societal responsibility. Make your company more than just a profit and loss sheet – you're in business to make a positive impact on the world.

» Previous generations looked at parents as authority figures. Today, parents are friends and helpers. I hang out with my parents. They're cool, but in a completely nerdy way. I look to them for advice and they do the same to me. The tables are not uneven. Although they birthed me, my opinion means just as much as theirs. The authoritarian figures left the day I went to college. My parents are now people I confide in. Our relationship is now predicated on a friendship instead of a dictatorship.

» Previous generations had a period of their lives between dependence and independence that lasted a summer (between college and the real world). For millennials, this glory phase of life has been extended. We don't mind living with our parents and keeping our costs low. There was more pressure in the "good ol' days" to get out of your parents'

house and create a life on your own. This has caused older generations to look at millennials as weak because we don't have the fortitude to live away from home. Is that true? Or do we just have a completely different set of values and social constructs that guide our lives today? Rest assured, as the millennial generation ages, the glory phase will end and we'll become normal consumers of household goods and services.

» Previous generations are considered "digital immigrants." Millennials are considered "digital natives." The way our brains are wired is completely different (for better or for worse). Although research in brain development among millennials is new, some medical experts say that the brains of people in this generation are physically developing differently because of their almost constant interaction with technology (3). Older generations had to learn technology after their formative years, whereas technology is ingrained in a millennials DNA. Think about how much screen time a baby boomer had from the ages of 0-18 compared to a millennial. Our brains are evolving, and so are the ways we communicate and systematize activities in our day to day lives.

» Previous generations were led by mass media. Today, personal (or social) media reigns supreme. The opinions of influencers now travel far and wide across the world in a matter of seconds. The largest media company in the world (Facebook) doesn't produce any media; it's all user generated. This is giving people a voice and corruption an antagonist. Whether you do something good or bad, social media is bound to magnify your actions. Harmful actions are no longer swept under the rug because of modern media practices. Social Media is a digital footprint that holds people accountable

Boomers, you had the shooting of JFK and drug addicts. We have 9/11 and social media addicts. You can sit there and complain about how "different" millennials are, or you can use their perspective to make better decisions moving forward. The choice is yours.

These differences may seem miniscule, but they shaped us throughout our formative years. Millennials are no better or worse than any other generation before us. In conversations with elders I've found that every generation has expressed defiance toward the social norms that were imposed on them.

As times continue to change, millennials get more and more heat from older generations. James Franco once famously said that "They hate us cause they ain't us," but that's not the case here. The reality is that we're different, just like every generation that came before us. I think there's a sense of jealousy that's manifested into dislike, one formed from the idea that millennials have had everything handed to them, and that they have an abundance of opportunities surrounding them. Perhaps there's even a sense of jealousy that millennials have had it a little easier than other generations did during our childhood. Previous generations should be proud that they have been able to provide millennials with unprecedented opportunities. We thank you.

Boomers, when you were in high school, the main question you had was, "Where are all my friends and what are they doing?" And that's awesome! There was a very short phase of my life where I had the same question.

However, in the age of technology, that question is one social media post away from an answer. People in my generation are asking questions like, "How do I connect with more people like me? Or different than me?" Or maybe a question like, "How can I share more information to attract the talent, conversations, and customers that will help me grow and thrive for years to come?" Those questions were a lot harder to answer, "back in the day," but today, they're extremely applicable. Future generations may be asking completely different questions, and that's a good thing. The questions we're asking show how our society has advanced over time. Again, this doesn't make us better or worse than any other generation; just different.

As hard as this may be to believe, millennials are the new hot thing today. Eventually, we won't be.

Eventually, Generation Z will be the cool trendsetters and millennials will be giving today's youngsters flack on how "they have it easy." Technology has made all our lives easier, but it's also caused problems we couldn't fathom a decade ago. The truth is that every generation is supposed to be making it a little easier for the generation that follows them. That's social evolution. That's the progression of life.

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■ About the Author

Jesse Henry is on a journey to create global impact. He left the self-development industry for finance so that he could better leverage his business acumen and communication skills. Ever since high school, he aspired to sit at the intersection of the economy. Although he didn't know what the destination looked like, he set off in college to work with leaders across all industries.

Jesse graduated Florida State University with a degree in Entrepreneurship and Professional Sales. During his time at FSU, Jesse started up 2 companies and created 2 student organizations to catalyze the FSU entrepreneurial ecosystem. His speech at TEDx FSU is what propelled him toward a future of endless opportunity.

Jesse's career trajectory has not always been crystal clear. For years, Jesse struggled to align his passions and find the proper teams to work with. Many of the concepts in this book came about from his perceptions of operational inefficiencies throughout corporate America and the public sector.

Jesse's commitment to society transcends "impact" and "financial abundance." He has a vision of what the world can look like, and he's going to stop at nothing to make it happen.

If this book seems like it would be insightful, please go to www.Amazon.com and order a copy for yourself.