



Recruit this!

What the millennial generation doesn't like about your recruitment strategies and what you can do about it

When I graduated from A.S.U. in 1993, one of my business school professors gave me some job-hunting advice, “Beggars can’t be choosers. You are young and inexperienced. Take whatever you can get.”

Granted, at the time I received my professor’s sage advice, unemployment was sky high and the country was in the middle of a recession. Today, the advice seems comical. I can’t imagine the look on my millennial cousin’s face if I tried to tell her the same thing.

The recruiting and job hiring process has changed dramatically over the past 26 years. Unemployment is at an all-time low, creating a “buyer’s market” for job seekers. In a whitepaper produced by XpertHr, human resource professionals report “searching and finding solid job candidates as the biggest challenge this year.”¹

Unless you have been spending your time hanging out with Elon Musk, planning your escape to Mars, you have probably heard, read, or experienced working with the millennial generation.

The millennial generation is currently the largest generation in the workforce. According to the Pew Research Center, they represents 35 percent of the U.S. labor workforce.² They outnumber both baby boomers and Gen Xers.

It only makes sense that if HR professionals are looking for job candidates and the millennial generation is the largest generation in the workforce, smart recruiters are going to need to re-examine the way they are reaching out to this dynamic generation.

So, what is your organization doing to drive away millennial job seekers? And, what can you do about it?

Your social media doesn't tell me your story.

Millennials may look for job opportunities on your website, but they will look at your social media presence to learn more about your company’s

personality. Nearly 60 percent of job seekers rank the organization’s social media presence as the reason they accepted their job.³

Your social media should maximize the use of video to tell your organization’s story and connect with job seekers. Video content is 10 times more likely to be viewed than other types of content and 40 times more likely to be shared.⁴ Video is also a terrific way to creatively demonstrate to job seekers what your organization stands for and what the corporate culture is like.

SodaStream is a drink maker that allows consumers to create their own carbonated beverages at home. In a video recruiting campaign called “Join The Revolution,” SodaStream went looking for “Rainmakers.”

The recruitment video features CEO Daniel Birnbaum and actual SodaStream employees. The video does not mention job titles, candidate experience, or job qualifications. The video focuses on SodaStream’s mission to minimize single use plastic drink bottles.

According to Birnbaum, the video is a reflection of SodaStream’s DNA, showcasing the company and their people’s personality.⁵ (Plus, this author thinks the video is *hilarious!*)

The obvious drawback to creating a video like SodaStream’s is the financial investment. SodaStream’s video is professionally scripted, shot, and edited. In addition, along with actual employees, it features Hafþór Júlíus Björnsson, The Mountain from the hit HBO show *Game Of Thrones*.

Do not think your corporate videos require as much financial capital as SodaStream’s promotional film. Remember, job seekers are looking for an insider’s view into what it is really like to work at your company. A video, shot with your smart phone, can have just as much impact as a highly polished professional video.

Prestige Care, an assisted living, memory care, and post-acute care organization, posts Job of the Week videos. The videos are simply shot

with the company logo in the background and gives an overview of the available job openings.⁶

Starring Prestige Care’s director of Talent Acquisition, the video gets to the point, has no fluff, and provides the viewer with the right information. The viewer learns of the available job opening, the job location, awards the facility has received, and what makes the job *awesome!* The video lasts less than one minute and includes a link to click to apply. Most importantly, the video feels genuine and authentic.

If your HR department is camera shy and you are having a hard time finding someone willing to step in front of the camera, try capturing some of these moments on video and posting to your social media accounts: company parties, office tours, employee volunteer events, award ceremonies, customer testimonials, or current employee endorsements.

Your job posting may tout a “family-like atmosphere,” teamwork, or a virtuous corporate mission statement – but job seekers want proof. Utilizing video on social media can showcase the human side of your organization.

Your job application is like taking the ACT all over again.

When it comes to the job application, it is tempting to make it as long as possible. The more information the better, right?

It turns out that shorter job applications are more effective than lengthy ones. According to Appcast, completion of online job applications drops by almost 50 percent when an application has more than 50 questions.⁷ Additionally, talented applicants are not going to jump through a bunch of hoops to fill out your application if they feel they are wasting their time. If an application takes more than 15 minutes to complete, 30 percent of job applicants will simply skip filling out your application.⁸

Tuft & Needle is a mattress store with both brick and mortar stores and a strong online presence. Started by two millennial college roommates, T&N’s founders wanted to create a different type of mattress-buying experience.

Tuft & Needle’s job application consists of basic biographical questions such as name, email address, phone number, and allows the applicant to attach a cover letter and a résumé. The application also has two thought provoking questions, “Why do you want to work for Tuft & Needle?” and “Name two retail companies that you think lead the way in exceptional customer experiences and tell us why.”⁹ The application is

easy to fill out and focuses on information that would be useful to a hiring manager.

Applications often ask non-qualifiable questions that increase the time it takes to fill out the application and give the hiring manager little substantive information.

For example:

1. “Are you a good communicator?”

This is a ridiculous question because nobody is going to answer “no” –and once you communicate with the candidate during the recruiting process, you will know if he or she is a strong communicator.

Consider replacing non-qualifiable questions with questions that allow the applicant to bring to light his or her own personality.

I recently saw the following question on an online application for a technical position.

2. “What is your favorite book? Why?”

What people read is a reflection of how they spend their leisure time. Plus, this is a great way to put together your own reading list!

By eliminating unnecessary questions from their online application, Home Depot accelerated the application process by 80 percent.¹⁰

Home Depot also added a Candidate Self-Assessment Tool that allows candidates to determine if the job is right for them before even applying. The questions include:

1. Do you love helping customers?
2. Are you a team player?
3. Do you enjoy selling?
4. Do you have respect for all people?
5. Do you want to build something?

To streamline the process even further, candidates can now use a tool Home Depot calls “Candidate Self-Service” and schedule their interview from any device.¹¹

If you have not looked at your online application in some time, take a few minutes and fill out the application yourself.

1. Is the application easy to understand and do the questions have a purpose?
2. Is the application mobile friendly? According to Glassdoor, 89 percent of candidates utilize their mobile devices when looking for a job.¹²
3. Does the application require the applicant to take unnecessary steps to complete the application?

With limited job applicants available and the multiple job opportunities screaming for their

attention, smart HR professionals are making the application process as easy as shopping online.

Free food, avocado toast, and ping pong tables aren't working.

Almost all of us love free food, and avocado toast is a great high protein snack. Many companies are offering these kinds of perks to entice millennials to work at their organizations. What are some more imaginative things companies are doing to stand out and engage millennial job seekers?

McDonalds uses Snapchat to recruit young job seekers. They call it “Snaplications.”¹³ The process allows applicants to create an introduction video for a local McDonald’s restaurant manager. The applicant can activate a “crew” lens which gives the applicant a McDonald’s hat and name tag in their video.¹⁴

PwC produces a podcast called Pursuit of Happiness. The goal of the podcast is to educate employees and potential job hires that there is more than one way to juggle both life and work. The podcasts address such issues as family planning, religious and gender inclusion, and new dads.¹⁵

Goldman Sachs Returnship® program helps

people get back into the professional world after being out of the job market for two to three years.¹⁶ For returning veterans, millennial moms or dads, people who have taken a few years off of work – this paid program offers each of them a variety of experiences within different departments at Goldman Sachs.

Millennial Myths and Misconceptions

Here is a millennial myth for you: Millennials are not loyal to their employer. According to a Capital Group survey, more than 65 percent of millennials feel that loyalty between the employee and the employer is important.¹⁷ Contrary to common belief, millennials are looking for a place to land and nurture their career. What is important to young job seekers is finding an employer who reflects their values. More than 85 percent of millennials who have remained with their employer for at least five years were happy with their sense of purpose at work.¹⁸

Millennials want to feel passionate about what they do, and they want to feel an emotional connection with your company. Through the recruitment process, you can demonstrate that your company’s mission, culture, and brand are things that they can fall in love with.

About the Author

Meagan Johnson (meagan-johnson.com) is a bright, funny, delightfully obnoxious generational humorist! She is a professional speaker and generational humorist who writes and speaks about the ever-changing multiple generations and the best practices of the organizations that employ and sell to them. Johnson is co-author of the best-selling book *Generations Inc., From Boomers To Linksters Managing the Friction Between Generations at Work*. Her clients include: Harley-Davidson, CISCO, Comcast, Procter & Gamble, Starwood Resorts, Nestle Purina, American Health Care Association, Boeing, THE C.I.A., and Bubba Gump Shrimp Company. She lives in Phoenix, Arizona with her four dogs that have a total of 15 legs! You do the math! You can reach her @ 800-759-4933.

Endnotes

- 1 https://www.xperthr.com/pages/the-top-hr-compliance-challenges-for-2019/?cmpid=PLCIUSAGIHUGMN-2018-1701-2018_pr_generic_tracking&sfid=7012X000001mLm
- 2 Fry, Richard, Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/04/11/millennials-largest-generation-us-labor-force/>, April 11, 2018.
- 3 Social Recruiting Tips, Learn how to implement a social media recruiting strategy in your business, <https://www.betterteam.com/social-recruiting-tips>, June 6, 2019.
- 4 Alexandra, 9 Tips On Social Media Recruiting Strategies, <https://harver.com/blog/social-media-recruiting-strategies/>, November, 2018.
- 5 Rooney, Jenny, “The Future Of Recruiting Talent? SodaStream Launches Commercial To Find ‘Rainmakers,’” *Forbes*, February 2, 2018. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenniferooney/2018/02/02/the-future-of-recruiting-talent-sodastream-launches-commercial-to-find-rainmakers/#2fe8bcf472cd>
- 6 <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:6501578115469447168/>
- 7 <http://www.greenhouse.io/blog/announcing-greenhouses-integration-with-appcast>
- 8 Newton, What is the Ideal Length of an Online Job Application?, <https://newtonsoftware.com/blog/2016/10/06/ideal-length-online-job-application/>, October 6, 2016.
- 9 https://hire.withgoogle.com/public/jobs/tuftandneedlecom/view/P_AAAAAADAAGyKmqJJUqCJkF
- 10 The Home Depot Simplifies Application Process to Fill More Than 80,000 Spring Positions, <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-home-depot-simplifies-application-process-to-fill-more-than-80000-spring-positions-300416823.html>, March 2, 2017.
- 11 Howland, Daphne, Home Depot launches mobile job app for spring hiring, <https://www.retaildive.com/news/home-depot-launches-mobile-job-app-for-spring-hiring/517152/>, February 15, 2018.
- 12 Singhal, Aditya, 5 Great Recruiting Strategies to Attract Top Young Talent, <https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/article/131/5-great-recruiting-strategies-to-attract-top-young-talent>, April 5, 2018.
- 13 Calfas, Jennifer, “McDonald’s Is Using a New Method to Recruit Young Employees—Snapchat,” *Fortune*, June 13, 2017. <https://fortune.com/2017/06/13/mcdonalds-snapchat-jobs-2/>
- 14 Greesonbach Sarah, Snaps, Texts & Tests, Oh My! Cool and Innovative Recruiting Strategies You May Want To Try This Year, <https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/coolest-recruiting-strategies/>, January 5, 2018.
- 15 <https://www.pwc.com/us/en/about-us/pursuit-of-happiness-podcast.html>
- 16 <https://www.goldmansachs.com/careers/professionals/returnship/index.html>
- 17 Zimmerman, Kaytie, “5 Things We Know Millennials Want From A Job,” *Forbes*, October 1, 2017. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2017/10/01/5-things-we-know-millennials-want-from-a-job/#46c87f977809>
- 18 Zimmerman, Kaytie, “Why Company Sponsored Volunteer Programs Are Keeping Millennials Happy At Work,” *Forbes*, September 22, 2016. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kaytiezimmerman/2016/09/22/company-sponsored-volunteer-programs-are-keeping-millennials-happy/#1d9fdc2378da>