

Part II

Leadership, Mentorship and Generations: Are you growing into an effective, innovative leader?

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Note: [Part I](#) focused on practical opportunities for generations to learn from each other. This article explores qualities of effective, innovative leaders – timeless for all generations, creating more opportunities to learn and grow in specific areas.

Much has been said about the differences between Millennials and Baby Boomers. Some of this typecasting has become both stale and unproductive.

More fascinating, however, are similarities between the two generations. These provide opportunities to create mentorship and deeper understanding about the lifelong qualities of effective, innovative leaders.



Both Millennials and Baby Boomers want to:

Make a difference,

Be recognized,

Be valued,

Be respected, and

Be heard.

And, both reject stereotypes about their generation!

The Millennial generation has been, and will continue to be a driving force to change the way we work. For that, *all* generations in the workplace today have much for which to be grateful. *

With respect to the topic of leadership and being an effective leader, we can learn from each other. Leadership is not only an act of service – it's a lifelong learning process. Leaders learn from their successes, and mistakes.

According to Kevin Kruse, author of the bestselling book, *Employee Engagement 2.0*, leadership is a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal. It's not driven by title, hierarchy, or age.

Take a look at the following leadership qualities. *Then, find others who are both younger and older than you.* With an open mind and eagerness to learn, ask these colleagues how you might deepen your leadership qualities.

Qualities of effective leaders. (These span generations.)

1. Being able to articulate a vision for the future, and mission for today.
2. Building an accomplished track record in a career space or academic area of distinction.
3. Building a reputation for consistency and follow-through.

4. Helping others feel valued, included, and cared for.
5. Making a commitment to lifelong learning – being willing to learn, grow, change, and make a difference in *all* stages of life.

Qualities of innovative, entrepreneurial leaders. ** (These span generations.)

1. Inclusive leadership: Visionary, inclusive, proactive, and organization-centered, rather than leader-centered.
2. Relentless creativity: New ways of undertaking everyday activities.
3. Creates extensive internal collaboration.
4. Cultivates robust external partnerships.
5. Authentic community connections.
6. Reality-focused, results-driven.



In decades ahead, Millennials will pass the leadership torch to future generations. It will be interesting to see how these valued leadership qualities evolve and are further exchanged through mentorship.



** Millennials have driven a more evolved, satisfying workplace. Most Baby Boomers would have thrived in coworking spaces, complete with coffee and healthy snacks. Instead, earlier generations were expected to creatively produce in drab cubicles and worse, if employees were not seen working at those cubicles at all times, it was assumed that they were slacking off!*

Furthermore, workplaces of the past were filled with those awful, lard-filled grocery-store cakes brought occasionally to celebrate a coworker's birthday! Not healthy, and not appetizing!

Twenty years ago, technology was not available to allow workers to send and receive e-mails from home as if one was sitting in the traditional office. The opportunity to work remotely became viable once e-mail access and Wi-Fi became available.

How much more vibrant it would have been to be given the opportunity to work from coffee shops and creative spaces. Thanks to expectations being set by the Millennial work force, employers know that work conditions must change to attract and retain talented employees. Workspaces are being designed for the users, not the top-down hierarchy. Common areas where ideas can be exchanged are replacing the monotone, isolated offices of the past.

*** The Alliance for Innovation and Arizona State University, School of Public Affairs, developed Six Qualities of Innovation (2012), based on hundreds of case study reviews of local governments across the U.S. and Canada.*

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