

Millennials: rough diamond of an organization

The care for building the involvement of the representatives of the so-called Generation Y has accompanied the managers of service companies for years. Young employees are seen as "a tough nut to crack," and yet they have the potential that can be released and used to achieve business objectives. How to use the expectations and opportunities of "Gen Y" representatives to push the organization to a completely new direction?

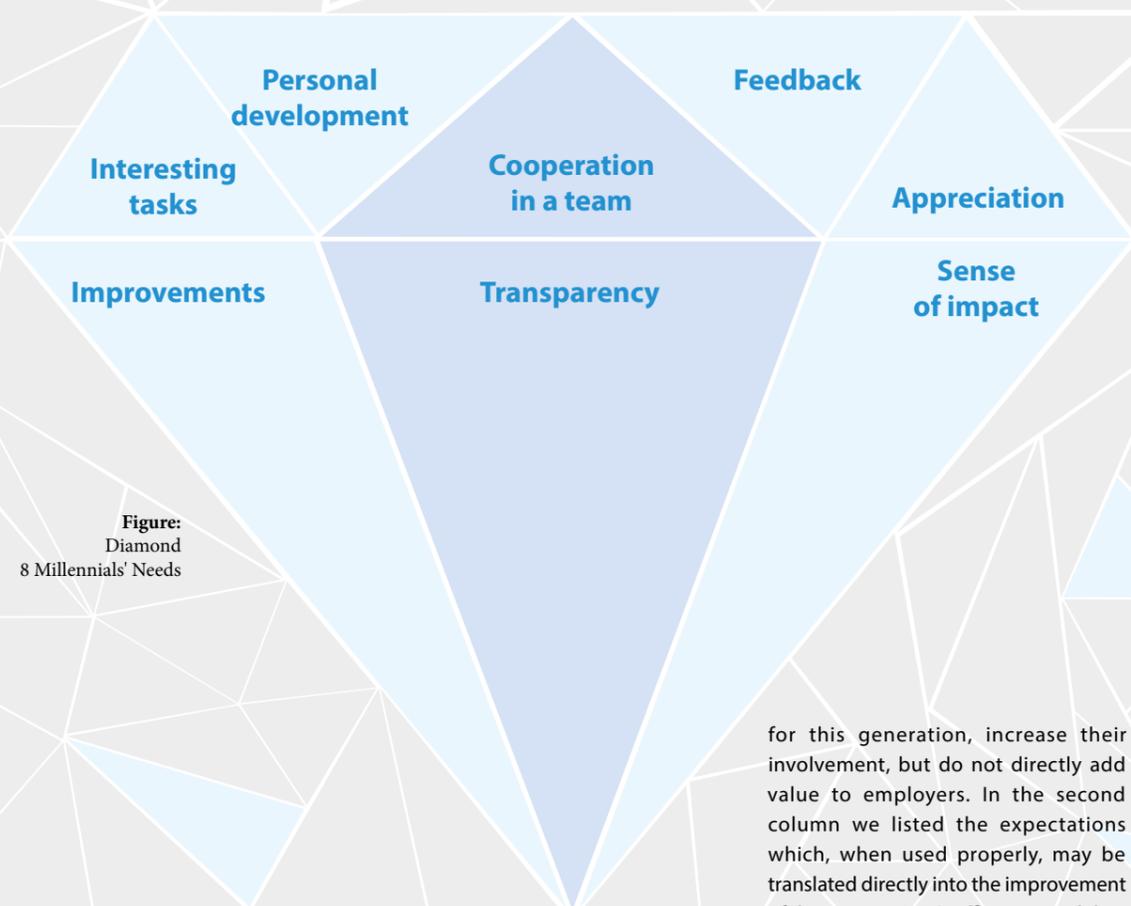


Figure: Diamond 8 Millennials' Needs

The challenges associated with the needs of the so-called Generation Y, i.e. persons born in 1980s and 1990s (also called Millennials), have been giving managers and employers sleepless nights for some time now. "Gen Y" in Poland means about 11 million people, which is roughly a half of the population of productive age. Many of them are already working in the SSC and BPO sector, and some younger ones still study – and they will soon begin their work in the sector. There are many reports and studies on the Millennials'

approach to work, providing managers with special recommendations. We decided to have a look at them.

Firstly, we selected 12 key studies on the expectations of the generation, carried out in the last 5 years by consulting and head hunting companies and research agencies*. We created a list of the most frequently mentioned needs of Generation Y. In Table we listed them in two columns. In the first one we included those that are important

for this generation, increase their involvement, but do not directly add value to employers. In the second column we listed the expectations which, when used properly, may be translated directly into the improvement of the organization's efficiency, and thus into the accomplishment of business objectives. The first group of needs (left column) is important from the point of view of building the involvement of "Gen Y", and often considered as crucial in reports and studies. However, we look at the issue differently. We believe that although the first group expectations should not be neglected, the greatest potential lies in the second group. You just need to find the key of how to respond to those expectations consistently and comprehensively.

Meta-analysis of 12 studies – Millennials' needs:

Millennials' needs that do not directly add value to employers:

- Emphasis on *work-life balance*
- Flexible working hours and place of work
- Socially responsible employer, driven by values
- Adequate remuneration and benefits
- Need for stable employment
- Desire for quick promotion
- Willingness to work abroad, in multiple locations
- No attachment to one employer
- Emphasis on online contact instead of "face to face" contact
- Casual clothes at work
- Working in a modern office

Millennials' needs which, when fulfilled properly, may add value to employers:

- Transparent, fair work environment
- Emphasis on relationships, teamwork
- Emphasis on personal development, learning
- Need for feedback
- Need for a sense of the impact of the effects of the team of the company
- Desire to perform interesting, varied tasks
- Desire to improve work environment
- Desire to be appreciated, valued

8 NEEDS OF GEN Y

Let us describe those needs briefly. The first one is transparency in the working environment. People representing Gen Y expect transparency and fair assessment in work life, in which their true achievements are taken into account. At the same time they want to build relationships in the team and anticipate collaboration with other employees. What is more, Millennials want to improve their working environment, get interesting and varied tasks, and, simultaneously, take care of their personal development and learn. On the other hand, they want to have a sense of impact, receive constant feedback and feel appreciated.

The eight needs, interconnected in that way, create a certain pattern. We called it a Diamond of Millennials' Needs (Figure). It consists of a "hard core", i.e. the needs of transparency and teamwork. Those two, well developed, translate into an appropriate answer to all the other six expectations. In the scheme we presented it in such a way that the hard core is in contact with all the other needs. At the same time, the expectations in each of the two "threes" are strongly correlated with each other – the need for improvements may be addressed by interesting optimization tasks and contribute to personal development. The provision of appropriate feedback, in turn, translates into meeting the need of having an impact on the reality and being appreciated.

HOW TO RESPOND TO THE EXPECTATIONS

How to use this potential? The SSC/BPO approach, developed by the

Results team and used in dozens of organizations may be of help, as it increases the efficiency of operational teams in service centres. It is based directly on the use of the two key forces of the Diamond's "hard core" described. The first one is to ensure transparency through permanent, implemented on an ongoing basis measurement of the work of the entire team, providing comprehensive and accurate picture of what the effects of tasks are and, at the same time, what the problems and their sources are. The other one consists in appropriately implemented team habits, such as e.g. daily and weekly meetings, which make it possible to conduct a common review of the work measurement conducted and draw conclusions.

We called this method Positive Productivity*. It responds directly to the 8 Needs of the Diamond by building sustainable culture of continuous improvement. Complete transparency of the process and tasks performed shows a number of cases of waste, which, the team is able to eliminate through systematic work, focusing on the identification and removal of the root causes of problems. In that way we satisfy the need for improvements. In addition, suitably programmed optimization work responds to the need of the Gen Y representatives consisting in the preference for interesting, diverse tasks that go beyond the daily routine. It also allows the acquisition of many new skills – thus it translates into the personal development of employees.

the implemented improvements is a response to the need to influence the employees' reality. It is directly connected with constant (daily, weekly) feedback delivered to the Gen Y representatives. What is more, together with the progress and achievement of results, it is reflected in the appreciation and valuing of young employees who feel satisfaction for the improvements they implemented in the working environment.

CUTTING THE DIAMOND

We are convinced that the "Gen Y" representatives are a kind of treasure, a diamond in the organization. Unfortunately, often the needs we have described are ignored when thinking about Millennials, or there is no coherent approach taken that would respond to them. The truth is that behind those needs there is the potential which, when freed, significantly helps in achieving company's business goals. It can be used well – the diamond can be "cut" properly – using the Positive Productivity* method.

Expanded version of the article with a list of sources and description of the Positive Productivity method can be found at: www.positiveproductivity.eu



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