

Do You Want to Hear A Few More Things About the Millennials? You Should.

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In recent years, a cultural fascination has emerged with the so-called “millennial” generation. Defined as those born from the early 1980s to around 2000, this generation thinks and works differently than prior generations. Millennials significantly diverge from previous generations in terms of their approach to long-term career goals, work-life balance, and communication within the workplace (to name a few). We have all heard about this...repeatedly.

Narrowing the pool to the legal industry, the millennial lawyer is both an asset and a challenge, as it is becoming increasingly clear this generation of lawyers departs from the traditional law firm model. Who is the millennial lawyer and what do they want? The answer to these questions will frequently be stated in generalizations, but that doesn't make them any less applicable. Can legal project management (LPM) help integrate this younger generation into the workplace, and ultimately deliver a better product? I would argue the answer to this is a definitive yes. Additionally, the insights drawn from the generalizations can be useful in determining successful approaches to LPM implementation.

The anxiety surrounding the millennial worker may stem from how differently this generation thinks. However, that very difference is fundamental for creating the innovation and growth that the legal industry needs and is in the midst of experiencing. The millennial lawyer is unique in comparison to prior generations in that the millennial lawyer thrives in a cooperative, communicative workplace. The teamwork mentality of the millennial is an asset to law firms seeking to implement LPM.

LPM stresses creating a plan for a legal project in which all parties are aware of the plan itself, understand their roles and responsibilities as it relates to the plan, and are in clear and effective communication with one another regarding its implementation. The collaborative, teamwork-focused nature of the millennial merges seamlessly with these elements of LPM.

The legal industry is unique in that a firm may have up to four generations working in the same environment. For LPM efforts to be successful, they must be implemented with an awareness of this generational diversity. The millennial lawyer differs from their older co-workers in many regards, prompting some anxiety in the legal field. What is undeniable is that this youngest generation, the millennials, is entering the workforce in ever increasing numbers. Rather than fight the change, embrace it. Millennial lawyers bring with them the desire to be innovative and work in a collaborative environment that is sorely needed to bring the legal industry into a new age of efficiency and profitability.

It's time to embrace the Millennials...before the Swipe Generation enters the workforce.