

Have the Millennials Figured it Out?

By [Carla Landry](#) on July 29, 2016

Contributing Author Julia Holemans

“Technologically savvy ... consistent high quality work output ... innovate ... fresh perspective ... incorporating new technology into our work processes ... simplifying our approach ... constantly evaluating our approach to projects and deliverables ... identification of inefficiencies.”

These are some of the words from the blog of a millennial that caught my attention. That millennial is my colleague, Geoffrey Schuler. Several months ago, Geoff responded to my blog post [“Do You Want to Hear a Few More Things About the Millennials?”](#) with his own blog post [“This Millennial’s Perspective”](#) detailing his experience as a millennial worker in the field of legal consulting. Geoff offered an insightful analysis of the unique skills which millennials possess.

Repeatedly, I was struck by his language. One of Geoff’s key points – his desire “to be efficient as possible” – really hit me. My earlier blog designated a link between Legal Project Management (LPM) and the millennials. As I read Geoff’s blog, it became more evident to me that the link between Legal Process Improvement (LPI) and the millennials is just as strong...and one which we should cultivate.

Some Definition for Context

LPI techniques provide a toolkit to illuminate inefficiencies by assessing how one currently does something, determining how to do it differently, and ensuring the new process is not only an improved one, but a sustainable one. LPI utilizes Lean and Six Sigma techniques to improve performance. Lean increases speed, Six Sigma increases accuracy. There are five key elements in the Lean Sigma framework for improving a process:

- Define the problem and why it needs to be solved
- Measure the current performance of the process
- Analyze the opportunities to reduce waste or variations
- Improve the process by identifying, implementing, and confirming process changes
- Control the new process by implementing methods to ensure improvements will be sustained

It’s referred to as the DMAIC approach. LPI, at its roots, is about improving the process in order to more efficiently deliver a desirable product to the client.

What’s the Connection?

While talk about the millennial worker often emphasizes the differences between this younger generation and their older counterparts (and implies that these differences are largely negative), I argue that millennials are on to something. Geoff mentioned several characteristics of the millennial which lend themselves to increased efficiency. Those that speak directly to LPI can be found in how he describes his desire to be as efficient as possible. Key elements of the DMAIC approach are evident in his examples. Geoff describes how he is driven to define, analyze, and improve a process through

a “careful review of work product and identification of inefficiencies,” by “constantly evaluating our approach,” and ultimately by “simplifying our approach” to a process.

In order for LPI to be most productive, it requires that every worker embodies this millennial philosophy of intuitive self-evaluation: am I going about this project the most effective way possible?

This efficiency is marked by an active and persistent self-evaluation of one’s methods and goals. I argue that this active and persistent self-evaluation perfectly embodies the concept at the core of legal process improvement.

The next time you’re wondering what techniques could make you more efficient in your practice, perhaps you should ask a millennial...and then listen to their answer.