

# Attracting, Engaging and Developing Millennials

# Q&A



CompuCom  
CIO Pam Baxter  
on benefiting  
from the new  
workforce  
juggernaut.

**P**am Baxter is the CIO for CompuCom, where she drives strategy and operations for all services built and supported by the IT team. With more than 20 years of experience as an IT executive, she makes sure CompuCom has the robust technical foundation needed to empower associates and serve clients. **#reimagine** tapped Baxter for her insights on how tech-savvy millennials are transforming the workforce.

Millennials are now the largest demographic in the talent pool. How are they changing the way organizations work?

**Pam Baxter:** Millennials want a flexible, adaptable organization. The old-school mentality of “I need to see you to know that you are productive” is changing. Millennials need employers to trust them and give them room to do the things they do. They’re changing organizations because they want to be online and connected 24x7, and they want to choose their own workplace environment. To be successful, organizations will need to be open to change and understand that we’ve become a more virtual, global workforce through social media.

Millennials have been called “digital natives.” How do they view and use technology differently?

**PB:** They use technology differently than those of us who didn’t grow up with smartphones or iPads® in our hands or with Facebook® and Twitter®. They know how to navigate technology. They want access to technology and data all the time. They want to be able to collaborate through social media. As a company, you need to respect their desire to be connected all the time. But you also need to be cognizant of privacy issues and make sure your employees are protecting your data. So you need to be sure employees understand how to separate the personal from the professional with respect to privacy.



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## How is the prominence of millennials changing the way organizations attract and retain staff?

**PB:** Millennials are the next generation of leaders, and some already are leaders. That’s changing the way companies recruit. A significant percentage of millennials have been in the workforce for 10 or more years, and they’re looking for companies that are more forward-thinking and open-minded. Millennials are looking for a positive company culture. It’s human nature for people to want to like what they do, and millennials have embraced that. Companies have to realize that developing a positive culture is a big part of attracting and retaining millennials — and, in fact, all talent.

## How do millennials’ motivations and career goals differ from those of earlier generations?

**PB:** Millennials have similar career goals, and they want to be taken seriously. Just because they’re tagged “millennials” and are younger and less experienced doesn’t mean they don’t want to move their careers forward.

But they aren’t necessarily as motivated by financial returns. They’re often more motivated by company culture and how the company gives back to society. Part of that different perspective is simply because they’re younger and don’t always have the same financial commitments, such as families to support. In that sense, we were all “millennials” at their age.

The difference is that for millennials, technology is a key part of who they are and what they do. That makes them think about the workplace in a new way. They say, “I want to choose where and how I work. I don’t want to sit in an office for eight hours a day.”

## What are some strategies for integrating millennials with boomers and Gen Xers?

**PB:** Smart companies know they need a multitude of resources. They also know that effective leadership requires a certain level of experience. You can’t place only millennials on the front lines. You need a combination of generations working collaboratively to succeed.

To achieve that, boomers and Gen Xers have to take millennials seriously. And millennials have to realize that these other generations aren’t simply people who “don’t get it.” The good news is that millennials want to be inclusive.

They also appreciate when they’re acknowledged and recognized. Companies should encourage millennials to take advantage of more experienced colleagues who can mentor them and guide them through experiences they haven’t had yet. That helps create open communication and improves collaboration.