

Exceptional Leaders Encourage the Millennium Generation

The Millennium generation (25 and younger) can be a challenge and an opportunity. How do you deal with employees who operate quite differently than you? They are constantly in contact with their network of friends and colleagues through text messaging. They write in blogs about anything and everything. They use technology to self organize into their own networks. They use on-line creation and collaboration tools such as Wikipedia to partner with others to create knowledge. They time share in meetings with laptops as they did in class.

Leaders can be put off by all of this. IT departments are reluctant to allow users to use technology that they don't manage. I remember when the president of a \$400 million company stated in 1998 that employees not be allowed to use the Internet. Fortunately he wised up and the company became a leading edge Internet user.

Exceptional leaders, rather than resisting and forbidding, engage younger employees and discover ways in which they can incorporate this new way of operating in a way that brings increased value for their jobs and for the organization. They are flexible and willing to negotiate new ways of working.

THOUGHT PROVOKERS:

How do you react to workers doing using technology in a way that you don't understand?

Do you assume that new technology causes them to waste time and not be productive?

To what degree have you really tried to understand the technological mentality of younger workers?

Do you partner with early adopters to discover new ways of working while setting appropriate boundaries when needed?

Exceptional Leaders recognize the contribution of younger workers to an organization and are willing to encourage them, when appropriate, by accepting their new ways of working.