The new 'millennial' rules for recruiters

- From social media to AI— a lot more has found its way into the hiring conversation
- Prospective millennial employees are receptive to the firm as they can relate to the recruiting team and feel that they would be able to work with them

One of the major factors influencing the way millennials work, play and live is the fact that they have grown up in an age where everything is instant and online. "Their affinity towards technology, flexibility on how and where they work, search for purpose and work-life balance, means employers must have a fresh perspective for attracting them," says Abhijeet Mukherjee, CEO of employment website Monster.com (APAC and Gulf). The Deloitte Millennial Survey 2018 found that attracting and retaining millennials and Gen Z respondents begins with financial rewards and workplace culture; it is enhanced when businesses and their senior management teams are in diverse roles, and when the workplace offers higher degrees of flexibility. "Given that millennials are now present across businesses, how talent is being acquired has been impacted in the last few years," says Mukherjee. The people who

have been bringing them to the workforce—the recruiters—have been reinventing their game plans.

Quality generation

Millennials have work traits that are different from previous generations. Organizations have to use varied approaches to reach out to this age group, so presence on social media plays a key role here. Companies understand the need for visibility on platforms where the target talent spends quality time. Companies also need to exhibit the experiential and cultural aspect of the workplace along with the opportunity, and social media is one of the best platform to highlight this.

"The recruitment process has seen a shift from hiring talent with adequate capability in volumes to hiring fewer but more skilled talent. This shift from volume to quality results in a shift in recruitment process as well, and technology plays a critical role in making this happen," explains Chetan Yadav, chief people officer at Tally Solutions, an enterprise resource planning software provider. So when you are forming a recruitment team to hire millennials, its important for members to have an open mind. "It also helps if the team has members belonging to the millennial generation; it creates a positive image of the organization. Prospective millennial employees are receptive to the company as they can relate to the recruiting team and feel that they would be able to work with them," says Poornima Gupta, associate professor, human resource and organizational behaviour, Great Lakes Institute of Management, Gurugram.

Learning generation

While it has often been said that millennials snack on jobs, they seem to be searching for more than just a good pay cheque. According to Sandeep Kohli, partner and talent leader, EY India, gone are the days when a business management graduate would be hired and then allocated a location for their role. "Now the candidate wants to know exactly what they will have to do, where their career paths will go, what are the benefits, and, most importantly, what are the learning opportunities. They are not afraid to ask questions, and, thus, the recruiters must know exactly what they are hiring for," he adds.

Internet generation

Millennials also grew up in the internet age. So,the way they look at technology is different from the baby boomers, or Generation X. The experience of hiring itself has changed with the involvement of technology. For home textile manufacturer Welspun India, around 70% of positions are now filled without involving a recruiter till the last stage, thanks to video recordings and Skype interviews. This, according to Nisha Verma, chief human resource officer of Welspun, reduces the cycle time and cost. "The rate at which technology is hitting the market, adoption can become a challenge. The existing millennial employees at Welspun, therefore, have often stepped up and helped us, even in the recruitment process," she says.

The present generation scans the net for jobs. Thus companies have to keep their profiles updated and build a brand image online as a great place to work. "Social media is also useful to keep track of what the industry trend is, what skills are hot, who are the competitors hiring, etc. It is, empowering for the talent and enabling for the recruiter," adds Verma. Technology also enables these recruiters to understand the candidate experience. For example, Glassdoor reviews give JSW Group an idea of the areas they need to work on. "We understood that the feedback time after an interview was too much. We are now working at plugging that gap so that they can not only get feedback on time, but also track what stage of the recruitment process they are in. Our job site will show candidates if they are in phase 1 or 2 or almost at the final leg of the interview process," explains Gautam Chainani, group president, HR at JSW Group. Using Artificial Intelligence to predict attrition can also help, since that helps JSW plan the manpower requirement at any point.

Despite all this, however, Chainani believes that the human touch still counts at the end. Therefore, recruiters must be trained to handle questions and explain the requirements and expectations to candidates. "From our experience, millennials want to know about the learning opportunities, office environment, continuing education

programme, etc. They want to learn fast and move fast, so, in a way, companies shouldn't just employ them, but through their learning and development programmes, make them employable as well," Chainani adds. Always remember that the millennial candidate will use social media to cross-check. Just stating one or two value propositions will not be convincing. As Kohli puts it, making your present employees—even the candidates who come for an interview—your brand ambassadors, letting them spread a good word about the hiring process can do wonders for the company.

Avoid being an awful interviewer

The recent accusation by UK-based Olivia Bland (via Twitter, right) about intimidation in an interview by the CEO of Web Applications, UK, has rocked the world of recruiters. The 2-hour interview left her feeling upset. She was eventually offered the job, which she refused because the interviewer "tried his best to intimidate and assert power over a young woman, who continues to push even when he can see that he's making somebody uncomfortable to the point of tears".

It has made people conducting interviews wonder where to draw the line between "checking if the candidate can handle tough situations" and "harassment".

In an age, then, when the interview experience also influences the employer's brand image, how can you make sure it goes smoothly?

"The interviewer should have the emotional intelligence to handle the candidates. Many a times, interviewers from Generation X (born between 1961-1986) think that they know best what they need from a candidate. They do not have the sensitivity to handle the ever-widening generation gap," says Poornima Gupta, associate professor, human resource and organizational behaviour, Great Lakes Institute of Management. "The need to check for a candidate's ability to handle adverse situations is genuine, but to ensure this line is not crossed, a) assess the comfort level of the candidate before going for the stress interview; b) look for verbal and visual cues to see if the candidate is getting agitated and change track and; c) get a neutral party to conduct such pressure tests in an interview rather than a prominent person of the

organization," says Gupta. Interviewers should be trained. There should be workshops to sensitize them to the needs and expectations of millennials so that they are better equipped to handle the candidates.

The story can be read online [here.](#)