



# Enterprising Rural Families™

This newsletter is an instrument of the *Enterprising Rural Families: Making It Work* program of the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service. For further information concerning the Enterprising Rural Families program or on-line course contact [information@eRuralFamilies.org](mailto:information@eRuralFamilies.org) or go to <http://eRuralFamilies.org/>.

## TIP OF THE MONTH

- The *Enterprising Rural Families: Strategic Planning and Goal Setting* course (see website above) will enable you to:
  - ⇒ Identify the unique characteristics of a family owned business.
  - ⇒ Describe the ERF model for family business systems.
  - ⇒ Identify the roles and responsibilities in a family owned business.
  - ⇒ Identify key points of change in personal and business cycles.
  - ⇒ Define goal setting and strategic planning.
  - ⇒ Identify the purpose and characteristics of a vision statement.
  - ⇒ Identify the purpose and characteristics of a mission statement.
  - ⇒ Identify the purpose and characteristics of a strategic goal.
  - ⇒ Describe the strategic planning process.

An Online Newsletter November, 2009 Volume V, Issue 11

## Here Come the Millennials

by Randy R. Weigel,  
Professor and Extension Human Development Specialist

*A generational phenomenon occurred last week at a seminar on campus. The Baby Boomer faculty member introducing the speakers wore a skirt, heels, and pantyhose. The Generation X speaker wore slacks, blouse and blazer, sandals, and no stockings. The Millennial graduate student who participated in the panel discussion wore a short skirt and (horrors) flip-flops! Kaboom—a generational collision.*

Three generations of professionals, three very different senses of what is appropriate at work. There is a new generation of employees showing up in the workplace with a whole new perspective, a different style of values, and a distinctive work ethic. They are as different from the previous generations as they can be.

### Who are the Millennials?

Claire Raines, author of *Connecting Generations: The Sourcebook*, says they are the hottest commodity on the job market. They're sociable, optimistic, talented, well-educated, collaborative, open-minded, influential, and achievement-oriented. They've always felt sought after, needed, indispensable. They are arriving in the workplace with higher expectations than any generation before them—and they're so well connected that, if an employer doesn't match those expectations, they can tell thousands of their cohorts with one click of the mouse. They're the Millennial Generation.

Robert Wendover, editing director of *GenTrends: Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come*—[www.gentrends.com](http://www.gentrends.com), states that the Millennials, born between 1980 and 2000, are a generation nearly as large as the Baby Boom, and they're charged with electricity. They've been called the Internet Generation, Echo Boomers, the Boomlet Generation, Nexters, Generation Y, and the Nintendo Generation. Several thousands of them sent suggestions about what they want to be called to Peter Jennings, and "Millennials" was the clear favorite.



## Shaped by their times

As Morris Massey, former professor at the University of Colorado, states in his widely used videos, “What you are, is where you were, when.” When your values were programmed and your view of the world took shape. Just as all generations are programmed beginning as infants, their experiences created filters through which they see the world—especially the world of work. According to Raines, eight key trends of the 90s and 00s have shaped the millennial personality.

- ⇒ **Focus on children and family.** In the decades right before and after the turn of the Millennium, Americans moved the spotlight back onto kids and their families. Las Vegas and Club Med *went family*. Parents and grandparents took the kids along on trips across the country and to destinations all over the globe. Eating out—once an *adult thing*—became a family matter. Ninety percent of fathers attended the birth of their children. Older parents—the average age for moms was now 27—brought more maturity to their roles as caregivers, teachers, and coaches.
- ⇒ **Scheduled, structured lives.** The Millennials were the busiest generation of children ever seen in the U.S, growing up facing time pressures traditionally reserved for adults. Parents and teachers micromanaged their schedules, planning things out for them, leaving very little unstructured free time. They were signed up for soccer camp, karate club, and ballet lessons—and their parents were called into service, shuttling them from one activity to the next.
- ⇒ **Multiculturalism.** Kids grew up in the 90s and 00s with more daily interaction with other ethnicities and cultures than ever before.
- ⇒ **Terrorism.** During their most formative years, Millennials witnessed the bombing and devastation of the federal building in Oklahoma City. They watched in horror as two Columbine High School students killed and wounded their classmates. And their catalyzing generational event—the one that binds them as a generation, the catastrophic moment they all witnessed during their most formative years—is, of course, the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001.
- ⇒ **Heroism.** Emerging out of those acts of violence, Millennials watched the re-emergence of the American hero. Policemen, firefighters, and mayors were pictured on the front page of the newspaper, featured on TV specials, and portrayed in art and memorabilia.
- ⇒ **Patriotism.** During the post-Vietnam and Watergate era, patriotism was at an all-time low. Displaying the American flag, always and forever the right thing to do for members of the WWII Generation, had become less and less common—particularly among disillusioned Boomers and skeptical Xers. September 11 changed all that. Stores that carried flags sold out within 24 hours, ordered more and sold out again. Soldiers became heroes.
- ⇒ **Parent advocacy.** The Millennials were raised, by and large, by involved parents who often interceded on their behalf. These parents tried to ensure their children would grow up safely and be treated well. Parents challenged poor grades, negotiated with the soccer coach, visited college campuses with their youngsters, and even went along to Army recruiting centers.
- ⇒ **Globalism.** With computer game pals in Singapore and Senegal, Millennials grew up seeing things as global, connected, and open for business 24/7.



## Principles of managing Millennials

What do today’s young employees want? What kind of work environments attract, retain, and motivate Millennial coworkers? Here are their six most frequent requests:

1. **Be the leader.** This generation has grown up with structure and supervision, with parents who were role models. Millennials are looking for leaders with honesty and integrity. It's not that they don't want to be leaders themselves; they'd just like some great role models first.
2. **Challenge them.** Millennials want learning opportunities. They want to be assigned to projects they can learn from. They're looking for growth, development, a career path.
3. **Let them work with friends.** Millennials say they want to work with people they *click* with. They like being friends with coworkers. Employers who provide for the social aspects of work will find those efforts well rewarded by this newest cohort.
4. **Let's have fun.** A little humor, a bit of silliness, even a little irreverence will make the work environment more attractive.
5. **Respect them.** "Treat their ideas respectfully," they ask, "even though they haven't been around a long time."
6. **Be flexible.** The busiest generation ever isn't going to give up its activities just because of jobs. A rigid schedule is a sure-fire way to lose Millennial employees.

### Getting ready for the Millennials

#### Be Prepared For...

- high expectations
- involvement of parents

#### Don't...

- expect them to pay their dues
- throw a wet blanket on their enthusiasm

#### Do...

- encourage them
- mentor them
- learn from them

---

#### References:

Raines, C. (2002). *Generations at Work: Managing Millennials*. Retrieved 4/20/09 from: <http://www.generationsatwork.com/articles/millennials.htm>.

Wendover, R. (2009). *GenTrends: Catching the Wave of the Generations to Come!* Retrieved 7/06/07 from: <http://www.gentrends.com>.



Millennials (Generation Y) are looking for stability. They can be loyal team players as long as they can balance work and life goals, gain new learning opportunities, and feel like they are supporting company goals. The employers that will be the most successful over the next two decades will be the ones that can best inspire and engage this challenging generation.



*Enterprising Rural Families*<sup>TM</sup>

*November, 2009 Volume V, Issue 11*