

Millennial Work Mistakes and Tips to Help

In 2015, Millennials make up half of our workforce, according to recruiter, branding advisor, and author, J.T. O'Donnell. She says that like any other generation entering the workforce, Millennials are keen for promotions, but are not considered promotion material due to their lack of professionalism and drive, and often lose their positions entirely.

In [an article](#) written by head hunter, Stephen Greenwell, he reveals the top reasons millennials get fired:

- Cannot complete a task;
- Attendance issues;
- Interest fizzles after the initial phases of projects, or when things get tough;
- Performs well only "in fair weather";
- Isn't jiving with the needs of the business;
- Have difficulty dealing with management.

O'Donnell adds a few related reasons to this list in her article, [3 Reasons Millennials Are Getting Fired](#), but offers tips to help Millennials understand what is expected of them in the workplace.

1. **Employers don't want to be parents.** Millennials were coached their entire lives and unknowingly assume that their employers will coach them too, but an employer pays people to do a job, not engage in coaching sessions.

Tip: Millennials should do their best to proactively seek resources on their own to help them close gaps in skills and knowledge in the workplace. Additionally, they should seek out a mentor to privately ask questions and get guidance on how to make the right impression at work.



2. **The anti-work attitude isn't appreciated (or tolerated).** Millennials tend to work only the minimum time expected, and will push for flexibility and a reduced work schedule to create more time for other pursuits. Being demanding about when and how they want to do their job can be viewed as disrespectful.

Tip: In the early days and weeks of a new job, Millennials can make up for what they lack in skills by being consistently on time.

3. **Millennials' happiness isn't the employer's responsibility.** Besides career development, Millennials also desire cool perks and benefits to make their job feel more rewarding. In spite of all the perks to keep them happy, Millennials are getting to these jobs and quickly showing visible signs of disappointment and dissatisfaction within months of joining the company.

As suggested by Alfie Kohn in his book, *Punished by Rewards*, he says that Millennials are addicted to praise, perks, and other incentives (otherwise known as bribes). With this sort of conditioning, Millennials often expect these bribes as adults in the workplace, but a company can offer only so much compensation and benefits. Millennials must learn to find intrinsic motivation (internal drive for work), so they can find real satisfaction and success in their careers.

Tip: Millennials who feel confused and unhappy in their job should seek career coaching. They need to know their professional strengths and workplace personas, and the defining skills they'd like to grow so they can build up their specialties and find direction and motivation at the job.

O'Donnell says that Millennials often don't understand that particular actions at work give the impression that they're lazy and unskilled. In her article, [5 Office Mistakes Costing Millennials the Promotion](#), O'Donnell illustrates common workplace mistakes, how managers perceive these mistakes, and how Millennials can alter their actions to reach success.

1. **Time.** When Millennials are so focused on leaving the office not a minute later than you need to stay, they send the message that they couldn't care less about their work, and management notices. Managers have no desire to promote people who aren't focused on and interested in the work they do.

Advice to millennials: Once or twice a week, stay 15 minutes past your normal work hour and get an extra task done. By staying late, this offers a chance make small talk with your boss about what you're working on and why you chose to stay late to finish it. Those moments can help you build a better personal connection with your boss and show you aren't obsessed with the clock - two things the boss will consider when a promotion comes available.

2. **Not taking initiative.** Millennials who take the initiative to try to improve things and go the extra step in their work show their potential to handle a larger role. This can help a Millennial show their ability to add value and ultimately provide justification for a promotion and pay increase.

Advice to Millennials: Try to anticipate something your boss will need and offer to do it in advance of being asked. Anytime you can take something off your boss's plate, you're showing your value. Managers like to promote employees that make their lives easier.

3. **Pointing out problems without offering solutions.** Millennials have been raised as equals and encouraged to speak their mind and share their perspective. In the workplace, this often manifests as criticism. The employer hears the comments and mentally marks the Millennial workers as too inexperienced and not passionate enough to be promoted.

Advice to Millennials: If you spot a problem, see it as an opportunity for you to offer to tackle solving it. It could very well be a fast-track to a promotion.

4. **Setting long deadlines.** An employer pays for productivity. The more an employee can produce, the more the employer will value that worker. However, Millennials hate to fail, and this often translates to their wanting to take more time to complete a task or project to ensure it's perfect. Unfortunately, there is not enough time in the day.

Advice to Millennials: Ask your boss when he or she wants the project done and then shoot to finish it a few hours to a day earlier. This gives time to review your work, and if changes or corrections need to be made, the boss can provide the feedback and you can still get the project done on his or her timeline.

5. **Total lack of enthusiasm for the mission of the company.** Companies exist to solve problems for their customers. Employers like to promote people who convey a sincere interest in solving that problem and making customers happy. Regardless of your position in the company, you should be able to see how your work affects the company's ability to deliver on its mission.

Advice to Millennials: Don't be shy about sharing your pride for the work the company does. Tell your boss why you are glad to be associated with the company; employers promote people who act like owners. When you are emotionally invested, they can see your potential to grow with the organization.

By Leah Morrigan