

# Decoding Millennials

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Proven Ways to Recruit  
and Retain Generation Y

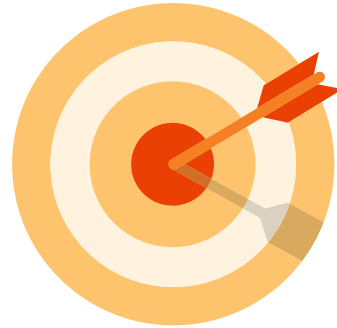


Millennials are the workforce of the future. But with so many career options at their disposal, how can you drive them towards contact centers?

A young couple is taking a selfie on a city street. The woman is on the left, holding a smartphone high in the air. She is wearing a light-colored jacket and has a large bag slung over her shoulder. The man is on the right, wearing sunglasses and a light-colored jacket over a t-shirt. They are both smiling and looking at the camera. The background shows a busy city street with other people and buildings.

Decoding Millennials

# Introduction



You need Millennials—but you also need them to need *you*.

Discover what it takes to master the art of attracting and retaining Millennials.



# Generation Y Has Taken Over

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Millennials, millennials, millennials. So much has been said of this Generation—and not all of it flattering. But one thing is clear—Millennials are the fastest growing generation in the workforce worldwide, and they are rapidly becoming the most influential population in the market. With 79.8 million Millennials in the U.S. alone, they make up the largest share of the U.S. workforce of any generation.<sup>i</sup> Within the contact center industry itself, 42% of customer service representatives belong to Generation Y.<sup>ii</sup> And predictions are that by 2025, Millennials will comprise as much as 75% of that workforce.<sup>iii</sup>



# Generation Y Has Taken Over

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Despite the large numbers, a ferocious battle for their talent exists. “The average Millennial new hire participates in the same number of interviews as older job seekers—but gets 12.5% more offers,” says Jean Martin, executive director of CEB’s human resources practice. “So young candidates are less easily wowed.”<sup>iv</sup>



# A Compelling Challenge

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For the contact center industry, attracting Millennial talent is even more challenging. According to a U.K. study, only 5% of Millennials regard working for a contact center as exciting, and over half (55%) harbor negative perceptions about working in a contact center.<sup>v</sup>

More educated, more diverse, more collaborative and more debt-riddled than any other generation in U.S. history, Millennials bring new perspectives both to what “work” means and what is expected from an employer. **With two-thirds of employers reporting that their Millennial workforce is *above average or exceptional*, tapping into what motivates Millennials is a worthwhile endeavor for employers.**<sup>vi</sup>

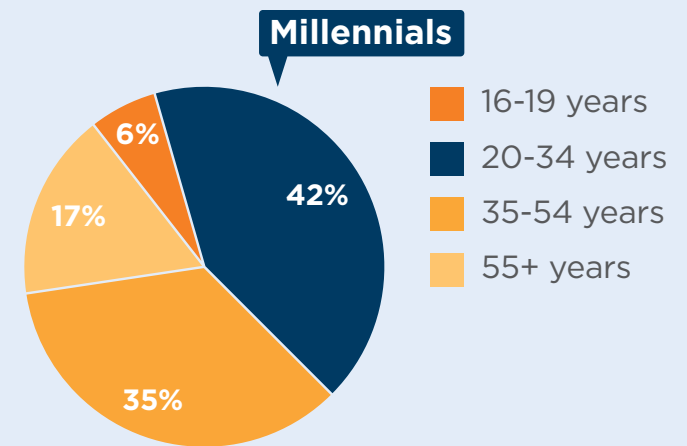
# A Compelling Challenge

There's been a lot of talk about appealing to this younger demographic by adorning the workplace with bean bag chairs, foosball tables, and "dog friendly policies." While some companies do employ these tactics, that's not necessarily what Millennials are looking for. Surprisingly (or not!), they simply want to connect, grow, learn and develop strong relationships—but they want to do it on their own terms.

## A Millennial by Any Other Name...

The most "named" generation of all goes by several monikers. Here are just a handful:

**Generation Y**  
**Echo Boomers**  
**Digital Natives**  
**Next Gen**  
**Baby Boomlets**



**U.S. Customer Service Representatives by Age Group (2016)**

*U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics*



Decoding Millennials

# The Millennial Mindset



# Values, Culture & Collaboration

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Millennials care about their paycheck—but it's been shown that they care equally (or more) about their values. This means that if you want to win this generation over to your organization, you'll first need to tap into their motivations and build a company culture that embraces their ideals.

This culture change requires buy-in from leadership at every level of the organization. It can be a daunting prospect, but if done right, Millennials will reward your company with loyalty. Data from Great Place to Work® shows that Millennials are 25 times *more likely* to plan a long-term future at their workplace when expectations of an excellent company culture are met.<sup>vii</sup>

# Values, Culture & Collaboration

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So, what motivates Millennials to join—and stay at—a company?

- Opportunities for personal growth
- Development of strong relationships
- Access to transparent and tech-savvy communications
- Engagement in purposeful work
- Balance of work and play

Whether you're looking for a contact center partner that grasps the Millennial mindset or want to attract Millennials to your own call center, this eBook offers useful strategies that can help drive this in-demand generation to your doors—and keep them from walking back out.



Decoding Millennials

Motivator #1:

# Opportunities for Personal Growth

# Knowing What They Want—And Getting It

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Members of Generation Y know what they want, and they expect to get it—including in the workplace. These individuals are highly motivated and want a workplace that fosters professional growth, the chance to learn and develop new skills and the opportunity for career advancement.

While Millennials want to earn a good wage, they will often forgo a competitive salary for better advancement opportunities. In fact, 60% of Millennials consider growth opportunities to be the most attractive job perk, and almost half (46%) of Millennials left their last job due to lack of career growth.<sup>viii</sup>

# Master Tip: Empower Employees to Advance their Careers

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For Millennials, professional growth doesn't necessarily mean they are looking for a promotion. Rather, they want the opportunity to develop the types of specialized skills and emotional progress that will advance their career over the long term.

To that end, consider the following three strategies for improving your contact centers' recruiting and retention rates with Millennials:



**Develop an awareness of career advancement options**



**Provide educational opportunities**



**Give individual feedback and coaching**

# 1. Develop an Awareness of Career Advancement Options

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Contact center agents may not be aware of the variety of positions available, or their ability to obtain the skills needed for advancement. We all know that the contact center industry is a land of opportunity—so be sure to clue them in!

## CASE STUDY

### **How Contact Centers Can Provide Growth While Meeting Organizational Goals**

An insurance claims contact center in the Midwest took a novel approach to hiring. Agents were told that they would spend two to three years on the production floor, and in addition to handling phone support, would also be learning about the company and the insurance industry in general. After the two-to-three-year time frame, the agents would be encouraged to apply for higher-level positions.

Additionally, the contact center required agents to obtain an Associate in General Insurance (AINS) and an Associate in Claims (AIC) within the first two years. In doing so, the contact center provided the opportunity for agents to work simple claims to completion. This allowed agents to gain solid experience as claims adjusters, while also improving the customer service experience.<sup>ix</sup>

# 1. Develop an Awareness of Career Advancement Options

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Even if they're not currently ready to take on a new role, having access to information about the educational background and skill sets needed for a specific position lets Millennials know what their next steps will be. And—most importantly—it gives them something to strive for. Make sure you have clearly defined career paths, and that your agents are aware of how their career may evolve over time. Encourage their development by providing the opportunity to do work that will lead to professional growth, and publicly celebrate their advancements within your organization.





## 2. Provide Educational Opportunities

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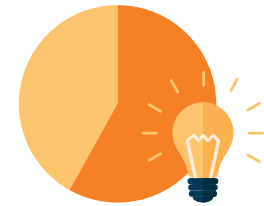
Leading contact centers are ripe with development opportunities. Whether it's industry training and certifications, offering reimbursement for continuing education or allowing employees to gain university credits for internal programs, these types of perks are of high value to Millennials for personal and professional growth.



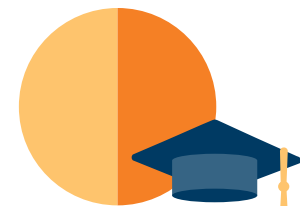
## 2. Provide Educational Opportunities

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A great way to get educational initiatives off the ground is to develop partnerships with local community colleges and universities. These relationships can yield outstanding instructional opportunities for your agents, along with career counseling and human capital assessments—all of which can help Millennials identify the resources that align with their individual motivations, strengths and professional goals.



**58%** of Millennials say they expect employers to provide them with learning opportunities related to their positions.<sup>x</sup>



**50%** of Millennials expect company financial support in paying for further education.<sup>x</sup>

## 3. Give Individual Feedback and Coaching

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In a traditional contact center environment, feedback usually focuses on meeting specific KPIs or improving recent interactions with customers. While this type of feedback is relevant to improving organizational goals, it doesn't necessarily correlate to an employee's own professional goals. Instead, coaching should focus on that person's individual strengths and motivations. For example, coaching can help employees enhance their public speaking skills, or help an agent make and reach a particular goal, or advise them on making better choices regarding interactions with coworkers and customers. These types of individualized coaching opportunities aren't hard to provide, and will go a long way towards making Millennials feel more understood and valued.

*That* is how loyalty to your company is achieved.



Millennials intending to stay for at least five years are far more likely to report a **positive** culture that focuses on the **needs of the individual.**<sup>xi</sup>



Decoding Millennials

Motivator #2:

# Development of Strong Relationships

# Collaboration is Key

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Millennials want to share their ideas. They also crave supportive leaders who are willing to build relationships with them that go beyond formal KPI coaching sessions and annual performance reviews.

Millennials are attracted to leaders who clearly articulate the WHY and HOW—*Why* a certain customer call type is handled in such a way, and *how* best to get work done every day. They are looking for mentors who will champion them, encourage them, inspire and motivate them—and challenge them on to greatness.



# Collaboration is Key

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According to WorkplaceTrends founder Dan Schawbel, “Millennials want to collaborate and support one another, and not have rigid management structures that slow them down.” They prefer meaningful relationships with coworkers and managers alike, and dislike too much bureaucracy. In fact, according to a WorkplaceTrends study, an overwhelming majority of Millennials (83%) prefer to work for a company with fewer layers of management.<sup>xii</sup>



# Master Tip: More Mentoring, Less Bossing

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Millennials want a mentor—not a boss. According to a recent survey conducted by TriNet, 75% of Millennials feel in-the-dark about their performance, and nearly 90% would feel more confident if they had ongoing check-ins with their superiors.<sup>xiii</sup>

Here are some ways to trim the bureaucracy while deepening relationships:



**Create mentoring Programs**



**Offer frequent check-ins with team leaders**



**Offer relationship-building activities**



# 1. Create Mentoring Programs

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Mentoring can take place organically, but actively encouraging and promoting mentoring programs at the contact center ensures the types of relationships Millennials seek. These programs help advance careers while building company loyalty. In a survey by Deloitte, Millennials intending to stay with a company for more than five years were twice as likely to have a mentor than not.<sup>xiv</sup>

Peer mentoring can be an affordable and effective way to establish a mentoring program. Experienced agents feel recognized and empowered; newer agents get the guidance they crave and form strong relationships with their mentors. This helps cut down on early attrition.

## 2. Offer Frequent Check-Ins with Team Leaders

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An effective mentor/mentee relationship requires constant interaction and feedback from team leaders. “The more frequent the check-ins are, the better,” said Rob Hernandez, Perform Product Manager at TriNet. “The biggest issue with the annual review process is the formality. There is often more emphasis on reflection rather than opportunities for improvement in the future.”<sup>xv</sup>

Not surprisingly, 42% of Millennials say they want feedback from supervisors and mentors every week.<sup>xvi</sup> Weekly check-ins with team leaders allow agents to form a closer bond with those who oversee them, and provide a way to get feedback in a timely manner.

## 3. Offer Relationship-Building Activities

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Millennials are a collaborative bunch—they want to work together, bounce ideas off one another and have genuine relationships with those around them. Facilitating a culture that feels more like a close-knit family and offers chances to work and play together helps Millennials feel more bonded and loyal to the company and their coworkers.

Organized community service projects, fun employee events, competitions and lounge areas where employees can relax together are all simple ways to foster a culture of closeness.

### CASE STUDY

#### **Community Outreach Builds Deeper Relationships and Engagement**

To further develop a sense of community, team spirit and belonging as well as to foster greater interaction amongst new employees, Alorica organizes community outreach events during new-hire trainings. This program helps sites reduce new-hire training time by an average of three to four hours through better facilitation and engagement, and builds a stronger sense of community among agents.<sup>xvii</sup>



Decoding Millennials

Motivator #3:

Access to Transparent  
and Tech-Savvy  
Communications



## Plug-In...

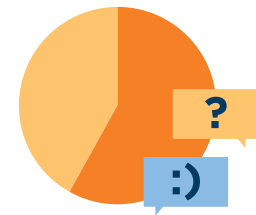
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For Millennials, being “plugged in” is second nature. As ‘Digital Natives,’ they have fully embraced and thrived in a world of instantaneous communication and are experts in text messaging, social media and mobile applications. Millennials expect technology to be as effortless in the workplace as in their personal lives, and often find older, legacy systems—systems that lack the speed or user-friendly interfaces they’re accustomed to—beyond frustrating. In truth, they see these platforms as downright unacceptable; in a recent Microsoft survey, 93% of Millennials indicated that modern and up-to-date technology was one of the most important aspects of a workplace.<sup>xviii</sup>

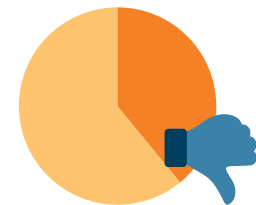
## ...and Open Up.

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Another aspect of communication that Millennials crave is open and honest dialogue with senior leaders. They want transparency from their superiors—where the organization is now, where it's going and what challenges lie ahead. Having access to this kind of straightforward information helps Millennials see more clearly how they fit in, and how they can best contribute.



**58%** of Millennials said communication was the most important leadership skill<sup>xix</sup>, yet



**39%** said their company suffers from poor leadership, citing ineffective communication as one of the main problems.<sup>xix</sup>

# Master Tip: Foster the Use of New Technologies and Open Communication

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It's critical to embrace the modern communication style preferred by Millennials. Work to adopt technologies that are easy to use and that function in ways similar to the tools they use to communicate in their everyday lives.

Let's start with these two strategies:

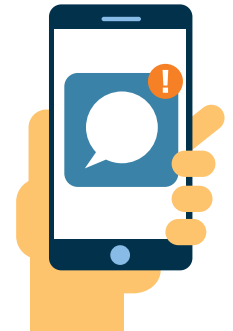


**Use the same channels Millennials use to communicate**



**Organize events that broaden communication**

# 1. Use the Same Channels Millennials Use to Communicate



Make it easy for this generation of connected communicators to find company-wide news on collaborative work forums; engage with them on social media; use social platforms to highlight their contributions and provide recognition; make employee engagement systems mobile-friendly.

As it turns out, the social channels used for internal communications with Millennials are often the same channels customers use to find answers and advice before turning to agents for help. So don't be afraid to tap agents for ideas to improve these self-help channels for your customers—as tech-savvy frontline representatives who deal with customer frustrations, their insights can be invaluable!



## 2. Organize Events that Broaden Communication at All Levels of the Organization

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To foster open and honest communication, champion occasions that allow Millennials to gain insight into the larger organization. Town halls, Q&A sessions with executives, “skip level” meetings (employees skip over their boss to meet with their manager’s superior) and “lunch and learns” with leaders from other departments are great ways to engage Millennials.



## 2. Organize Events that Broaden Communication at All Levels of the Organization

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Taking this idea even further, companies can allow agents to access even the highest levels of leadership. By creating an “Ask the CEO” area within a collaborative employee network, employees at every level are offered a fast, easy and direct communication channel to the lead of the organization. Such initiatives demonstrate an open-door culture, and emphasize the value of hearing what every employee—at every level of the company—has to say.

Which is *exactly* what Millennials are looking for.

# Use of Tablets Boosts Engagement and Performance

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Giving frontline team managers tablet computers can boost agent productivity. Agent supervisors can access reporting, dashboards, email and systems in real time; this allows them to conduct live-call monitoring and complete coaching documentation without leaving the production floor.

## CASE STUDY

### Tablets: A Critical Productivity Tool

Supervisors say the use of tablets has more than doubled the time they can spend on the floor, resulting in more agent engagement and better overall performance. According to one Alorica supervisor, since increasing her floor time, she's seen a 10% increase in first-call resolution. Another supervisor saw a 6% increase in attainment, saying, "without it [a tablet], I would have missed so many coaching opportunities."<sup>xx</sup>

A photograph of two women, one with curly hair and one with a headband, looking at a tablet together. The image has a warm, orange-toned overlay. The woman on the left is wearing a striped top, and the woman on the right is wearing a light-colored shirt and a polka-dot headband. They are both smiling and looking down at the tablet. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or meeting room setting.

Decoding Millennials

Motivator #4:

# Engagement in Purposeful Work



## Beyond the Wage

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Millennials want to know that their work fulfills a purpose greater than simply earning a paycheck. They want to feel that they are serving a worthwhile mission—one that's aligned with their beliefs and values. And they want to play a significant role in solving real and important problems.

Millennials care about more than the company mission statement. Gen Y members are more likely to work for companies that demonstrate a culture of caring about causes and contribute to the needs of their community. Millennials draw a direct correlation between companies that care about community issues and companies that care about their employees.

# Master Tip: Empower Agents to Make an Impact

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Millennials are more likely to stay engaged at work if their organization conveys that they care about more than the bottom line. Of course, this requires creating initiatives that extend the company's mission beyond its own financial interests.



**Promote social  
responsibility and  
community involvement**



**Keep the  
WHY alive**



**Communicate  
how your company  
adds value**

# 1. Promote Social Responsibility and Community Involvement

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Feel-good words and statements only go so far. Millennials want to see that the company takes action to provide a meaningful investment in its communities. Providing opportunities for volunteering or donating to a worthy cause can go a long way towards showing employees your company is truly committed to giving back.

## CASE STUDY

### **Making Lives Better with Alorica**

At Alorica, agents are empowered to contribute to their local communities, fellow employees and their families through the company's non-profit foundation, **Making Lives Better with Alorica (MLBA)**. Through the foundation, local chapters fund important community initiatives in their local area. For example, some chapters have helped support local schools or children in community foster homes. Others have run blood drives, and have used funds to provide for the care and upkeep of animals at their local zoo and aquarium.

Because each chapter gets to choose what efforts they support—rather than be subject to the classic corporate “top-down approach” to distributing foundation funds—employees feel more engaged in their ability to make a difference.<sup>xxi</sup>



## 2. Keep the WHY Alive

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Emphasize the value an agent's job has in a broader context, and *why it is so important* that they do their job to the best of their abilities. Use language that frames their role in the bigger picture positively. For example, when our agents say what they do, the response shouldn't be, "I do customer service," but rather, "I make people's lives better." At Alorica, answering the WHY question is an integral part of our culture and vision. From website messaging to the communication style between leadership and team members, there is a consistent emphasis that the goal is "to make lives better...one interaction at a time."



## 3. Communicate How Your Company Adds Value to the Greater Good

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Company newsletters and other communication tools should highlight ways in which employees really do make people's lives better. Managers should frequently share positive responses from customers; these comments illustrate the impact the agent is having—impact that goes far beyond the financial benefit to the agent and company alike.

As an example, Alorica recently brought to the attention of the entire company one agent's efforts that resulted in saving an infant's life. Due to a fire at a shipping facility, delivery of three packages to a customer had been delayed. Upon learning that these packages contained critical, life-saving medicine *needed that day*, the agent worked tirelessly to track down the packages and ensure they were delivered in time.

## 3. Communicate How Your Company Adds Value to the Greater Good

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Highlighting experiences like these emphasizes to all employees—but especially frontline agents—how their job does truly “make lives better.”

And frankly, that’s what matters most.





Decoding Millennials

Motivator #5:

# The Balance of Work and Play



## Rethinking the 9-to-5

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There's an unfortunate perception that Millennials don't want to work hard. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's not that this generation is unwilling to work—they simply don't want to be chained to a desk five days a week, eight hours a day, to get the job done. While Millennials value the financial security of a job (especially with an average of \$35,000 in student debt<sup>xxii</sup>), they equally value autonomy and independence in the workplace.

For Millennials, personal authenticity and family are major components of their identity. Consistent with previous studies, a study by Bentley University's Center for Women & Business shows that Millennials place a higher premium on the success of their personal lives than on their careers.<sup>xxiii</sup>



## Rethinking the 9-to-5

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But there's more to the story. They want to spend time with their families *and* fulfill career aspirations. So if companies want to prompt loyalty while grooming employees for future leadership roles, they need to create a work environment that respects personal values *and* allows team members the flexibility to achieve personal and professional goals.

# Master Tip: Offer Greater Flexibility

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When properly motivated by workplace policies, Generation Y will happily work 50- to 60-hour workweeks, including evenings and weekends. But those hours must allow them to meet personal obligations and goals while proving their mettle at work.



**Offer flexible hours  
and schedules**



**Personalize benefits to  
meet individual needs**

# 1. Offer Flexible Hours and Schedules to Support a Positive Work/Play Balance

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When it comes to the schedule, give your agents options. Allow them to work split shifts or longer hours, but fewer shifts per week. Meanwhile, benefits such as parental leave, unpaid time off and telecommuting also appeal greatly to Millennials who value time with their family and the achievement of personal goals.



**43%** of Millennials would switch jobs for greater flexibility.<sup>xxiv</sup>

## 2. Personalize Benefits to Meet Individual Needs



In addition to schedule flexibility, Millennials find flexibility in compensation equally attractive. During the hiring process or an annual review, consider allowing agents to choose two or three benefits from a menu of options. Choices might include:

- A \$.25 pay increase per hour, in exchange for less flexibility or shorter breaks
- Longer breaks or lunches instead of a \$.25/hour increase
- Extra wellness days that are unpaid, but don't impact their attendance record
- Paid time off for volunteering
- Compensation for gym memberships or activities that promote health and wellness
- Weekly versus bi-weekly paychecks



## 2. Personalize Benefits to Meet Individual Needs

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Yes, this list does relate to financial compensation. But it's important to realize that for Millennials, being afforded the *choice* is as important as the payments themselves.

### CASE STUDY

#### **Increase Satisfaction by Allowing Agents to Manage Their Schedules**

Alorica empowers agents to manage their work schedule with its Spectrum® web-based workforce management system. By accurately forecasting capacity requirements, Spectrum dynamically schedules agents to match projections and allocates agents based on real-time contact center conditions.

As a fully automated system, Spectrum® allows agents to view their schedule, volunteer for up-time or overtime and sign up for down-time or pre-arranged excused time off. Agents can trade whole or partial shifts with other skilled agents, request time off and completely manage their schedule to the betterment of the organization. Through Spectrum, agents gain more flexibility, which in turn increases employee satisfaction, improves attendance and decreases attrition.<sup>xxv</sup>

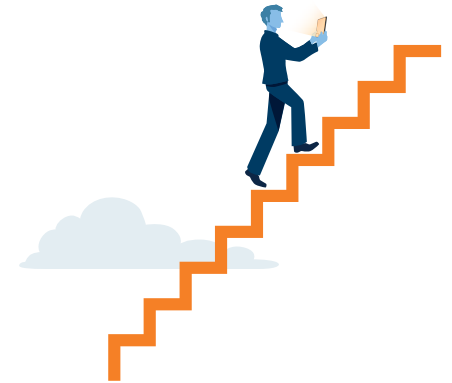
A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a smartphone. The image is heavily filtered with a warm, orange-brown color. The person's fingers are visible, with the thumb and index finger of the right hand positioned as if about to tap the screen. The smartphone is held horizontally. The background is dark and out of focus.

Decoding Millennials

# Conclusion

# Decode Millennials, and Discover a Competitive Advantage

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Ultimately, Millennials want the same thing that every employee wants: schedule control, meaningful work and relationships, and a choice of projects and learning opportunities. In focusing on the needs of this crucial generation, companies are creating a better place to work—not just for those Baby Boomlets, but for everyone.

Now blink once or twice, and get ready for Generation Zed!



Now blink once or twice, and  
get ready for Generation Zed!

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For more information—and to get started on transforming your customer experience—call 866-ALORICA or email [sales@alorica.com](mailto:sales@alorica.com).



Decoding Millennials

# About Alorica

# Alorica



Alorica is a leading provider of Business Process Outsourcing solutions that span the entire customer lifecycle. Good, glad we got that out of the way. Here's the deal—we think serving customers is awesome. And that's why, when it comes down to it, we really only do one thing—we make lives better...one interaction at a time.

## **PASSION • PERFORMANCE • POSSIBILITIES**

These are the principles that guide us in helping others make better choices and informed decisions. They're more than words. They're our rally cry.

### **PASSION**

Everything starts with conviction. A desire to obliterate the status quo, and the audacity to believe that we will. We're problem solvers. Question answerers.

Strategic dreamers. We see every interaction as an opportunity to create opportunities—for our customers, our clients, our colleagues and our communities.

### **PERFORMANCE**

We're 110% committed to the end result. Onward and upward, it's all about taking our clients to the next level. We stay engaged. We mine new sources of inspiration. And we give it our all, no matter the challenge. They say go big or go home. We don't believe in the latter.

### **POSSIBILITIES**

100,000 employees. Operations in 17 countries. Over 70% of our business is with Fortune 500 companies. So where do we go from here? Anywhere. Everywhere. We're always innovating, evolving, imagining new ways to continuously improve. Some

see the sky as the limit. We see the sky as a stepping stone.

### **WHAT'S IN OUR SECRET SAUCE?**

A spoonful of customer care. A dash of technical support. A pinch of revenue generation. Equal parts receivables management, customer retention and reverse logistics. Fulfillment and B2B solutions, for sweetness. And finally, hosted contact center solutions, direct response and back office processing for that added kick.

Guess it's not so secret anymore, huh...

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