

Millennial interest in facilities management



**Winning the loyalty of young professionals
who want meaningful careers**

In some respects, the FM landscape is a paradox.

For companies facing a baby boom retirement wave with few replacements, the FM talent landscape is a desert. But for young professionals, it can be a career oasis inside FM service provider companies whose cultures meet the needs and aspirations of millennials.

While millennials are often characterized as lacking loyalty to their employers, there is more to the story. According to a recent independent survey commissioned by JLL, there is an underlying contradiction to these commonly-held views. The survey results show that millennials have greater employer loyalty when their career and personal needs are met.

The churn challenge

While the facility management jobs pipeline is wide open, there's the challenge of attracting young professionals who often have a low awareness of FM careers. But there is also the costly challenge of churn.

It starts with loyalty among the millennial generation, which is in short supply, as a recent report by the Corporate Executive Board (CEB) shows.



“The next generation of talent will job-hop as new opportunities arise if it means they’ll be one step closer to their dream career,” as noted by CEB at the peak of the college graduation season.

The June 4 article “When to Quit Your Job” cites at least six factors influencing the so-called “Hummingbird effect,” through which young career seekers “sample” different employers for a year or two, then move on to try something else.

Companies are paying a high cost to keep up with the instability. As reported in our previous whitepaper, *The Key to Closing the Facilities Management Talent Gap*, since 2009 the total cost of recruiting, onboarding and training employees approached \$500 billion. The cost is compounded by the productivity lost by taking employees offline for retraining.

Despite the investment in time and cost, why are millennials prone to job-hopping?

One reason centers on management styles, internal cultures, the conditions for career growth, development and advancement. When the balance is right, companies earn stronger loyalty from young professionals.

When young people leave ... or not

The employee disconnect is expensive. Among millennials, “Only one in five will stay,” as recently reported by CEB.

The irony is not lost on FM services companies who specialize in delivery of positive work environments and experiences, both on behalf of corporate clients and themselves.

“Although there’s this perception that millennials aren’t loyal, there’s more to the story,” contends Chris Pesek, Managing Director of JLL’s Integrated Facilities Management Group. “According to our research, millennials will be loyal when they’re part of a reputable and relevant organization, feel like they can grow, and have opportunities for career rotations and cross-pollination between internal and client teams.”



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Sharing the knowledge

The career oasis for millennials resides inside companies that embrace employee development, collaborative learning, listening to all employees, idea contribution, innovation, cross-pollination and making a difference.

The new JLL study on millennial career preferences and awareness of the FM field offers some assurance. The findings underscore how organizations that see the value of encouraging and creating the conditions to sustain continuous learning and knowledge sharing are today among the most innovative and competitive “meta-companies.” With the current generation of FM talent at the end of their career track, and as the FM talent gap becomes more pronounced, companies that recruit, train and retain in-house FM teams have the option of outsourcing these types of non-core functions to strategic partners who specialize at them.

Key findings

Millennials are loyal when they were part of a larger organization, had growth opportunities and could try new roles, according to the March, 2014, JLL survey of nearly 200 millennials.

On the other hand, one-third of the respondents said they would stay only three years or less with a given employer. The reason for the departure is that they felt there was little, if any, opportunity for further growth. “I feel I have done just about everything I want to do here; there’s no room for growth or to move up,” are among the comments by those surveyed.

The main takeaway of the study is that millennials will be more likely to find satisfaction with FM service providers who offer mentoring, job rotations, cross-pollination of knowledge and relationships, and an exposure to multiple client accounts.



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Three steps closer

The survey probed for three main career attributes of millennials: ways of working; challenging jobs; personal development.

In each instance, the millennial mindset aligns well with FM service providers who help meet these needs:

Ways of working

When asked about their preferences for ways of working, 98% of the survey respondents cited innovating and influencing organizational change, while 85% want to interact with diverse groups involving clients and co-workers. In addition, 81% would like to experience autonomy in their work. Moreover, 77% want to work in a respected profession.

“When FM is central to operations, the best FM people are highly valued members of the organization,” JLL’s Pesek added. “That’s because our expertise is treated as a dynamic and innovative core competency and not viewed in a simplified way as a support function.”

Career challenge

A challenging job also makes for a more engaging career experience, with 92% of those surveyed saying they want to work for an organization offering personal and professional growth. Another indicator is that 87% seek access to cutting-edge technology in an innovative field, while 60% want to work for an industry leader.

Pioneering FM companies like JLL allow graduates to learn from the best minds and experiences that define this organization and its workforce as industry leaders

Personal development

The survey also shows how the chance to continuously learn, share and gain knowledge, and advance are also held in high regard by millennials, with 87% saying they would like to be challenged and learn new things on a daily basis and value rising to the highest level of the organization. Well-defined mentorship programs are important to 60% of the respondents.

“Graduates polled in the survey are the first to admit they are not the finished product, but are eager to learn and develop. FM service providers who are focused on talent development are a good career choice for graduates seeking structured mentoring,” Pesek observes.

Millennial career hierarchy

The JLL study also sheds light on how millennials rate different career attributes.

When looking at their own career fulfillment, millennials view finding a job and job security, as well as salary, as the most basic of needs.

But the three measures cited above – ways of working, growth and challenge – occupy a loftier millennial set of expectations exceeding salary or even job security. This trio creates the critical mass for the intangible realization of making a difference, being innovative and ultimately creating change. These attributes also cascade up to the ultimate tangible ideal attributes of career success: travel and other perks.

They converge to nurture and form the conditions for the FM talent desert to become the FM career oasis.



CONCLUSION

Consider the frequency and cost of employee churn among young professionals along with the lost productivity associated with their retraining. Add the growing facilities management talent gap resulting from a retirement wave. Factor in each, and you might say the FM talent issue is a hard-to-solve challenge.

There is a clear answer, however, when considering the value of partnering with FM companies whose cultures are already geared toward understanding and meeting millennial career needs.

In these settings, loyalty is not an issue among millennials when there is room for professional growth, challenge, collaboration and advancement.

For FM self-providers and companies seeking alternatives to their current FM service providers, there is an immediate solution: cost-effective outsourcing to organizations equipped to meet the career needs and expectations of millennials.

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LINKS

Corporate Executive Board Report on Millennial Loyalty

<http://www.executiveboard.com/marketing-blog/when-to-quit/>

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