KPMG

Meet the Millennials

Produced under the umbrella of
KPMG's "ITs Her Future"
Programme

Foreword

It's been a good year.

Employee satisfaction has been one of the company's top priorities and initiatives have been kicked off left, right and centre to focus on just that. Change is coming.

When results of the latest employee satisfaction survey hit your inbox, you shake your head in disbelief. Surely there's a mistake; a typo, a miscount perhaps.

Employees are still not happy

Despite every company's best efforts, bolstering that employee satisfaction score continues to be an issue. So what's going wrong? It's the question on every leader's lips, the worry on every HR function's mind.

Welcome to a new era of the human capital workforce. For the first time in history, we're seeing five generations in the workplace at the same time, each bringing a unique set of priorities and expectations. With companies leveraging the same blanket techniques to attract, engage and retain them, it's no wonder that these generations are struggling to co-exist. Recognising that **one size doesn't fit all** is critical, and the time to act is now.

Companies need to better tailor their efforts towards specific cohorts, and **millennials may just be the best place to start**. They currently comprise 35% of the UK workforce[(1)], and are set to represent an astounding 50% of the global workforce by 2020[(2)]. They bring wants and needs which differ greatly to those that came before them, and hold more bargaining power than ever before in the labour marketplace. Companies need to be aware of how to move that power in their favour, alluring them with the right selling points, and plying them with the right perks to make them stick around once they're through the door.

The focus of this paper is to stimulate discussion around exactly how businesses should go about putting this into practice. We look at understanding how to attract, engage and retain millennials. We specifically look at this through a **technology lens**, where the number of new hires from the millennial talent pool is steeply rising. Rapid growth across the technology sector means predicted job vacancies are mounting, as is concern over whether there will be enough qualified professionals to occupy them.

Technology and the much-publicised gender gap seem to go hand in hand but will this continue as millennials take over? Not only is it a missed opportunity for women, but for companies too, so it is critical to stay mindful of any gender specific differences. And finally, focus on the here and now is valuable, but what about the future? Generation Z are fast approaching the workplace so what do companies need to do to make sure they're well prepared for this incoming flurry?

Disclaimer: The statements made in this paper are not necessarily true of all Millennial and Generation Z individuals, rather they represent trends and characteristics typically observed.

It sounds simple.

A happier workforce means a more productive workforce. A more productive workforce means more revenue and more revenue means more reward for our employees.

Now, which company wouldn't to sign up for that?

Introduction

Are millennials a lazy, entitled group as the media sometimes suggests? Or do they represent a new era of talent, an army of creative, tech-savvy optimists who are redefining the workplace as we know it?

For the first time in history, we see five generations of employees working together under the same roof. But traditionalists are leaving, and Baby Boomers are looking towards their retirement ventures, taking years of experience with them. Generation X are replacing them, slowly moving up in the hierarchy, but the bulk of the people on the ground, the do-ers, are millennials.

In the technology sector, where talent and expertise thrive, harnessing the right people in the right way is crucial. So in order to successfully leverage this cohort of creative, tech-savvy optimists, and develop them as future leaders, employers need to understand their wants and needs. They need to understand what makes them, as employees, jump ship, what makes them stay, and how this cohort might just influence those that follow.
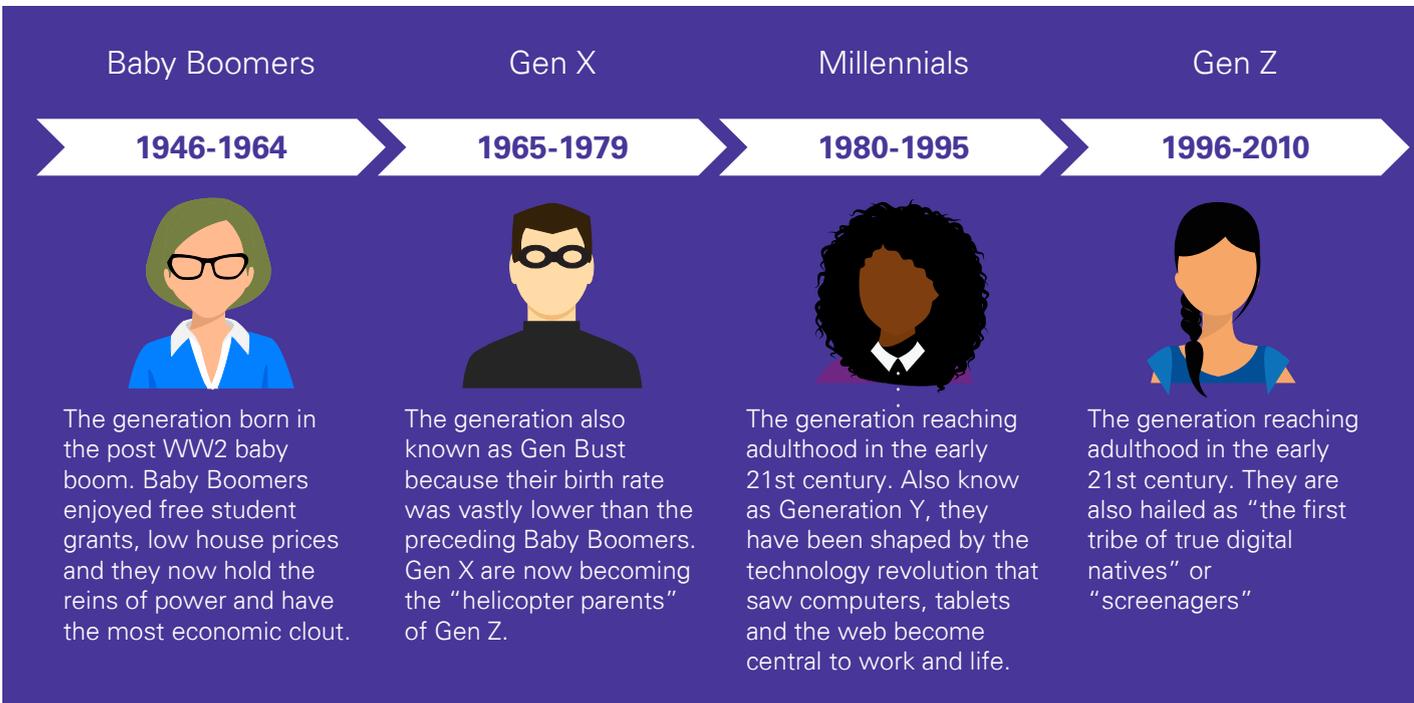
These questions plagued us here at KPMG so, pen and clipboard to hand, we conducted our own survey. We grilled over 70 millennials, varied in age and gender, questions around their employment related challenges, priorities and expectations. We'll intermittently disperse this paper with some of our findings as we go along.

So who are they?

The term 'millennial' has been used increasingly of late. It is the topic of news articles, it is mentioned on the radio, it is slowly edging its way into dinner table conversations.
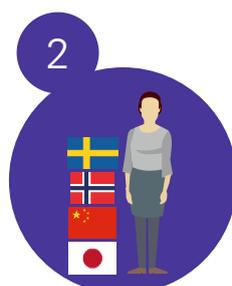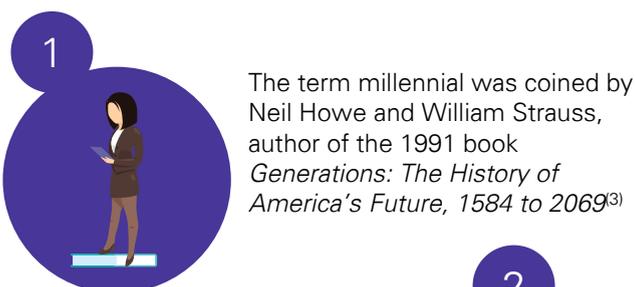
But how many people really understand what a millennial is?

Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen Z
1946-1964	**1965-1979**	**1980-1995**	**1996-2010**
The generation born in the post WW2 baby boom. Baby Boomers enjoyed free student grants, low house prices and they now hold the reins of power and have the most economic clout.	The generation also known as Gen Bust because their birth rate was vastly lower than the preceding Baby Boomers. Gen X are now becoming the "helicopter parents" of Gen Z.	The generation reaching adulthood in the early 21st century. Also know as Generation Y, they have been shaped by the technology revolution that saw computers, tablets and the web become central to work and life.	The generation reaching adulthood in the early 21st century. They are also hailed as "the first tribe of true digital natives" or "screenagers"

Note: This is a guideline only, different definitions will quote slightly different time spans.

'Millennials' are broadly classified as individuals born between around mid-1980s to 2000 and are usually expected to have reached adulthood around the turn of the 21st century. They are also commonly termed 'Generation Y', following their predecessors 'Generation X'.

Fun Facts:

1 The term millennial was coined by Neil Howe and William Strauss, author of the 1991 book *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584 to 2069*[3]

3 There are around **13.8 million** people who make up Generation Y in the UK[5]

2 In Sweden they are called Generation Curling, Generation Serious in Norway, and Generation John Paul II in Poland. The Chinese call them *ken lao zu*, or 'the generation that eats the old', and the Japanese termed them, *nagara–zoku*, 'the people who are always doing two things at once'[4]

The Millennial DNA

As the name indicates, millennials grew up during the Millennium period, a time of rapid change. Naturally events that took place during this period have shaped them, giving them a unique set of priorities and expectations that differ from previous generations.

Here are a few key things to know about them:

Curiosity made the millennial

Millennials need to know the *reason* for doing a task before they do it. As the generation of immediate gains, they prefer to understand the value of doing something upfront. Why should they invest their time in this task and how does it fit into the bigger picture?

The job hoppers

On average, millennials stay within a given role for a maximum of three years. With the degree of networking, peer-to-peer comparison and online job search possibilities that are available today it's not surprising to understand how quickly millennials become hungry for the next challenge.

Tech-savvy

The World Wide Web was born, ushering in the technology revolution. As such, millennials are considered the 'Digital Natives' of the world; history's first 'always connected' generation.

All-accepting and all-embracing

Globalisation has quickened in pace. The millennial generation has been exposed to far more cultures, people, travel opportunities, information and goods compared to previous generations. Not only has this has made them the most tolerant of diversity, but also the most likely to seek it — especially in the workplace.

Balance is everything

Generation X hoped for work life balance, Generation Y simply demand it. If it's possible for one, it's possible for all and with so much happening outside of their working lives it's expected as a norm on any job specification.

You don't ask you don't get

Millennials are more confident when it comes to challenging the system. They are less afraid to ask questions, make comparisons or question 'the norm' of things. If they're thinking something, they're most likely to express it.

Attracting millennials to the workplace

With millennials comprising an ever growing, increasingly powerful proportion of the talent pool that employers dip into, getting them through the door is the critical first step. It's arguable that an employee satisfaction survey is of limited value when the pool of talent to respond to it is stagnant.
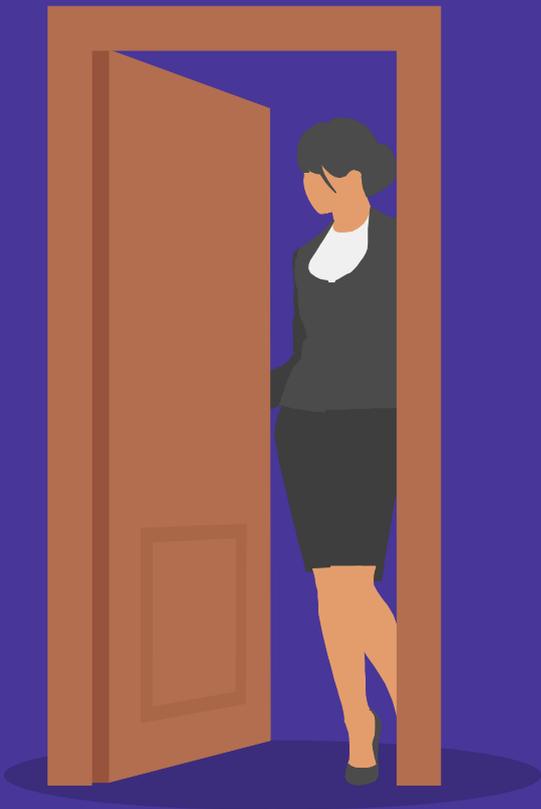
1. They prioritise culture

Culture is key when millennials are scanning the marketplace for their next job. How the employer portrays the overall experience of working for them is a key differentiator when they decide which positions to apply for.

Companies need to focus on cultivating the working conditions that foster creativity and morale. Quick wins like introducing a pool table in the office, early finish Fridays or allocating time for them to pursue personal hobbies during the working day would do the trick.

2. They want to enjoy their working experience

Millennials are the first generation to use the word "fun" to describe their dream job. They really embody the sentiment that life is too short to be stuck in a dead end job. As part of our market research, we asked millennials whether they ever considered a career in technology, to which a vast number of responses were "no" boiling down to a perception that it is "boring" or "too manual". This really hit home that millennials prioritise enjoyment over all else.

Companies need to focus their efforts on ensuring that from the time they start their work day to the time they finish, millennials are enjoying every minute. This might be through holding more frequent off-site team events or giving them the power to choose to work on the projects that interest them most.

3. They want open and honest communication

Millennials are brutally honest with each other, and they expect the same from their employer. They want to feel as though their opinion matters and that their insights are contributing to a bigger picture that is allowing the company to develop.
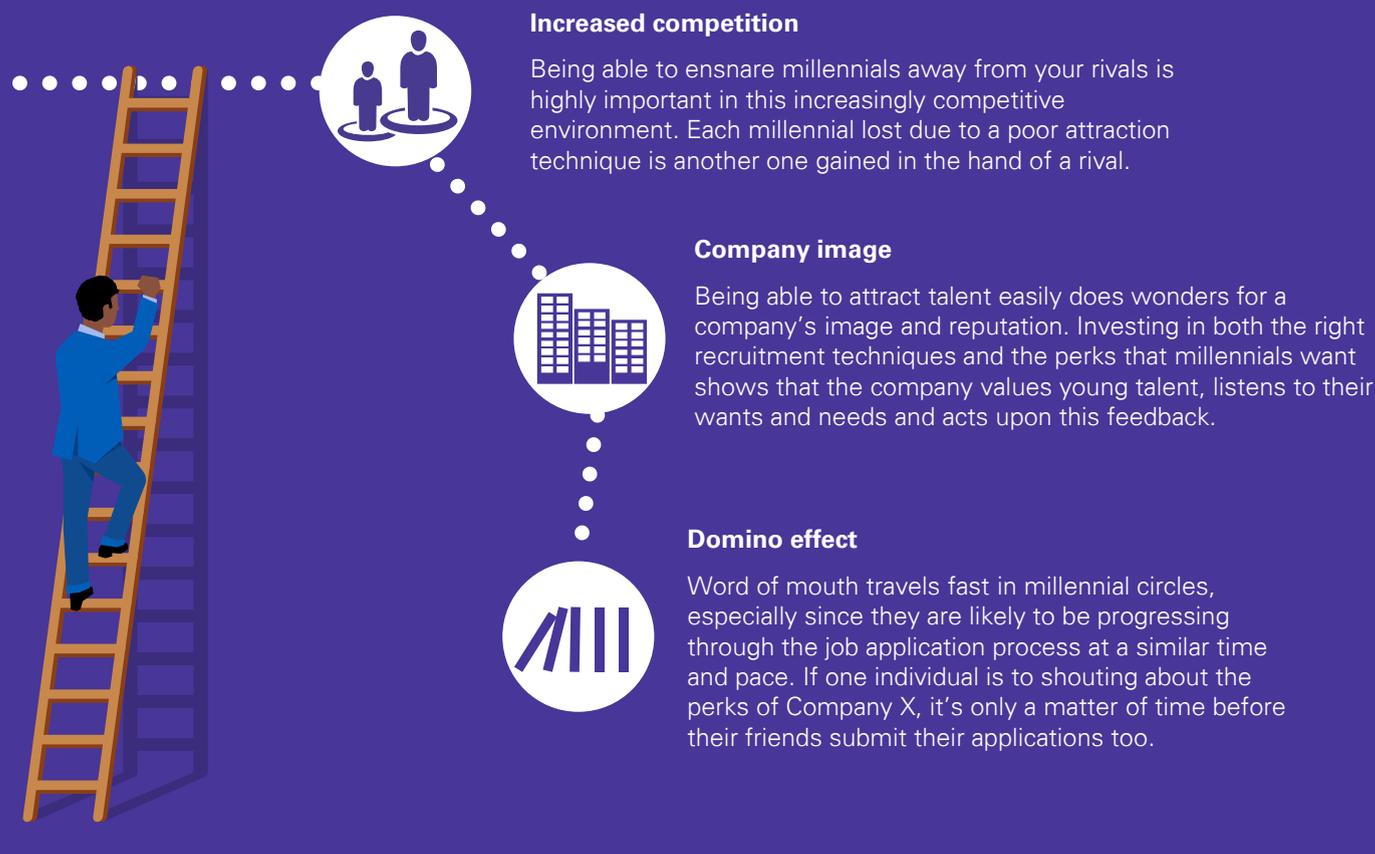
Companies need to adopt a transparent communication policy. For example, they might want to host a weekly drop-in session with the leadership team, where even the most junior staff can pose questions to the C-suite executives. Alternatively, making 360 feedback the norm means that millennials not only receive honest feedback on a regular basis but are also empowered to dole it out.

4. They want flexibility

Millennials want to have the option to control their own working hours and location. Whereas previous generations only hoped for a work-life balance, these headstrong millennials expect it. In fact, in a survey conducted by KPMG [6] across a broad millennial audience, work-life balance was one of the top rated factors when looking for a job.

Companies need to formally prioritise work-life balance. At KPMG, we drive intelligent working across every area of the business, and we're transparent about this with our clients as it aligns to the future of work. The focus is on outcomes rather than the amount of time put in. Known for their active social schedules, millennials will truly see the appeal in clocking off once work for the day has been completed, or working from home to sneak in that cheeky yoga class between meetings.

Talent acquisition should sit right at the top of all leader's priorities lists. Here's why:

Increased competition

Being able to ensnare millennials away from your rivals is highly important in this increasingly competitive environment. Each millennial lost due to a poor attraction technique is another one gained in the hand of a rival.

Company image

Being able to attract talent easily does wonders for a company's image and reputation. Investing in both the right recruitment techniques and the perks that millennials want shows that the company values young talent, listens to their wants and needs and acts upon this feedback.

Domino effect

Word of mouth travels fast in millennial circles, especially since they are likely to be progressing through the job application process at a similar time and pace. If one individual is to shouting about the perks of Company X, it's only a matter of time before their friends submit their applications too.

Engaging millennials in the workplace

Enticing millennials into the workplace is the first achievement, but there's no stopping there. Now it's about ensuring that they're motivated enough to keep that employee satisfaction survey score soaring. Engaged employees are satisfied employees, after all.

1. Social impact is important

For many millennials, work isn't simply a way of earning money to spend on the weekend. This generation is unique in its social consciousness, and nowadays 63% of millennials expect their employers to contribute to a social cause.[7] As an example, KPMG currently spearheads a Women in Technology diversity programme by the name of ITs Her Future. A substantial proportion of the team is made up millennial effort, who say that their involvement stemmed from a desire to "work towards a common goal", "play my part" and "contribute to a wider cause that isn't simply client related".

Companies need to cultivate a reputation for social responsibility; ignoring an army of passionate individuals who want to do their bit is a missed opportunity. Anything they can do to show a consideration for the community, such as providing monthly opportunities for volunteering, or leadership donating a proportion of their salary to charity, will go a long way.

2. They want to socialise

Millennials are increasingly social, and want to be able to connect with their co-workers both inside and outside of the office. They enjoy being part of a tightly knit community which is bound by strong relations, akin to a "work family".

Companies need to shun the perception that socialisation at work is a distraction and start actively encouraging it. One way to do so is by embracing social media and encouraging employees to use it during the working day. For example, instating a 'Facebook-like' platform for work purposes not only provides employees with light relief but also provides them with the means to network and stay connected.

3. They want mentoring

Millennials are known for being headstrong and having firm views on their direction in life. Nevertheless they need help to harness that ambition, refine those ideas and focus on further developing those strengths. When asked whether their employer provides sufficient support for their advancement, the majority of our survey recipients shook their heads.

Companies need to consider how they are going to provide mentoring to 50% of their workforce, and fast. Introducing mentoring programmes early on for millennials who have just started in their job gives them hope from the outset that their employer truly prioritises their development. Companies could look to instate reciprocal mentoring whereby junior millennials are paired with more senior colleagues who could be one or two management levels above them. This way, not only do they get access to a wealth of experience and advice, but their senior counterparts get immediate insight into the minds of the most powerful proportion of their workforce.

4. They want celebration for smaller successes as well as big

Millennials are now increasingly hoping for gratitude for small scale successes, which might usually be overlooked. Whilst big project milestones are generally celebrated, they also want to feel as though their day-to-day efforts are being noticed.

Companies need to understand how to engrain more employee appreciation into their ways of working. This could be anything from getting senior members of the team to thank the junior members for being part of a project, to hosting a formal dinner to recognise a team's efforts over the past month.

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5. They want to talk business

You've heard it before, millennials love to see the bigger picture. They want to understand how the value they're providing on a daily basis when they come to work is contributing to some greater goal towards which the company is edging.

Companies need to involve millennials more in this bigger picture. Asking their opinion on how to improve the customer experience, or what products you should be planning next not only makes them feel more included but also gives them context for their work going forward. It's as easy as setting up monthly focus groups or sending out a poll on what could be done better.

6. They need the right manager

Traditional leaders are often "drivers". They're the fiery, results-oriented people who get things done but could potentially derail millennial engagement efforts. Millennials grew up with no clear lines of authority. They grew up being praised and heard. Reaching the workplace and facing different treatment could therefore be a tough adjustment for the common millennial.

Companies need to encourage the adoption of different management styles. This might mean less focus on purely getting from A to B, and more on collaboration, communication and identifying the best way to reach B. Companies could even introduce training courses for manager-level staff focusing on attributes valued by millennials such as being transparent, good listeners, relationship-oriented and so on.

Employee engagement is of the utmost importance. If you need reminding, here's why:

Employee Satisfaction: Engaged employees are invested in the success of their company and have a relatively higher degree of commitment and loyalty.

Productivity: Engaged employees often become top performers, as they are committed to "going the extra mile" to achieve company success

Recruitment & Retention: Engaged employees significantly lower the risk of employee turnover for the company, meaning less money invested in constantly recruiting new and trying to retain new staff

Innovation: Engaged employees bring an added level of passion and interest to their job, which often leads to increased innovation as a by-product

Profitability: Engaged employees are naturally more productive and efficient, in turn positively affecting the company's bottom line

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# Retaining millennials in the workplace

Known as the job-hopping generation, tempting millennials through the door is only one part of the puzzle. Since statistics suggest that both younger millennials and female millennials seem more compelled to explore other options [8], they need to feel the urge to stay put the most.

Average number of companies within first five years after graduation
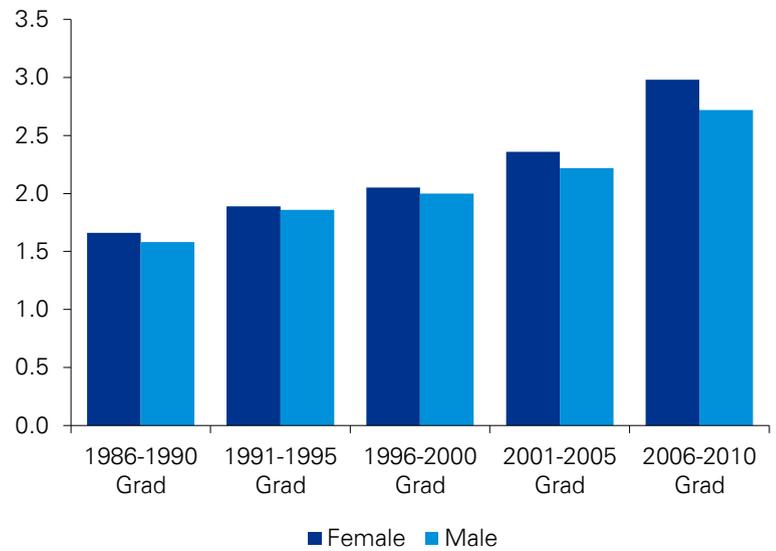
% change of average number of industries (compared to 1986-1990 cohort)
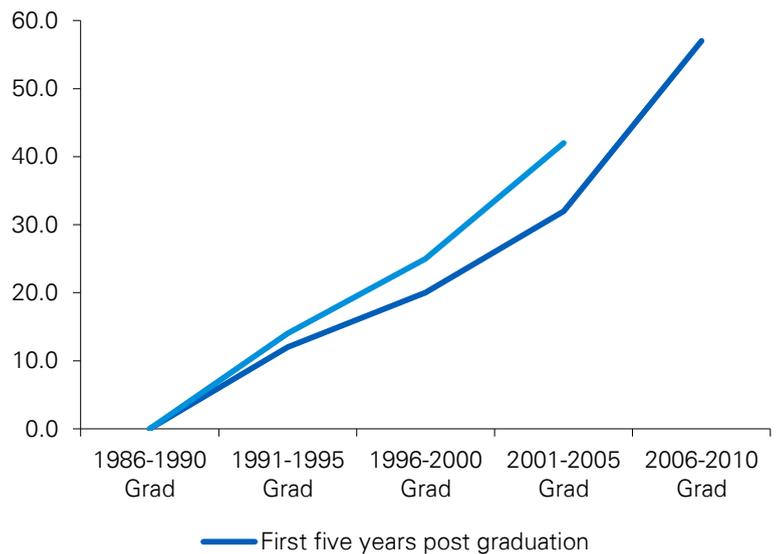
1. They demand balance

Work-life is balance is one of the most common phrases bandied around when speaking of workplace allure. But it's more important than ever when it comes to millennials so pay attention. For this generation work-life balance isn't optional, it is compulsory. In fact, in our survey, work-life balance ranked the second highest priority when looking for a job (after salary).

Companies need to engrain flexibility to foster an 'anytime anywhere' work environment to replace the traditional 9-5 mentality. Opportunities such as being able to work from home one day a week, or being able to take time out from the working day to deal with personal commitments are huge ticks in the box. Similarly, a policy forbidding sending and replying work emails on the weekend would go down a treat.

2. They want to see internal promotions over external hires

It's simple – if millennials don't see the opportunity to move up, they move out. Intuitively this makes sense. Generally people don't start their careers with the job they want for the rest of their lives. Instead the beginning of their career is about gaining skills to eventually earn that dream job.

Companies need to set honest expectations for millennial workers so that they know that if they stay longer, they will be rewarded with a better title, more money and the opportunity to grow. Where a vacancy comes up, companies should offer the opportunity to existing millennial staff first instead of opting for an external hire.

3. They yearn to e-learn

Millennials crave knowledge. They're used to having information at their fingertips, and thrive off processing it. In short, if they're not learning, they're not developing. And if they're not developing, then they're going to start looking for a way out.

Companies need to prioritise learning and, more importantly, upgrade how it happens. Millennials don't want formal lectures or a bunch of data hitting them in the face all at once. KPMG offers three year learning paths to provide technical, business and soft skill confidence delivered via a blended, flexible approach. It offers snackable learning options that are easy to get in and out of, continuous but also relaxed. Leveraging modern technology, that millennials know and love, through e-learning makes a huge difference – why not deliver training via podcast or Facebook Live video instead?

4. They want security

A report written by Infosys and the Future Foundation [9] last year blares the horn loud and clear. Millennials are anxious about their jobs. Many don't want to work for a start-up, but instead prefer the stability of a corporate job. The study also found that 40% of millennials think their job will be outsourced or replaced by automation within the next five years. Again, in our survey, job security was noted as one of the top priorities for employed and job-seeking millennials.

Companies need to focus on providing millennials with the safety blanket they so need. Proactive communication helps, giving them the opportunity to constantly air their thoughts and concerns. When change is on the horizon, engage them fully. Help them understand the change, how it will impact them and get their input on how best to make it happen. Growing up in a period of rapid change makes them born change agents after all.

Nailing employee retention means happier workers and less money wasted on the everlasting recruitment cycle. Here's why:

Improved employee attraction: High employee retention facilitates a sense of belonging and security which not only boosts that employee satisfaction score tenfold but also encourages new recruits like bees to honey.

Happier clients: High employee retention means that instead of having to explain to the client why yet again one of their key team members is being replaced, they have continuity with staff who understand their needs and are able to meet their requirements.

Improved quality: Higher employee retention ensures a stable and reliable knowledge base. Companies forget that when employees leave, they make sure to take that accumulated knowledge with them.

Cost savings: Higher employee retention, simply put, means fewer costs. The cost of turning over a single staff position can be anywhere between 25-75% of that person's annual salary cost.[8]

Improved productivity: Higher employee retention means better productivity. Every time a new employee is hired, it takes significant time and effort to then get that individual up to speed.

Gender differences

The gender gap. The glass ceiling. They've weathered the test of time no matter how hard we've tried to shake them. But will the millennial uprising mean that we finally see the back of them?

Millennials are likely to be the most tolerant and diverse generation to have graced this planet, with exposure to more cultures, people and opportunities than ever before. You wouldn't be blamed for presuming that these millennials are too cool for archaic gender norms.

Millennials are socially progressive and refuse to conform to traditional definitions of masculinity and femininity; more than two thirds of millennials believe gender no longer defines a person as it once did.[10] They're more likely to openly embrace their LGBTQ identity. They're more likely to identify as politically independent and religiously unaffiliated. They're more likely to support same sex marriage. The list goes on.

You can bet it's been a waiting game, due to millennials delayed entry into the workforce and ambivalence regarding marriage and children, to see whether these ideals translate into something more tangible in the workplace.

But the results are finally in, and despite theory suggesting otherwise, there are indeed gender differences between female and male millennials. Their millennial DNA make up is different; they want different things, face different challenges and companies shouldn't be turning a deaf ear.
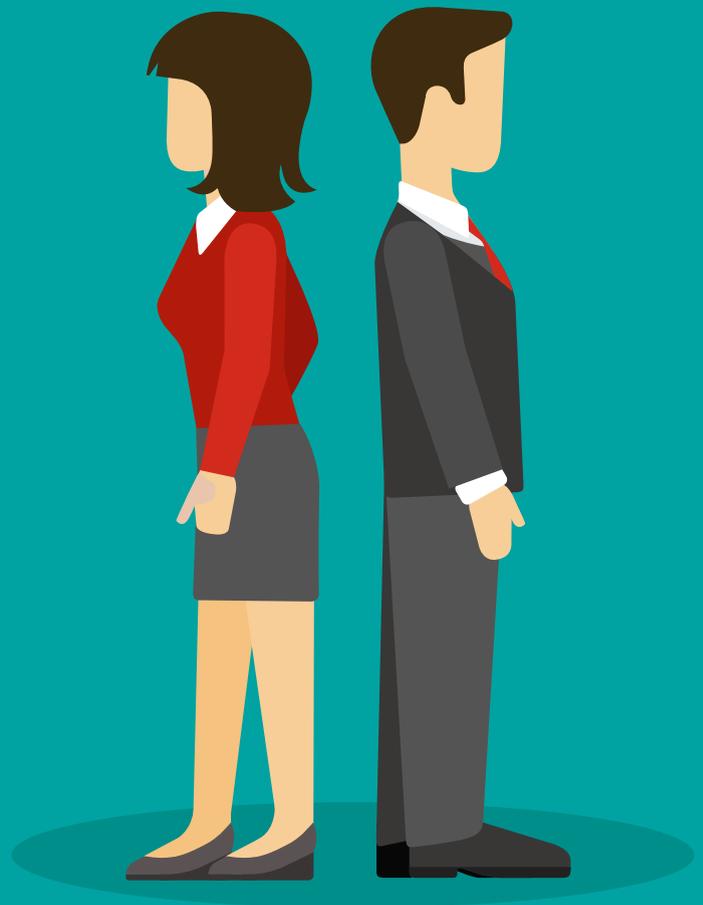
So what makes female millennials unique?

They're more hesitant when it comes to job applications

Female millennials fear more than their male counterparts that they won't find a job that will suitably match their personality and skills set. They also worry that employers might just discriminate against them on the basis of their gender. As such they're less likely to apply for a particular position despite being as qualified as male applicants, if not more so.[11]

They're less confident and optimistic

Male millennials still maintain a higher sense of optimism than females. They believe they are fully able to achieve a higher standard of living than their parents, and are more likely to deem themselves entrepreneurial.[12]

They're more sociable

Female millennials are more likely to crave a familial culture, filled with team working, inclusiveness and a close knit community. On the contrary, male millennials seem to favour more of a lone ranger lifestyle. They are more likely to prefer to eat alone, travel alone and work alone,[13] stemming from a desire to be independent.

They're less keen on technology

Generally, female millennials are still less likely than their male peers to opt for a STEM career that may introduce them to a career in technology. This is largely due to a continuing perception bias of women being more suited to the arts and humanities and to a lack of encouragement at education level. In the study that we conducted, only 51% of female millennials studied a STEM-related degree at university, compared to a whopping 86% of males.

They're more likely to suffer from imposter syndrome

It's a feeling that high achiever experience when they believe their success is undue, or down to luck as opposed to talent, and female millennials are more likely to fall victim. Technology has played a part in this, with the transparency of social media leading to a pit of social pressure and constant comparisons.

They want different things from their employers

Male and female millennials still seem to have different priorities when it comes to employment. In a survey we conducted across a broad millennial audience, 77% of respondents stated that female and male millennials have different expectations and concerns when it comes to the workplace. Statistics showed that males cared far more for remuneration than did their female peers. Whereas female millennials had a more balanced view, caring the most for promotion opportunities and work-life balance.

### They're less likely to actively pursue a promotion opportunity

Female millennials are less likely to put their name forward for that internal vacancy than their male colleagues. This is in part influenced by their need to factor in considerations such as maternity leave and childcare, which still continues to be more of an issue for females, and becomes more difficult as they move up the career ladder. In fact, of our survey respondents who believed that female millennials faced more challenges in the workplace today, 70% quoted this as being the reason.

Male millennials
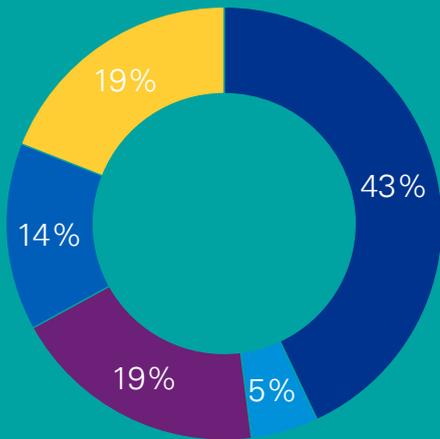
- Salary
- Job Security
- Promotion
- Location
- Work-life balance

Female millennials
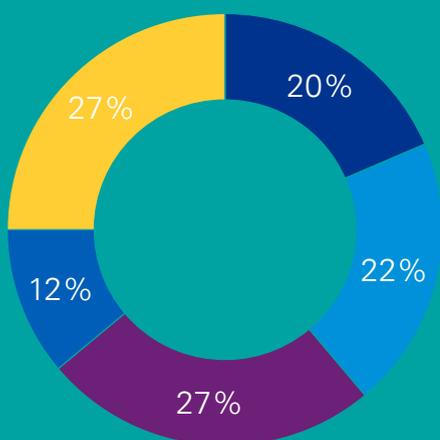
So how to translate this into concrete advice? Here are a few tips to help ensure companies aren't alienating female millennials as they attract, engage and retain:

Place more females in leadership positions

Female millennials sometimes don't feel prepared or confident enough to apply for positions of responsibility. This is in large part due to a perception that this aspired state is filled with their male counterparts. It is difficult to relate when there are few female role models to aspire to emulate. Companies need to do two things. Enhance current leadership diversity and develop millennial talent in preparation for future leadership roles. The former could be done by making it policy that there are equal male and female applicants for a leadership position. The latter could be done through investment in training for top talent. This ultimately shows that the company believes in their talent and young leader potential.

Ensure provision of well-rounded benefit packages

Generally millennials are attracted to employers who can offer more than simply good pay, but this is the case even more so with females. Companies should ensure that they offer a package deal where pay is only one element and doesn't have a dominant weighting. More so than ever, emphasis on rapid career progression, learning and development should be taking centre stage.

Provide more support during career breaks

This seems to be one key period where female millennials seem to fall behind their male counterparts, given their need to generally take more time off for childbirth and child care. Companies need to define unobstructed pathways for progression for female millennials who are approaching these circumstances, and make sure these are communicated loud and clear. They should also make sure they publicise a willingness to promote regardless of a candidate's childbearing status and provide solid maternity packages to ensure that they do return.

Provide female specific mentoring

It's clear female millennials face quite different challenges in the workplace. As such the advice and support they receive from their employer should be tailored and delivered in a certain way. Initiating female specific mentoring could do the trick. Not only does this immediately expose them to a female role model to whom they can aspire, but also provides them with a safe haven to converse any gender-specific issues. It is, however, a vicious cycle due to the lack of women in senior positions already, but involvement of male mentors would also demonstrate that endorsement of diversity and support for millennials comes from both sexes

Set up female focused initiatives

Establishing initiatives primarily focused on and driven by women checks multiple tick boxes. First and foremost they establish a community of like-minded female professionals, who can support each other and work together towards a common goal. Secondly, if company leadership is sponsoring the programme, it shows that they are listening. They care about the ultimate goal and are willing to support, something that should inspire and motivate.

KPMG's Its Her Future programme does just this. Its vision is to empower young women to be architects of change across the technology industry, through a number of different initiatives. It aims to give the 40-strong team a sense of purpose and motivate them with the comfort of knowing that KPMG's MC leadership team are right behind them. Furthermore, the programme looks to target remediate key issues faced by women in technology through projects such as mentoring, skills workshops and technical confidence development.

Use gendered wording in job descriptions

Beware of the power of words. To encourage the female millennial to feel confident enough to apply for that first interview, employers should pay close attention to the language used and what it signals. Female millennials generally respond better to nurturing, positive language as opposed to competitive connotations that entice males.[14]

When skimming through a job description or a marketing campaign, their eyes are drawn to phrases which promote collaboration and team working, as opposed to suggesting an environment of competition and being pitted against each other. Female millennials can absolutely embody "dominant", "strong" and "competitive" characteristics, but it's worth noting that this wording is often a cue for an atmosphere which is unwelcoming and potentially toxic.

The verdict?

Unfortunately gender typecasts are sticking around for a little longer, at least in the technology sector anyway. But by proactively taking action now, companies can help in the effort to banishing these stereotypes to the archaic ages – where they belong.

Generation Z

Perfecting the art of catering to the millennial takes time. But this shouldn't distract from the fact that their successors are just around the corner, quickly approaching employable age. Companies need to get ahead of the game and start understanding how these individuals might just disrupt the playing field.

Generation Z. The Post Millennials. iGeneration. Founders. Plurals. The list is endless.

Born between the mid 1990s and 2010, the millennials' younger generation have already made a name, or rather multiple names, for themselves. They're already emerging as the next big thing for market researchers, cultural observers and trend forecasters alike.

Employers – start taking notes.

So what do we know about this elusive group?

The first thing to pen down is that Gen Z shouldn't be painted with the same Millennial brush. They're being raised differently, changing their views, outlook and perspectives. They have also had a different experience with technology. Sure, millennials were digital but Gen Z is the first to be born into an era of smartphones. Most won't even remember a life before social media.

Admittedly, as they are still children, many of their adult characteristics are yet to be vetted. Nevertheless, early indicators point towards the following differences from their millennial siblings:
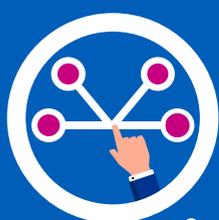
They're less focused

Gen Z are living in a world of continuous updates. They process information faster than other generations thanks to apps like Snapchat and Vine. Thus you won't blame them if their attention spans are significantly lower.

They're better multi-taskers

The typical Gen Z can create a document on their school computer, do research on their phone, while taking notes on a tablet, then finish it off in front of the TV with a laptop. All whilst face-timing a friend. You get the picture. Gen Z can shift very quickly between work and play.

They're early starters

Researchers are predicting that Gen Z will go straight into the workforce, opting out of the traditional route of higher education. They know the true value of independence, and knowledge is no exception. If a Gen Z'er knows they are capable of learning something themselves, through a more efficient, non-traditional route, you bet they'll grab that opportunity with both hands.

They're more cautious

Growing up amid tumultuous times of a global recession, war and terrorism has made Generation Z more realistic that opportunities are not boundless, as many millennials believe. They're expected to take less risks and seek more stability than the freedom and flexibility that millennials seek. They're expected to recognise the need to continue to master new skills to stay relevant and competitive. This could mean that learning and development plays an even bigger role in the future workplace.

They're more entrepreneurial

Being born into a highly networked and tech-fuelled world has resulted in the entire generation thinking and acting with an entrepreneurial hat on. Recent studies show that 72% of teens want to start a business of their own in the future.[15] They're constant creators, coming up with reams of ideas every day, taking inspiration from things they see and hear.

But what does this mean for companies of today?

That employee satisfaction survey that you've been screaming about over the past few years won't suddenly disappear overnight when this new cohort comes along. That satisfaction score that you've focused every effort into amplifying wont pale in significance, nor will the concept of employee satisfaction become a thing of the past.

The bottom line? Companies need to be forward looking. With the oldest members of these cohort only just leaving school, these teens of today are primed to become the dominant youth influencers of tomorrow. You need them on side and motivated.

The biggest mistake is to fall into a false sense of security and believe that they're just kids, there's nothing to be done now. This generation of youngsters are in school, but don't be fooled; this doesn't buy you any time. In the time it takes you to read this paper, this group of individuals are most likely making those key decisions which will influence their professional life ten years down the line. To take Biology or Maths at GCSE? To accept that accounting work placement or not? The decision points are bountiful and companies need to firmly plant themselves at the heart of them.

For example, the proportion of youngsters who consider a career in IT is waning, drastically more so with females[16]. Think about that age-old question "what do you want to be when you grow up?". Fireman, doctor, actress are all common answers, but how many children aspire to be a hacker or a programmer?

Even more worrying is that this interest wanes with age, again more so with females. Whereas 27% of girls in middle school (10–13 years-old) have considered an IT career, this drops to 18% among high schoolers (14–17 years-old). Furthermore, 69% of females who haven't considered an IT career attribute it to not knowing enough about what IT jobs involve, suggesting that lack of interest alone isn't the culprit.[17]
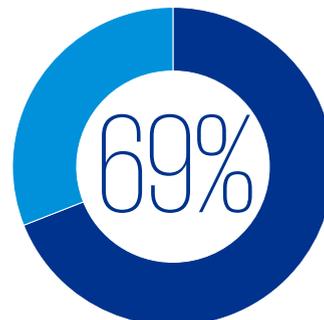
10–13 year-old girls who considered an IT career
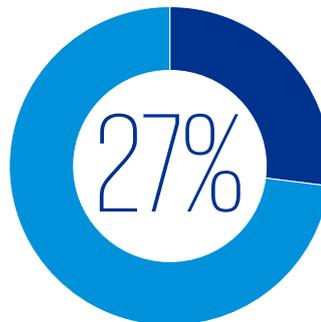
14–17 year-old girls who considered an IT career

27%

18%
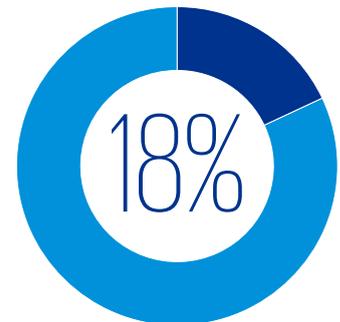
% of females who don't consider IT career as they don't know what it involves

69%

So what can companies do now?

Learning begins at home and at school. Generation Z's key role models are their parents and teachers. Companies need to embed themselves in these places to propel education in the right direction.

Generation Z have a limited perspective of IT careers; we need to start reversing this. Technology can be cool and companies have a responsibility to spread the word. Being a visual journalist, a music data scientist, a wildlife technology engineer all sits under the umbrella of technology – teachers need to start championing these opportunities in the classroom. Developing an alliance with a particularly primary school would help companies to start educating teachers.

Another factor that doesn't do Technology's reputation any favours is the vanilla-flavoured IT curriculum served to Generation Z. As kids these days begin their IT class, on the agenda is learning how to type, to save a word document, to create a pie chart in excel. Companies need to put themselves forward to spice things up. Taking over a single IT class for the day and showing children how to create a gaming application would no doubt be far more enthralling.

Generation Z also harbour a misconception around the nature of IT jobs. When asked what a career in IT would be like, youngsters home in on the stereotype that it means to be isolated, sedentary and operating alone in front of a screen for 40 hours a week. Again developing strong partnerships with local partnerships could facilitate change in this space. Simple initiatives such as inviting school children to the office for a day would go a long way in dispelling these claims. Needless to say these visits should be as entertaining as possible – perhaps running a robotics show and tell, or a simulation of how a hacker might break into a bank?

One strand of KPMG's Women in Technology programme, IT's Her Future, focuses on exactly this. Through the IHF Young Girls Campaign[18], KPMG is working to provide students with the right information about technology to enable them to make informed career decisions. The campaign also looks to place more of KPMG's technology-driven women in front of these young students, particularly to encourage young females to get involved and show them that it can indeed be done.

Our roadmap plans the campaign's execution through three main channels to achieve and maintain competitive advantage:

Secondary school engagement: through work experience, innovation days and mentoring programmes

Primary school engagement: through school visits to KPMG and vice versa

Teacher engagement: through provision of teacher toolkits and hosting interactive teacher conferences at KPMG offices

This three pronged approach tackles the problem at its root causes, and is feasibly imitable by any company savvy enough to make the investment. The ultimate aim is to start attracting young Gen Z candidates for apprenticeships and graduate programmes now, but the beneficial by-products are numerous. It acts as a lever to build up their technology knowledge so that they're better prepared once they reach the real world. This means less time spent on training and upskilling and more time delivering. Remember how we drilled home the importance of employee engagement? Well this also gives their millennial siblings the opportunity to engage with something other than daily project work, and view themselves as role models contributing to the community.

The moral of the story is that you need to act now. Miss the boat and you're opting to side step another pool brimming with talent and potential. Your loss.

Conclusion

Fast forward a year.

That all-too familiar email hits your already swamped inbox. The subject, "Employee Satisfaction Survey Results", still gives you the chills. You tentatively hover the mouse over the attachment, before opening with a small intake of breath.

Change has been rife this year and, lo and behold, it shows. **Employees are happy.**

There has been a recognition that today's workforce isn't quite the traditional, homogenous cohort that it once used to be, and **one size really doesn't fit all**. There has been a genuine focus on embracing and capitalising on these differences to move towards a more harmonised, generationally diverse workforce.

As a business leader, this year was one of learning.

You learnt that millennial workers are coaxed to the workplace by a distinct set of perks. They really value culture, especially where sense of purpose is bestowed. Trust is a huge thing for them. They want to be trusted with the flexibility to determine their own ways of working, and to be trusted to provide their opinions and views through open communication channels. As for money? It's no longer the only item at the top of the list.

You learnt that once they've got the job, millennial workers require quite particular offerings to keep them engaged and enthused. They're looking for support and guidance through mentoring to reach that ultimate goal. Millennials love to see the bigger picture in life and this is no change in the workplace. They want to be privy to this and have the ability to provide their own unique insights.

You learnt that millennial workers, more so than any other type, need to see particular incentives to make them stick around. Seeing a transparent path for career progression is critical, and this starts with offering them a stab at promotion opportunities before approaching the external market. Learning is also a must; a job becomes stagnant once professional development plateaus.

You learnt that millennial workers aren't the same. Females and males demand and offer different things. Where females seem to generally crave career progression, flexibility and balance, their male colleagues are happier with a good remuneration package complemented by enough career advancement opportunities.

And finally, you learnt that millennials aren't the only generation to worry about. Generation Z are just around the corner, and by embedding the company in the minds of schools, teachers, and parents, you're finally getting a head start in priming these young stars and addressing future skills shortages in technology.

The result? **Employees are happy.**

The vast amount historically spent on replacing dissatisfied workers with unmet needs, or wasted on failed attempts to attract millennial talent, is now sunk into better causes. HR's headache of constant recruitment and resignation has dissipated. Clients are happier as they can now rely on a more consistent delivery team, and the company's brand image has never looked better. Employees are delivering faster, innovating more and producing higher quality as they're voices are being heard. It sure is reflected in this year's bottom line profits.

And last year's low employee satisfaction score is, quite literally, a thing of the past.

Employee satisfaction

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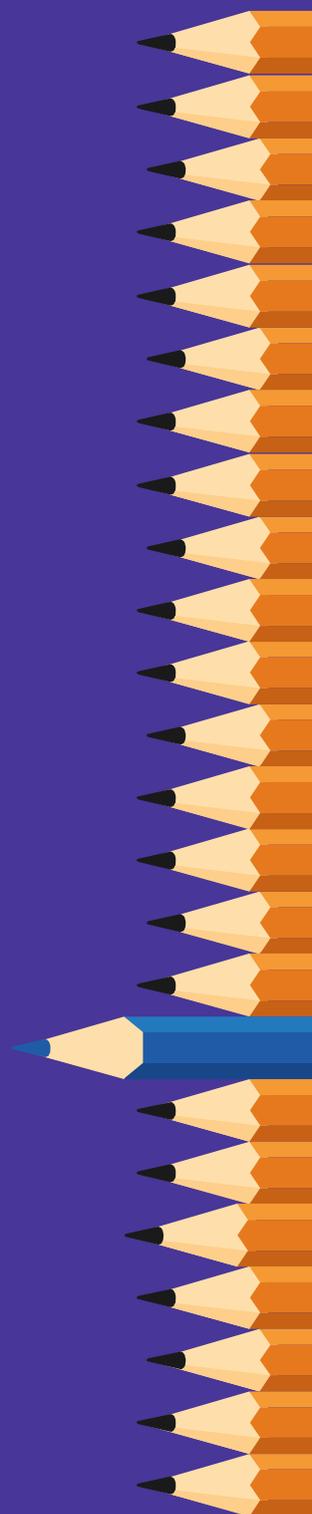
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