

Millennials Want Jobs That Promote Their Well-Being

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Story Highlights

- Work-life balance is especially crucial to millennials
- Millennials are least likely generation to be thriving across all five elements
- Well-being conversations require trust between employees and managers

Work-life balance is increasingly important in today's job market, but it's especially crucial to [millennials](#).

Nearly six in 10 members of this generation (57%) say that work-life balance and well-being in a job are "very important" to them. What's more, millennials -- whose propensity for technology has the potential to keep them constantly tethered to work emails and projects -- care a lot about having a job that actively promotes their well-being.

Defining Well-Being

[Well-being](#) encompasses all the ways people think about and experience their lives. Gallup and Healthways define and measure well-being in terms of five elements:

- **Purpose:** Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social:** Having supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial:** Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase

security

- **Community:** Liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical:** Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

In each of these five elements, individuals can be "thriving," "struggling" or "suffering," depending on how they answer several questions related to each facet of well-being in their lives.

These well-being metrics provide an in-depth perspective on the interaction and interdependency of factors that significantly affect work performance, such as finding fulfillment in daily work and interactions, having strong social relationships and access to the resources employees need, feeling financially secure, being physically healthy and taking part in a community.

Leaders can make a substantial difference in their employees' lives -- and enhance company performance -- by including well-being principles in their human capital strategy. Employees who are thriving in well-being perform better across a variety of measures, including missing fewer workdays, adapting to change more quickly and staying with their companies longer.

On the bright side, Gallup and Healthways research shows that millennials are more likely than those of other generations to be thriving in physical well-being and [are improving in key areas of health](#). But it also shows that employees who are thriving in all five elements of well-being are 81% less likely than those thriving only in [physical well-being](#) to seek out a new employer in the next year. This finding is particularly compelling, considering that millennials are the [most likely generation to job-hop](#).

Millennials Are Least Likely to Be Thriving Across All Well-Being Elements

Unfortunately, Gallup and Healthways have found that millennials (born

between 1980 and 1996) are the generation least likely to be thriving in all five elements of well-being. A mere 5% of working millennials are thriving across all five elements, and less than 40% of working millennials are thriving in any *one* element of well-being. Across all generations, just 7% are thriving in all five elements.

To greatly improve millennial workers' well-being, companies need to better understand the contributing factors behind this generation's low well-being, even as its members thrive in physical well-being.

For starters, only 29% of millennials strongly agree that they feel comfortable discussing life outside of work with their manager. When managers are open to conversations about life outside of work, they can more than double the likelihood that their millennial workers will be engaged in their jobs.

In fact, Gallup finds that 59% of millennial employees who strongly agree that they can talk with their manager about "non-work-related issues" are engaged at work. Well-being and employee engagement -- both powerful performance drivers -- go hand in hand and [can build on one another](#).

Further, 62% of millennials who feel they can talk with their manager about non-work-related issues say they plan to be with their current organization one year from now -- illustrating the power of meaningful manager-employee relationships. This dynamic can improve the likelihood of retaining millennial workers for the next 12 months by more than 50%, as only one in two millennials, on average, plan to be with their company one year from now.

Developing an Encouraging Manager-Millennial Relationship

However, an encouraging manager-millennial relationship doesn't happen overnight. Well-being conversations require trust between employees and their managers. Employees need to feel comfortable before they can share personal aspects of their life, such as their purpose, social and financial goals.

Likewise, managers need to know their employees well enough to understand when it makes sense to bring up well-being in conversation -- and which elements of well-being are areas of strength or opportunity for each unique employee. Companies need to inform and equip managers for conversations with employees, so managers have the necessary education and resources to provide helpful guidance and encourage employees to reach their goals.

Although conversations about work tasks and role demands are critical, they alone are not enough to satisfy employees and enhance performance -- especially with millennials. Millennials appreciate and desire communication with their managers, and they want to know that their manager cares about them as a person. Companies that aren't encouraging meaningful millennial-manager relationships are not doing enough to meet millennials' workplace needs.

Here are key takeaways for leaders seeking to increase employee well-being:

- Managers should be open to conversations with millennials about life outside of work.
- Individual employee development plans should include goals for each element of well-being.
- Companies should consistently provide well-being opportunities and activities for each element of well-being, such as periodic financial classes, access to a fitness center and volunteer programs within the community.
- In their recruiting and retention strategies, companies should emphasize work-life balance and how they promote a [culture of well-being](#).
- Higher well-being is not the outcome of a one-time initiative but of a *culture* that encourages careers that matter and lives that are well-lived.

The best managers ensure that their employees get every opportunity to excel in their lives outside of work. They do not view conversations about work, life, strengths and well-being as outside their realm of responsibility but as cornerstone characteristics of [performance-driving management](#). Great

managers realize that it takes time to foster connections with workers -- but that it's well worth the effort.

Survey Methods

Results are based on data collected as part of the national Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index survey from Jan. 2, 2014, through June 30, 2015. A total of 34,087 working millennials were included in the analysis. Work-life balance data are based on a web-based 2014 Gallup Panel of Households study, with a random sample of 1,392 working millennials, aged 18 and older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. For results based on the total sample of working millennials, the margin of sampling error is less than ± 0.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Each sample included a minimum quota of 50% cellphone respondents and 50% landline respondents, with additional minimum quotas by time zone within region. Landline and cellular telephone numbers were selected using random-digit-dial methods.

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