

GENERATION Y



Horwath HTLTM

Hotel, Tourism and Leisure

INDUSTRY REPORT

**Millennials as Guests
and Employees:
*Who they are and
what they want***

JUNE 2018

millennial

/mi'leniəl/ 

noun

plural noun: **millennials**

a person reaching young adulthood in the early 21st century.
 "the industry brims with theories on what makes millennials tick"

A quick Google search says it all - Millennials did not only ruin the napkin industry, but also lack manners, have too little sex and even killed the McDonald's Wrap; They are presumably accountable for everything going wrong in this world.

Whatever struggles your industry might find itself in (be it fashion, beer, cars, gyms, casinos or marmalade), the blame is probably being placed on them - the Millennials.

Is this also true for the hotel industry? Who are these Millennials and what do they really want from your hotel - apart from avocado toast for breakfast?

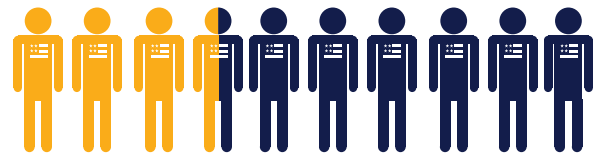
Thinking outside the box

The truth is, they are not what the media might have led you to believe. As employees, they are highly motivated and, in fact, hard-working; they are just working differently.

While representatives of older generations like to hold on to familiar structures and working methods because "that's the way it's always been done," Millennials are thinking outside the box.

Paul Breslin, Managing Director of Horwath HTL Atlanta and 30-year veteran of the hospitality industry, considers Millennials to be the most diligent employees: *"They are very hard-working and definitely not lazy, but you need to give them a platform, not a job."*

Did you know?



35% of the American workforce are Millennials

Source: Pew Research Center, April 2018

Born to be a GM?

Research conducted by Ernst & Young outlines the unique skills Millennials can bring into the workplace. The study showed that the Millennial generation outpaced Generation X and Baby Boomers in their ability to be inclusive leaders, making Millennials highly suitable for management and other leadership positions. In order for Millennials to unfold their full potential, it is important to create an environment that allows them to make mistakes and encourages them to go beyond their comfort zone.

The Millennials' ability to multi-task and handle stress is especially valuable in the fast-paced hospitality industry. Entailing ever-shifting tasks, responsibilities and priorities, the hotel industry is highly attractive for Millennials who are characterized by their openness to changing environments and new ideas.

In fact, Millennials are highly valuable employees who appreciate flexibility and the opportunity to participate in what is happening in their workplace.



In his book *'State of the American Workplace'*, Jim Clifton, CEO and Chairman of Gallup, emphasizes the importance of understanding that Millennials want to work for a company whose mission and culture reflects and reinforces their values. *"Most workers, many of whom are Millennials, approach a role and a company with a highly defined set of expectations. They want their work to have meaning and purpose."* he says. This statement does not only apply to Millennials as employees, but also as guests in a hotel.

"Fully understanding your guests can be achieved the same way as understanding your employees – It's all about figuring out the dynamics of their needs." Breslin adds.

Meeting their needs

Millennials already make up more than one third of the world's total number of hotel guests and are predicted to reach over 50 percent in the next few years. Knowing what they are looking for when they travel is all the more crucial for Hoteliers. Accordingly, Millennials are considered one of the most important segments for tourism due to their size and characteristics. Therefore, plenty of research has been conducted aiming to identify ways hotels can adapt to the unique desires and needs of Millennials.

Hotels of various brands are already making moves away from traditional design and amenities towards more modern ways to appeal to the younger, tech-savvy generation.

Did you know?

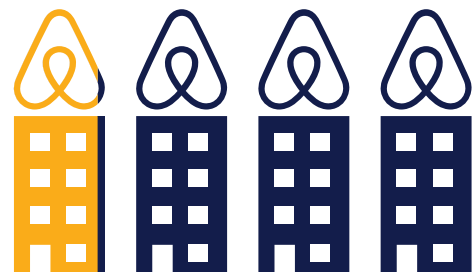


25% of millennial travelers like travelling alone

Source: *Future Of U.S. Millennial Travel* by Resonance

Residence Inn, for example, started hosting events multiple times a week, including visits from food trucks and chefs from local restaurants. Unique offers like these draw in Millennials wanting to experience the local culture in the most authentic way possible.

Did you know?



Airbnb is the preferred type of accommodation for 23% of Millennials

Source: *Future Of U.S. Millennial Travel* by Resonance



However, efforts of hotel brands to target the Millennial market do not end with just events or extravagant design - Radisson RED, for instance, launched an app that allows guests to check in, check out, access their room details, order food at the on-site restaurant and place requests to the hotel staff - all from their phone!

By revamping its room service, Hyatt Centric killed two birds with one stone: Firstly, the food delivery comes in a paper bag that guests can take with them while exploring the city. Secondly, the use of environmentally-friendly packaging appeals to the Millennial generation which is known to be highly eco-conscious.

Social media - a beneficial addiction?

Hoteliers criticizing the Millennial's alleged addiction to social media have obviously still not yet discovered the advantages of Millennials' affinity for modern technology. Hotels employing Millennials, for example, can use their expertise in social media to improve communication with visitors, which enormously helps to build a brand and reputation.

Adding a piece of cool art or a fancy mirror in your lobby does not only visually please guests, but also has the potential to be shared by them on social media and subsequently pop up on the timeline of hundreds or thousands of followers - forget about the reach of conventional marketing strategies!

Did you know?



71% of Millennial travelers enjoy Health & Fitness activities while on vacation

Source: Future Of U.S. Millennial Travel by Resonance

Instagram Moments

Paul Breslin has been consulting hotel developers for decades and understands the crucial role social media plays in hotel design decisions. Modern platforms like Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram have become indispensable in our daily lives and have therefore been an integral part of design decisions for the Westin Resort development in Foxhall, Georgia.

Years ago, when Harrison Merrill, Owner of Foxhall Resort, was referring to adding a fancy element to the hotel, he would talk about Kodak-Moments. Since Kodak has become obsolete and has long been substituted by modern memory-saving tools like Instagram, Harrison is now talking about Instagram Moments instead.

Resistance is futile

Millennials are definitely transforming the hospitality industry - both as employees and as guests. However, hoteliers can use this development to their advantage, provided that they fully understand their needs and desires and adapt outdated practices accordingly.

Resistance is futile, because Millennials are here to stay!

Sources:

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Paul Breslin, Managing Director of the Atlanta office of Horwath HTL, is a 35-year veteran of the hospitality industry. His background within the industry is all encompassing, with extensive experience in hotel operations, development and asset management with major branded hotels as well as independent and smaller luxury hotels. He has provided hospitality consulting services to many Fortune 500 companies, including The Coca-Cola Company, BB&T Corp., Marriott International, and Hilton Worldwide Holdings.

Paul is a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants and the Hotel Asset Managers Association. He is a Certified Hotel Administrator by the Educational Institute of AHLA. He is a founding member and immediate past president of the Atlanta Hospitality Alliance, and currently serves on its Board. Paul also serves on the Governmental Affairs Committee of the Georgia Hotels & Lodging Association.

As a Certified Hospitality Educator (CHE), Paul is the Executive-in-Residence in Lodging for the J. Mack Robinson College of Business, Cecil B. Day School of Hospitality at Georgia State University.



Kerstin Chyba
Intern
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Kerstin is currently pursuing her Bachelor degree in 'Export-Oriented Management' at the IMC University of Applied Sciences Krams in Austria. She speaks German, English and French.

Before starting her Internship in the Horwath HTL Atlanta, Kerstin spent an exchange semester at the IPAG Business School in Nice, France. Besides her studies, she has already been able to gain valuable experience in consulting. Kerstin has worked for a business and tax consultancy for several months, which helped her to broaden her knowledge and gather initial experience in the industry. Due to her affinity with the consulting industry, Kerstin wants to continue her career in consulting after her studies and eventually become a consultant herself.



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