

## BOOK REVIEW

Pritam Singh, Asha Bhandarker, and Sumita Rai. (2012). *Millennials and the Workplace: Challenges for Architecting the Organizations of Tomorrow* (New Delhi: Sage), pp. 233, (paperback), ISBN 978-81-321-0898-6, Rs. 425.

### **Reviewed by**

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The book starts emphatically with the blueprint that only species, institutions, and organizations that had capability to appropriately adapt to the changing environment could survive, grow, and excel. Sensitivity to the contextual challenges becomes an essential requirement for even mere survival of individuals and institutions. The book presents two anecdotes narrated by two Indian CEOs to illustrate and capture changing individual expectations and mindsets in the last 60 years. Contemporary organizations have to be well equipped and prepared to handle the complex challenge which is being thrown by the young generation of Millennials. This will be possible when organizations develop greater understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation about this generation and their aspirations, expectations, and mindsets. It is in this perspective that the unprecedented and remarkable project described in this book was undertaken to map out the expectations and profiles of the Millennials. The exclusive focus of the project was to explore the expectations and aspirations of people with a view to creating organizations that match those so that they can contribute their best to institution and nation building.

This book has been organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 (“Meaning of work and workplace: A panoramic view”) provides an excellent review of the literature on the significance of work in human life and human nature, and the meaning of workplace. The factors leading to greater meaning of work and workplace are brilliantly summarized. Age, gender, education, work experience, family background, place of upbringing, parental occupation, and parental styles are the demographic factors that affect meaning of workplace. Locus of control, achievement motivation, and personal values are the personality variables that predict meaning of workplace. The chapter also discusses the research design and framework utilized in this project. The key thrust of this research is on the Millennial generation which comprises people born after 1977. Understanding their expectations and meaning of workplace will be immensely useful to create the desired organization of the future. The project was carried out during 2007-2010, using both quantitative and qualitative research. The data for the project were gathered from 2170 respondents from leading engineering and management schools, with a final usable sample of 2158.

Chapter 2 (“Who are the Millennials?”) characterizes the Millennials in terms of their demographic and psychographic background profiles as well as selected personality factors such as achievement motivation, work locus of control, and personal values. The four personal values—personal growth, self-fulfillment, progressive orientation, and community development—are highly valued by the Millennials group. Millennials are highly achievement-oriented and also have high internal control beliefs. These characterizations are of immense value since they will help organizations to develop appropriate ways to build person-organization fit. The findings on personality have been examined across various demographic and psychographic variables.

Chapter 3 (“Meaning of workplace: Millennials’ valence”) describes the expectations of Millennials and examines them across various demographic and personality factors. Understanding the meaning of workplace from Millennials’ lens is the core around which new forms of organization need to be architected. Understanding Millennials’ expectations becomes much more critical in the coming decades as the war for talent becomes more severe on a global scale. Millennials crave for a workplace that provides freedom for experimentation, offers

opportunities to take initiatives, and encourages idea generation and innovation. The authors have looked at an excellent set of demographic factors including age, gender, nature of education, prior work experience, family type, parents' occupations and employment status, place of upbringing, and parental styles. They also studied selected personality factors and found that people with high self-fulfillment value, high personal growth value, high progressive value, high community value, and high achievement orientation have greater meaning of workplace expectations.

Chapter 4 ("Meaning of workplace: Expectations vs. reality of workplace attributes") brings out the gap between what Millennials expect from the workplace and what they get. On the one hand, Millennials have many higher order self-related developmental expectations like "Look for opportunities to actualize experiment and express their creativity," "be meaningfully engaged," and "become part of the community and contribute to society." On the other hand, Millennials are faced with the workplace realities that are anathema for self-development and creative self-expression, viz., they are bogged down by work culture characterized by hierarchical and top-down approach, drive for conformity, less attention to unleash human potential, and less sensitivity to people development. This chapter also examines the Millennials' expectations from their immediate superior as well as factors triggering the intention to leave the organization. Millennials prefer to work with an immediate supervisor whose style is more nurturing, who is open to meet people, who brings people together, who is empowering in his approach, who is fair, who is a good role model, and who inspires others. Perceptions of HR professionals regarding the Millennials have also been examined in this chapter. The authors have done a remarkable job in gathering these data, because HR professionals are key actors at the workplace in influencing policies related to employees at the workplace.

Chapter 5 ("Architecting the organization of tomorrow") attempts to sketch the contours of the new workplace that would create alignment between the individual's expectations and the organizational offerings. The chapter begins with an exciting and meaningful story that wonderfully highlights the essential wisdom that the world can be built by building the Millennials and the youth.

The book has successfully and convincingly established that organizations and leaders must map out the Millennials' dreams and aspirations and appropriately architect organizations and leadership styles. Organizations and leaders need to shift their mindsets from the shackles of the past and present to proactively respond to the emerging realities of the future. The authors have been very benevolent in creating checklists that will enable organizations and organizational members to build organizations of tomorrow responsive enough to meet Millennials' expectations, desires, and aspirations. The book concludes with an organizational DNA and a leadership code for meeting Millennials' expectations. The book should be read by everyone interested in developing appropriate organizations that would get Millennials excited about work.