

CONSUMERLAB



# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AT WORK



The working lives and expectations of the emerging professional generation in the US

An Ericsson Consumer Insight Summary Report  
April 2013

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## METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this report Ericsson ConsumerLab has conducted qualitative interviews with 64 22-29 year olds across San Francisco and Silicon Valley. Eight individual interviews were conducted with people in management positions responsible for younger employees, and four interviews with experts on the millennial generation.

Further to this, Ericsson ConsumerLab has carried out an online study of 1,945 respondents between the ages of 22-65. This sample represents online US knowledge workers. Of this group, 479 are classed as Super Millennials, as referred to in this report.

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Ericsson ConsumerLab gains its knowledge through a global consumer research program based on interviews with 100,000 individuals each year, in more than 40 countries and 15 megacities – statistically representing the views of 1.1 billion people.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used, and hundreds of hours are spent with consumers from different cultures.

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# THE LEADERS OF THE FUTURE

In this report Ericsson ConsumerLab looks at the latest generation to enter the workforce – the Millennials. In particular, we focus on those aged 22-29 who are currently in employment.

This generation will have a profound impact on working life in the future, as well as bringing new skills into the workplace. We examine their attitudes and behavior, and in particular their affiliation with communication and technology.

In the US, approximately 60 percent of the millennial generation are in work. Of this 60 percent, this report will focus on those with a college education who are ambitious, forward-looking and see themselves taking on leadership positions in the future. Those who come under this category are classed as Super Millennials, and it is these people who it is believed will have the greatest impact on future working life.

Throughout this report, all figures and references to Millennials refer to this smaller category.

## KEY FINDINGS

### > **Private communications**

Millennials' continual communicative behavior means they bring a good deal of their personal lives into work. However, they do not necessarily allow work to enter their private life.

### > **Changing policies**

It is now getting more common for Millennials to bring their personal devices into work. As a result, they will expect policies and cultures regarding use of personal devices to be a lot more open in the future.

### > **Private phones for work**

Almost half of Millennials use a private phone for work which they pay for themselves. This means that they also pay for work-related use.

### > **New expectations**

Millennials work differently from previous generations, placing different expectations on communication tools and work life in general. To keep them engaged and motivated, employers will need to address any subsequent points of tension in the workplace.

### > **Untapped potential**

Companies today are not taking full advantage of the special skills Millennials possess, especially when it comes to technology and their natural talent for collaboration – both key competencies for a successful company.

### > **Work/life balance**

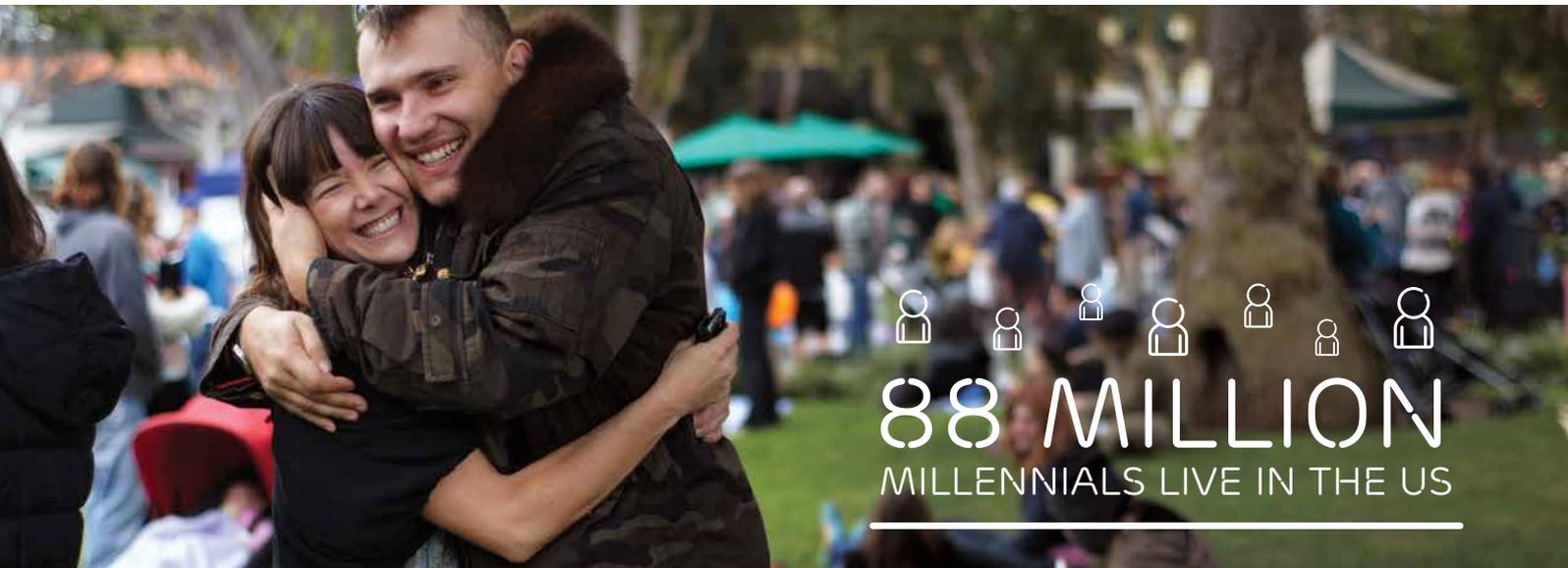
Keeping a balance between work and leisure time is very important to the millennial generation. Industries and businesses must come up with solutions to help them achieve this.



## SUPER MILLENNIALS

will have the greatest impact on future working life

# WHO ARE THE MILLENNIALS?



88 MILLION  
MILLENNIALS LIVE IN THE US

The millennial generation is a large one, comprising some 88 million individuals in the US alone. This number is far greater than that of the previous generation – Generation X – which is generally estimated to be around 55 million. The number of Millennials in the workplace will soon outnumber other generations.

The way in which Millennials were raised has had a profound impact on their world view. Parents of the boomer generation had a tendency to hover attentively around their children, directing and supervising a broad range of activities. As a result, the millennial generation



Millennials want to know the big picture. They also feel that they should have a friendship with their supervisor. They are very egalitarian in their world view because they grew up with their parents being their best friends.”

Expert in the millennial generation  
Karen Myers

grew up feeling cherished and unique. This has implications and challenges for the workplace.

Throughout their childhoods, Millennials were encouraged to have close relationships with their parents, teachers and coaches. This has carried over into the workplace. Millennials want close relationships with their supervisors, and expect frequent feedback. They dislike ambiguity and expect transparency and fairness in all their dealings with work organizations.

Unlike their boomer parents, Millennials are not workaholics. They believe in a clearly defined work/life balance, and they expect companies to have policies in place to help them achieve this. Though goal-oriented, Millennials are not as long-sighted as their predecessors. They are less willing to pay dues, and unlikely to pursue the delayed gratification of a gradual promotion track.

One of the most notable differences between Millennials and other generations is their relationship with technology. Due to the rapid changes in technology over the last 25 years, Millennials have become highly adaptable and naturally fast-paced. In their eyes change is a constant, which can lead to impatience when working in organizations using outdated technology.

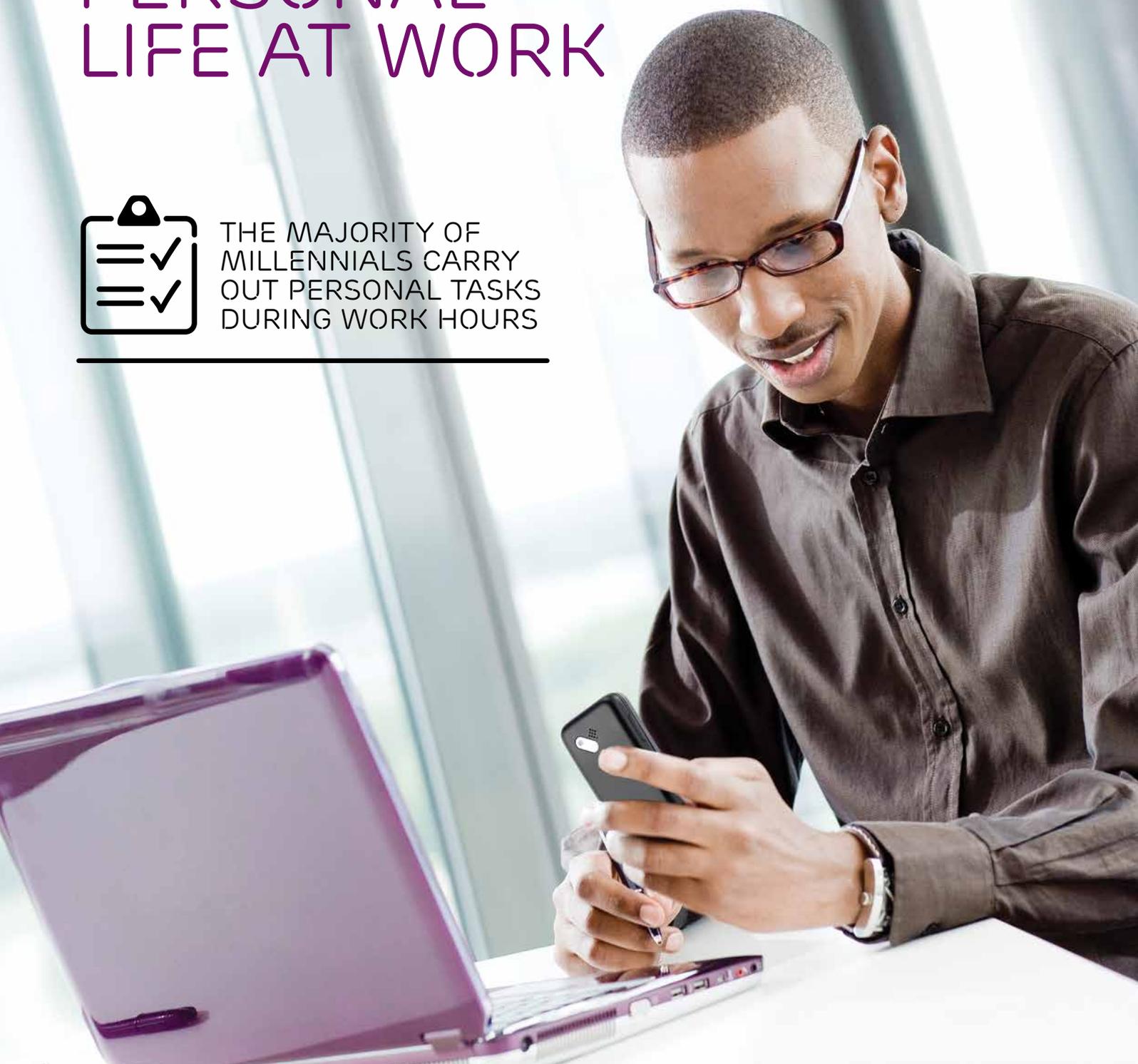
Newer technologies have enabled fast-paced communication to become second nature to Millennials. They are particularly adept at working in teams, having been frequently encouraged to do so throughout their school years.

# PERSONAL LIFE AT WORK



THE MAJORITY OF  
MILLENNIALS CARRY  
OUT PERSONAL TASKS  
DURING WORK HOURS

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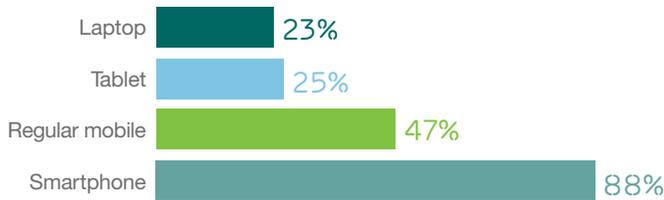


In their personal lives, Millennials are in continual correspondence with friends and family. This has an impact on how they behave at work. The majority of Millennials say they carry out personal tasks during work hours. Though keen to perform well at work, it is virtually impossible for them to leave their personal lives behind, as they typically check Facebook, conduct IM chats and send and receive texts on their devices throughout the day. This is seen as a right rather than a benefit.

However, it does not work both ways. Millennials are less willing to let work disrupt their private lives – especially at the weekend. This reluctance is partly due to how they view life in general. They view work as just one aspect of life, and place more value on the sanctity of free time compared to previous generations.

# BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE

Figure 1: Personal devices regularly brought to work



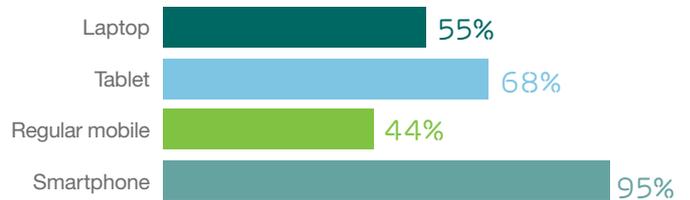
Source: Ericsson ConsumerLab, Young Professionals at Work 2013  
Study base: Personally own respective devices

Millennials rely on their connected devices for both work and personal use.

Smartphones provided by an employer are more regularly taken home from work than any other work device. They are also the most common personal device to be brought into work. People tend to have a more emotional attachment to their smartphones, as their personal apps and social networks help them to maintain a connection with the outside world. This makes them difficult to be without.

As many as 25 percent of Millennials regularly bring their personal laptop or tablet into the workplace. These are mostly used for a combination of personal and work-related tasks. 37 percent of those who bring personal devices into work use them only for personal reasons; the main reason for this is to avoid employers interfering with their private life. On a work device, the chance of this happening is greater.

Figure 2: Work devices regularly taken home

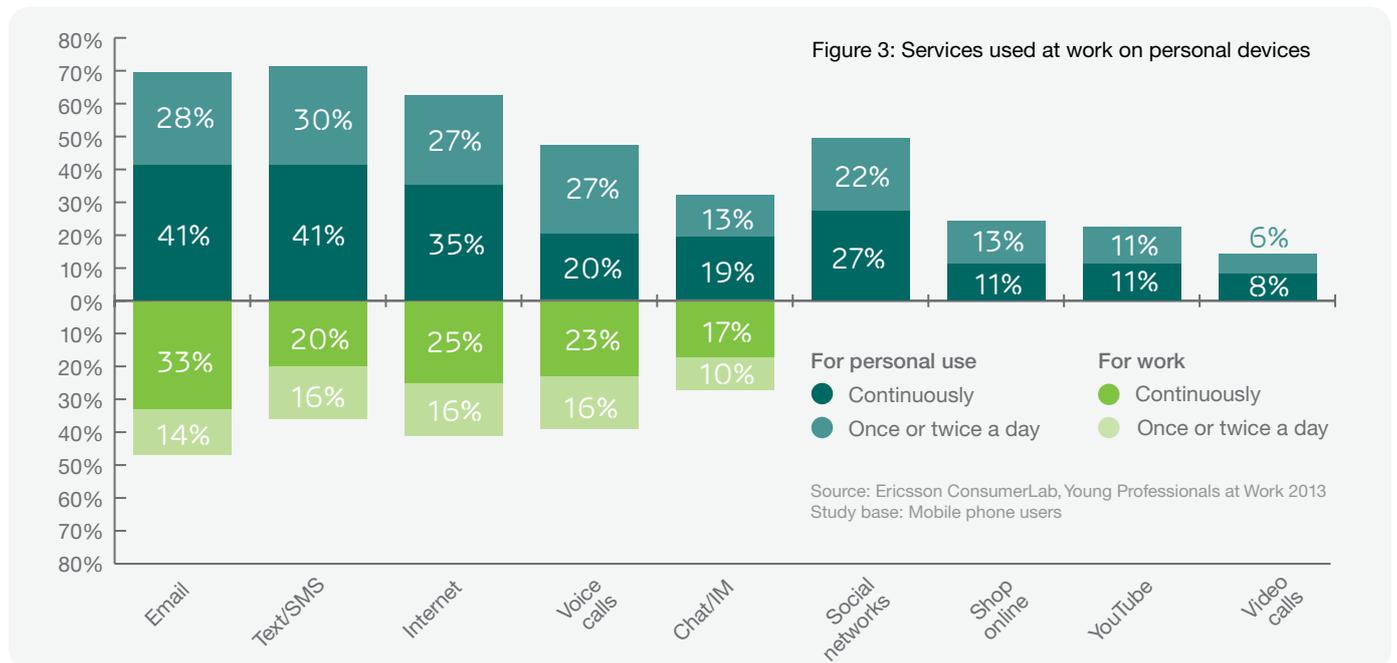


Source: Ericsson ConsumerLab, Young Professionals at Work 2013  
Study base: Have respective devices provided by employer

Half of Millennials regularly bring a laptop, tablet or regular mobile phone home from the workplace. This is usually for a combination of work and personal tasks, or for work tasks only. Those who leave their devices at work do so to avoid carrying them back and forth, and to keep their work and personal lives separate.

As a result of this crossover, company policies are changing. Most companies still pursue policies regarding which services/apps their employees are allowed to install on their work devices.

However, the Millennial habit of bringing personal communication to work has forced companies to make other policies more open, allowing personally owned devices to be connected to the work network and giving them access to work communication services.



# MANY PAY FOR WORK USE



## 45% PAY FOR WORK USE

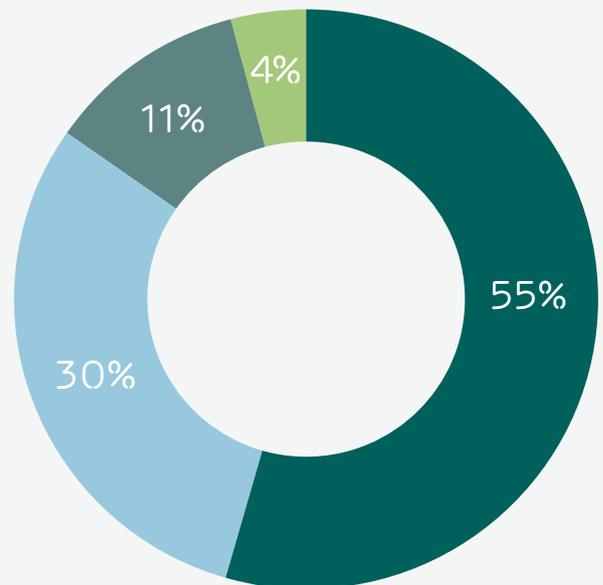


There is a pattern to the way in which most Millennials use their mobile phones. While the majority use a single phone for both private and work-related tasks, 30 percent only use their phone for personal reasons.

As we've seen, many use their private phones for work. 45 percent pay for this themselves, covering the cost of both work and personal communication. 23 percent have their mobile phone subscriptions either fully or partly paid for by their employer. In this case it is more likely to be a smartphone than a regular phone.

However, having part or all of the subscription paid for by the employer is not always considered a good thing. When those who pay their own subscriptions were asked if they would like to have their mobile phone provided and paid for by their employer, 50 percent said no. The main reason for this comes back to keeping work life and personal life separate.

Figure 4: How many mobile phones do you use?



- One - Both for work and personal use
- One - Personal use only
- Two - One for work, one for personal use
- Two - For both

Source: Ericsson ConsumerLab, Young Professionals at Work 2013  
Study base: Mobile phone users

# NATURAL SKILLS FOR COMMUNICATION



I remember how people respond to different communication. I take mental notes, I just remember.”

Millennial

Responsiveness is a hallmark of the millennial generation. They seem to have a natural understanding of each method of communication, carrying a mental profile of each one's strengths and weaknesses and which situations they are best suited for.

Millennials use a wide range of communication tools. In order to be useful, these tools must meet several conditions. They should:

- > Be asynchronous, allowing the recipient time to respond to a message in their own time, as well as offering the potential for immediate feedback
- > Be multi-modal, allowing multiple connections at the same time, either as a group or with simultaneous individual conversations
- > Be casual, allowing participants to connect naturally without impositions on how a conversation should be conducted

- > Be rich, with the ability to convey a complete range of human emotion
- > Enable attachments and links
- > Be mobile, operating from multiple platforms wherever the user happens to be
- > Provide an electronic record of what was said and agreed to

Ideally, it should be possible to carry out multiple tasks simultaneously and not demand all of the user's attention at once. Millennials favor modes that allow them to multitask, deliberately avoiding those that don't. Multitasking comes naturally to this generation – they grew up with it.

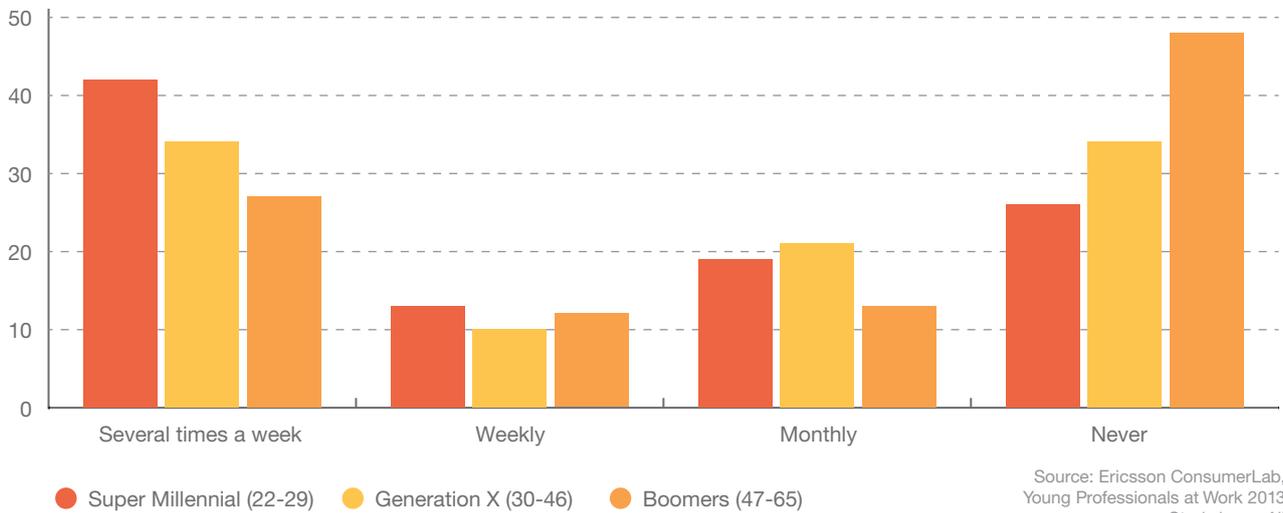


For Millennials, technology is a sixth sense. It's a way of knowing the world. There is no real cognitive processing like there is for other generations who learn it later in life.”

Expert in the millennial generation  
Andrea Hershatter

# THE POWER OF PERSONAL NETWORKS

Figure 5: How often do you use your personal social network for work related issues?



Reaching out to friends and contacts comes naturally to Millennials, not only personally but professionally. They use the power of their personal networks to solve work-related issues, where previous generations would have confined these questions to their colleagues. Personal networks can be used to address a variety of tasks, but are most often used for small, tactical jobs. In this way the company benefits too.

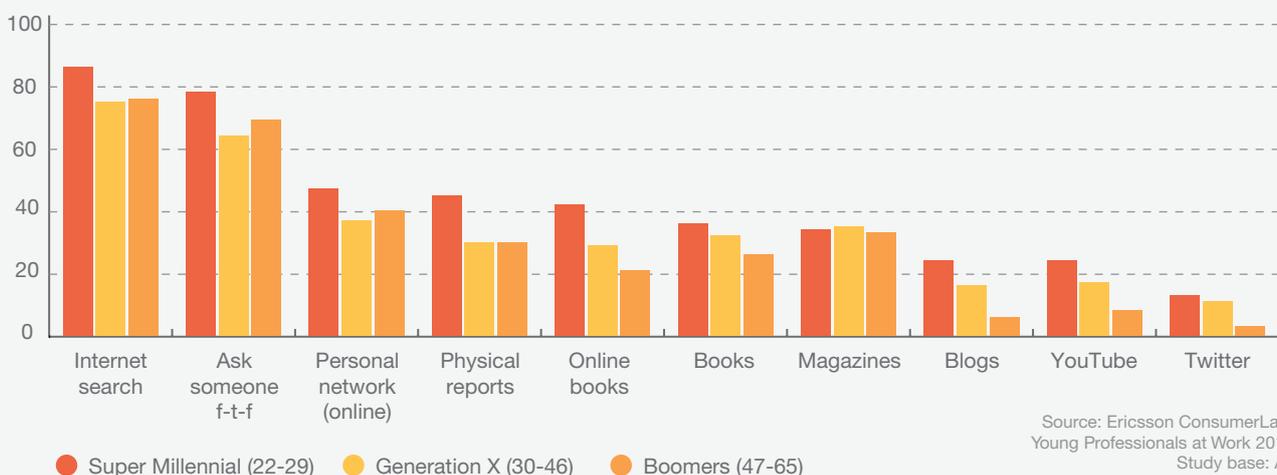
While internet searches still dominate across the board when it comes to information gathering, the second choice is usually to ask someone face-to-face.



USE A PERSONAL NETWORK TO GET HELP FOR WORK-RELATED ISSUES EVERY DAY

Physical sources such as books, magazines, journals and newspaper articles are still used frequently, even among the digital generation. But when it comes to more recent online sources such as blogs and Twitter, younger generations are the predominant users.

Figure 6: Most common sources of information gathering for work



# POINTS OF TENSION



A WORK/LIFE  
BALANCE IS  
AN IMPORTANT  
FACTOR FOR  
MILLENNIALS

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When entering work for the first time, most points of tension stem from the differences people experience between what life is like at work, and what it was like growing up.

At a time when jobs are relatively scarce, Millennials are entering the workforce in huge numbers. For many, the

“They are very, very comfortable with change. They have a global awareness, they are very resilient, they are technologically very savvy, creative and collaborative.”

Expert in the millennial generation  
Maureen Buehler

future is uncertain. This reality has been difficult for them as it challenges their natural optimism and self-confidence, characteristics acquired from their upbringing by doting boomer parents.

As previously discussed, a key factor for many Millennials is their company’s respect for a work/life balance. This is one of the most important components for job satisfaction. Maintaining relationships with friends and family is considered very high priority. Millennials are happiest when they have flexible working hours (with no overtime), liberal policies towards personal communications, the option to telecommute on certain days and the ability to block work communications at the weekend.

The sense of equality that Millennials learned from their friendships with parents and teachers growing up translates directly to the workplace. Millennials expect everyone to be equal, and for there to be transparency, fairness – and no hierarchy.

Finally, Millennials are impatient. As part of the Facebook generation, they want instant gratification. This gives them a low tolerance for modes of communication that are slow or do not provide immediate feedback.

# WHAT MAKES AN IDEAL COMPANY?



TRANSPARENCY,  
CLEAR DIRECTIONS  
AND CONSTANT  
FEEDBACK

Millennials are excellent natural collaborators, and perform well working closely in teams enabled by technology. As proficient multitaskers, they favor modes of communication that allow them to do many things at once – and become impatient with companies that fail to invest in up-to-date collaborative technology. Growing up with change as a constant has made them naturally innovative and more forward-looking than previous generations.

In the eyes of a Millennial, an ideal company should allow them to sustain their personal lives at work. It should also offer them the opportunity to work in teams, preferably with others of their own age. There should be transparency, clear directions and constant feedback from managers and supervisors, with whom Millennials expect to have a close relationship. In order to perform optimally, having the latest technology is a must, especially when it comes to communication.

While the ideal company by this description is rare, it is likely that more will emerge in the future. As Millennials themselves get into power and start taking on management positions, working life as we know it looks set to change, becoming more networked, social and collaborative – with a greater emphasis on uninterrupted leisure time.



When Millennials become managers, I think there will be zero tolerance for inefficient systems in technology. They already don't understand the legacy systems.”

Expert in the millennial generation  
Andrea Hershatter



## NETWORKED, SOCIAL AND COLLABORATIVE

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