



Four Ways to Increase Millennial Engagement at Pediatric Hospitals and Health Systems

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Millennials are a perplexing generation, and this can make the task of effectively engaging them seem daunting. But understanding how they operate is crucial in discerning how to effectively engage them as employees, patients, and parents of patients.¹ Below are a few tips for increasing millennial engagement at pediatric hospitals and health systems.

1. Focus on Relationships

This cohort is hyper-connected; they are people-people and prioritize relationships. Millennials want to form connections and utilize their relationships as resources in the decision-making processes. Millennials want to build trust not only with their friends and family, but also with their colleagues at work and the doctors and nurses who care for them and their children. Millennials thrive in environments of open communication. In the workplace, millennials prefer to receive frequent feedback, so they know exactly where they stand and what's expected of them. The same goes for a healthcare setting. Whether it's themselves or their children who are the patients, they want constant and clear communication. Healthcare organizations that provide proactive information will gain loyalty from this generation.

2. Connect to Purpose

Millennials are highly connected to *purpose*. When organizations can connect the dots in how their mission relates to millennials' personal values, they build loyalty with them as employees and as patients and parents of

¹ For more information, see *Millennials as Parents Are Challenging the Conventions of Pediatric Care* (white paper), National Research Corporation (available at <http://go.nrchealth.com/MillennialWP>).

patients. Connecting the millennial workforce to the mission of your organization can effectively turn a new millennial consumer into a walking brand advocate who spreads the message about your organization to others seeking a recommendation.

3. Ensure Their Voice Is Heard

Be sure to include them—like members of any generation—in the conversation. If they are part of your workforce, provide an interdisciplinary team for them to work with to make a difference and build relationships across the organization. If they are parents of patients, include them on your patient and family advisory council. And when they provide their feedback, make sure real change is implemented from these conversations. If this generation feels their voice is unheard, they will disengage. Transparency is second nature to them, and a standard requirement rather than a “nice to have,” as it was for previous generations.

Meet Them Where They Are

The wants of prior generations are the expectations of the millennial generation. When selecting a healthcare provider, millennials look for an organization that can deliver tailored and personalized experiences—especially when it comes to care for their children. They don't want to feel like another number; they want individualized advice from someone with their family's best interest in mind.

In the workplace, millennials are looking for work/life balance. They want freedom to complete their work in a way that's rewarding to them, and flexibility to pursue commitments outside of work. Being able to attend a child's soccer game or a parent's doctor's appointment is important to them.

Meeting millennials where they are and tailoring experiences to fit their expectations can take sacrifice from the organizational standpoint. But, if done successfully, it will equate to engaged and loyal millennial employees, patients, and parents of patients, who will also be your most cost-efficient advocates.

Board Takeaways

As boards of pediatric hospitals and health systems focus on improving the patient experience, they should pay special attention to millennials. This includes taking time to consider the following:

- Does our mission and brand speak to millennials? How can we build loyalty with this group?
- How does our organization ensure that the millennial voice is heard and that we are

acting on their concerns or ideas for improvements?

- In what ways are we tailoring experiencing to match millennials' expectations (e.g., providing personalized care, wellness opportunities, convenient access points, price transparency, a positive work/life balance for employees, etc.)?
- What more can we do to provide a positive online/digital experience?

Engaging millennials means looking at your hospital or health system from their perspective and intentionally making improvements that appeal to them. This will become increasingly important and healthcare leaders that focus on the expectations and needs of millennials will help move their organizations towards being more innovative, forward-thinking, and prepared for future generations.

The Governance Institute thanks Megan Charko, Program Manager, Pediatrics at NRC Health, for contributing this article. She can be reached at mcharko@nrchealth.com.

