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Casino & Gaming International



LOVE, LEARN AND LAUGH: LEADING MILLENNIALS



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There's a new breed of workforce coming our way. We've all heard about them although some of us have not "seen one" yet. Many leaders are quite concerned about this new generation and the need for adapt. These new contributors are young, educated, intensely social, committed to a healthy work-life balance, confident and opinionated, hungry for career progression and in need of constant appraisal and recognition. You've recognised them, they're the Millennials.

How can we build the future of our companies, making the most of the unique skills and attitudes that are filling the seats in the office today? Millennials call for a different approach and failing to adapt to this new workforce can only mean two things for leaders: accepting an ageing workforce that will gradually become out of touch with today's consumers, or suffering from an unhealthy level of attrition amongst employees.

As CMO of Betsson Group, I welcome a growing percentage of Millennials in my team, and while I won't pretend I have it all figured out, I can detect the beginning of a winning recipe when it comes to keeping these young employees- often first-jobbers- engaged, committed and productive.

I can summarise my approach quite simply- I call it "3-L": Love, learn and laugh.

LOVE

Millennials have been raised to believe that they're unique, they'll make a difference and they can do whatever they want. "Love what you do. Do what you love" is the mantra of this generation who are not after "a career" per se but whose aspirations amount to a lot more than just paying the bills. Then they start working and the reality hits them in the face; two things happen:

1. "What do you mean I can't become CEO in 3 months?!".

They realise they're going to have to climb the ladder one step at a time and in a world of quarterly appraisals, they're not going to be treated differently and promoted every week to the next level. This can lead to major disappointment and many Millennials can't cope. They take up freelance positions where the relative freedom makes up for the lack of advancement. The risk for the employer is to have a workforce that becomes disappointed and disillusioned within a few months of joining a company, leading to an unhealthy attrition level. It's important to remember that Millennials don't stick around when they're disappointed. It's a generation who would rather go back to live with their parents, rent free, rather than stay in a role that they feel is going nowhere.

2. "That's IT?!".

They realise that there is a routine and a boring side to any job. They imagined their role would be fun and exciting every minute of every day. The reality is nothing like that. "Social Media Executive" sounds like a dream come true for someone who nurtures their friendships via Instagram, but the reality- the tracking, the reporting, the processes- make this role a basic, millennial nightmare.

The solution to this issue is LOVE- an emotion any human being craves. Love who you work with, love the process and perfecting it, love a job well done, love pushing your boundaries, love the excitement of being challenged, love feeling that your role matters and is indispensable within the big matrix, love the company and caring for the company's

results above your own, love being part of something big.

In the same way that children, as they grow up, need to play games with increasingly sophisticated rules to keep them challenged, Millennials need to be shown that business is a game where you win or you lose and a lot is at stake. However, the principles of "Dragon City" or any game app still apply: you chose your supply, you understand the demand, you prepare for battle, you plan for the future... The big difference between a Millennial and someone joining a company in the 90's (many of today's leaders) is that we were quite happy to be told "sit here and do this", whereas Millennials need to know what's being done around them by others, why, and the long term impact of this action on society, mankind... Once convinced by the grand plan, a Millennial will demonstrate a level of passion and commitment second to none.

Creating a genuine attachment to the company means finding a way for Millennials to not feel like a number in a matrix. One way to make the marketing department at Betsson more endearing to our 200 marketers- to make our function more concrete and "human"- was to create an entity within the group, with its own personality, mission statement, modus operandi that makes it distinct yet highly compatible with the rest of the group. The outcome was the creation of "BMS" Betsson Marketing Services, the in-house 360 degree marketing agency servicing Betsson Group's 27 brands worldwide. The level of passion to find the name and create the visual identity of our in-house agency was second to none, and the pride and sense of belonging it instilled was absolutely outstanding compared to the costs involved- nil!



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LEARN

Humility is not the main forte of Millennials. Having had access to unlimited information from birth, with contacts all over the world and a little bit of knowledge about a wide variety of topics, they tend to consider themselves pretty "advanced" at whatever they've never done before.

No free meal, ping pong table or team bonding exercise will keep Millennials from leaving your company. An on-going, intense, challenging learning curve will. Being a high tech baby has its advantages: Millennials' ability to process information and to check the validity of the source is second to none; their confidence empowers them to question the status quo a lot more often than their older counterparts, and to confidently approach senior management to discuss their ideas.

The way to make the most of Millennials, is two fold:

- 1) Encourage them to list what they've learned and what they want to learn and help them make a plan to cover this,
- 2) Give them access to an outlet where they can express what they've learnt and the thoughts that come from this learning. Having visibility and access to the top layer of the company is important to Millennials. They often join a company because of its CEO or founder, so they expect to have access to this person. They may be thinking they're about to 'teach the CEO how it's done', and will certainly will come out delighted at what they have learned or understood, and energised about the way ahead.

Millennials tend to dip in and out of a lot of activities and have a wide variety of interests. Committing to ONE thing is not a typical approach to life: they blog, they design, they make, they create... They are as deeply rooted in the tech world as they are in the real one. As a leader it is important to make the most of their natural curiosity and desire to explore by offering training on skills that are peripheral to their role. Unlike older generations who tend to focus on a task and want to become the best at it, it is uncommon for Millennials to commit to only one topic. They want to understand how the whole company works, they may work in marketing but they want to know how products are created and how P&L works. Offering training in all sorts of shapes (attending conferences, shadowing

colleagues, online courses...) and even making them compulsory and playing on Millennials' natural competitiveness by organising exams and challenges is a great way to keep them engaged, make them feel nurtured by their workplace and satisfy their natural curiosity and need for variety.

At Betsson, I encourage marketers to widen and deepen their skills. We pay for courses and conference attendance, we organise in-house training from in-house gurus, we invite speakers from the outside world, we organise contests, task forces and hackathons around innovation and efficiency... It's all work in progress and our training commitment keeps evolving to accommodate our employees' needs and company's goals. However, the only rule that governs all these activities is that you have to share what you learned with colleagues and spread your newly acquired knowledge. This turns the student into a teacher, giving him the responsibility to grow the company knowledge in a scalable way while ensuring that he really learns and understands.

LAUGH

The sense of belonging is a must for everyone, as described in Abraham Maslow's work The Hierarchy Of Human Needs. Millennials' need for belonging is strong and ongoing. Even when alone, Millennials are not alone: they're connected via technology to their friends or some kind of interest group or forum... Furthermore, they place a high value on virtual relationships so they consider their network to be limitless. Millennials don't keep their experiences or thoughts to themselves; for them, experiences only have a value once shared- food is photographed before being eaten, concerts are viewed through the screen of a smartphone.

Nothing reassures me more than when I hear a burst of laughter in my team. To me, this is like a confirmation that I got the team right. It's the audible proof that there is a glue that keeps the team together, it's the sound of the oil that makes the collaboration process smooth, the transparent tie that promises that tomorrow, they'll be back at their desk, ready for more and having a good time.

Any comedian will tell you that it is much more difficult to make people laugh than it is to make people cry. There's no recipe to ensure we all get our three minutes of laughter per day (healthy ratio), and as a leader, as a manager, I certainly

can't rate or instigate or force that. But what I can do is to set up an environment where laughing, bonding, sharing are encouraged. Soldiers at war laugh, nurses and surgeons laugh, even prison guards laugh at work. A serious job, responsibilities or a uniform do not stop people from laughing and bonding. Lack of trust does. Laughing demands letting go of control, being yourself and sharing with others, and it requires a healthy level of "psychological safety". Interestingly, psychological safety happens to be the secret ingredient that Google found to be at the root of the most successful teams in the world. Psychological safety is defined as such in Wikipedia: "a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking. It can be defined as "being able to show and employ one's self without fear of negative consequences of self-image, status or career". In psychologically-safe teams, team members feel accepted and respected."

Psychological safety is the ability to be yourself, to count on others, to know you'll be supported if needs be and you'll be there for others, that there is a high level of empathy and genuine caring within the team and that it's equally positive to be honest about your weaknesses as it is to show your strengths. Psychological safety implies that team members feel comfortable expressing conflicting opinions and taking risks. Indeed, it is impossible to be funny in an environment where conflict is avoided at all costs, diversity of thoughts is not encouraged and political-correctness censors self expression. Laughter can't be forced, but it can be welcomed and encouraged.

I was lucky to be exposed to a great deal of laughter and camaraderie when working for start ups. Google was a start up when I joined in 2003 and so was Eventbrite when I joined in 2012. One of the peculiarities of start ups to which I am most attached, is that work is discovered as you go along; things are not figured out in advance like in larger, older corporations. People have to embrace responsibilities way beyond their job description; crisis happen often and unexpectedly and demand innovation and collaboration; a certain level of mayhem is constant, from which the magic happens and upon which the company grows and matures. There is also an acceptance of failure and learnings because new boundaries are being explored. This is an environment that is highly conducive to pushing everyone's boundaries while exposing individual personalities, hang ups and weaknesses. In this environment, fostering "try, fail and learn fast" and a solid sense of humour is the glue that turns anxiety into excitement, obstacles into challenges. This start up mentality is almost impossible to recreate at scale in a large group if it is not already in its DNA and company culture, but it is totally possible to welcome it within a specific function. So I re used many tricks and tools from Google and Eventbrite: from a monthly "Make It Happen" award, to having walls turned into white boards for brainstorming purposes and for listing the funniest quotes of the moment as well as motivational and humorous phrases.

So here you have it: my ever-evolving recipe to building the future of our companies, making the most of the unique traits of Millennials, this wonderfully creative and confident workforce that are stepping into our offices.

LOVE: Help them fall in love with their role, their department and the company they work for, encourage empathy amongst team members.

LEARN: Focus on continuously challenging what they know and pushing them to learn every day and set learning goals

LAUGH: Encourage camaraderie and psychological safety as well as a sense of belonging and collaboration with a good laugh now and again. **CGI**

MARION GAMEL

Marion Gamel started her career in Paris in the fashion industry. After working for international fashion houses, she moved to London. In 1995, Marion co founded the first magazine for the modeling industry: NG Magazine, in partnership with Emma Heming-Willis, the publication peaked at 45,000 copies worldwide.

While attempting to put NG magazine online in the late 90's, Marion caught the "Internet bug" and started working in 2000 for the European online advertising group AdLink as Marketing Manager for the UK and Ireland, where she joined forces with the Internet Advertising Bureau to evangelise the media and advertising industry about the opportunities offered by digital advertising.

In 2003, Marion joined Google as a founding member of the European marketing team, reporting to Lorraine Twohill, Google's CMO. For 2 years Marion was Marketing Manager for the UK and Ireland, where she launched Google's B2B products: AdWords and AdSense, as well as consumer products such as Gmail and Google Book Search. She also created Google's first ever branding campaign: Doodle4Google, that was then used in 20 markets, and for which she received the Founders' Award. In 2005, Marion saw a great opportunity for Google in India where the Internet giant had no domestic operations. With a strategy approved, she moved to Bombay in 2006 where she was Head of Marketing for India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In 2008, Marion turned her focus on the Middle East and Africa where she lead Marketing and before she left Google in 2010, she was looking after emerging markets of Eastern Europe.

After consulting for a couple of years, Marion was appointed VP of Marketing EMEA in 2012 by the global and fast-growing Internet ticketing and event marketplace Eventbrite, where she built a European team and grew Europe's contribution from 6 to over 15% of its global revenue. She left Eventbrite in 2015 to launch her own consultancy, MarketingFuel, offering two services: A "CMO on Demand" for fast growing tech companies as well as coaching for young C-level executives.

In January 2016, Marion joined Betsson Group, European leader in online gaming, as CMO. Marion is also the CEO of Betsson Services, the group's marketing agency. She currently lives in Malta, manages a large team of marketers looking after the group's 25+ brands globally.