

Top 10 Lessons Learned from 2014 ACT-IAC Associates

1. **Success starts at 5PM – after work, it is time to network**
2. **It is more about what you know and who knows you, than who you know**
3. **Invest in public speaking skills – be ready to take the mic**
4. **Develop an elevator pitch – anything worth saying can be said in 20 seconds**
5. **Do not be afraid to use new tricks; gamification, social media, and other tools can and do belong in the workplace**
6. **Always build mutually-beneficial relationships; networking is not selling and one-way streets become dead ends**
7. **Seek opportunities for new leadership roles – even on lost causes – success will be empowering**
8. **Become the person people think of when they need answers to tough questions**
9. **In addition to performance, young professionals need a champion to advocate for success**
10. **Be aware of impact; it is far more visible than intent**

Millennials in the Marketplace

- ☛ In 2013, 378 government employees retired each day; 43 percent of those remaining are eligible to retire within the next five years
- ☛ Cost constraints industry-wide encourage an influx of young professional hires, but professional development opportunities are uneven
- ☛ Industry associations and programs, like ACT-IAC's Associates Program, fill the mentoring and skills development gaps

- ☛ Millennials have some difficult stereotypes to overcome, and the first step is to adapt to existing workplace norms in order to be heard
- ☛ Open-minded companies should look to how the next generation of employees interacts with technology to maximize productivity
- ☛ Millennials will comprise nearly half of the federal workforce by 2020 – embracing them is a matter of necessity more so than cost cutting

Going Green

As the federal sector struggles to find more ways to lower costs, greening staff – bringing in newer, younger, and, more importantly, cheaper talent – is trending upward. Having harvested most of the low-hanging fruit of cost reduction, industry is now addressing less-elastic costs in the direct labor base by using younger talent to rebalance rates. With more employees retiring every day, the Federal Government is in the midst of its own human capital crunch, increasingly backfilling with under-30 talent. Regardless of the underlying cause, the same challenge presents itself: greening staff generates a mid-tier leadership void ripe for young professionals to fill, but management and millennials alike lack many of the critical elements for successful transition. “Going green” succeeds when young professionals who invest time to master essential industry skills are paired with management teams who understand and embrace millennial culture and ideas.

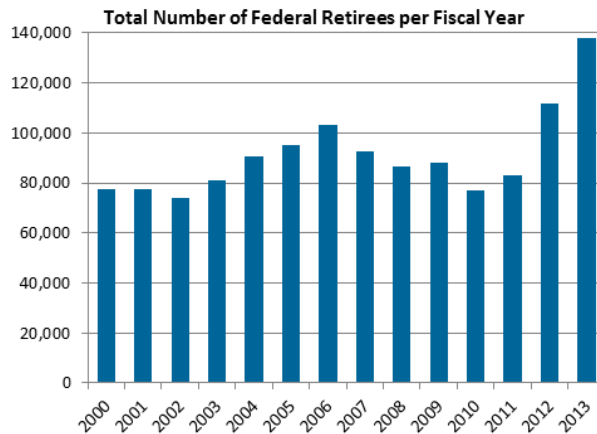
Millennial Challenge

The term “millennials,” defined as people born after 1980, often comes with negative connotations. Whispers of entitlement, disloyalty, and lack of drive run rampant. These generational stereotypes are not unfounded, but they can often be harnessed as strengths. Job hopping can be indicative of a lack of fulfillment in current roles. Millennials need to feel that they are being groomed for a career, not stuck with a job. Their ubiquitous integration with technology can lead to better, faster, cheaper ways to collaborate and deliver services – they have a “there’s an app for that” mentality. Harnessing these traits can provide a symbiotic relationship, but not without deliberate effort and open minds from management and millennials alike.

New Dogs, Old Tricks

Millennials are faced with the twofold task of changing perceptions – distancing themselves from the “entitled and coddled” stereotype – while simultaneously advancing their own careers. To do so, these new dogs need to master some of the old tricks, including matters of dress, decorum, and deadlines. Employees looking to get ahead must dress for the job that they want, sanitize their social media presence (or segregate personal accounts from professional networking outlets), and consistently meet deadlines as though they were chiseled in stone. While these tricks of the trade might

seem basic, they are essential to building and maintaining a personal brand in the workplace. Ultimate success will be determined by more critical and higher-caliber standards – attitude, work ethic, and performance – but new dogs cannot expect the opportunity to show what they are capable of if they cannot master basics like submitting their timecards on-time.



The data represents the total Civil Service Retirement and Federal Employees Retirement Systems Annuitants added to the Annuity Roll Processing System (ARPS). Source: Office of Personnel Management, ARPS

Old Dogs, New Tricks

Just as millennials must adapt to the workplace, so too must the workplace adapt to millennials. Rigid, hierarchical organizations rooted in command and control may have worked for the Greatest Generation, but they are anathema to the current crop of incoming employees. Millennials seek meaningful tasks, crave constant feedback, and thrive when they have the opportunity for experiential learning coupled with effective mentoring from senior management. With millennials expected to comprise 46 percent of the Federal workforce by 2020, the organizations that succeed in the next decade will be those that embrace these young professionals not as a means to cut costs, but as the future of the Federal sector.