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The Trophy Kids



Larissa Kravanja always believed she could achieve whatever she put her mind to. So far, she hasn't disappointed herself.

The University of Virginia graduate, now in her mid-20s, has been ascending the corporate ladder at Merrill Lynch & Co. and looking forward to eventually attending one of America's top law schools. An admittedly obsessive list maker, Kravanja continually sets new objectives for herself. Soon after her college graduation, she made a list of goals she hoped to reach by age 25, including running two half marathons, taking the entrance exams for graduate school and law school, getting promoted at Merrill Lynch, and moving from Brooklyn to Manhattan. She achieved all of them, but just barely; her move to Manhattan took place less than a month before her 25th birthday in 2008. She also reached a significant milestone not on her list: living with her boyfriend.

Kravanja's to-do list for the next five years is still taking shape, but it already includes starting law school, figuring out her subsequent career plans, embracing a less stressful "day-by-day approach" to life, and learning to cook. "I sometimes get shocked looks from my older colleagues at Merrill when I talk openly about getting ready to go to law school," she says. "They think I must hate what I'm doing now, but that's not the case. I just believe in planning ahead."

Kravanja embodies many of the characteristics of the millennial generation born between 1980 and 2001. Like a quintessential millennial, Kravanja counts both career achievements and community service among her top priorities in life. In fact, she had expected to join a nonprofit organization after college, despite two summer internships at Merrill Lynch as an analyst in the retirement and insurance groups. But she was lured back to Merrill by a full-time job in the multicultural marketing group. She soon was promoted to assistant vice president for global diversity and inclusion, overseeing the brokerage and investment banking firm's "professional network" groups for minorities and women. "Now, my whole day job is giving back to our employees," she says. In addition, she does volunteer work for the organization Upwardly Global, mentoring highly skilled immigrants on job-search strategies.

In the workplace, Kravanja shows her millennial stripes in her desire for a flexible schedule and a casual culture. She usually manages to adjust her work hours for personal needs, but in Merrill Lynch's more formal atmosphere, she must leave her jeans at home and only listen to her iPod as circumstances permit.

Self-confident and impatient, she wishes she could speed up her career progress. “People tell me I need to be more patient, that I will get rewarded in time,” she says. “But at times, it’s hard to be patient for the bigger reinforcement pay-offs like bonuses and promotions.” She also needs regular feedback about how she’s doing. “It’s very millennial of me, I guess,” she says. “I don’t need a daily pat on the back, just a big pat when I finish a big project. I probably need it so much because my mom has been giving me feedback since day one.”

She keeps in touch with her mother on a near daily basis and still welcomes her guidance. “She hasn’t influenced me much about college or Merrill Lynch,” Kravanja says. “As I’m growing up and away from her, the advice is more about domestic things like moving to a new apartment. But she still wants to keep up on everything that’s happening in my life.”

Millennials like Kravanja are truly “trophy kids,” the pride and joy of their parents. They and their parents have placed a high premium on success, filling resumes with not only academic accolades but also a smorgasbord of sports and other extracurricular activities, volunteer work in their local communities, and exotic travels abroad. The trophy kids were lavishly praised when they made the grade—and sometimes even when they didn’t, to avoid damaging their self-esteem.

Since nursery school, the trophy kids have been prepping to get into the best colleges. James Danko, the business school dean at Villanova University in Pennsylvania, even received an Excel spreadsheet that an applicant’s parents had used to record their child’s accomplishments through the years. “It’s a credentials-driven generation, no doubt about it,” Danko

says. “I have to give them credit for their drive and ambition, but there’s sometimes almost too much intensity in competing with peers. It gets to the point that they feel they need to take college courses in the summer and have double, even triple majors to keep their edge.”

Now what happens when these trophy kids, who have always felt special, arrive in the workplace with greater expectations than any generation before them? That’s what companies are gradually discovering as they recruit more and more millennials. “This generation of young people is quite serious about reshaping the work environment to conform to their personal goals and lives,” says Daphne Atkinson, a consultant on business schools and management education. “Although their every want and expectation won’t be met, they will definitely make employers sit up and take notice.”

Indeed, employers face some of their biggest management challenges ever as they try to integrate millions of millennials into a workplace with three other very different generations. In addition to the millennials, there are the traditionalists—also referred to as the veteran, mature, or silent generation—born between 1925 and 1945; the baby boomers, 1946 to 1964; and generation Xers, 1965 to 1979. (See the accompanying table for a summary of the characteristics of the four generations in the workplace.) Already, the trophy kids are at odds with some members of the other generations, who perceive them as arrogant and unwilling to adapt to the corporate culture. Their trademark flip-flops and ripped jeans, ubiquitous iPods, and preference for text messages rather than face-to-face communication are driving some older colleagues and managers nuts.

Four Generations in the Workplace

	Millennials	Gen Xers	Baby Boomers	Traditionalists
<i>Time Span</i>	1980–2001	1965–1979	1946–1964	1925–1945
<i>Current U.S. Residents, Census Bureau Estimate</i>	92 million	62 million	78.3 million	38.6 million
<i>Key Historical Events</i>	Columbine High School shootings, September 11 terrorist attacks, Enron and other corporate scandals, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Hurricane Katrina	AIDS epidemic, space shuttle Challenger catastrophe, fall of the Berlin Wall, Oklahoma City bombing, Bill Clinton–Monica Lewinsky scandal	Vietnam War, assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr., first man on the moon, Kent State killings, Watergate	Great Depression, Pearl Harbor, World War II, Korean War, Cold War era, Cuban missile crisis
<i>Traits</i>	Entitled, optimistic, civic minded, close parental involvement, values work-life balance, impatient, multitasking, team oriented	Self-reliant, adaptable, cynical, distrusts authority, resourceful, entrepreneurial, technology savvy	Workaholic, idealistic, competitive, loyal, materialistic, seeks personal fulfillment, values titles and the corner office	Patriotic, dependable, conformist, respects authority, rigid, socially and financially conservative, solid work ethic

In contrast to the millennials, the traditionalists, many of whom have already retired, respect the status quo and bring a strong sense of loyalty to their jobs. Graying baby boomers, who are on the verge of retirement or at least a switch to part-time status, earned a reputation for being workaholics and consider their careers an integral part of their identity.

Resourceful and self-reliant, generation Xers don't trust institutions and don't expect job security. Together, the four generations make for an intriguing and potentially explosive brew.

It will take more than a decade for yet another generation to join the workforce. Although it's a little early to start characterizing the children born after 2001, some researchers already are concocting generational names. Because the millennials are sometimes referred to as generation Y, generation Z is naturally one of the labels being attached to the next cohort. Largely the offspring of generation X, this up-and-coming group is also being called zeds, gamers, the new millennials, and the homeland generation, a reference to homeland security in this age of terrorism.

For now, though, most of the attention is aimed squarely at the millennials. In some ways, educators and employers have found that they exhibit a number of contradictory attitudes and behaviors. "It's all about me" might seem to be the mantra of these self-absorbed young people who aspire to be financially successful so they can pay off college loans and afford their digital toys, international travels, and other pleasures. But many millennials like Kravanja also demonstrate strong concern about social and environmental issues and tend to be active in community service. In another interesting twist, they want structure and clear direction in their work assignments, but they also expect flexibility to decide when and where they complete the tasks. And although they crave individual praise and recognition, they can also be terrific team players, whether in sports, the classroom, or the workplace.

Millennials also are a polarizing generation. They have many fans who admire their optimism, intelligence, ambition,

and commitment to make the world a better place. But they also come in for some stinging criticism for their inflated expectations. Employers, in particular, have mixed feelings about millennials. While respecting their aptitude for technology and their ability to work well in teams, many recruiters and managers find millennials far too demanding when it comes to needing guidance, frequent performance appraisals, rapid career advancement, and work-life balance. Although many of them are well educated, millennials strike employers as being book smart but suffering from a deficit of common sense. How else to explain the job candidate who showed up late for an interview at a public relations agency with chewing gum in her mouth and blue, chipped fingernails?

Some employers even go so far as to call millennials slackers, although they actually can be incredibly efficient, productive workers as long as their job is engaging and will help advance their careers. But if they find work boring and unfulfilling, they'll be out the door in a snap. Such behavior causes bitterness among many employers, who bemoan such disloyalty and the resulting low retention rates.

Whether they like the millennials or not, farsighted companies know they must try to accommodate them because they are America's future workforce as the large baby-boom generation moves into its twilight years. According to U.S. Census Bureau population estimates, America's millennial generation currently numbers about 92 million, compared with 78.3 million baby boomers.

"We have to understand that millennials simply view the world differently from us, and try to adapt to them," says Rich Garcia, director of enterprise recruiting and retention at State

Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Co. in Bloomington, Illinois. “We can’t let ourselves get bogged down in thinking they’re not loyal. Instead, we need to give them a voice in the organization and learn to work with them, not against them.”

Cam Marston, founder of the consulting firm Generational Insight, has observed heightened interest in understanding the millennials, particularly among technology, health care, consulting, accounting, and other professional services firms that vie aggressively for talent. “With each passing week, it’s becoming clearer that this is a very different generation,” he says. “More companies are trying to understand those differences and make changes to attract these young people. Some are doing it willingly, others more begrudgingly.”

L’Oréal is not only willing but actually quite enthusiastic about welcoming more millennials to its beauty-products business. “The millennial generation is at the top of my agenda of priorities,” declares François de Wazières, director of international recruitment for Paris-based L’Oréal. “We’re very seriously investing in knowing these people’s characteristics and how we can recruit and manage them to the fullest efficiency.” To that end, L’Oréal, together with an organization of European business schools, has launched a study of millennials’ values and attitudes.

“I believe the millennials will be a gold mine of talent for L’Oréal because they are such a good fit with our emphasis on innovation, creativity, open-mindedness, and entrepreneurial spirit,” de Wazières says. “Of course, we will have to explain to middle managers and executives that they will want to wear jeans and T-shirts and have flexibility in their work life. But we will also have to draw a line between what we will accept and what we won’t.”

Certainly not all the characteristics that demographers, educators, and employers ascribe to millennials apply to each and every member of the generation. There are exceptions to any generalization. In fact, the various millennial traits tend to most closely fit college students and graduates, who are of greatest interest to corporate recruiters. Some of the attributes also could describe generation X, which is known for being technology savvy and seeking work-life balance, too. But even those two qualities resound much more strongly with the millennials. Clearly, the trophy kids are emerging as a quite distinctive and fascinating group of young people who will command the world's attention for many years to come.

A MILLENNIAL PORTRAIT

The millennials are fast on their way to rivaling the baby boomers as the most studied generation. They are sometimes referred to as “echo boomers” because many of them are the offspring of boomers, who have helped shape them and continue to play a major role in their lives. Whether they will affect the world as much as the boomers did remains uncertain, of course, but they are certainly promising to make waves.

The trophy kids have generally enjoyed financial and emotional security in their close, comfortable relationships with their families. But their lives also have been touched by a succession of momentous events, including the Columbine High School shootings; the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan; Hurricane Katrina; and the wave of corporate scandals that began with the collapse of Enron Corp.

One of the most avid watchers of millennials has been Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. Between 1997 and

2004, it put millennials under the microscope for five research studies on “America’s emerging leaders.” Some of the earliest surveys detected an unusually optimistic, self-assured generation. But among the findings in Northwestern Mutual’s 2004 survey of 21- to 23-year-olds: heightened anxiety because they’re living in a world in conflict. Indeed, the millennials surveyed consider growing up faster and a lack of innocence as two of the chief disadvantages of their generation. They also were pessimistic about America’s direction and its leadership, but enthusiastic about their connections to family and friends.

Their dissatisfaction with political leaders obviously has motivated the millennials to action. They were quite active during the 2008 presidential primaries, with more young people voting than in recent years and especially strong support for Barack Obama and his campaign theme of “change we can believe in.” In a survey of 18- to 24-year-olds in fall 2007, Harvard University’s Institute of Politics found that 41% definitely planned to vote in a 2008 primary or caucus and 61% intended to vote in the general election.

Although the threat of terrorism has shaken the millennials as it has all the generations, young people still tend to have high self-esteem and plenty of hope and ambition. That’s certainly the case with Steffen Ringelmann, a graduate of Vassar College who is happily pursuing his artistic passions in New York City. After graduation in 2004, he floated around a bit, waiting tables so he could paint and do volunteer work at a free monthly publication in Brooklyn and an art gallery in Manhattan. Feeling a bit exhausted and overwhelmed, he spent three months chilling out on the coast of Maine, then

headed to Berlin, Germany, for four months. Now back in New York City, he works as an assistant at a furniture and design gallery and builds furniture in the evenings and on weekends for a major advertising agency and other customers.

“My goal is to be a tastemaker and have an influence on style,” he says. “I have found my path in life in design and can see myself succeeding financially, as well as emotionally and creatively.” He agrees that his generation is self-involved and less willing to join the rat race. “I want to explore, deconstruct, and understand my own sense of self through the act of creation,” he says. Then he adds, laughing, “It’s about me, me, me, me, me!”

Not content to be simply their parents’ trophy kids, many millennials dream of riches and world renown. In a 2006 study of 18- to 25-year-olds labeled “generation next,” the Pew Research Center in Washington, DC, found that they believe that their generation’s top goals in life are being rich and famous. Similarly, in a 2007 Harris Interactive survey, 56% of 13- to 21-year-olds said their dream is to be a millionaire, and about a third aspired to become a famous musician or singer. About 40%, however, envisioned a nobler achievement: curing diseases.

Whether or not stardom is within their reach, this digital generation clearly loves attention and cyberfame. It’s a celebrity-obsessed group that grew up on *American Idol*, entertainment tabloids, and Internet gossip. The millennials share the most mundane—and most sensational—aspects of their lives on such social networking sites as Facebook and MySpace, opine in blogs, and post their personal video creations on YouTube. They are so casual and indiscreet that much of their

life is an open book online, where they display racy photos, boast about their sexual exploits, and try to rack up the most virtual “friends” or connections. Older adults believe they have no sense of privacy and warn them that their exhibitionism could ultimately hurt their careers and personal lives.

Ringelmann finds MySpace and Facebook “guilty pleasures” and incredibly valuable ways to connect with new people and possibly promote his furniture designs. But he also finds the connections rather shallow. “My generation is very social and gets to know a lot of people online, but we don’t have many good friends through our networks,” he says. “I think we’re a very socially distracted generation because of the Internet.”

The avid social networking is but one manifestation of the tremendous influence of technology on the millennials. Always connected to cell phones, iPods, laptops, or video-game players, this generation—sometimes called the MyPod Generation—has mastered multitasking skills better than any other. At the same time, however, educators and employers complain that the informal, shorthand style of text and instant messaging has impaired young people’s writing abilities and interpersonal communication skills. What’s more, the digital generation’s tendency to do multiple things at once may be resulting in shorter attention spans.

Another hallmark of the millennial generation is its prolonged adolescence. Many young people like Ringelmann are drifting awhile, delaying marriage, children, home ownership, and even a steady career until well into their 20s or even their 30s. But they aren’t being frivolous Peter Pans; they’re just taking longer to explore the possibilities before assuming major

responsibilities. They want to control their destinies and are afraid of making choices that could prove to be mistakes. Failure to them, in the end, is never finding their true passion.

Consequently, they tend to be job hoppers, often living at home with their parents, who provide a financial safety net. In a 2005 Pew Research Center survey, nearly three-quarters of 18- to 25-year-olds had received financial help from parents in the previous year, and nearly two-thirds said parents had assisted with errands, housework, and home repairs.

The trophy kids remain much closer for much longer to their doting parents than earlier generations and generally enjoy better relationships with their families and other older adults. Even as the millennials head off to college and take jobs, their parents remain their trusted advisers. That is creating havoc in the workplace as some hovering “helicopter parents” try to get involved in job interviews, salary negotiations, and even performance reviews. Clearly, millennials and their parents need to strike a better balance so that this generation learns to think and act more independently.

A DARKER SIDE

Some researchers tend to glamorize millennials and gloss over the generation’s negative attributes. True, many young people today are healthy and well adjusted, with resumes chock-full of accomplishments. But like any generation, millennials have their share of vices as well as virtues. Some millennials engage in such unhealthy activities as binge drinking, abuse of both illegal and prescription drugs, and sexual promiscuity.

Research studies assessing the problems yield mixed results. According to the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention's (CDC's) National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, the rates of sexual activity and alcohol and drug use have declined in recent years among high school students. Even so, a CDC study in 2008 estimated that one in four teenage girls is infected with at least one sexually transmitted disease. What's more, the Partnership for a Drug Free America's teen tracking study found that one in five had abused a prescription pain medication, and a similar number had abused prescription stimulants and tranquilizers. The partnership dubbed today's teens Generation Rx.

When the Pew Research Center asked an older group—18- to 25-year-olds—about negative behaviors, roughly 70% said they believe their generation engages more in violence to solve conflicts and more in binge drinking than young adults did 20 years ago. About 63% said their generation is illegally using drugs more, and three-quarters said casual sex is more prevalent. Indeed, older generations are especially critical of millennials for their emotionally uninvolved hook-ups and sexual relationships with “friends with benefits.”

There is also a downside to the millennial generation's competitive drive. When Harris Interactive surveyed 8- to 21-year-olds in 2007, they said they worry more about getting good grades than anything else. This obsession with grades is leading some young millennials to become stressed out, anxious, and sleep deprived. Teachers also complain that in their quest to win admission to the most elite universities, millennials are much more concerned about high marks than about learning and enrichment.

Perhaps because of the intense pressure to succeed academically, cheating is widespread among twentysomethings. In

a 2006 study of 32 graduate schools in the United States and Canada, researchers at Pennsylvania State University, Rutgers University, and Washington State University found that 56% of business school students admitted to cheating at least once in the previous academic year, as did 47% of non-business students. Although millennials contend that they want to work for companies with integrity, many of them apparently aren't living up to such high ethical standards themselves.

BENETTON GENERATION

As more millennials move into the workplace, it's starting to resemble a Benetton advertisement of many colors and cultures. Because this is such an ethnically and racially mixed generation, it could signal major strides in diversifying the middle and upper management ranks of corporate America. In a study of U.S. college freshman trends, the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles found particularly sharp jumps in the proportion of Asian students, 8.6% in 2006, compared with 0.6% in 1971, and Latino students, 7.3%, up from 0.6%. Over the same period, the share of white students fell from 90.9% to 76.5%.

There is also a gender shift under way, with girls and young women accounting for a growing share of college and graduate school enrollments and taking on more leadership roles in companies. According to the UCLA freshman study, 55% of students are now women.

Having grown up with greater diversity in their neighborhoods and schools, millennials tend to be more open and accepting of each other, regardless of gender, color, religion, or sexual orientation. Multiracial and multicultural friendships

are commonplace. UCLA reports that in its 2007 freshman survey, 37% of students said that helping promote racial understanding is a personal goal of theirs, the highest level since 1994.

Millennials also are more positive than older generations about such divisive social issues as gay marriage, interracial dating, and immigration. The Pew Research Center found that 47% of 18- to 25-year-olds favor legalization of gay marriage, compared with only 30% of people over 25. Similarly, 61% of the younger group believes that gays and lesbians should be able to adopt children, whereas only 44% of older people concur.

As for interracial dating, 89% of 18- to 25-year-olds consider it acceptable, whereas 70% of people over 25 approve. And when asked whether the growing number of immigrants strengthens American society, two-thirds of 18- to 25-year-olds said yes, compared with 57% of 26- to 40-year-olds, 47% of 41- to 60-year-olds, and 38% of those over 60.

To be sure, there are still class and cultural differences among the millennials. But the racial and ethnic tensions are likely to be much less pronounced with this generation than with older Americans. Millennials favor a corporate culture of inclusion and tolerance and will gravitate toward companies that actively promote racial and cultural diversity. “We’re finding young people we hire much more progressive on workplace issues,” says William Margaritis, the head of corporate communications and investor relations at FedEx Corp. “They want to know up front about a company’s commitment to diversity.”

Danielle Beyer certainly does. She graduated from a high school with dozens of nationalities and then attended the

internationally diverse University of Rochester in New York. “At a time when whom you do business with is no longer limited by countries’ borders, a diverse workforce is important to me,” says Beyer, who joined the financial services company National City Corp. after receiving her M.B.A. degree from Rochester. “I’ve always liked having the opportunity to ask a peer or coworker about the places they’ve been and how they got to where they are today.”

Beyond the cultural diversity within their own ranks, the millennials also have developed a worldliness that will serve them well in the increasingly global economy. These days, recruiters say, it’s the rare resume from a millennial that doesn’t include at least a summer of study overseas, as well as volunteer work in developing nations, interesting pleasure trips to exotic lands, and fluency in at least one foreign language. In the 2007 UCLA study of freshmen, 52% said they were interested in understanding other cultures and countries better, up from 43% in 2002. And in Harris Interactive’s youth study, 8- to 21-year-olds listed traveling the world and speaking another language as their top two ambitions.

“It used to be unusual to see students who had taught in other countries or been involved in groups like the Peace Corps or Habitat for Humanity, but now we’re interviewing many with international experiences that amount to much more than just vacations abroad,” says John Ventola, cochairman of the hiring committee and summer program at the law firm Choate, Hall & Stewart in Boston. “Their open-minded view of the world is a very valuable attribute for lawyers, who shouldn’t think about things rigidly but should take into account different viewpoints. That’s what diversity is really all about.”

MILLENNIALS AROUND THE GLOBE

Although the millennial generation is identified most closely with the United States, teenagers and young adults in other countries share many of the same attributes as their American counterparts.

De Wazières, the recruiting chief at L'Oréal, has noticed that millennials around the globe are surprisingly similar. "One thing I find to be very universal is that they have international experiences, are eager to take on the world, and value their relationships with their parents and the relationships they can develop with older people in the workplace," he says. "I tell our managers the good news is that this generation won't hate you."

He particularly observes the common bonds between millennials of different cultures at L'Oréal's annual marketing and strategy competitions for business school students. "It's the best way to witness how alike this generation is, whether they're from Malaysia, India, France, Argentina, or the United States," he says. "They wear the same clothing, have the same iPods, and mix and connect easily. Two hours after meeting, they're probably best friends on Facebook." Indeed, this is clearly a high-tech generation, regardless of geography. Technology has linked young people from all corners of the globe and allowed them to share information and experiences virtually.

"There are cultural and geographic differences that cause things to play out a little differently," says Atkinson, the management education consultant. "But I see many similarities across national boundaries in the millennials' optimism, manifest destiny to change the world, and drive to succeed."

Researchers in Australia, for example, have found millennials Down Under to be much like those in the United States on several counts, including their job-hopping habits. An Australian study by the recruiting firm Drake revealed that nearly two-thirds of millennials stay less than two years with an employer, and nearly half had already held five jobs in their few short years in the workplace.

Some studies have focused on millennials in several different countries and come up with striking parallels. The market-research firm Synovate looked at young people in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States and labeled them the “stay-at-home generation” because they tend to rely so much on parents for support and often live with them longer than previous generations. “The taboo of living with Mom and Dad has disappeared in a number of countries, not just the United States,” says Julian Rolfe, global manager of syndicated youth research. “It has a lot to do with best friend parenting, especially with mothers and daughters who share clothes and music and think of each other as mates.” In the United Kingdom, millennials who linger in the nest are sometimes called “kippers,” short for “kids in parents’ pockets eroding retirement savings.”

PricewaterhouseCoopers undertook a major study of millennials in the United States, United Kingdom, and China to determine their expectations about work. In a survey of about 2,700 graduates who were offered jobs with the accounting firm, it found that more than 90% of millennials in all three countries believe they are more likely than their parents to “work across geographic borders,” and roughly three-quarters believe they will have two to five employers during their

careers. About 10% of the Chinese students expect to work for 10 or more employers, compared with 3% of the U.S. and U.K. respondents.

“This is a very demanding, very career savvy group of young people with huge similarities across countries,” says Michael Rendell, partner and leader of human resource services for PricewaterhouseCoopers. “To keep them from leaving, companies will have to give them more responsibilities early in their careers and offer them a range of opportunities, including international assignments.”

Despite such research studies, some educators and recruiting experts worry that millennials in the United States may find members of their generation from other countries, especially Asian nations, stiff competition because of a stronger work ethic. “We can expect the millennial generation’s international counterparts from China, India, and other countries to pass them by in promotions, raises, and career development, while the American millennials are tending to their own personal needs,” says Bruce Moore, associate director of the career management center at the Cox School of Business at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

Dennis Garritan, director of graduate programs in human resource management at New York University, warns millennials to be especially concerned about competition from China. “I believe Chinese women in the millennial generation who are multilingual and intellectually gifted will give Americans a run for their money,” he says. “They bring the millennials’ skills, but they also have the baby boomers’ work ethic. Personally, I would hate to have to compete with some of these young Chinese women for jobs.”

CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

- Highly accomplished and doted on by their parents, the trophy kids are arriving in the workplace by the millions. Employers are benefiting from their technology, multitasking, and teamwork skills, but bristling at their demands for flexible working conditions, frequent feedback and guidance, and rapid promotion.
- Companies are struggling to integrate the millennial generation of trophy kids with three other distinctly different generations in the workplace—traditionalists, baby boomers, and generation Xers. Employers need to learn as much about the millennials as possible because like them or not, they represent the future workforce.
- Despite the insecurity of living in a world filled with terrorism threats and wars, the millennials remain an optimistic, confident generation. Self-absorbed and exhibitionistic, many millennials aspire to be rich and famous. Yet they also have an altruistic streak that leads many to perform community service.
- Millennials are explorers. They are inclined to change jobs frequently in their search for the ideal career, and many are delaying the milestones of adulthood—marriage, children, and home ownership.
- Millennials have vices as well as virtues, including alcohol and drug abuse, casual sex habits, and cheating in school.
- The millennial generation, a blend of colors and cultures, prefers to work for companies with a diverse

workforce. Young people also are worldlier in their experiences and perspectives, a valuable asset in an increasingly global economy.

- Millennials around the world share many of the same characteristics, including their technology savvy, drive to succeed, job-hopping tendencies, and close connection to parents. But some career counselors worry that the stronger work ethic of millennials in some Asian countries may prove to be a competitive threat to young Americans, who are overly concerned about their personal needs and passions.