

# Millennials

How to know them well and bring out the best in them?



*Like it or not, the millennials are amongst us.*

*At work, in various social settings, at home, in public...*

*They are everywhere.*

*Instead of avoiding Generation M, or worst still, typecasting them, why not get to know them better?*

*Are they more similar or different from the rest of us who are from other generational groups?*

*How will their behaviour and working style affect the way we work?*

*Should we treat them differently just because they are millennials?*



**In this second edition of the Dale Carnegie ASEAN newsletter, these issues will be explored.**

**Dale Carnegie ASEAN  
Quarter 2-2018 Newsletter**





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# THE MISUNDERSTOOD GENERATION

Dr. Seetha Nesaratnam

The main reason why millennials are misunderstood is that there is a mismatch between what they think they want and what the other generational groups at the workplace are giving to them. Recently, I completed a doctoral thesis that examined millennials and problems at the workplace. The study involved in-depth interviews with employers who hire and manage mil-

## Lack soft skills

The findings of my doctoral thesis are consistent with two studies. According to a 2015 Ernst & Young Global Generations Report, it is challenging to manage millennials because they lack soft skills. The report specifically highlighted that millennials lack communication

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*Millennials simply do not like to be told what to do and how to get things done.*

lennials and a survey on new graduates and their views on employability. Just over nine out of 10 employers identified the dire need for millennials to undergo training to enhance their EQ (emotional quotient) and other key soft skills such as communication skills, teamwork, problem solving and leadership skills.

Also, the employers strongly believed that they were customising and catering to the needs of this generation by using one-to-one coaching in training. Surprisingly, when I asked the millennials for their feedback, they emphatically suggested that one-on-one coaching is a waste of time and that EQ is no longer an essential factor in today's digital world of deep machine learning and artificial intelligence. There is clearly a divergence in thinking between managers and millennials at the work place.

skills and leadership skills and I find this to be accurate. Their 'one-ness' with the digital world has created a human disconnect within them. It is almost like they are unable to develop meaningful interpersonal relationships with co-workers and their managers.

## Sceptics of training

As for the 'don't coach me' attitude, it is supported by a 2017 Deloitte Millennial Survey. According to this report, most millennials in the United States and emerging markets expect themselves to be financially and emotionally better off than their parents. They feel that their parents have approached life all wrong. So why would they want someone from their parents' generation to mentor them? I find this a big challenge because I come from a time and era when mentoring was an integral aspect of developing talent. Millennials simply do not like to be told what to do and how to get things done.



Their 'one-ness' with the digital world has created a human disconnect within them.

## Job-hopping

If we factor in the persistent job-hopping behaviour of this generation, the issue becomes even more complex. Over three consecutive years, Deloitte has consistently found that more than one in three millennials will leave their jobs within two years. Issues like reduced productivity, escalating recruitment costs, loss of experience and succession gaps are just some of the challenges posed because of this trend. We have to come to terms with the fact that the millennials are the workforce of the future and therefore any business recruiting new talent will have to learn how to cope with them and their working styles.

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*Nine in 10 millennials regard quick career progression to be the most important.*

## Managing millennials

Since there is no running away from the challenges of managing the millennials, let's look at how best we can work with them. We must always remember that this millennial generation is all about work-life balance. They all want to be successful and enjoy the fruits of their labour. It's not about amassing that big savings fund, but it's about that new digital device that they simply must have or that holiday that they deserve to go on or that new restaurant that they have to try out. This is what the millennials are about. So, how do they go about getting what they want? They want to progress at work fast and earn big money quickly. What attracts them? There are four areas that I wish to highlight:

- A clear path for career progression
- A competitive salary
- Technology
- A good working environment





## Embrace technology

Research have pointed out that nine in 10 millennials regard quick career progression to be the most important. Anyone hiring them needs to ensure that the compensation strategy is in line with their expectations. Slightly over half of them say that they would most likely consider a job where the employer uses technology that is up-to-date. This means that employers must embrace technology to keep their millennial workers engaged.

## Empowerment

Despite showing resistance to coaching, employers must not shy away from training the millennials. What should be done is to customise the training in a manner to suit them. The training cannot be mundane and boring. For training sessions to be lively and engaging, trainers must adopt the lingo and philosophy of the millennials.

Finally, we should not discount the millennials. They have many key strengths which can be very beneficial to the companies. So, let's hear them out. Give them a voice and develop them to be independent with some decision-making autonomy. This is very empowering and satisfying for them.

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*Give millennials a voice and develop them to be independent with some decision-making autonomy.*

## About Dr. Seetha

Besides being a Dale Carnegie trainer, Dr. Seetha is a senior lecturer at a private university in Malaysia. She received her PhD in management from the Asia Pacific University and her thesis focused on graduate employability in Malaysia.





# OVER-HYPING GENERATION M

**Mr. Siwat Chawareewong**, chief executive officer of GroupM Thailand, believes that we could be looking at the wrong place by focusing too much on the millennials. He tells us why.



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*Baby boomers and millennials are just convenient labels to refer to people defined by some events or characteristics shared within each group.*

## Generation gap?

In the media and advertising industry, we work with people from many different generations. Some baby boomers have been with GroupM for nearly 30 years, but the world and consumer behaviour have changed a lot in that time. In order to keep all employees competitive, companies must strategize to replace the jobs that are being disrupted. From my experience, I found that there is no co-relation between good work perfor-

and leadership are also affected. To minimize the turnover rate of good staff, extra steps should be taken to coach and monitor them. Top management must instill a strong culture within the organization. This is crucial. If not, talent may not be attracted and retained.

## Leveraging on the good performers

It is important for companies to be aligned with the goals of their top performing staff. Organiza-

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*Companies should focus on retaining their high performing staff and not look only at attracting and retaining a specific generational group.*

mance and age group. An employee's performance depends on his desired goals. Also, everyone has his own distinctive expertise, traits, level of digital literacy and ability to adapt to change.

I don't believe in stereotyping generational groups. Baby boomers and millennials are just convenient labels to refer to people defined by some events or characteristics shared within each group. Personally, I focus on managing individuals within teams. It is all about how we spot their potential and develop them in terms of their desired goals. Doing so will change how they see themselves and then they will go the extra mile not just for themselves but also for the company.

## Attracting and retaining talent

Companies should focus on retaining their high performing staff and not look only at attracting and retaining a specific generational group. This is because staff turnover is problematic regardless of the age group. Losing good performers is especially costly. There will be losses in productivity, not to mention the costs incurred in recruiting and training. Organizational knowledge

tions must also be flexible enough to adjust to the expectations of these staff and help them to meet their career goals. It is vital to challenge them and to find out what they are good at and what they need to learn. Give them customized assignments that will take them to the next level. Also, give them credit, visibility and be willing to let them go to take on new opportunities if it makes sense for their development and learning.







GroupM itself has a standard procedure in managing people and processes using a decentralized organizational structure. In our organization of 600 people, each manager looks after not more than 20 people in order to be as close as possible to their teams. The top management is responsible for developing these managers with leadership skills like relationship building, communication, coaching, and celebrating successes to ignite team performance and deliver the best possible business outcomes. We do this because employees don't leave companies, they leave their managers.

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*Be willing to let them go to take on new opportunities if it makes sense for their development and learning.*

**Future-proofing**

The projected changes that are likely to happen in the near future can be classified into two kinds. In the first scenario, changes will be continuously dramatic and disruptive and every organization should have proactive plans to develop their staff's readiness and ability to effectively adapt themselves to changes. Doing so will empower an organization to have greater competitive advantage over its competitors. Of course, to be able to do this, the organization must first know its unique strengths and have a positive mindset towards growth. In the second scenario, automation will change the way we live and work and it has been a phenomenon since the industrial age began. Machines have been taking jobs away from people and it's not likely to stop. These two scenarios will impact businesses of all sizes. Companies with less staff may find that they can react and adapt to changes faster than those with more manpower.

For the millennials, they are more likely to start their own businesses and look for jobs that they are

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*In an age of workplace diversity and inclusion, soft skills are absolutely necessary to raise our cultural literacy.*

interested in regardless of the remuneration. For millennials entering the global marketplace, it's important for them that they be their own bosses because they are more than willing to accept more work and responsibility by taking on leadership roles. They believe they can make a difference. Our strategic plan is to focus on developing our strong corporate culture that leads to an intimate relationship among our staff. In an age of workplace diversity and inclusion, soft skills are absolutely necessary to raise our cultural literacy. The ability to understand everyone's unique style of work and how to leverage on such diversity can be the magic potion that will help us to attract talent with high performance and potential.

**About GroupM**



GroupM is a leading global media investment management group serving as the parent to WPP media agencies that include Mindshare, MEC, MediaCom, Maxus, Essence and m/SIX, as well as the programmatic digital media platform, Xaxis. GroupM's primary purpose is to maximize the performance of WPP's media agencies by operating as the leader and collaborator in trading, content creation, sports, digital, finance, and proprietary tool development. GroupM's focus is to deliver unrivaled advantage to its clients, stakeholders and staff.



**Janan Kwek**

GobblerCo

# GETTING THE BEST OUT OF MILLENNIALS



## About

**Janan** is the founder and managing director of **GobblerCo**, a discount retailer and social enterprise with a mission to make groceries more affordable for the general public.

**GobblerCo** is a discount retailer that sells very affordable groceries to the masses. Our purpose is to help people save more so that they can better enjoy life. Our vision is to lower the cost of living in Singapore.

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*Millennials are comfortable with expressing their views publicly and disagreeing with management. They regard debating to be healthy as they believe that it will lead to better outcomes.*

### 1. Tell us about your organization

GobblerCo is a social enterprise that is focused on making groceries more affordable to the masses and lower income families. We achieve this using a for-profit discount retailing model. We are part of the ComfortDelGro Group.

### 2. You lead an organization with many millennials (defined as those born in the early 1980s to the early 2000s). How would you describe the millennials?

Millennials have their own mindset about how things should be. They are expressive and very vocal on politics, work, culture, etc.

They are very comfortable getting their information from the Internet and they are totally at home with the numerous sources of information and the rapid rate in which they are receiving them. For example, it is quite likely that before they attend an interview, they would have already read up a lot about your organization on the Internet and formed an initial impression.

### 3. Every generation has certain defining traits. In your opinion, what are the distinctive strengths of this generation that an organization should leverage upon?

They are very good in generating ideas and they can articulate their ideas very well. One way to leverage upon the millennials would be to have focus groups or dialogues with them to get their ideas on how to solve organizational problems. Naturally, some of the ideas may lack the realism

in implementation or the benefits of the 10,000 feet, helicopter view of the organization. That is fine when we are in idea generation mode.

They also care about causes and are extremely energetic. Organizations can rally them around a common good, cause or problem and have the millennials become the advocates for the cause. They can easily mobilize themselves and add a lot of energy to the organization. This can help boost employee morale and engagement.

### 4. What do you think are effective ways to attract and retain millennials?

We use retention bonuses and provide them with a clear path for professional growth. For instance, in the first six months that an employee is hired, they are given the leeway to fail. This is when they are given soft KPIs. After six months, the KPIs become a concrete measure of performance.

We have a quarterly feedback session where we allow people to raise issues, to contribute ideas to improve the workplace and empower them to implement the ideas. I have found that to be very effective. They generate better, improved ideas as they are willing to work on enhancing the original ideas in small groups even after office hours.

### 5. How do you compare the millennials to the previous generation, Generation X, in terms of their working styles and aspirations?

Millennials are comfortable with expressing their views publicly and disagreeing with management. They regard debating to be healthy as

they believe that it will lead to better outcomes. Sometimes though, the tone can get offensive when they become carried away. The older generation usually will listen and quietly agree.

Generally speaking, Generation X will ask: "What can I do for the organization?" Typically, they have a stronger sense of gratitude and appreciation for what the organization has done for them.

By contrast, millennials tend to ask: "What can the organization do for me?". They also want to know that their work makes an impact. For example, I have a former employee who wanted to know how our organization was using our profits as a social enterprise.

**6. What do millennials expect out of their leaders and their work environment?**

They have high expectations of themselves and the organizations they work for. They want to make changes and have an impact in whatever they do.

Millennials want to be heard and valued. They want you to take time to get to know them. They

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*Millennials want to be heard and valued. They want you to take time to get to know them. They want to be coached and mentored on a regular basis. They seek constant feedback.*

want to be coached and mentored on a regular basis. They seek constant feedback.

I also do a lot of one-on-one discussions with the team to hear them and give personalized feedback. What I found is that there are so many layers to people's personalities

and it really takes time and effort to get to know them as individuals.

**7. What are some challenges leading and managing them?**

One challenge is the amount of time and effort you need to get to know them, hear them out and consult them.

In order to convince them, you must show millennials the "why". They expect you to know them, what they value and to cater to those values and to deliver on your promises. They want you to be transparent with them and to get them involved in making decisions. Sometimes, there may be minor decisions that we want to push through without consulting the millennials. Doing so may make them feel disrespected. In my experience, I have had to take a longer time to arrive at some decisions due to this defining trait of this generation.



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*In order to convince them, you must show millennials the "why". They expect you to know them, what they value and to cater to those values and to deliver on your promises.*



**8. The earlier batch of millennials are already coming into managerial positions – what do you think are their distinctive strengths & weaknesses as managers?**

They are very relational and they tend to lead with a more consultative style that relies on camaraderie rather than a top down leadership style. They tend to seek consensus in teams. Some of them are also very mature.

Millennials are very used to getting knowledge and ideas from the Internet. One blind spot they might have is a false sense of confidence about what they know. Sometimes they make assumptions about what can or cannot be done based on the available information out there, forgetting that we don't know what we don't know.

**9. Millennials grew up with technology like the Internet. In this current industry 4.0 era, how do you think we can leverage the millennials' comfort with technology and increase productivity at our work place?**

They are very knowledgeable about the latest technologies such as Pigeonhold, Google Docs and can also help older colleagues learn to embrace some of these technologies. For example, our team introduced Pigeonhole, a mobile phone app that allows you to poll individuals for responses. We use it to facilitate meetings and vote on some decisions.

**What kind of advice would you give to other business leaders managing this generation?**

- Get to know them well
- See them as students to invest in and help grow versus treating them as transactional employees
- Understand their values and motivate them based on these values
- Don't take disagreement as rebellion

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF  
**MILLENNIALS**



# Enabling THE MILLENNIALS

Le Khac Nhien An



## Defining traits

Millennials are eager to learn, contribute and prove themselves. Also, they want to be acknowledged.

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*Never forget to give timely recognition for each and every small win that they make.*

Companies can leverage on these characteristics by constantly giving them new and trendy things to learn. Always involve them in meaningful projects and don't hold back from giving them responsibilities. Millennials must be given the space to make mistakes for them to learn and grow. Never forget to give timely recognition for each and every small win that they make.

## Expectations

Compared to previous generations, millennials need much more social cohesion. To them, bonding beyond work-related interactions is vital. They value work-life balance very much and this will greatly impact the decisions they make at work.

As they value honesty, transparency and fairness, millennials respect leaders who can understand them and share similar values. They might stay longer with their companies if they have a strong belief that their leaders' or the company's words and action are all aligned and congruent.

This is in line with the recent Dale Carnegie study done on leadership blindspots. The findings of this survey conducted in 14 countries with 3,300 respondents are consistent with the expectations of the millennials. These are:

- Leaders must give their employees sincere praise and appreciation
- Leaders should admit their mistakes
- Effective leaders truly listen, respect and value their employees' opinions
- Leaders must be honest to gain employees' trust

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*They might stay longer with their companies if they have a strong belief that their leaders' or the company's words and action are all aligned and congruent.*





*We must be more tech savvy than them to earn their respect.*

## Retention

Millennials become bored very quickly with repetitive work. They are reluctant to follow unclear visions. Also, they would quickly jump ship if leaders and organizations cannot articulate a vision that is in line with their vision.

In my industry, less repetitive and more creative work and projects in line with current and upcoming technological trends greatly appeal to them. For example, we automate more and more operational activities and move the team towards proactive solutions in the IT team. For digital business development, we have moved away from traditional models and have introduced new business models along with pioneering solutions and products to remain competitive and to keep our millennial employees engaged.



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*Millennials are reluctant to follow unclear visions.*”

distracted from the big picture and the end goal. In times of crisis, they need strong senior leadership to guide them.

## Millennials as managers

By now, millennials are already in managerial positions or are going to fill these positions. From my observation, they are generally more talented and tech savvy. They are more creative and work faster.

Also, as managers, they are more straightforward and have closer relationships with their subordinates. At the same time, as a cohort, they suffer from lack of depth and tend not to pay attention to details. They can be better managers by improving on their risk management skills. A common trait that I also see in them as managers is that they are easily

## Coping with millennials

The million-dollar question is how to channel what we know about the millennials to implement strategies and policies that will deliver the right results. If we can find ways to leverage their comfort with technology through enabling them to invent highly effective and applicable technologies in current projects, we would surely increase the productivity of the whole organization while satisfying their passion for technological innovation.

In this regard, leaders and management must keep abreast of the latest technological trends. We must be more tech savvy than them to earn their respect. Once the millennials see us as one of them, we would be better able to relate to them.

## About Le Khac Nien An

He is the Continuous Integration Country Manager & Compliance Officer of Bosch Vietnam. He has more than 20 years' experience in top executive positions in international organizations like Accenture, AXA and P&G, among others.

## About Bosch Group



A multi-industry global conglomerate, Bosch has more than 400,000 associates globally and operates via 440 subsidiaries in more than 60 countries at the end of 2017. It generates a revenue of about US\$100 billion.

In Vietnam, Bosch currently employs close to 3,700 associates, of which 1,800 are research and development engineers. The manpower strength is projected to grow by more than 60 per cent to reach 4,600 associates in 2020.



MILLENNIAL BEAUTY UNDER PRESSURE:

# MISS UNIVERSE 2015 — A DALE CARNEGIE GRADUATE



Good manners pay off. And this attitude cuts across all generations. No one can dispute that Pia Alonzo Wurtzbach is a worthy role model of her generation.

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*I'm here because I need to train to win the Miss Universe 2015 pageant.*

The winner of the 2015 Miss Universe from the Philippines and a millennial herself showed the world why she totally deserved the crown when she kept her cool despite the gaffe made by host Steve Harvey during that fateful moment in December 2015 in Las Vegas. Steve Harvey mistakenly announced that Miss Colombia was the pageant winner and the Colombian beauty actually had the coveted tiara placed on her head.

The mistake was discovered minutes later and Pia, who was born in 1989, kept her cool even as she realized that she was the rightful winner. The first Filipino to win the Miss Universe title since 1973 kept her poise and won audiences all over the world with her regal bearing. Despite the confusion and the obvious emotional roller coaster in that few minutes, Pia's grace and humility showed. She was reported in the press as saying that "it's a very non-traditional crowning moment". Very diplomatic for a millennial whose peers are used to over-the-top behaviour since it is always a Yolo (You Only Live Once) moment for this generation.

Pia's excellent deportment and behaviour can be traced back to one lazy afternoon in May 2013. It was the first session of the Dale Carnegie class in Manila and Pia showed up in nondescript fashion wearing jeans, a red T-shirt, a pair of sandals and a pair of black rimmed glasses. Not exactly the fashionista one would expect of a future Miss Universe. She was purposeful and knew exactly why she was there. Pia said: "I'm here because I need to train to win the Miss Universe 2015 pageant."

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*The true test of a person's integrity is how strong you are and where you get it from.*

Her Dale Carnegie Course trainers remembered Pia as a very diligent participant. They noticed that she took notes all the time and always prepared well for her classes. Pia's intentional preparation showed her enthusiasm and drive. Also, as she values youth and her potential, she does not want her time to go to waste. To quote this intrepid and inspiring Filipino who aims to raise awareness about HIV: "The true test of a person's integrity is how strong you are and where you get it from."

She walked the talk as she said that she was going back to her Dale Carnegie classes when

asked about her immediate plans after her victory in December 2015. Integrity and enthusiasm all rolled into one commitment even after reaching the pinnacle of her pageant journey.

So, how exactly did the Dale Carnegie Course help Pia, who is only the third Filipino to have been crowned Miss Universe? She lists the following benefits:

- Gave her even greater self-confidence
- Increased her resolve & heightened her enthusiasm
- Reinforced the values of integrity and honesty
- To always remember to trust & treat everyone fairly
- Enabled her to better manage pressure & handle stressful situations
- Reminded her to remain magnanimous in victory & gracious in defeat
- Set a vision for herself and to make it a reality by having enthusiasm & the right actions

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*My vision is that one day, I'm going to wear a crown. I don't know what crown it will be but it's going to happen.*

On her graduation day, Pia told her Dale Carnegie Course classmates and guests: "At first, the Dale Carnegie Course was like work. I felt like a robot just going through the paces, doing what I was told to do in class. Life was boring and uninspiring. Then, midway through the course, I realized that I had direction, meaning and purpose. That little Golden Book had meaning after all. I started to see myself as a work in progress. The sessions and exercises began to sink into me. My vision is that one day, I'm going to wear a crown. I don't know what crown it will be but it's going to happen. Also, I will be a celebrated actress and I will influence a lot of people with my speeches."



# THE LATEST FINDINGS

## FROM DALE CARNEGIE THOUGHT LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

What makes a strong culture? It's not as simple as many business blogs would suggest. Successful corporate culture is not a mission statement on the wall or merely defined by the work environment you create. Fads like installing a ping pong table, open creative space, or free craft beer is not what makes a great corporate culture. Today, leaders need to provide so much more to create a culture that engages their workforce – they need to have the right attitudes and do the right things to ensure their culture is the right one for the given business environment.

In a recent survey, Dale Carnegie examined the perceptions of senior leaders as they relate to the strength of their own company cultures, beliefs about its importance and impact, and actions they are taking to improve it.

### Our Research



Online,  
web-based survey



600  
Senior Leaders



4 Countries:  
India, United States,  
Germany, Indonesia



Across a range of  
industries and  
company sizes

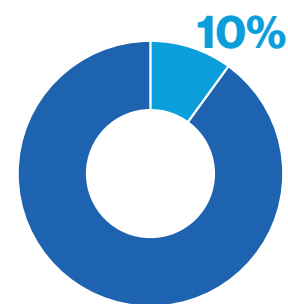
ONLY  
**21%**

of senior leaders we surveyed said their own corporate culture is **strong**.



We defined Culture Champions (CC) as those companies which claim to have a strong corporate culture, are exceeding their financial goals compared to expectations, and have lower turnover and higher employee engagement scores relative to others in their industry. Just 10% of the companies we surveyed met these criteria.

### Attitudes and Actions Differed Between CC Leaders and Other Senior Leaders We Surveyed.



■ Culture Champions (CC)  
■ All Other Companies

### Attitudes

#### Percentage of Senior Leaders Who Agree

Culture has a strong impact on financial performance

92%

58%

Culture has a strong impact on employee engagement

98%

72%

Employee engagement has a strong impact on financial performance

92%

67%

■ CC Leaders  
■ All other Leaders

**35%**

CC Leaders recognize that managing culture is an ongoing process. While our Culture Champions already have EXCELLENT corporate cultures...a full 35% also say they have room for further improvement.

### Actions

#### Top 5 Areas of Focus for High-Performing Cultures According to CC Leaders

**84%**

of CC Leaders have recently taken action to further improve their culture (vs. just 66% of other leaders).

CC Leaders measure their results; it's not enough to assume that efforts to manage the culture have had the desired impact. HR metrics and employee surveys can help gauge true progress.

Providing employee training

64%

60%

Creating a strong customer focus

62%

52%

Developing and maintaining trust in senior leadership

62%

38%

Providing clear strategy and goals

57%

49%

Encouraging strong relationships between employees and their managers

57%

51%

■ Extremely Important for high-performing culture  
■ My company is excellent at this

Contact our local offices to have more information about the research content





- Pioneer in adult learning industry since 1912
- Consistently rated by TrainingIndustry.com to be among the top 20 global training organization in Leadership, Sales and Workforce Development since 2012
- The only company in the industry globally to be awarded ISO 9001:2015 for trainer development and certification
- 2,800 certified trainers/coaches

- Our clients include 80% of Fortune 500 companies
- Global network of 91 countries in 270 offices – biggest footprint in the industry globally
- Best selling books of the century: How to Win Friends and Influence People; How to Stop Worrying and Start Living
- 99% of our graduates said they are satisfied with the training they have received