

Generation Gap: On Their Bosses, Millennials Happier Than Boomers

By JOE LIGHT
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What do twenty-somethings like? Their bosses, it turns out.

In a recent study, members of the so-called Millennial generation rated their managers more highly than did Generation Xers or baby boomers. Sixty-eight percent of surveyed Millennials, born between 1982 and 1996, rated their managers' overall performance "good" or "very good."

Their older colleagues weren't nearly as impressed with their bosses' skills. Fifty-nine percent of Generation Xers rated their bosses' overall performance favorably, while only 55% of baby boomers did. Only 51% of boomers said their company values their contribution, while 60% of Millennials did.

In other measures, such as their boss's ability to manage people and keep commitments, respondents fell into in similar age-group patterns.

The survey, from human resources firm [Kenexa](#), was conducted in February and March this year and included 11,000 respondents.

Brenda Kowske, research manager at Kenexa, says younger people may be more open to being managed.

"Millennials are more willing to take direction and accept authority," she says. "As we grow older, our ideas become more concrete and less flexible."

David Lewis, president and chief executive officer of OperationsInc LLC, an human resources consulting firm, says baby boomers' muted praise may also stem from being "traumatized" by the soft job market and having endured several economic downturns.

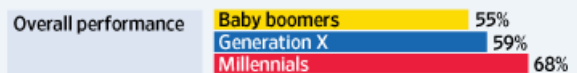
Younger employees may not be as embittered about stripped benefits or frozen salaries, he says.

The downturn also displaced many more-experienced workers, forcing some to take jobs for which they feel overqualified, he says.

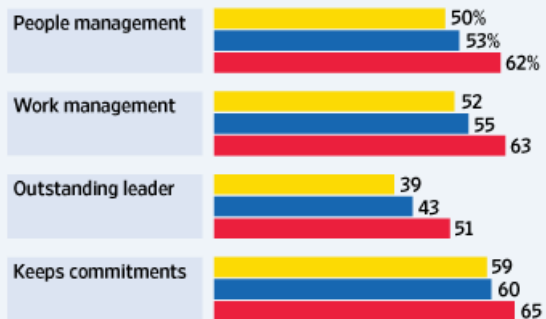
"Now that companies can get seasoned, skilled workers at a fraction of the cost, many boomers are reporting to people they don't respect or who are less experienced," Mr. Lewis says. "That builds a level of anxiousness and resentment."

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Generations' ratings of their manager's performance, based on a study of 11,000 respondents. The portion of respondents who said their manager was doing a 'very good' or 'good' job:



The portion of respondents who said they agree or strongly agree their managers do a good job on these measures:



Note: Study was conducted in February and March.

Source: Kenexa