MASTERING

MILLENNIALS

how to effectively communicate with this generation
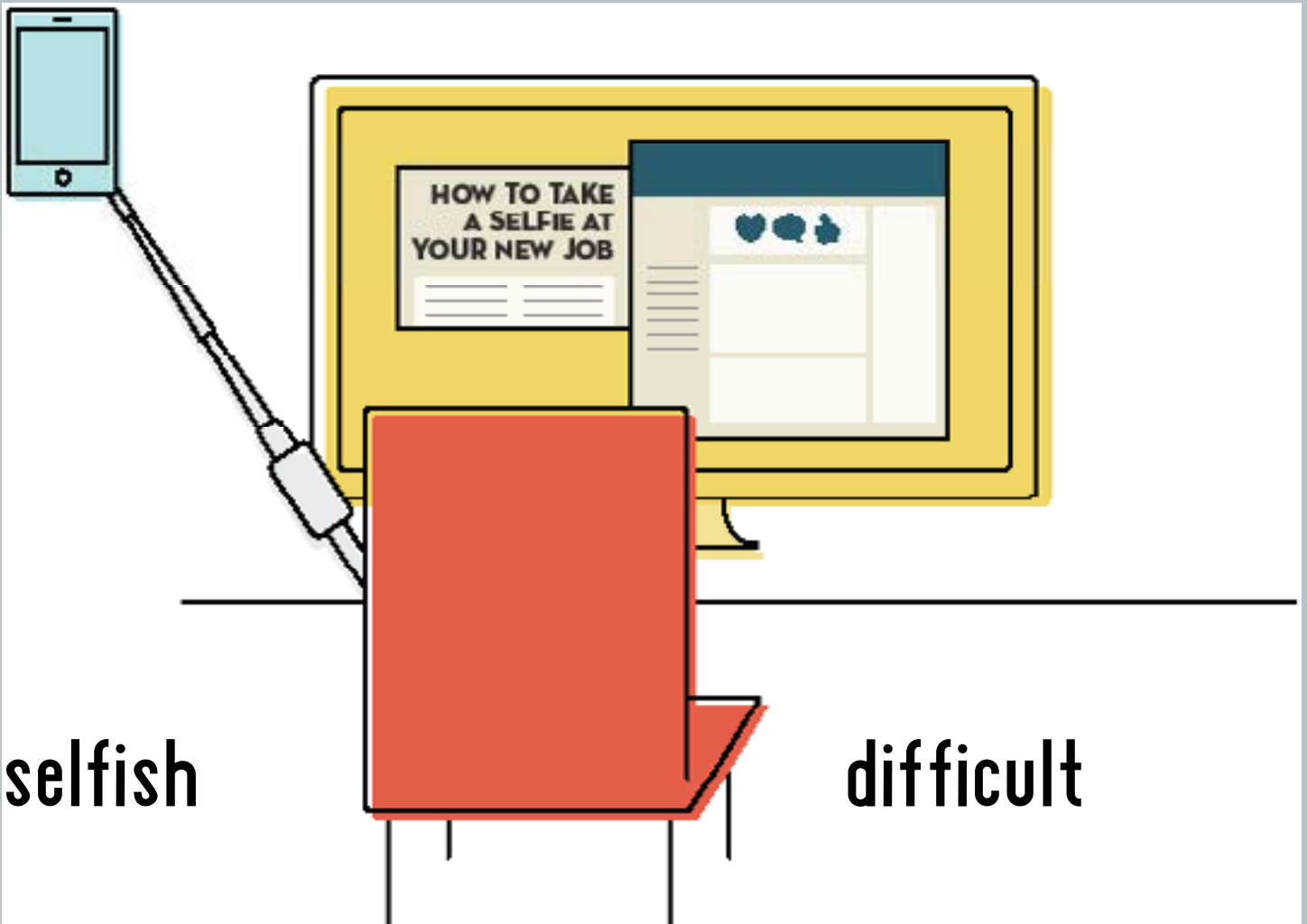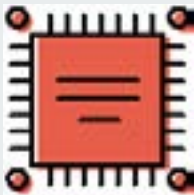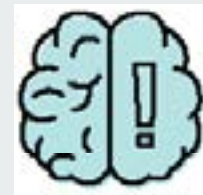
leaders

motivated

self-starters

tech-savvy

entrepreneurs

innovative

Traits and characteristics that were once viewed in a negative light are now starting to show their value. A part of this is due to the evolution of these characteristics and how Millennials have chosen to grow their once perceived negative traits into strengths, but the other part is due to the

change in our attitudes of how we view millennials.

By shifting the way we view this generation and looking at what they bring to the table through a different and more positive lens, we're able to make a much bigger impact in the workplace.

We're starting to see the effects of what a Millennial mindset can bring into the workplace, and the results are profound.
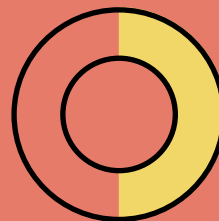
Millennials have already managed to take the lead in the workforce, accounting for over *50% of the working population*!

While the transition period may have started out a little rocky, we're recognizing the unique benefits of having both Millennials and Baby-Boomers in the office, working alongside one another towards a common goal.

MILLENNIAL COMMUNICATION STYLE

frequent

informal

Communication is *so* important and significant to Millennials–especially in the workplace–and their approach to it is different than what many are used to.

They like frequent communication. Informal communication. Digital communication. Positive communication. While it can seem overwhelming and unnecessary to take on a whole new approach to communication,

if you dissect the reasoning behind millennials' preferences, the dots will all start to connect.

digital

positive

we're going to touch on a few of these reasons, and then show you how you can adjust processes at your business in order to

BETTER

ALIGN

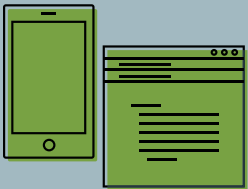with this **new** way of thinking.

CHAPTER ONE

historical context for why millennials
communicate the way they do

CHAPTER TWO

the best methods of communication for millennials

CHAPTER THREE

how to segment conversation and communication
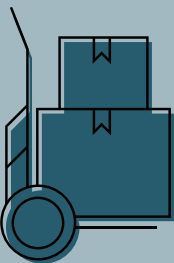
CHAPTER FOUR

what this means for millennial relocations

UB

RELOCATION FOR A NEW GENERATION

urbanbound brings humanity to life's transitions

UrbanBound is a web-based platform offering groundbreaking relocation solutions to enterprise companies. UrbanBound will connect your employees to their new city in a way that is changing employee relocation forever.

request a demo

INVITE YOUR EMPLOYEES

CHECK THEIR PROGRESS

KEEP THEM ON TRACK

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

EXCLUSIVE SERVICE PROVIDERS

MOBILE SOLUTIONS

historical context for

WHY MILLENNIALS COMMUNICATE

the way they do

DOES IT EVER FEEL LIKE YOU'RE HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH:

a brick wall

one earbud in

distracted

chatting/emailing other people while talking to you

eyes glued to the screen

If you answered "yes" to these questions, you just might be having a conversation with a **MILLENNIAL!**

Don't worry though, you're not alone. Even Millennials themselves have had this thought during a conversation with another Millennial. And, while the picture painted above might feel familiar (*perhaps even a little frustrating*), there's something else you need to know: Millennials aren't necessarily *bad* communicators. They're just *different* communicators.

If we take a step back and try to understand the "why" behind this, we might actually find that there's benefit in this kind of interaction.

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millennials, also known as

GEN-Y

consist of anyone born between
1982–2004

This generation has been through a lot of changes and seen a lot of ups and downs. They witnessed the gender shift and equality struggle in their parents' and grandparents' generations. They watched the economy thrive and flourish, and then they watched it crash in 2007–many of them still too young to do anything but watch helplessly as their parents attempted to rebound. They were the first generation to grow up knowing what a computer was basically from birth, and they were a huge part of the technology boom we've been in over the past decade.

Being witness to these ebbs and flows is a big reason why Millennials are the way that they are. They take on an "activist" role in society. They want a voice, and they aren't shy about it. They want not just to be a part of change, but they want to spearhead change. They want to build their own careers, pave their own way, and they want to do it on their own agenda.

why is this though? well, let us take a look back at their childhood.

**Another thing we know about Millennials is that they crave frequent communication and feedback. In fact, many of them rate it as being more important than things like benefits, salary, or time-off.
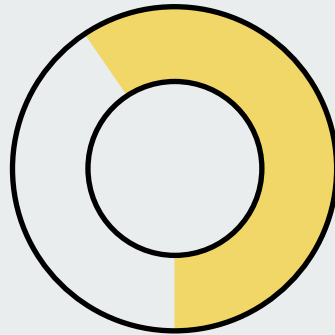
fathers spent 2.5 hours per week with their children, and mothers spent 10.2 hours per week with their children.

fast forward to <u>2011</u>

fathers spent 7.3 hours per week with their children, and mothers 13.5 hours.

THIS IS A 60% INCREASE IN THE TIME PARENTS SPEND WITH THEIR CHILDREN.

Millennials are used to getting time with their parents–they're used to having their ear, using them as a sounding board, and having someone to consistently guide them in the right direction.

Already we can see a correlation between this and the type of communication and attention the Millennial generation needs in the workplace.

While managers aren't necessarily parents, they do tend to represent a similar role in their employees' lives. So, naturally, Millennials end up setting expectations that align with what they're familiar with in terms of someone in that role, and they end up wanting a lot of feedback and coaching.

In fact, where previous generations followed the "no news is good news" mindset, Millennials follow the exact opposite mindset–to them, no news is bad news. If they don't hear from their manager regularly, they'll assume either that they're in trouble, they're not doing a good job, they're job is in jeopardy, or their manager doesn't like them.

TINYPulse research states that:

42% of Millennials want feedback every week.

64% of employees surveyed said they wanted their supervisor to check in with them at least every 2 weeks

THIS IS MORE THAN TWICE THE % OF EVERY OTHER GENERATION.

UB

another reason why the millennial brain works this way is because of the time in which they joined the workforce.

THINK ABOUT IT:

Millennials started their careers during a time when no one's jobs were guaranteed, layoffs were happening left and right, and their hopes and dreams of a long and prosperous career were immediately challenged by the recession. Keeping that in mind, it's easy to see where their desire for reassurance stems from.

HOPES

DREAMS

REASSURANCE
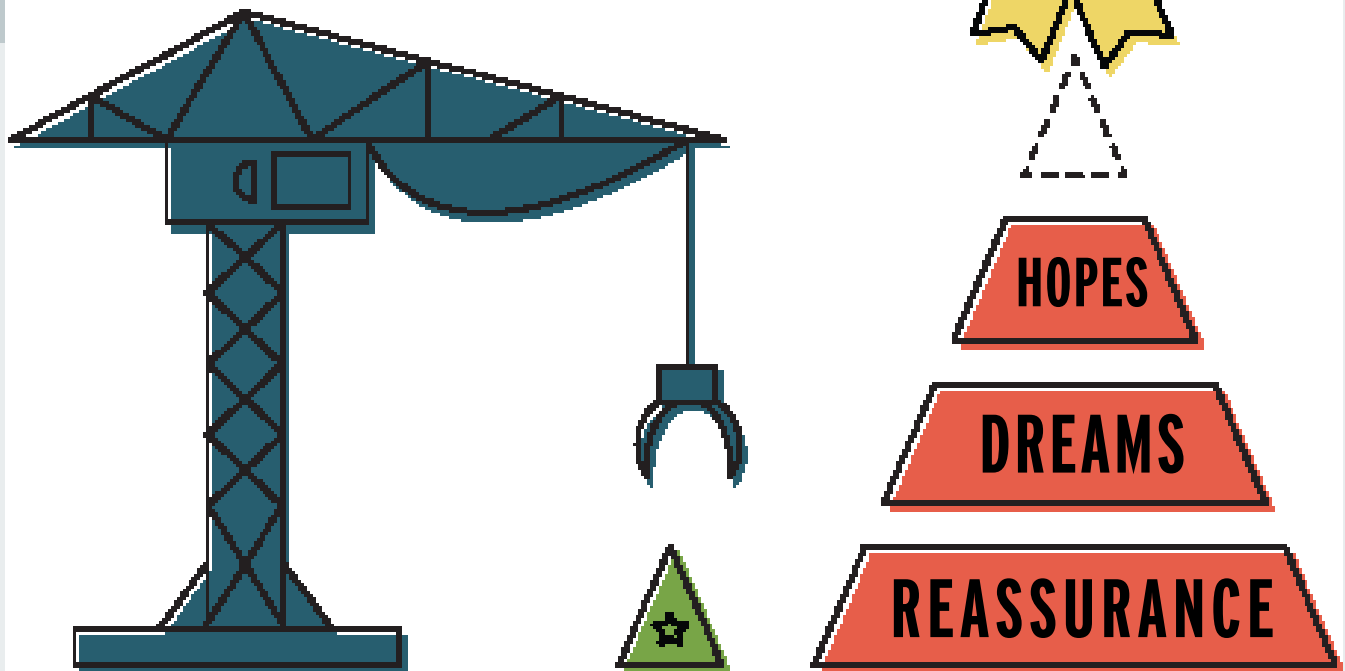
Another hot topic for Millennials is their need for frequent feedback. The first thing to understand here is that feedback does not necessarily mean your employees need to be told what a good job they're doing. They welcome any and all feedback, good or bad, so long as it's constructive. And if you think about it, this isn't specific to just Millennials—everyone wants to receive feedback with a constructive spin on how to make something better, areas to improve upon, and a path for how to get there. This is simply second nature, and it comes with the role of being a manager.

"FEEDBACK" CAN MEAN VERY DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT GENERATIONS

Where that word might take on a more formal meaning to Baby-Boomers and imply prep work beforehand, to Millennials it can mean something as simple as a few sentences or a quick chat confirming that they're on the right track (*and if they aren't, general guidance for a different direction they should take*).

Millennials are actually a very independent generation and they know how to run with things on their own, but quick and informal check-ins will go a long way. Transparency with your feedback will also be well received, as this generation is often blunt and honest with how they frame things. When you grow up with the barrier (*or rather, protection*) of a screen between yourself and the person you're talking to, you get a little extra confidence in your delivery.
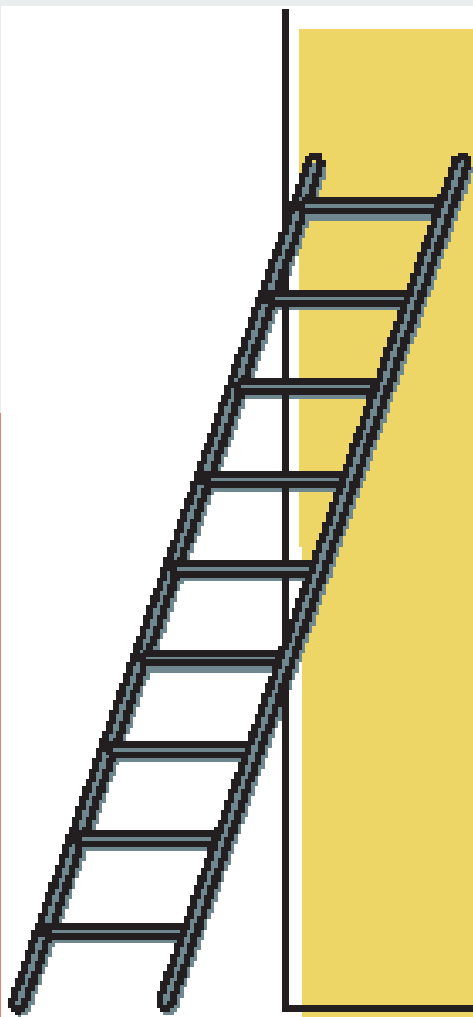
millennials don't want to stay in jobs climbing the corporate ladder in a methodical and structured way. they want to get a job and skyrocket themselves into powerful positions—positions where they have leadership, an active voice, and are making a noticeable difference in what they're passionate about. if you think about it, it's not hard to see why they have a different way of communicating their ideas.
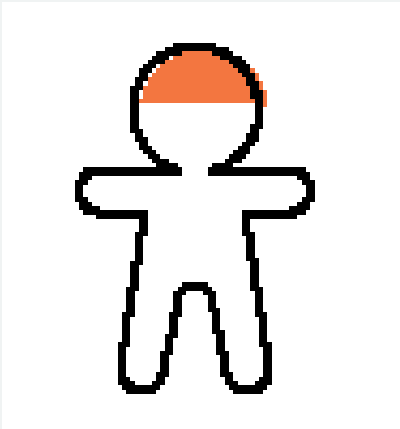
So, now that we have this background behind why Millennials behave and communicate the way they're known to do, let's dive into what you can *actually do with this information.*
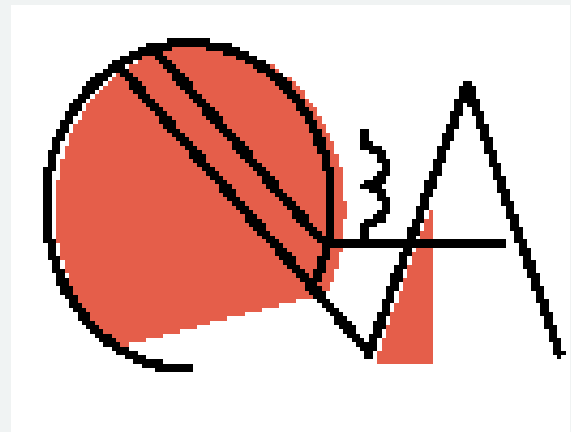
UB
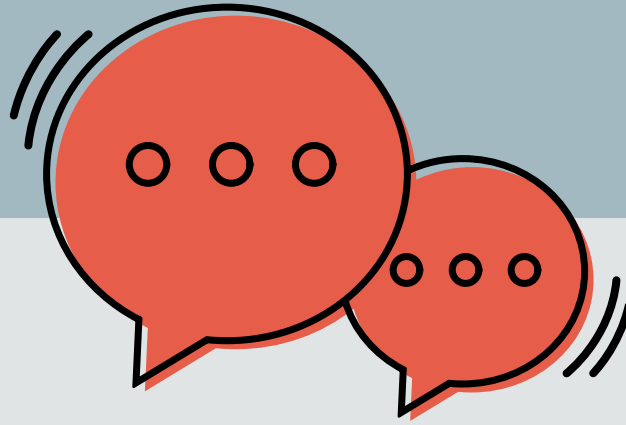
the best
METHODS OF COMMUNICATION
for millennials

"**ONLY 15% OF EMPLOYEES** SAY THEIR COMPANIES DO A VERY GOOD JOB **FOSTERING COMMUNICATION**."

"60% OF RESPONDENTS SAY A **WEB-BASED Q&A PLATFORM WOULD BE EASIER TO COMMUNICATE** WITH TEAM MEMBERS OF A DIFFERENT GENERATION."
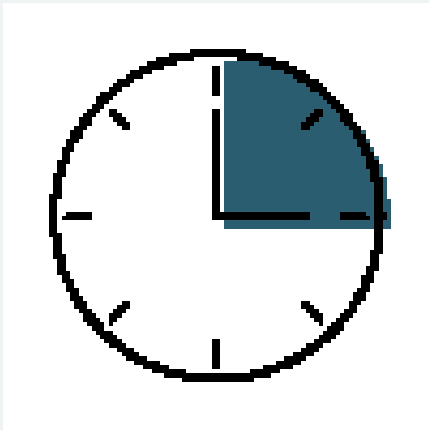
"**CHECKING IN FOR 15 MINUTES** EACH WEEK, IS MORE IMPORTANT TO EMPLOYEES THAN A TOP BENEFITS PACKAGE."
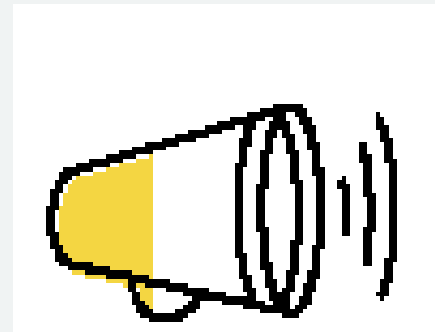
"38% OF BOOMERS SAY **MILLENNIALS ARE MORE HONEST BUT SOMETIMES TOO BRASH** OR OPINIONATED"
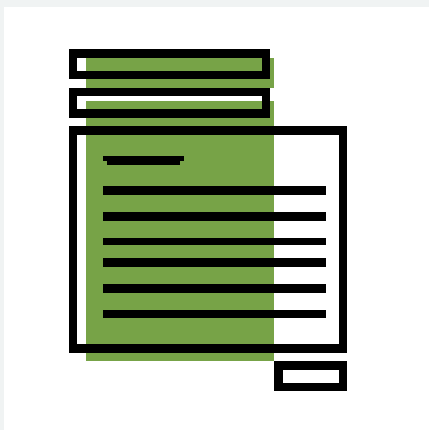
"70% OF EMPLOYEES WOULD BE MORE LIKELY TO SHARE INFO WITH MANAGERS **IF THEY COULD ENTER COMMENTS INTO A WEB-BASED FEEDBACK PLATFORM**."

It's pretty clear millennials are particular about their communication. It's also clear that there may be a generation gap in how employees choose to exercise that communication.

UB

MILLENNIALS VALUE FEEDBACK ON A FREQUENT CADENCE, BUT AREN'T CONCERNED WITH HOW THEY GET IT

they'll accept feedback via:

messaging apps

email

phone

text

informal conversation
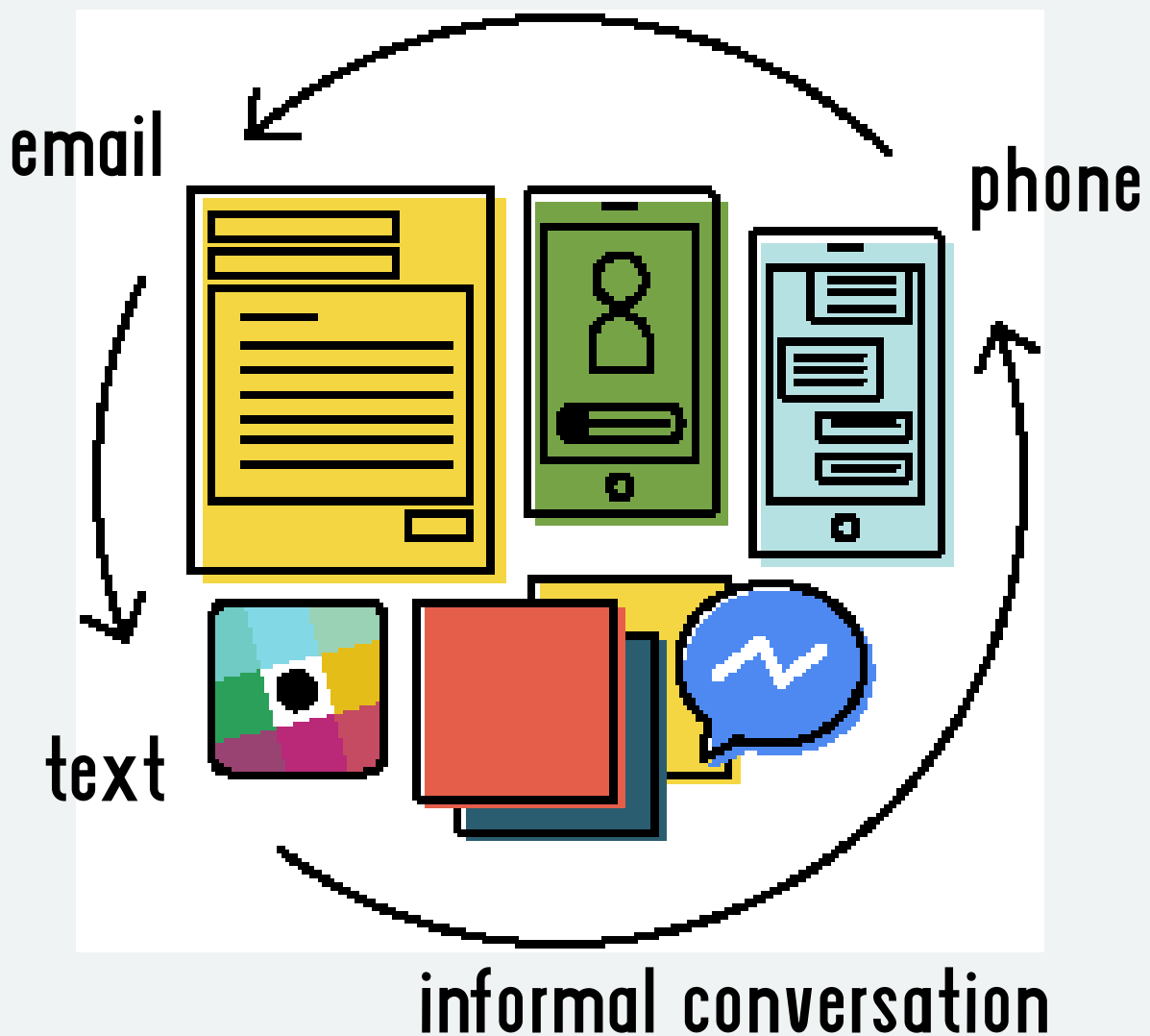
AND IT CAN COME BEFORE, DURING, OR AFTER WORK.

This might feel unnatural from what Boomers are used to–which is more in line with planned, in-person, and professional meetings. While these one-off conversations may feel abrupt and unprofessional, it's second nature to Millennials. They're used to switching between different apps, conversations, and tasks, and they've become so good at doing this that it appears they're doing it all simultaneously. In fact, multitasking is actually easier for Millennials than it is for them to devote full attention and concentration to *one task at a time*.

VERY FEW MILLENNIALS

know of a time when they had to make the phone cord stretch as far as possible to get themselves into a different room when they wanted to talk to their friends.

They didn't have to wait until school to have conversations, and most of them grew up not knowing what the word "*disconnected*" really meant. Because of this, they're accustomed to the back-and-forth "banter" type of feedback we associate with their communication style.

One area where Millennials thrive when it comes to communication is in transparency. It's no secret that they're a more open generation. Part of this is due to the "barrier" of a computer screen we referenced earlier, but the other part is just

due to a shift in habits. Millennials grew up communicating all day long, so naturally, they stopped thoroughly thinking through every last sentence, ensuring it's all framed in a professional and proper way.

Electronic communication allows you to execute a greater level of transparency because you're able to give feedback in a more direct way; however, there is still enormous value in face-to-face communication.

teams should have a healthy blend of both, because it opens up the opportunity to clear up things that may have gotten lost in translation (we've all been there).

Millennials are blunt and honest, and they'll expect the same (or at least, your version of it) from you.

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there are a few things we've learned along the way when it comes to communicating with millennials—here are 3 that we've found to be most valuable.

MILLENNIALS PAY ATTENTION TO THE TONE OF VIRTUAL COMMUNICATION

#1
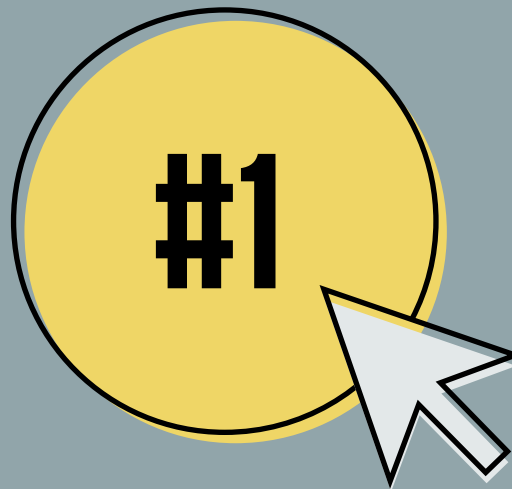
If you put an email chain between a Millennial and a Baby-Boomer in front of a stranger, you can be certain they'd be able to pair the generation with the email. This is because Millennials and Baby-Boomers have a different level of comfort when it comes to virtual communication. When

Boomers transitioned from mostly face-to-face professional communications (*which are often more polite and formal*) to a digitally-heavy communication environment, they brought some of those more "polite and formal" characteristics with them.

On the other side of the coin, since Millennials grew up communicating electronically, they're able to naturally articulate exactly what they want to say and how they want to say it. If you take one look at an email or chat from a Millennial, it's probably filled with quick sentences, dashes, smiley faces, punctuation, emojis, even gifs–anything they can do to make the conversation feel as personable and life-like as possible. Other generations; however, did not grow up with that same level of exposure to communicating via tech, and as a result, they can sometimes come off as sounding short or irritated through digital conversation, and Millennials pick up on that (even if it's not what you intended). That said, don't take it as a sign of disrespect if Millennial emails are informal or overly-happy sounding

it's just what's natural to them!

we've touched on how important transparency is to millennials, and something that goes hand-in-hand with transparency is a sense of personality.

MILLENNIALS VALUE PERSONALITY

#2
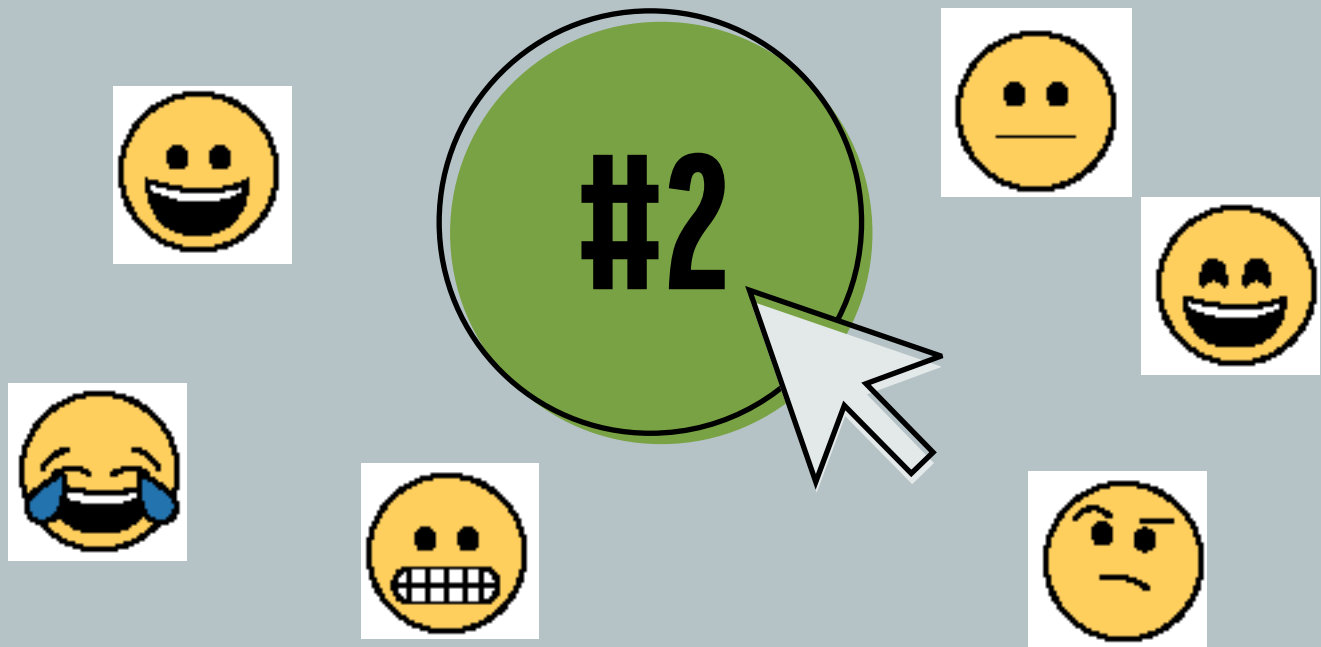
WE DECIDED TO PUT THIS ONE TO THE TEST AT URBANBOUND.

Last year during summer intern season, our Relocation Consultants tried something a little different with their intern groups. While their communication with full-time, more established relocating employees has a more professional tone, they thought they'd switch it up for the interns. They used email language that would resonate with them if they were in the interns' shoes, and instead of sending their typical welcome email,

they sent this:

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save   send   delete

B *I* <u>U</u>

Hi from Alex and Lauren!

We wanted to quickly check-in before you begin your short term housing search, as well as clear something up:

Despite what you may think, us relocation consultants are in fact not robots.

We get it though, you need proof. So, we wrote up some fun facts to help you get to know us a little better, and we look forward to getting to know you better when we connect on the phone this month.

1) This is our first time using a selfie stick. Sadly, we struggled taking this photo.

2) We are both collegiate athletes (well, that's only half true). Alex went to school at Saint Louis University and played club soccer. She relocated to Chicago when she graduated. Lauren graduated from Bradley University and played volleyball all 4 years! She recently moved from the suburbs of Chicago to the city.

3) Alex and Lauren are obsessed with crushing their FitBit steps goals and regularly jaw jack on the app.

(Left: Lauren; Right: Alex)

4) Lauren loves the Bachelor, cookie dough ice cream, and her chocolate lab, Rosie. Alex loves going to live concerts/music festivals and she's excited to go to Bonnaroo for the first time this year. She also doesn't like sweets and takes a lot of flack for this from her coworkers.

Lastly, if you're relocating to a city where there's more than one Acme intern, please submit your name and contact information by March 28th if you're interested in being on this list.

Talk with you soon!
-Alex & Lauren

there are a few things about this email that make it appealing to a group of interns.

By putting in their picture, Alex and Lauren humanized themselves and immediately established trust and reliability amongst their relocating interns. Millennials are more comfortable and likely to have a positive conversation with someone they can actually picture, so this gives interns that connection to reality.
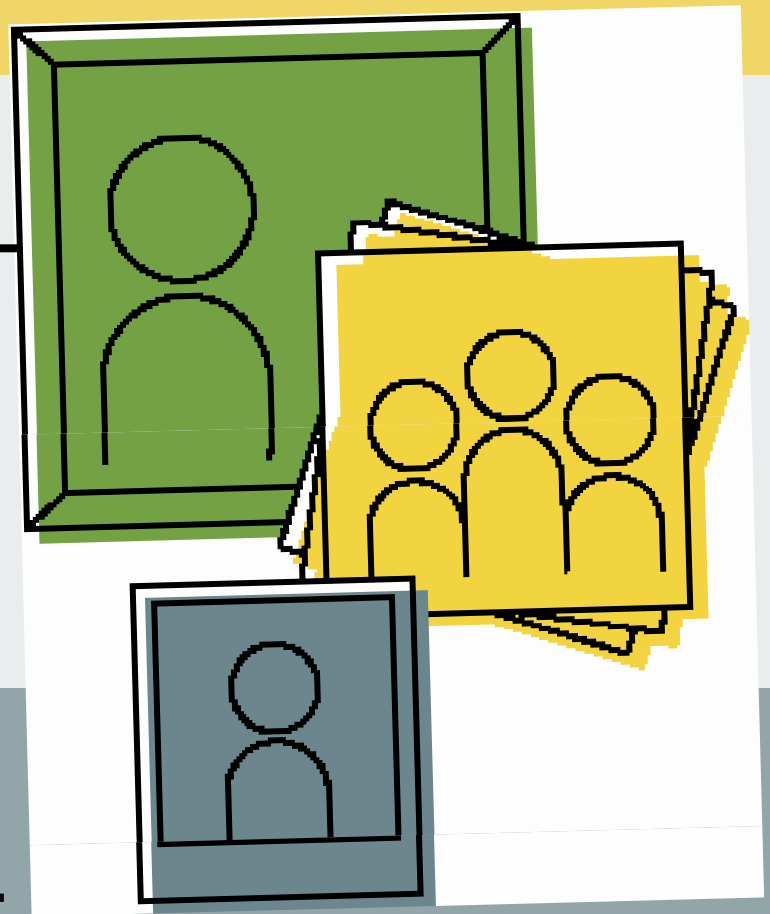
additionally, there's a level of

PLAYFULNESS TO THE CONTENT WHICH IS APPRECIATED AND RECOGNIZED BY THIS GENERATION*

We spend most of the day reading and responding to repetitive (*and at times, mundane*) emails, so this language adds a differentiating element, showing interns that the experience can be as personable as they want. An authentic and quirky voice will be well received by Millennials,

so by taking the extra time to infuse this in your communications, your response rate (and the attitude within that response) will skyrocket.
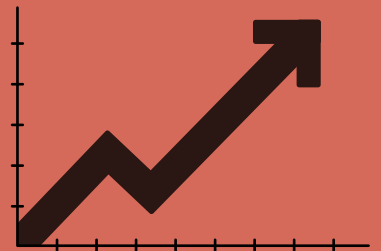
While this type of email is probably not a good fit for someone in a more managerial or executive role, there is certainly value in this approach if you can properly identify and segment your audience.

MILLENNIALS CONSUME CONTENT IN A VARIETY OF WAYS

because millennials have no off-switch, they're consuming content all day long. this is why it's so important to create flexible content.

They switch their attention between electronic devices dozens of times per hour, so employers have to identify a way to capture that not-so-undivided attention by utilizing various mediums of communication.

#3

One way to do this is to send short bursts of thoughts or ideas their way as they come to you. Millennials and generations alike will read it, understand it, and retain it much more than if they were to receive a long-winded email. In fact, the likelihood that they'll even make it to the bottom of something too lengthy is slim. Think about what's popular amongst Millennials: Tweets, Top 10 lists, videos, blog posts, short blurbs...they don't want to spend too much time reading one thing, because they might miss another in the meantime.

Given the above, don't take this to mean it has to be their way or the highway. Set expectations ahead of time and try to meet in the middle. If you need to get something across that might not be as easy to convey in a quick message, let them know at the beginning of the email that it's imperative for them to read the entire message. Or, if something has a little more importance or density to it, set an in-person meeting to go through it, that way you ensure everything you want to cover is making its way through.

You can also set expectations for how Millennials should communicate with certain groups of people. Maybe amongst each other, a casual or brazen tone is okay, but if you want them to act more professionally and less forward with certain groups or levels of professionals at your company, let them know. They do know how to tighten it up and change their tone, they just have to make a conscious effort to do so.

as you can probably see, it all starts, begins, succeeds, fails, and ends, with communication.
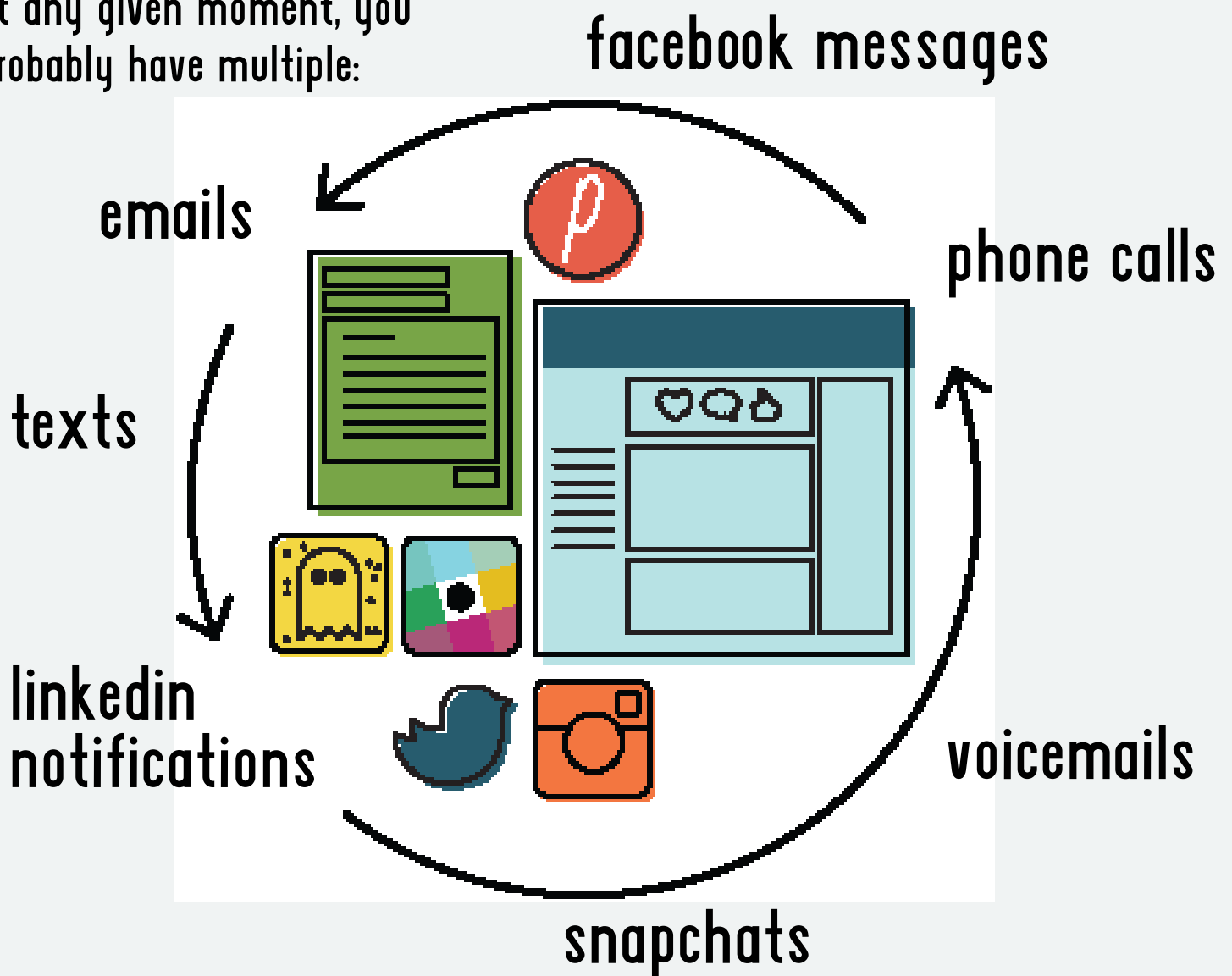
UB

how to

SEGMENT CONVERSATION AND COMUNICATION

THINK ABOUT ALL THE DIFFERENT PLACES YOU HAVE CONVERSATIONS LIVING RIGHT NOW

at any given moment, you probably have multiple:

facebook messages

emails

phone calls

texts

linkedin notifications

voicemails

snapchats

YOU PROBABLY HAVE MULTIPLE TEXT CONVERSATIONS GOING. A never-ending list of email chains and new messages in your work inbox, other emails to get to in your personal inbox, a few missed calls or voicemails to return, messages on LinkedIn, Facebook, if you're extra tech-savvy maybe even some Snapchats...and this is just scraping the surface.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD OF NOTIFICATIONS.

Calendar reminders going off, emails coming through, texts, missed calls, chats coming from every which direction–because of all of this chaos, we have no choice but to segment this information. Believe it or not, our brains have actually adjusted to this madness and have rewired to naturally function and respond to this type of environment. Although our brains have adapted to this new normal, it can still be pretty challenging. (*Yes, even for our uber-connected, uber-technology savvy Millennials and generations beyond!*)

CATEGORIZE & ORGANIZE

information will be well received because it's the way their brains are already working.

They try to keep track of dozens of things, all at the same time, all day long. If you're able to help them segment one more piece of their life into a bucket to categorize and pay attention to at a time when they're ready to, it's going to make a huge difference in their experience and the way they communicate with you.

For example: when a Millennial opens Snapchat, they're expecting to see a picture or video. When they open Twitter, they're expecting to see a feed of updates or short snippets. When they open their texts, they're expecting to see personal messages from friends or family. Their brain already knows what to expect, that way, it can prepare itself to understand and properly categorize whatever is on the other side.

make a difference with organization and you'll help organize their work life!

*This is where relocation can end up getting lost.*

We often have pieces of our relocation living in every which place–some of it is in our work email, some in our personal email, some communication may be in texts, some over the phone or in voice-mails, and the rest of it may live in whatever software is being used. As you can imagine, it's pretty hard to properly categorize and organize all of this. If someone opens up their work email expecting to see something from their co-worker and ends up seeing something about their relocation, they may not be prepared to deal with it at that time and will end up either forgetting about it, miscategorizing it, or ignoring it altogether.

Let's get into some strategies for how to achieve this centralization

"we need to find a way to give relocation that same segmented attention we give everything else in our life–this is why centralizing the relocation process is so critical"
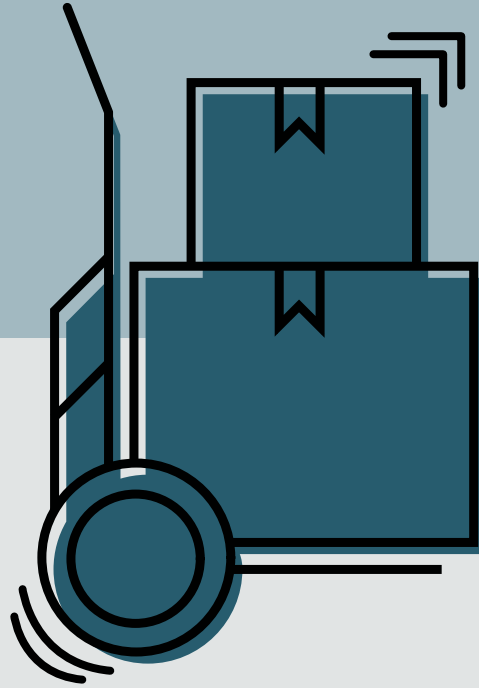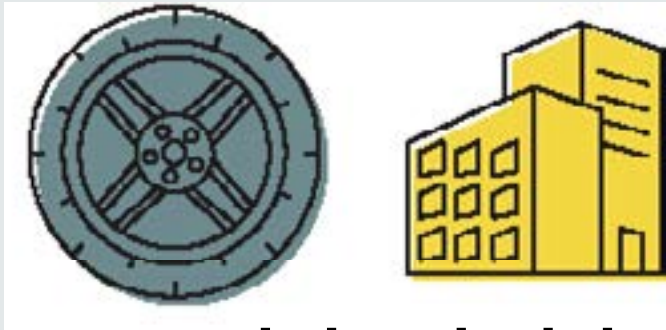
what this means for

MILLENNIAL RELOCATION
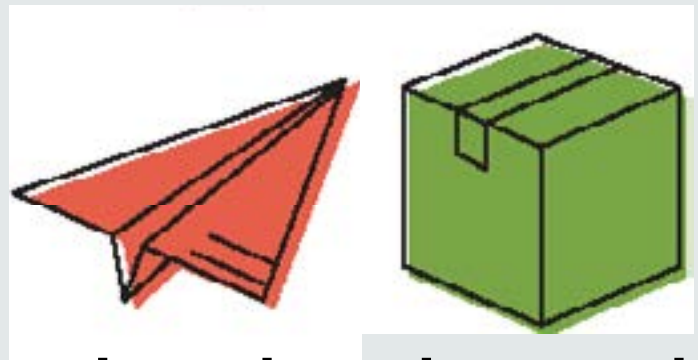
there are

HUNDREDS OF TOUCH POINTS

throughout a relocation

and given the fact that there are so many pieces throughout a move that a transferee needs to address and take care of, information is flying all over the place.

car rental **hotel** **travel** **shipment**

For example, a transferee might be in the middle of talking with one supplier for:

- hotel booking
- one for car rental
- another for travel
- household goods
- shipment vanline or company
- auto shipment

AND THIS IS JUST TO NAME A FEW.

Now add on top of that communication with:

- a hiring manager
- maybe a Mobility contact
- a third party software
- the bank

THE LIST GOES ON.

As you can see, these conversations can pile up, and fast, so it's important to organize and segment all of these communications and house them in one place so that everyone involved in the process can stay on top of everything.

this also allows your employees to think about and
ORGANIZE THEIR RELOCATION

when they are ready to do so, which provides a
much more seamless and organized experience

texts

emails

social media

When an employee is at a point when they're ready to devote some attention to their move, they should be able to:

LOG IN

to one place and see everything they need to see, instead of having to check those dozens of other places.

It's also important to be able to see and review all past communications. That way, a transferee can refresh themselves on where they are with certain parts of their move. More often than not, relocation is not the only thing going on in your employees' lives, so it's easy to confuse or forget previous conversations had about certain things.

If you implement software or a solution that helps offer this segmented experience, be vocal about it! In a recent **Global Mobility Trends** survey, 44% of employees said that they either didn't know or their employer didn't offer online access to information concerning their mobility benefits program.

This is something that employees clearly want (*and in some cases even expect*), so if you have it, leverage this huge advantage and use it to your benefit!

think about how you handle your banking or finances.

You probably set aside time in your day to dedicate attention to it, login to your online banking portal, and identify the things you need to accomplish (bills to pay, messages from your bank, payments or transfers received or requested, etc). You are prepared for what you need to do, and your brain has already started to think ahead and get into the right mindset to deal with that specific set of tasks.

everything you see is expected

SIMILAR TO HOW WE KNOW WE CAN LOGIN TO OUR BANKING APP AND SEE ALL OF THIS IMPORTANT FINANCIAL INFORMATION, WE NEED TO PROVIDE THE SAME EXPERIENCE FOR RELOCATION.

Not only does this ensure that they'll be mentally prepared to start making progress on their relocation, it also ensures they won't get distracted with something else while handling something relocation-related. It's easy to open your email and start one task, then receive an email that you would rather deal with instead, thus leading you down a completely different path.

$$$$$

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instead of viewing the fact that

MILLENNIALS ARE CONSUMED WITH TECHNOLOGY

and always plugged-in as a negative thing,
find a way to spin this to your advantage.

Using technology allows you to not only communicate on your own terms and on a timetable that coordinates with your schedule, it also allows you to reach a broader audience and can actually improve how you plan and execute work. There are entire industries dedicated to project management softwares to align with Millennials and the way that they work (think: Evernote, Asana, Basecamp Trello). By taking advantage of these tools, Millennials end up receiving and digesting their workload in a more manageable way that their brains can process, which means a lot less lag time in between projects and in the time you spend explaining projects.

utilizing technology allows you to communicate with your entire team at once!

It allows them to communicate with each other, prioritize tasks in a way that makes sense to them, and interact with you when they come to a point of needing approval, guidance, or a roadblock removed.

all in all:

communication and centralization are key.

UB