

The antithetic Millennial and their impact on innovation detractors

By Craig Morgan

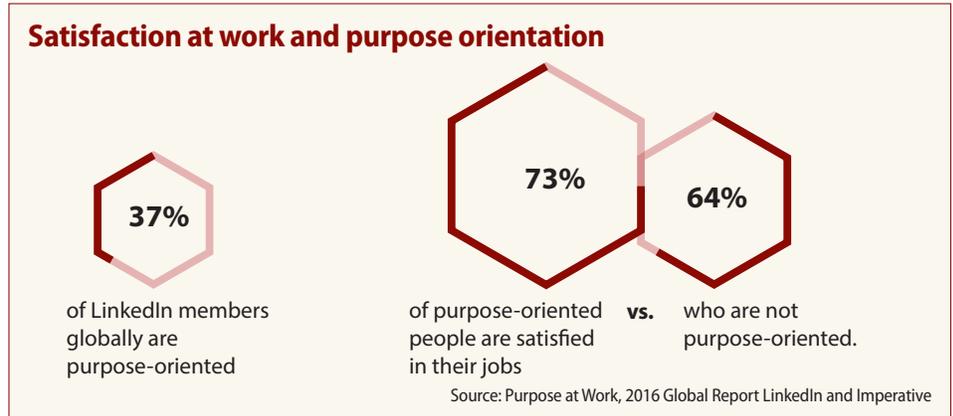
By 2025, Millennials will make up the majority of the workforce¹. In response, companies are clamoring to understand how to recruit, motivate and retain these workers. But what is the current and expected impact of this demographic on clinical research?

The cultural nuances and motivational drivers that make this demographic unique are the very elements that can make or break a clinical research study, increasing numbers within the patient pool. It is a key player in trial planning, administration and investigation of studies.

Millennials are often characterized as the “purpose-driven generation”^{2,4}. They are constantly seeking purpose in what they do and why. Millennials often have an interest in challenging status quo systems or even regulations they consider to be unnecessary or burdensome.

This generation may offer important clues for how to recruit and retain clinical research participants. Rather than just appealing to the individual benefits of participating in a study, sponsors may also benefit from appealing to the larger societal benefit. A global LinkedIn survey of over 26,000 Millennials found that employees who feel like their work creates a positive impact are more likely to be fulfilled and stay with a job longer². By offering more information to the patient about the larger study results, sponsors can help them more fully grasp the impact of their participation. With that, data transparency may move from being a “nice-to-have” to a critical element in a successful retention strategy.

Ambitious and team-oriented, Millennials prefer a tight-knit, cross-functional working



approach that values social interaction³. Having grown up in an environment promoting teamwork, most Millennials prefer a sense of unity over division and collaboration over competition. Matthew Howes, Palio, stated, “We should expect this generation to tear down walls between sponsors, vendors and sites involved in clinical programs. Clinical research of the future will see research sites and investigators brought in before protocols are developed to create a highly collaborative team environment⁴.” Open to change and multitasking, they thrive in a dynamic, fast-paced environment. If harnessed effectively, this has the potential to improve the quality of protocols and streamline study execution by facilitating communication between sponsors and research staff.

Technology is integral, and not just an enabler. Millennials are used to instant, networked and mobile communications. As a result, they are often skeptical of legacy-entrenched systems (and innovator detractors happy with the status quo) that are inefficient, cumbersome and lacking in transparent communication mechanisms.

It’s no secret that patient recruitment is one of the biggest challenges for clinical research, particularly as patient populations become more targeted. According to the Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development, nearly a third of the time dedicated to clinical trials is spent on patient recruitment and enrollment⁵. Other research cites that 37% of all sites in a given trial fail to meet their enrollment targets, and more than 10% never enroll a single patient⁶.

Technology adoption enabling real-time collaboration across sites, sponsors and CROs will only increase as the Millennial workforce grows. No longer willing to muddle through business processes with outdated platforms that rely on email communications and Excel residing in siloed functions, we can expect these workers to drive the industry further towards cloud-based technologies that provide anytime, anywhere access addressing these trial bottlenecks.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, “Irrespective of the long-term aims and ambi-

tions of an individual company, the ability to attract and retain Millennial talent will be a vital step to achieving it⁷. "Beyond patient engagement, sites, sponsors and CROs will increasingly find that embracing technologies that promote cross-organizational collaboration in real-time is no longer optional but expected and necessary. 

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3. Young, Charlie. *5 reasons you want millennials on your team*.
4. Howes, Matthew. *Marginalization of millennials: Changing the clinical research landscape*. CenterWatch. June 6, 2016.
5. *Impact Report*, Tufts Center for the Study of Drug Development, Vol. 15, No. 1, Tufts University, 2013.
6. Whitepaper: InVentiv Clinical Trial Recruitment Solutions. Accelerating Clinical Trial Recruitment. October 14, 2013.

7. *Growth reimagined: Prospects in emerging markets drive CEO confidence*. PwC 14th Annual Global CEO Survey Report.

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