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5 WAYS Millennials Can Build Rapport With The Older Generation

As the workforce gets younger, organisations have to crack the code to create an engagement model that is inclusive of millennials. This can range from drawing insights from individual motivational drivers to monitoring behaviours to create a better work environment. **Varuni Khosla** discusses five ways that millennials can use to build a rapport with the older generation at work.

- 1 Listen to the Voice of Experience**
"You can choose to disregard it, but keep it as a rear-view memory to reflect upon, if your decisions go wrong," says Rattan Keswani, deputy managing director, Lemon Tree Hotels. "Additionally, you should retain a bit of formality unless you get the permission to be otherwise."
- 2 Mentoring and Coaching**
In addition to their knowledge of technicalities, older workers can play a critical role in helping millennials understand the company culture, its politics and protocols. "A recent survey showed 70% of respondents saying Gen X was best equipped to manage teams. Hence, learning leadership from older workers should be a prerogative of the millennial generation," says Suresh Raina, managing director, Hunt Partners.
- 3 Look for Similar Interest**
Break the ice by starting a dialogue. While it is easy for millennials to start communication with the colleagues of their generation, to get along with the older generation, look out for the topics which they are more comfortable with to talk about. Do not let the generation gap create a communication gap. As more and more millennials today are targeting higher level of hierarchy where they will be managing older generation too, it is important for them to take the initiative to avoid the awkwardness while working together, says Suchita Dutta, executive director, Indian Staffing Federation.
- 4 Use Facts to Gain Rapport**
Do not create an impression for someone on the basis of his or her age. Generally, millennials have a feeling that the older generation is reluctant and will not take them seriously. While dealing with the older generation, it is always advisable to get your facts ready and be specific on the things that you take up to avoid conflicts. This will make you sound knowledgeable and help you gain respect. Besides, this will also help reduce the communication gap which is important to maintain a cordial relation at workplace, says Dutta.
- 5 Seek Views**
Millennials should actively seek and listen to advice and wisdom of older workers. Seeking advice from an older worker is neither an admission of failure or weakness, nor does it indicate a sign of inexperience. Rather, it demonstrates high self-awareness and maturity. Gen X workers appreciate the respect shown for their knowledge and wisdom and, as research has shown, are more than happy to share their insights, says Raina.