ROADMAP TO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

One in Three Workers Today are Millennials

It's no secret that the millennial generation has redefined the workplace with a different approach to life and work. Are you a leader hoping to hire and retain the best talent? This session provides a view into the minds of successful young professionals working as landscape architects at leading practices.

According to the Pew Research Center, “more than one-in-three workers today are Millennials” in 2015. Over fifty-three million Millennials were in the U.S. labor force as of May 2015. Richard Fry writes, “It’s worth noting that the millennial population as a whole (not just its workforce) is already projected to surpass that of Baby Boomers this year as the nation’s largest living generation, according to the Census Bureau.”

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Understand challenges and opportunities facing young professionals once they have entered professional practice.
2. Understand basic research and demographics about millennials and how it affects the profession.
3. Learn about the present generation of graduates and their key motivators in the workplace.
4. Explore methodologies to retain young professionals and engage them in your practice.

SESSION OUTLINE

I. Millennial Generation: An Introduction
   a. Millennials were born between 1980-1999.
   b. Comparison to Baby Boomers and Gen-Xers
   c. Typical Millennial Values
   d. What is the percentage of Millennials in the profession? How will this shift over the next 5-10 years?

II. Millennial Generation: What this means for the profession
   a. What the new generation brings to the profession - now more than ever landscape architects are generalists, playing specialist where passions are high.
   b. The speed at which design options and studies are being done is faster than ever. Parametric modeling is a tool tapped into architecture, and we are adapting to it with our own set of variables.
   c. The viewshed of the student is larger than ever, sustainable practices and technologies are constantly being tested, work outside of the US and adaptation to different cultures and user groups is becoming the norm at all office types. How do you remain engaged when you do not get to visit the site or meet the client?
   d. Students are capable of using a wide range of technologies, often far beyond the capacity of firm leaders. (Review key skills)

III. Keeping a millennial engaged (Or, if you are a millennial, are you engaged?)
   a. Identifying what engagement means -- Young professionals need to be able to identify and fulfill their personal goals and objectives in an office environment.
   b. Providing opportunity and challenge. Money is typically not the largest driver for fulfillment.
   c. Supporting staff through the LARE and other professional milestones.
   d. Internships are a great way for emerging professionals to test out what type of culture they may thrive in. Are firms using interns in a mutually beneficial way?

IV. Discussion
**SURVEY RESULTS:** Over the summer and fall of 2015, our team conducted an online survey for millennials working in landscape architecture firms and currently in school studying landscape architecture. All respondents were self-identified as members of the millennial generation and employed within landscape architecture.

**Millennials currently in landscape architecture firms: 122 Respondents**
- % of respondents with a BLA: 41%
- % with a MLA: 47%
- % with Both: 10%

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**HOW LARGE IS THE OFFICE YOU WORK IN CURRENTLY?**

- 50+ 31%
- 10-20 21%
- 20-50 28%
- 1-5 5%
- 5-10 15%

**DO YOU FEEL PRESSURE WHEN YOU ASK FOR QUESTIONS OR HELP?**

- Yes 21%
- No 68%
- Other 11%

**HOW MANY OTHER OFFICES HAVE YOU WORKED IN?**

- 1-2 62%
- 2-3 24%
- 3-4 7%

**ON AVERAGE, HOW MANY HOURS A WEEK DO YOU WORK?**

- 45 38%
- 50 45%
- 60 12%
- 40 5%
“If you could speak freely to your supervisors, is there anything specific you would tell them?”

“Effective leadership starts from the top down. Your involvement is invaluable and the office would be a better place if it were consistent. Please invest in an IT consultant to manage the day to day quirks and hiccups with our setup.”

“I love when you are passionate about your work!”

“To never lose sight of inspiring those who work under you. Find ways to make even the most daunting projects into something valuable for them. To have patience and help younger staff find value in everything they do. And to always listen to what these individuals want from their profession. Find the passion these individuals have and harness it to grow the firm and the individual.”

“The most important thing to me is that you work for good people. I don’t mind working hard or long hours, but I am want to know that someone cares about me as a person, not just as someone who works for them.”

“Provide flexible work hours.”
Millennials currently studying landscape architecture: 52 Respondents

% of respondents studying for a BLA: 62.5% MLA: 37.5%

**IN YOUR CURRENT PROGRAM, DO YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE LEARNING EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL AT A FIRM?**

- **YES**: 48%
- **NO**: 52%

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR THE FIRM YOU CHOOSE TO WORK FOR TO PROVIDE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND MENTORSHIP?**

- **VERY IMPORTANT**: 69%
- **SOMETHING**: 29%
- **NOT AT ALL**: 2%
As a new employee at a firm, how valuable do you expect to be compared to current employees?

- More valuable: 4%
- Just as valuable: 61%
- Less valuable: 35%

What is the most valuable knowledge or skill you will bring to a design firm?

- Design ideation: 65%
- Software / technology: 21%
- Hand drawing / sketching: 14%
Once you graduate, what will be the most important factor when selecting a firm to work for?

- Flexibility: 21%
- Firm Portfolio: 27%
- Salary: 10%
- Growth Potential: 42%

How many hours per week do you expect to work?

- Over 60: 6%
- 60: 13%
- 40: 31%
- 50: 50%
Janelle Johnson, RLA, ASLA
Janelle is currently a Senior Associate at Hoerr Schaudt. Previously, she practiced as a Senior Landscape Architect at OLIN. Janelle’s experience spans across the public and private sectors, with typologies ranging from residential estates to public parks. Her interests lie at the intersection of design and preservation, where her design approach is to use the cultural and historical influences of the site to inform her design sensibility. Janelle earned a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture with Distinction from Purdue University, as well as a Master of Landscape Architecture and a Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania.

Jessica Henson, RLA, ASLA
Jessica is an Associate at OLIN and an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is currently project manager on OLIN’s winning competition entry for the U.S. Embassy in London. She earned a Bachelor of Architecture degree with a minor in Structural Engineering at the Illinois Institute of Technology and a Master of Landscape Architecture degree at the University of Pennsylvania. Jessica has taught design studios at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Illinois focusing on demographic shifts, resiliency, resource supply and demand, and the relationship of cities to their regional context.

Jennifer Birkeland, ASLA, LEED AP
Jennifer is a project manager at WEST 8 in New York. Previously, Jennifer was with OLIN where she managed the Landscape Design Standards for the University of Arkansas. She also worked on the winning design entry for the Washington Monument Grounds at Sylvan Theater. Prior to West 8, Jennifer was with Ken Smith Landscape Architect for the Orange County Great Park, Verzone Woods Architects, Perry & Associates Collaborative, and the City of Cambridge Planning Department. Jennifer received her Master of Landscape Architecture at Harvard University, and has a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from California Polytechnic State University Pomona.

Recommended Sources for Further Reading


