

# MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE



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**T**hey want collaboration. And mentorship. They want new experiences and to be part of something bigger than their 9-to-5 jobs.

For a special report this week, *Crain's* took a look inside the minds of Metro Detroit millennials to find out what motivates and inspires them in their careers. As part of that project, we asked millennials to tell their stories in their own words. Here are responses from our own Gongos millennials:

## **FLEXIBILITY, OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH**

"As someone who's been in the workforce for a little while now, I'm looking for flexibility in my schedule.

I want an employer that I trust, where it feels like they care about me and my growth and development. In my current job, I have so many wonderful people who care about me, how I'm feeling in my role and how I can grow to the best of my ability, and that's not something I feel I

could find anywhere else."

— *Kaylie Smith, 28*  
*Research Manager*

## **MY JOB FITS MY LIFE**

"I am challenged, appreciated and feel engaged not only in my role, but in the success of the company overall. I see my purpose in the organization. I am motivated by producing work I'm proud of — whether individually or in a group — and thrive in an environment that fosters collaboration and encouragement. Development programs are in place for me to map my future and merge my personal goals with the goals of the company.

But most of all, what I like about my job is that it fits in my life. I crave a fulfilling personal life just as much as I strive for success at work and am drawn to opportunities that allow for both. I want to feel encouraged or supported in my personal choices and surrounded by people who understand that although I want to have career

success, my life outside the office is just as important to me. Technology allows me to access my personal and work lives in the same sitting and I want to be around people that are OK with that.

The reasons I may choose to leave a job would be that it was no longer conducive to the lifestyle that I want, I was no longer feeling valued or challenged or felt I had hit a ceiling in my growth or opportunity. Most information about our generation will say that we skip around the job market a lot, generally staying at one place for only a short time, and I sometimes feel that pressure. But I think that's because there are many companies that are structured in such a way that my generation feels the only way to move up is to move out. Or that other opportunities must be out there with a more progressive company that sees value in the young and dynamic workforce."

— *Hallie Dunklin, 26*  
*Specialist, Brand Identity & Design*

## TRANSFORMATION UP CLOSE

"I see my 20s as the critical period of my career development. Similar to the critical period of language acquisition during early childhood, my 20s are the best time to focus on learning and advance my career before I have a family and my attention will have split priorities.

My biggest goal right now is to learn as much as I possibly can. That means attending available trainings at work and also seeking out external trainings. Having a senior employee who is willing to mentor me is an invaluable resource. I see this mentorship as more than just shadowing, but an apprenticeship, with a chance to try and stretch my abilities with the guidance of someone who has already succeeded in that area.

I also am very willing to put in extra hours to gain more experiences. I feel like this helps make me and my employer more confident in my advancement.

A key element to this is having the specific expectations for advancement available from managers. This helps me stay focused and allows me to concentrate on doing excellent work, rather than spending time trying to figure out how to get considered for that next

promotion. Another important area is honest feedback. I love constructive criticism. Knowing what I'm doing well and what I need to improve on is extremely motivating and takes the 'guess work' out of my days.

I like feeling that my company has my back. This makes me even more willing to work harder and longer. Providing flexible hours where an employee can work later on one day and then leave early the next without having to take time off is a very special perk."

— Bill Brunner, 24  
Research Manager

## EVERYONE WANTS TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED

"Truly liking the people I'm working with has been one of the most influential factors keeping me here for the past four years. I never have a problem with hard work, as long as I have good company.

In addition to good people, it is also important that my employer values my input and development. I'm not going to be motivated if I'm treated like just another cog in the machine. A lot of my peers have had and left various jobs since we've been out of school because they didn't feel valued. Everyone wants their work to be acknowledged, even if it's just a small comment before you leave for the day.

Finally, workplace flexibility is another aspect that I feel separates me and others in my generation from those who have come before us. I work to live, I don't live to work. When my job starts affecting my relationships and activities outside of work, that's when I begin to re-evaluate. I expect to regularly put in 50+ hour weeks, but I also expect that when I need to go to the doctor or need a vacation, I can do so without putting up a fight."

— Miranda Kaltenborn, 25  
Research Manager

To read the full report at [crainsdetroit.com](http://crainsdetroit.com), click [here](#).