**Chapter 5: It’s Not Disloyal, It’s Seeking Purpose**

One of the most notorious claims about millennials is their willingness to job-hop. For the last 10 years, we have been bombarded with statistics such as millennials will hold 10 jobs by the age of 32 and six careers throughout their lifetime. Yet the Great Recession created a job climate that doesn’t enable retention, making disloyalty not just a millennial phenomenon but a symptom of corporate instability. In this environment, job-hopping may be seen as the best way to grow salary and career. The road to loyalty in the modern workplace is to give people cause to be loyal, to give them something to believe in.

**One Coin, Two Sides Model: Disloyal or Seeking Purpose?**

For this particular stereotype, the observable behavior is that millennials leave companies within three years, if not less. From a traditional perspective, this can be perceived as disloyal. From a modern, top talent perspective, this is a side effect of the global recession and is a call to action for corporations to be held to higher standards and earn back employee loyalty that they are no longer entitled to. These higher standards involve cultivating a strong foundation in values and mission that highlights the impact the company is making in the world, and how each employee contributes to that impact.

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| **One Coin: One Observable Behavior**  Finding a new job on average of every three years. | |
| **Side 1: Traditional Interpretation**  Disloyal job-hoppers | **Side 2: Top Talent, Millennial-Based Modern Interpretation**  Seeking purpose; compelled to have an impact |
| Supporting Beliefs:   * It’s riskier to leave an unstable company than to stay around and get a paycheck as long as possible. * It should be possible to stay at a company for 30 years. Reality has changed and that is scary! But I still sometimes act as though continued employment is fairly certain. * I’d like to make a difference through my work. But I’ve been around long enough to know that some companies facilitate giving back and some don’t. If I really want to give back, I can always volunteer or do something meaningful outside of work. * This new generation is primed for immediacy. If they aren’t immediately given a promotion or a raise, they want to leave. They don’t understand that it takes time to develop your career. * The company needs to come first, the individual second. Don’t make your success more important than the team’s. | Supporting Beliefs:   * Companies aren’t entitled to my loyalty after everything they have done to employees who stayed with them 30–40 years in the past. I have to be careful about what company I choose to stay at for a long time—and even then, I can’t expect that there won’t be layoffs. * I want to work for a company that proves it cares about its employees, the surrounding community, and the world at large. I have to look out for me and what’s best for me is to gain as many transferable skills as possible, and make as big of an impact as possible while the company is still interested in keeping me. * We are facing huge, global problems today. I have seen individuals as well as organizations have a huge impact on addressing them. I want to be a part of something long term that is making a difference. |

Table 5.1: One Coin, Two Sides model for disloyalty vs. seeking purpose interpretations of modern behavior. Source: Invati Consulting.

Exploring the Traditional Interpretation: Disloyal

From the traditional perspective, people believe that millennials are primed for immediacy and when they don’t get what they want, they leave. Most people in previous generations, especially when working for large corporations, expected to work at a single company for 30 to 40 years, and those expectations were relatively fulfilled in comparison to today.

Regardless of generation, most people tend to agree that this is no longer the case. Yet older generations often still can’t understand why a millennial wouldn’t wait until the actual day comes when they lose their job. Part of the reason for this is because older generations are reaching life stages and situations that make leaving a job high risk, such as supporting and funding education for a growing family and reestablishing retirement funds post-recession.

***Exploring the Modern Interpretation: Seeking Purpose***

After witnessing the impact of the Great Recession and corporate irresponsibility on their parents, millennials have developed high selectivity when it comes to staying at a company long term. They know there are compensation and benefits associated with working a full-time job, but they also know forgoing a traditional job seems less risky because of opportunities to work from home, piece together a freelance career, or earn income online successfully.

For millennials today, loyalty is created by providing something to believe in. Specifically, modern talent is inspired and attracted by doing social good. They have gained insight into global challenges from a young age and appreciate an increased capability to make a difference through grassroots initiatives made possible by digital technology. As such, they often have a strong belief in working for organizations that mirror their own sense of purpose and desire for social good.

**Leveraging Millennial Values to Build a Modern Organization**

The only way to solve the “revolving door” of young workers leaving companies for other opportunities is to become a company that young people want to work for. You need to build a modern corporate social responsibility culturethat is more than financial contributions and fund-raisers. It’s about creating corporate social responsibility that resonates with modern talent and lets them equate their employment with doing social good.

To attract and retain motivated and loyal millennials, companies need to value positive impact at the organizational level and in the day-to-day work of the employee. On an organizational level, having a strong social responsibility mission is imperative to millennials. On an individual level, having a work plan that clearly ties to both the business mission and a larger vision for social good is important. If the mission and vision have been articulated clearly to encompass the business’s benefit to society, employees inherently will understand the connection of their work to social good.

**Tales from the Trenches**

***Turning Around Turnover Through a Cultural Movement***

TCC, one of the largest Verizon Premium retailers, has a turnover rate of 45 percent—significantly less than the industry average of 66 to 80 percent for part-time employees. TCC attributes its decreased turnover to their “Culture of Good,” a program that started by providing 60,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to 1,600 employees in 28 states for distribution to those in need. Based on a philosophy of using such moments to build a movement, TCC went on to build a cadence of similar community and charitable programs in which, today, 91 percent of stores are involved. TCC leveraged the grassroots desire to do good to create a culture that spread to every employee, resulting in lower turnover, increased engagement, better identification of high-potential talent, and increased customer acquisition.

***NEWaukee—Millennials Influencing Corporations to Invest in Community: A Grassroots Approach to Inspiring Two-Way Loyalty***

To stem the outflow of young talent from her adopted state of Wisconsin, Angela Damiani and her business partner, Jeremy Fojut, founded NEWaukee, a social architecture firm that creates a diverse range of community and educational events for millennials and local businesses to meet and network*.* The inaugural event took place in Milwaukee and has expanded to 150 events in 15 cities across Wisconsin, with an astounding attendance of 12,000 young professionals. The week showcases events that highlight unique parts of the community, organically creating reasons for people to stay as well as providing opportunities to make friends and explore employment options.

***Corporate Social Responsibility in a Global Company***

In 2015, Yum! Brands, the umbrella corporation for such familiar fast-food outlets as Taco Bell, KFC, and Pizza Hut, reported over 40,000 hours volunteered by employees and franchises. Although its social good initiatives span four categories—food, community, people, and environment—its specially abled restaurant initiative is emblematic of the company’s mission. Starting with a single store in India, it created KFC locations in every major Indian city run 100 percent by teams that are hearing and speech impaired. By 2015, the effort expanded to 21 stores across the country, employing over 300 team members, seven shift managers, and one assistant restaurant manager, all who are speech or hearing impaired. The initiative spread to Yum! stores in other countries, including Thailand, Pakistan, Egypt, and Spain.

**Summary: From Disloyalty to Recapturing Organizational Purpose**

Although we would like to be able to rely on companies as in past times, people from all generations agree that this is an unrealistic expectation. Young employees in particular feel that companies are no longer entitled to loyalty, and those that show they care about social good earn loyalty more successfully than those that don’t. In order for organizations to create such loyalty, they need to nurture a corporate social responsibility culture, which includes a mission that discusses the impact of the business on society, provides ways for employees to contribute beyond financial means to the initiative, and promotes individual work plans that clearly connect to the business mission.

**How Modern Is Your Culture?**

Take the [“How Modern Is Your Culture?” diagnostic](https://goo.gl/forms/Me6MhSMeUv8tzBaI2) to determine if your organization is leaning toward a traditional perspective of loyalty that is at risk of disengaging modern talent.

**10-Minute Champion**

[View and contribute](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1t8JXUyYyyjSBjqOii3UkM6AKxGf_Fm7nR05TqhtKreY/edit?usp=sharing) ideas for actions you can take in 10 minutes or less.

**Chapter 5: Questions for Further Discussion**

1. From your perspective, how has a desire to do social good changed over the years in the workforce?
2. Has your sense of loyalty to your employer changed over the years? If so, how and why?
3. Are corporate social responsibility initiatives at your company seen as feel-good public relations efforts or genuine efforts to do social good? If the former, how can this be transformed to something with authentic purpose?
4. What other ways do you think companies can increase loyalty?

**Chapter 5 Resources and References**

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