



KELLOGG

RURAL LEADERSHIP
PROGRAMME

**“YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY...”
BEATING THE STATISTICS AND HOLDING
ON TO THE YOUNG TALENT IN YOUR
AGRIBUSINESS**

Kellogg Rural Leadership Programme

Course 38 2018

Sarah Tait

KELLOGGS RURAL LEADERSHIP COURSE 38

"YOUNG PEOPLE TODAY..."

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IN YOUR AGRIBUSINESS

SARAH TAIT



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you goes to Rural Leadership Trust team, including Scott Champion, Anne Hindson, Lisa Rogers and Patrick Aldwell, for making our participation in the Kellogg Rural Leadership Course (Cohort 38) so rewarding and eye-opening. The support with completing our projects, and challenging our own perceptions and ideas throughout the course has been invaluable to us all.

Life-long friendships have been made, and rural leaders have been further shaped in the past six months.

A huge thank you also goes to the Rural Leadership Trust's Strategic Partners, DairyNZ, AGMARDT, FMG, the Mackenzie Charitable Foundation and Beef & Lamb. Without them, this course would not have been possible for any of us.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conversation about “young people” in the New Zealand primary industries is one that we have all mulled over for a numerous years now. Of major concern to many agribusinesses is the transient nature of the young people they employ - it seems that holding on to a millennial staff member for more than five years is now rare, and this creates significant disruption for businesses, as well as hesitancy to invest in staff development.

Why do young people move on to new jobs so frequently? Is there something that we can do to minimise this? There comes no easy answer as the challenge of managing people - their perceptions, ambitions, cultures, family situations and career expectations - is a dynamic that is constantly changing, and perhaps changing faster than we can understand it. But opportunities do exist for agribusinesses who are seriously looking to better retain their millennial staff. We must begin by looking beyond the all-too-common stereotypes corresponding to this generation.

As New Zealand primary industries continue to grow and we enter a period where export value takes all priority over volume, the need for more highly skilled employees has never been more important to agri-sector support services. Millennials will soon make up the majority of the New Zealand workforce and their skills offer the key to the primary sector’s strategy being a success.

In order to rise up to the challenge of better retaining millennials in our agribusinesses, **data collection on New Zealand millennials**, specifically those involved in the rural industries, is required to understand their unique cultural differences and how they may affect their behaviours. Almost all of the data currently publicly available on “millennials” is North American.

A **guide and tool kit for New Zealand agribusinesses** needs to be produced that could detail practical methods to improve retention of young staff in agribusinesses. This guide could offer techniques on how to provide a stronger “people strategy” within their businesses; techniques to understand the strengths and needs of their staff; to cope with staff travel or other sabbaticals; and to ensure that a business’s training and orientation resources are adequate to minimise business disruption caused by employee’s extended leave or turnover. The guide could also offer methods that will help businesses meet millennial expectations of regular feedback and recognition, and methods to meet millennials’ high need for “empowerment”. Millennials crave opportunities to dedicate their skills and abilities to make an impact on the business they work for.

Relevant job flexibility options could be trialed in agribusinesses and showcased. Job flexibility and “temp” options will become even more valued by millennials as many are travelling overseas or pursuing other development opportunities more-often; they are beginning families later in their careers (and in many cases both millennial parents are working); and Baby Boomer parents are soon-to-be retiring and will soon require more care by their millennial children. More flexible work options need to be explored that better harness technology and correspond to all millennial (and agribusiness) needs. **Cross-sector human capital sharing viability** could also be investigated further to find how it might add value to all primary industries.

We now have an opportunity to change the nature of work in New Zealand agribusinesses in a way that will promote millennial participation and engagement. If agribusinesses are not proactive in this space, we will lose these young people to other industries, and lose a great deal of potential for growth in our sector.

INTRODUCTION

This research project includes a literature review of the current and future importance of “young people” as human capital in the New Zealand primary sector. Special focus is put on understanding the generation known as the “millennials”, their differences compared to other generations and their engagement levels at work.

The problems and opportunities that come with having young people in our workplaces are then explored, specifically looking into methods of understanding millennial staff more deeply; the appropriateness of staff development resources and communication methods; techniques to enhance millennial empowerment and allow for job design flexibility. Opportunities are investigated throughout the report of processes that might reduce millennial turnover, minimise business disruption and improve the long term prosperity of New Zealand agribusinesses.

This project focusses strongly on young people employed in agricultural support service roles, but the findings in many cases are relevant to all roles within the primary sector.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

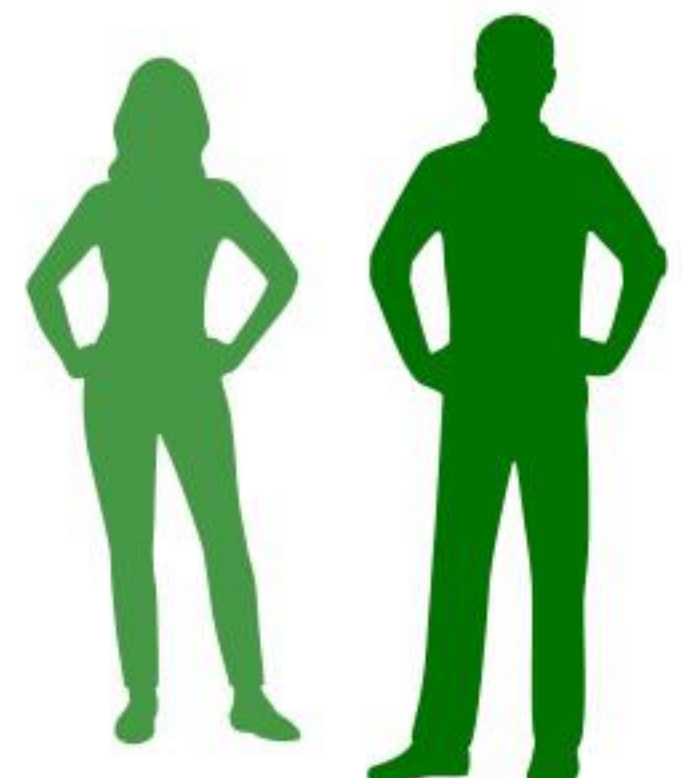
This research project aims to identify who it is we are referring to when we talk about young people, or the generation known as “millennials”. Understanding their general tendencies must provide to us clues on how to better retain them within our businesses.

It also aims to challenge the agri-sector on how well we understand our employees, to discuss current problems and how they come about, along with discussing potential solutions and new ways of looking at these problems.

It is hoped that this project will shed light on different ways to manage young people that may help retain them in our businesses. It is hoped that many of these ideas could be employable within businesses immediately.

METHOD

This project was carried out by research to produce a literature review. In “Part 1” the review aims to understand the current situation of New Zealand agriculture human resource needs, demographics that affect this, and how “generations” are commonly differentiated. It then contributes information to “Part 2” about the problems and opportunities in the battle to retain young talent in the primary industries, the section in which deeper analysis and problem solving is used.



LITERATURE REVIEW

PART 1: THE CURRENT SITUATION

New Zealand Agriculture's Future Human Resource Needs

In 2012, 350,000 people were employed in New Zealand primary industries, equating to 16% of total employment nationally. Of those employed in the primary industries, 21% are in support service roles (Bell et al., 2014). If New Zealand was to meet the goal set by government in 2014 to double primary sector export returns by 2025*, by then the primary sector would need:

- A net increase of 49,900 workers
- 92,600 more workers with qualifications
- To train an additional 235,000 people to replace the natural attrition of workers within the industry

As New Zealand agriculture continues to grow, the human resource demand will become greater for high-skilled employees rather than for lower skilled. It is projected that there would be little difference in the total number of people required in work “on-farm” nationally, but most of the increase in employees would be required in the agricultural support services. Skill sets would contribute to: adding value beyond the farm gate, value chain, integrated farm systems, transport services, management skills and consulting, people and culture skills, computer support and scientific research. There is likely to be an increase in demand for degree-qualified (or higher) staff (Bell et al., 2014).

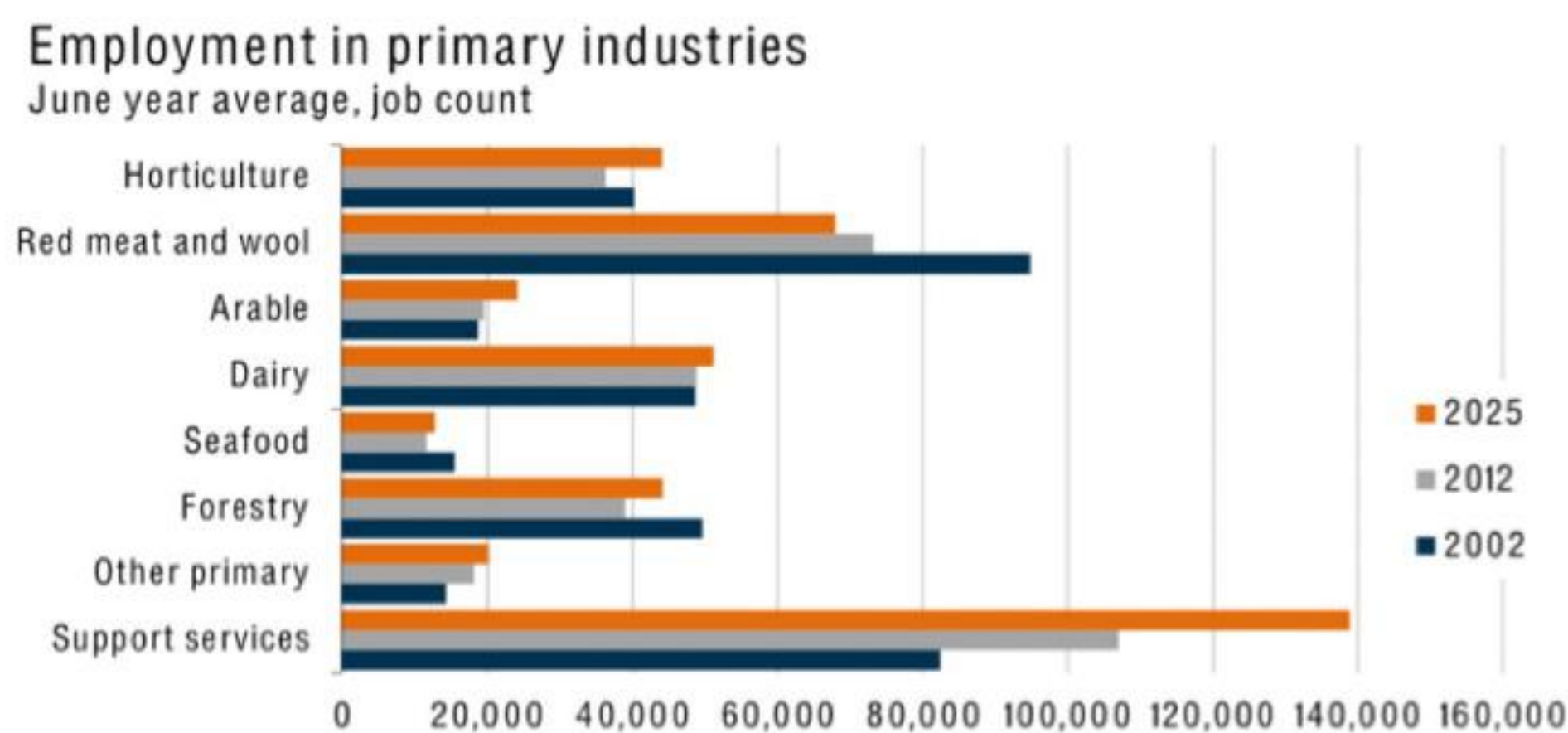


Figure 1: Current and Estimated Future Employment in Primary Industries in New Zealand - Job Count
Image source: (Bell et al., 2014)

In 2012, 54% of primary industry service support worker had formal post-secondary school qualifications. By 2025, it is likely that this will need to be 65%. This means that if we are meet the export returns goal, we will need 2.5 times the number of highly qualified support service people compared to what we would need if growth remained at the status quo (Bell et al., 2014).

*This goal belonged to the former National government, the current Labour government aims to encourage “value of exports over volume” more generally, but both goals are likely to produce similar future human resource demands.

As young people have been the great majority of university graduates and other “highly qualified” graduates in New Zealand in the past decade, and this trend continues, their participation in the sector will be crucial for primary industries in order to meet these export value growth targets.

The retention [of current employees] is critical because people currently in the workforce already have many of the skills needed for continued success in the primary industries. The capability gaps and needs [for New Zealand agribusiness] cannot be met purely by new entrants alone (Bell et al., 2014).

The total number of people required to be engaged in the primary industries must grow significantly to meet sector goals, and a great portion of this growth must be taken up by highly skilled people who are likely to be young people. The retention of all those currently employed in the sector, as well as that of those who will be employed in the near future, is critical to the “high value” output ambitions of New Zealand primary industries.

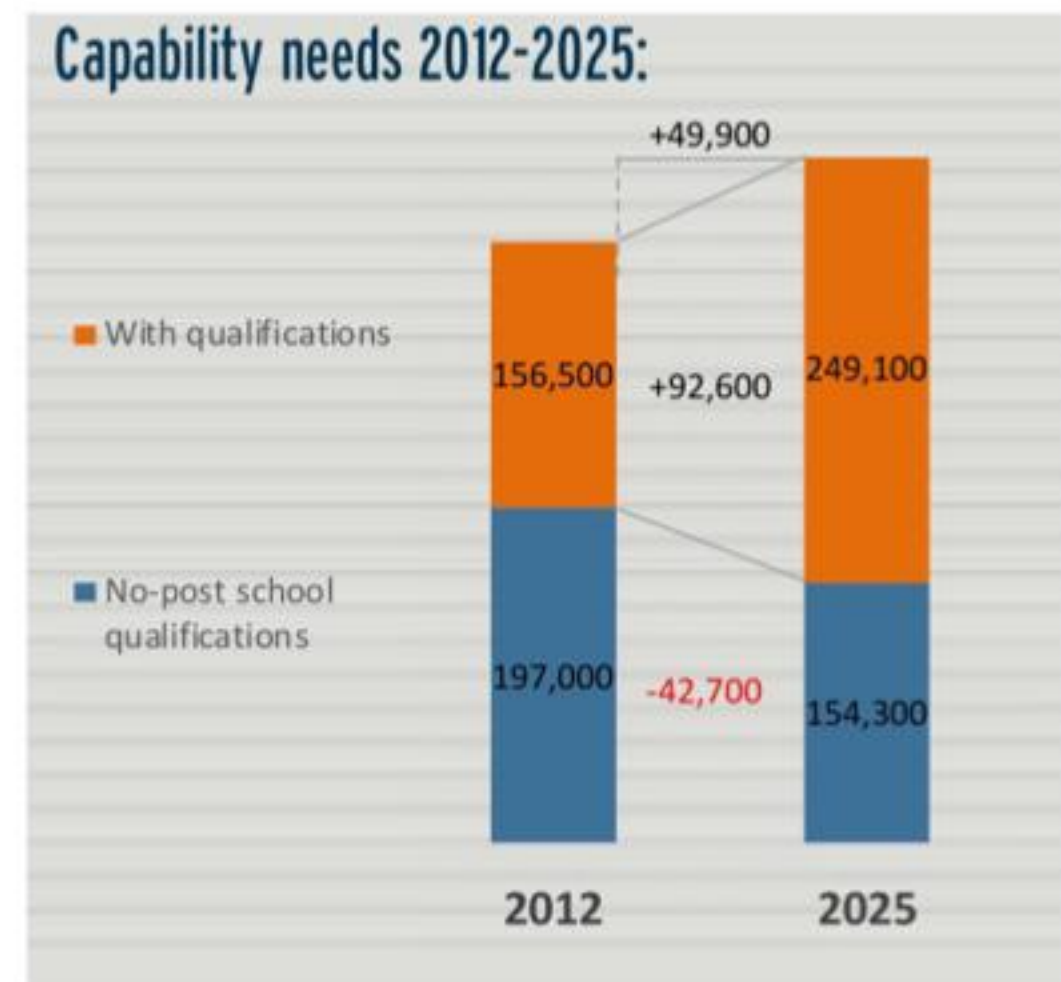


Figure 2: Estimated Future Capability Needs in New Zealand Primary Industries - With and Without Tertiary Qualifications

Image source: (Bell et al., 2014)

What are the Demographics?

- Most New Zealand agricultural workers are ageing. In 2013, more than 56% of those employed in New Zealand agriculture were over the age of 45 years (Figure.nz, 2013).
- Proportionally, fewer millennials are employed in the agricultural industries than in other industries. In 2013, those under the age of 35 years employed in agriculture equalled less than 27% of total, whereas nationally, 32% of all people employed were in this age bracket (Figure.nz, 2013).
- By 2020, millennials will form the majority of New Zealand’s workforce (Bell et al., 2014).
- “Baby Boomers” are retiring later, while millennials are getting married and having children later in life (Bailey & Dugan, 2017). Those millennials who have delayed having children are beginning to do so now.
- Workforce participation by women has increased in the last 30 years. Between 1986 and 2016, the percentage of all New Zealand females who were employed rose from 52% to 61% (Statistics NZ, 2017). This may be due to higher education levels, and greater mortgages putting more pressure being on for dual-working parents.
- There are now more female graduates than male from both agricultural universities (Lincoln and Massey) in New Zealand.

Who is who ?

“Millennials”, also known as “Generation Y”
Born 1982-96 (36-22 years old today)

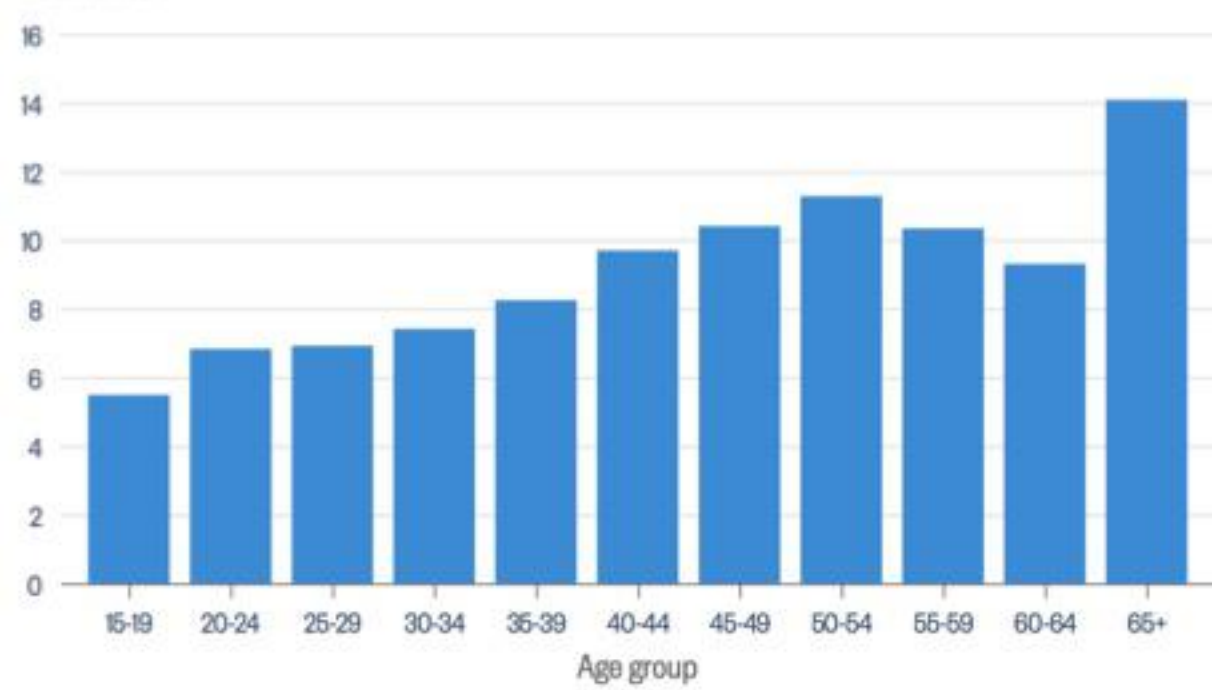
“Generation X”
Born 1965-81 (37-53 years old today)

“Baby Boomers”
Born 1946-64 (54-72 years old today)

Age distribution of people working in the agriculture industry in New Zealand

2013 Census, %
Provider: Stats NZ

figure.nz



The composition of the New Zealand work force is in a period of significant change. Millennials will soon form a greater part of the national human resource supply; the number of highly skilled females in the agricultural sector is increasing faster than the number of males; and as more agricultural industry employees soon retire, millennials are likely to be the age group to fill these significant gaps. Within just a number of years, not decades, millennials will be the leaders of our industries, and there will be great changes in the way their organisations work.

Are we ready?

Figure 3: Age Distribution of People Working in the Agriculture Industry in New Zealand

Image source: Figure.nz

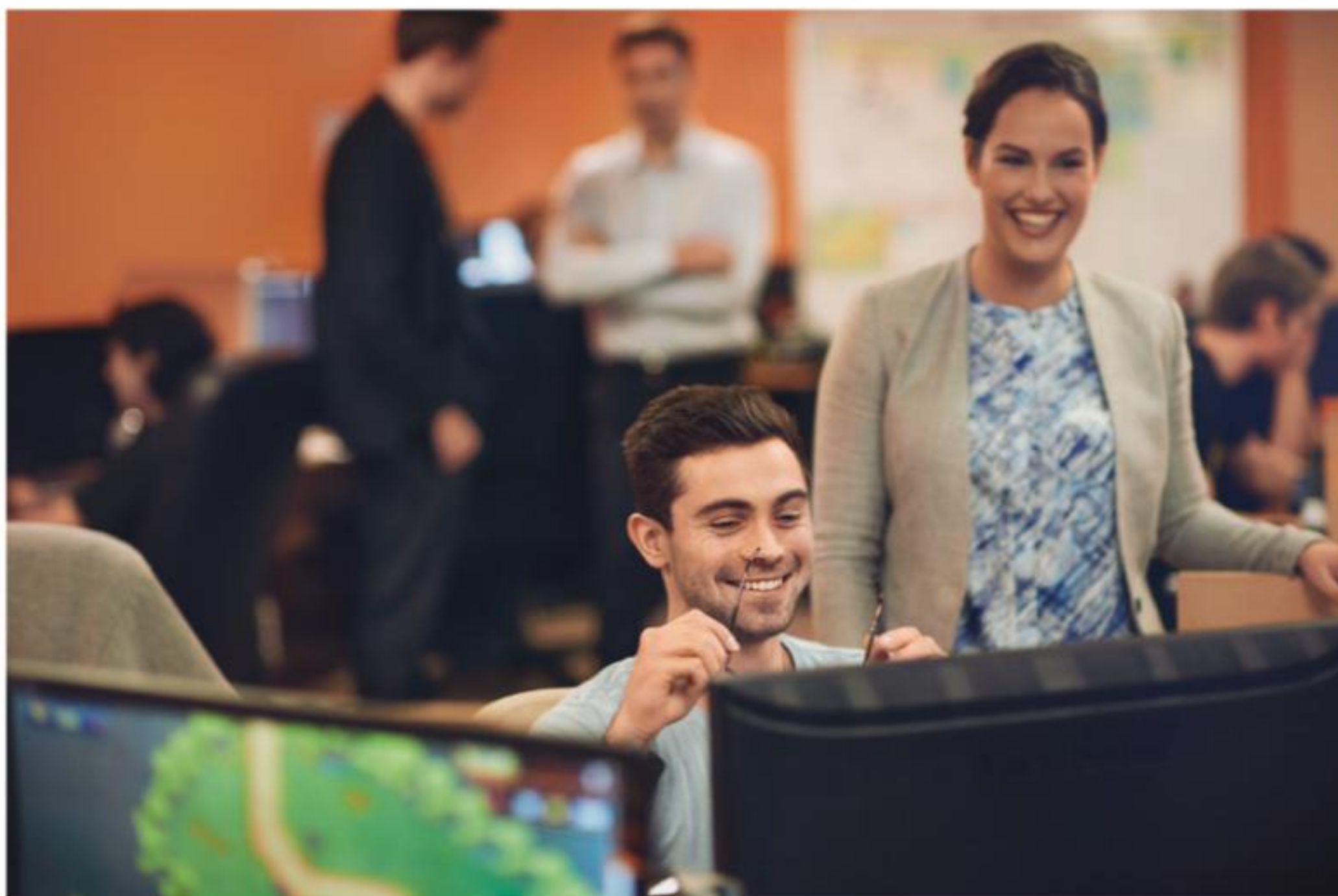


Image source: nzstory.govt.nz

What Characterises Millennials?

The term "millennial" is often associated with the negative connotations and stereotypes. Some say that they are the largest and least understood generation in America. Millennials are profoundly different to other generations and they will continue to disrupt how the world communicates (Gallup Report, 2016).

Who are Millennials?



Millennial Stereotypes

- Impatient, want “more and more”
- “Speak another language”, always on their cellphone, and invested in social media
- Expect a trophy for showing up to work and want special privileges
- Very little toughness
- Entitled, narcissistic, fame-obsessed and self-interested



Millennial Values and Strengths

- Want to feel valued as individuals
- Want to have an impact on society and the business they are working for
- They want high levels of wellbeing, to have a healthy and purposeful life with active community and social ties (Gallup Report, 2016).
- Millennials will blend work and life - they are used to working anywhere and not switching off (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016)
- They offer diversity, tech savviness
- Millennials tend to have higher self confidence than previous generations in academics, creativity, public speaking and writing (Canedo et al., 2017).
- They often are more individualistic, have a higher self-reliance and competitiveness.
- Study for longer.
- Have broad networks of online communities.
- Will live longer.
- Are less likely to identify with specific religions or political parties (Gallup Report, 2016).
- Do significant voluntary work and donates more money than other generations (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016)
- May value salary, social status and free time more than other generations.

Why are Millennials so “Different” to Prior Generations?

- Baby boomer parents and government policy has emphasised and invested in education, giving rise to a generation of “empowerment” and entitlement (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016)
- Impatience can be argued to come from an “instant gratification upbringing”. Many aspects of millennial lives are instant due to technological advances, except job satisfaction and strength of relationships
- Social media accentuates mental health and self esteem issues. It is argued that protective millennial upbringings have not prepare them for the “real world”
- May not have learned to rely on friends, many relationships are superficial and via social media. May not have practiced deep, meaningful relationships, meaning they have fewer coping mechanisms



Millennials in the Workplace

If agribusinesses all throughout New Zealand are to employ more millennials now and into the future, we must understand how they approach their employment, as it is fundamentally different to the approaches of other generations.



Millennials do not stay in jobs as long as previous generations

This is the ultimate complaint made by businesses around the world who employ millennials. Turnover rates of millennials can be up to 80% per annum, and some leave without another job lined up (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016). In 2015, 21% of millennials switched jobs in the US - which is a rate more than three times higher than that of non-millennials (Bailey & Dugan, 2017). Only half of millennials in that survey conducted in the US “strongly agree” that they will be in the same job in 12 months time.

Millennials tend to not view careers as life-long employment relationships like their Baby Boomer parents. There has been a massive shift in the commitment to their company, to that of their own career and profession, making them more likely to change jobs (Gong et al., 2018). This makes managing millennials fundamentally different to managing other generations in your workplace.

Millennials “view” work differently compared to other generations.

Due to their unique upbringing and digital environment, they tend:

- To expect free and ample information resources
- To expect high speeds of communication and multi-tasking
- To be eager to share experiences
- To have ambitions in career advancement
- To have a strong desire to take control of their own careers (Gong et al., 2018)
- To feel less need for a secure, permanent job and security than their Baby Boomer parents
- To have different ways for searching for jobs, have different requirements within jobs, different attitudes and expectations.
- Millennials highly value extrinsic rewards, but in many cases are less willing to sacrifice their personal lives to obtain them. They are more likely to trade promotion opportunities and additional job responsibilities for more leisure time (Canedo et al., 2017).



A survey of 200,000 job seekers from 189 countries, found that the top three desires of millennials were: appreciation for their work - everyday; good relationships with colleagues, good work/life balance. Only at number eight was “attractive fixed salary (Strack, 2014).

There is an idea in the New Zealand dairy industry that: “if you don’t want to progress in the industry then there is something wrong with you”, and to do this you need to “do the hard yards”, struggle as previous generations have to earn the right to succeed and to be respected (Taylor, 2016). But millennials’ set of values is often different, and they often aspire to different things.

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The critical challenge with millennials is their mental health.

Millennials have higher anxiety and depression rates than previous generations (Canedo et al., 2017). This affects how they approach their jobs, compete at work and interact with peers. Negative health reports also derive from lack of sleep, less physical activity and weight fluctuations (Taylor, 2016).

One report conducted by Gallup in 2016 (Gallup, 2016) drew key conclusions on the approach of millennials to their work compared to Baby Boomers.

Table 1: Common Differences between Baby Boomers and Millennial Employees in what Motivates them at Work

Motivations of Baby Boomer Employees:	Motivations of Millennial Employees:	What does this look like?
My Paycheck	My Purpose	Millennials want to work for organisations with a purpose and a mission, whereas previous generations' purpose was their own family and financial security.
My Satisfaction	My Development	Millennials do not care about the "bells and whistles" anymore, they find such incentives condescending.
My Boss	My Coach	Millennials do not want managers who command or control, but coaches who give direction and encouragement.
My Annual Review	My Ongoing Conversations	Communication with millennials must be real time, they are accustomed to continuous texting, tweeting etc. This is the norm in their lives, so it must become a part of workplace communication as well.
My Weaknesses	My Strengths	Young people respond better to the aim of not just minimising weaknesses, but maximising strengths.
My Job	My Life	Work is no longer considered a 'job' as other generations have, a millennial's work is something that they identify themselves by and it does not stop after they have left the office (Gallup Report, 2016)

Table adapted from: (Gallup, 2016)



Image source: nzstory.govt.nz

Although generational differences are important, it is important to remember that not every person in every generation will fully reflect its values. It is simply a tool to better understand general needs and values.

Shall Millennials Conform to Our Organisations, or Shall Organisations Change?

This is a question often presumed, but rarely asked. Businesses tend to expect millennials to conform to how their organisations work. Their differences are commonly considered as being “their problem” and not that of the employer. This has made some sense up until now, as millennials have formed the minority of the workforce.



We may now need to look at this differently however, as millennials will soon make up the greater part of our staff, and high quality candidates may become scarce if the primary industries prosper as forecasted. If our agribusinesses are truly motivated to retain millennial staff, great leadership will be required within them to adapt their strategies to achieve this.

The Crucial Difference Between being “Satisfied” and being “Engaged” at Work

In a report published by Gallup in 2016, job satisfaction was measured by the following three aspects: tangible rewards; demands imposed on a person; and opportunities that a job offers (Bailey & Dugan, 2017). In this report it was found that millennials are as satisfied or more satisfied with nearly all aspects of their jobs compared to other generations.

So if job satisfaction is similar to that of other generations, what is driving millennials to switch jobs so often?

The answer is that job satisfaction is not the same as “engagement at work” which alludes to a deeper, emotional and behavioural connection to a job or company (Bailey & Dugan, 2017). It was found that **only 29% of millennials are “engaged” at work**, which according to the report, comes at a cost of USD\$30.5 billion to the US economy every year. Being disengaged may mean that employees have no energy or passion for their work, they just “show up” to complete the hours required of them. Productivity, profitability and innovation suffers in businesses with lack of employee engagement (Gallup Report, 2016). The key to retaining millennial talent in your business is cracking the code to their engagement in the role.

PART 1. CURRENT SITUATION - Summary Points

- If primary industry export returns meet goals set for 2025, the sector will require an additional 30,000 people employed in agribusiness support services, and most of these people will need higher education.
- Retention of currently employed highly skilled staff is essential to not further exacerbate the human resource supply challenge at hand.
- Millennials, who will soon form the majority of the national workforce and who tend to be highly qualified, but the most transient employees, are the generation that we must understand more deeply and find better ways of retaining.
- Millennials are fundamentally different to prior generations in terms of their values, skills, mental health, job tenure, and how they “view” work.
- Improving millennial “engagement” at work is likely to unlock their loyalty to the business and their own potential.



PART 2: PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Human Resource Management Capability in New Zealand Agribusinesses

Human Resource management is not always a priority for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in New Zealand primary industries. There is an opinion that spending money on HR is not acceptable for many (Taylor, 2016). But every company, no matter its size or access to resources, needs a “people strategy”. The importance of having a people strategy is especially real for agribusinesses since millennials are likely to become a larger part of their workforces. Understanding their needs is crucial in order to retain them today, and going forward.

Businesses must understand:

- their current employee performance;
- how to forecast employee supply and demand;
- how to attract great people;
- how to educate and up-skill great people, and
- how to retain great people (Strack, 2014).

An important question raised in the government-commissioned report “Future Capability Needs for Primary Industries” in 2014 is: how do we support better HR practices as primary industry businesses grow and employ more staff? (Bell et al., 2014)

The following report builds on methods that could be adopted by agribusinesses to help this cause.

How Well do We Understand Our Staff?

Disengagement at work earns millennials the reputation of being “entitled job hoppers” (Gallup Report, 2016), but are employers giving them compelling reasons to stay? Communication and understanding the people you employ will remain the most important capabilities any HR “department” can have.

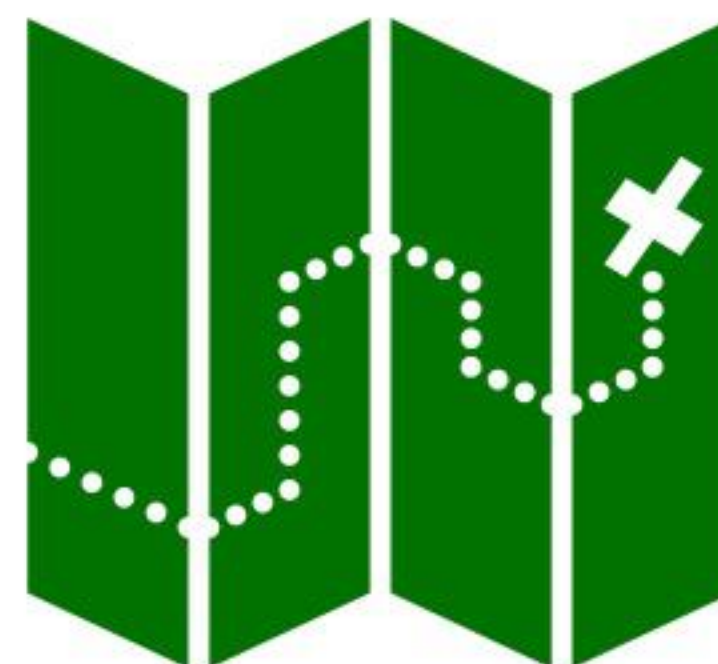
Intangible characteristics of a person include their emotions, egos, confidence, determination, motivation, values, and cultural dimensions that include norms, values and beliefs. Many of these characteristics are unwritten and require navigation and understanding (Laloux, 2015). There is a plethora of **psychometric tools** available online, many of them free of charge, that offer personality, strengths, leadership and entrepreneurial “style” testing. Examples include the Myers Briggs Type Indicator, the DISC Profile, and Strength Finder. After sitting the online test, reports are generated of the individual’s results which describe their key strengths, preferences or other personal attributes. Some tests will offer results that describe how well different “types” of people will work together, or suggestions on how to get the best out of others who are a different “type”. Some participants report that after receiving the results to their test, they felt better in their leadership quest as I didn’t have to try to pretend to be somebody that they were not (doseofleadership.com). Including such testing in a process to more deeply understand young employees will allow them to feel that their individualism is valued, since millennials crave an individualised management style (Gong et al., 2018).



Understanding a millennial employee's career vision is a key starting point in retaining them in your business. The **“Career anchor”** concept was first developed in 1986 (Gong et al., 2018). This idea suggests that an individual's career anchor reflects their personal values and vision of the career they desire. It is argued that this anchor provides subconscious guidelines for decision making under uncertainty and it determines what individuals will *not* give up when making career decisions. Typology includes ratings in: autonomy; stability/security; technical competence; managerial competence; entrepreneurial creativity; service to a cause; pure challenge; and lifestyle. For example, those who value “pure challenge”, must have challenges emerge quickly enough to satisfy them in their roles. Research shows that failure to promote fit between the work environment and career anchor results in turnover intention (Gong et al., 2018). Career anchors of millennials are essential to understand to influence job satisfaction and minimise turnover intention. If a job does not resonate with a millennial's personal values and career vision and it is therefore not engaging for them, with their expectations for speedy solutions, these young people may deem alternatives such as changing jobs as a more straightforward solution than approaching management (Gong et al., 2018).

As millennials like to take control of their own careers, an important part of successful HR function with these young people is **active career planning**.

- Agribusinesses must provide clearer pathways for their young staff that provide them great opportunities to excel and use their skills. Some agribusinesses already do this, but these pathway plans may not be revisited often enough and as such, they lose meaning and relevance.
- By having regular, in-depth and meaningful “catch-ups”, there may also be an opportunity for employers to have an influence on the statistically poor millennial mental health. Early detection of behaviour that is out of the ordinary could allow for early intervention.
- Better career planning could provide transparency to millennials around how businesses design and assess performance goals, and how employees are rewarded.
- The challenge also lies in the fact that career trajectories may no longer be linear in nature as we are used to. Careers may now move sideways, go down, or even pause for a while. Career pathway planning must be flexible enough to accommodate this along with the changing lifestyles and preferences of young people.
- Some millennials have been reported to believe that they should be promoted every two years (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016). Career planning, to some extent, could lay out key milestones to aim towards which would unlock new “levels” of increased responsibility. Each level, alongside regular salary or fringe benefit increases, could constitute a “promotion” if broached well enough with the individual.
- The “glass ceiling” argument, when junior staff members have visibility of higher level positions within their companies but little opportunity to move into them in the short to mid term, may heavily influence millennial decision making turnover intention. Active career pathway planning would clarify what is attainable within what timeframes and manage millennial expectations.



Actively managing talent rather than having a passive commitment to it has been shown to yield better returns (World Economic Forum, 2016).

Businesses may risk resorting to **stereotypes to explain** millennial job transience, but businesses must investigate the paths that have led to any early termination of employment by a millennial (<2 years). Deeply understanding millennial employees as individuals, understanding (and respecting) their career visions, along with

actively facilitating career pathway planning with them are all highly important first steps in gaining their loyalty and improving their engagement in the workplace.

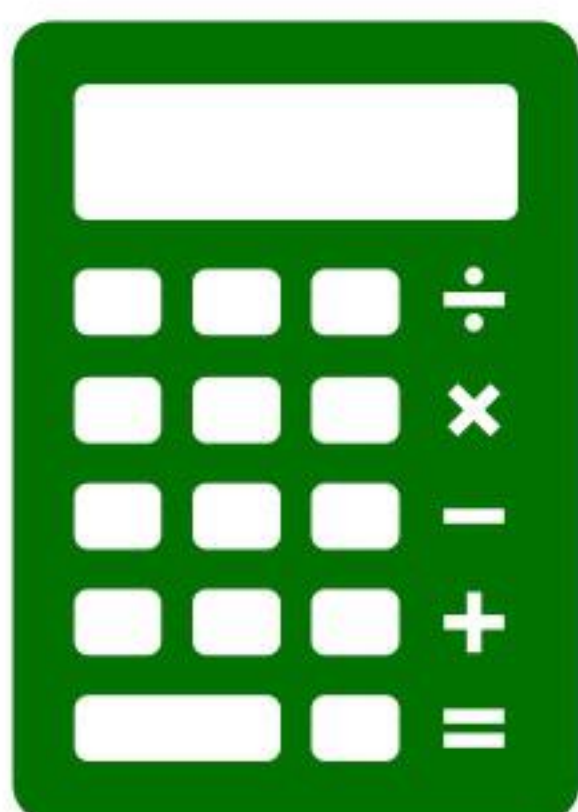


If talented people are to be a scarce resource going forward, then we must understand them better.

Image source: nzstory.govt.nz

Why is Employee Transience so Disruptive to Agribusinesses?

This seems like a simple question, but it is one worth exploring further. Employee transience is highly disruptive to agribusinesses because of:



- The difficulty in finding new appropriate candidates, particularly if the skill set required is niche or the region undesirable to potential candidates.
- The high financial cost in recruiting and training employees. The cost to recruit and train employees is approximately 50% of their annual salary and at times as high as 250% (Hechl, 2017).
- The opportunity cost if that position is not filled immediately and the business forgoes income opportunities
- The high inconvenience cost to colleagues, clients and other stakeholders who commonly must invest time and patience into the development of and relationship with the new staff member.
- The loss of potential managerial and leadership talent to the business

In essence, the disruption comes from the relative scarcity of suitable candidates, the financial cost of training new staff, and the “lag phase” before new employees can perform at the same level as their predecessor. If new potential candidates were more accessible, and if they could be trained more quickly, would employee turnover be less of “disruptive” and less of a problem? Is the core of this problem the staff turnover itself, or the inefficiency in finding and training new staff?

The ability to “locate” potential candidates is improving all of the time as platforms such as LinkedIn become more and more mainstream for young people to better their own “visibility” in their lines of work. These platforms break down barriers that previously would have prevented employers finding candidates in other regions, countries, and from different industries.

It is suggested that education systems are not keeping up with demand for highly skilled people (IFAMR, 2012)—but is this entirely true in the case of the New Zealand primary sector when new graduates with limited experience are often not given a chance by companies hiring? Most agribusinesses are guilty of looking for candidates “with experience” and it is common to discriminate between job applicants who have experience, and those that do not.

Many companies are reported to have limited “bench strength” — employees who have had adequate training and preparation, and who are competent and ready to fill higher roles (IFAMR, 2012). Early recognition and proactive investment in the future skill requirements needed in agribusinesses is the strategy most likely to minimise future business disruption. Firms can no longer be passive consumers of ready-made human capital (World Economic Forum, 2016). This will be even more important for all businesses in the future as the growing demand for highly skilled people will make the market for experience and talent even more competitive.

Is it that businesses are under-resourced to do further appropriate training themselves? Or do they see the investment as too great and too risky given the short job tenure typical of young staff today? Is protecting their “IP” an issue? Perhaps. But could it be that one day we accept that long term loyalty of employees is a “thing of the past”, and businesses have training and process-mapping resources in place to cope with frequent employee turnover? This has not been widely discussed in New Zealand agribusiness.

The disruption caused to agribusinesses due to relatively high staff turnover could be reduced somewhat by finding and training new staff more time and cost effectively.

Developing Our Staff - How Can We Do It Better?

The 2016 Gallup report (Gallup Report, 2016) quotes that poor (or absent) career development may be a cause of poor millennial engagement ratings in their jobs. Millennials tend to value opportunities to grow and learn more than other generations.

Formal higher education opportunities are sometimes offered to millennials by businesses. These opportunities sometimes come with “hooks” such as a time commitment to the business or repayment for the study otherwise. Almost all of the literature found reiterates that “continual learning” is a desire of millennials. This may be true in a general sense, but in the New Zealand agricultural industries, the desire of young individuals to do more “formal, higher education” may be less than in other regions and industries, though this is yet to be measured. But unlike in other countries and cultures, higher education generally isn’t linked to income or social status in New Zealand rural communities. If this is the case, then other, more practical learning techniques, or “micro-credentials” may be required to satisfy millennials’ desire for learning and to maintain their engagement in their roles.

The challenge also is in how we become more innovative and flexible in the delivery of training, recognising that people have different ways of learning and different constraints



(Bell et al., 2014). This may include work commitments, family, personal health and other life circumstances. Utilising technology, which may include mobile learning on online platforms, augmented reality and virtual technology, may be economic, more flexible and more effective options to efficiently train new and existing staff. Learning could be achieved via a constantly evolving curriculum online while they work (World Economic Forum, 2016). Mobile learning could be accessed at anytime, anywhere, and employees can quickly search for answers using keywords (Canedo et al., 2017). This kind of mobile learning already exists in New Zealand agribusiness of scale, but the SMEs do not have access to such a resource.

It is estimated that by 2020, more than a third of the desired core set skills of most occupations will be skills that are not yet considered crucial today, such as the ability to work with and make data-based decisions. Methods for building skills based on today's workplace requirements or on past successes, will not yield the desired return today and in the future (World Economic Forum, 2016).

In the same report (World Economic Forum, 2016), of the business leaders surveyed:

- 39% will provide employees with wider exposure to roles (support mobility and job rotation),
- 25% will increase efforts in targeting the female talent pool,
- 25% will collaborate with the education sector more closely, and
- 65% will invest in retraining current employees

Collaboration and more meaningful links forged between educational institutions and business could better equip current and future primary sector employees for their jobs and for the rapidly changing world around them. New Zealand agribusinesses, SMEs especially, rarely collaborate with the university sector. Universities may look different in the future. They could be based more on internships, and businesses may hire people based on their problem solving ability as "traditional" skills become outdated more and more quickly.

Some businesses report that their high-potential employees ("hi-pots") are placed on live training assignments on various projects within their companies, and career planning is in place to cite evolving skills and aspirations - and they must regularly revisit to reassess these (IFAMR, 2012). Fonterra has a highly regarded graduate program similar to this whereby new graduates spend two years experiencing every aspect of the business in short-term placements. This of course, requires the graduates to be flexible in their location of work, as well as being prepared to work short periods in roles outside of their core interests and skill base.

Mentoring millennial staff may be an effective method to continue their development and support their retention. Millennials are likely to need higher levels of mentoring and attention than other generations. They want less supervision, value individualism, but need more organisational support than other generations (Canedo et al., 2017). One source (Hechl, 2017), distinguished between "career mentoring" (extrinsic factor focussed) and "psychosocial mentoring" (intrinsic focussed, and based around role modelling and acceptance). This source found that there is a strong relationship between the quality of psychosocial mentoring and turnover intention rates within millennial staff (Hechl, 2017). Psychosocial mentoring in New Zealand may be addressed with the content of some leadership courses available, but in most cases these kinds of courses are out-sourced, and may be somewhat "removed" from the day-to-day job and business. Perhaps if leadership within businesses had a "champion" for this kind of mentoring for all staff, the positive effects of such training could be longer-term and wider-reaching within the organisation. This report also indicated that if mentoring was perceived as low quality, it resulted in low job



satisfaction levels and a higher rate of “intention to leave” the organisation. Mentors need to be sufficiently trained if a mentoring strategy is to be successful. Technology may also offer the opportunity for “e-mentoring” when a mentor is not co-located with the mentee. Mentors could be from anywhere in the country or world, inside or outside of the organisation.

Some literature suggests that putting staff in jobs before they are fully ready or qualified is a good development strategy. This might be true, but the appropriate people and resources must be available to support the individual as they are challenged in the role.

It has been suggested that management should rigorously move people up, sideways or out of the organisation. Stagnation may cause further disengagement and must be addressed quickly to avoid turnover. It is interesting that this is the only one literature source (IFAMR, 2012) mentions the demotivating effects of other colleagues on millennial employees. Employment law in New Zealand may prevent some staff members from being moved “out”, but proactivity in seeing and understanding how individuals work together, along with frequent communication may prevent problems developing beyond repair.

Secondments, “the temporary transfer of a worker to another position”, to keep them interested and challenged may be a useful, and largely unexplored technique to retain talented staff in agribusinesses. Similarly, some businesses allow people to swap jobs on a longer term basis within their organisations, as this too proves motivating to employees and improves their performance (IFAMR, 2012).

Finally, when considering development opportunities for staff, management must be clear on how wide-reaching any investment in staff will be since resources are almost always limited. One New Zealand business manager warned that he cannot invest the majority of his development budget on the 20% of his staff who are the most ambitious and “talented”, and who are commonly the most volatile. He must invest in the “masses” - the other 80% who are more likely to be content and stay on in their jobs, and who, due to their number, might be more difficult to replace if discontentment should set in. This is an interesting consideration as literature often focusses on “talent” retention alone. Of course, this approach depends on the size of your team and its role make-up, but it must be considered by all agribusinesses.

The “Flight Risk” Mentality

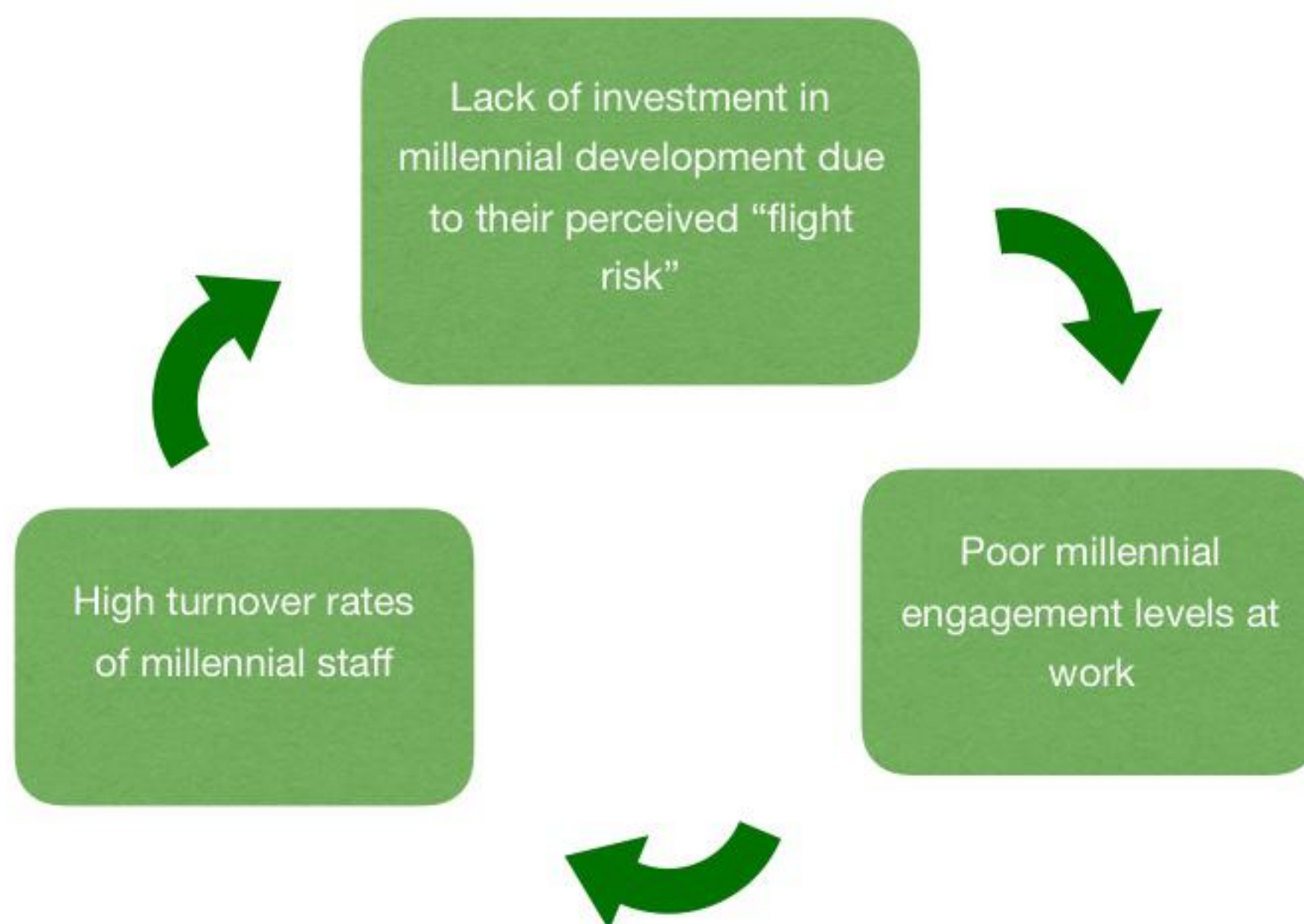
The high cost associated with staff turnover can discourage employers from investing time and money in the training of their staff (Bell et al., 2014). This may disadvantage staff by reducing development opportunities available to them if this training is seen as a cost that may produce little long-term return.

One report in the US cited that (in addition to work suffering, the unacceptably high cost to families and staff during their company-sponsored MBA process), half of sponsored employees left the firm within 2 years of completing (IFAMR, 2012).

The cause of the turnover was mainly due to frustration when promotions were not given to young staff or suggestions not implemented. This is an important discussion to have, as significant investments may be lost if it is not possible to offer opportunities to young people to implement their new skills and for them to feel like they are making an impactful contribution to the business. Planning opportunities for young people to do this may be the difference between seeing a return on your investment or not.



A Vicious Cycle: Lack of Investment a Common Cause and Result of Millennial Disengagement



Is the "O.E." an Opportunity?



It is no secret that young New Zealanders are avid travellers. It is a common goal for a young graduate to "want to get a get job for a couple of years to save some money so I can go on my O.E.". This is enough to make any potential employer cringe.

Some businesses have admitted to not hiring people under a certain age, and avoiding those who have not yet done their O.E as they see the risk of them "moving on" within a couple of years as being too great.

Common overseas experiences for young, rural New Zealanders include: working the seeding or harvest in either Australia or England; working swathing or harvesting in North America; working on a ranch or for a hunting outfitter in Canada; working in London in labouring or administration jobs; working in ski resorts in Europe or Japan; completing Camp America summer camps; or volunteering or backpack-holidaying in general in Asia, Europe or South and Central America. Young New Zealanders tend to do their OE for between three months and two years. As the cost of travel has significantly dropped, some young people are opting to do more short trips (up to 6 weeks at a time) every one-to-two years.

Many of these jobs are poorly paid (or are in isolated settings) and offer very limited learning opportunities. Nevertheless, thousands of New Zealand millennials every year leave the country to take them on as they are among the few opportunities that exist for them to travel, experience independence, culture, meet new people and to put themselves outside of their comfort zones.

One of the most unexplored opportunities that New Zealand agribusinesses have is the chance to "facilitate" their young staff's OE's leveraging off their often extensive overseas contacts. What if OE's consisted of stimulating, meaningful, developmental jobs that recognised millennials skills and were above minimum wage? What if OE's

were to build on young peoples' tangible skills related to their industries, allow them to form new relationships with stakeholders overseas, challenge them in new cultures, and perhaps bring home to the businesses global skills, market insights and technical expertise?

Businesses would not have to pay for this travel at all, millennials are already fully prepared to do this. What businesses need to do is start this conversation in the job interview with the millennial, gauge what interests them, and draw on their own networks and contacts to plan something relevant to the individual's role - an opportunity with "hooks". The business should discuss how far in to the employment such a trip could be made, what its duration could be, what learning outcomes there could be for the employee and what outcomes or tangibles could result for the business. Planning such trips well in advance; allowing the employee to incorporate their own independent travel into the itinerary; giving them time to develop the work-related skills that they may need; and reiterating the value of the experience to the business is likely to greatly improve millennial engagement at work and loyalty to the business.

Since millennials are often already prepared to pay for frequent travel, there may be no reason why agribusinesses could not facilitate short term experiences such as this every couple of years, and relationships could be made with similar agribusinesses overseas to do biennial "exchanges" or job swaps with their similarly-qualified staff. More than 70% of millennials globally are eager to work abroad. Imagine if a dairy consultant could have six weeks work experience every two years in a different country, and that it be self-funded and offer strategic advantages to their employer at home? With good planning, and adequate learning resources on hand to efficiently train "exchange staff" for short term job-filling, disruption to agribusinesses could be minimised.

Since overseas travel and continual learning are common desires of millennials, agribusinesses could capitalise on this in a well-planned and openly communicated strategy to retain and develop their own staff.



Communication and Feedback Expectations

Millennials require more recognition and regular feedback than other generations in the workplace. This is commonly a criticism and may contribute to their perceived lack of "toughness". Regardless of whether this is accurate or fair, the truth remains that improved millennial engagement and retention is more likely to result if businesses have systems in place to provide frequent and consistent communication and feedback. Gallup, (2016) found that only 21% of millennials meet once per week with managers, with the majority meet with managers less than once per month. Such attention to communication allows millennials to believe that their managers and businesses value them and their development - the same report found that the more conversations had with them, the more engaged they are. It is even suggested that instant messaging platforms could be used by staff in the workplace to make communication more instant, inclusive and to allow for multi-tasking.



One juggling act that employers have when it comes to their young staff and giving them feedback, is that millennials tend to have an inflated sense of self and skills, and they may be less aware of their weaknesses (Canedo et al., 2017). Millennials are likely to expect high performance evaluations for simply "trying hard" (Canedo et al., 2017). This may make self-evaluations less effective and the task of giving negative feedback may be difficult for managers. There is an opportunity to use technology to provide

millennial staff with more timely feedback from streamlined data sources (Canedo et al., 2017), such as live sales results, benchmarking and automated progress reports. This feedback will also be perceived as being more “objective” compared to the interpretations of managers, and millennials are already accustomed to (and expect) this kind of fast feedback that their personal devices, such as smart phones and watches, already offer them. Agribusinesses could put in place routines or systems to facilitate the constant communication and recognition needed by millennials.



Image source: nzstory.govt.nz

Empowerment and Impact Expectations

Millennials like to have voices heard and to feel empowered in the workplace.

Millennial staff want to be engaged in their jobs, both emotionally and behaviourally. They ask themselves “does this organisation value my strengths and contributions? Does it give me the chance to do what I do best everyday?” (Gallup Report, 2016). Millennials need to be motivated by challenging tasks that correspond to their skills and abilities, and in doing this, their output and role enjoyment greatly improves (Mihelič, & Aleksić, 2017).

By understanding the unique skills and experiences of staff (beyond their jobs or specialisations) and then drawing on them for random project work can be empowering for millennial staff. Practices such as reverse mentoring also give millennials a voice for decision making processes (Gong et al., 2018).

Millennials like to discuss topics with senior colleagues, to feel empowered, and they are not fond of “top-down” leadership - they instead prefer to collaborate to reach outcomes (Mihelič, & Aleksić, 2017). Stuart Taylor’s Kellogg report (Taylor, 2016) quotes that understanding the goals of the farm was a change that his farm staff wanted. High levels of involvement and visibility of leadership could be achieved through organising group discussions and interactions with senior managers (IFAMR, 2012). Less experienced staff in the business could

be encouraged to pitch to senior management their ideas about emerging issues for the company. Many young people love the opportunity to show what they're capable of, and to feel like they're contributing to the strategic direction of the company (IFAMR, 2012).

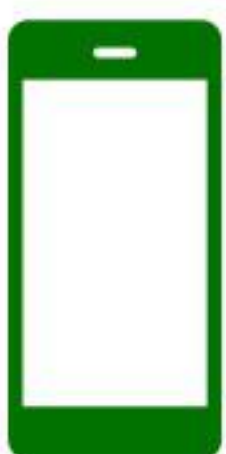
Millennials do not mind working, but they often believe that there are better ways to work (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016). In some cases it may be possible for managers to grant some highly valued autonomy and flexibility to millennials, and allow them to choose some job assignments or the chance to innovate in their role. "Role innovation makes a role more compatible with the incumbent's individual profile and therefore increases job satisfaction. It enables them to take advantage of his or her strengths, leads to higher performance and lower turnover" (Gong et al., 2018). Management needs to learn whether millennials are ready for the challenge of innovation in their roles. Role innovation is particularly valuable where fast changes render their old role or some of its processes as being obsolete (Gong et al., 2018).

Instead of managers deciding new performance targets, employees could decide on their own targets to give them more ownership of them. When management must appoint somebody new on the team, the other staff could draw up the job description, interview and appoint them (even if they are sub-ordinates) (Canedo et al., 2017).

A.I. could be an opportunity through which people can fulfil their own potential — ie. the possibility exists of improving worker productivity and liberating them from routine work (World Economic Forum, 2016). This is even more reason to teach millennials to perform tasks outside current roles and to be innovative as they are already naturally adaptable, and the rate of technological change we are experiencing now is more comfortable for them. A common result of empowering staff and improving their confidence is that the "boss" doesn't get pestered or interrupted as often, and employees can take responsibility, resolve problems themselves and are more likely to be engaged in their work (Laloux, 2015).

A recurrent reason given by millennials for quitting their jobs is that they felt like they weren't "making an impact". When they feel like this, and see what appears to be a better job opportunity, they often take it. A "better" job may just mean more interesting, less stressful or more developmental for a millennial (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016). It is a common misconception that millennials want "more and more", they really just want a job that feels worthwhile.

Job Flexibility



The world we live in today looks very different from that of even 15 years ago, and millennials want more job hours flexibility than Baby boomers and Gen Xers (Bailey & Dugan, 2017). Smartphones and cloud-based data storage have made many job tasks possible to execute at almost any time, anywhere. Men and women alike are more equally participating in the workforce in agricultural support roles, making family commitments more of a juggle shared by both parents in many cases. Job design in some businesses has responded to these changing needs, and allows staff members to utilise technology to execute their tasks in a more flexible way. This in some cases includes allowing more part time contracts and job sharing, working from home, or teleworking (working out of other offices). But the availability of "career customisation" must be further improved in New Zealand agribusiness. It must go beyond the ability to job share, to have maternity leave and phased retirement, and it must be available to



everyone. Many millennials leave their jobs to start their own business in order to control their job design (Millennials in the Workplace, 2016).



“Work is what people do, not where they do it”. Some believe that organisations of the future are likely to have a smaller full time worker pool and instead use external consultants and contractors for specific projects (including those from overseas). There may be greater use of virtual teams, freelancing and online talent platforms (World Economic Forum, 2016).



Wingham Rowan in the UK suggests that creating pools of “very flexible people” is one way that will shape the job market of the future (Rowan, 2013). A platform called “TaskRabbit.com” has emerged that links these pools of people, many of whom may be available at very short notice, to businesses that suddenly need spare labour. This is a market place for “spare hours”, and has been inspired by the collaborative consumption and regularly used services provided by AirBnB, Uber and other platforms. Workers who have proven their reliability earn higher ratings on the platform and therefore can contract themselves at higher hourly rates. Could an equivalent of this “temp agency”-type platform consisting of highly qualified professions be relevant to New Zealand agribusinesses? Such a platform would also create data so that people can see what jobs are in demand, and what skillset and qualifications would make them eligible for such a role. Investors could also use that market data to make decisions (Rowan, 2013).

Interestingly, in the case of the New Zealand primary industries, most future support service employees will be required in Auckland, Canterbury and Wellington (Bell et al., 2014). Living affordability, traffic congestion and lifestyle choices may discourage provincial candidates from taking up these roles. This could be an excellent opportunity for more uptake of “telecommuting” in New Zealand agribusiness and related industries.

Being proactive with “modern” job design may work to incentivise millennials to stay within your business, especially since they may be responsible for both their young families (which they have started at a later stage in life) and ageing parents at the same time.

More Women are Now in Ag Support Service Roles - What are the Implications?

“Workplace structures often, unwittingly, favour men... but currently, women make up the majority of those enrolled in university in nearly 100 countries” (World Economic Forum, 2016), and as mentioned previously, there are now more female agricultural graduates than male in New Zealand. Should this trend continue and females take on a greater share of agricultural support roles - maternity leave management, job flexibility and pathways for continued development will need to be improved to better capitalise on female potential in an environment that will desperately need their skills.

One practical reason prevails that complicates employing young females in some New Zealand agribusinesses: maternity leave management.

It can be a complicated and disruptive thing for agribusinesses to facilitate maternity leave. For many managers, both male and female, when hiring or considering employees for promotions, it can be extremely difficult *not* to discriminate between young, promising male staff, and female





staff who may be in stable relationships and who are at an age typical of starting a family. This is not a product of conscious sexism, but rather a fear of business disruption because key skills may be difficult to replace; systems may not be in place in the organisation to cope with the leave; and there will be uncertainty whether the female will return to work at all. But what if there were platforms (such as the one mentioned above) that acted as a temp-agency for highly skilled people for short term contracts? What if there was better process mapping in place in businesses to allow for more efficient transition into a job when another individual takes it on? New processes will have to be forged by New Zealand agribusinesses to minimise this disruption as more frequent maternity leave occurrence is seemingly inevitable given current trends.

We do not overlook the fact that some females will choose to exit their careers semi-permanently for their family, but many others will need to return to work in some form to help meet the relatively high costs of living and mortgages of today. What has been cited as challenging for some mothers returning to work is their reintegration into the workplace after parental leave - there may be no ability to work part time, or to work remotely, and childcare may be impractical or cost prohibitive. "Flexible" working, however, presents an unprecedented opportunity to rebalance any gender divide, as, in some roles, it provides an opportunity for women to be employed remotely with the use of technology. Technology may also provide companies with a chance to explore results-driven rather than presence-driven role evaluations (World Economic Forum, 2016). Of course, it can be argued that many roles in agribusiness are field based, laboratory based, or relationship based where they simply cannot be done "from home". But perhaps some agribusinesses are not challenging this enough and do not consider internal job swap opportunities, job sharing, outsourcing or loosening requirements for certain tasks to be carried out in normal office hours. It could be that we need to be more innovative and challenge the status quo further if our agribusinesses in New Zealand are to be more effective in using the talent available to us.

Having invested in women as they enter junior positions, employers appear to frequently lose their investment by failing to retain talent further up the ladder. And although women are, on average, more educated than men globally, their chances to rise to positions of leadership are only 28% of those men (World Economic Forum, 2016). Women may also have poor perceptions of senior roles, limit themselves and their own aspirations due to perceived family commitments, and are less likely to want the top job due to assumed stress and pressure (Sandberg, 2015).

Women may lack confidence re-entering their jobs after an extended period away. There may be a lack of visible role models who have "successfully" reintegrated back into work after parental leave. Women may harbour guilt that they are not being "good" mothers by returning to work, while at the same time fear that in their workplace they are perceived as being less committed to their careers because of assumed family obligations (Sandberg, 2015).

There are no clear answers or one-size-fits-all solutions to these barriers, but much of what limits women's potential in workplaces is based on assumptions and perceptions alone. As more women become both breadwinners and caregivers, and businesses are more driven to retain their talent and have conversations about their continued technical and leadership development, it is hoped that maternity leave will become less of a "taboo" conversation in workplaces and women's confidence levels and levels of aspiration might benefit from this.

"The talents of half the world are often wasted or under-utilised"

Human resource strategy - for within one firm, within a sector or across sectors?



As we delve deeper into times of rapid technological advancement and uncertainty, our workforce, which will soon be dominated by millennials, must be diverse in background and skill.

Many in-demand occupations did not exist 5-10 years ago, and the pace of change is set to accelerate. More than 65% of children starting school today will end up working in jobs that don't exist yet (World Economic Forum, 2016).

“At this rate we should expect to do jobs that we've never done before for the rest of our lives” (Shen, 2018).

The Future Capability Needs for Primary Industries report asks the question: “How do we provide and encourage opportunities [for people] to move between primary industry sectors to gain greater experience and ultimately add value across sectors?” (Bell et al., 2014)

This is an important angle to consider. We tend to only deeply consider the impact of staff turnover on our own businesses, as pressures exist that must make every dollar invested in any resource produce a return. It seems completely counter-intuitive for a business to want to encourage the movement of staff across sectors - due to the high costs of staff turnover, both financial and otherwise, along with the relative scarcity of suitable candidates. This tends to make businesses want to retain their human resource talent at all costs.

But consider if every business were to accept that every staff member will move on, sooner or later, but they nevertheless fully invest in training that person. What might reciprocate from this? It could give rise to a constant flux in businesses of highly skilled, intelligent people with diverse working backgrounds and experiences. Although it may be difficult to imagine beyond the presumed “disruption” of this, it is food for thought.

There is an opportunity for inter-industry collaboration (both within primary sector, as well as beyond the primary sector) to find people who have the required skills from industries that no longer need them. One limitation to this idea may come from the desire to protect intellectual property (IP) and the general unwillingness to collaborate within industries by sharing information as there is a perception that it is giving away competitive advantages (IFAMR, 2012).

As counter-intuitive as it may seem, the diversity in background and skill that our businesses will require in order to be resilient into the future, may well be facilitated inevitably by high turnover rates of millennials and have the effect of “sharing them” across industries.

“At this rate,
we should expect to
do jobs that we have
never done for the
rest of our lives”

Where does New Zealand culture fit into this?

New Zealand culture offers an interesting angle to the dilemma of managing millennials and their desire for autonomy, continual learning, travel, empowerment and flexibility of roles. New Zealand organisations typically operate with a hierarchy system that is less “entrenched” compared to other countries. Senior team members are more accessible to lower level staff, and staff from all levels of the business may be more likely to be given a “crack” at something, or their ideas be taken on board. Also, the relatively small number of people employed by the primary sectors means “everyone knows almost everyone”, and more doors are open to young people looking for forms of mentorship or other contacts. New Zealand is also a small nation that is proudly nimble, proactive and is not afraid of challenging the status quo. All of these characteristics already correspond to millennial needs, and smaller changes in businesses could be more easily made to satisfy them compared to in other cultures.

Challenges still exist around the “tall poppy” culture and “fear to failure” in this country, and our arguably poor ability to give feedback (Taylor, 2016), but New Zealand agribusinesses may have some cultural advantage over other nations and their businesses when it comes to the current and ever-growing challenge of managing millennials in the workplace.

Let's not limit this to “Millennials”

It is recognised that many of the characteristics of “millennials” are in fact prevalent in other generations as well, and that improvements in job design and HR practices are likely to be effective across a broad range of staff. Professionals at all levels want a combination of freedom, variety and impact (IFAMR, 2012). “Organisational disillusionment” applies to the powerless at the bottom as much as the hierarchy, argues the PwC report by Frederic Laloux (Laloux, 2015). Adaptions to agribusiness processes and even culture, must not be seen as being treatment to favour only young people.



Have "People Strategy" well formed

Core business **training resources, orientation and process mapping** in place to cope with staff turnover

Explore Job Flexibility Options

- Traditionally relevant to staff that have young families, old or sick family members, but it **must extend to all staff**, including those who may live remotely, have extended leave requirements, or even desire different lifestyles
- **Think outside the box** and use technology
- Options may go beyond working part-time, job sharing, telecommuting, "results-driven" work
- **Prioritise the reintegration** and continued development of maternity leave returnees

Employ techniques to "better understand" employees

- Psychometric Tools
- Active Career Planning



Communication Processes Formed

- Use of **platforms** for instant, inclusive communication
- Feedback to staff very **regular, provides recognition.**
- **Potential for feedback to be "live"** or automated with technology

Empowerment

- Give staff challenging **tasks that relate to their unique skills and abilities**
- **Allow time for interaction** of young staff with senior staff to understand company goals, to pitch ideas to solve real problems
- Allow young staff to **collaborate with colleagues on and problem solve** to feel like they are contributing to the strategic direction of the business
- Allow staff to have **autonomy** in their roles where appropriate, and to **innovate** within their roles
- Allow staff to **set their own targets** to have greater ownership of them

Staff Development

- Explore formal, **higher education options "with hooks"** if candidates are genuinely interested
- Adapt learning resource top be **more digital, mobile, flexible**
- Collaborate with the **education sector** more readily to build learning resources
- Offer **mobility and job rotation** to staff
- Consider the **"OE" as an opportunity**
- Encourage staff to take roles before they are "ready"
- **Ensure opportunities exist** for staff to implement new learnings
- Identify any "demotivating" staff and manage
- Priority is to build **"bench strength"**

Conclusion

Millennials are perhaps the least understood generation in New Zealand's workplace, and this is proven by poor retention statistics and stereotypes dominating the minds of employers. These young people have different values, skills, mental health situations, and how they view work is extremely different compared to previous generations. Low engagement levels of millennials in their work is strongly related to their high turnover rates.

New Zealand agribusinesses must improve their understanding of this generation as projected primary industry growth and the demand for millennials' high qualifications is likely to make them an even more sought-after resource in agribusiness.

The development resources belonging to agribusinesses must be reviewed for their appropriateness for this generation. Millennials have a strong desire for continual learning, so there must be structures in place in businesses that will satisfy these needs.

Methods and the frequency of communication between managerial staff and millennials must also be reviewed as constant feedback and recognition is highly important to them.

Techniques that allow millennial staff to feel empowered and that their work is impactful is a crucial aspect of work that is too often overlooked in today's workplaces. Processes can be put in place in agribusinesses to facilitate this.

Finally, job flexibility is of growing importance to millennial staff. Working part-time, job sharing, working from home and "results-driven" work instead of "presence-driven" work are options available today, but more options appropriate for agribusinesses must be developed to accommodate this need.

Much attention and investment could be made into the retention of staff, but we cannot escape the law of "the most limiting factor". If one aspect is limiting in the employment experience of a millennial staff member, they are likely to move on - unravelling all of your investment. Every agribusiness' "people strategy" must be clear and well communicated, but above all, staff development and retention relies on the right leadership, culture and employee experience. This requires open-mindedness, and action, not just discussion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To collect data about New Zealand millennials**, and specifically those involved in the rural industries to understand their unique cultural differences and how it may affect their behaviours. Almost all of the data currently publicly available on "millennials" is North American.
- **To produce a guide and tool kit that could be available online** and that could detail practical methods to improve retention of young staff in agribusinesses. Agencies already exist that specialise in locating skilled personnel, but it seems there are few resources or ongoing support available to New Zealand agribusinesses (that do not have dedicated HR departments) that detail how to "keep" them.
- **To investigate the feasibility of an online platform that could act as a "temp agency" for highly skilled people with agribusiness backgrounds.** This may become more important and relevant as millennials in the workplace continue to frequently travel overseas for short "stints" and as maternity leave (and other kinds of leave) of skilled support people becomes more common.
- **To research, trial and showcase job flexibility options relevant to New Zealand agribusinesses.** This may include investigating further how cross-sector human resource capital sharing might add value to all primary industries.

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