

The Millennial: A Matter of Time

One of the signature aspects of this particular generation of Millennial individuals is their status as the first true generation of digital natives. (Prensky, *Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants*. 2001) Technology is a ubiquitous, normative, and pervasive feature of their environment. It is not unique, it “just is.” For those of us who are more in the digital immigrant or digital alien end of the spectrum, the social consequences in the work environment can be very evident, particularly when the less technologically facile person is in the leadership position. Being digitally present, but not physically present, makes time and inclusion very fluid. For example, prior to cell phones, meetings began on time with all members expected to be present. However, by calling in, meeting times can shift or people can add input without being there physically. Too, using asynchronous frameworks, people can attend meetings but from different locals and times across the world, again being digitally present but not physically. Fluidity in time also spills over into time commitment in other aspects of the job environment, such as getting projects done or handing in assignments. If the social norms of the organization require physical and chronological adherence, there will be some training that needs to be done. Secondly, immediacy and casualness of information dissemination is expected. Often times, learning to use formal voice in interactions with others not of their age, particularly in print, is an important heads-up as well as their being mindful of social conventions and using appropriate positional language with a superiors. As a leader, if one takes the time and does this gently, this pays out benefits for all involved. Finally, the need for collaboration and teaming is integral for this generation. While there are many individuals who, through temperament or cultural influences, would rather work alone, there are many people of this generation that find that working in a teaming situation more natural and satisfactory. Here, decision making and working to their own strengths while getting support and training in new areas should occur. The leader’s role is one of clear facilitation and guidance, allowing a high degree of self-determination on the part of the Millennial within determined limits but also training, for all ages, in how to make the appropriate mesh with other age groups. To finish, a small plug for an intriguing book by Howard Rheingold, called *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. Here he looks at how cell phones, pagers and other technologies of like ilk have changed societal norms in technological savvy individuals in key nations around the world. As an enthusiastic technological immigrant, Rheingold brings the perspective of both the old and the new to the foreground.



Picture: Hall, Justin. [Howard Rheingold](http://www.rheingold.com). 2009. 30 June 2009 <www.rheingold.com>.

Power Bases

There are seven different bases of power that a leader may use, depending upon the situation as- well- as the readiness of the people being lead. According to French and Raven, the initial types were *coercive*, *expert*, *legitimate*, *referent* and *reward* power. Later, Raven in conjunction with Kruglasnki, added *informational* power while Jersey and Goldsmith still later conjured up *connective* powers. Some of these power bases are inherent within the individual (personal power) while others are external and granted to the individual (positional) by either the followers or supervisors.

Coercive power is leadership by the stick, were individuals actively comply to avoid punishments and sanctions. Reward power is leadership by the sugar cube, the inverse coercive power, whereby people strive to earn perceived benefits and rewards. Informational power is just what the old adage says; having it is power over others. Related is expert power, whereby a leader has the knowledge and the skills to be seen as worthy of trust by people under them. All of these are personal power in nature. On the other hand, positional power is represented by the following kinds of power bases. Legitimate power is positional power that comes from being assigned a job or position in a known organizational system. Connection power is power by association. While not having the power in and of themselves, these kinds of leaders, by

virtue of their relationship to those who do, have a certain cache rubbed off on themselves. Generally, the higher the readiness of the followers, the more the leaders will tend to make use of the less direct leadership approaches of expert, information, and referent types. Being mindful of using ones power positively, appropriately and consistently— as determined by the current situation and positioning of the group, will lead to a successful and supportive work environment for all.