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## FIRM MANAGEMENT

# GONE!?!

What if after looking around, you realized that you were the last person left and everything, all the work, everything fell on your shoulders? Would you be able to get it all done? Would you be ready to deal with it, the pressure and time commitments...

Garrett Wagner • Jun. 12, 2019



What if you looked around your office and suddenly realized you were the only person left? What would you do first, would you get out of your chair and start to look around for your co-workers, would you page them on the inter-com, would you send them a fax or better yet, would you just start yelling?

What if after looking around, you realized that you were the last person left and everything, all the work, everything fell on your shoulders? Would you be able to get it all done? Would you be ready to deal with it, the pressure and time commitments day in and day out? This may sound like a scene from a horror movie or the latest summer blockbuster but what if this happened in the accounting industry?

What if by the time you finished this article, all the millennials inside your company were gone? Statistically that would mean 35% of your company would be gone, according to the latest analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data by the Pew Research Center. At first you may celebrate, no longer having to deal with entitled millennials. But after the part had ended you would begin to take stock and wonder why they were gone?

This may sound like a horror movie or maybe even a cause for celebration depending on your perspective, but it is a reality that many organizations are rapidly heading for. As they cling to the past and what they know and have grown use to, they are finding it harder to retain the millennial mind. One common theme from millennials in the accounting industry, they are ready for a change where they work, and we are heading towards a tipping point where more will leave their current jobs for other opportunities. More than ever before in the past, the millennial generation's frustrations are moving beyond the common themes; technology, process improvement, billable hours, and are heading towards an immediate desire to stop putting up with the status quo and quit their jobs.

But what is causing the increase in the future of this profession to have such a strong desire to quit their jobs effective today and how do we remedy this issue so we don't end up with 35% of our workforce disappearing.

The major factor driving this increase in dissatisfaction with millennial jobs is that sadly nothing has changed. The problems our industry faces are not new nor unique to any one company or organization. However, for most organizations no real progress is being made to address the variety of underlying issues. What has been broken continues to be broken and unlike generation X, millennials are not eager to wait another 30 years to go through each day with a growing number of broken issues. Imagine if each day you arrived at home, your refrigerator was broken, it stayed on, but no longer got cold. How long would you wait to get it fixed? Millennials grew up in a world full of rapid and constant changes, this is what they know and expect and if they do not see it happening ever where they work, they will not be willing to stick around forever and keep waiting.

As this generation sees change continuing to not happen, it is losing hope that change will be coming where they work. We are on our way to a tipping point in the industry where more millennials may end up quitting their job and only worsen the talent shortage our industry is already facing. Before you look at this as another reason to call millennials entitled, think about this question. How long would you want to keep working at a job where things were not changing for the better and the issues it is faced with continue to grow and not be addressed? Instead of taking a negative view of the millennial generations for waiting things to improve where they work and instead of being too busy to make change happen yourself, why don't we put the millennial generation to work fixing our issues and retain and engage them where they work.

One of the greatest challenges in making change happen for any organization is rallying their people around a change initiative and getting those people to successfully drive that change. Harness the passion and energy of millennials and task and empower them to drive change where they work. Don't let them continue to grow dissatisfied inside the four walls of their offices, turn their energy around and to work for you.

Start now and once you finish reading this article, challenge the millennials inside your office to come up with one thing to change and a plan to make that change happen. Then do the hardest most unnatural thing possible, let them do it. Take a step back, be open to change and see what happens. Best case scenario, your energetic millennials will spend some time working and fix an issue that needs fixing. Worst case, they have less time to spend on Snapchat during the workday, but learn from their efforts so that they can be more successful the next time.

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