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The facilities industry is all about people, customers, and service providers. Understanding the interface between these groups and leading a service-providing team is more important today than it has ever been. These books lead to several other books on tap for the year that will help facilities officers.

### MILLENNIAL RESET: REIMAGINING A WORKPLACE THAT WORKS FOR EVERYONE

Mary K. Pilotte, with Amber L. Cross, 2018, 99 pp., softcover, \$19.95.



There are many books about the workplace. These books attempt to tell one how to be a good leader of people, create an open and welcoming workplace, and manage change (either technological or organizational). But there really aren't many books that identify how to deal with the changing workforce as exhibited by the cohort born between 1981 and 2004—the *millennials*.

We know much about this group: They will make up 75 percent of the workforce by 2025, they were raised by “overprotective” parents, they are open and sharing with others, and so on. Some of these characteristics are

viewed as good, while others are viewed as problematic by thinkers such as Simon Sinek. But the fact that they will make up 75 percent of the workforce in just a few years is a reality that cannot be ignored.

*Millennial Reset* presents the changes necessary to keep and maintain a productive business enterprise and to manage differences between Gen-Xers and millennials. Since change cannot happen without knowing where one has started from, the first half of the book sets the baseline. What are the characteristics of the working generations (baby boomers, Gen-Xers, and millennials)? What makes each tick? Whom do they recognize as role models representing ideals of behavior? Knowing the characteristics of and differences between these generations helps identify the challenges a manager or leader faces to keep the workplace functional and productive.

There are plenty of problems facing a business manager or leader when mixing these generations. Their differences can be extreme—to the point of seeming polar opposites at times. Here are the

broad generalizations: Baby boomers tend to challenge authority based on their experience with war protests and civil rights. Gen-Xers tend to focus on social status and material possessions. Millennials, while generally resisting codes of conduct, usually don't separate their personal lives from their professional lives. These perceived differences highlight the difficulty of managing opposites while trying to get a multigenerational workforce moving in the same direction—it can be very frustrating.

*Millennial Reset* provides numerous ways to deal with these generational differences and to integrate them into a smooth-functioning organization, with some thought. The balance of the book describes ways to weave the “overwhelming” characteristics of millennials into a corporate setting and to combine the best management and leadership techniques for boomers and Gen-Xers into tools that will also work with millennials. These tools come from Pilotte's decades in the corporate world, combined with her research and her experience in higher education; at Purdue, she currently works with millennial graduate students and teaches the upcoming Gen-Z.

Pilotte discusses tools such as modifying one's communication techniques to articulate goals and expectations frequently, and providing rapid feedback when work is done well (and avoiding criticism). Of course, communication channels such as social media are another important tool for managers and leaders to utilize. As Pilotte points out, communication with millennials means not only listening frequently to their ideas and feedback, but also paying attention to what benefits are important to them. Some of these techniques are not new, but Pilotte includes nuanced changes that work with the millennials.

Each chapter includes a “bottom-line” and “take-away” summary of reminders and activities to help

you practice the recommendations described. The book offers ways to validate and compare employee characteristics (which may vary despite the generational monikers), and how to leverage their differences into a more cohesive workplace.

The book might be considered a little late in the game as we near the end of the Gen-X entry into the workforce, but it does give us tools we can use to

begin assessing the upcoming Gen-Z employees. It will be interesting to see if Pilotte develops a guide for the next generation, so that workplace managers and leaders can be better prepared to succeed. In the meantime, this book is a convenient and handy addition to any supervisor's reference library if they desire to both improve corporate culture and maintain their peace of mind.

## SUBSCRIBED: WHY THE SUBSCRIPTION MODEL WILL BE YOUR COMPANY'S FUTURE—AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT

Tien Tzuo, Portfolio, 2018, 256 pp., Available in hardcover, softcover, ebook, audiobook.

A repeating dictum is that the United States is now a service economy; a manufacturing (products) economy no longer dominates national enterprises. There's a reasonable description of this change in business perspectives in *Subscribed*, by Tien Tzuo. As Tzuo explains it, business owners once looked to make products more efficiently so they could then market and sell them in increasing numbers; so their fixed cost of production became smaller, and due to the results of marketing, they could raise the price of their products and thus increase profits. All that has changed. Successful companies are no longer focused as much on marketing their products as on getting customers to engage in an ongoing relationship through a subscription for service.

The next question may be, "What does that mean for an educational facilities manager?" The question is unexpected because facilities management (FM) is a service industry—how is a service industry affected by an overall change from acquiring products to services? As discussed in several other reviews, understanding the supply side of the business will help FM providers identify how to better manage the demand side. Indeed, the education industry may be changing toward a subscription focus, thus affecting the facilities organization.

Consider the possibilities discussed in *Subscribed*. As businesses switch from producing an individual product to sell into making that product a service obtained through a subscription, the business must convert more than just the financial ledger. There's an attitude change needed. For a subscription fee, the business provides a service that is continuously updated and improved through feedback from the subscriber. It's almost as if you must offer pure, continuous improvement. Do you want to communicate with someone on the other side of the city, state, nation, or world? Use your subscribed smart device

and choose audio only or Facetime.

Do you want to create documents for reports or presentations? Use your Office 365 subscription and cloud storage to collaborate with others. The next step may be a subscription to a learning environment where the subscription (rent) means regular renovations and upgrades to the physical and cyber environment.

Are we ready for this kind of subscription for learning? What happens if the education industry sells subscriptions for continuous learning? Will we see education facilities in more locations or will their physical presence disappear into online-only education delivery? The jury is still out. But *Subscribed* should get you thinking—it certainly has me thinking. 💰



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