



2016 Cone Communications

Employee Engagement Study



Introduction

With telecommuting, flexible schedules and our increasingly wired (and wireless) world, the boundaries in and outside the workplace have become increasingly blurred – and the very concept of the work experience is undergoing a massive transformation. As we transition beyond traditional office norms, employees are looking to companies to provide more purpose in the workplace, helping them make a difference at work, in the community and across the globe. Enter the new world of employee engagement.

Employee giving campaigns and company-wide days of service are deeply rooted mastheads of corporate culture, but the employee of today expects more – whether that's a benefits package representative of the changing needs of both work and personal lives or deeper service experiences, such as a long-term paid sabbatical.

Modern employees know engagement is much more than just how they can support causes that are important to them personally – they also understand and look to be involved in helping the company address social and environmental issues that are critical to the business.

Companies should embrace this new enlightened employee. Engaging employees effectively in corporate responsibility (CR) efforts can result in a more dedicated, fulfilled workforce; one that's likely to stick around in a time when employees overall are increasingly transient.

Key Takeaways

The findings from the 2016 Cone Communications Employee Engagement Study reveal several key takeaways for companies seeking to appeal to this enthusiastic but demanding group:

Employees Want to Know Employers Care:

Americans see their work and personal lives as increasingly blended, and when they come to the office they want it to mean something more than just a paycheck. They want to know their employer cares about them as an individual – and they expect benefits that go well beyond the standard financial and healthcare packages.

Engaging Employees in CR Impacts the

Bottom Line: A company's CR commitments have a direct tie to attracting and retaining talent. For many employees, CR is a consideration in not only deciding where to work, but also impacts job satisfaction and loyalty. In fact, it is so important to some that they won't take a job unless the company has strong social and environmental programs.

Don't Check the Box on Volunteerism with One

Type of Activity: Planning a day of service as the only engagement tactic for employee volunteerism isn't going to cut it. Employees want a range of options and they want them on their own terms – whether that's a quick activity they can do at their desks or an after-hours opportunity they can do on their own time.

Give Employees a Role in Broader CR Efforts:

Employees want more than the traditional donation and volunteerism opportunities when they come to work. They want to be a part of something bigger – and that means having a tangible and active role in contributing to their company's CR goals. Employees are ready to voice their opinions and roll up their sleeves to make an impact on social and environmental issues important to the business.



Get Credit for Internal Efforts, Externally: Employees want to share their employee engagement experiences with their social networks. Give them the activities and the tools (e.g., hashtags) to share and they will become enthusiastic advocates for your company externally.

Young Gen X is the Overlooked But Ardent Employee Engagement Supporter:

Although all eyes may be on the up-and-coming Millennial generation, young Generation X – the managers, leaders and budding CEOs of today – are also enthusiastic supporters of employee engagement efforts. They are ready and eager, they just haven't been tapped.

Beyond the Paycheck: Employees Expect More

In today's always-on world, the barrier between work and personal life is not so cut-and-dried anymore — in fact, two-thirds (64%) of employees feel it's becoming increasingly blended. Yet, most employees don't mind this change, as long as their employer reciprocates. Today's employees expect not only basic benefits, but also opportunities to bring their passions for social and environmental issues to the workplace. But most of all, employees want to feel valued and respected at work. Nearly all (93%) say they want to work for a company that cares about them as an individual.

78% of employees are OK with their work and personal life intersecting more as long as employers provide benefits that help balance both

78% say if they feel valued and fulfilled in their work, they don't mind working after designated hours

Employees today want it all. In addition to traditional benefits, such as affordable and quality health insurance (94%) and a competitive financial package (92%), employees are seeking more contemporary benefits. Employees say opportunities to support causes or issues they care about (64%) are as important as wellness programs (69%) or tuition reimbursement (66%).

Beyond benefits, more than three-quarters (78%) say they want to be an active participant in helping their company improve its responsible business practices by providing feedback, ideas and potential solutions.



Corporate Responsibility Drives Recruitment and Retention

A company's social and environmental commitments are key drivers in recruitment, retention and loyalty for today's workforce. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of employees say their job is more fulfilling when they are provided with opportunities to make a positive impact on social and environmental issues – and seven-in-10 (70%) would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to important issues. CR is also a significant consideration for candidates when deciding which job to take:

58% consider a company's social and environmental commitments when deciding where to work

55% would choose to work for a socially responsible company, even if the salary was less

51% won't work for a company that doesn't have strong social or environmental commitments

Today's employees are looking for work that means something more – they want to be employed by a company that has strong values and clear CR commitments. At the very least, companies should ensure their human resources departments and recruiters are armed and educated on the organization's social and environmental goals and progress. Organizations should also continue to reinforce their commitments both internally and externally as an ongoing competitive advantage to attract and keep top talent.



Mature Millennials in Focus

The notoriously transient mature Millennial segment, aged 27-35, is significantly more likely to view CR as a key factor. Two-thirds say they won't work for a company that does not have strong CR commitments (vs. 51% U.S. average); and once hired, they are more likely to be loyal (83% vs. 70% U.S. average) when they feel they can make a positive impact on issues at work. Retention among this highly sought-after group has huge implications for business. Other research has shown that nine-in-10 Millennials expect to stay in a job fewer than three years¹, at a cost of \$15,000 to \$20,000² to replace each Millennial employee.

88% feel their job is more fulfilling when they are provided opportunities to make a positive impact on social or environmental issues (vs. 74% U.S. average)

79% consider a company's social and environmental commitments when deciding where to work (vs. 58% U.S. average)

76% would choose to work for a socially responsible company, even if the salary would be less than at other companies (vs. 55% U.S. average)

Sources: ¹Future Workplace, Multiple Generations @ Work Survey, 2012
²Millennial Branding, Millennial Retention Study, 2013

Employees Set Sights on CR Commitments

A growing opportunity for businesses is to empower employees to get engaged and invested in broader CR commitments. More than seven-in-10 not only want to know what their company is doing, but are also willing to roll up their sleeves to further their company's positive impacts:

75% say it's important their company shares its goals, progress and related achievements

71% want their company to provide opportunities for them to help make a positive impact on the company's social and environmental commitments

77% say it's important their employer provides them with hands-on activities around environmental responsibility

47% believe companies need to find a balance around providing opportunities that focus on individuals' personal interests and the social and environmental issues most important to the business

Companies can encourage employees' enthusiasm to directly impact social and environmental goals by providing tangible and relatable activities that ladder up to an organization's material issues. With unique insight into a company's operations, employees can give important feedback on progress and provide ideas for potential innovations. Employees who are well-versed in a company's CR commitments can also act as valuable external representatives of efforts to consumers, customers and other stakeholders.



Compost collected by Target team members is turned into EcoScraps soil sold at stores

Volunteerism on Employees' Own Terms

When it comes to volunteering at the workplace, traditional opportunities still lead the way. Employees look to companies to provide turnkey ways to participate in volunteerism through company-wide days of service (67%) and corporate-led activities throughout the year (67%). However, more than half of employees are looking toward more progressive volunteer models, such as micro-volunteerism (63%) and paid service leave (61%), as well as a strong desire to engage through after-hours opportunities (58%).



Preferred engagement varies based on different demographics.

Men are more willing to make a greater time commitment to volunteerism through paid service leave (67% vs. 56% women), after-hours service opportunities (60% vs. 55% women) and service trips (59% vs. 48% women).





Employees also want to flex different muscles in applying their time and energy to worthy causes. Although much attention is given to a newer skills-based volunteer approach, only a quarter of employees say this is their preferred type of engagement. Over half prefer a blend of skills-based and non skills-based activities, and nearly a quarter prefer to leave their workplace skills at the office:

The research reveals there's no silver bullet to engaging employees in volunteerism activities. Employees seek a range of opportunities that give them the flexibility to customize what skills they use, when they do it and what types of activities they participate in.

53% prefer activities that are a balance between skills they use every day and skills that are not related to their job

24% prefer activities that are related to the skills they use every day at their job

23% prefer activities that are not related to the skills they use every day at their job

Philanthropy at the Office Gets Personal

Employees view their employers as facilitators and multipliers for their own philanthropic efforts. With the explosion of crowdfunding today, helping colleagues in individual fundraisers or during times of need topped the list of giving opportunities. Employees also prioritized other donation programs that allow them to support issues that are important to them personally and in which they have already invested their own sweat equity:

Top philanthropic opportunities:

Helping colleagues in individual fundraisers or during times of need

78%

Matching gifts

70%

Dollars for doers

69%

Urgent appeals for critical issues or during times of disaster

69%

Payroll deduction

60%



Communications: Reach Employees Where They Are, With What Matters Most

Employees don't want to look too hard to find information on engagement opportunities. Companies should leverage tried-and-true communications channels to reach employees where they are looking. As with any communications strategy, breaking through will require more than one communication channel around a singular campaign – leading companies integrate CR messaging throughout the workplace experience.



Employees prefer to learn about engagement opportunities through:



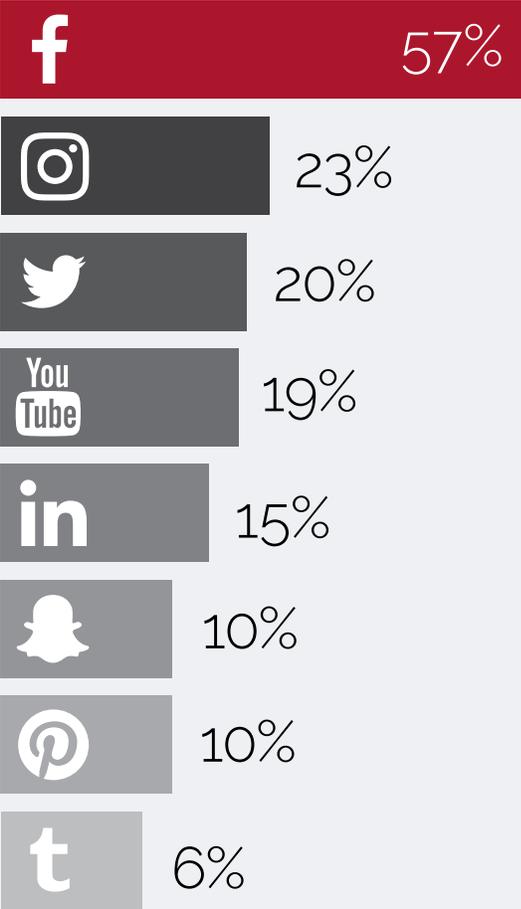
Social media also presents a burgeoning communications opportunity, as employees see this as a way to personally share and amplify their participation:

52% want to share their own photos, videos and experiences on their personal social media platforms

48% would use designated company hashtags to share their own photos, videos and experiences

When looking at particular social media channels, Facebook reigns as the best channel to reach all employee demographics (57%). Yet, marked differences exist among specific audiences. Men are more likely than women to use Twitter (26% vs. 14% women) and YouTube (28% vs. 11% women) and Millennials are twice as likely to engage on Instagram (45% vs. 23% U.S. average) and Snapchat (25% vs. 10% U.S. average).

Preferred social media platforms:



To further motivate employees to participate, it's important to understand they are equally inspired by altruism and personal gain. Although making a meaningful difference is a top incentive for engagement in workplace activities, employees are just as motivated by more self-serving goals, such as professional growth and financial incentives.

Top motivators include:

- 87% Professional growth
 - 85% Making a meaningful difference
 - 85% Financial incentives (e.g., bonuses or gift cards)
 - 79% Personal recognition
 - 76% A meaningful personal experience (e.g., exploring new places, meeting new people)
 - 74% Perks (e.g., better parking spaces, "casual Fridays")
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Mature Millennials and Young Gen Xers are Standout Supporters

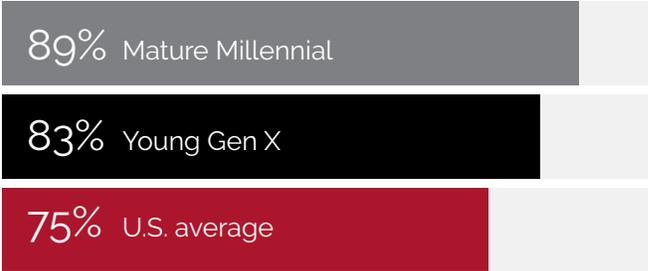
Mature Millennials (27-35) and young Generation X (36-44) rose to the top as highly engaged employees in today's workforce. These segments are prioritizing involvement in social and environmental issues with much more enthusiasm than the average American and are ready to invest their time, money and personal passions to support important issues at the office and in their communities.

Key generational findings include:

Consider a company's social and environmental commitments when deciding where to work:



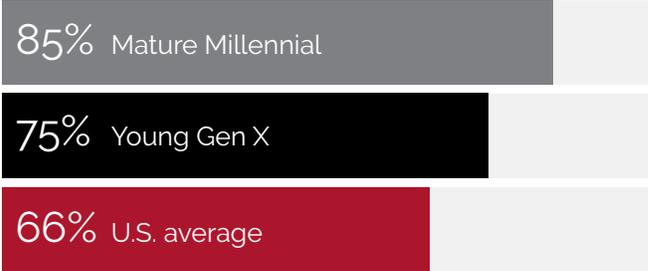
Believe it is important for their employer to share goals, progress and achievements related to the company's social or environmental commitments:



Would be more loyal to a company that helps them contribute to social and environmental issues:



Wish their employer would provide volunteer opportunities they could do with friends or family:



In Conclusion

Employees are a company's front-line ambassadors, problem-solvers, innovation and idea creators and quite simply, the most important asset a company has. Yet, as the workplace evolves, so do expectations from employees, and it's going to take even more to keep them inspired and dedicated. Companies that respond with dynamic, flexible and innovative employee engagement programs will be rewarded with a loyal and energetic workforce that is ready to give their all to advancing the health of the company, their careers and society at large.

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About the Research: The 2016 Cone Communications Employee Engagement Study presents the findings of an online survey conducted April 11 – 20, 2016 by Toluna among a random sample of 1,020 adults, employed at companies with 1,000 employees or more, comprising 510 men and 510 women ages 20+. The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is $\pm 3\%$ at a 95% level of confidence.

About Cone Communications

Cone Communications (www.conecomm.com) is a public relations and marketing agency that is Always Making a DifferenceSM for business, brands and society. With a unique combination of corporate responsibility, consumer brand and integrated marketing expertise, our people deliver emotional storytelling and business value for every client. Cone is part of the DAS Group of Companies, a division of Omnicom Group Inc. (NYSE: OMC), a global group of marketing services companies.

About Cone Communications' CR Research & Insights Team

For almost two decades, Cone's dedicated Research & Insights team has tracked the news, trends, research and best practices in CR. Cone's pioneering research in corporate responsibility became the reference for companies seeking to understand this critical and rapidly evolving landscape. The agency has conducted over 50 primary research reports since and still provides the most comprehensive understanding of the changing attitudes, expectations and behaviors of consumers and employees when it comes to a company's involvement in social issues and responsible business practices.

For more information about Cone Communications' research and services, please contact:

Alison DaSilva
Executive Vice President, CR Research & Insights
adasilva@conecomm.com

Whitney Dailey
Senior Supervisor, CR Research & Insights
wdailey@conecomm.com



CONE

COMMUNICATIONS

855 Boylston Street
Boston, MA 02116

Phone: 617.227.2111
Fax: 617.523.3955

www.conecomm.com

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