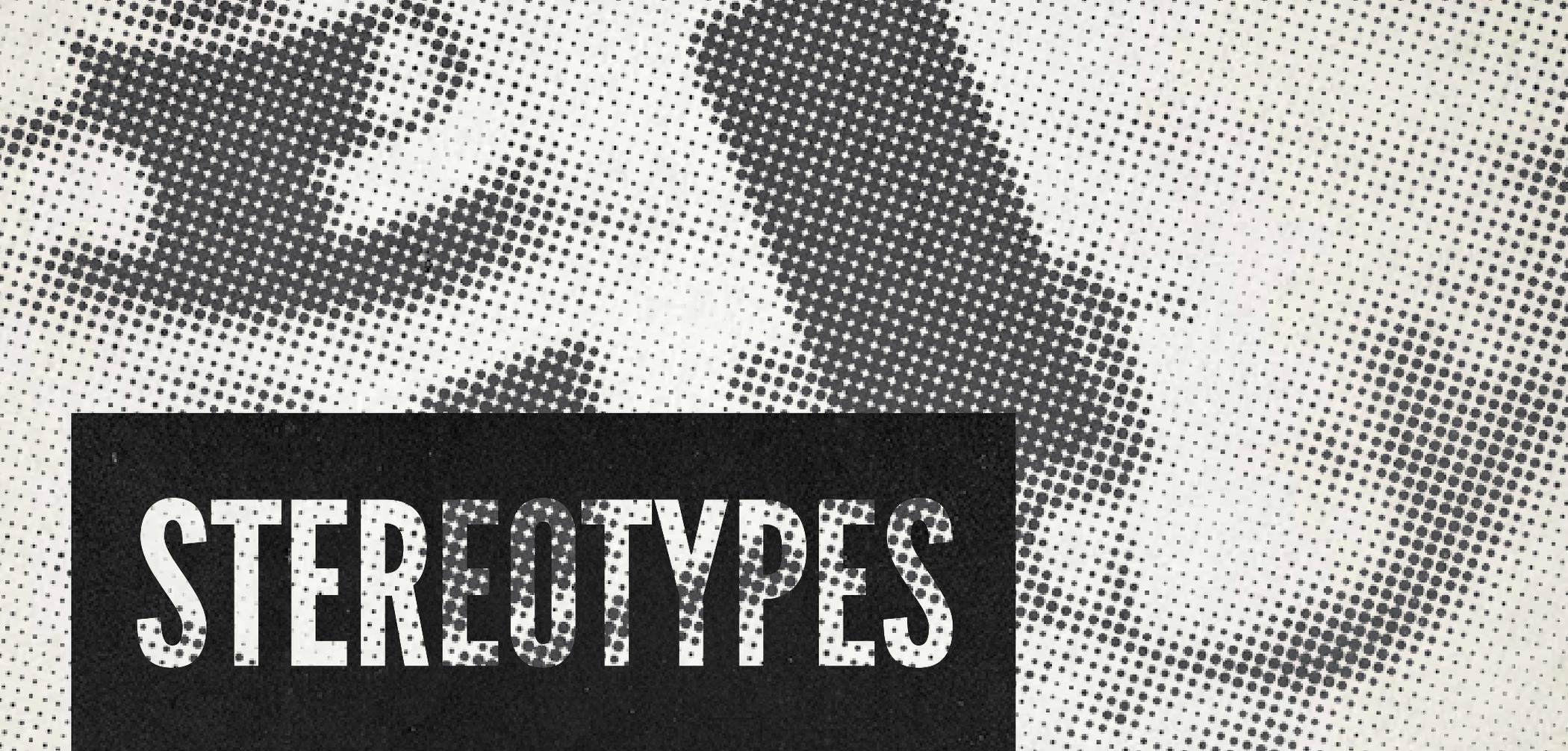# HOGAN

THE MILLENNIAL

IT'S NOT THEM, IT'S YOU

COMPLEX

Frustrated. Baffled. Confused. All words managers and supervisors across the globe often use to describe their feelings toward their millennial subordinates and co-workers. But, are their feelings justifiable? Are Millennials really the monsters Baby Boomers and Gen Xers make them out to be? The answer may surprise you.
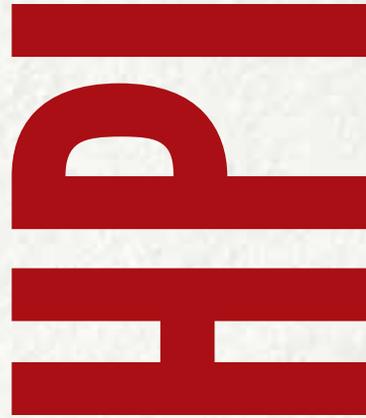
STEREOTYPES

Entitled, lazy, and materialistic are perhaps the three most common descriptors of Millennials. However, if you turn back the clock, Baby Boomers were known as the "Me Generation" thanks to extremely high levels of narcissism, yet they turned out just fine. Not convinced? Just ask a Baby Boomer, and they'll be sure to tell you how great they are.

In turn, those same Baby Boomers referred to the Generation Xers who followed them as slackers and rebels who lacked ambition, vison, and character. Yet, *The Generation X Report*, a research report from the **Longitudinal Study of American Youth**, showed that Gen Xers were largely "highly educated, active, balanced, happy, and family oriented."

As opposed to relying solely on common stereotypes to describe the characteristics of a generation, the more productive approach to understanding Millennials lies in the examination of their personalities. By simply understanding Millennials, it will be much easier to learn how to work with them and maximize their strengths.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES HPI

Anyone walking across a college campus in the past decade has been witness to a common theme: students wearing headphones or staring at mobile devices, seemingly oblivious to their surroundings and fellow humans. Based on this observance, one would think sociability levels within this age group would be significantly lower than previous generations.

According to Hogan research, however, the opposite is true. Millennials score higher on the Sociability scale of the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) than Baby Boomers or Gen Xers. This is likely due to technology, as Millennials tend to prefer text messages and social networking to face-to-face conversation. Why ask a stranger for directions when you can find a more reliable and accurate answer on your phone? Why expend the energy to get to know someone in person when you can get the same information by looking at his or her Facebook profile? It doesn't mean they're avoiding social interaction – they're just doing it differently.

Millennials tend to be regarded as lazy, but don't confuse laziness with lack of ambition. Hogan research shows that Millennials are actually on par with their predecessors when it comes to ambition levels; only slightly less than Gen X and dead even with Boomers. Hogan CEO Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic explains that "since much of Gen Y has been persuaded – first by overprotective parents, then by grade inflation and the unrealistic promises from universities – that their high expectations would eventually translate into actual achievements, it should come as no surprise that millennials are less interested in working hard to actually achieve them."
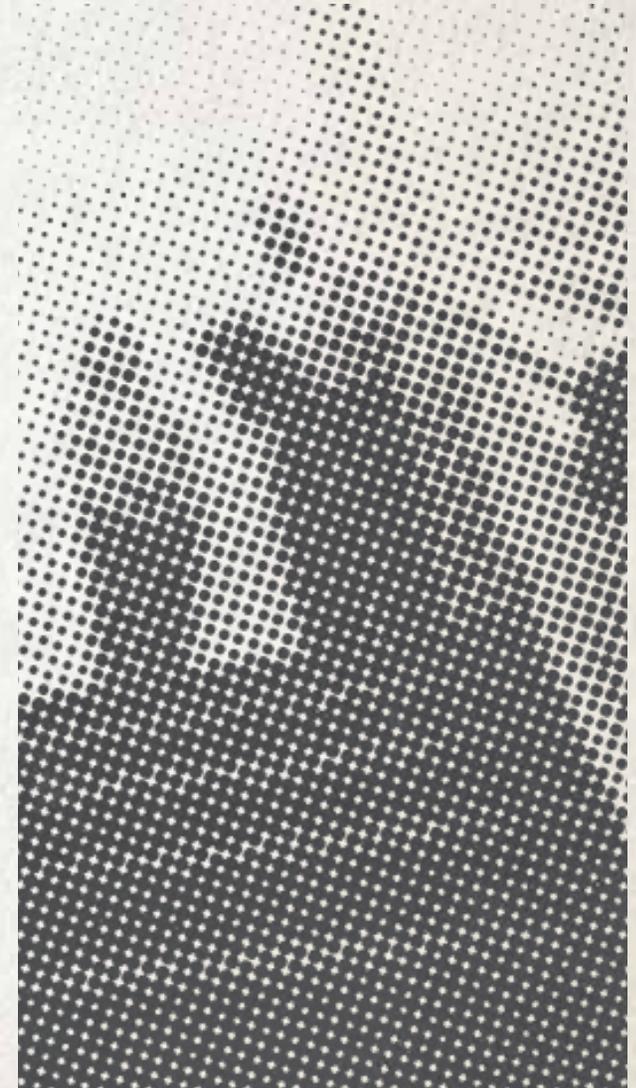
GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES
HDS

Comparing generational characteristics via the Hogan Development Survey (HDS), which measures the dark-side behaviors that emerge under stress, pressure, or boredom, Millennials scored higher on the Bold and Dutiful scales than Baby Boomers or Generation X.

High-Bold Millennials tend to be overly self-confident, arrogant, and entitled, which aligns with the overprotective parent theory and the resulting expectation of special treatment. Accordingly, Millennials can be notorious job-hoppers when promotions aren't readily offered by senior managers.

High scores on the Dutiful scale mean that Millennials tend to be eager to please and reluctant to act independently or against popular opinion. While these characteristics aren't all bad when it comes to certain jobs, they can inhibit productivity and prevent workers from achieving their goals.

GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

MVPI

When taking a look at Millennial scores on the Motives, Values, Preferences Inventory (MVPI), or the core values and drivers that that get millennials out of bed in the morning, we see another common theme that ties back to entitlement.

While their overall scores are not significantly higher than their Baby Boomer and Gen X counterparts, Millennials tend to rank higher on the Power scale, which gives additional creedence to the idea that they've been conditioned to expect special treatment.

Additionally, Millennials tend toward higher scores on the Security scale than previous generations, which is somewhat ironic given that a generation with such an ingrained sense of entitlement should also have the need to feel a stronger sense of security.

ENGAGEMENT IS **KEY**

We're working in a world full of employees (70% to be exact) who are not fully engaged or who are actively disengaged from their jobs. So, addressing the "Millennial Complex" can help organizations solve the overall engagement epidemic the global workforce is currently facing. However, when dealing specifically with Millennials, a study from **Network for Good** identified the following three areas as critical to improved employee engagement:

1. **Engaging Workplace** – Conduct annual surveys, listen to feedback, and identify engagement drivers.

2. **Purposeful Work** – Help employees understand the importance of their work in relation to the company's overall mission.

3. **Giving Back** – Organize volunteer projects and reward employees for their charity.