



How Millennials Navigate Their Careers

Young Adult Views on Work, Life and Success

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Introduction

Much has been written and said about the so-called “Millennial generation.” Perhaps no age group has generated more articles, books and blogs than our present crop of young adults (ages 18-35). Additionally, perhaps no generation has been saddled with more labels, clichés and stereotypes than the very large cohort of professionals who have entered the workforce since the turn of the 21st century. Generational “experts” have variously asserted that this group is driven, lazy, hard-working, entitled, ambitious, self-centered, socially responsible, disloyal, and committed... take your pick. If you apply enough contradictory labels to any large group of individuals, some of those are bound to be accurate at least some of the time. At the very least, they will have the ring of truth to those who are disposed to that point of view, but they hardly equate to knowledge grounded in rigorous research.

An insurgence of millennial thinking followed the publication of Howe and Strauss’ *Millennials Rising: The Next Great Generation* (2000). This book and others like it spawned a cottage industry of generational scholars. These experts and consultants asserted that the Millennials were truly different than the generations that preceded them; a new generation of people that could be described by a common set of traits based on the times and manner in which they were raised.

But generalizations about large groups of people, especially those connected only by arbitrary birth date categories, are bound to be fraught with problems. In his excellent 2009 piece *The Millennial Muddle*, journalist Eric Hoover pointed out that to accept generational thinking one must “swallow two large assumptions”:

- that tens of millions of people born over a 20 year period are fundamentally different from people of other age groups; and
- that those tens of millions are similar to each other in meaningful ways.

There is some reason to believe that the times we are raised in, and the accompanying societal trends, do impact us and our thinking on such central issues as our work, our well-being and our families. There are things that researchers generally agree are different for Millennials than for those born in prior generations. For example:

- **The increasing impact of technology:** There is no doubt that young adults today have grown up in a time of increasingly pervasive (one might suggest omnipresent) technology in their lives. Smart phones and other portable devices that connect to the internet have dramatically altered the speed and way in which we gather information, communicate with others, find a destination and shop for new products.
- **Delays in making “adult commitments”:** Millennials are less likely than previous generations to have completed the traditional milestones of “adulthood” by age 32 (Arnett, 2000). Today, young adults get married later, have children later, and are less likely to own a home by age 30 than was the case a generation ago (Taylor et al., 2014).

- **Changing gender roles:** There has been a gradual but steady shift in gender roles in higher education, in the workplace, and in homes. Women now earn the majority of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). In one quarter of dual-career couples' households, wives earn more than their husbands, and if one looks at all U.S. households, women are now the primary breadwinners in 2 of 5 (Wang, 2013). These striking statistics call into question our long-held stereotype of the male breadwinner. There is growing evidence that young women are now more professionally ambitious than their male counterparts (Patten, 2012). By contrast, young men today express a strong desire to be involved parents and see their role in the family as being an equal balance between breadwinner and caregiver (Harrington, Van Deusen, and Humberd, 2011).
- **Changing nature of careers:** Beginning in the late 20th century, a dramatic shift occurred in the relationship between careers and employers as significant organizational downsizing reached record levels in the 1990s and early 2000s (Uchitelle, 2006). As a result of these changes, employees realized that the employment contract – the belief that good employees would be rewarded with job security – was dramatically altered, and may have resulted in young professionals seeing themselves more as free agents, willing to change jobs frequently to reach their career goals (Harrington and Hall, 2007, Arthur and Rousseau, 1996).
- **Changing expectations about work:** A number of studies have documented Millennials' expectations for their future employers, including high expectations for work-life balance, career advancement, training and development, meaningful work and career satisfaction (De Howe & De Vos, 2010). In addition, Millennials have low expectations regarding job security, although they still highly value it (Dries et al., 2008).

In this study we surveyed 1,100 Millennial-aged men and women to better understand the impact these generational changes are having on their careers. We wanted to answer a number of questions such as: How do young adults search for jobs? Is there a difference between how young women and young men perceive success? What are employers and HR departments doing that young people see as most helpful to their career success? What organizational characteristics are most likely to increase or decrease employee retention and engagement?

These are the main questions we sought to explore through our research of how Millennials navigate their careers. Because we did not also study older workers, we are not able to directly compare younger workers to their older counterparts. Despite this, we believe this research will allow us to convey an accurate picture of how today's young professionals see their jobs, their employers, their careers and their commitment to life goals beyond the workplace. We hope this study fosters greater understanding and dispels unfounded myths and stereotypes regarding today's young adults in the workplace.

II. Description of the study and characteristics of the sample

Our sample was composed of individuals aged 22-35, with at least two years of professional work experience, who were employed at five large companies. The companies were all members of the Boston College Workforce Roundtable and had programs in place to assist employees with work-life integration. We used a mixed-methods approach. We first conducted qualitative interviews with 26 individuals to help us better understand their career and family goals and attitudes. We then used our analysis of the qualitative data as a basis for developing the questions used in the larger quantitative survey.

The survey was conducted on-line in the U.S. in each of the five companies. All of the companies were based in the U.S., but had offices in other countries. They included:

- a global professional and financial services company
- a global provider of insurance, annuities and employee benefit programs
- a global financial services provider
- a global property and casualty insurance firm
- a global provider of commercial and industrial property insurance

A total of 1,100 employees completed the survey across the five companies, ranging from 95 to 323 responses from each of the participating organizations. The companies used their employee databases to randomly select participants who met the study criteria. Employees' participation in the study was voluntary.

Some relevant demographics of the survey sample include:

- 56% of the survey participants were women and 44% were men
- 62% were in the 30-35 age group, and 38% were aged 22-29; median age was 31
- the median number of years of work experience was 8 years
- 99% worked full-time
- 29% of participants were managers, 64% salaried professionals, and 7% were paid hourly
- the highest educational level for study participants was bachelor's degree (67%), master's degree (25%) and doctoral degree (3%); 6% did not possess a 4-year college degree
- 76% earned less than \$100,000 per year and 24% earned over \$100,000; median income was \$75,000 - \$100,000
- 30% of the participants identified themselves as single (never married), 53% as married, 15% as unmarried living with a partner, and 2% as divorced, separated or widowed; one third of the participants had children
- 82% self-identified as White, 9% Asian or Pacific Islander, 7% Black, 5% Hispanic, and 1% Native American (survey participants could select more than one choice)

III. Study Findings

This section of the report summarizes the findings from our research in five major areas.

- A. Job Search** includes details on how young professionals approach the job search process and ultimately select their employers.
- B. Job Satisfaction** provides information on how these Millennials view their current employers. Are they satisfied with their jobs? How well do their managers and their company cultures support their development and work-life balance? How involved are they with their jobs and how much effort are they willing to put in? How long do they expect to stay with their companies, and what would be the likely reasons for them to leave?
- C. Career Management** moves beyond the job focus and provides a broader look at how these young adults navigate their careers. What are their career goals and aspirations? How important are their careers to their personal identities? How skilled are they in navigating their careers? Are they satisfied with their careers? How do they measure their career success?
- D. Life Satisfaction** moves beyond both job and career to look at how these young professionals view their lives. Are they satisfied with their lives? What are their priorities? What impact do marriage and children have on their lives and careers?
- E. Important Statistical Relationships** defines and explains the key statistical relationships that we identified among the job, career and life variables. What impact does job satisfaction have on work-effort, desire to stay with the company and overall career and life satisfaction? What impact do manager support and organization culture have on job satisfaction? How important are career navigation skills to finding a job that you like? What factors are likely to cause an increase in work-effort?

A. Job Search

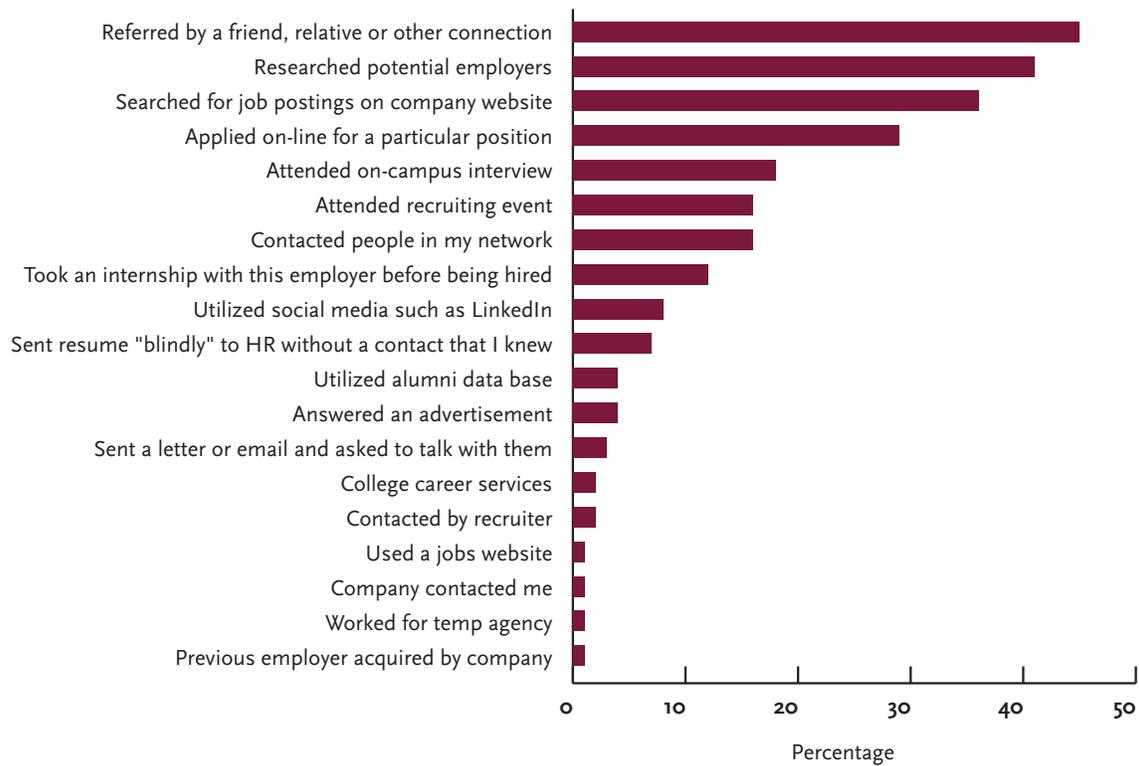
A1. What approaches do young adults use to find a Job?

We begin our discussion of how young professionals manage their careers by examining the methods that our study participants used in searching for jobs and the criteria they used to select an employer. Chart 1 shows the various approaches that they utilized to find and be hired by their current employers. Participants were asked to check as many different approaches as they used.

Actually, every job I've gotten has been by knowing someone who worked at the company.

(31 YEAR OLD FEMALE)

Chart 1: Approaches Used in Seeking Employment



As can be seen, a wide array of options for finding and pursuing roles is listed. It is apparent that the Internet has offered young professionals new tools in gathering information and pursuing job leads such as researching employers through company websites, searching job listings on-line and utilizing social media. However, the most common approach to finding employment was referrals from friends, relatives and others (45% of participants noted using this approach).

Young adults continue to commonly make use of personal connections when they are searching for jobs. In spite of living in a virtual age, the old adage that there are three important things that matter in job search – networking, networking, and networking – seems to hold true.

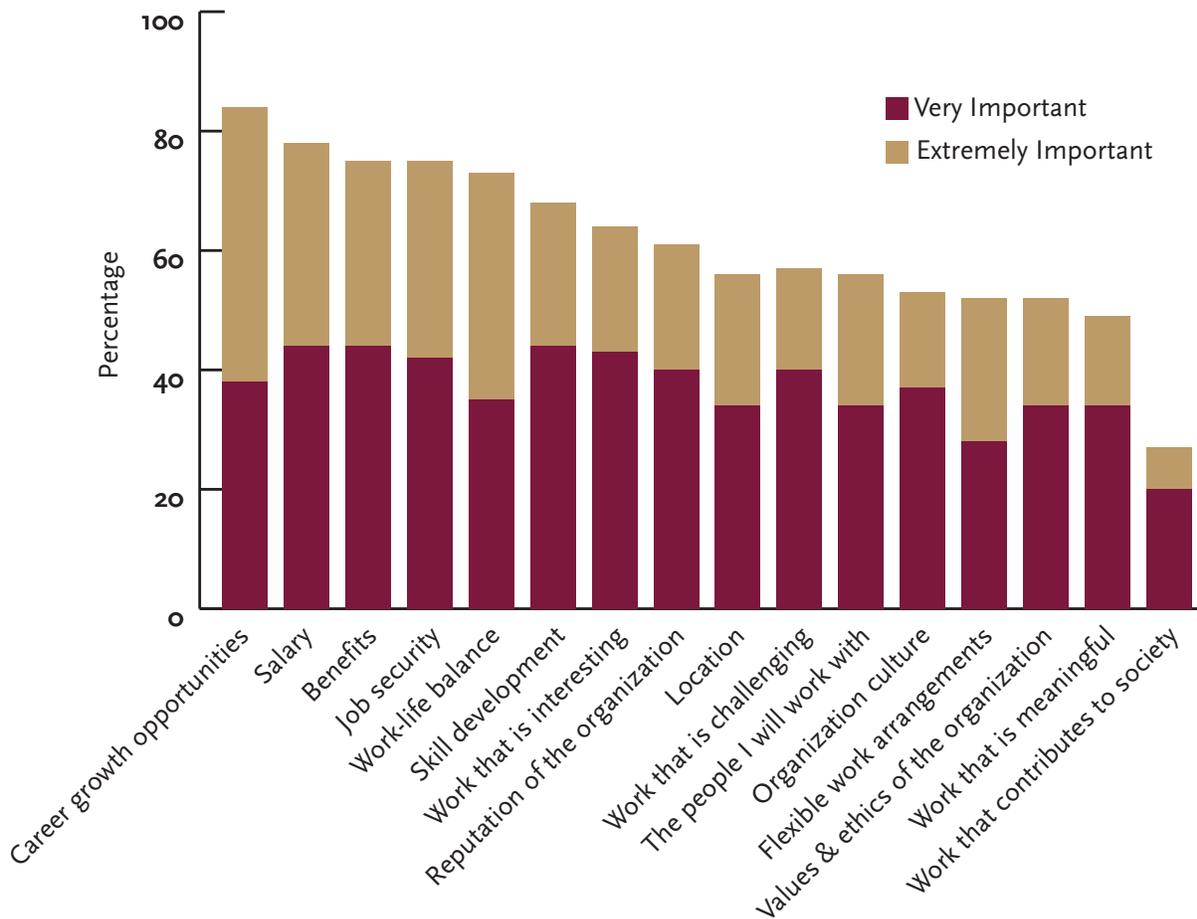
A2. What criteria do young adults use to select an employer?

As mentioned in the introduction, a number of studies have found that Millennials have high expectations from their employer regarding work-life balance, career advancement, training and development, meaningful work and career satisfaction. They also highly value job security but understand it may not always be the reality in today's marketplace. We asked our survey participants to rate how important each of a number of suggested factors was to them in selecting their current employers. Chart 2 lists the factors rated "Extremely important" or "Very important" in order of priority.

I could tell almost immediately what they were about – that the management really did believe in developing associates and making sure that we get to where we want to go.

(25 YEAR OLD FEMALE)

Chart 2: Employer Selection Criteria



Our study results confirm the importance of career advancement, salary, benefits, work-life balance and job security that other researchers have found in their studies. It is probably not surprising that “Career growth opportunities” was the highest rated factor. Given these young adults are at the beginning stages of their careers, it seems logical that opportunities for career growth are the most highly valued attribute of a potential employer. Next come salary and benefits which, again, are not surprising. Work-life balance also scored highly and this reflects much of what has been written about Millennials’ valuing their lives outside of work. This value appears to be true for this cohort regardless of whether or not they have children. We will explore this issue more fully later in this report.

The high value placed on job security may come as more of a surprise, as many “generational consultants” have asserted that Millennials lack loyalty and are very willing to leave their present employer if better opportunities exist elsewhere. It also calls into question the strategy of moving away from a culture of job security to one that employs a “free agent” approach, which has been embraced by many U.S. companies. In light of the massive downsizing that has occurred in recent years, perhaps employers believe that job security is less important or expected these days. While it may be true that employees do not necessarily expect long-term job security, it appears that it is nonetheless highly valued by potential young employees. This is consistent with other recent research on Millennials and their intention to stay with their current organizations (Deal and Levenson, 2015).

It is interesting to note that “Work that is meaningful” and “Work that contributes to society” were the two lowest rated characteristics of those we provided. “Work that contributes to society” was rated as “Not important” or only “Somewhat important” by 39% of participants as compared to 28% that rated it as “Very” or “Extremely important”. While early in one’s career it may be more difficult for young professionals to find work that directly

contributes to society, it does raise some questions regarding the conventional wisdom that Millennials are “the most socially conscious generation since the 1960s,” at least with regard to our specific sample.

While men and women felt equally strongly about the importance of career growth opportunities, job security, skill development, work that is interesting, and work that is challenging, there were some differences in other areas. The women in our sample rated work-life balance and flexible work arrangements, as well as salary and reputation of the organization, as more important than the male participants did.

B. Job Satisfaction

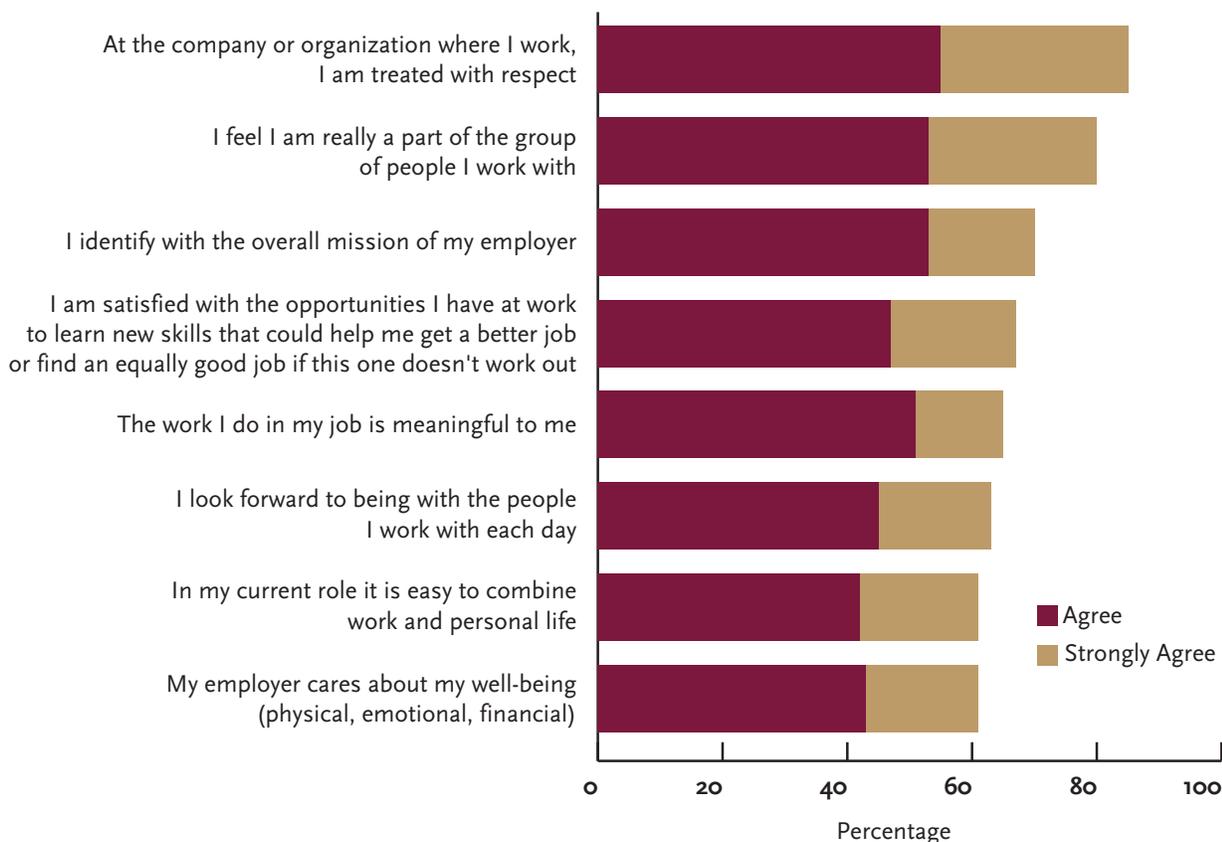
We asked study participants a number of questions about their current jobs in order to better understand how well these jobs were meeting their needs. Approximately one-third of the participants had worked in their companies for three years or less, one-third for four to seven years and one-third for eight years or more.

Overall, the employees at the companies in our survey indicated that they were doing well and were highly motivated. Their responses suggested that the participants worked hard, felt respected and supported at work, and planned on staying with their present employers. For example, more than 80% agreed or strongly agreed that they were willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help their organization be successful. Slightly more than 85% said they felt they were treated with respect in their workplaces versus only 5% who did not.

B1. Are young adults satisfied with their jobs?

The questions in Chart 3 were used to assess the job satisfaction of the people surveyed. Job satisfaction is focused on **satisfaction that employees have with their current jobs at their current employers.**

Chart 3: Job Satisfaction Ratings



The majority of survey participants are satisfied with their jobs overall: 85% agreed or strongly agreed that they were treated with respect and 79% agreed or strongly agreed that they really felt a part of the group they worked with. There were, however, some themes of dissatisfaction as well. More than 20% disagreed or strongly disagreed that it was easy to combine work and personal life in their current roles; 15% did not believe their employer cared about their well-being; 14% were not satisfied with the opportunities they had to learn new skills, and 14% did not feel their job was meaningful.

B2. How supportive are the organizations’ cultures regarding work-life issues?

To evaluate organizational culture we used a set of questions that tested how positive the working environment was toward work-life balance. Overall our participants viewed both their company cultures and their managers as being supportive. Nearly three quarters agreed / strongly agreed that offering flexibility to employees in completing their work was a strategic way of doing business. More than 60% agreed / strongly agreed that employees were given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities, but 13% disagreed / strongly disagreed that this was the case.

There were some statistically significant differences between the men’s and women’s perceptions of their organizations’ cultures. These differences are shown below.

Table 1: Organization Culture Perceptions of Men and Women – Percentage that agree or strongly agree with the following statements

	Men	Women
Work should be the primary priority in a person’s life.	22.2%	19.5%
The ideal employee is the one who is available 24 hours a day.	32.2%	22.1%
To get ahead in this organization, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours per week, whether at the workplace or home.	43.4%	38.2%

It would appear from these responses that the men perceived the cultural pressures to work longer hours somewhat more strongly than the women.

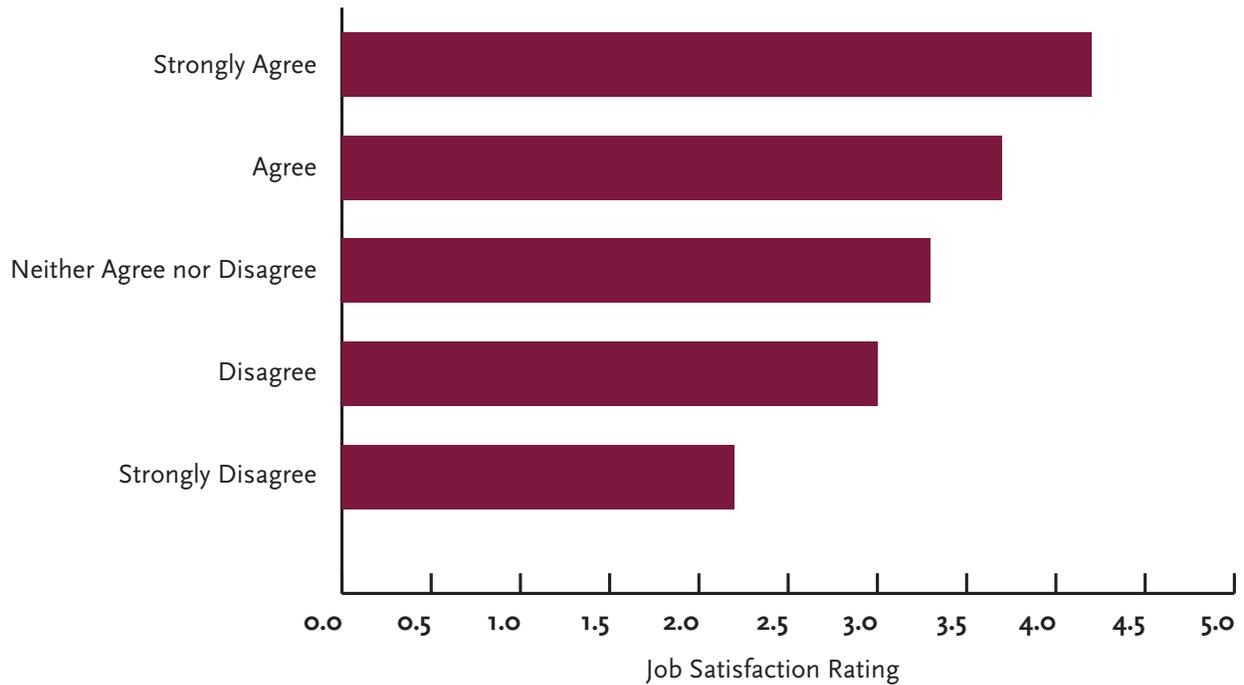
B3. How supportive are the young adults’ managers?

More than 3/4 of both men and women agreed / strongly agreed that their managers cared about their opinions and their well-being. Chart 4 shows the impact that having a manager who cared about his/her employees had on job satisfaction. **Perhaps, not surprisingly, those who felt most strongly that their managers cared about their well-being were more satisfied with their jobs. Those who strongly agreed that their managers cared about their well-being scored 2 points higher on a 5-point job satisfaction scale than those who strongly felt that their manager did not care about their well-being. These responses clearly indicate the critical role that managers play in young adults’ job satisfaction.**

I think the managers I respect the most are the ones that are direct and care about the people that work for them. They have realistic expectations.

(33 YEAR OLD FEMALE)

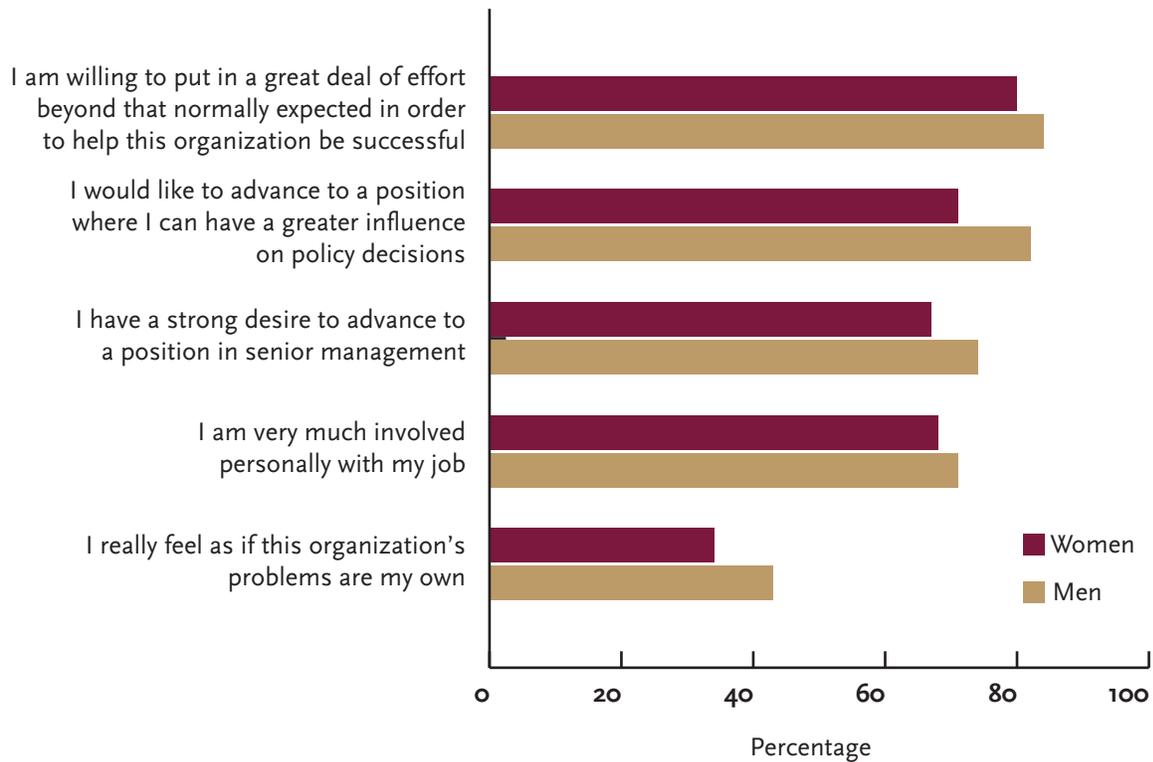
Chart 4: Responses to “My Manager Really Cares About My Well-being” Question Versus Job Satisfaction Rating (1-5 scale)



B4. How hard are young adults willing to work?

The majority of survey participants said they were willing to put in a great deal of effort in order to help their organizations be more successful, and also indicated a strong desire to advance in the organization. There were not significant differences between men and women in willingness to put in extra effort and personal involvement with the job. We did find statistically significant differences between the responses from men and women on the statements that concerned advancing to higher levels and feeling that the organization's problems were their own.

Chart 5: Work-Effort – Percentage that agreed or strongly agreed with the following statements



These findings suggest that the men we studied may have been somewhat more ambitious than the women, which seems contrary to findings reported by Pew Research that found that a higher percentage of young women than young men stated that being successful in a high-paying career or profession is one of the most important things in their lives (Patten, 2012).

B5. What would cause these young professionals to leave their employers?

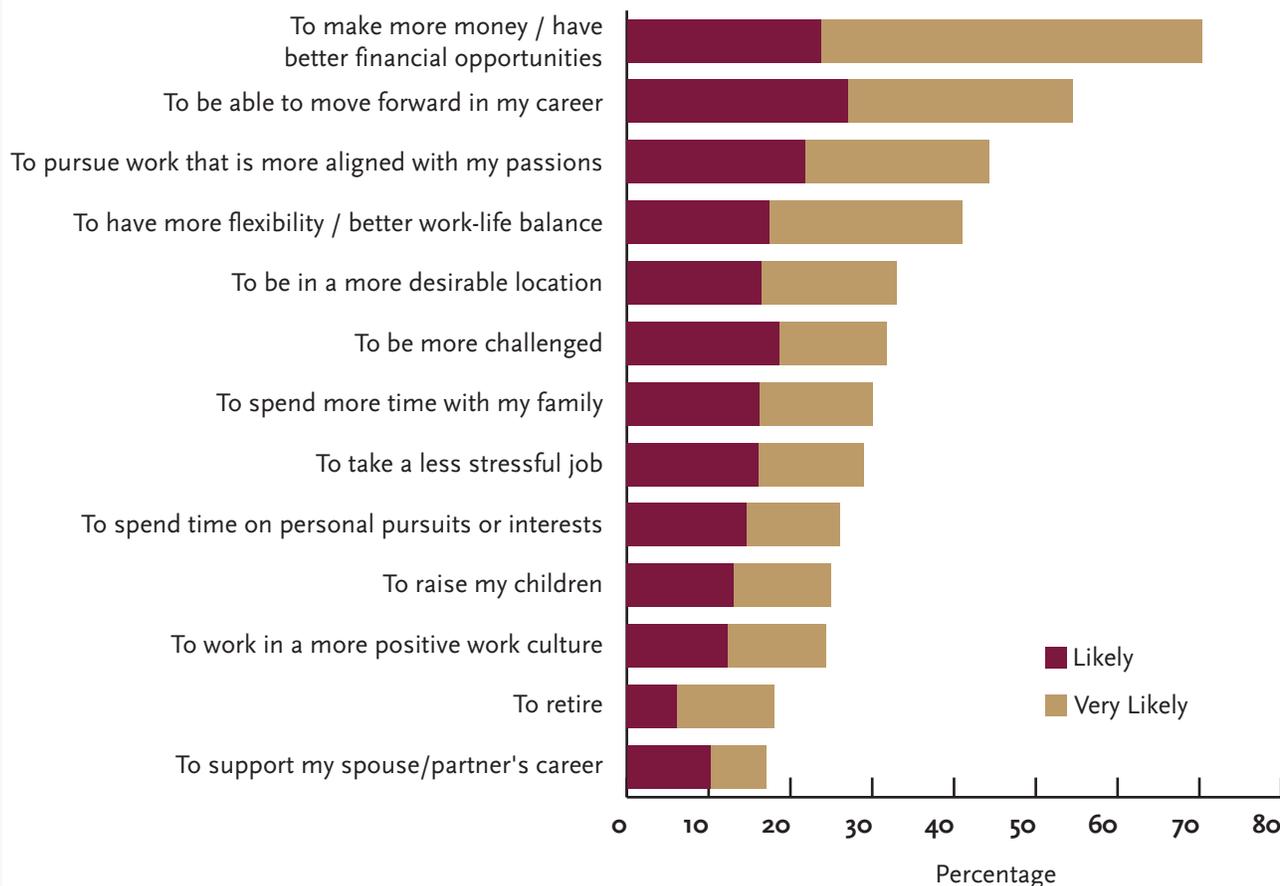
Overall, slightly more than 60% of the participants said that they plan to stay in their jobs for some time. However, over one quarter agreed (17.2%) or strongly agreed (8.8%) that they often thought about quitting their jobs.

We asked the survey participants, “If you were to voluntarily leave your current employer, how likely is it that each of the following reasons would be the cause?” Chart 6 lists reasons that participants selected for why they might consider leaving their jobs, prioritized according to their likelihood.

As long as opportunities keep popping up internally, I will keep taking them. I would rather stay loyal to a company where I have a network of advocates and supporters.

(35 YEAR OLD FEMALE MANAGER)

Chart 6: Potential Voluntary Job Withdrawal Causes



The main reasons cited were: to make more money, to move forward in their careers, to pursue work that is more aligned with their passions, and to have more flexibility/better work-life balance.

The men in our study were more likely (76%) than the women (66%) to report they would leave their jobs in order to make more money. The women were more likely than men to say they would leave to take less stressful jobs (33% to 23%) and to raise their children (31% to 17%).

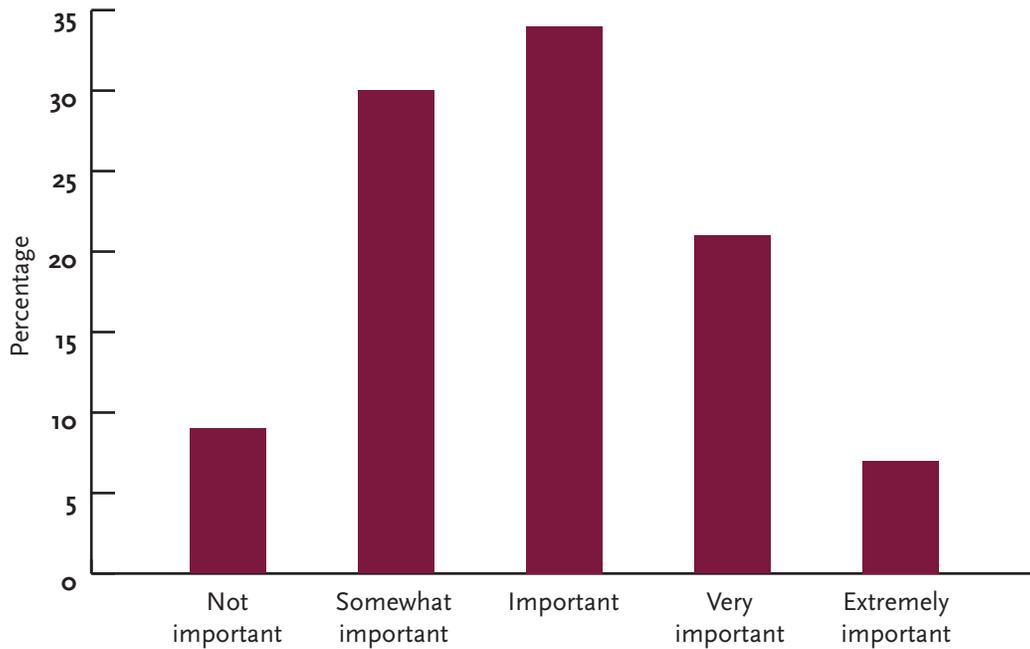
C. Career Management

In order to better understand how young adults navigate their careers, we asked them a number of questions on the importance of career, what they hoped to achieve in their careers and whether they were happy with their career progression. We were also interested in learning more about their abilities to define what they wanted to achieve in their careers and whether they felt they had the skills to pursue their ambitions.

C1. How important is career to young adults' identities, to how they define themselves?

While slightly over 60% of participants reported that their careers were important, very important or extremely important to their sense of identity, nearly 40% said their careers were not important or only somewhat important to how they define themselves.

Chart 7: Importance of Career to Identity



Three-fourths of the study participants agreed / strongly agreed that “In general, I like my career” compared to less than 10% that disagreed. This did not mean however, that they felt their careers were central to their sense of identity. For example, in response to the statement “work is only a small part of who I am”, slightly more than 2/3 of participants agreed; and 58% disagreed with the notion that most of their interests were centered on their work.

C2. What are young adults’ career goals?

In the previous section we reported our results for the question “How hard are young adults willing to work?” We found that more than 80% said they were willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected to help their organizations be successful. In this section we examine their career goals and what they want to attain for themselves over a longer period of time. Consistent with the earlier section’s results, we found that the young adults had a strong desire to take on increasingly challenging tasks and to grow professionally. Chart 8 provides a summary of the responses to the survey questions about career goals.

Chart 8: Career Goals



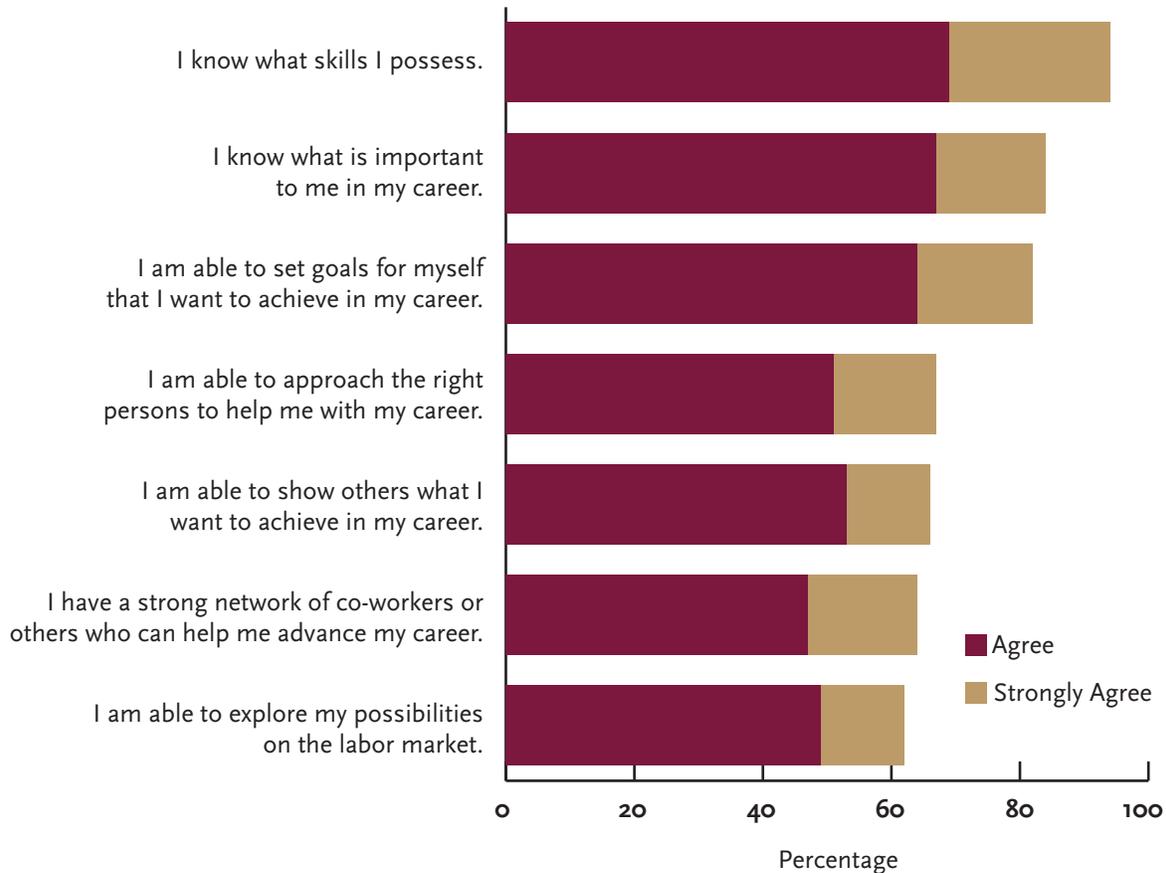
Although a very high percentage wanted to take on increasingly challenging tasks (82%), be known as an expert in a particular area (77%), and advance up the management ladder (74%), only about 20% wanted to advance if it meant spending less time with their families / personal lives. Most (64%) of the survey participants had established career goals for themselves and 44% agreed that they tended to make their career choices based on their own values rather than the choices provided by their employers. Half wanted opportunities for international assignments, although only about 40% were willing to relocate to advance their careers. Although, as was stated earlier, it is often asserted that Millennials change jobs and employers frequently in order to move forward in their careers, only 26% of the group we studied felt this was the best way to advance their careers. More than half (58%) preferred to stay with one employer. About 20% wanted to start their own business one day. This is in contrast to other studies that found that a considerably larger percentage of Millennials wanted to start their own businesses (Bentley, 2014). These different findings may be the result of differences in the groups sampled. The participants in our study had selected their current positions at large and highly stable organizations.

It is worth emphasizing that when presented with the statement “I tend to make career choices based on my values and interests rather than the choices provided by my employer” a very small minority of participants disagreed with this, in total less than 15%. Approximately 42% were undecided and 44% agreed that it was their values and interests, not their employer’s, that were their primary drivers in managing their careers. Participants agreed vs. disagreed with this statement by a factor of 3-1. Therefore, it would seem that **helping young employees find congruence between their values and those of the company is important.**

C3. How skilled are young adults at navigating their careers?

To assess career navigation skills, study participants rated seven different statements on a 5-point scale from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Chart 9: Career Navigation Skills



As Chart 9 illustrates, 94% of the survey participants agreed / strongly agreed that they knew the work skills they possessed. More than 84% knew what was important to them in their careers and 82% agreed / strongly agreed that they were able to set career goals for themselves. However, the percentages dropped sharply when asked if they:

- Were able to approach the right persons to help them with their careers (66% agreed or strongly agreed)
- Were able to show others what they want to achieve in their careers (66%)
- Had a strong network of co-workers and others who can help them advance their careers (65%)
- Were able to explore their possibilities on the labor market (62%)

Remember that this was a group of young adults who had already found and been hired into one or more jobs in their careers. The fact that only 62% agreed or strongly agreed that they were able to explore their possibilities on the labor market would seem to be somewhat surprising. As we will discuss later in this report, career navigation skills are very important for achieving job and career satisfaction.

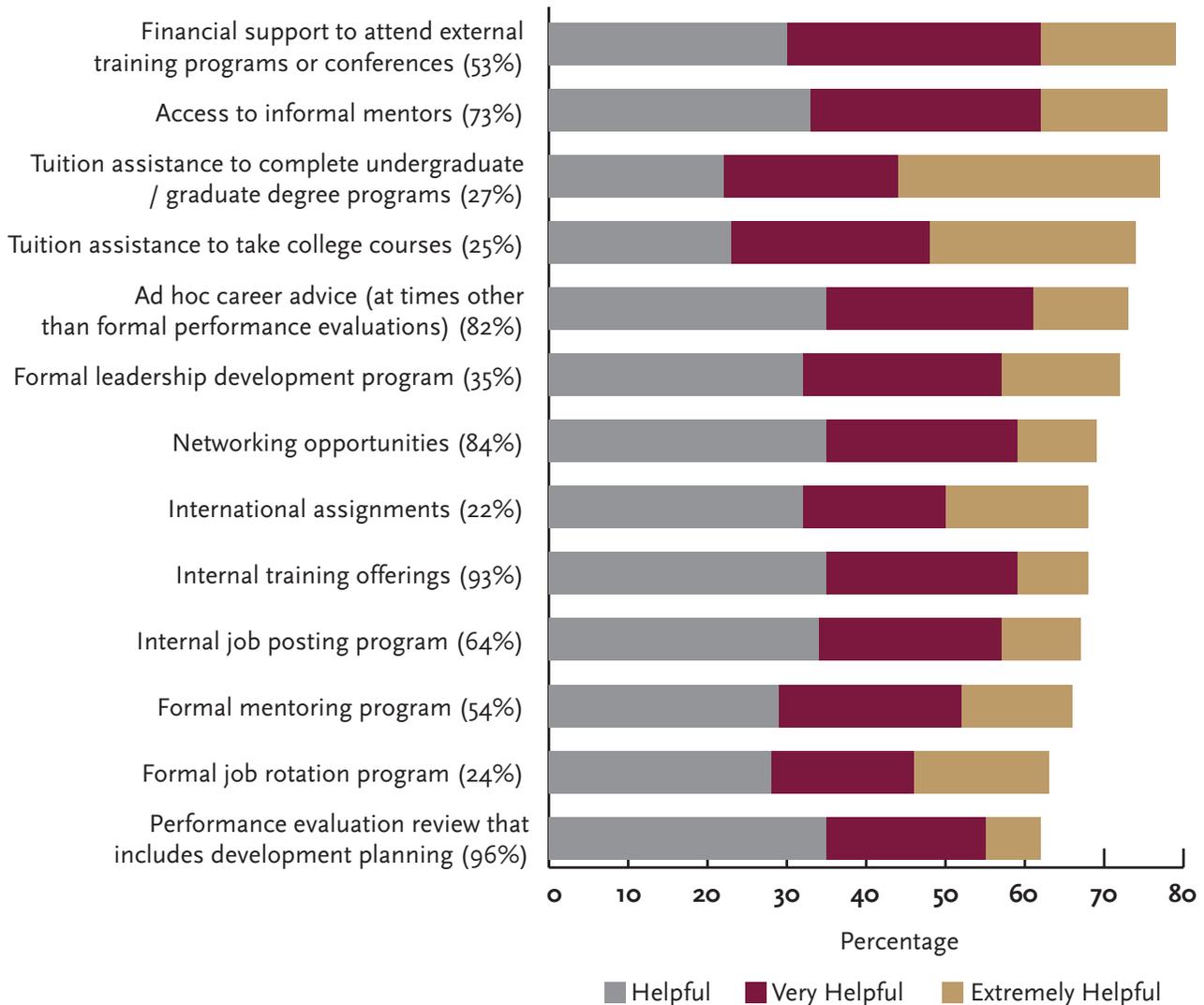
C4. What do employers do to support young adults' careers?

Next, we wanted to explore what employer-provided resources and supports were most utilized and helpful in facilitating career growth for our sample of young professionals. We asked survey participants “In what ways has your employer supported your career?” We provided them with a list of resources they could select from, and asked them to rate each in term of how much they had helped. We have included usage rates in parenthesis next to each of the options to show what percentage of employees actually made use of each of the options. Some of the options rated most helpful were not heavily used. For example, “financial support to attend external training” was used by 53% of the study participants and “tuition assistance to complete undergraduate/graduate degree programs” was used by less than 27%.

Honestly, I would stay throughout my whole career if I could. The opportunities I've been provided, their take on work-life balance, the programs I've been able to participate in – it shapes my view of the organization. I have no reason but to be grateful.

(27 YEAR OLD FEMALE FINANCIAL ANALYST)

Chart 10: Employer Support for Career – utilization percentages in parentheses



While we do not know what the cost was to provide each of these options to the employees, it seems clear that two options stand out as having low out-of-pocket costs and a high “helpfulness” coefficient: “Access to informal mentors” – used by 82% of participants and “Ad hoc career advice (at times other than formal performance evaluations)” – used by 71%. The study participants found these less formal methods to be quite helpful in supporting their development. It is also noteworthy that they found these informal development approaches to be more helpful than “Performance evaluation reviews that include development planning.”

Professors Kathy Kram and Monica Higgins have defined a new model for mentoring (Kram, 2009) which appears well suited for today’s organizations. The authors argue that in today’s fast-changing, technologically enabled global workplaces, the notion of mentoring as a formal relationship, with one more senior person in the organization who can provide the guidance, exposure and opportunities needed, is an outdated paradigm. Instead, Kram and Higgins advocate helping employees understand how to build and cultivate a developmental network which they describe as a more informal, small group of people who serve as an employee’s “personal board of directors.” This small network is better positioned to provide the person with the necessary, guidance and support needed to foster development.

It is important also to note that while tuition assistance to take college courses or pursue a college degree was not widely utilized (only 25 and 27% respectively), these benefits were seen as among the most helpful supports an employer offers. Tuition assistance to pursue a degree, for example, was viewed as “extremely helpful” by more than 30% of those who were able to use that benefit.

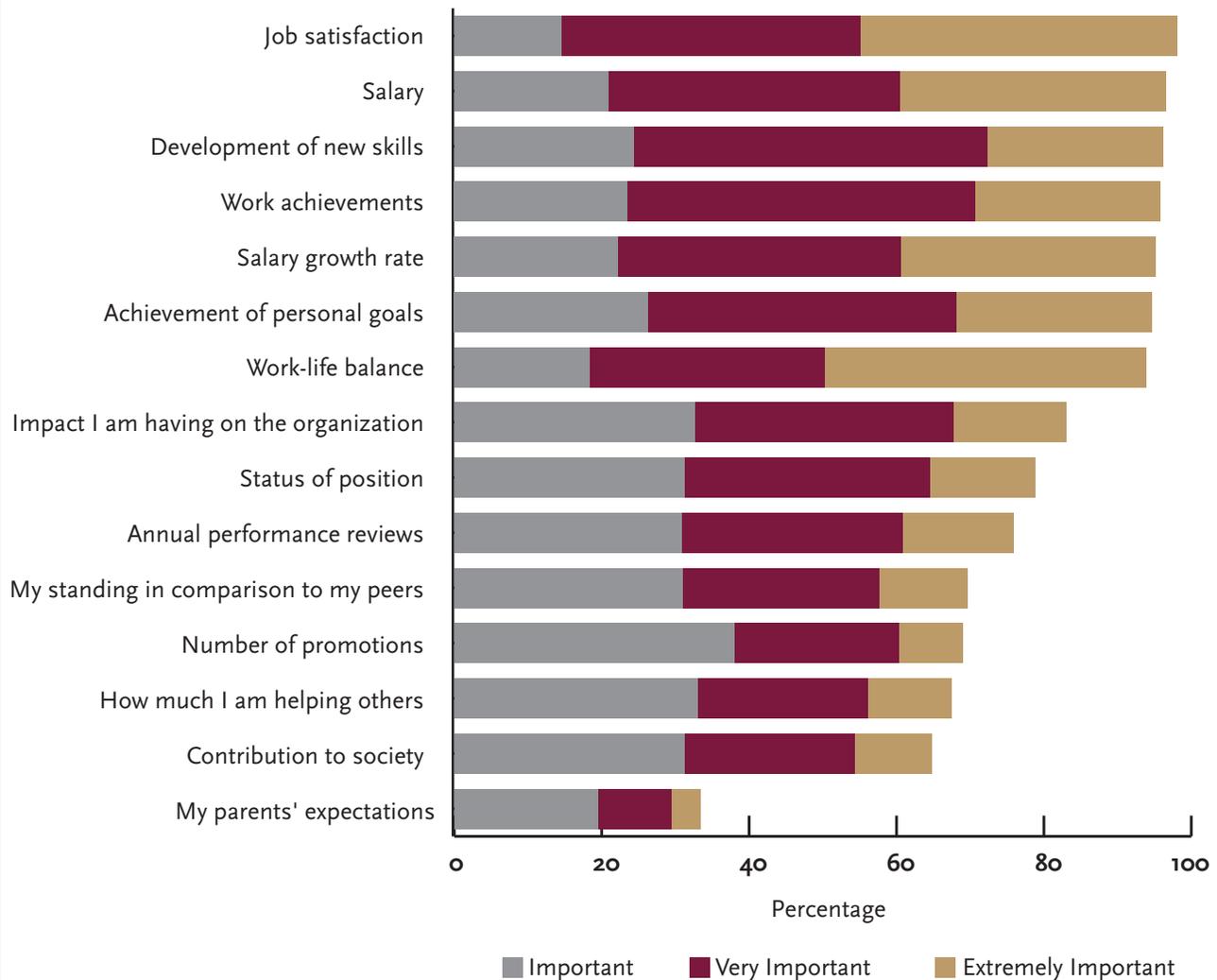
I select role models and mentors by how they handle different situations. I have a mentor who helps me make hard decisions, another who provides career advice, one who helps with difficult people, and yet another who helps me interface with a different group. I try to combine the best of the best of what I have seen.

(33 YEAR OLD FEMALE)

C5. How do young adults measure their career success?

Based on the interviews we conducted, we developed a list of measures that were typically used by the Millennials to measure their career success. In our survey, we asked participants how important each of a number of measures was in terms of how they evaluated their career success. Chart 11 delineates the measures, summarizes the responses and prioritizes them based on the percentage of responses that were important, very important or extremely important.

Chart 11: Career Success Measures



Salary and salary growth rate were considered important determinants of career success with over 95% of participants placing these in the important / very important / extremely important range. However job satisfaction ranked even higher than salary measures at 98%. In fact, job satisfaction was rated as very / extremely important by 84% compared to 76% for salary. A 2008 study of the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y (Millennials) also found that job satisfaction, followed by salary, were the two highest rated measures of career success for all four generations (Dreis et al., 2008).

We also found that development of new skills, work achievements and achievement of personal goals were important career success measures (about 95%). Finally, work-life balance (94%) was viewed as extremely important by 44%, which was the highest extremely important rating of all of the top-rated measures.

There were a number of statistically significant differences between the responses of the women in our study and the men. Table 2 below highlights these differences.

Table 2: Career Success Measures of Men and Women – Percentage that found each of the following to be very important or extremely important

	Men	Women
Job satisfaction	79%	87%
Work-life balance	69%	81%
Work achievements	66%	77%
Achievement of personal goals	64%	72%
Annual performance reviews	39%	50%
Contribution to society	30%	37%

Their responses were similar on two of the other top rated items, the importance of salary (Men: 76%, Women: 75%) and development of new skills (Men: 71%, Women: 73%)

While much has been written about “helicopter parents” and the undue influence they have on Millennials, it seemed clear from our survey results that parental influence is not of great importance to the participants’ view of success. When asked if measuring up to their parents’ expectations was a major indicator of success, 36% said that it was not important at all, and only 14% rated it as very important or extremely important. Overall this indicator received by far the lowest score of any of the 15 criteria listed.

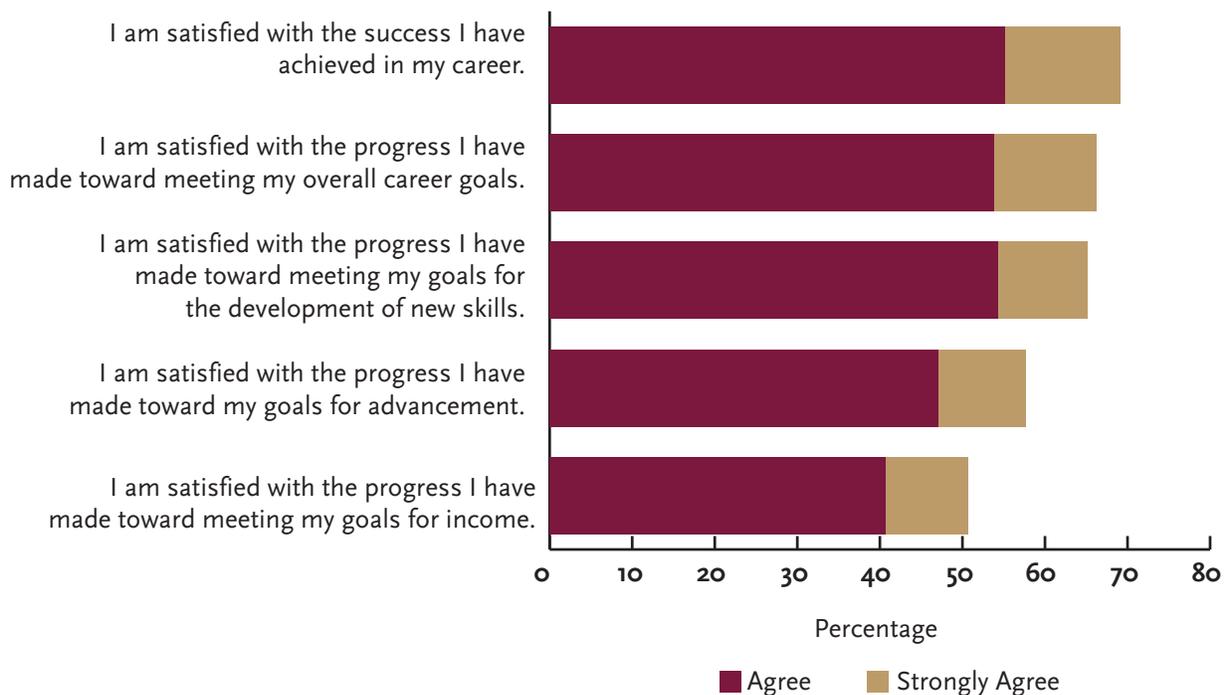
There has also been a great deal written about the social consciousness of the millennial generation. On our survey, 2/3 of the participants rated “how much I am helping others” and “contribution to society” as important / very / extremely important. However, both of these criteria were near the bottom of our participants’ prioritized list of career success measures.

C6. How satisfied are young adults with their careers?

We looked at the number of employers the participants have had to see if that was a predictor of career satisfaction. We found little difference in career satisfaction based on the number of different employers a person had. There was some evidence to suggest that those who had only one employer were slightly happier with their careers and their lives than those who had more than one employer.

We also asked questions about career satisfaction that focused on the progress employees have made toward achieving their longer-term career goals for income, personal development and advancement.

Chart 12: Career Satisfaction



It has become almost conventional wisdom that most Millennials are dissatisfied in their careers and in their rate of advancement. But in our study nearly 70% of the young professionals reported that they were satisfied with the success they had achieved in their careers and 3-in-5 were satisfied with the progress they have made toward their goals for advancement.

The lowest level of satisfaction according to participants (51% vs. a range of 56-70% for all other factors) was in meeting their goals for income, which has been mentioned as one of their most important career success measures and the most likely reason that they would leave their present employer. Clearly it is important to focus on and understand this relatively low level of satisfaction. That said, salary is a difficult area in which to satisfy everyone. As Frederick Herzberg pointed out in his seminal work on motivation, salary is an extrinsic reward, a “hygienic” factor, rather than a “motivating” one (i.e. a poor salary will be demotivating but at some point, increasing salary does not increase intrinsic satisfaction or motivation). While it is important to maintain competitive salaries, salary may never score the highest on employee satisfaction surveys and at a certain level, will have diminishing returns when it comes to increasing employee engagement.

This suggests that it is important to look at the other factors that will enhance satisfaction, increase motivation, and decrease the likelihood of undesired employee turnover. If we utilize the prioritized list of Career Success Measures and the prioritized list of Voluntary Job Withdrawal Causes, the factors that are most important to look at include helping employees:

- find satisfying work about which they are passionate and which provides opportunities for development;
- find opportunities to advance their career in ways that are consistent with their career-life goals;
- find optimal work-life integration.

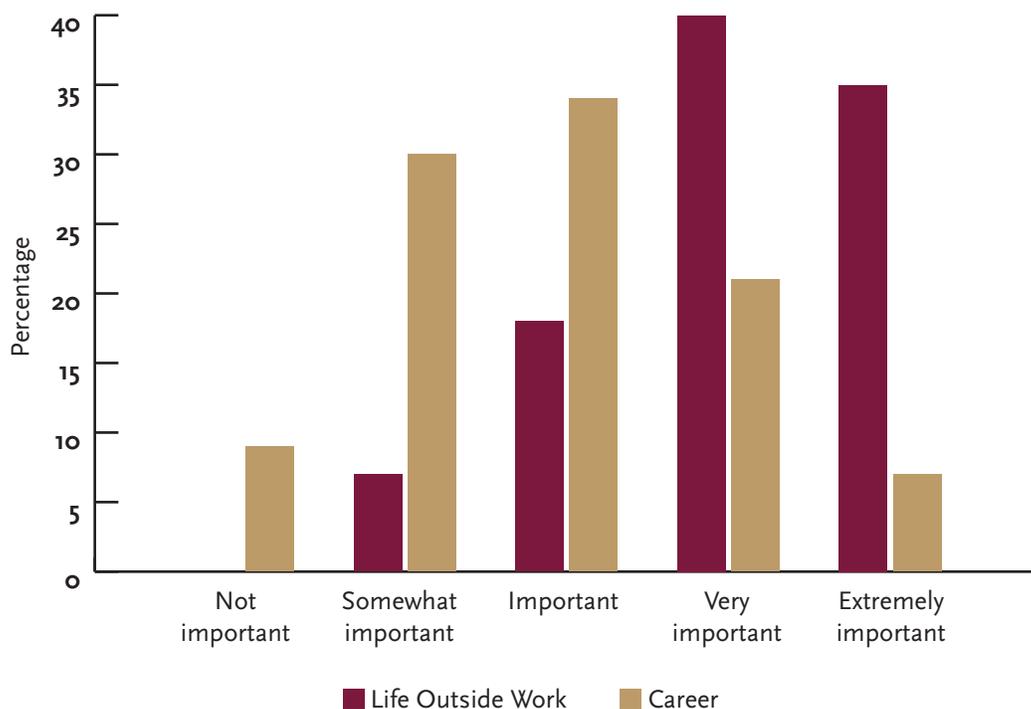
In their 2010 Harvard Business Review article *How to Keep Your Top Talent*, authors Jean Martin and Conrad Schmidt reported that 40% of internal job moves made by individuals identified by their companies as “high potentials” ended in failure. The authors suggest that the first mistake companies make is assuming that their high potential employees are highly engaged. For a number of reasons that is often not the case. Why? First, these employees set an incredibly high bar for their organization and how the organization will treat them. Second, high performers may not feel a strong sense of engagement to the work of the organization. Third, many high potential employees have the skills and engagement to be successful but don’t feel the roles available to them are consistent with their aspirations and career goals. This would suggest that it is important to help top talent advance their career in ways that are consistent with their own aspirations.

D. Life Satisfaction

D1. How important is life outside of work to young adults’ identities, to how they define themselves?

We wanted to understand the relative importance of “life outside of work” compared to the importance of “career” in terms of how young adults’ define themselves. Similar to the question about the “importance of career to your identity” discussed in the previous section, we asked “How important is your life outside of work to your identity, to how you define yourself?” Chart 13 shows how the responses compare.

Chart 13: Importance of Life Outside of Work Compared to Importance of Career to Identity



Clearly, the majority of the young adults we surveyed felt that life outside of work was more important than career to their identities, to how they define themselves. We found this to be the case regardless of gender, marital status, or parental status. There was little variation among these groups in their responses to these two identity questions. Looking at the data a different way, the majority (66%) told us that life outside of work was more important, 23% said they were equally important; and 11% said career was more important.

D2. How satisfied are young adults with their lives?

While most participants reported being satisfied with their lives, women reported being somewhat more satisfied with their lives than men. We asked the participants to prioritize the importance of five life satisfaction elements, and then to rate their level of success with each of these five elements. The areas prioritized by importance are not completely aligned with the areas that people rated themselves as most successful.

Life satisfaction priorities by level of IMPORTANCE:

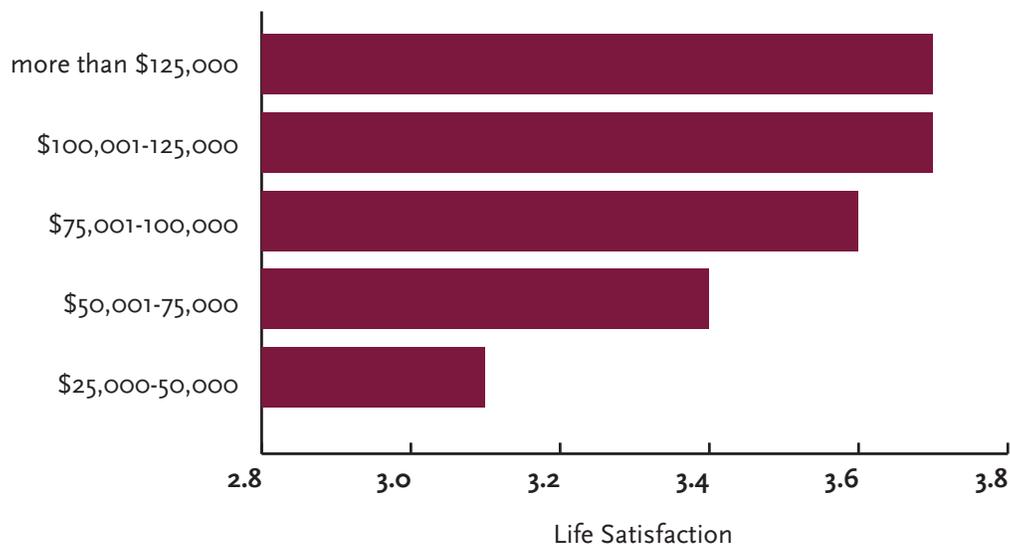
1. Having good mental and physical health and enough energy to get things done daily
2. Having supportive relationships and love in your life
3. Liking where you live, feeling safe and happy in your community
4. Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
5. Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

Life satisfaction areas prioritized by level of SUCCESS (i.e. where they have had the most success in their lives):

1. Having supportive relationships and love in your life
2. Liking where you live, feeling safe and happy in your community
3. Having good mental and physical health and enough energy to get things done daily
4. Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
5. Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals

We looked at the relationship between income and life satisfaction in order to understand what, if any, correlation there is between earnings and satisfaction. We found that life satisfaction increased as annual salary did until the participants reached \$100,000 or more per year. At this point, the relationship leveled off and there was little correlation between increased salary and increased life satisfaction.

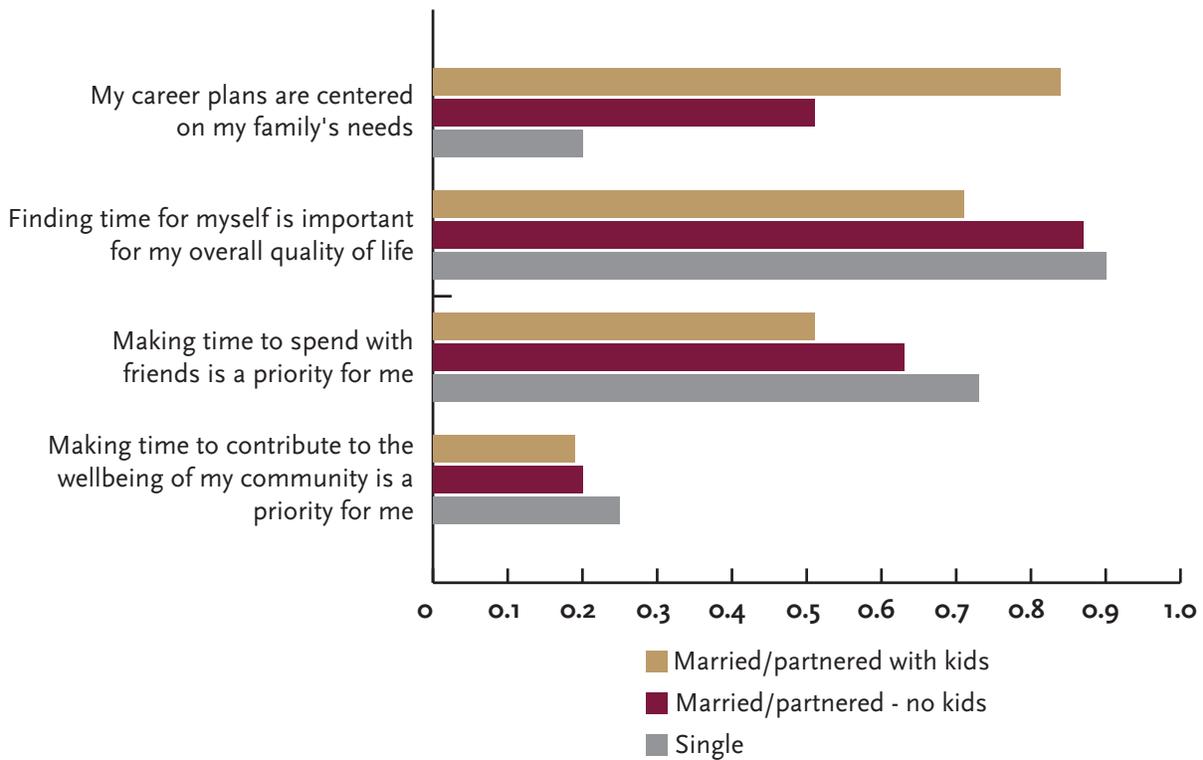
Chart 14: Life satisfaction by annual salary on a 1-5 scale



We also found a number of other interesting relationships regarding life satisfaction. We divided our sample into three groups: those who were single (never married and not living with a partner), those who were married or partnered without children, and those who were married or partnered with children. When we asked participants how satisfied they were with their lives, we found significant differences across the three groups. Those who were married/partnered with children reported being more satisfied with their lives than those married/partnered without children, who in turn were more satisfied with their lives than people who were single.

We asked a number of other questions that helped us to better understand the different priorities of the three groups. Chart 15 shows a sample of those questions.

Chart 15: Comparison of priorities of married or partnered with children, married or partnered without children, and single never married and not partnered. Percentage saying “to a considerable extent” or “to a great extent”



For all three groups, time for themselves was a higher priority than making time to spend with friends, which was a higher priority than making time to contribute to the community. Not surprisingly, career plans were more centered on family needs for those who were married with children than for those who did not have children or were not married.

D3. What is the impact of marriage and family on young adults' careers?

It is clear from the first item in Chart 15 above that being in a relationship and having children have a strong impact on how young adults' career decisions are made. For those who were married or partnered with children, more than 90% said that their career decisions are made in terms of how they will affect their families to a considerable or great extent.

Over 86% of survey participants agreed / strongly agreed that they and their spouses or partners often discuss their career and family goals and plans with each other. There was no statistically significant difference between men and women on this. According to participants, career and family goals were discussed with their partners/spouses quite frequently: daily (17%), weekly (45%), monthly (28%). Only 1% said they never or hardly ever have career/life discussions. A higher percentage of men (66%) said that they had daily or weekly conversations than women (58%).

My wife and I are on equal footing with career decisions, with family decisions, so we would talk it out together, and we may pull in our extended family to the decision. If there's a conflict between work and personal, the personal would always win.

(23 YEAR OLD MALE MANAGER)

Participants who had discussions about career/life goals with their partners at least monthly scored significantly higher on life satisfaction than those who had those conversations only once or twice a year.

Participants who had more frequent career/life goal discussions with their partners also reported having greater support from them in their roles as workers (see Chart 16).

Chart 16: Relationship Between Frequency of Career Discussions and Spousal/Partner Support (1-5 scale)



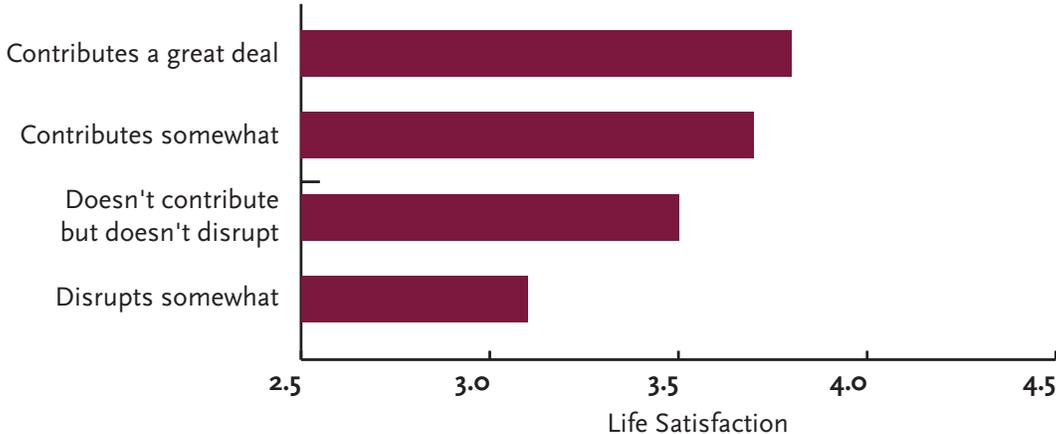
Overall, the large majority felt their spouses/partners supported them as workers and contributed to their careers, although there was a significant difference between men and women - 87% of men agreed / strongly agreed that their spouses or partners understood the demands of their work, while 78% of women agreed / strongly agreed.

Over two-thirds of participants indicated that their spouse or partner was willing to do more at home to support them so they could attend to work. Interestingly, women were more likely to both disagree with this statement (13% vs. 8% for men), and strongly agree with this statement (25% of women vs. 20% of men).

In terms of taking on new or challenging projects at work, women were more likely to strongly agree that their spouses were supportive. While 30% of participants overall strongly agreed that their spouses were supportive, 33% of women strongly agreed compared to 25% of the men in our sample. Similarly, when the need to travel for work arose, 34% of women strongly agreed their spouse was supportive vs. 27% of men.

Nearly three-quarters of participants indicated that their spouses contributed to their careers: 38% indicated their spouses contributed a great deal and 37% indicated that their spouses contributed somewhat. These numbers were similar for men and women. Through analysis of the data, we found that **higher spouse/partner contribution to one’s career corresponded with higher life satisfaction** (see Chart 17). Spousal support correlated positively with an increase in life satisfaction.

Chart 17: “How would you evaluate your spouse/partner’s contribution to your career?” versus “Life satisfaction” (1-5 scale)



There were some disparities in spouses’ education between men and women. The men in the study were significantly more likely to report that their spouses had a Master’s Degree (38% of men vs. 17% of women), while women were more likely to have spouses whose highest level of education was a high school diploma, some college, or a two-or four-year college degree. Men and women were equally likely to have spouses with a doctoral degree (approximately 5%).

In terms of spouses’ employment, 89% of all participants indicated that their spouses were employed for pay. This number was higher for women (92%) than men (85%), but the vast majority overall were part of a dual career couple. There were statistically significant differences between men and women in terms of the earnings of their spouses. While nearly 60% of men indicated that their spouses earned under \$50,000, only 22% of women indicated that their spouses earned less than \$50,000. At the higher end of the earnings spectrum, only 15% of men indicated that their wives/partners made over \$100,000 a year while 27% of women indicated that their husbands/partners earned over \$100,000 per year.

Overall, 45% of the participants were the primary earners in the family, bringing in at least 10% more income than their spouses, 38% made the same as their spouses and 18% earned less than their spouses. When stratified by gender, female participants were the primary earners in 33% of families, 43% made about the same as their spouses (less than a 10% difference more or less) and 24% were out-earned by their spouses (greater than 10% difference). For the men in the study, 59% were the primary earners, 31% made about the same as their spouses and 10% made less than their spouses.

We asked the married or partnered young adults if their spouse or partner made enough money for the family to live on comfortably, would they would find it acceptable if they did not work outside the home. Of the total

participants, 47% agreed / strongly agreed that if their spouse made enough money, they would be comfortable not working outside the home. Interestingly, more men (51%) than women (44%) agreed / strongly agreed with this statement.

Both male and female participants had the highest level of career satisfaction when they were the primary earners in the family, but female satisfaction exceeded that of the male participants. Interestingly, females who were married with children had the highest levels of life satisfaction overall.

E. Important Statistical Relationships

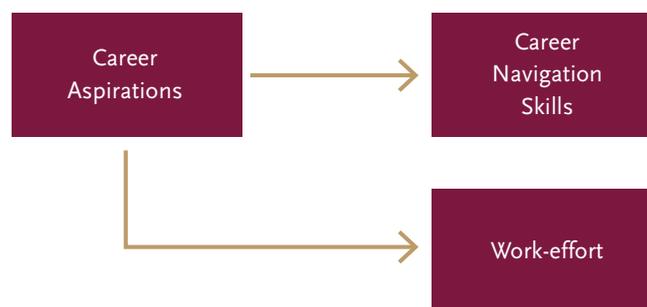
The statistical relationships we have described in this report thus far have generally been used to compare one or more groups to another (e.g. men and women), to determine if there are statistically significant differences between them. We used analysis of variance techniques (ANOVA), t-tests and cross-tabs to assess these differences. Using the statistical approach of multiple regression analysis, we have identified a number of important relationships among key variables that we studied, and these are described in this section.

First, we found evidence that suggests that having strong career aspirations has an impact on young adults' work-effort as well as their ability to navigate their careers. Second, we discovered several qualities that likely contribute to young adults being satisfied with their jobs. Third, we identified a number of significant relationships with job satisfaction. It is likely to benefit both young adults and managers if workers are satisfied with their jobs. Below, we explain these sets of findings, as well as how they might be related.

E1. The importance of career aspirations

We begin by looking at career aspirations and how they correspond with other factors. Our findings indicated that being motivated in one's career is connected to two other important variables. Those who scored higher on the career aspirations questions also scored higher on career navigation skills. Having high career aspirations may have a positive impact on the skills and abilities needed to navigate one's career successfully. In addition, career aspiration scores were also strongly related with work-effort. Being more motivated and directed in one's career went along with putting in greater effort on the job.

Figure 1: Important Career Aspirations Relationships



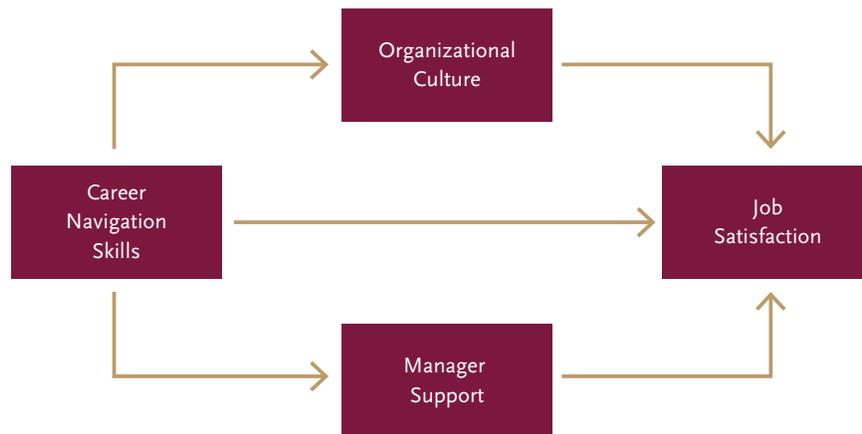
E2. The importance of career navigation skills

We found that participants were more satisfied with their jobs when they had better career navigation skills. In other words, young adults who were better skilled at seeking employment reported greater satisfaction with their current jobs. This suggests that developing and improving career navigation skills could have a positive payoff for young adults in terms of having higher satisfaction with the jobs they accept. Investing in young adults' career navigation skills may also be positive for employers, since we also found that more satisfied Millennial workers tend to work harder and are less likely to leave their organizations.

Young professionals with good career navigation skills were also more likely to report having better manager support and working in organizations with cultures that were more supportive of work-life balance. Again, this may indicate that Millennials who understand what they want from a job are more likely to find work in positive environments.

As expected, supportive management and supportive cultures were positively related to higher job satisfaction. What might not be as obvious is that career navigation skills may contribute to job satisfaction in multiple ways. In our analysis, we found these skills were associated with job satisfaction directly, as already mentioned, but also via the working environment, in terms of having supportive management and working in a context that promotes good work-life balance.

Figure 2: Important Career Navigation Skills Relationships



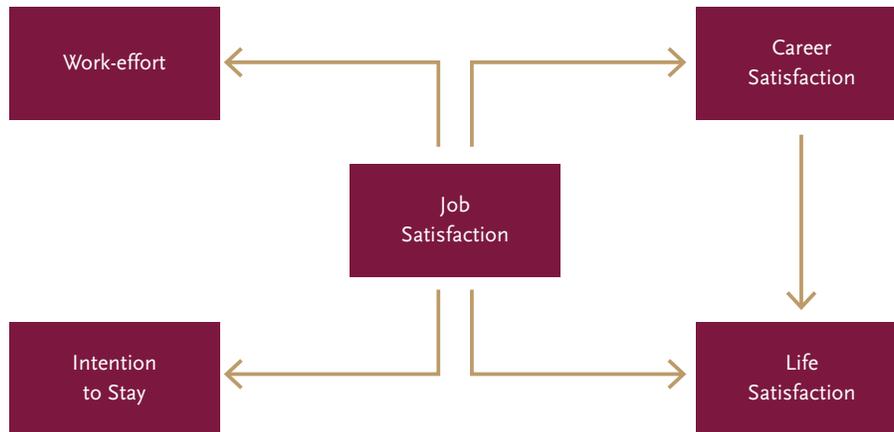
E3. The importance of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction deserves the attention of both Millennial workers and employers as it is a worthy investment on both sides. For workers, being satisfied with one's job is obviously desirable in its own right, but we also found that job satisfaction was associated with several important variables in our study. Young adults who were satisfied with their jobs tended to also be satisfied with their careers. As work tends to be a substantial part of life, in terms of time, personal identity, etc., it stands to reason that satisfaction with work should also be related to being satisfied with life in general. This was demonstrated in our sample. Being satisfied with one's job and being satisfied with one's career tended to coincide with being satisfied with one's life overall.

In addition, job satisfaction was also related to two other elements that concern employers. It was strongly related to work-effort. Employers who want to encourage work-effort may be able to increase employee's efforts by finding ways to increase their satisfaction on the job. In addition, employers who succeed in raising job satisfaction among their young adults may also reduce turnover. Common sense indicates people who like their jobs are less inclined to leave them. Not surprisingly, this was confirmed in our findings.

Where job satisfaction is concerned, the interests of employers and employees are clearly aligned. Millennials who are happier with their jobs are more likely to be satisfied with their careers and their lives, work harder, and stay with their current employers.

Figure 3: Important Job Satisfaction Relationships



E4. Summary

From the perspective of both Millennials and their managers, job satisfaction appears to be beneficial and important. Job satisfaction may increase work-effort; and for young professionals, it is likely to correspond with wider satisfactions, both with their careers and with their lives in general. This suggests it is in the interests of employers and young adults alike to work at improving job satisfaction. Research has shown that long work hours have a negative impact on job satisfaction and do not increase productivity (Carmichael, 2015). Because job satisfaction is related to work-effort, one might infer that pushing employees to work harder could be self-defeating if it decreases job satisfaction. It might actually dampen work-effort by making workers unhappy. Promoting good work-life balance is to everyone's benefit.

Job satisfaction may be increased by young adults improving their career navigation skills. Managers can help support employees in doing this, and can also work to be supportive in general.

For young adults, being motivated in one's career corresponds with higher work-effort and improved ability to navigate one's career. Based on our findings, one might suspect that being career-driven can lead to working in more supportive working environments, and ultimately to higher satisfaction in one's job, career, and life in general.

IV. Summary

Our study of 1,100 young professionals working in five U.S.-based corporate settings has yielded many interesting findings. Some of these seem to support conventional wisdom on Millennials and some do not. It is important to recognize that our sample was not nationally representative and therefore our findings cannot be generalized to all young professionals in the U.S. That being said, we do feel our results offer some interesting and highly useful insights into a broad cross section of employees working in Fortune 500 organizations. We feel some of the most important takeaways from the study include the following.

A. Importance of career navigation skills and job satisfaction

Participants who rated themselves higher on career navigation skills (i.e. know themselves, know what they want in their career, know what they offer their employers, know how to communicate their career desires) were more satisfied with their jobs. We then found that those who were more satisfied with their jobs scored higher on work-effort and intention to stay with their employers. They also tended to be happier with their careers and their lives overall.

These findings suggest that **developing and improving young adults' career navigation skills may have a good payback both for the individuals and their employers.**

We also found that organizational cultures and managers that actively support their employees tend to have more satisfied young adult workers. Managers, in particular, seem to have a considerable impact on Millennials' job satisfaction. Participants who agreed that their managers cared about their well-being were significantly more satisfied with their jobs than those who disagreed. **Encouraging and celebrating long work hours may be damaging to job satisfaction which in turn may reduce work-effort.** It seems that promoting good work-life balance is to everyone's benefit.

B. How Millennials measure career success

Six measures stood out as most important to how young adults measure their career success. These six dimensions, and the percentages of our study participants who rated them extremely important, were:

1. Work-life balance (44%)
2. Job satisfaction (43%)
3. Salary/salary growth rate (35%)
4. Achievement of personal goals (27%)
5. Work achievements (25%)
6. Development of new skills (24%)

These dimensions were rated much higher than other measures which we have often heard in the popular press are important to Millennials. For example, "Contribution to society" was rated extremely important by only 7% of our study participants, and "Meeting their parent's expectations" by only 2%.

C. Millennials and job loyalty

Much has been written about the “fact” that employee loyalty is a “thing of the past” and not a value held by most Millennials. There has also been a widely held belief that this lack of loyalty leads young professionals to see job hopping as the surest means to career advancement.

In our study however, these points did not hold true. The majority (60%) of the young adults said that they plan to stay in their jobs for some time. **At a rate of more than 2-1, study participants said they believed that staying with their employers was their preferred strategy to advancement versus leaving their organizations.**

When asked what would be the most likely reasons they would consider leaving their jobs, the most frequent responses from study participants were:

1. To make more money
2. To move forward in their careers / to have better career growth opportunities
3. To pursue work that is more aligned with their passions
4. To have more flexibility/better work-life balance.

The importance of salary in retaining talent is not a surprising finding. But beyond salary, **the importance of helping young adults find a role that aligns with their passions, providing them opportunities to grow and develop in their careers, and instilling a workplace culture that supports the whole person and provides appropriate work-life balance, all seem to be critically important to talent retention.**

D. Comparisons of young men and women

In recent decades, women have made tremendous strides in higher education and the workplace, and we have begun to see increasing demands from men to become more engaged as parents at home. In our study, the young men’s and women’s responses generally did not differ significantly. There were, however, a number of areas where interesting and statistically significant differences were evident. For example:

- **Ambition / career advancement:** 82% of young men would like to advance to a position where they can have a greater influence on policy decisions compared to 71% of young women in our study; and 74% of men have a strong desire to advance to a position in senior management, compared to 67% of women. While the women in our sample report having somewhat lower aspirations for top-level jobs than the men, the difference we found is not nearly as great as the difference found in reality in most senior management positions, where men greatly outnumber women in most organizations. (LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Company, 2015)
- **Company culture evaluation:** 32% of men felt the ideal employee is one who is available 24 hours a day compared to 22% of women. Perhaps the males in the study identify more with the notion of the “ideal worker” who puts work ahead of other obligations, although even for men, less than 1/3 feel that this is the expectation of their company.
- **Willingness to consider being an at-home parent:** Surprisingly, 51% of men indicated they would consider staying home if their spouse’s income was adequate, compared to 44% of women. This runs contrary to what many people might guess to be the most likely “gendered response” to this question. This suggests that it may be time to drop our assumptions about both men’s and women’s roles in family life, and their desire to remain engaged in the workforce after having children.

E. The importance of a supportive spouse

Over 86% of survey participants indicated that they often discussed their career and family goals and plans with their spouses / partners and more than 60% said they did this on a daily or weekly basis. **Participants who had discussions about career/life goals with their partners at least monthly scored significantly higher on life satisfaction** than those who had those conversations only once or twice a year.

A greater frequency of career/life goal discussions with partners also corresponded with greater support as a worker from those partners. Greater support from one's spouse/partner as a worker had a positive effect on both career navigation skills and job satisfaction. For many young professionals who are juggling two careers and a family, looking at career and life decisions as a team appears to be a very important determinant of satisfaction both at work and at home.

F. Importance of life over work

Finally, it is essential to note that the importance of "life over work" was reinforced by our study participants. **The majority of young adults that we sampled clearly felt that their lives outside of work were much more important to their sense of identity than their careers.** Rather than being work-centric, most of the young professionals we surveyed report being dual-centric with a strong desire for a meaningful life and an identity based on much more than job titles or organizational status.

Although a very high percentage of respondents wanted to take on increasingly challenging tasks, develop their expertise, and advance up the career ladder, few (approximately 20%) were willing to pursue these goals at the expense of time with their families and their personal lives.

This finding is hardly unique to our sample. Most studies have found that individuals derive much more meaning and satisfaction from important relationships and family than they do from their careers. This was clearly supported in our study and explains why work-life integration is so important to these workers.

V. Recommendations

A. Recommendations for Employers

Workplaces that provide an environment where employees can thrive and grow in their careers have employees that are more satisfied with their jobs, work harder and are less likely to leave their companies. There are a number of strategies organizations can adopt in order to create work environments that are attractive to young professionals. Our recommendations for employers are:

1. **Help young adults develop their career navigation skills:** As our study results demonstrate, career development is highly valued by today's young professionals and career navigation skills are critical to achieving that development. Unfortunately, most companies do little to educate their young professionals on how to navigate their careers successfully. Career management workshops and career coaching can do much to demystify this process and offer the time and structure needed for self-assessment and career planning. Young adults can build the competencies they need in order to find a better job fit within the company that engages their passions, develops their skills, and helps them achieve their desired work-life balance.
2. **Provide opportunities for development and advancement:** In order to keep employees engaged and facilitate their growth, companies should develop career progression planning and opportunities to craft a career path that utilizes employees' unique talents and appeals to their personal interests. Initiatives such as internal job postings, rotational programs, international assignments, formal and informal mentoring, sponsorship and other talent management strategies can keep employees feeling challenged and supported in working toward their career aspirations.
3. **Recognize the critical importance of managers as the "face of the corporation's culture."** Managers are the critical link in translating corporate culture to employees. They need to find ways to support their employees' career development and help them integrate their home and work lives, with an overall focus on improving job satisfaction as well as performance. This includes finding ways to reduce long and often less productive hours at work. By doing this, the managers and the companies will have and keep happier and more productive young workers.
4. **Foster a more balanced and flexible work environment:** We have known for some time that work-life policies and practices that are fully integrated into an organization's culture are highly valued by young adults and most other employees for that matter. These policies and practices are considered an important part of a supportive environment and they recognize the "whole person perspective" that most employees are seeking. Work-life and flexibility practices do not undermine employee engagement, productivity or performance. Most research supports the premise that such practices can and do result in higher levels of engagement, commitment and output as well as employee well-being.

B. Recommendations for Young Adults

We found strong connections between career aspirations, career navigations skills, job/career satisfaction and life satisfaction. In essence, it seems that the better that young adults do in understanding their skills, establishing clear and challenging career goals, and building a network of people that can help them find the right jobs, the more successful they will tend to be in their careers and the happier they will tend to be with their lives.

Our recommendation to Millennial workers is to be ambitious and actively seek out the careers and jobs that they want to have. In many ways, the act of wanting something is the first step to achieving it.

We also recommend investing time in developing strong career navigation skills. These skills can help young adults better identify and secure jobs that will be more satisfying, in companies that will be a good fit for them. Many of the young adults we talked with have created developmental networks that consist of mentors, friends and relatives who assist in their development. Colleges, universities and community colleges may also provide career courses that will assist with improving networking and career navigation skills.

For those who are married or partnered, we found strong associations between frequency of career/life communications, having a supportive spouse or partner and job/career satisfaction. **These regular communications about life and career tradeoffs appear to be a very good time investment for young couples.**

C. Recommendations for Colleges and Universities

As was true of employers, very few higher education institutions take on the challenge of helping their students develop the career navigation skills that are needed to be successful in the workplace. Career courses need to take a whole person perspective to increase the likelihood of fulfillment both at work and in one's personal life. We have two recommendations for faculty, staff, and career professionals in higher education.

First, **provide education that helps students better prepare for and manage their careers.** We found a strong correlation between career navigation skills and job satisfaction, yet many of our study participants felt they were not able to approach the right people to help them with their careers and could not tell others what they wanted to achieve in their careers. Young professionals are looking to find work that engages their passions, develops their skills, and allows for a healthy work-life balance.

There is clearly an opportunity for increased education and skill development. As careers have become more self-directed, it is increasingly important that new graduates be armed with the skills needed to navigate their own careers more effectively. We recommend that the following topics be integrated into the appropriate curriculum:

- Developing a clear sense of identity in order to identify one's passions and better understand what jobs will be most meaningful
- Understanding what types of jobs are available and which companies provide workplace cultures that best match one's needs
- Building career navigation and networking skills
- Planning for one's development on the job
- Considering the balance one hopes to achieve between professional and personal lives

Second, as was shown in Chart 1 of this report, young adults utilize many approaches in seeking employment. In spite of all of the technological advances that have been made in recent years, most still turn primarily to family, friends, and other personal contacts to find jobs. As in days past, networking is one of the most important tools to finding a job that will lead to career and life satisfaction. **Helping your graduates build the necessary skills to do effective networking, and specifically person-to-person networking, is of critical importance.**

VI. Acknowledgements

We are very appreciative of our partners at KPMG, who generously sponsored this research project and report. We want to thank the five member companies of the Boston College Workforce Roundtable that participated in this study, and in particular our primary contacts in each of these organizations who helped us to arrange the interviews and contact the survey participants in their organizations. They were instrumental in our ability to conduct this study and we could not have done it without their support.

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We would also like to thank all of the more than 1,100 young adults from these five organizations that participated directly in our research. They took time out of their busy days to be interviewed or to answer our rather lengthy survey. Because of them we have been able to provide this look into how young adults navigate their careers.

Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues at Boston College: Lauren Stiller Rikleen, Sarah Koelling and Brianna Dougherty; Douglas (Tim) Hall at Boston University and Beth Humberd at UMass Lowell for their support through this process. Undertaking a research study like this is a team effort and we appreciate their contributions to bringing this project to fruition.

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