



**THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
FOR U.S. MOLD BUILDERS.**



A REPORT ON BEST PRACTICES FOR

RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REPORT DISCLAIMER	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
PARTICIPANT LOCATION	5
MILLENNIALS IN MOLD BUILDING	6
RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL	7-8
SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE MOLD BUILDING INDUSTRY	9-10
GETTING MILLENNIALS INTO YOUR PLANT	11
BENEFITS EMPHASIZED WHEN HIRING THE MILLENNIAL	12
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN MOLD BUILDING	13
MOTIVATIONAL METHODS FOR MILLENNIALS	14-15
HOW TO MOTIVATE THE MILLENNIAL	16
CELL PHONE POLICIES IN MOLD BUILDING	17
SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES IN RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL	18

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although every mold builder faces unique challenges, stalled workforce development continues to plague the U.S. mold manufacturing industry.

According to the National Association of Manufacturers, in Indiana alone, 87 percent of manufacturers indicate difficulty in recruiting young people¹. However, this is not due to a lack of available job opportunities. According to a recent Deloitte Insights report, over half of the potential two million jobs that will become available over the next decade in manufacturing will likely go unfilled due to a skills shortage².

Given the industry statistics above, it comes as no surprise that of the 56 mold builders surveyed in this report,

“ACCORDING TO A RECENT DELOITTE INSIGHTS REPORT, OVER HALF OF THE POTENTIAL TWO MILLION JOBS THAT WILL BECOME AVAILABLE OVER THE NEXT DECADE IN MANUFACTURING WILL LIKELY GO UNFILLED DUE TO A SKILLS SHORTAGE.”

85 percent indicated that it’s either very important or moderately important to hire millennial workers. For the purposes of this report, “millennial” is defined as someone born after 1987 and before 2000.

While the following data provides further insight into the strategies employed by mold manufacturers to recruit the millennial, below are a few notable takeaways.

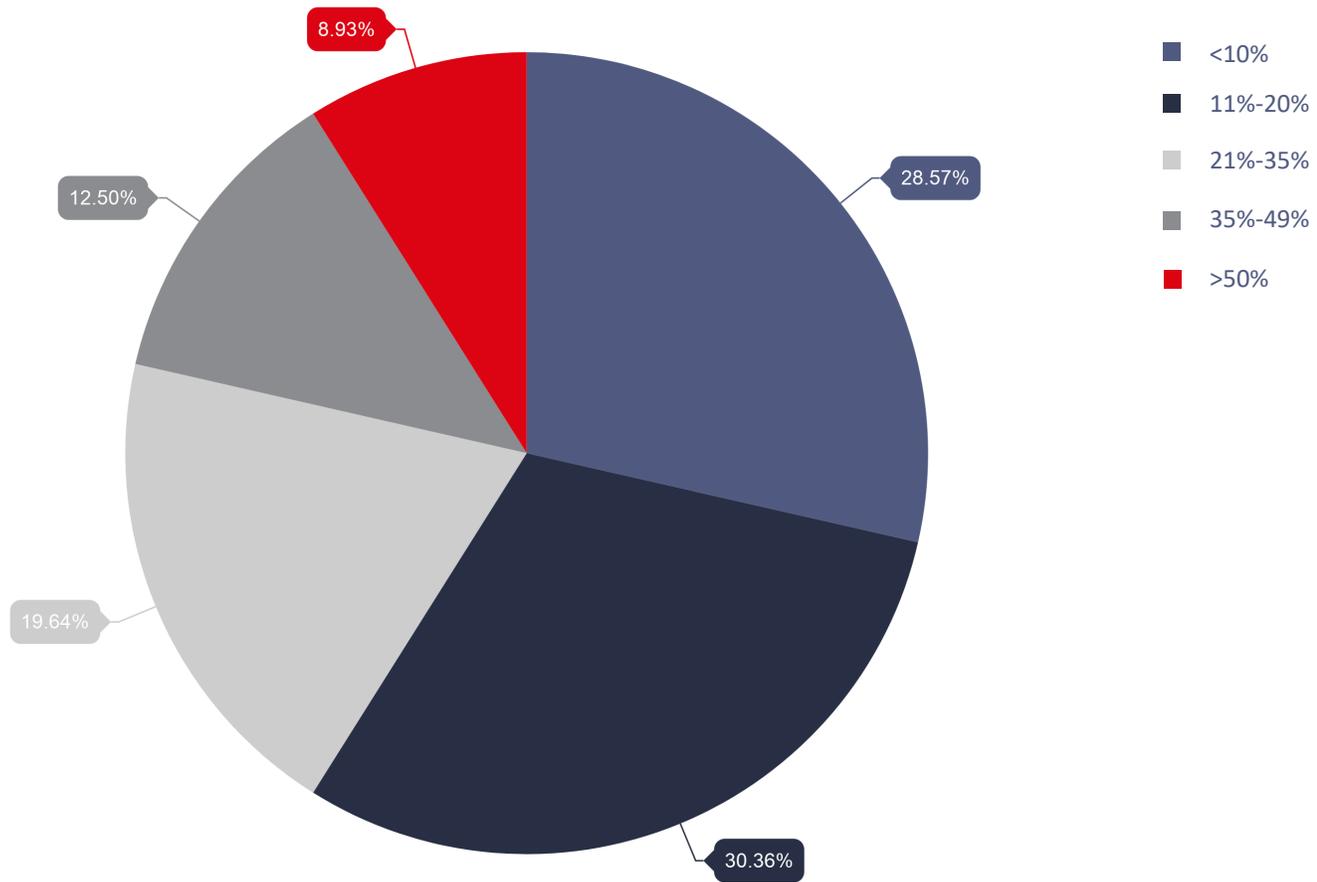
- Over 60 percent of U.S. mold builders operate facilities where less than 20 percent of their employees are millennial-aged.
- Technical schools, referrals and high schools are the most popular forms of millennial recruitment; newspaper, career centers and radio advertisements are the least.
- Although over 67 percent of mold builders have some kind of social media presence, 44 percent say they are not using social media to recruit a millennial workforce.
- During the interview process, over 87 percent of mold manufacturers emphasize career growth to millennial workers, far surpassing the 40 percent who emphasize starting pay.
- Over 76 percent of mold manufacturers surveyed have some kind of apprenticeship program.
- When motivating millennials in the workplace, 68 percent of survey participants emphasize providing verbal recognition and more responsibility in the workplace when millennial employees are successful.
- 1.79 percent of respondents have no kind of cell phone policy at all, while the majority (48 percent) indicated that cell phones were allowed on plant floors as long as they caused no issues.

The following AMBA report on Best Practices for Recruiting the Millennial will provide more detail on the above points, allowing companies to benchmark their procedures and their policies with others in the industry who face the same challenges.

1. Holt, Vicki. (2018, January 23). How Manufacturers Can Win the War for Millennial Workers. *National Association of Manufacturers*. Retrieved from <https://www.shopfloor.org/2018/01/manufacturers-can-win-war-millennial-workers/>

2. Giffi, Craig A. Dollar, Ben. Gangula, Bharath. Rodriguez, Michelle D. (2015, January 26). Help wanted: American manufacturing competitiveness and the looming skills gap. *Deloitte Insights*. (Issue 16). Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/insights/us/en/deloitte-review/issue-16/manufacturing-skills-gap-america.html>

MILLENNIALS IN MOLD BUILDING



As referenced in the Executive Summary, over 87 percent of surveyed mold manufacturers agreed that it was important or moderately important to hire millennial workers. It's easy to see why after realizing that many mold manufacturers have workforces that skew heavily towards an older demographic.

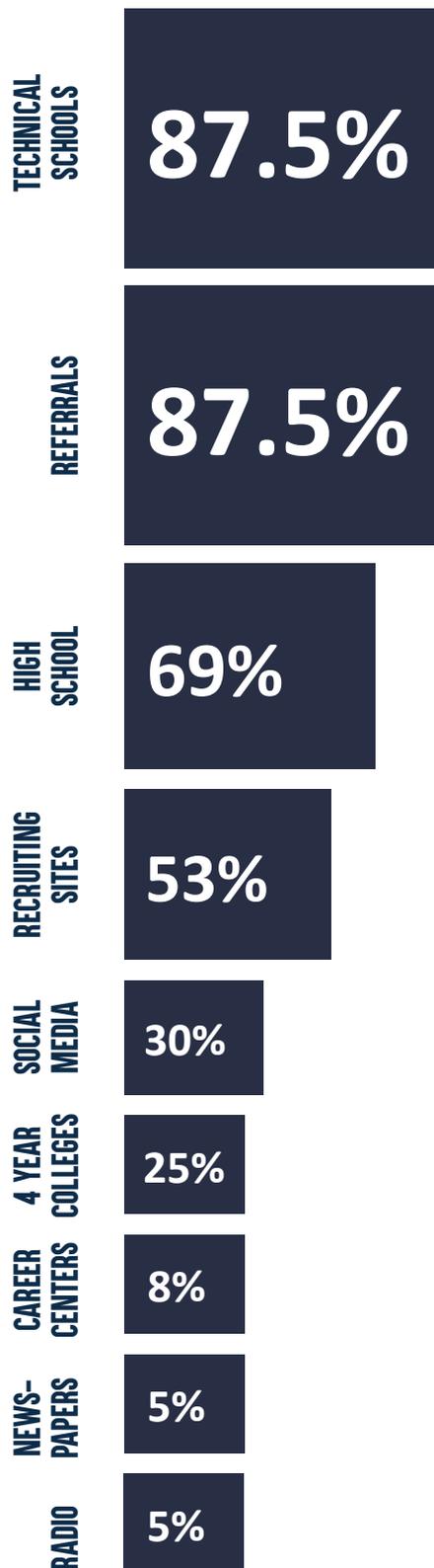
When asked the question, "What percentage of your company workforce is under the age of 30?", nearly one-third of respondents answered that less than 10 percent of their employees are millennials. Another 30 percent indicated that less than 20 percent of their employees are millennial-aged. Particularly noteworthy is that less than 10 percent of surveyed companies have a workforce where over half of their employees are millennials.

According to Brian Fortney, global business manager for Training Services, this statistic is present throughout the manufacturing industry. "Manufacturers are not addressing this with the right amount of energy...[their] challenge isn't foreign manufacturing, it's the high school guidance counselor. They don't understand that manufacturing is high tech. The plants are not dark and dangerous."³

ACTIONABLE ITEM: Before mold manufacturers can begin recruiting millennials, they must first address the preconceived ideas that students have about working in manufacturing. To begin, build relationships with and provide education to local guidance counselors, high schools, technology centers and technical schools.

3. Spiegel, Rob (2018, March 02). Workforce Gap Grows as Boomers Retire. *DesignNews*. Retrieved from <https://www.designnews.com/automation-motion-control/workforce-gap-grows-boomers-retire/102727970958356>.

RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL



To hire millennial workers, mold manufacturers must first recruit them. When respondents were asked how they most often source potential millennial-aged employees, 87.5 percent* of respondents named technical schools and employee, family or friend referrals.

Closely following that, over 69 percent of respondents look for high school students, while just over half (53 percent) use recruiting sites.

Less popular recruitment methods included social media (30 percent), 4-year colleges (25 percent) and career centers (8 percent). Only approximately 5 percent use newspapers or radio to recruit millennials.

IS TRADITIONAL MEDIA DYING?

Although only 5 percent of survey respondents mentioned using print or radio to recruit millennials, traditional media is not necessarily dying. According to the TargetMarketing article, “How and Why Marketing to Millennials with Print Boosts Engagement,” millennials find print advertising to be more authentic and trustworthy than other forms of media. At The Centre for Experimental Consumer Psychology at Bangor University, the study found that “touching printed materials while looking at them triggers spatial memory in a way that other channels don’t, leaving a footprint deeper in the brain...the real experience is also internalized, which means the materials have a more personal effect.”⁴

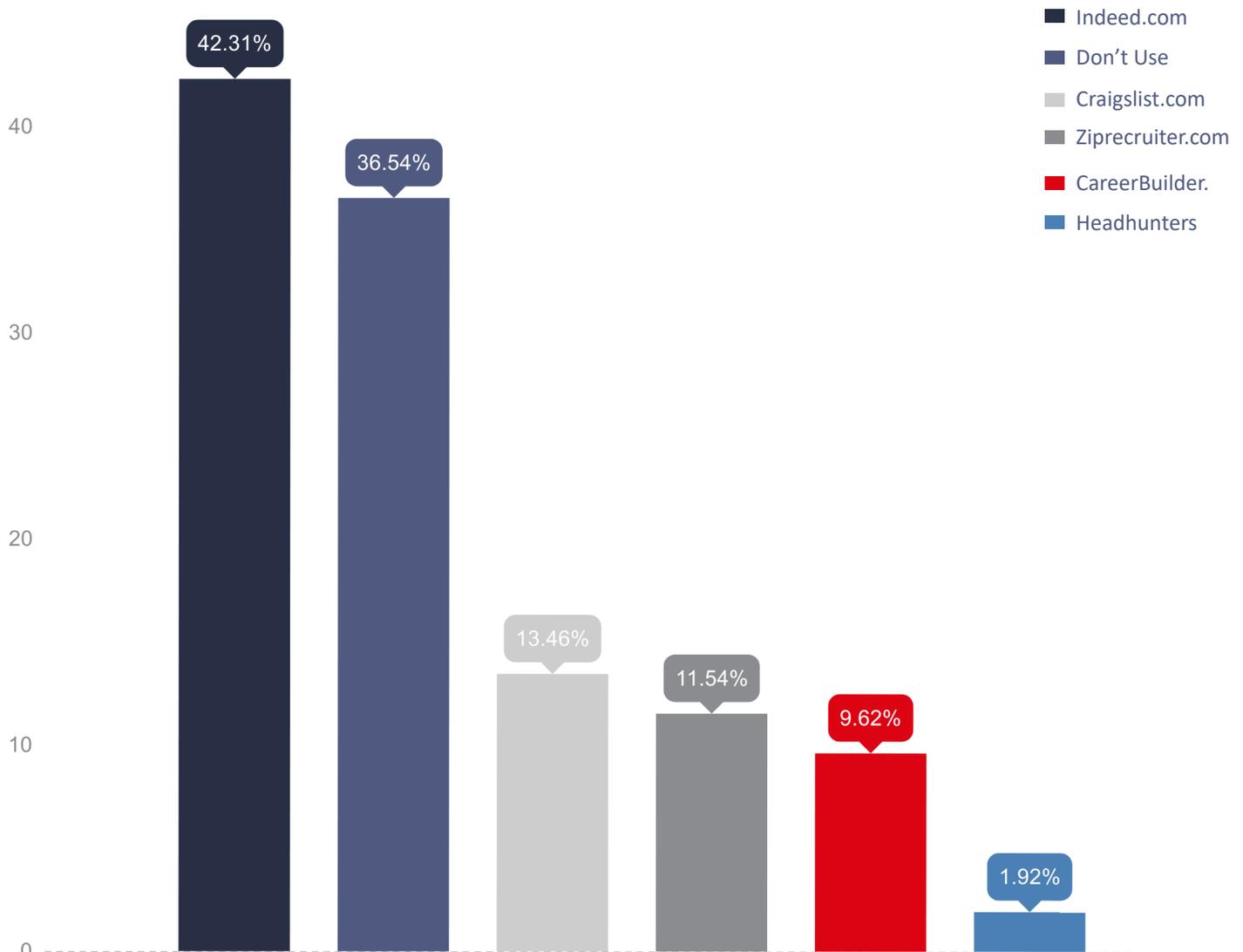
However, the article notes that additional marketing activities are still required. While print media can be an effective way to “touch” a millennial, launching an activity like a local direct mail campaign to families with high school students becomes much more effective when paired with plant tours set up through local high schools.

ACTIONABLE ITEM: Think about using a tiered approach in your marketing plan. For example, try running a direct mail campaign, followed by plant tours with high school students a few months later, all while running a digital campaign on Facebook, Snapchat or another digital medium so that millennials have multiple opportunities to interact with your brand and/or facility.

**Note: Results do not add up to 100%, because respondents were able to choose more than one option*

4. Fletcher, Heather. (2018, June 28). How and Why Marketing to Millennials with Print Boosts Engagement. *TargetMarketing*. Retrieved from <https://www.targetmarketingmag.com/article/how-and-why-marketing-to-millennials-with-print-boosts-engagement/>.

RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL (CONT'D)



When asked what recruitment sites - if any - respondents used to recruit millennials, over two-thirds of respondents indicated that they do use some form of recruitment site. Of the recruitment sites named by respondents, 42 percent* use Indeed.com, 13.46 percent use Craigslist.com, 11.54 percent use Ziprecruiter.com and another 9.62 percent use CareerBuilder.com.

By far, the least popular method used by mold builders to recruit millennials is via headhunters - only 1.92 percent of respondents use this method. 36 percent of respondents use no form of recruitment site at all.

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

IN THE MOLD BUILDING INDUSTRY

	COMPANY PRESENCE	USE TO RECRUIT MILLENNIALS
LINKEDIN	67.86%	37.04%
FACEBOOK	64.29%	44.44%
YOUTUBE	26.7%	5.56%
TWITTER	19.64%	3.7%
INSTAGRAM	7.14%	0%
SNAPCHAT	3.7%	3.7%
NO SOCIAL MEDIA USE	14.29%	44.44%

**Note: Results do not add up to 100%, because respondents were able to choose more than one option.*

SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

IN THE MOLD BUILDING INDUSTRY (CONT'D)

In this survey, respondents were asked the question “On which social media channels does your company have a presence?” According to the responses, 67 percent have a LinkedIn profile, while 64 percent have a Facebook page. However, numbers drop significantly for other channels - 26 percent have a YouTube channel, 19 percent who have a Twitter channel, 7 percent have an Instagram channel and 1.79 percent have a blog. 14 percent of respondents have no social media presence of any kind.

When asked the follow up question, “Which social media channels do you use to recruit millennials?”, 44 percent of those surveyed reported using Facebook to recruit millennials, while another 37 percent reported using LinkedIn. Only 5 percent or less reported using YouTube, Twitter or Snapchat. Over 44 percent of respondents reported using no social media of any kind to recruit millennials.

SOCIAL MEDIA: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MOLD BUILDING

In recent research done in 2018 by the Pew Research Center, authors Aaron Smith and Monica Anderson report that 88 percent of 18- to 29-year-olds use some form of social media. Over three-quarters of surveyed adults ages 18 to 24 use Snapchat, visiting it multiple times a day, and 71 percent of Americans in this age group also use Instagram. Close to half use Twitter, while 94 percent use the less traditional YouTube medium.⁵

Clearly, the millennial generation has a dominant presence in social media. However, when mold manufacturers were asked what social media channels they use to communicate with millennials, over 44 percent reported that they don’t use any social media channel at all to recruit them. Although another 44 percent of respondents did report using Facebook, only 5.56 percent report using Youtube, while 0 percent report using Instagram - the favorite mediums of the millennial generation.

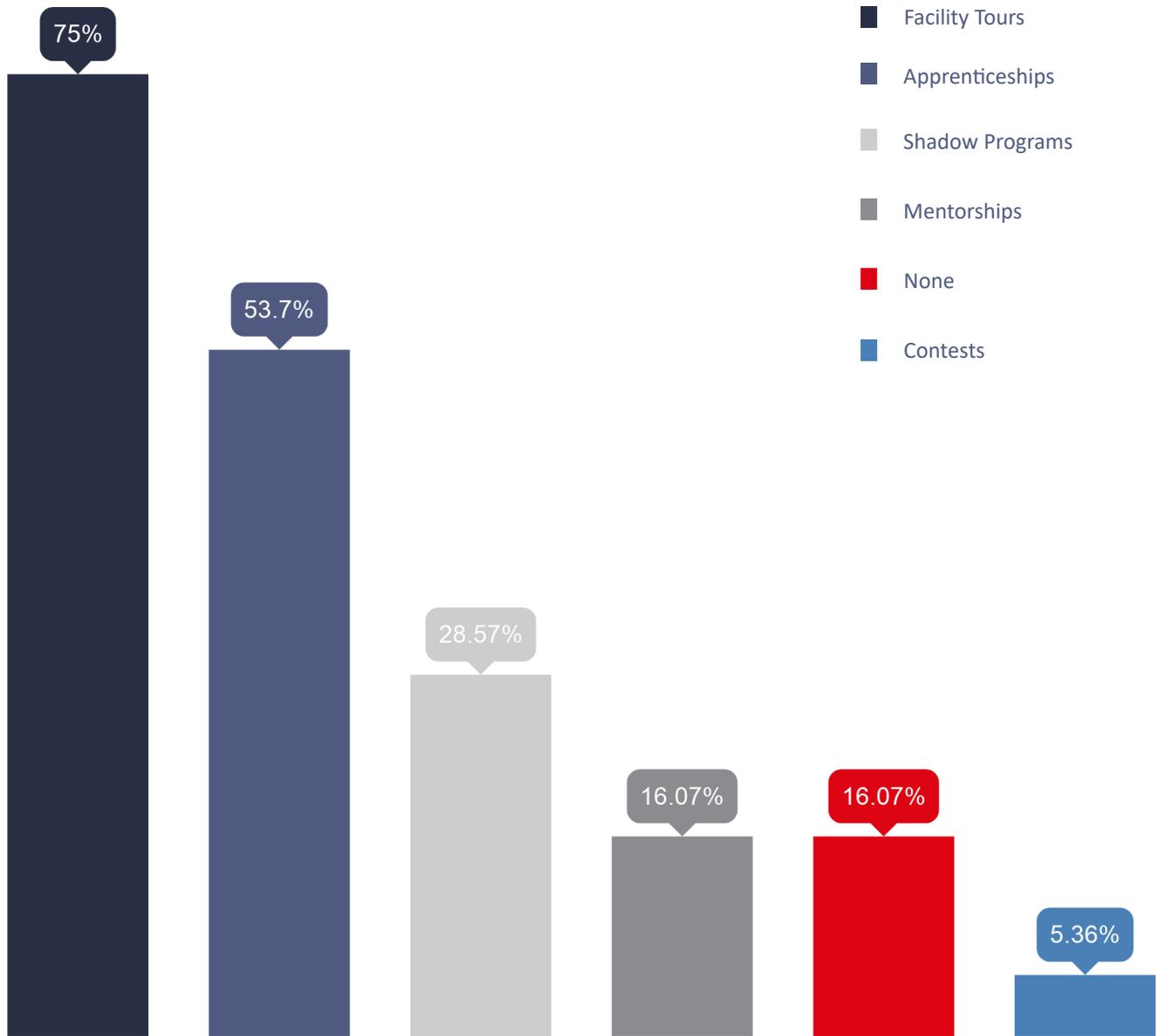
Currently, millennials have a social media presence, and yet mold manufacturers aren’t taking advantage of it. But should they? Research cited in the article, “10 Stats That will Make You Rethink Marketing to Millennials,” argues yes. Author Erin Sagin writes that social media channels provide companies with the opportunity to create native, organic content that doesn’t feel like advertising. It also allows companies to tap into the community that comes with social media connections, an important feature given that 89% percent of millennials trust recommendations from friends and family more than claims by the brand.

ACTIONABLE ITEM: If your facility has not been using social media - either organically or via paid content - to reach out to the millennial generation, research demonstrates that it is worthwhile to do so. Taking advantage of platforms like YouTube, Instagram and Twitter to show the friendlier, less-salesy side of your company will help correct preconceived ideas about working in manufacturing while also demonstrating your company’s work, culture and opportunities in an organic, authentic way.

5. Smith, Aaron and Anderson, Monica. (2018, March 1). Social Media Use in 2018. Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2018/03/01/social-media-use-in-2018/>.

6. Sagin, Erin. (2018, July 9). 10 Stats That Will Make You Rethink Marketing to Millennials. Wordstream Blog. Retrieved from <https://www.wordstream.com/blog/ws/2016/02/02/marketing-to-millennials>.

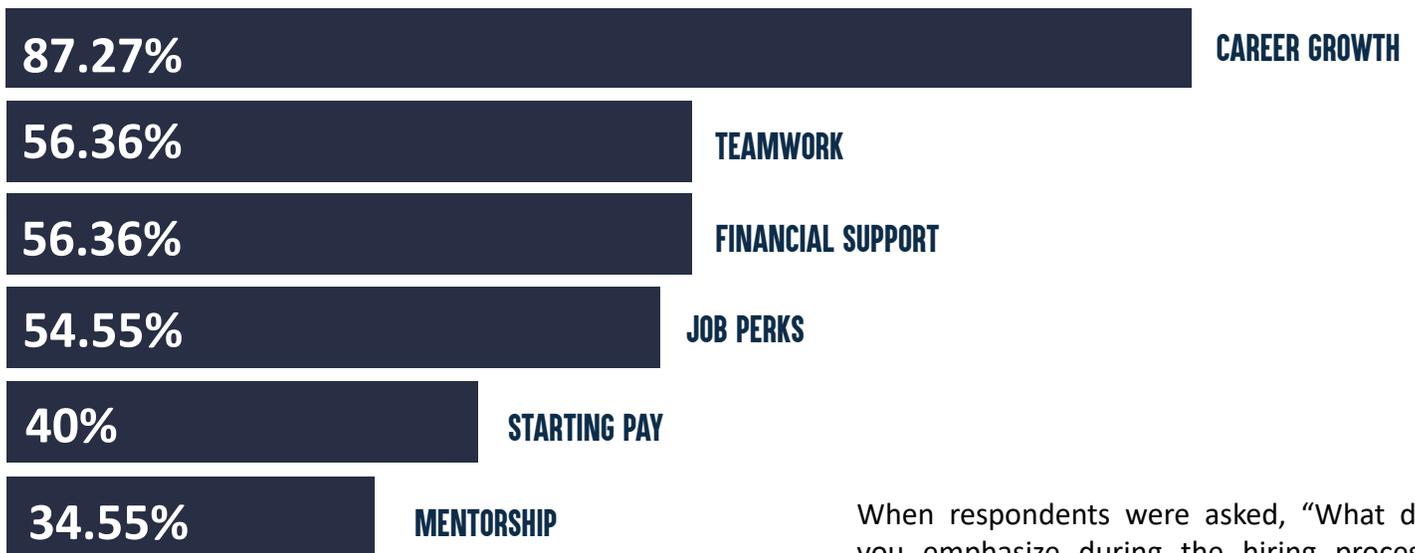
GETTING MILLENNIALS INTO YOUR PLANT



In the recruitment section of this survey, respondents were asked “How do you interest millennials in your facility?” 75 percent of those surveyed use facility tours, followed by 56 percent who use apprenticeships and another 28 percent who conduct shadowing programs. 5.26 percent of companies use contests while 14 percent of respondents employ no particular method to get millennials into their facility.

**Note: Results do not add up to 100% because respondents were able to choose more than one option.*

BENEFITS EMPHASIZED WHEN HIRING MILLENNIALS



When respondents were asked, “What do you emphasize during the hiring process for millennials?”, over 87 percent* of respondents referenced career growth,

followed by 56 percent who focus on the importance of teamwork, as well as financial support from the company. Just over half of the respondents - 54 percent - review potential job perks, while only 40 percent of respondents emphasize starting pay. Just over one-third of respondents emphasize a mentorship program.

CAREER GROWTH AND THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

Interestingly, when asked what mold manufacturers emphasize during the hiring process, career growth was by far the most named item, followed by both teamwork and financial support. Are these the items that the millennial generation cares most about when considering employment?

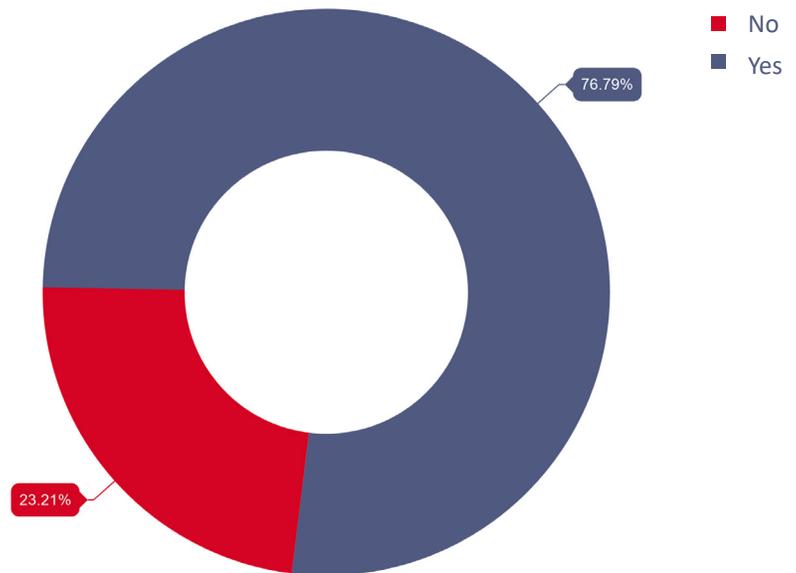
According to the article, “9 Harsh Realities of What Motivates Millennial Workers,” the answer is yes. The author, John Rampton, writes that although millennials are often accused of being lazy, their desire to have a flexible schedule and a work/life balance comes from their access to technology and the ease with which they can communicate.

Rampton also writes that millennials are indeed committed to furthering their career path, but for different reasons than previous generations. Often, they want to understand the “why” behind what they’re doing and be able to collaborate along the way.

**Note: Results do not add up to 100% because respondents were able to choose more than one option.*

APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS IN MOLD BUILDING

When surveyed, over 76 percent of mold manufacturers indicated that they have an existing apprenticeship program available at their facility.

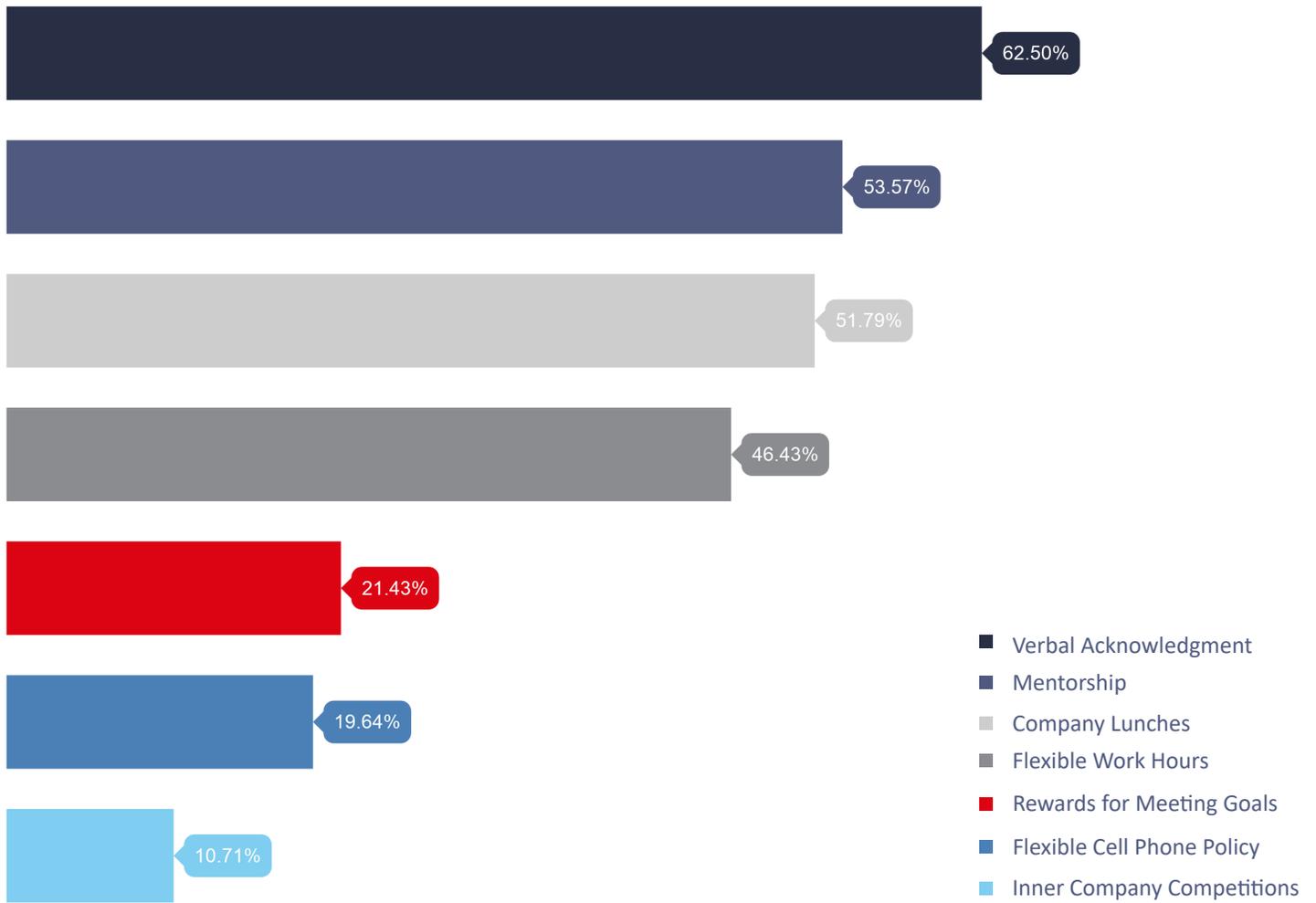


FOUR REASONS TO START AN APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

- 1. PRODUCES MORE QUALIFIED, CONFIDENT EMPLOYEES.** Apprenticeship encourages not only the development of skills, but makes employees feel valued and knowledgeable.
- 2. APPRENTICESHIPS PROVIDE ECONOMIC VALUE FOR YOUR COMPANY.** According to the Department of Labor, companies receive \$1.47 for every dollar in increased productivity, reduced waste and great innovation for every dollar invested in an apprentice. Another report from the U.S. Department of Labor in 2014 also found that due to the skills shortage, the average manufacturer can lose 11 percent of annual earnings (around \$3,000 per employee).⁷
- 3. APPRENTICES FILL A GROWING NEED IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.** With baby boomers retiring at an alarming rate, as cited in the Executive Summary, apprenticeship programs provide you with the employees you need today and allow them to gain the tribal knowledge collected by past generations.
- 4. EMPLOYEES HAVE THE SKILLS YOU NEED.** While traditional 2- or 4-year degrees can be valuable and necessary in particular positions, apprentices will be trained in exactly what they need to know to be successful at a particular facility.

⁷ Hindman, John. (2017, March 1). Six Reasons to Start a Manufacturing Apprenticeship Program. Automation Alley. Retrieved from <https://automationalley.com/Blog/February-2017/Six-Reasons-to-Start-a-Manufacturing-Apprenticeshi.aspx>

MOTIVATIONAL METHODS FOR MILLENNIALS



When asked how mold manufacturers motivate millennials in the workplace, over 62 percent emphasized verbal acknowledgment when workers successfully completed goals or projects. Following verbal acknowledgment, 53 percent of respondents mentioned mentorship programs (i.e. providing guidance and feedback) and another 51 percent emphasized perks like company lunches. 46 percent of respondents also provide flexible working hours, while another 21 percent offer rewards for meeting goals. Less used policies included the 19 percent of respondents who offer flexible cell phone policies and another 10 percent of respondents who encourage inner company competitions.

**Note: Results do not add up to 100%, because respondents were able to choose more than one option.*

HOW TO MOTIVATE

THE MILLENNIAL?

When surveyed, over 62 percent of respondents indicated that they provide verbal recognition in the workplace to show appreciation to millennial employees, followed by 53 percent who emphasized mentorship and another 51 percent who reference company lunches. In many ways, these companies are on the right track.

According to Larry Alton in the article, “How Millennials Are Reshaping What’s Important in Corporate Culture,” millennials value culture more than any other generation that’s come before them. He writes that, “On average, millennials would be willing to give up \$7,600 in salary every year to work a job that provided a better environment for them.” They also significantly value feedback and growth, engagement and purpose and a work-life balance.⁸

How does this translate to one’s plant facility? Implementing some way of regularly recognizing and praising millennial workers when they are successful within the workplace could be a potential start.

As referenced by the Inc.com article, “38 Percent of Millennials Want This Improved At Work” reporter Ryan Jenkins writes that “One in four organizations find their current recognition programs are ineffective for Millennial workers and 38 percent of Millennials would like to

see the recognition program at their current employer improved.”⁸

“THEY ARE ALSO PREPARED TO SWITCH JOBS EARLIER AND MORE FREQUENTLY THAN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS, SO EMPLOYERS NEED TO TAKE PARTICULAR STEPS TO MAINTAIN MILLENNIAL ENGAGEMENT”.

“ON AVERAGE, MILLENNIALS WOULD BE WILLING TO GIVE UP \$7,600 IN SALARY EVERY YEAR TO WORK A JOB THAT PROVIDED A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR THEM.”

Reasons for ineffectiveness in current recognition programs can be explained by Jenkins’ following arguments, where he goes on to quote Rodney Mason, GVP of Marketing with Blackhawk Engagement Solutions, when he writes,

HOW TO MOTIVATE

THE MILLENNIAL (CONT'D)

“Millennials are accustomed to attention and praise from their earliest days, and expect regular affirmation in the workplace. They are also prepared to switch jobs earlier and more frequently than previous generations, so employers need to take particular steps to maintain Millennial engagement”. This is where perks like offering flexible hours, company lunches, rewards for meeting goals and more responsibility play a role in motivating and retaining the millennial worker.

Not ready to go above and beyond for the millennial generation? Keep in mind that asking for and/or desiring these cultural changes is not necessarily a sign of ego or laziness. As Jamie Notter writes in the Forbes article, “Motivating Millennials (And Everyone Else, For That Matter),” Notter explains that because the millennial generation grew up with the social internet, with all information at their fingertips, millennials crave autonomy more quickly than generations before them and feedback more often. Notter also writes that millennials were exposed to the “extensive material abundance in this country that surrounded their coming of age,” which leads this generation to focus more often on “higher needs”. This includes the desire to understand the purpose of their work and where it fits in the bigger picture.¹⁰

“BECAUSE THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION GREW UP WITH THE SOCIAL INTERNET, WITH ALL INFORMATION AT THEIR FINGERTIPS, MILLENNIALS CRAVE AUTONOMY MORE QUICKLY THAN GENERATIONS BEFORE THEM AND FEEDBACK MORE OFTEN.”

ACTIONABLE ITEM: Improve company culture by hosting a monthly company lunch or offering flexible hours to employees. Motivate employees by offering them incentives for reaching goals and consider providing them with feedback when they do well or when they face challenges. Provide them with insight into what role they play in each larger project and in the company as a whole. Give them more responsibility when they experience success, so that they can advance towards autonomy.

8. Alton, Larry. (2017, June 20). How Millennials Are Reshaping What’s Important in Corporate Culture. Forbes.com. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/larryalton/2017/06/20/how-millennials-are-reshaping-whats-important-in-corporate-culture/#67a3d3b92dfb>.

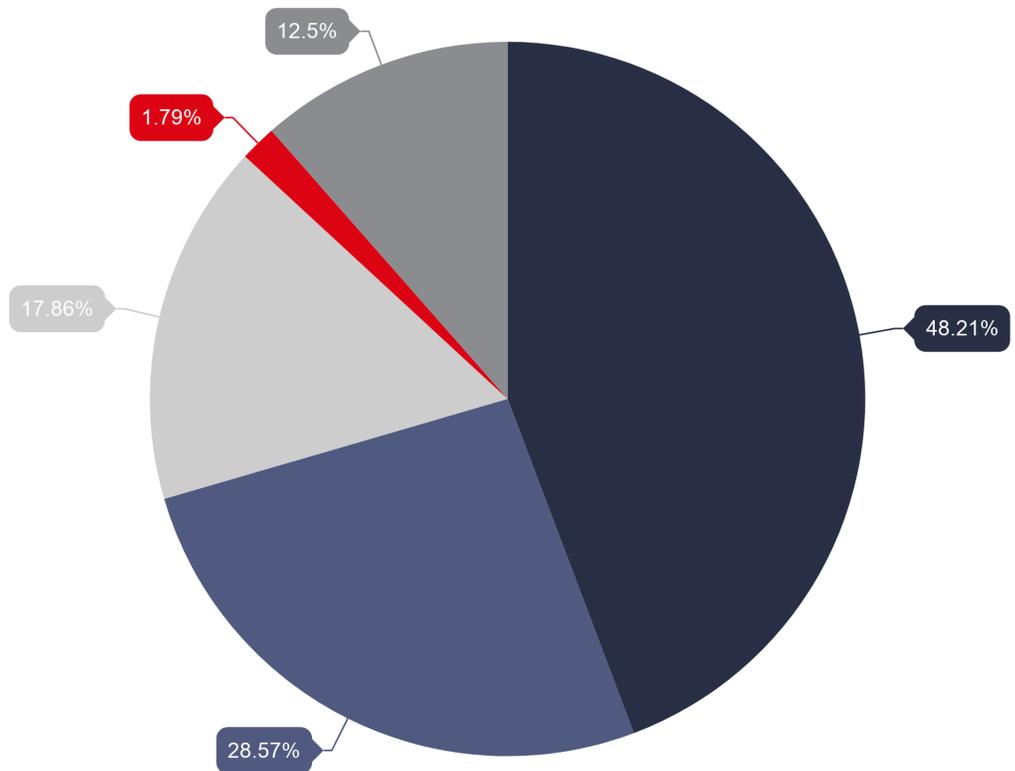
9. Jenkins, Ryan. (2017, May 9). 38 Percent of Millennials Want This Improved at Work. Inc.com (HR/Benefits). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/ryan-jenkins/how-to-elevate-millennial-performance-using-recognition.html>.

10. Notter, Jamie. (2018, March 14). Motivating Millennials (And Everyone Else, For That Matter). Forbes.com (Forbes Coaches Council). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2018/03/14/motivating-millennials-and-everyone-else-for-that-matter/#1f77c52057c1>.

CELL PHONE POLICIES

IN MOLD BUILDING

During this survey, mold manufacturers were asked about their cell phone policies in the workplace. The majority of respondents (48 percent) indicated that they are comfortable with some cell phone use when absolutely necessary. 28 percent of respondents have no policy unless it interferes with the working environment, while 17 percent of respondents do not allow any cell phone use at all. Only 1 percent of respondents have no policy at all (although another 12 percent of respondents do have some sort of policy unique to their facility).



According to Nielsen, when looking at smartphone owners by age, penetration is highest among Millennials aged 18-24, 98 percent of

whom own smartphones.¹¹ Unfortunately for owners in every industry, this is the reality they face today, and understanding how to manage it can be critical to the productivity of one's workers.

However, millennial cell phone use is not all detrimental. According to the article "The Surprising Reason Millennials Check Their Phones 150 Times A Day," John Brandon writes that 73 percent of millennials say tech has given them a better work-life balance, contributing to a better understanding of projects...or building better friendships outside of work."¹²

How each facility handles its cell phone policy needs to be best suited to that facility's needs, both in terms of productivity and safety. However, this new reliance on technology could create better relationships, remove communication barriers and could even improve productivity.

11. Millennials Are Top Smartphone Users. (2016, November 15). Nielsen.com (Insights). Retrieved from <https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/news/2016/millennials-are-top-smartphone-users.html>

12. Brandon, John. (2017, April 17). The Surprising Reason Millennials Check Their Phones 150 Times a Day. Inc.com (Technology). Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/john-brandon/science-says-this-is-the-reason-millennials-check-their-phones-150-times-per-day.html>

SUCCESSSES & CHALLENGES

IN RECRUITING THE MILLENNIAL

When respondents were asked how they most successfully recruit members of the millennial generation, they were provided with the opportunity to free fill their responses. The most popular responses included the following:

- Building a pipeline with local career centers, local high schools and trade schools
- Friend, family and employee referrals
- Plant tours, summer work programs and/or apprenticeship programs

OTHER RESPONSES INCLUDED:

- Posting on personal social media pages
 - Word of mouth (i.e. referrals)
 - Attending and/or connecting with robotics clubs and programs
 - Use of recruiting sites, like Craigslist.com, Monster.com and LinkedIn
 - Offering mentoring at local community colleges and 4-year universities
 - Demonstrating to potential millennial workers how others their age have been successful
 - Attending employment events geared towards tech schools
 - Becoming involved with local career centers
 - Offering paid schooling
-

When respondents were asked what recruitment methods were most challenging and/or least successful, they were provided with the opportunity to free fill their responses. The most common challenges named included the following:

- Recruiting out of high schools and community colleges can be challenging, due to a need to educate potential workers about the industry. They often don't know what they want to do and expect to receive top pay right away.
- Headhunters, recruiters and temp agencies often provide uninterested, unmotivated employees.
- Print advertising (newspapers/magazines/classified ads) rarely results in qualified leads.
- Traditional help wanted signs don't usually produce qualified, motivated employees.
- Ziprecruiter.com and Indeed.com have not been successful recruitment sites.
- Job boards/ads don't usually produce candidates that have the right attitude and/or skill set.



**THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE
FOR U.S. MOLD BUILDERS.**

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