



THE BLACK SPECTACLES
ARCHITECTURE CAREER
SATISFACTION SURVEY
2020



**black
spectacles**



MOTIVATING THE MILLENNIAL WORKFORCE



TABLE OF CONTENTS

04	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
05	CAREER PRIORITIES FOR MILLENNIALS
07	MILLENNIAL WORK ETHIC
09	STRENGTHEN YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT
10	MILLENNIAL WORKPLACE SATISFACTION
11	RECRUITING TOP TALENT
12	MANAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS
14	CONCLUSION
15	REFERENCES

+ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE, MILLENNIALS ENCOMPASS THE MAJORITY OF THE LABOR MARKET.

Millennials are defined as those born between the years 1981 and 1996¹, and in 2016 they became the largest generation represented in the workforce with 56 million working or seeking employment, which amounts to 35% of the market². As this generation has overtaken the workforce, they are influencing trends and setting standards in the organizations they work for.

WHAT MOTIVATES MILLENNIALS?

Black Spectacles conducted a survey to determine how this is represented in the architecture industry. The results show millennials desire a strong workplace culture, and it also indicated their work ethic is motivated by the presence of a strong company culture.

Over 400 architects, both licensed and unlicensed, representing 44 states as well as regions outside of the United States, weighed in about their career satisfaction, what components of a job are most important to them, and the hours they're willing to work for a fulfilling role. Once culture was established as a priority for the respondents, in a follow up survey participants defined what aspects of company culture were most important to them. Here they identified a collaborative work environment, flexible working hours and company core values as components they most value in an organization. In attracting young and hardworking talent, these are areas to focus on.

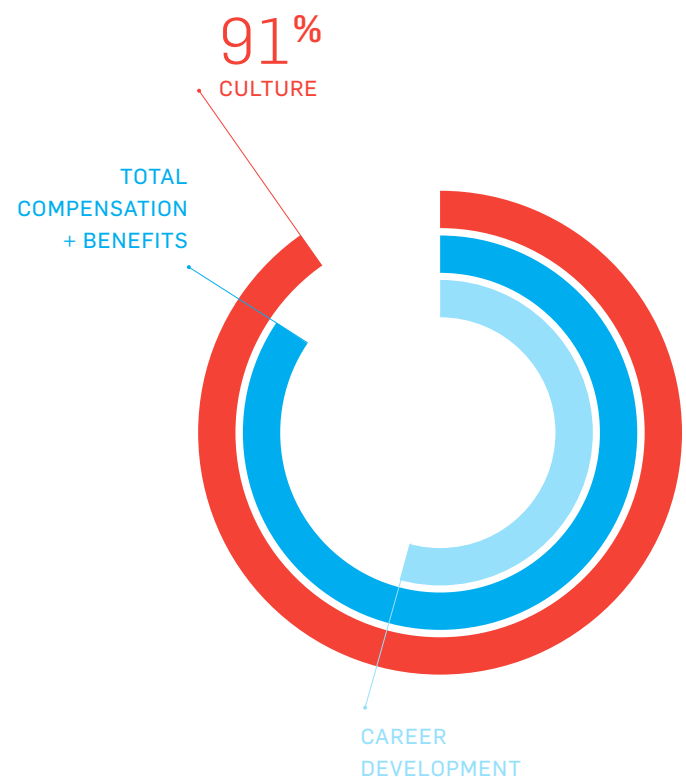


CAREER PRIORITIES FOR MILLENNIALS

CULTURE WINS OVERWHELMING MAJORITY

91% of the top three answers chosen contained “culture” as the most important aspect millennials look for in a job. Second and third place are “total compensation & benefits” and “career development,” respectively. Following these came a stark drop off with “name recognition,” “awards,” “project portfolios,” and “sustainability practices.”

With this overwhelming return showcasing that millennials prioritize having a solid workplace culture as one of the core components of a job and organization, it’s hard to ignore the importance of either emphasizing a current positive work environment or enhancing one that needs improving. Culture is a broad subject that has many divisions and subcategories, so millennials were asked to provide clarity on what the most important aspect of company culture is to them.



IN A FOLLOW-UP SURVEY, MILLENNIALS STATED THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WORKPLACE CULTURE

1

COLLABORATION

invites an employee to contribute to a larger goal by way of shared responsibility and group dynamics. *The Harvard Business Review* outlines fostering social connections for coworkers and colleagues, showing empathy as a manager, displaying generosity with helpfulness and being a safe place to share problems are good foundations for building a strong culture³. This positive communication can contribute to enhanced teamwork and ease of interdepartmental workflow, which drives creativity and innovation, leading to the success of the company.

2

FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

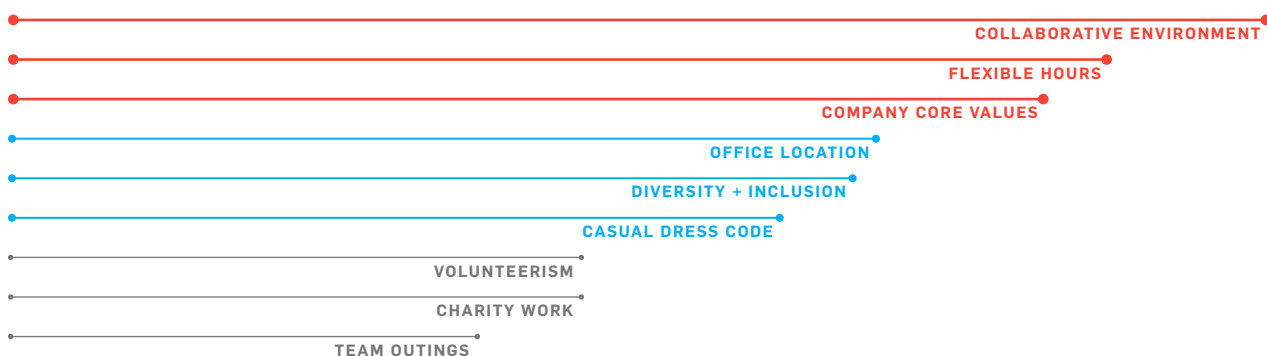
came in at number two, not surprisingly, as a Deloitte study states 75% of the millennial generation thinks a “work from home” or “work remotely” policy is important⁴. Overall, attendance and general morale is increased when these types of programs are integrated into organizations.

3

COMPANY CORE VALUES

shape the culture and the identity of a company, and are the reasons people join the team, stay on the team, and are driven to contribute quality work. Just like the benefits of having a collaborative work environment, having a set of company core values helps an employee feel like they’re a part of something bigger than themselves. A study conducted by several business professors from Columbia University and Duke University show more than 50% of CEOs and CFOs surveyed say corporate culture influences productivity, creativity, profitability and growth rates⁵.

What part of workplace culture is most important? >

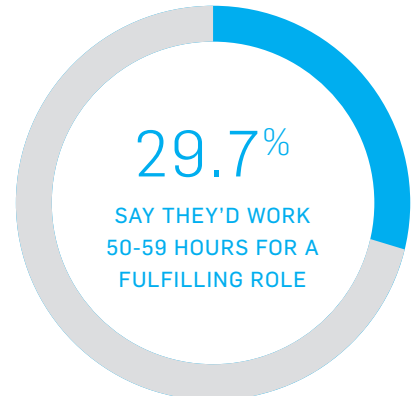
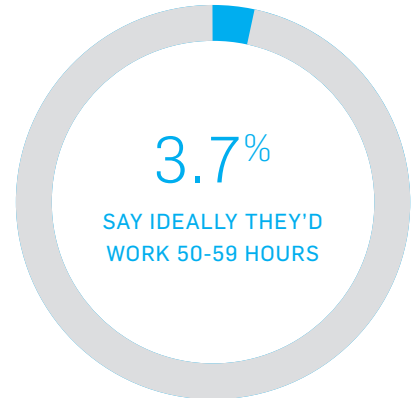


+ MILLENNIAL WORK ETHIC

HOW DOES A POSITIVE COMPANY CULTURE INFLUENCE WORK ETHIC IN MILLENNIAL ARCHITECTS?

The survey results show millennials are willing to work *more* hours than what they're currently required to for a fulfilling role. The majority of survey respondents reported they currently worked 40-49 hours per week, and noted in an ideal work environment they would continue to work those hours. However, they indicated they would increase their weekly workload to 50-59 hours for a fulfilling role. The survey results determine a fulfilling role includes culture, career development, and total compensation. The shared goal for both companies and employees is to maximize productivity, and we're seeing that investing in the workforce results in an uptick of motivation.

How many hours would you work?



“When you’re happy
at work, you do
better work.”

MATT DUMICH, FAIA

PRINCIPAL, SMITHGROUP



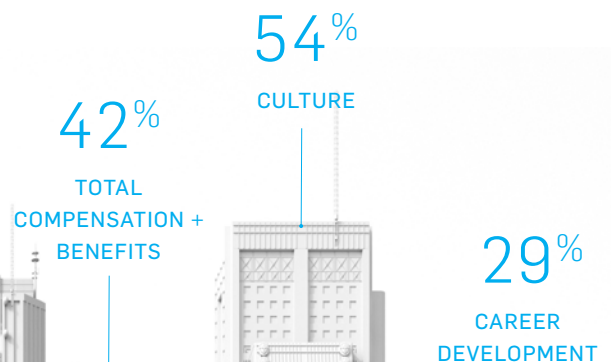
+ STRENGTHEN YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

THE BLACK SPECTACLES SURVEY CEMENTS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF A STRONG COMPANY CULTURE, BUT WHAT OTHER COMPONENTS CAN YOU LEVERAGE IN ATTRACTING AND RETAINING TOP MILLENNIAL TALENT?

Understanding the wants and needs of your current and potential employees can position you ahead of your competition. Culture definitively claims the top spot with 54% of first place responses. Survey respondents ranked total compensation & benefits as the second most important component of a job with 42% of second place votes, and receiving 29% of third place rankings is career development.

Keeping these statistics on your radar can inform recruiting techniques, or help in developing company ideals, which millennials are clearly paying attention to.

Workplace culture is most important for large firm employees. >





MILLENNIAL WORKPLACE SATISFACTION

A focused group of millennials employed by an organization with 100 or more employees, with a satisfaction rating of three stars or less shows they are even more committed to working longer hours for a fulfilling role.

The survey shows a 16% jump from hours currently worked of 50-59 hours per week to millennials pledging they would work these hours for a fulfilling role. Additionally, there is a 4% increase of millennial employees who currently work 60-69 hours per week but maintain they would work those hours in a satisfactory position. Several declared they would work maximum hours of 80+ hours per week for a fulfilling role.

This group is one that pledges to have a solid work ethic, and is one that could be actively recruited. There is a strong value proposition for an architect to seek other employment opportunities, so an effective recruiting method would be to capitalize on recruiting these unhappy candidates to your firm with a focus on supporting strong company culture.

+ RECRUITING TOP TALENT

OVER ONE-THIRD OF THE PARTICIPANTS
RATE THEIR SATISFACTION WITH THEIR
CURRENT ORGANIZATION AS THREE
STARS OR LESS.

This is assessed as “somewhat satisfied” at best, and believe this is a section of the workforce that can be recruited or motivated with the allure of a positive company environment. Given what has been proven as this group’s favorables - strong culture, competitive compensation, and career development, there is a road map of opportunities to attract and inspire this top talent by enhancing those assets in an organization. If there are members of your company who fit into this category of low satisfaction, implementing some policies and programs to enhance the company culture have been shown to boost morale and garner increased work ethic.





+ MANAGEMENT TAKEAWAYS

CONSIDERING THE ASPECTS OF
WORKPLACE CULTURE MILLENNIALS
VALUE MOST, THERE ARE SOME
ACTIONABLE ITEMS ORGANIZATIONS CAN
TAKE TO HIGHLIGHT EXISTING PROGRAMS
AS WELL AS CREATE A SET OF MEASURES
TO ATTRACT MILLENNIAL TALENT.

A strong culture fosters growth in the company and with the individuals who work there, amplifying their contributions to the organization in a symbiotic relationship.

There are ways to amplify collaboration and communication through chat platforms such as Slack, GoToMeeting, or GChat and with tools for task management such as Asana, Trello, and ProofHub. These programs foster an interaction that transcends role and department, without having the constraints of only meeting in a physical office space. They also create more channels for employee discussion and collaboration, but that isn't effective if the environment or tone isn't conducive to idea-sharing. In order to stimulate a collaborative work environment, first establish the framework to encourage the flow of ideas and innovation autonomously within the organization.

Embolden employees to create and share ideas freely and collaboration will become a natural behavior.

Another aspect millennials look for in an employer is the option to work from home or remotely. With the advent of the aforementioned digital communication services, facilitating a work from home program is fairly seamless. According to a Connect Solutions survey, 77% of workers said they were more productive when working remotely, and 30% stated they got more done in less time than when they worked in-house. Additionally, remote workers were less apt to take time off, even when they were ill, and according to Global Workplace Analytics, companies that implemented a telework program realized a 63% reduction in unscheduled absences⁶.

In identifying a company's core values, it better defines the culture of the entire organization. In the hiring process, it is a way to appeal to candidates who align with the same values, and for current employees, strong values provide a North Star or a direction to channel motivation. In regards to who is responsible for establishing a set of core values, 70% of respondents to the

Columbia and Duke professor's study agree with the statement, "Leadership needs to spend more time to develop the culture." ⁷

Not only are these attributes of a company what millennial architects are looking for, they prove to align with what leadership believes to benefit a company's success as well.

WHAT AREA OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT FOR EMPLOYERS TO SUPPORT?

56.6% of millennials said licensure is the most essential support from an employer. This took precedence over job training, conferences, certifications and tuition reimbursement. Similar to the other areas where investing in an employee's wellbeing garnishes returns in company productivity and success, supporting licensure does the same for architects.

Upon licensure, organizations can bill more for an architect's work, compounded by the influx of business a licensed architect can attract in the market. From an individual perspective, according to the American Institute of Architects (AIA), the base pay for a non-licensed architect staff member at level 1 is \$54,600, whereas the same position for a licensed architect is \$58,330⁸. The disparity gets larger as more seniority is accrued, which presents a sense of urgency to get licensed. Organizations that facilitate licensure will attract ambitious talent who are serious about progressing in their career.



+ CONCLUSION

HOW CAN YOU CREATE AND LEAD A STRONG WORKPLACE CULTURE?

Be aware that the workplace population is shifting from baby boomers and Generation X to millennials. The company culture that fostered a successful organization decades ago may not have the same effect in the present. With the transference in generational influence, the workforce has changed in significant ways; what motivates and attracts employees today are not the tangible items that pulled candidates in the past.

The long-standing norm in the architect industry has been a demanding schedule with long hours. However, the culture is changing; workplaces across industries have placed focus on work-life balance, and architecture is not different. While the survey respondents do not work extreme hours, the drive to put in more time still applies when the job is rewarding and the work environment enjoyable.

Building a strong workplace culture doesn't happen overnight; most of the connections which influence the atmosphere happen organically and take time. Creating a framework such as flexible work options, team outings routine meetings, and daily check-ins help foster a strong culture, but ultimately the foundation is grown and nourished by the leadership team and relies on the entire team to flourish in day-to-day interactions.

As a management team, setting the tone for a positive and encouraging environment is key, but the onus is on employees to follow through with the precedent that has been set. Supporting employees during working hours creates a great sense of community and team building, but the support should go beyond how a good company culture benefits a bottom line. An employer is a key part of an employee's career, so emboldening workers to expand their professional development is mutually beneficial. Successful employees make successful companies.



REFERENCES

1. Michael Dimock, [*“Defining Generations: Where Millennials end and Generation Z Begins.”*](#) Pew Research Center, January 17, 2019.
2. Richard Fry. [*“Millennials are the largest generation in the U.S. labor force.”*](#) Pew Research Center, April 11, 2018.
3. Emma Seppälä and Kim Cameron. [*“Proof That Positive Work Cultures Are More Productive.”*](#) Harvard Business Review, December 1, 2015.
4. Peter Economy. [*“The \(Millennial\) Workplace of the Future Is Almost Here -- These 3 Things Are About to Change Big Time.”*](#) Inc., January 15, 2019.
5. Susan Adams. [*“Corporate Culture Matters A Lot, Says New Study.”*](#) Forbes, November 12, 2015.
6. Abdullahi Muhammed. [*“Here’s Why Remote Workers are More Productive Than In-House Teams.”*](#) Forbes, May 21, 2019.
7. Susan Adams. [*“Corporate Culture Matters A Lot, Says New Study.”*](#) Forbes, November 12, 2015.
8. [*AIA Compensation Survey Salary Calculator*](#), Readex Research, 2019.



**black
spectacles**

hello@blackspectacles.com