

Get your shop in order to attract Millennial and Gen Z Technicians

It is seldom that a hiring manager in a shop is from the same generation as the young men and women they are hiring, who are starting off in their careers. That is really nothing new, but what is new is that the difference in attitudes and perceptions today with Millennials and Gen Zers is much more dramatic than with previous generations.

These generations are motivated by different things than baby boomers and even Gen X. Understanding and addressing these differences can help you dramatically in your recruiting and retention of technicians.

Here are some specific pointers that are worthy of consideration:

1. **Smartphones:** This generation looks at their phones as a gateway to information, and their connection to the world at large. Rethink any policy that forces them to put their phones away completely, and replace that with clear parameters for usage. For example -
 - a. Fast checks for family issues/emergencies
 - b. Use to Google work-related information
 - c. Charging stations
2. **Computers:** Ensure that you have a sufficient number of computers available for research, testing, and diagnosis so your techs don't have to wait on each other to look things up. It is frustrating for them, and a loss of revenue for the shop and the technician.
3. **Equipment:** Is your workshop equipment current and up to date with industry standards? Make sure you aren't using ancient tools. Millennials and Gen Zers will want to use the latest and greatest.
4. **Climate:** If in a warm climate, make sure there is air-conditioning in the shop so that employees are comfortable and vice versa if in a cold climate. Not only will they be more comfortable, but they will be more productive as well.
5. **Cleanliness:** Today's cutting edge shops are places you are proud to showcase. They are well-organized, with shining epoxy floors, a clutter-free environment and a written policy for maintaining cleanliness.
6. **Tools:** Do you have a designated place for tool storage that is clean, uncluttered and well organized? Is your tool inventory managed and controlled, or do your techs waste time digging through dirty tools thrown on a shelf to find what they need?
7. **Visibility:** Are your techs and shop visible from the service reception area and/or customer lounge? Today's cutting-edge shops no longer hide the tech but instead showcase the clean shop and professionalism of the techs, and are welcoming to

the customer. Techs who are skilled at engaging with people can be tapped to help explain issues/work needed, etc. to the customer. Direct communication with a tech facilitates the creation of a bond and a sense of trust for the customer. It also enables the tech to be more fulfilled in their job, by seeing and witnessing the helpful impact they're having on others.

8. **Certifications and credentials:** Are they proudly displayed to the customers, and seen as a point of pride? Do you have signage signifying industry certifications or accreditations that the shop or its techs have earned?
9. **Break/lunch room:** Do you have a dedicated break/lunch room area with microwave, refrigerator, quality drinking water (not an old, crusty water fountain) and coffee? Is the room cleaned regularly and is it an environment where you yourself would be happy to sit down and eat lunch?
10. **Motivational signage:** Installing motivational signage throughout the shop is a reminder for every one of the kind of culture you strive for. It is also a visible sign to your customers of what is important to your organization. There are many sources of this type of signage available online. Here is just one for your reference: <https://www.successories.com/Motivational-Posters/1>
11. **Career progression:** Do you have some type of hard copy document (flyer/poster/handout/page in your company handbook) that lays out the career progression plan(s) that your company adheres to? Millennials and Gen Zers want to see where their career is headed in visible steps.
12. **Respect:** Too often, the service department is not valued and respected at the same level as the sales department. Their personnel are sometimes viewed as “second class citizens”. This inequality can take many shapes. It can be in the quality, overall feel and cleanliness of the respective areas. It can be in sales meetings held at expensive restaurants, while service meetings are held in the lunch room with pizza and sodas. Senior management needs to take a hard, objective look for any potential inequities. If any exist, hiring and retaining new techs will be a challenge.
13. **Training:** Do you have a strategy for training technicians, and can you explain it to a new, savvy employee starting out?