

directive leadership.

- If time is not of the essence, lean toward participative leadership.

Other situational variables to keep in mind include the type and intensity of pushback you might get, the power of those pushing back, whether you have all the smarts needed, and the stakes involved in the decision. Assuming that the first rule is true, go ahead and implement your suggestions.

Still, Dr. Conflict wonders whether there isn't a good reason why the two dissenters have pushed back. Maybe their acceptance is really important. Maybe it's not in your job description to implement suggestions without unanimous support. Or maybe, just maybe, your suggestions aren't really as good as you think they are. After all, a bad idea isn't improved by long-winded explanations; it's still a bad idea. So how about taking off the hair shirt for a minute and asking the dissenters what's going on with the pushback? What do they think should be done? And as long as you're at it, ask the other board members the same questions. Just remember: it takes a thick skin to be a leader, and it might not be pleasant to hear the answers.

Now what about those millennials? For purists, millennials are not yet out of elementary school, but most now combine echo boomers (those born between 1977 and 2000) and the Millennium Generation (those born since 2000). This generation is known by a variety of names, including Generation Y and Generation Next. They've also been called the Boomerang Generation, which is particularly apropos considering that during the current economic crisis, many moved back home.

No matter what you call them, though, they make up a third of the population, give or take, and are just now coming into their own. Though there is debate about how best to lead this generation, there is near-unanimity that its members are and will be high maintenance.

Though the phrase "What's in it for me?" has also been used to describe this generation, Dr. Conflict wonders how this is different from the attitude of any other generation. So what if they think in transactional terms of "What's in for me?" So what if they are concerned about their personal life and striking a balance with work? So what if they want a fair deal? And you don't?

The wonderful thing is that the millennials are straightforward about what they want. For sure, it will be harder to inspire them with visionary leadership, but that isn't such a bad thing. Indeed, there is a small but growing group of experts that argues that transactional leadership, which emphasizes reciprocity, is inherently more ethical than transformation leadership, which stresses charisma and vision.

In the end, it is not about what the millennials or boomers want but what we all deserve in the workplace: "respect, fair treatment, equality, balance, flexibility, appropriate feedback, job enhancement, and advancement opportunities." These goals were as important to our parents and they are to us now and as they will be to the class of 2030. Thank goodness this generation will be out there making us all more honest.

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