

Millennials from 1A

However, recent surveys put these claims in doubt. Personal finance website Bankrate.com found that a quarter of 18-to-25-year-olds reported not using their paid vacation days.

This year, the Boston Globe reported that nearly half of millennials consider themselves “work martyrs” — dedicated, indispensable and racked with guilt if they take time off.”

With job-related emails flooding inboxes through all hours of the day, the Globe reported that analysts aren’t talking about the boomer concept of “work-life balance” anymore, but “work-life blending.”

But still, the lazy stigma remains. Baby boomer managers often complain about millennial attitudes at work; they’re not motivated and they can’t pay attention.

While the millennials interviewed for this series didn’t fully refute that characterization outright, they found a complicated economic and social landscape that, to them, bred the stigma.

25-year-old Dan Lokic, who just arrived in Florence this summer as the city’s management analyst, believed motivation was a huge factor in millennial satisfaction at the workplace.

“I think millennials are much more likely to be opinionated at work,” he said. “If they’re working in a job that they don’t like, it’s going to be a lot more evident than if a baby boomer

was doing that. I think that’s because a lot of millennials are passionate about certain things. If they’re in a job where they don’t feel that passion, like a cashier, they think, ‘This sucks,’ and quit.”

Baby boomers, he argued, would be more willing to suffer through a job they didn’t like because the pay was good and lifetime benefits made quitting difficult.

However, those benefits have dried up in recent years.

Wages for millennials are at historical lows. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, full-time workers age 18 to 34 made \$35,845 in 1980. For the period of 2009-13, they made just \$33,883. The figures were not adjusted for inflation.

In addition, long-term benefits are evaporating. CNN recently reported that only four percent of employers offer pension plans, compared to 60 percent in 1980. Instead, the country has moved to 401(k)s, which can be transferred from job to job.

“In the past, the trend was you find a company and you stick with it for quite a while until you retire,” Lokic said. “Now you’re seeing a workforce where millennials hop around. And that’s the new norm.”

But instead of complaining about the norm, millennials are embracing it.

“I don’t have a pension, but there’s people with a million dollars in the bank who worked themselves to death and didn’t enjoy any of it,” Lucio said. “I enjoy my life and I do what I

want and how I want it. I’m very happy. I’m an entrepreneur and I own my business, so I won’t follow rules from anybody.”

She came to this outlook from her past work experiences.

“I had corporate jobs and it was all scripted. You have to do this and sit in this box for so many hours a day. And then you get to leave for a 45-minute lunch. And you have to clock back in.

“I hated myself. I didn’t want to do what other people wanted me to do. I wanted to be free and to do what made my heart happy. I was making a lot of money and it was great, but I wasn’t doing things I loved. I was getting overweight. It wasn’t fun for me,” she said.

That’s not to say that she’s a flake when it comes to work.

“I was raised to value work and that nothing is being handed to you,” she said.

When she was 18, her dad

gave her two choices: Work or go to college. She chose college for a while, but she didn’t find it interesting. Her father, grandfather and brother were barbers and were perfectly happy, so she went to trade school to follow in their footsteps. She hasn’t looked back since.

A 2016 study by Deloitte University Press found that only 16 percent of millennials see themselves with their current employers a decade from now, but the reasons didn’t always mirror Lucio’s experiences.

Only 28 percent felt that current organizations were making full use of the skills they had to offer. Millennials were also hungry for advancement, with six in 10 bemoaning the fact that their leadership skills were not being fully developed. Millennials believed businesses were not doing enough to bridge the gap to ensure a new generation of leaders was being

created.

Lokic is part of the millennial generation that took a more traditional route, getting a master’s degree in Regional Planning. He’s made the traditional nine to five work for himself, and has seen ways managers can make jobs better for millennials.

He said, “The first way to make them stay is to ask them, ‘What would make you stay?’ Maybe if a millennial isn’t doing the type of work they like doing, a manager should ask, ‘What do you want to work on? What do you enjoy doing?’

“I think if an employer works with an employee and tries to help them, they’re more willing to stay with you and give you good and hard work. I wouldn’t necessarily accommodate everything they want, because they’re working for a specific purpose. But just being flexible and being understanding of millennial needs and wants is

important. It doesn’t mean you need to kiss up to them.”

He pointed out that benefits, such as flexible scheduling or the opportunity to work at home, are important factors in retaining millennials.

But keeping millennials in the workforce only happens when they have available jobs, which is something the Siuslaw region has been having difficulties with.

A report by Leland Consulting Group, which was issued by the Florence Urban Renewal Agency in November 2015, found that the Great Recession hit the Siuslaw region harder than the rest of the state.

In 2013, job growth for Oregon raised 5.2 percent, while it decreased 7.7 percent in Florence.

See **MILLENNIALS, CONT. 7A**

Siuslaw News

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