



Providing Meaningful Feedback With SPM Tools: How to motivate and keep millennials in sales



[Rahul Nair](#)
[Optymyze.](#)

The rise of millennials in the workplace is often lamented, but in the sales industry, millennials are a perfect fit - they are ambitious, focused, and have an entrepreneurial spirit. This means they will actively go after sales opportunities and not give up easily. Once they believe in a company and set their minds on selling, they will give their all to shift products. They also adopt new technologies fast and use them to their advantage.

On the other hand, millennials are known to “job hop” frequently. According to [Deloitte's 2018 Millennial Survey](#), 48 percent see themselves leaving their jobs within two years and only 28 percent seek to stay beyond five years. This perceived lack of loyalty might be a sign that organizations have not yet adapted their engagement habits for the millennial generation.

What do millennials want?

To start, millennials have a strong desire to grow, deliver impact and become leaders. They want to understand where they fit into the company, how their work impacts results, and how the organization helps them grow. Thus, delivering meaningful feedback is a crucial step that needs to be taken by sales leaders and their HR teams in order to retain millennial sales reps.

Increasingly, HR and sales managers are recognizing the true value of their sales performance management (SPM) tools and are tapping the data within to uncover key feedback-related insights. Since SPM data provides a real-time view of the sales team's progress and individual rep results by region and territory, or organizational level, managers have unprecedented visibility into the selling behaviors of top performers and can then apply a proven standard of performance on which to base feedback. Meanwhile, SPM solutions provide millennials reps a digital outlet by which they are empowered and motivated to own their careers top to bottom.

Let's take a closer look at utilizing SPM to deliver meaningful feedback that inspires millennials for the long haul.

Real-Time Performance Metrics

In order to help millennial sales reps succeed and achieve professional satisfaction you must have visibility into their performance metrics. How many calls are they making? How many meetings have they scheduled? How many deals are they closing? What's the average value of their deals? This data is the ace up your sleeve guiding the right course-correction feedback and actions.

The data shared through SPM tools provides managers with this valuable information, as well as who is performing well and who isn't, helping them measure employees against their peers and clearly see why one rep may be underperforming. At the same time, managers gain visibility into the behaviors of top-performing reps and can work with individuals to replicate those behaviors in a real-time feedback loop.

The Digital-Native Generation

While the traditional approach to providing feedback through in-person discussions is still a process that should occur annually, if not bi-annually, SPM platforms allow for mobile-friendly ways of keeping employees connected and up-to-date on their latest progress, 24/7. For example, mobile productivity calculators offer millennial sales reps the ability to gauge their own performance against their coworkers whenever and wherever they might be, providing clear, concise "need-to-know" intel that helps them reach their next sales goal.

SPM tools also make it easy for companies to introduce gamification into their sales operations, appealing to the always-competitive sales rep. Who doesn't like a little friendly competition? Gamification works seamlessly for millennials because it leverages key behaviors that define them- they are team players, collaborators, and achievement-oriented. They thrive on recognition not just by managers but by peers and other leaders in the organization.

Turning SPM Data into Action

Scheduling regular SPM-based feedback sessions with millennial sales reps will help them feel valued and respected – which are both great motivators. Focus on their most recent activities and create a comfortable atmosphere in which they can talk about their challenges and pain points. From there, a performance improvement plan can be built, customized to each individual's strengths and goals. It's also important to ensure this training and performance content is housed digitally so reps can reference it at any time via the device most convenient to them in real time. By enabling on-demand access, employees feel more empowered to take autonomy over their career and goals.

Meaningful feedback is important, but it's not the final destination. HR and sales managers must provide their millennial sales reps with opportunities to develop their skills through in-house or external trainings. After all, they need to practice applying their feedback in a friendly work environment. It will be time well spent, as millennial reps will be more driven to succeed and bring more knowledge and confidence to their interactions with prospects, whether over the phone or in person.

Reinforcing the Process

Yes, SPM data is a key resource that drives millennial motivation. However, it's important to remember that this technology alone is not enough – sales organizations need to holistically transform the way they work if they want to not only retain top millennial talent but also build sustainable sales operations for the future. This is why it is absolutely critical to identify and standardize the preferred selling behaviors through SPM and apply them across the whole organization to millennials and beyond. Most companies see the greatest success when they engage with strategic partners who can help objectively assess and establish the process that tie such behaviors to specific business objectives.

Compensation plans can be a great tool in facilitating this operational change, and SPM tools can make this process both easy and effective while helping to align compensation and bonus plans with the larger sales organization strategy. When the organization can identify its most pressing need – whether it be acquiring new customers, retaining those customers or focusing on new product distribution – it can create consistency between sales compensation and organizational objectives so that every sales action ladders back up to a larger goal.

Make sure to proactively and consistently communicate these compensation plans and expectations with the sales team. The best sales performance comes when the team is fully aware of the company's direction,

what they must do on an individual level to move the company toward that goal and how they will be rewarded for it. When creating goals for compensation plans it is important to keep the targets challenging yet still achievable. SPM data can assist in identifying quotas and targets by looking at the track record of the sales team, allowing organizations to set attainable goals that make sales reps go that extra mile.

In the case of millennial sales reps, it's also important to think about what *drives* them to go that extra mile. Here's a hint – it's not all about money anymore. Millennials value work-life balance and experiential rewards. To further engage this generation, organizations should consider offering them options, such as choosing their own compensation plan. For example, they can mix and match a cash incentive and an all-inclusive resort vacation when achieving key sales goals. Or, they can select a day off to participate in a community service event that they are passionate about. Regardless of the prize, this “Choose your own Adventure” approach to compensation is one that provides the most meaningful rewards for each individual, thus inspiring them to work even harder.

In summary, HR and sales managers need to work in tandem to create a workplace culture that not only drives success but motivates millennial employees to truly be their best. By using SPM tools to provide knowledgeable, personal feedback, HR teams can show sales reps that they are supported and appreciated, which in turn will create meaningful change in selling behaviors across the sales organization.

Author Bio

With over 10 years of experience in supporting executives drive desired business outcomes for their sales organizations, **Rahul Nair** serves as Director of Strategic Engagement at Optymyze. During his time at Optymyze, Rahul has worked with clients to increase accuracy, timeliness, automation, efficiency and transparency in the sales organization. He holds a BS in Mechanical Engineering from Pune University.

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