

## Column: Millennials are making workplaces safer

---

[theoaklandpress.com/opinion/column-millennials-are-making-workplaces-safer/article\\_becc0f1a-eaca-11e9-](https://theoaklandpress.com/opinion/column-millennials-are-making-workplaces-safer/article_becc0f1a-eaca-11e9-)

By Corey Lindros, Special to MediaNews Group

October 9, 2019



So many people complain about millennials not exhibiting the work ethic of yesteryear. But in our workplace, I love what I'm seeing with millennials.

Truth be told, millennials are coming into the work site and improving things in unprecedented, unexpected, and wonderful ways. And I see this from a safety perspective.

The world of work site safety has increased dramatically from the days of old. In today's world, we have a mixture of manpower -- a lot of young guys coming in and a lot of older guys starting to step out. Some guys have been doing the work one way for 30 years. Working side-by-side with new guys, who don't have experience or knowledge to understand what safety looks like just yet, they impart their knowledge and expertise from decades-long careers.

At the same time, apprentices go through a lot of safety schooling before they get into the field nowadays. They're actually helping journeymen with safety, and the journeymen are helping them learn the craft. That's a switch of priorities in our industry, and it's revolutionizing how safety is being brought into the field.

We are a union contracting company, and we try to keep the same manpower load. It's a nice synergy to see wisdom going two ways. It's a good path for communicating safety.

In our company, the safety culture comes from the very top all the way through the organization. We've decided to implement a safety software system. Some of our long-time, hands-on, mechanical guys are not comfortable using computers or other technology. Newer men on the job don't mind jumping on a phone or computer for safety training. While the expert guys are bringing along their younger peers in talent and detail of different jobs, it's the young guys who are helping with safety in so many ways.

We utilize safety training to onboard newer folks, and we can track it. We have the option of modular training on phones, laptops and other devices, audits right from a phone, taking pictures in real time. Our system notifies foremen, supervisors and executive-level guys what is happening in real time.

A safety culture begins the first day a person starts with our company. Our new hire package outlines our expectations from a safety standpoint. We also offer an incentive program, a safety lottery that everybody in the company is entered into. They could win a \$100 Visa gift card, safety gear, extra on top of the day to day stuff, to motivate everyone to continue their attention to safety.

Safety is no joke. Everyone talks about it, and we know on some level that it is essential, but a top-level-down focus on safety separates the smaller players from the big boys. By embedding this in every level of the business, we're saying our people matter more than anything -- and that grabs attention from higher-level jobs. It is for sure an investment.

Of course, there is more to this from a technical aspect than meets the eye. A company, in order to have jobs with General Motors or Ford or some of the other big players, has to meet a series of qualifications, many of which are safety-related. We want employees who have great safety records and can maintain them. By connecting the generations in our work sites, we're ensuring that everyone is aligned in a focus on safety -- and connected by company priorities.

You can understand the culture of a company by its invested interest in safety. Not just the documents that need to be provided, not just a third-party audit here or there. When you have systems and people dedicated to always keeping eyes on safety, you know it's a priority.

There are many reasons we want our guys to keep working. It's not just to build our bottom line, or for our future as a company. It's because we are a people-focused company first and foremost. Without people, you have nothing. And without a guarantee of safety, you have no people.

We say we are a back-to-work company, we want to keep everyone working, and we put our

money where our mouths are. The guys know it. They live it, alongside one another, motivated by the knowledge that the company at its highest level cares about them. That's the assurance, and the future, that a dedicated approach to safety can offer. And we have our youngest employees to thank for making that a reality.

Corey Lindros is Corporate Safety Director for Progressive Mechanical, which is based in Ferndale.