

# The Future of Work - How are Employers Adjusting to Millennial Expectations

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## INTRODUCTION

- The purpose of this research was to examine how agricultural based companies are staying ahead while new technology advancements and millennial expectations are influencing future labor markets.

## METHODOLOGY

- For the purpose of this research, we scouted and examined three agriculturally related companies (*John Deere*, *Taylor Farms* and *G3 Enterprises*) at a local, national and global level.
- Each company was asked questions relating to workplace technology, employee performance and progression.

## BACKGROUND

- A 2018 OECD study looked at the risk of jobs being eliminated by automation and found jobs with the greatest risk include food preparation, construction, cleaning, farming and sectors that employ migrant workers. The same study mentioned the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how it is affecting labor in the agriculture industry forcing many workers to change employers or jobs quite often.
- According to Robert Watler's Whitepaper entitled, "Attracting and Retaining Millennial Professionals," Millennials will make up a majority of the workforce by 2025 and already serve as a large part of the current working population as Generation X and Baby Boomers cycle out
- The same whitepaper categorized Millennials: born 1980-1999, Generation X: born 1960-1979 and Baby Boomers: born 1940-1959.
- G3 Enterprises** is a leading packaging manufacturer, bottling services, and logistics solutions business based in Modesto, California with less than 1,000 employees.
- Taylor Farms** is an American based producer of fresh-cut fruits and vegetables. The company was established in 1995 and is headquartered in Salinas, California with approximately 2,000 employees and another 8,000 employed at other facilities across the United States and Mexico.
- John Deere** is an American corporation that manufactures agricultural, construction and other heavy equipment machinery. This company is a world leader in providing advanced products and services and is committed to the success of its customers worldwide. Established in 1837, John Deere has grown to over 10,000 employees based in Moline, Illinois

## RESULTS

| QUESTIONS  | JOHN DEERE   | TAYLOR FARMS  | G3 ENTERPRISES   |
|--|--|---|--|
| • What types of technology is your company utilizing?  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology based company</li> <li>Investment in Blue River Technology (See and Spray technology)</li> <li>AutoTrack (self driving farm machinery)</li> <li>Virtual Reality to show farmers product use</li> </ul>     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Technology investments to improve productivity</li> <li>Looking at automatic harvesting</li> <li>Employees are given laptop and cell phone</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newest advancement: Millennials in company moved G3 transportation system to digital</li> </ul>   |
| • Has newer technology influenced employee performance?                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Modeling business model similar to tech companies in Silicon Valley</li> <li>Open cubicles, more interaction</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demographic is mostly young professionals (Salinas Facility) and issued laptop and cell phone as resources for support</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New digital system has challenged older employees more familiar with manual system</li> </ul>   |
| • Does your company offer employee reviews or feedback? If so, how often?                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Year and End-Year Reviews (more conversation based in public environment)</li> <li>Employees who want more frequent feedback usually set up more meeting times in addition to mid and end year reviews</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual performance review</li> <li>Employees encouraged to request feedback</li> <li>Informal reviews after 90 days</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previously was a once a year performance assessment</li> <li>Coaching Notes program now x3 per year (assessment of previous 4 months and plan for next 4 months)</li> </ul> |
| • Are rewards or reinforcements available to employees based on a good job performance?      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Badging (virtual) - any employee can badge another employee for good performance</li> <li>Point system to earn company apparel</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>End of fiscal year bonus based on sales</li> <li>Salary review based on good performance</li> <li>Point system to earn company apparel</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual review of salary</li> <li>Kudos program (point system for gift cards)</li> </ul>   |
| • What opportunities do Millennials have for career progression or self-development?         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deere employees are encouraged and have the opportunity to shadow other employees and sometimes using Skype for longer distance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team Bonding</li> <li>Strengths Training</li> <li>Business and Leadership training to teach employees the goals of Taylor Farms</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Harder for a smaller company to provide a promotion right away (only so many spaces)</li> <li>New employees have to have experience before moving up in company</li> </ul>  |
| • Does your company offer shadowing opportunities or personalized training to new employees? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some training, learn as you go</li> <li>Employees utilize shadowing opportunities with resources on how to prepare</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New employees shadow periodically throughout the first 2 weeks, tour facilities and company welcome presentation</li> <li>Shadowing available to high school and college students</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No formal training or shadowing</li> </ul>  |
| • How is your company promoting a positive and inclusive work environment?                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee resource groups based on identity (Black, Latinx, LGBTQ, etc.)</li> <li>Diversity and Inclusion event at headquarters with Deere leadership on panels.</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Open cubicle layout, open mutual and casual meeting spaces</li> <li>Promoting healthy lifestyle living</li> <li>Classrooms and educational seminars</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Behind the times, has not yet address how to implement diversity and inclusivity because of older and conservative location</li> </ul>                                      |
| • How do you ensure your employees are engaged and satisfied?                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social outings and good interaction</li> <li>Company intramural activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promoting family, health and wellbeing</li> <li>Trustworthy to employers, trustworthy to consumers</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examining employee turnover, creating goals</li> <li>Keeping employees engaged in large projects</li> <li>Encourage employees to take larger roles</li> </ul>               |

## CONCLUSION

- John Deere, the longest established company of the three, has more resources and financial capability to be an advanced company in the agriculture industry.
- John Deere and Taylor Farms are able to attract and retain millennials as an employer because of ample resources and positive work environment.
- G3 Enterprises is a newer and smaller scale operation. The size prevents G3 to be as competitive with Taylor Farms and John Deere when it comes to attracting Millennial employees.
- G3 Enterprises is in a smaller more conservative area, has not yet addressed how to create an inclusive and advanced workplace for Millennials.
- Millennials favor feedback and each company has their own assessment system that works for their operation.
- John Deere has the most shadowing and opportunities for employee advancement followed by Taylor Farms and the G3.
- The location is a large factor for these companies when it comes to providing support to employees. G3 Enterprises is located in Modesto. Taylor Farms has multiple facilities in California, Florida, Texas, Arizona and Mexico. John Deere is based in Iowa with operations across the United States and Globally
- The larger companies employ a wide demographics because of the different operations and more needs to address whereas, G3 Enterprises is on a micro level and does not have less needs to address.