

# It's Time To Prepare the Next Generation in Lodging

Millennials To Become the Largest Generation in the Workforce by 2025

By [Davonne Reaves](#)

HNN columnist

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The hospitality industry has been through major challenges over the past two years with the COVID-19 pandemic that will no doubt shape its future. Many of the top concerns facing the industry have centered on labor, including the diversity of the workforce.

But little attention has been given to what the next generation in lodging will look like, who will lead the industry, and how we're helping prepare the next generation in lodging for success.

If we want future generations to help shape the industry's future and innovate, our sector should invest in the next generation today.



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For the past 10 years, there has been a lot of focus on the millennial generation. For example, several hotel brands were created focusing on the millennial clientele. In addition, countless studies were conducted to understand the mindset of one of the largest generations in the workforce since the baby boomers.

Millennials [represent 44% of the workforce](#), and by 2025, are [expected to outnumber baby boomers](#) in leadership positions.

The industry is facing unique labor challenges, with [nearly 3 million workers having left the workforce](#) since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and must make strategic decisions to solve employment issues today and prepare for tomorrow.

## Leadership and Inclusion

According to a study conducted by Deloitte, approximately 63% of millennials believe their [employers aren't taking the opportunity to develop their leadership skills](#) or full potential in the workplace. Most millennials also think they are not gaining the industry or technical knowledge they need to become effective leaders.

In a study by Glassdoor, [76% of employees and job seekers stated that a diverse workforce](#) is important.

As an industry, we should focus on creating opportunities to adequately equip the next generation and facilitate a diverse and inclusive environment.

The next generation in lodging can shape and innovate the industry by becoming more inclusive and better reflecting the world's diversity.

We can't continue to grow as an industry if we do not adapt to the times.

My generation is challenging the status quo, so the inclusion efforts are not only made at the entry to mid-level positions, but also at the executive level, realizing that a more diverse C-suite can bring more money to the bottom line.

Executives should engage employees and listen to what they have to say and make them feel heard.

We have to address the issue of millennials leaving the hospitality industry and the increased disruption in our industry.

We're losing a lot of our workforce because of the increased appeal of entrepreneurship in recent years. But what if we created a culture in which employees could experience the freedom of entrepreneurship so they wouldn't feel the need to leave?

Let's prepare the next generation in lodging by training and giving them space and flexibility to experience different career paths within the industry.

## Final Thoughts

Listen to millennials. Sometimes we're not taken seriously and seen as college kids. But some of us are now hotel owners and executives, and we have a lot to say.

Some millennials have experienced two economic downturns and learned many lessons.

Most of us are not too far removed from operations and still have a vivid understanding of how to deal with guests successfully.

But, some millennials are around 40 years old and wondering why it is still the same people speaking at industry conferences so many years later.

It's time to include the next generation of leaders so we can be prepared to carry the baton and lead our industry towards a prosperous future.

*Davonne Reaves is the founder and president of The Vonne Group and co-host of the NextGen in Lodging podcast focused on inclusivity and diversity. She started her career as a front-desk agent and is now a hotel consultant and an asset manager.*

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