Generational Differences in the Military

An overview of the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and the Millennials

Request for Information

- **DACOWITS continues to be interested in the propensity, recruitment, and talent management of women joining the Armed Forces. The Committee requested a briefing on the following:**

  – Comparison between different generations serving within today's military (Baby Boomers and Generation X) and the new generation that is joining the Armed Forces (Millennials)

    • Factors to be compared could include mindset, views on family, job expectations, work ethic and habits, promotion/talent management, values, priorities

Agenda

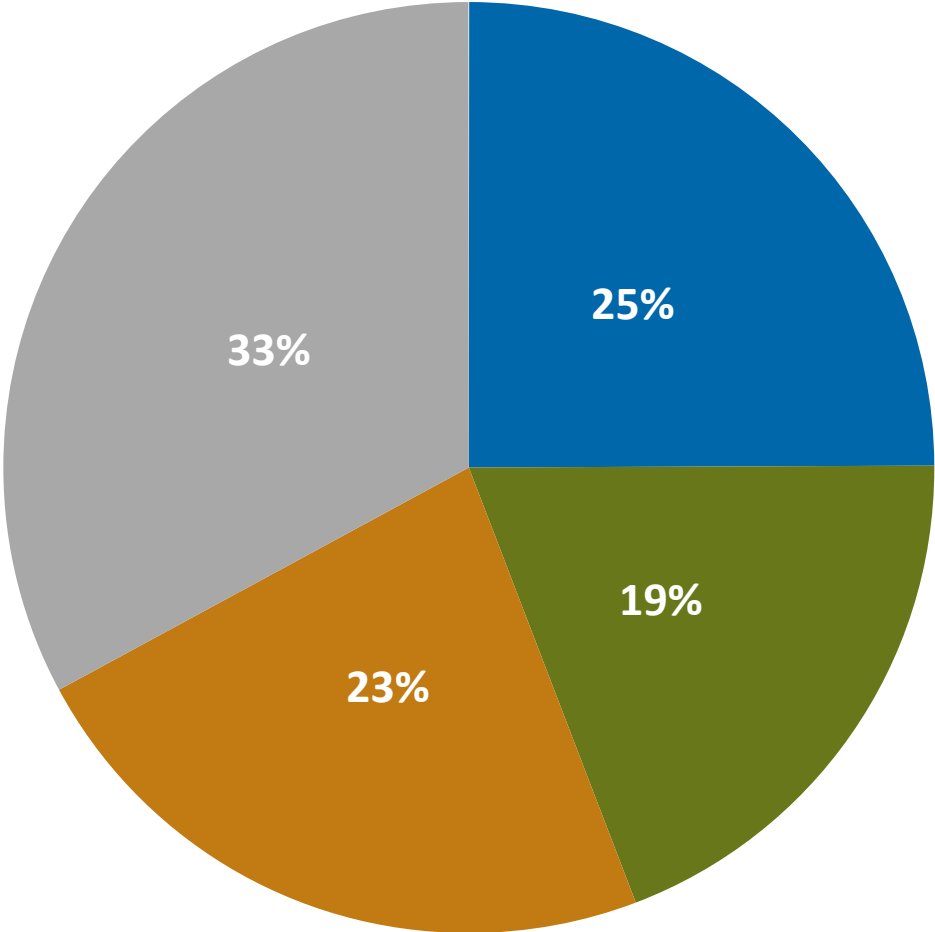- **Defining the Generations**
  - Values and Attitudes
  - Views on Family
  - Views on Work

- **Millennials in the Military**
  - Current Military Landscape
  - Propensity to Serve and Recruitment
  - Training, Talent Management, and Retention

Defining the Generations: U.S. Population[1]

- ■ Baby Boomers (b. 1946–1964)
- ■ Generation X (b. 1965–1981)
- ■ Millennials (b. 1982–2000)
- ■ Other

25%

19%

23%

33%

Additional citations: 13,24, 32

Generational Characteristics

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Defining Events[2]	• Civil rights • Vietnam War • Cold War • Sexual Revolution • Woodstock • Lowered voting age • Assassination of JFK	• Latch-key kids • Watergate • End of Cold War • Fall of Berlin Wall • MTV • First Apple computer	• Heightened security • School shootings • 9/11 • Digital era • Children of divorce
Innovations[2]	• Television • Telephones • Polio vaccine • Satellites • Airline industry	• Computers • Microwave • DNA discovered • Atari • VCR	• Internet • 24-hour journalism • Cell phones • Text messaging • Social media
Pop Culture and Heroes[2,3,33]	• Martin Luther King • John F. Kennedy • The Beatles • Partridge Family • Nixon	• Clinton/Lewinsky • OJ Simpson • Dennis Rodman • Madonna • Michael Jordan • Grunge music	• Saved by the Bell • Seinfeld • Friends • Hip hop • Boy bands • Oprah Winfrey

Generational Characteristics [2,3,4,26]

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Attitudes	• Anti-war • Anti-government • Challenge authority • Equal rights • Optimistic • Question everything • Involvement • Materialistic • Want to "make a difference" • Highly competitive • Privileged • Workaholics • Self-fulfillment • Individualistic	• Balance • Diversity • Highly educated • High expectations • Independent • Informal • Work-life balance • Skeptical • Independent • Self-reliant • Resourceful • Self-starters	• Diversity • Self-confident • Most educated • Global community • Safety first • Expectant • Optimistic about future and economy • Idealistic • Empowered • Team players • Respect authority • Rule followers • Collaborative • Innovation

Who Are the Millennials?

Compared to other generations, Millennials—

- **Are more liberal[6]**

- **Are more accepting of—**
  - Immigration[6]
  - Different ethnicities[11]
  - Less defined gender roles and homosexuality[9,11]

- **Are the most diverse generation in race/ethnicity[10,11]**

- **Are less religious than previous generations[11]**

- **Are less strict on personal appearance; about one-third of young adults have tattoos[7]**

- **Are similar to the pre-Baby Boom generation in community, and teamwork[13]**

Additional citations: 13

Who Are the Millennials?

<u>Compared to other generations, Millennials—</u>

- **Are seen as impatient and overly expectant, possibly because they were more sheltered as children[32]**

- **Are more civic minded yet not as politically active; they are only attentive to national affairs in high-profile situations[12]**

- **Prefer the use of diplomacy when possible[32]**

- **Are just as altruistic, if not more so, than older generations[6]**

- **Are projected to be the most educated generation in U.S. history; they are under pressure to be overachievers and seek high levels of educational attainment. Women, in particular, are very well educated.[15, 38]**

Views on Family [2, 4, 14, 17]

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Mother	• Stay-at-home mom	• Working mother • Single mother	• Working parent(s)
Family Structure	• Dispersed family	• Single parents	• Single parents • Looser family structure • Merged families
Marriage/ Children	• Increasing divorce rate • Divorced/remarried	• Wait longer to marry	• Marry older or never marry • Have children later

Millennial Views on Family

Compared to other generations, Millennials—

- **Marry older[10]**

- **Are less likely to marry[10]**

- **Spend as much or more time with their children; mothers spend the same amount of time with their children, but fathers spend more time with their children[16]**

- **Are more concerned with being a good parent than with having a good marriage[17]**

Views on Work[2,4,5,28]

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Character-istics	• Committed • Personal fulfillment • Intrinsic goals (self-acceptance, affiliation)	• Tentative or divided loyalty • Extrinsic goals (money, fame)	• Less loyalty • Respect competency over position • Innovation • Networking • Multitasking • Tech savvy • Extrinsic goals (money, fame)
Work Schedule	• Workaholic • No time off • Invented 50+ hour workweek	• Plenty of time off • Work-family balance • Work smarter, fewer hours	• Flex time, job sharing, etc. • Work-life balance
Messages to Motivate	• "You are valued/ needed"	• "Do it your way, forget the rules"	• "You will work with other bright people"

Views on Work[2,34]

|	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials
Preferred Environment	• Equal opportunity • Warm and friendly	• Fast-paced • Efficient • Fun • Positive	• Collaborative • Creative • Diverse • Positive • Flexible • Desire continuous feedback
Desired Workplace Character-istics	• Clear and concise expectations • Good fit with company • Teamwork • Ability to stand out	• Tasks with a clear purpose • Engaging • Cutting edge • Dynamic leadership	• Challenging work • Strong mentors • Constant learning opportunities

Millennial Views on Work[34]

In a 2012 poll of Millennials...

- **81% think they should be allowed to set their own hours at work**

- **88% want their co-workers to be their friends**

- **60% think they will switch jobs in the next 5 years**

- **50% believe switching jobs will help them climb the corporate ladder faster**

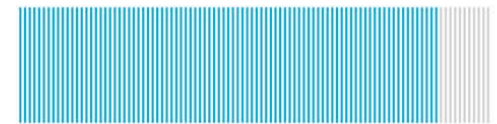- **50% would rather have no job than a job they hate**

3/4

3 out of 4 Millennials would like to have a mentor.
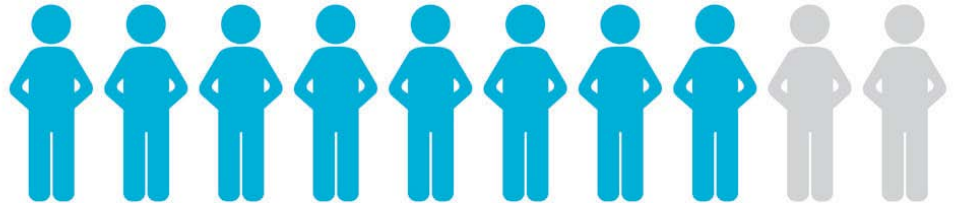
8 out of 10 Millennials want regular feedback from their boss.

2/3

Two-thirds of Millennials think they should be mentoring older co-workers on technology.

89% of Millennials think it is important to be constantly learning at their job.

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Millennial Views on Work

<u>Compared to other generations, Millennials—</u>

- **Are less likely to stay with one employer[12,34]**

- **Are more loyal to their personal life than their employers[12]**

- **Desire to keep their work lives and their personal lives separate[18]**

- **Place more emphasis on compensation that is useful in the now as opposed to the future (education benefits versus retirement)[19]**

- **Place greater value on enjoying their job than having a high-paying job[38]**

- **Are realistic about salary expectations for their first jobs but unrealistic with their overall career projection[20]**

- **Seek opportunities to improve themselves and desire environments in which they can develop new skills[20,34]**

Millennials at Work

Compared to other generations, Millennials—

- **Possess the ability to develop visions based on their personal drivers and to also take into consideration the desires of others[7]**

- **Are adept at sharing information with others on a global scale[32]**

- **Are more receptive to advice but require more explanation on the task process as well as the importance of the task[8]**

Millennials and the Military

"September 11 reinforced the heroic nature of people in uniform—be it policemen, firemen or members of the armed forces. Going forward, that will continue to leave a pro-institutional attitude on many of the generation. They see the value of institutions in making the world safer."

—Morley Winograd, co-author of *Millennial Momentum: How a New Generation Is Remaking America*[29]

Current Military Landscape: Active vs Reserve[31]

Legend: Generation X (age 36+) | Millenials (< age 36)

Category	Generation X (age 36+)	Millenials (< age 36)
All Service Members	26%	76%
Active Component	20%	81%
Reserve Component	33%	67%
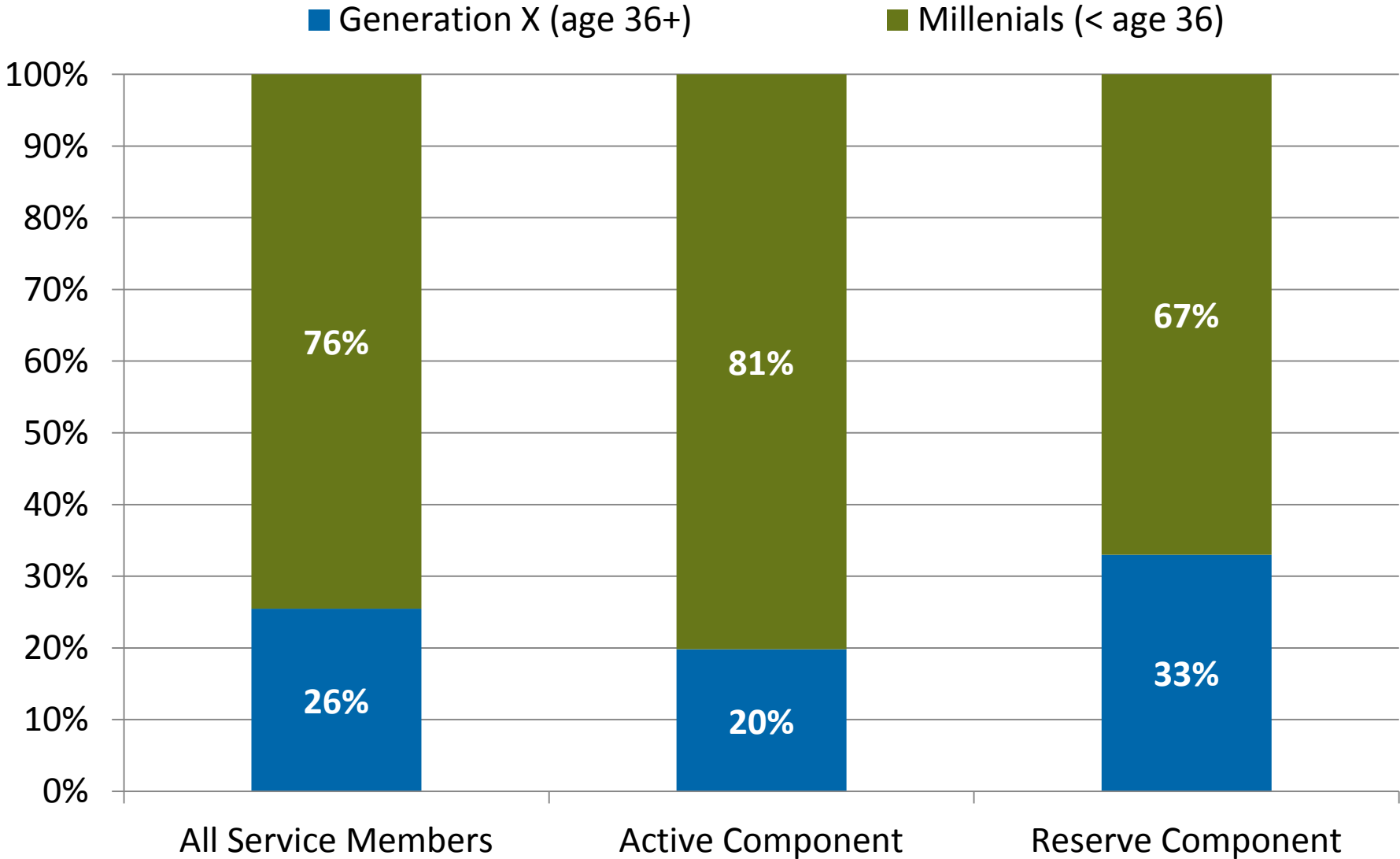
Current Military Landscape: Officer vs Enlisted[31]

Legend: ■ Generation X (age 36+)　■ Millenials (< age 36)

Category	Millenials (< age 36)	Generation X (age 36+)
All Service Members	76%	26%
Officers	49%	51%
Enlisted	81%	19%
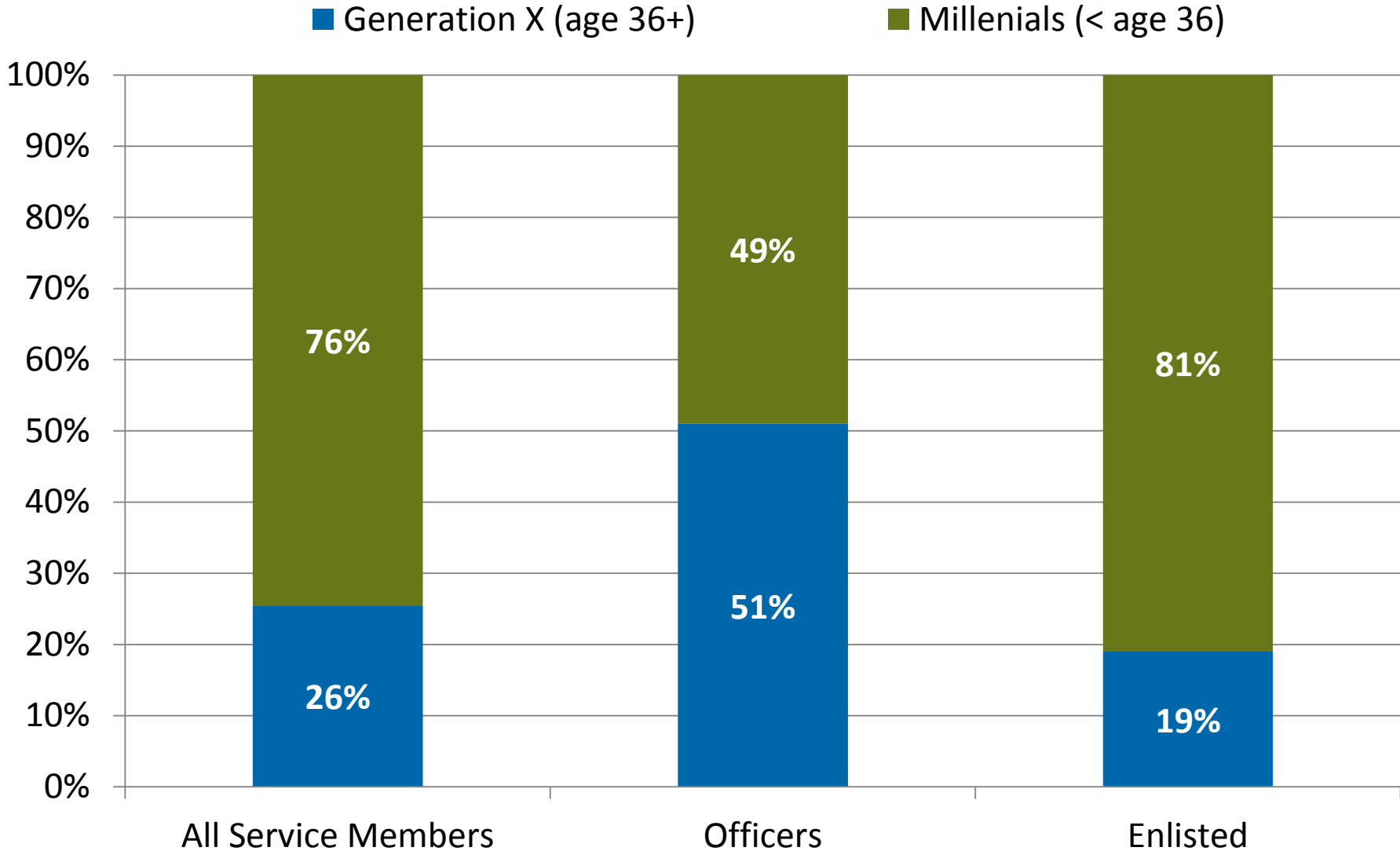
Current Military Landscape

- **Higher command positions are occupied by Baby Boomers and Generation X, with some Millennials occupying lower command positions[10,13]**

- **Current training methods are developed by Baby Boomers for Baby Boomers, making it hard for Millennials to adapt[7]**

Propensity of Millennials to Serve in the Military

Top-performing college students' post-graduation intentions, 2011[30]

Legend:
- Private sector employment — 29%
- Nonprofit/teaching — 17%
- Graduate school — 27%
- Federal Government — 2%
- Something else (including military) — 23%
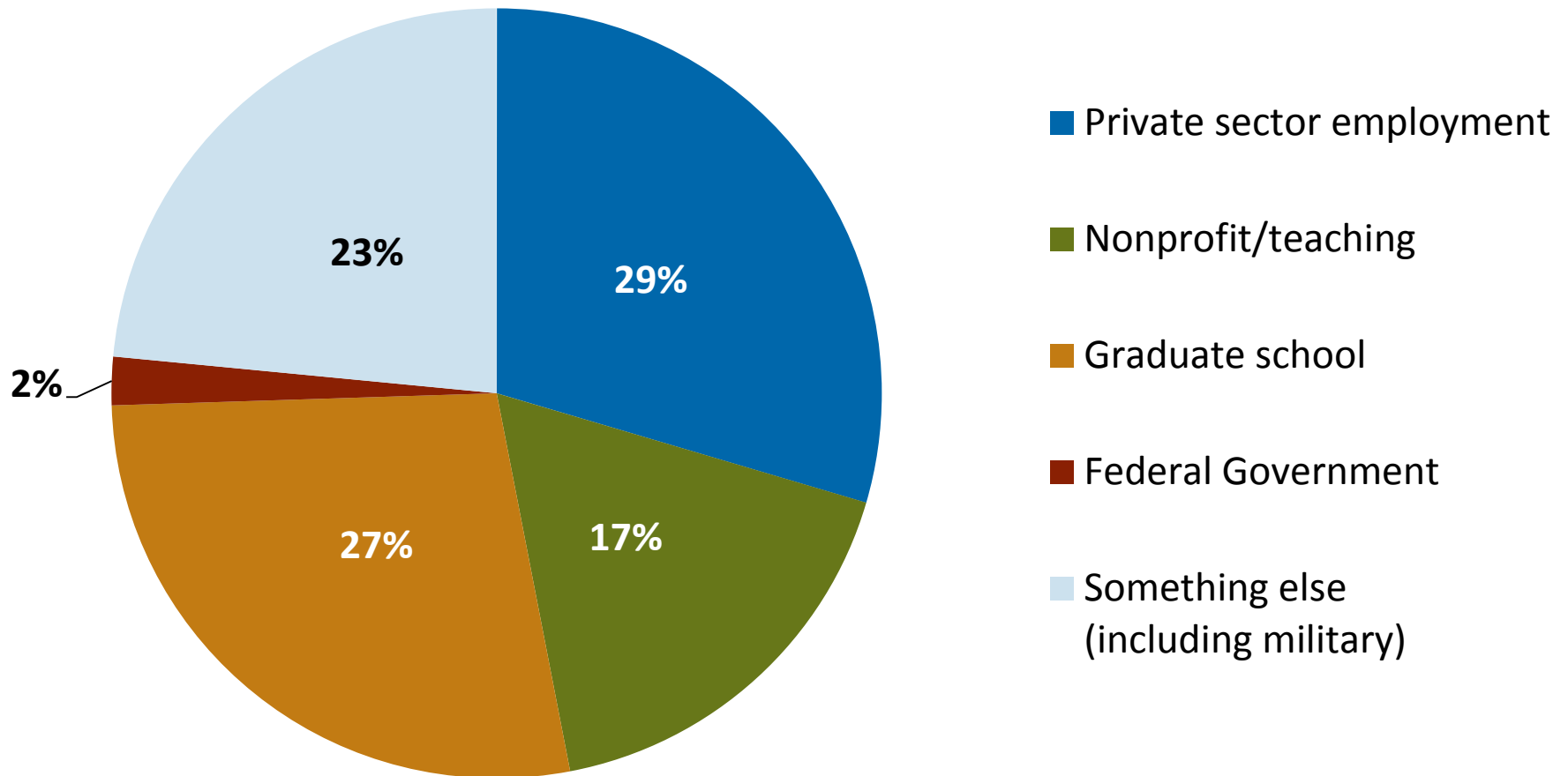
Recruiting Millennials

- **Strong commitment to family and work-life balance[13]**

- **Strong commitment to community[13]**

- **Strongly support the military but are not necessarily interested in joining[23]**

- **Importance of having family members with military service family [22]**

  – Veterans and family members of veterans are more likely than the general public to recommend the military to young people[22]

- **Importance of Internet- and social media-based recruitment communications[13]**

Recruiting Millennial Women

- **Military is not seen as a viable career for women[23]**

- **Nearly 15% of Millennial women said they would avoid the defense sector because it has a negative image[36]**

- **82% of Millennial women believe an employer's policies on diversity, equality and workforce inclusion are an important consideration in deciding on an employer[36]**

- **Work-life balance is important. 20% of Millennial women would give up some of their pay or slow their rate of promotion in order to work fewer hours[36]**

- **Important factors for Millennial women in selecting a job[36]:**
  - 22% value training and development opportunities most strongly
  - 19% value flexible working hours most strongly
  - 69% desire international work experience at some point in their career

Training, Talent Management, and Retention for Millennials

- **Desire creativity and initiative rather than blindly following orders[13]**

- **Flourish in teamwork situations[13]**

- **Desire constant learning[34]**

- **Respect competency over position/title (i.e., rank)[3]**

- **Oftentimes have casual attitudes toward information privacy[13]**

- **Don't plan to stay with one employer[12,34]**

- **Desire their co-workers as friends[34]**

- **Expect constant feedback[34]**

- **Desire a mentor[34]**

Talent Management and Retention for Millennials[37,39]

2015 Fortune/ Great Place to Work 100 Best Workplaces for Millennials

Benefit	% of Top 100 that offer it	% of others that offer it
Telecommuting	82	74
Flexible scheduling	76	63
Fitness classes	70	24
Massages	65	26
Paid volunteer days	46	39
Paid sabbaticals	15	11

Compared to other companies, the 100 best workplaces for Millennials had—

- **14-20% higher scores on innovation measures**
- **18% higher score on receiving a fair share of the profits**
- **14% higher score on management involving people in decisions that affect their career**

….when rated by their Millennial employees

Current Military Landscape: Men vs Women[31]

	Active Duty Men	Active Duty Women	Reserve Component Men	Reserve Component Women
Married	57%	45%	48%	36%
Dual Military	7%	46%	1%	8%
Divorced[35]	7%	3%	--	--
Have children	43%		43%	
Single Parents	4%	11%	8%	16%

Talent Management and Retention for Millennial Women[38]

- **Having children alters work priorities:**
  - 51% of mothers said being a working parent makes it harder for career advancement
  - 42% of mothers have reduced their work hours to care for a child or family member
    - 35% said it hurt their career
  - 39% of working mothers have taken a significant amount of time off from work to care for a child or family member
    - 32% said it hurt their career
  - 27% of mothers quit their job at some point to care for their children
  - 13% of mothers turned down a promotion
  - 63% of Millennial women without children believe having kids will make it harder for career advancement

Talent Management and Retention for Mothers[40]

2015 *Working Mother* 100 Best Companies

Benefit	% of Top 100 that offer it	% of others that offer it
Fully paid maternity leave	100	5
Childcare resource and referral service	96	9
Paid paternity leave	90	17
Professional development opportunities	98	84
Mentoring program	87	15
Cross-training to develop skills not directly related to job	87	42
Telecommuting	100	60
Flex time	100	54
Compressed work schedule	94	31
On-site stress reduction program	98	5
On-site fitness center	88	21

"...if the current leadership...learns to accept, deploy, and manage... [Millennials] effectively, the millennials could even provide an echo of the grit and selfless heroism that inspired journalist Tom Brokaw to label their grandparents "the greatest generation." On the other hand, if the leadership fails to understand and adapt — if it insists on harnessing millennials with outdated mind-sets, rules, and processes — it could squander a historic opportunity to reinvigorate the military and rekindle an idealistic, can-do spirit..."

—Military of Millennials, 2007[13]

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