

EMERGING LANE

Kentucky's young professionals and creatives

A Millennial 'Game Changer'

Cara Silletto's Crescendo Strategies

CARA Silletto has been called a "game changer," recognized by numerous organizations as an up-and-coming human resources professional with a unique approach.

What's unique about Silletto and her company, Louisville-based Crescendo Strategies? Her focus on millennials in the modern workplace. Millennials (those under 36) now comprise the largest generational group in the workforce; by 2020, they'll outnumber the Baby Boomers and GenXers combined. Silletto's unique position led her to start her own company in 2012 and author "The Millennial Mindset" earlier this year (available for free download at CrescendoStrategies.com).

We talked with Silletto to get some insights into how her rise in the HR world has happened and what the future holds.

TLR: What inspired you to create your own HR consulting business as a result? Clearly you saw a need.

CS: I began Crescendo Strategies as an entrepreneurial consulting firm, helping startups write business plans, do market research and run financial models. I quickly learned it wasn't fun telling dreamers that their babies were ugly. As we came farther out of the recession, I was looking for a new route and it was clear to me that the training and development cuts made during hard times were coming back to haunt organizations.

TLR: At what point were you inspired to focus on the behavior of Millennials?

CS: The Millennial niche found me. I had several HR and talent development mentors who had decades of experience consulting and training, and they encouraged me to go into the generational space

because I sit in a unique sweet spot for bridging the widening gaps. I'm a Millennial myself, born in 1981, and I have more than a dozen years of work experience where I learned (the hard way) what older managers and colleagues expected of me.

TLR: What, in your mind, defines Millennials in terms of their mindset and expectations in the workplace? How do they differ overall from GenXers and Boomers?

CS: We were raised differently. Millennials are extremely egalitarian, because we were raised with a voice as children. We don't see hierarchy like previous generations saw it because we got the same vote as our parents in many cases. After years of giving our opinion at home, it's pretty surprising for Millennials when they enter the workforce to find no one wants their opinion. Instead of titles, ranks and seniority, Millennials see everyone as equal in that we all bring value in our own way. Millennials not only embrace change, we expect it. Unlike Boomers who worked extremely hard to earn more money and "do better" and GenXers who learned the "Boomer way" of paying their dues, Millennials have strength in numbers and aren't willing to work 60-plus hour weeks and sacrifice too much at home.

TLR: Many older people identify Millennials as being "entitled." How do you handle these attitudes when working with HR professionals?

CS: It's critically important for HR professional and organization leaders to not place blame on Millennials for the heightened sense of entitlement seen today. It's there, but it's not our fault! HR must find middle ground here by having both Millennials and leaders communicate their expectations more clearly.

TLR: What do you see as the future of the American worker and workplace,



Cara Silletto

given that Millennials are overtaking these groups due to attrition?

CS: The times of long-term tenure and "commitment for commitment's sake" have passed. Most companies no longer offer long-term benefits, such as pensions, for employees and Millennials know that companies can let them go anytime. There's very little loyalty in either direction these days. To get and keep talent, it's time to focus on performance and results, rather than seniority, tenure and a time clock. I see more companies using contractor roles to reach goals or complete a specific scope of work.

TLR: What has it been like to see your company grow so much?

CS: We've made incredible strides and had unexpected obstacles since I started Crescendo Strategies in 2012. I never imagined I'd have a tribe of followers who believe I'm a thought leader, be quoted in *Forbes*, named by Recruiter.com as a "Top 10 Company Culture Expert to Watch," or recognized by *Workforce* magazine as a "game changer."

TLR: What's next for you and Crescendo?

CS: There's a growing need for reducing unnecessary employee turnover at companies across the United States, and I can't do it alone. Our team is building online courses to reach more supervisors and managers, and I've recently brought on fellow Millennial Erin Mires, Ph.D., with an HR and diversity specialty, to deliver on-site training programs and build new content for clients. — Kevin Gibson

Lexington to Get Largest Escape Center in the U.S.

Thanks to Countdown Games, team-building exercises are being taken to a whole new level. Coming this fall in Lexington, users can engage problem-solving and puzzle skills in a unique way, with some of the biggest escape rooms in the world.

According to the Countdown Games website, users can solve problems like time bombs. "Your evil uncle has died, but he programmed a bomb to go off 1 hour after his death to destroy any evidence of his crimes. Your job is to go into his home and solve his traps, puzzles and riddles before the bomb goes off! Movable walls, challenging puzzles with a surprise around every corner."

Visit countdowngames.com for more information.

Lakeside Live Offers New Central Ky. Food, Music Scene

The Mall at Lexington Green has undergone a major facelift in the last few years, and now it will be taking advantage of its waterfront location even more than before with Lakeside Live. Launched in mid-June of this year and running every Friday and Saturday night from 6 to 9 p.m. until Oct. 15, Lakeside Live offers local and regional musicians playing free shows. A project by Lexington Green owners, Langley Properties, the project came about as a way to increase the amount of visits to the retail center's shops and restaurants.

Visit lexgreenlakeside.com for more information.