

Identify | Influence | Achieve



The Millennial Bidders

David Wall

Winning your audience

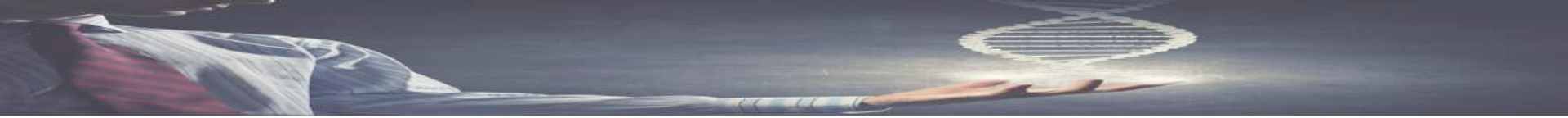
The DNA of engagement

APMP UK
14th Annual Conference 2016



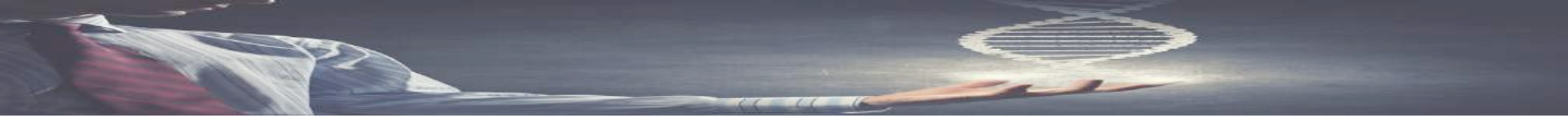
By 2020, 50% of the workforce will be millennials.

- Who are the Millennial bidders? What are their ambitions, skills and flaws?
- What do they want out of their bid careers and how can their bid leaders retain them?
- What impact do they (and will they) have on the bid profession?
- Are they already part of the audience we are trying to win over in our bids?
- Myth busting, both old and new – Can we open a line of communication between the old guard and the new?
- Where do we go from here?



Who are the Millennials?

- Me!
- More than just an age bracket – culture / psychology / skills / aspirations
- The impact of the Millennials is not purely a “bids question” but being debated across the workplace
- Like it or not, they are the future of the bids sector!



Why is this a topic at all?

- What do the junior bidders think of the sector, bidding as a career and THEIR careers?
- Is there a discourse break between the Bid directors and the junior writers/managers?
- Is this a seniority issue that has always been present, or new to this particular generation?
- What is the future of the bids sector? It's in their hands...



Surveys

- I have ideas, but could only shape this subject by asking millennials across the sector their opinions, ideas and what **they** feel.
- Hoped this would shape my talk and highlight what millennials themselves believe
- But I also asked senior/heads of/directors a similar set of questions to see if there are any differences of opinion across the generations...
- Led to two different surveys:



2 Surveys

Junior Survey

Do you see a long term career in the bids world?

Do you WANT a long term career in the bids world?

Do you think that technology helps or hinders the bid process?

Do you feel you are more skilled at graphics/technology/indesign than senior members team?

Do you enjoy your current role?

Do you think in your career you will want to move to another bids role to a different sector?

Would you rather work in a large firm or a smaller business/start up?

Is there the progression you hoped for in your current role?

Do you feel your current business reward loyalty to the firm?

Do you rate the level of training on offer at your current business?

Senior Survey

In your opinion, is the overall calibre of bidding higher now than in 2006?

Is the bidding world more competitive than it was in 2006?

Has technology enhanced the quality of bidding over the last 10 years?

Are millennials more skilled at graphics/technology/indesign than other members of the team?

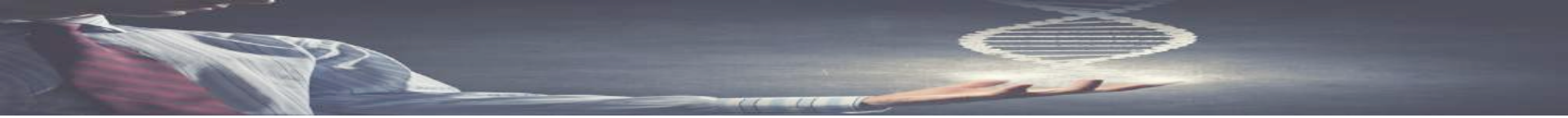
Do you tailor your bids for a potentially younger procurement audience?

If budget was no issue, would you rather hire an experienced (10yr bidder) over a junior bidder to train up?

Do you feel that millennials are less loyal to the business than previous generations?

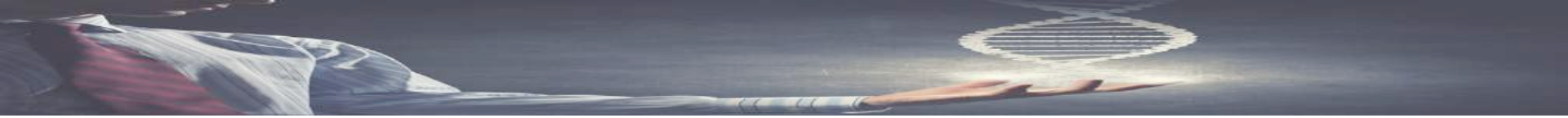
Do you see a long term future and career in bids for individuals now entering the bidding world?

Is the training on offer in your firm for junior individuals better than you remember it being for you?



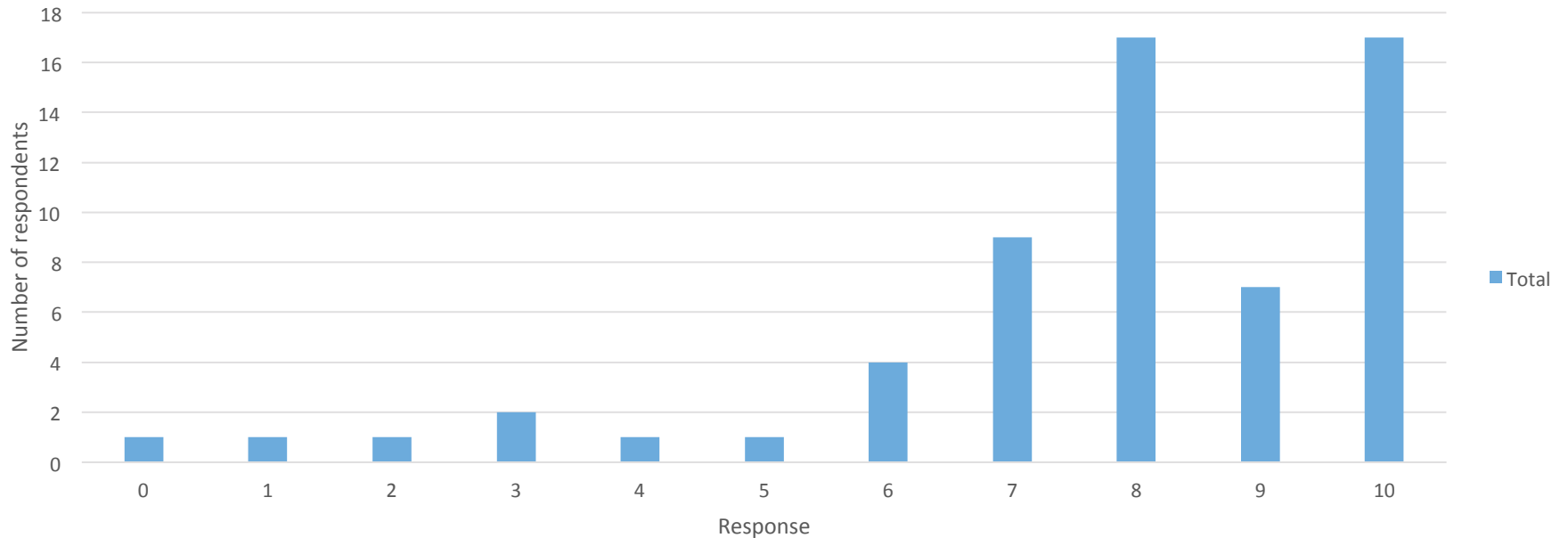
What do these millennials want from their bid careers

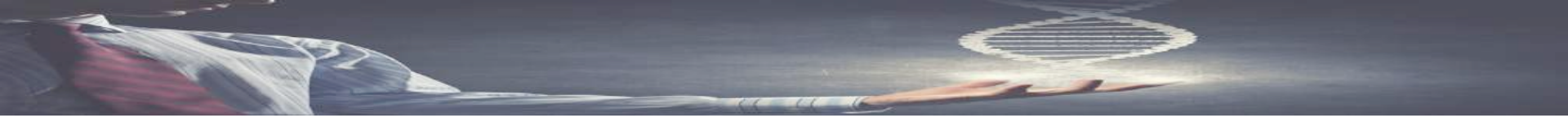
- Their Motivations
- Their future Ambitions
- Their Skills – are they unique?



Is there a future long term career in bids?

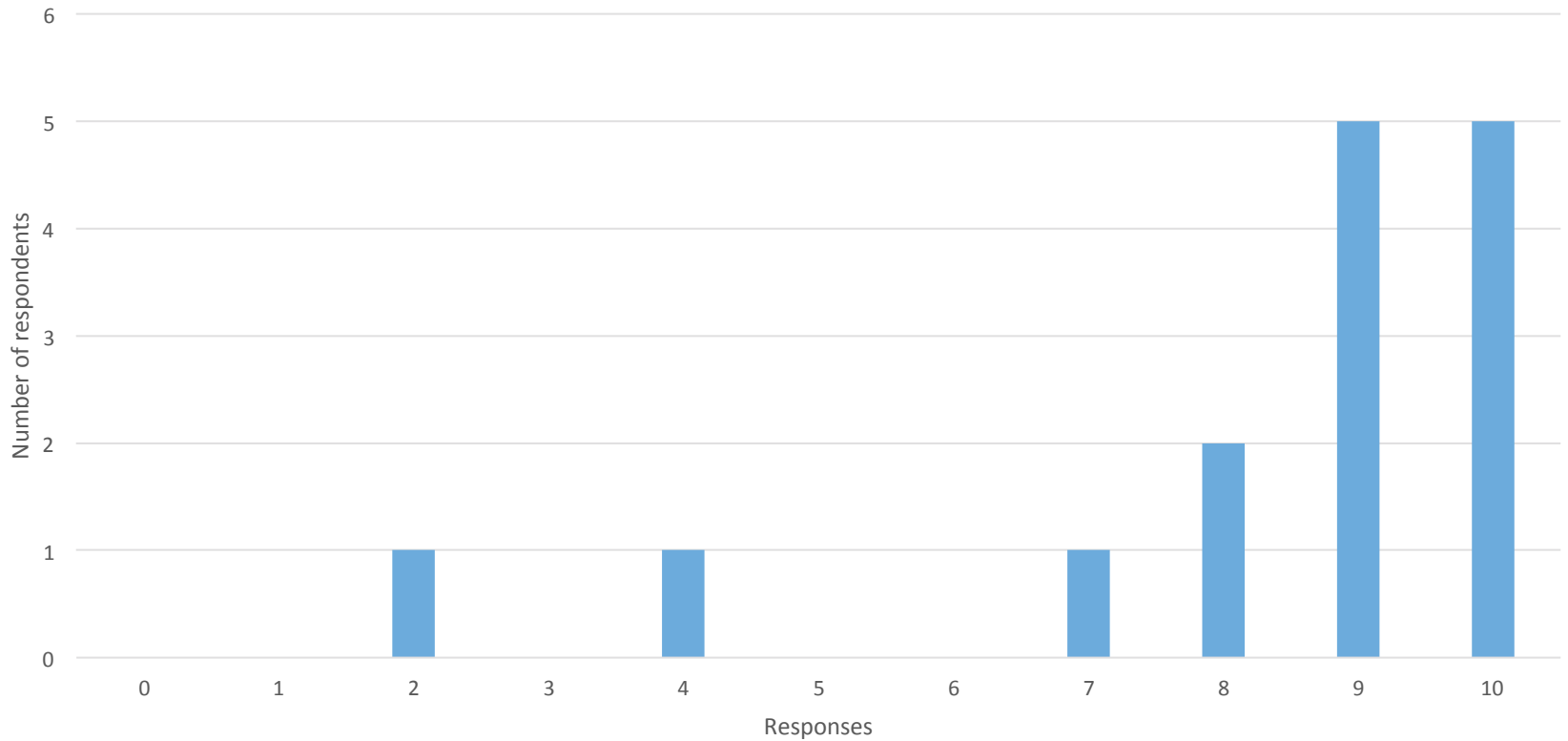
Junior response:





Is there a future career for millennials in bids?

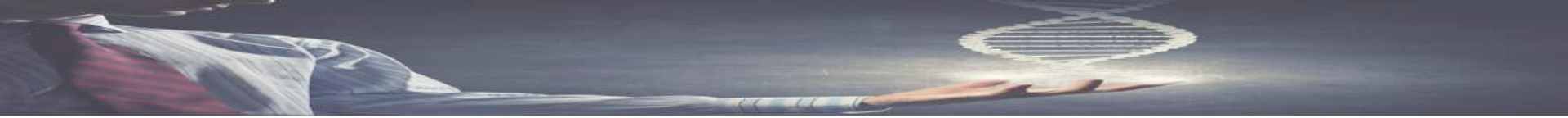
Senior response:





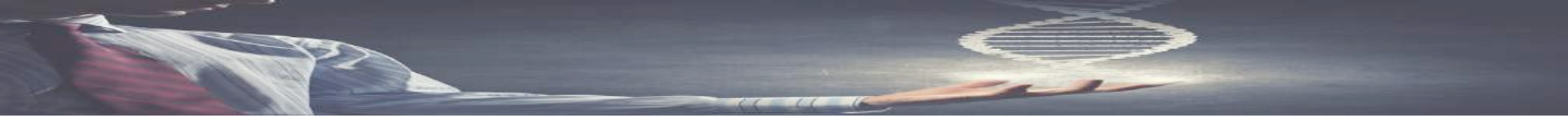
Is there a future career in bids?

- 2/3rds of those millennials asked strongly agreed – whilst 90% say YES
- Only 1 person said no!
- Seniors agreed
- There is no fear that the role is going to disappear / become “automised”

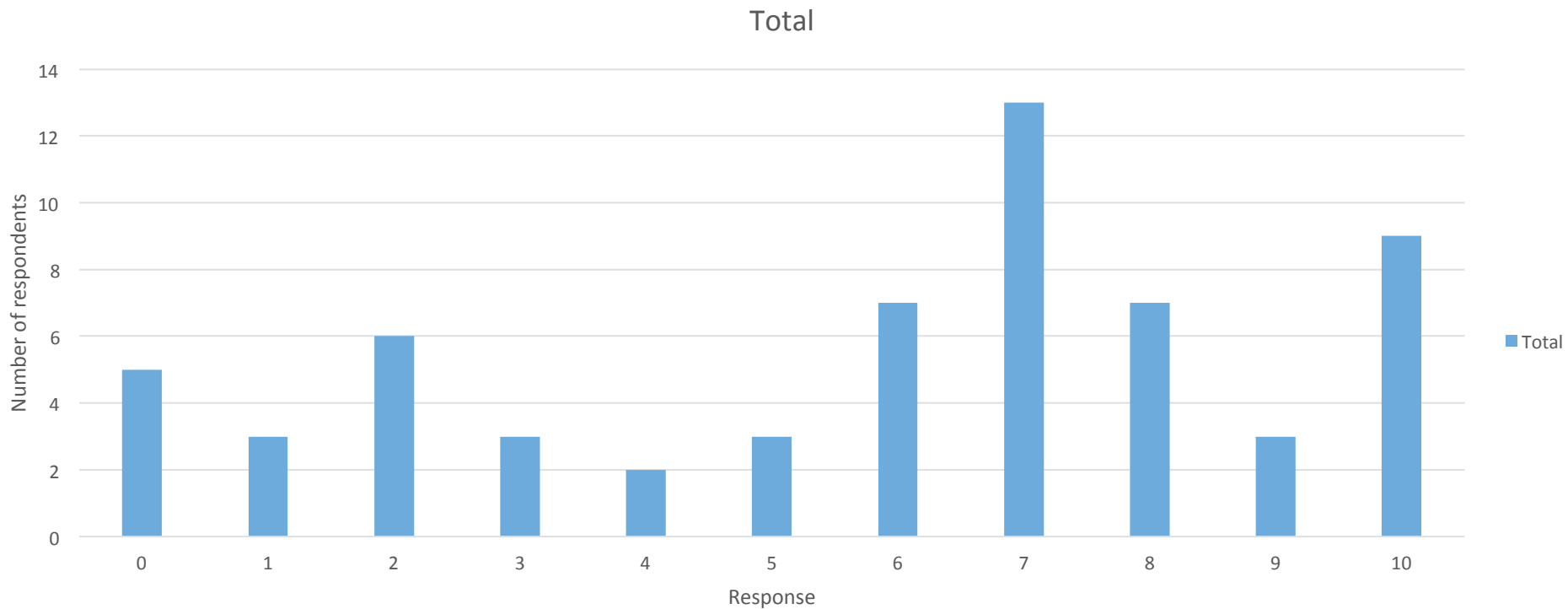


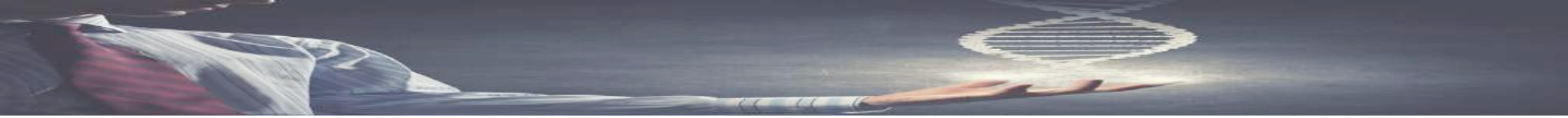
But I wanted to take this further – DO millennials WANT a future in the bids sector?

- Is bids a stepping stone to something else?
- “falling into bids” after graduating...
- Can a bids career only take you so far – on to BD director / coaching / consultancy?



Do millennials WANT a future in the bids sector?





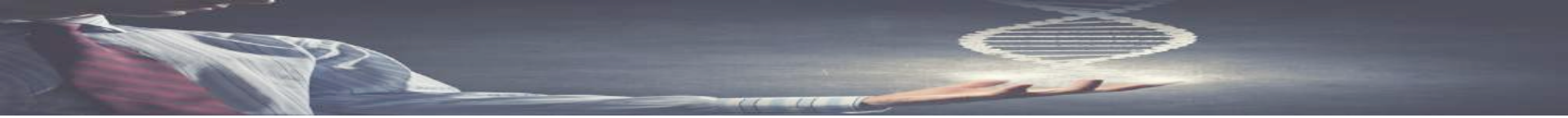
Do millennials WANT a future in the bids sector?

- “Strongly agreed” dropped from 2/3rds to only just over 50% (but that is still half)
- 36% think NO they do not want a future in bids....
- whilst 28% strongly disagree that they want to stay in the sector.

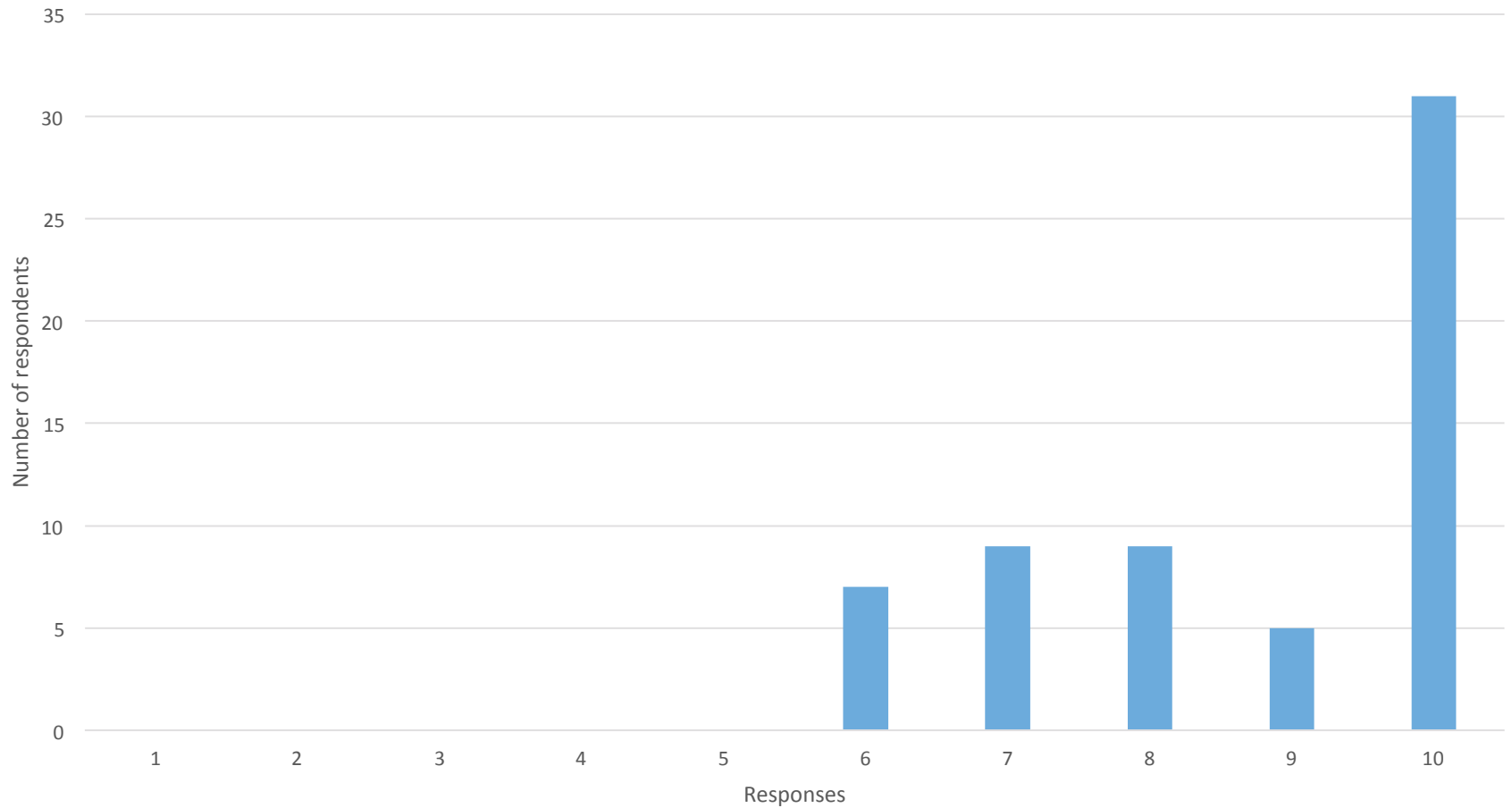


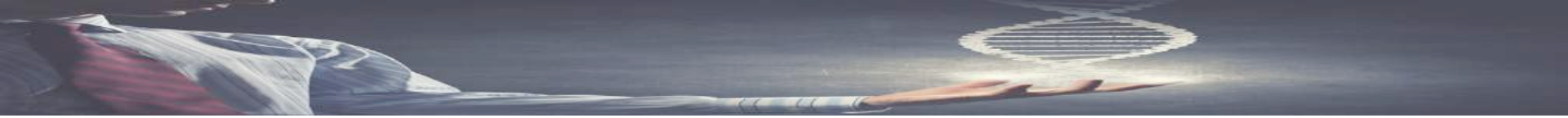
Technology

- Technology – often praised, yet just as often maligned.
- Wanted to ask 2 questions on technology within the bids space to both parties:
- Does Technology help the bidding process, and are millennials better skilled at it?



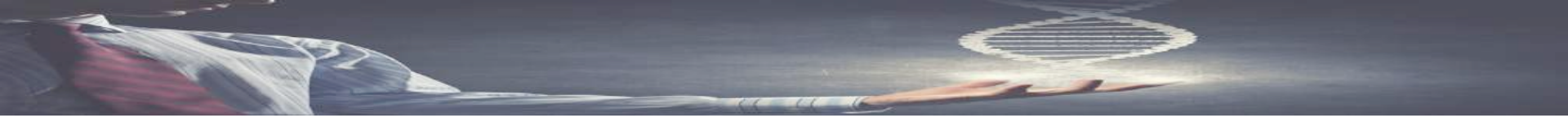
Does technology help or hinder the bid process



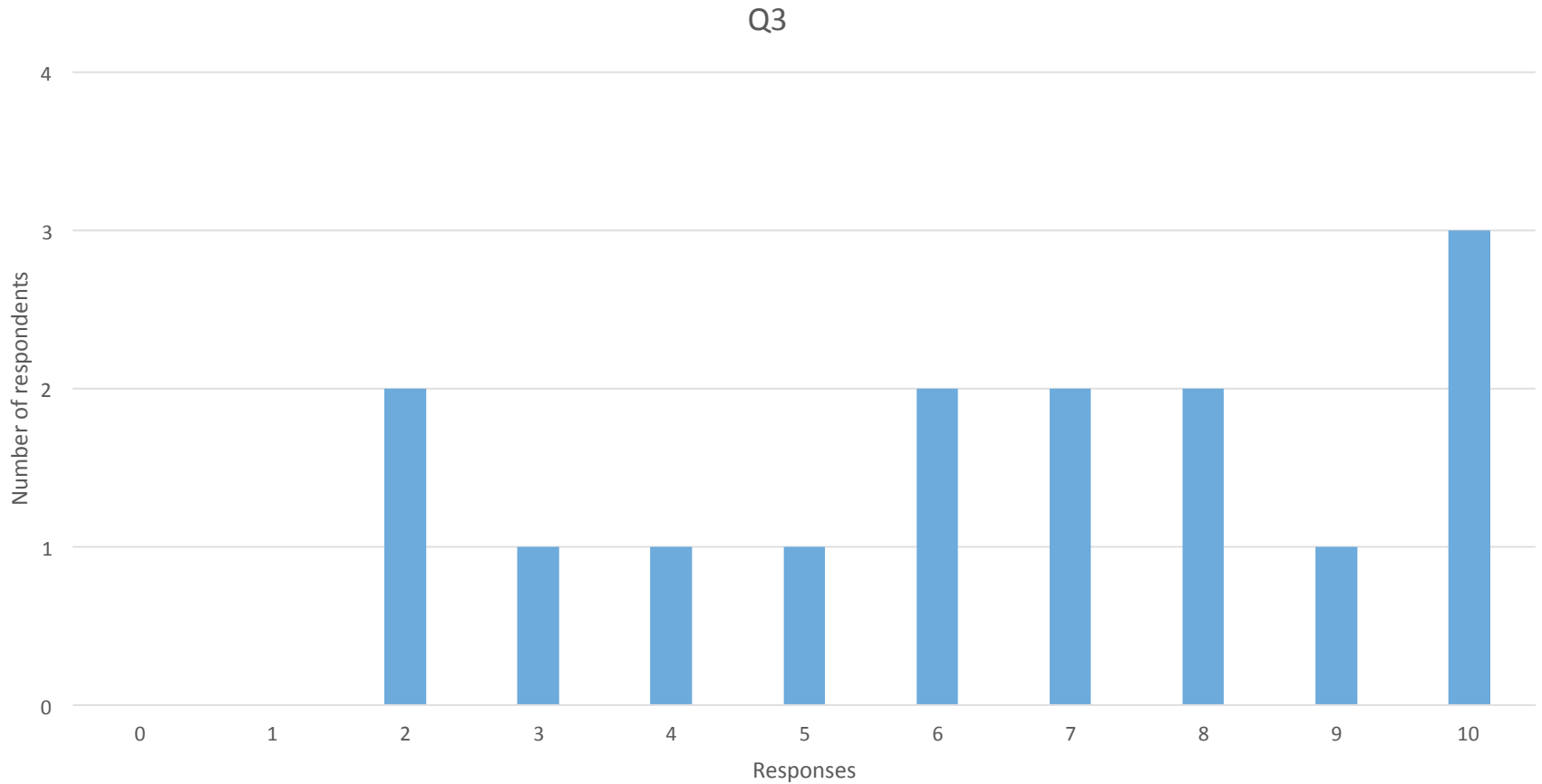


Does technology help or hinder the bid process

- 51% of Juniors answered a straight 10 – absolutely yes.
- And 100% answered yes overall.
- Interesting as none of them have worked with anything other than blackberries and Iphones ...



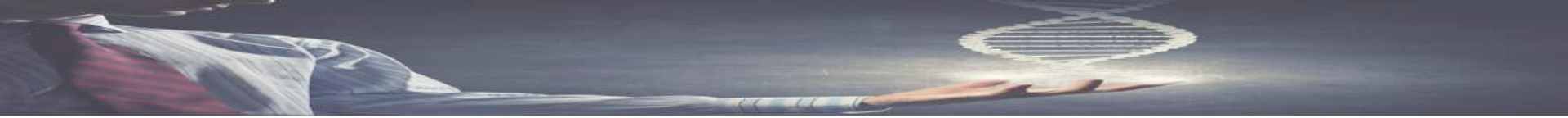
Does technology help or hinder the bid process





Does technology help or hinder the bid process

- More varied response
- On the whole it has allowed huge improvements VISUALLY – brochures, printing ease, graphics – time and expertise
- But also the process itself – Ease of getting hold of directors over email, firing questions around the globe, holding kick off meetings over skype...
- However some key hindrances:
- Portals
- Emails – Juniors hide behind their emails?
- Loss of face to face project management?
- Higher expectations?

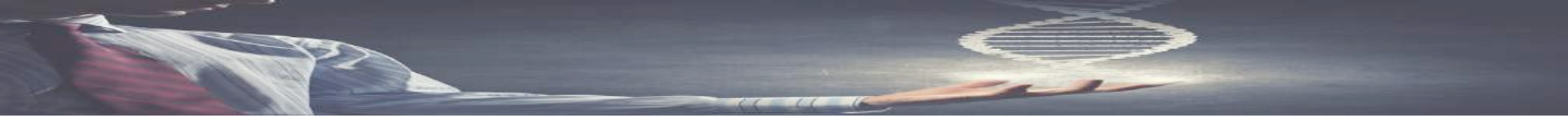


Technology – who does it better?

- Asked Juniors:

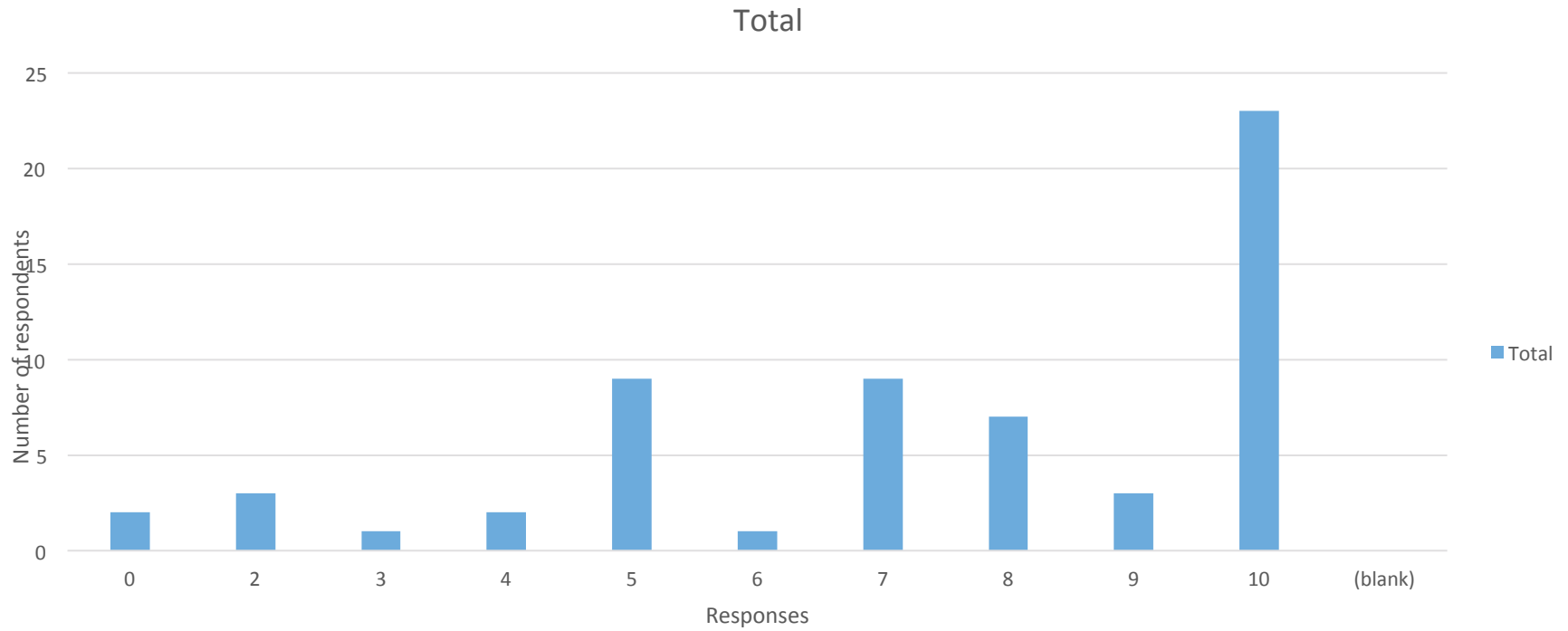
Do you feel you have better graphics/technology/indesign skills than more senior members of the team?

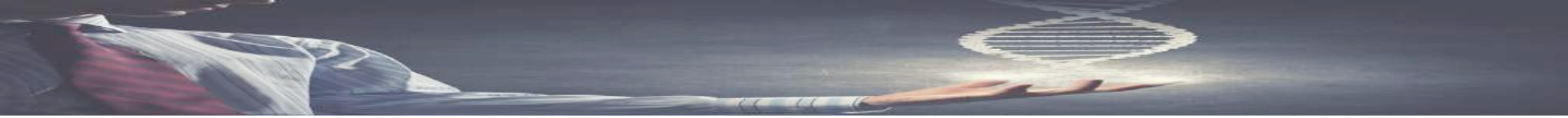
- Interested to see if the Iphone generation feel they are more natural and adept



Technology – who does it better?

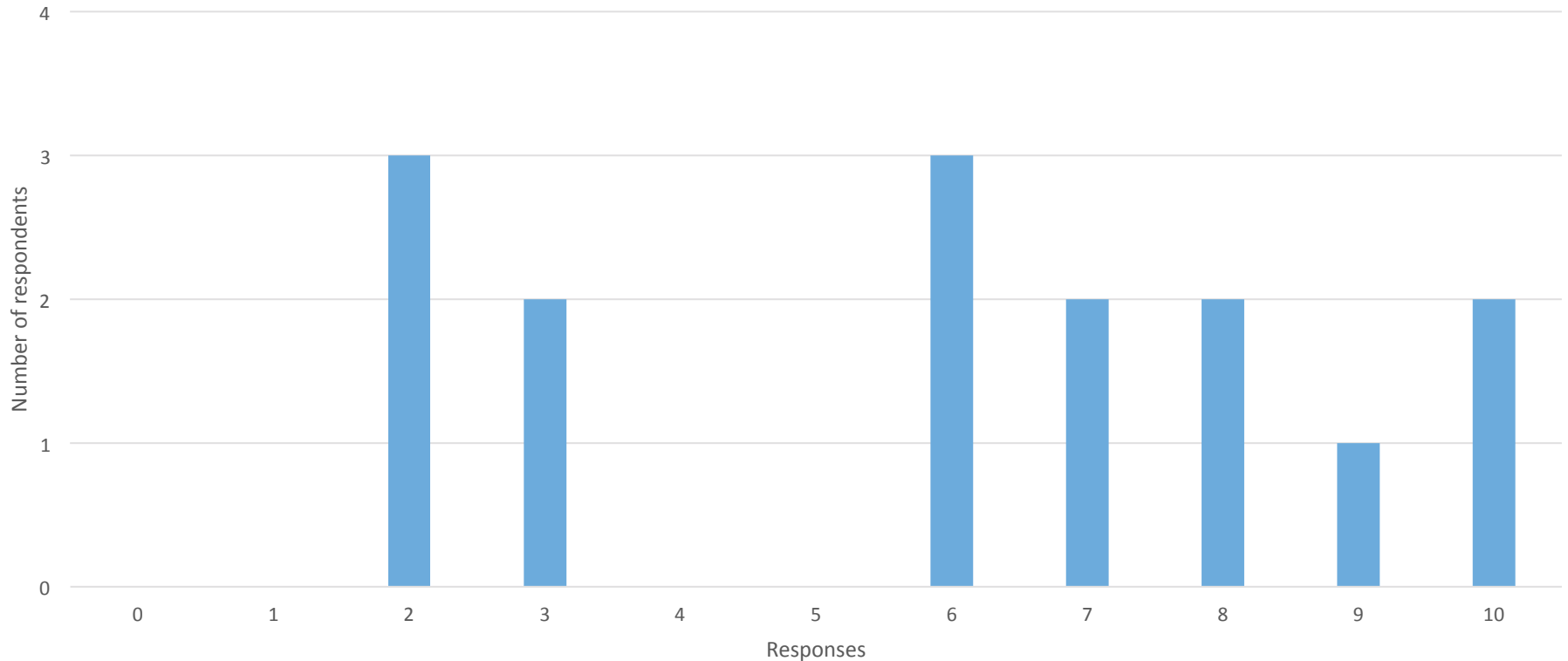
Resoundingly yes – 72% YES, 40% answered 10





Technology – who does it better?

Senior response differs somewhat....





Technology – who does it better?

Why the difference?

- Arrogance of youth?
- Acquiring skills with experience?
- Older generations actually having to learn/take courses that gets them to a higher level?

Technology one of the overriding trends of the millennial generation as they haven't ever worked without it



General Millennial trends – relevance?

- This got me thinking about broader millennial trends and ideology... Are these relevant to the bids sector?
- Are they more interested in smaller business environments?
- Do they expect a better work life balance?
- Do they expect more remote working?
- Are they more likely to move jobs than elder generations?

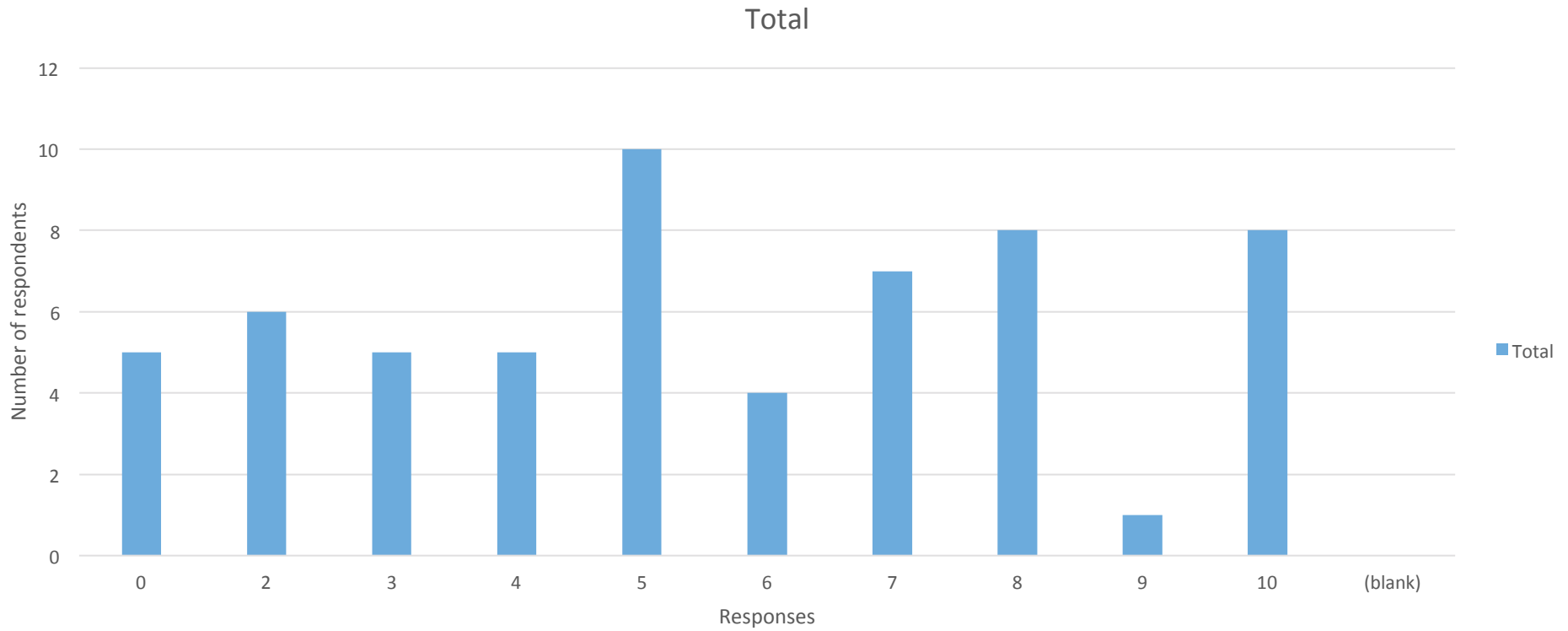


The size of a Company

- Modern discourse adamant that Millennials want to work in smaller “start up environments” rather than established businesses
- 67% of millennials asked by Forbes 2015 said they wanted to start a business, only 13% wanted to rise within a larger business.
- Is this the case within the bids world?

Q5 The size of a Company

Well not necessarily....





The size of a Company

- More people went plum down the middle than anything else
- Respondents across the whole spectrum – and 47% indicated they would be more interested in a larger firm environment
- WHY?
- Nature of the role – thrives in a larger business setting?
- Only larger firms have bid teams?
- Over reliance on key individuals in smaller firms?



Work life balance

- Every single millennial I have spoken to expects a work life balance
- Split of opinion:
- This is not banking – cut throat ambition etc.
- But more people I speak to are put off by reputed long hours at legal firms – they expect their Thursday nights



Work life balance

- MONEY
- General discourse that the millennial generation care less about money
- But every individual I speak to, money is a motivating factor in them getting frustrated or looking for a new role.



Working from home

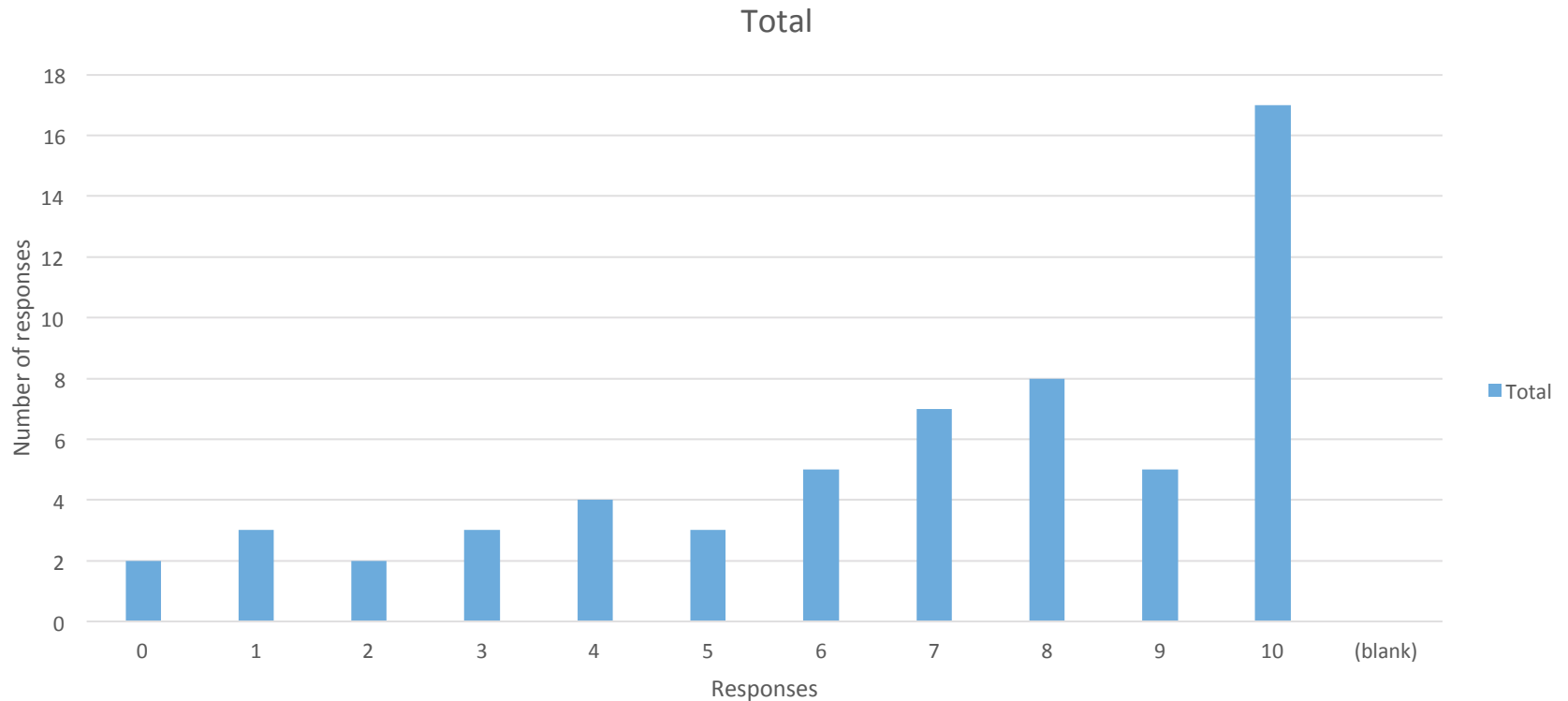
- Remote working can fit with bidding – [face to face bidding VS working from home](#)
- But Millennials still need people contact, particularly early stages, (kick off meetings) and especially to get buy in from stakeholders
- And need to be TRUSTED to work from home



“Millennial job hoppers”

- Much is made of this generation of job hoppers
- Bidding is a highly sought after skill – offers to move
- Any more “mobile” than the generation before?
- Movement within the sector:

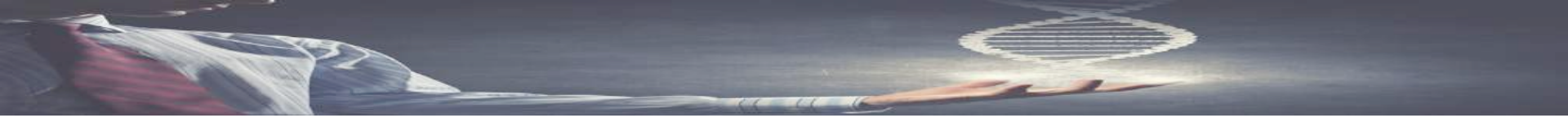
Do you think you will want to move sector (in a bids role) in your career?





Do you think you will want to move sector (in a bids role) in your career?

- 76% YES and 30% answered absolutely
- Why:
- Millennials want variety in their careers – can bids get repetitive?
- It is now easier to move – Likedin, recruiters
- In demand Skillset – “Employees market”
- Company loyalty – does it mean anything anymore?

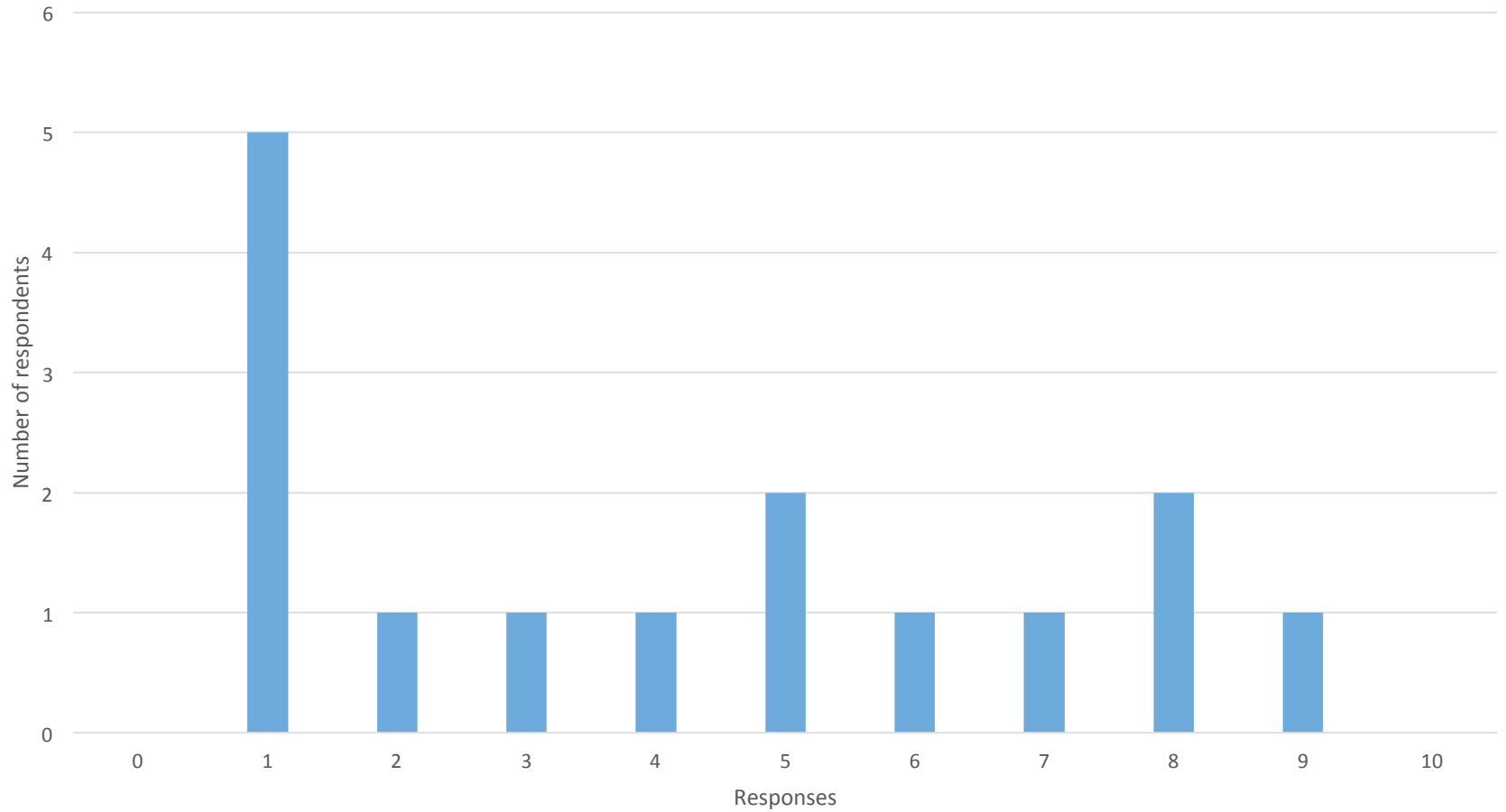


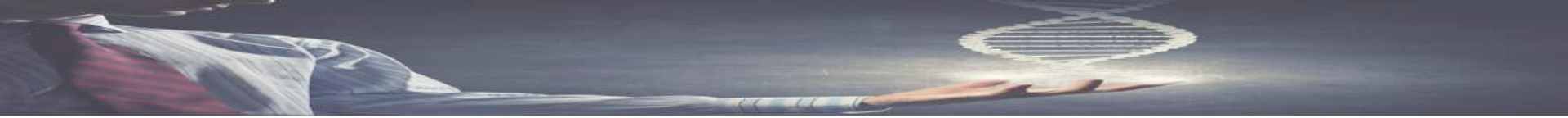
Loyalty

- “millennials have no loyalty – except to their Instagram followers”
- Trained up by a firm for 3 years, and then they disappear for a 10K pay rise....
- So I wanted to ask the Head of/Directors, Did they feel the millennial generation are less loyal?



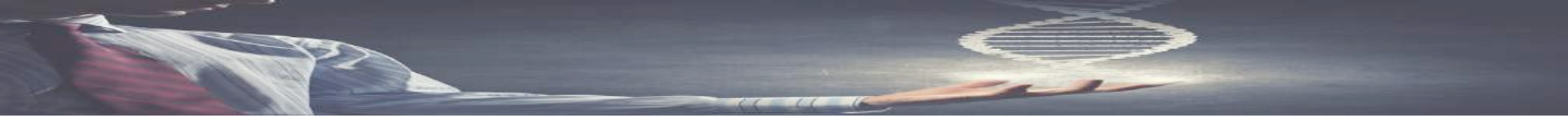
Do you feel millennials are less loyal?



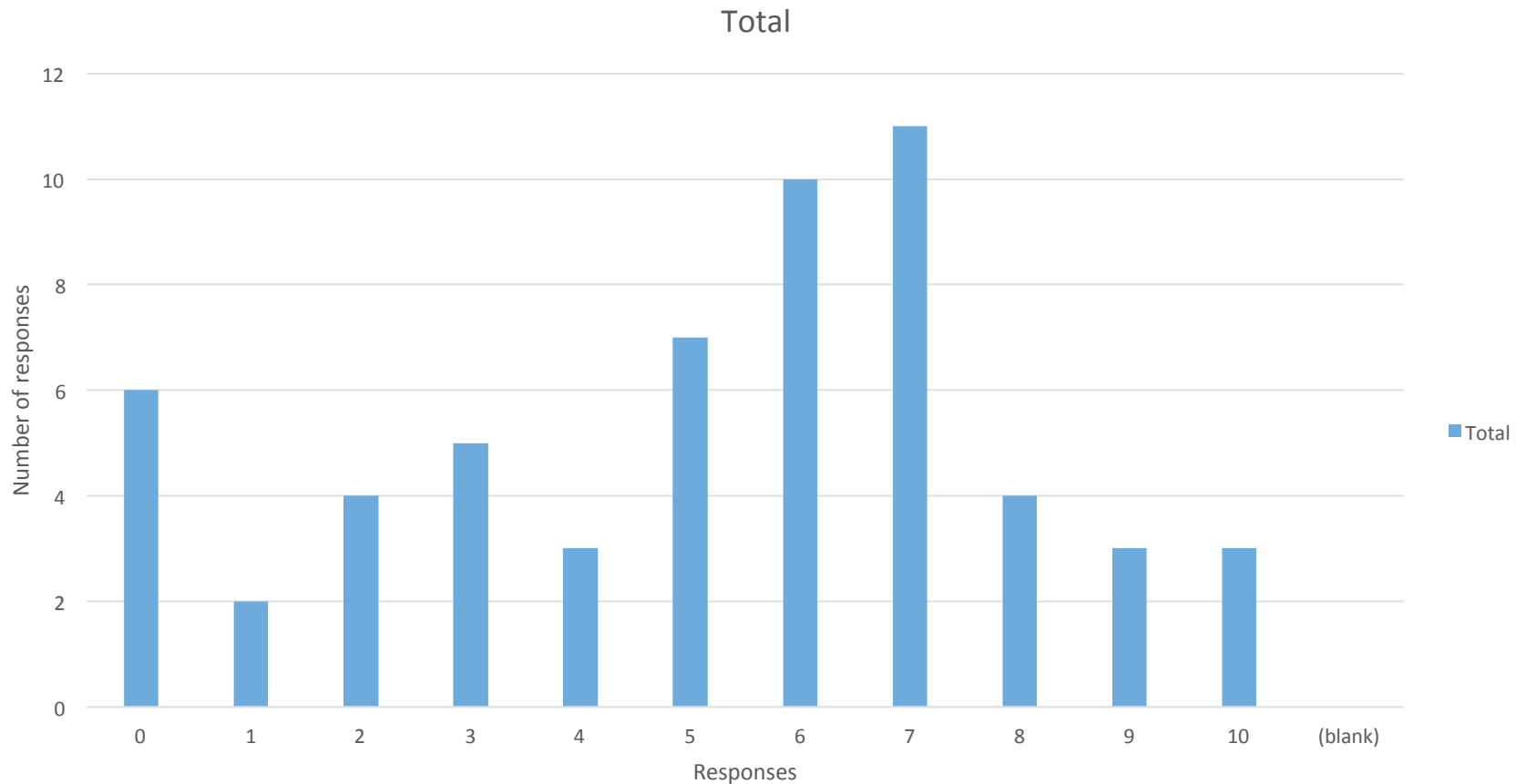


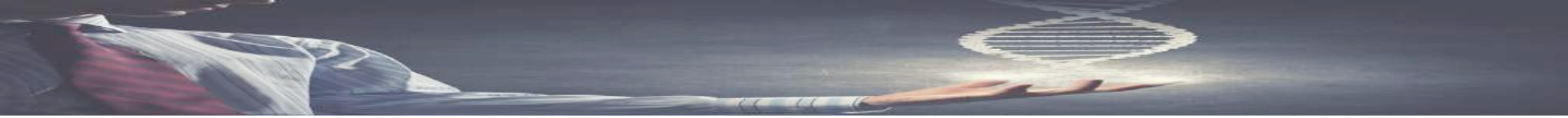
Do you feel millennials are less loyal?

- Resounding no, they feel they are no less loyal than other generations
- Many wanted to emphasise that firm loyalty is a cross generation issue, not solely for millennials.
- If this is such an issue, is it due to a business not rewarding loyalty?
- So I wanted to turn this question around and ask the millennials just that....



Do you feel your current firm rewards loyalty?





Do you feel your current firm reward loyalty?

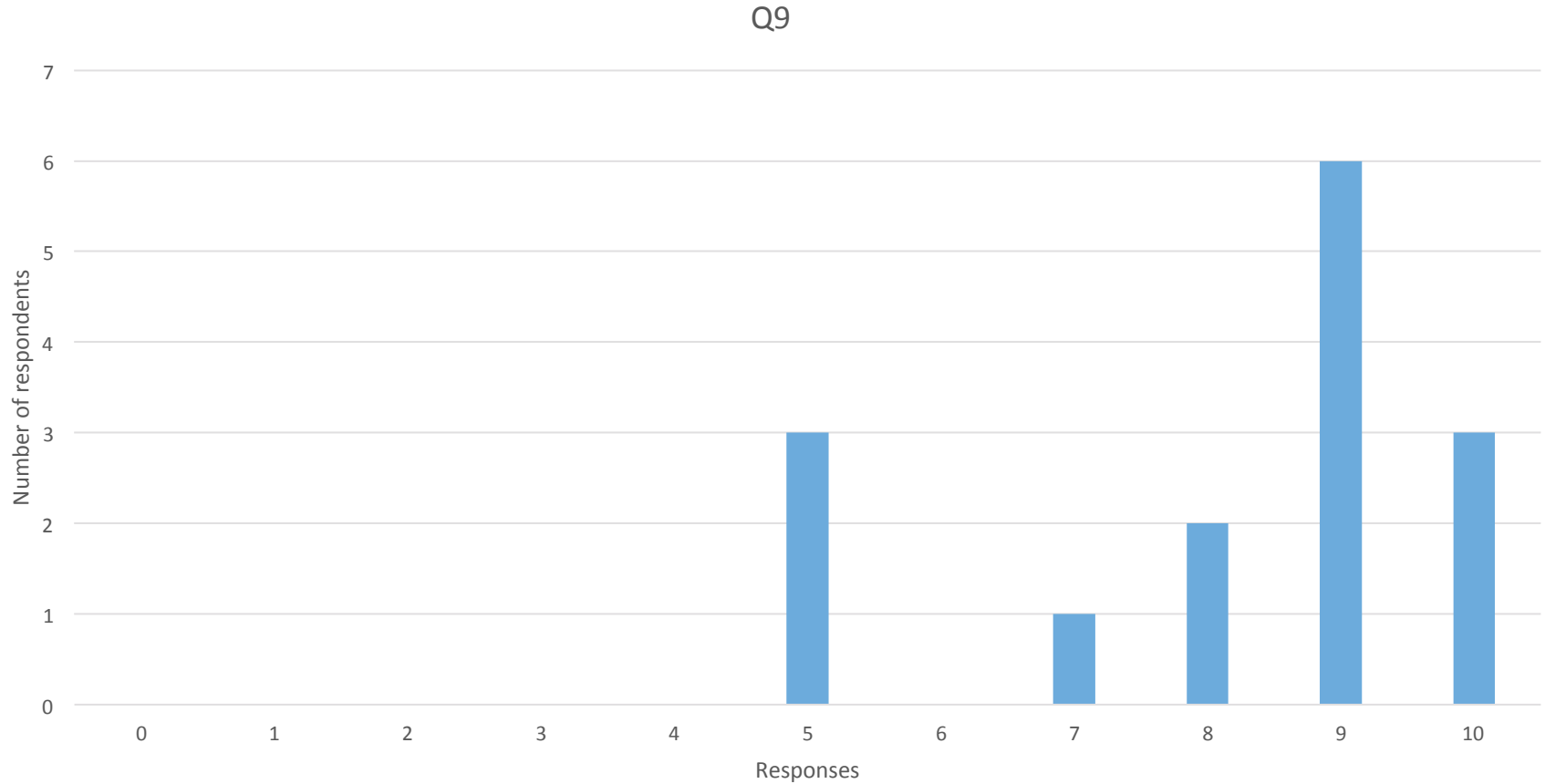
- 53% said yes, 12% neutral and 34% said no they didn't feel loyalty was rewarded.
- But are millennials being let down by their firms – Should companies do more to EARN their loyalty: Training, Progression, Salary matches

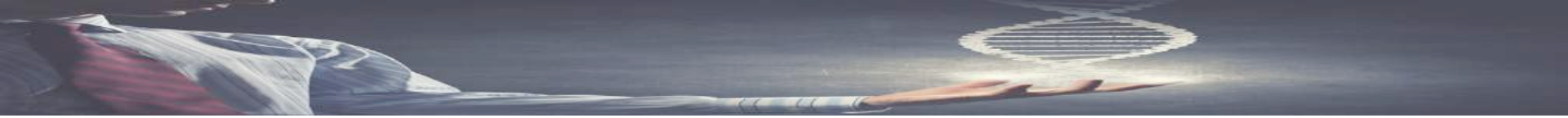


Training

- Every millennial I have spoken to highlighted the importance of TRAINING
- When I've spoken to older bidders they have often referenced the lack of training they received when they began their careers in the sector but how they feel the training now on offer at their firms or in their teams is so much better

Does your firm provide better training than you received yourself?

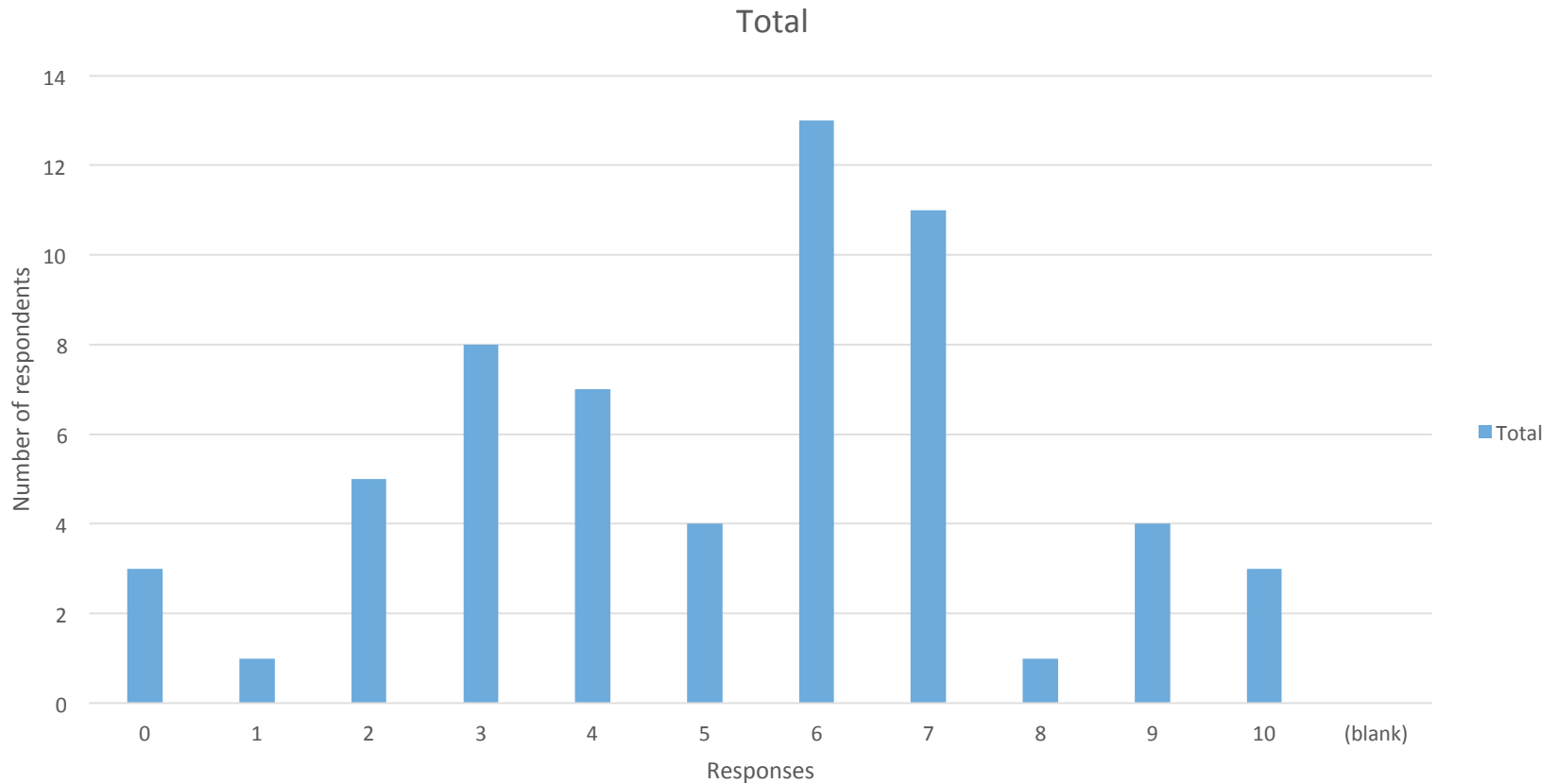




Training

- Not a single senior individual answered no.
- WHY:
- Structured training programs, Consultants bought in, APMP itself
- Recognised function of a business now, so given budget to put towards training
- DO the millennials feel the same? Do they rate the training they receive as highly as their feel they need?

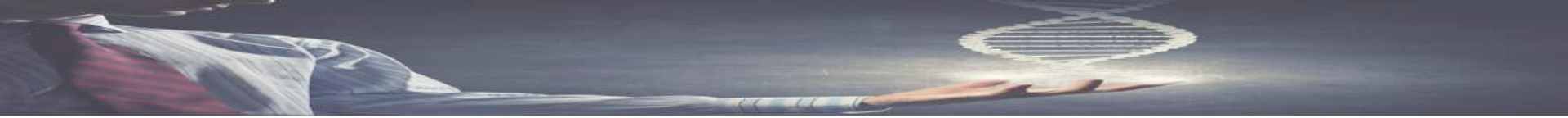
On a scale of 1-10, do you rate the level of training to receive?





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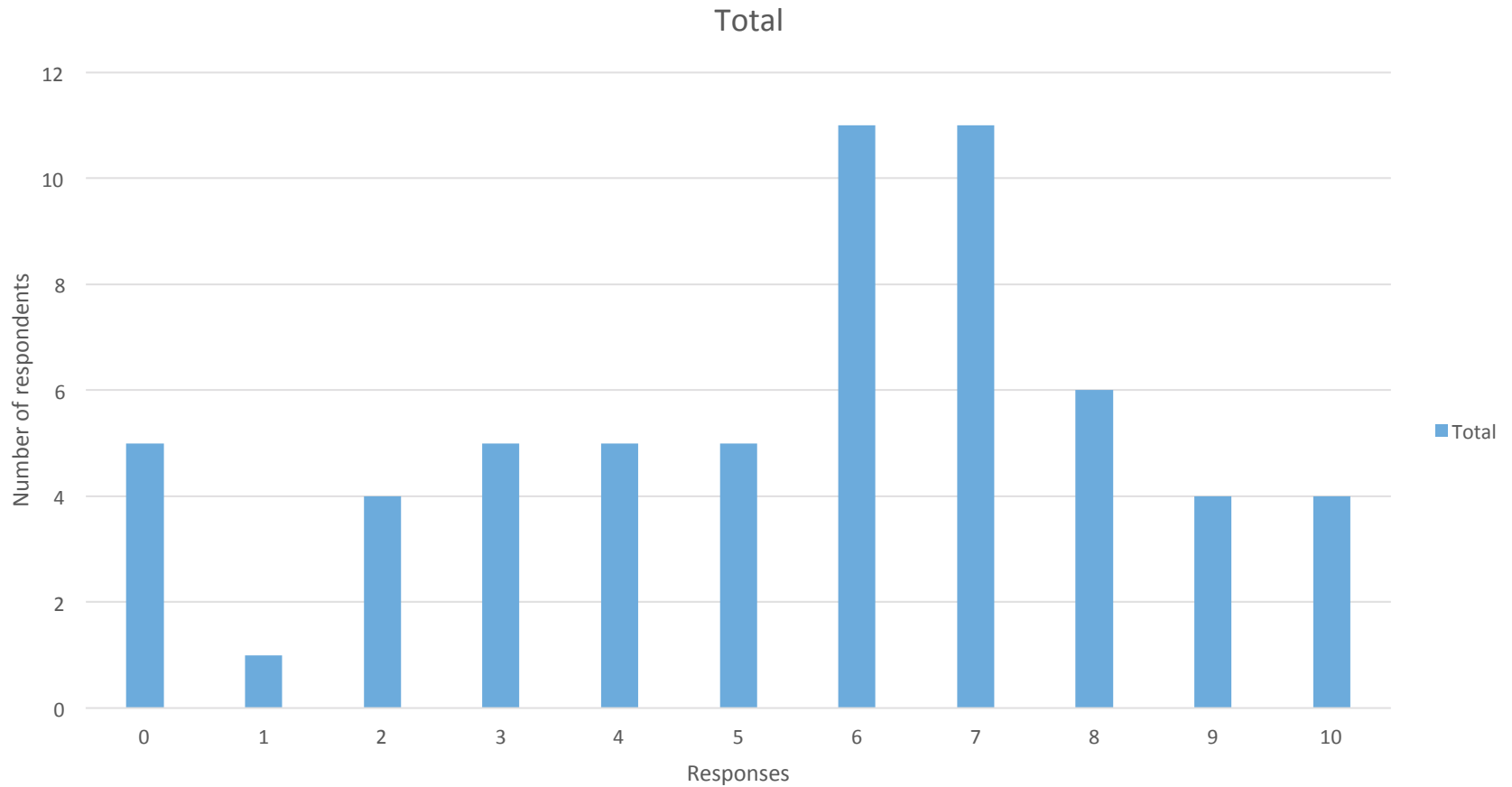
- Only 50% rated their training above average
- Too many juniors still feel let down:
 - “bid director too busy for me to get training”
 - “left to learn on the job”
 - “only rudimentary training”
- They were slightly different questions, but highlights big difference between those who provide the training and those who receive it
- Still shows lots to do from a training side.

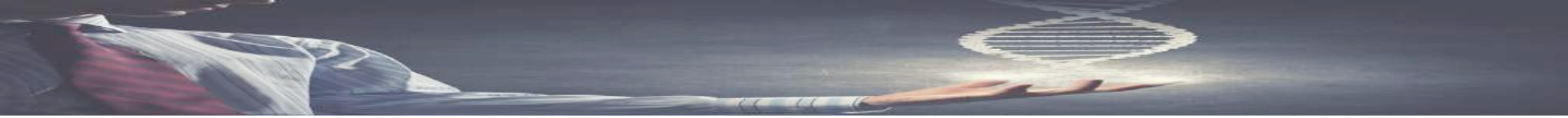


Progression

- Other key motivator for millennials is progression
- Too high expectations?
- Feel that they can move from exec to writer to manager within 3 years.
- Progression – Or lack thereof – remains the biggest factor when I speak to junior and mid level business professionals who are looking for a new role
- Realistic expectations of progression?
- So I was keen to see what they felt about the progression in their current roles:

Does your current firm offer the career progression you hoped for?





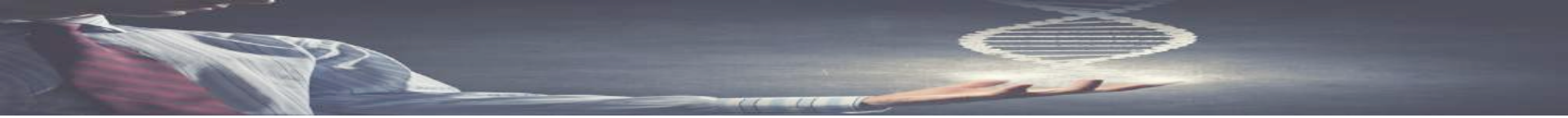
Progression

- Only 8 out of 60 strongly felt they did have good career progression in their current roles
- 33% feel they don't, but still a majority (59%) feel they can see their future career
- It is not just about “status promotions” – achievable and clearly defined targets engage and enthuse the millennial generation



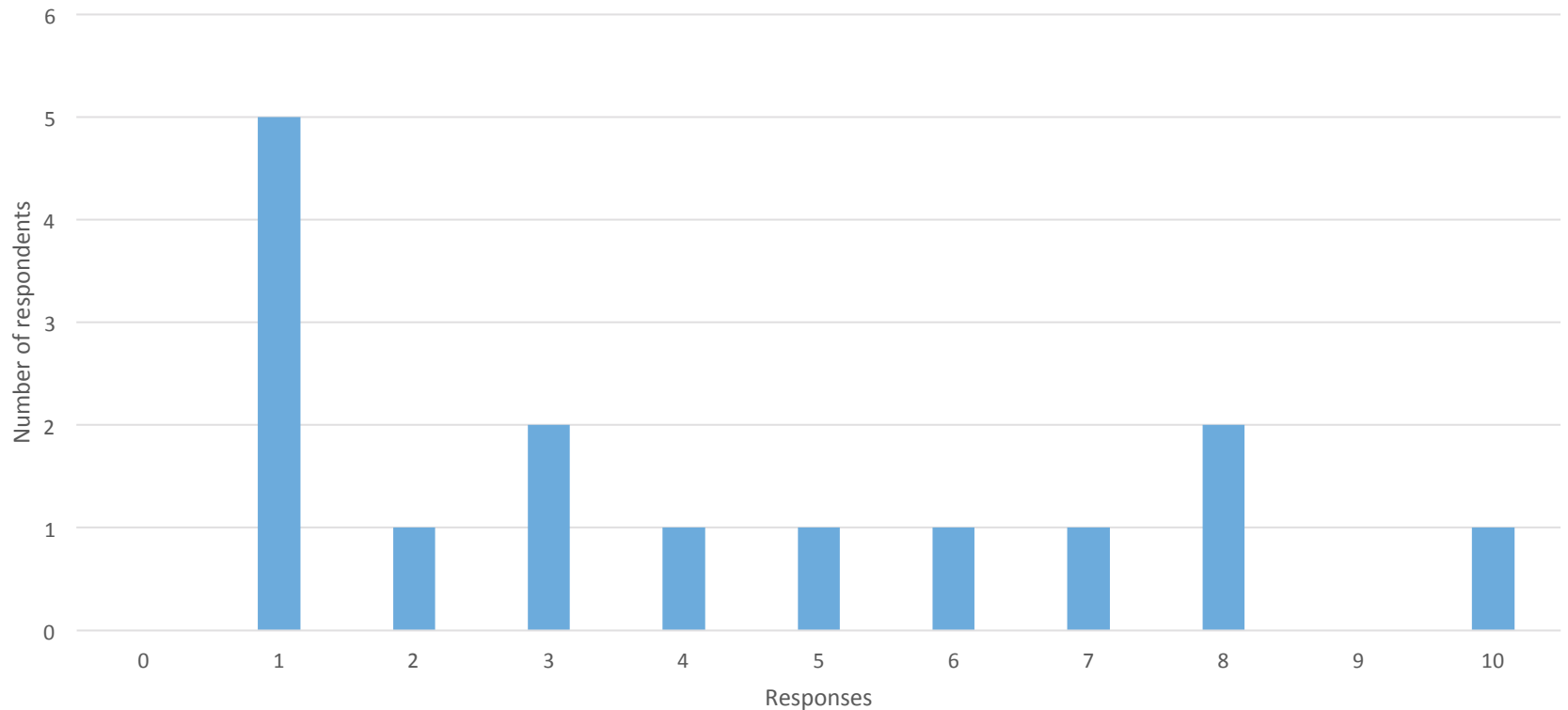
Millennials on the “dark side”

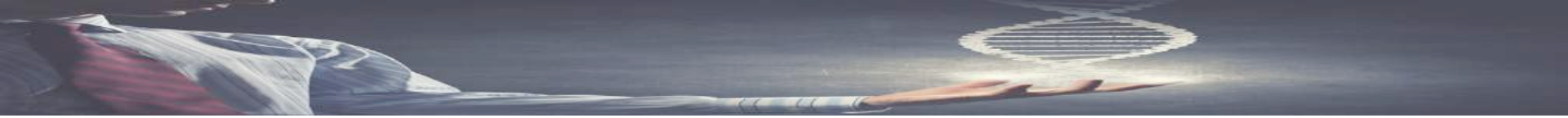
- Its not just bid teams that are getting younger.. Are their now also millennials on the procurement side?
- Do you now need to tailor your bids for a YOUNGER AUDIENCE?
- Do they expect a different style, language, format and design?



Millennial audience

I put this question to my senior survey respondents – Do they tailor their bids for a potentially younger procurement audience?





Millennial Audience

Resounding no... Only 1 person strongly said they already did.

But everyone found it a very interesting question... is this something that will be more relevant in 5 years time?

Importance of knowing your audience – is that audience not millennial yet?

Decision makers still too senior?

External procurement consultants tend to be older?



CONCLUSIONS

They are a large part of the sector already, and growing every year as a percentage

They do see a future in the bids space – but some need convincing to stay

If firms have committed time and effort to their training, need to keep them in the sector to see the benefits

Top of the sector need to invest in this next generation – Training and clear progression plans

Millennials themselves need to prove their commitment as well... not a one way relationship. Need a dose of REALISM



CONCLUSIONS

An egotistical generation – but no different to previous generations. They need to feel appreciated

Higher pressure on them financially than previous generations, hence the money issue

They are a “connected” generation – so aware of other opportunities, their market worth, and what other firms are doing from a bid perspective.

Therefore businesses need to be Competitive to retain talent

On the procurement side, the Millennials are yet to have a real impact as a target audience – But need to be preparing for this



Association of Bid and Proposal Management Professionals

UK Chapter



conference@apmpuk.co.uk

www.apmpuk.co.uk

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