



# Definitive Guide to America's Most Broken Processes



## Most businesses claim employees are their greatest asset, but employee turnover rates tell a different tale.

According to data compiled by Compensation Force, turnover across industries has steadily increased since 2011. And that rate is set to rise even more in the next few years, as restless young workers survey a job market that increasingly favors the applicant.<sup>1</sup>

However, actual turnover rates are only part of the story. For every employee who leaves a company, there are many others looking to get out. In a cross-industry survey of full-time employees, Nintex found that a third of workers are currently looking for a new job.

No company wants to be a revolving door of talent. Beyond the monetary costs, there are cultural and reputational

impacts associated with turnover. Once a company develops a reputation for high attrition, it starts to be viewed — both internally and externally — as a career path way station. *An OK place to bide time while you search for something better.*

Many companies view losing good employees as inevitable — particularly when it comes to millennial employees, who are widely seen as opportunistic and impatient for rapid career development.

But the employee retention crisis can't be reduced to the natural tendencies of restless workers. There's another huge part of the equation: Broken corporate processes. From IT functions to administrative tasks to onboarding strategies, companies must look at the flawed internal processes that are sending good employees out the door.

<sup>1</sup><http://www.compensationforce.com/2017/04/2016-turnover-rates-by-industry.html>

# Methodology

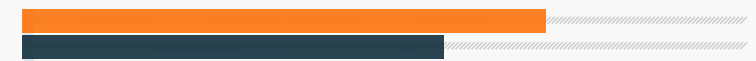
To uncover and examine corporate America's most broken processes, we conducted a survey of 1,000 U.S. full-time employees across industries and departments.<sup>2</sup> The survey focused on answering key questions:

- What are the top broken corporate processes?
- Who do employees blame for these broken functions?
- How do broken processes impact employee performance and morale?
- How can businesses improve internal functions?

## EMPLOYEES WHO ARE LOOKING FOR NEW JOBS ARE MORE LIKELY TO...

**72% v. 58%**

Feel IT processes are broken



**26% v. 14%**

Say printing is broken



**71% v. 52%**

Feel onboarding processes are broken



**70% v. 44%**

Feel admin processes are broken



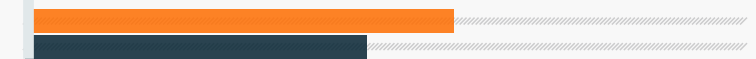
**55% v. 40%**

Say raise negotiations are broken



**59% v. 47%**

Say promotion processes are broken



**38% v. 6%**

Be somewhat/very unhappy at work



■ Employees looking for new jobs    ■ Employees overall

<sup>2</sup> All respondents work at companies with more than 500 employees and work on a computer or other mobile device for more than five hours a day.

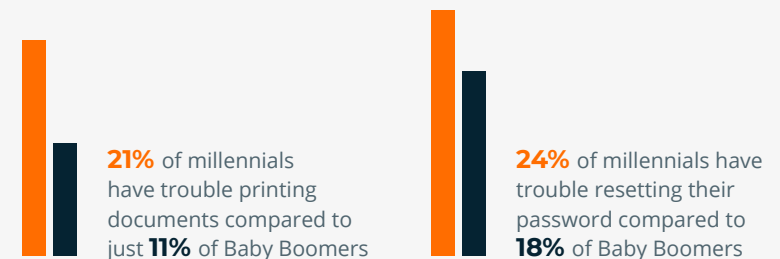
## Our survey revealed several key findings:

- Technology troubleshooting is America's most broken workplace process.
- The majority of employees surveyed **point to broken internal processes across IT, onboarding and administrative functions.**
- Broken functions are particularly problematic in IT, which leads non-IT employees to blame IT workers and engage in shadow IT.
- Just over half of those who cite broken administrative processes **do not feel their companies define and follow a process for personal career advancement.**
- Of employees surveyed who are actively looking for new jobs, the vast majority (86 percent) say their company's broken processes are a factor behind their decision. **Millennials are particularly likely to be influenced by broken processes to look for other work.**
- Broken processes are actively impeding growth: **67 percent of respondents say their company's broken processes prevent them from maximizing their potential.**

**Two-thirds of employees say their company's broken processes prevent them from maximizing their potential**



### MILLENNIALS STRUGGLE WITH BASIC IT TASKS







# Corporate America's Top 5 Most Broken Processes

- 1 Technology troubleshooting
- 2 Access to tools and documents  
that enable good job performance
- 3 Annual performance reviews
- 4 Promotions
- 5 Employee onboarding

## Breaking Down the Broken Processes, by Category

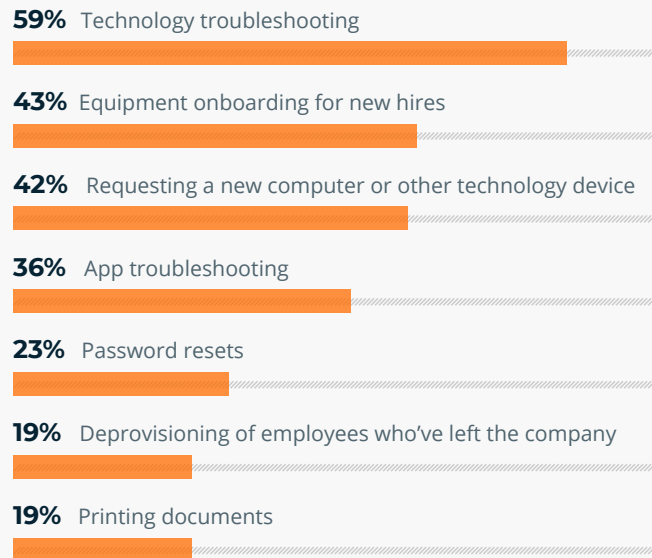
Our survey divided broken processes into four categories: **IT, onboarding, administrative and document management/sales**. Of these categories, document management/sales is the only area in which fewer than half of employees observe broken functions.

### IT

**62%**

observe broken IT processes within their organization.

#### TOP BROKEN IT PROCESSES



### ONBOARDING

**58%**

observe broken employee onboarding processes within their organization.

#### TOP BROKEN ONBOARDING PROCESSES



## ADMINISTRATIVE

# 54%

observe broken administrative processes within their organization.

### TOP BROKEN ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES



## DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT/SALES

# 39%

observe broken document management/sales processes within their organization.

### TOP BROKEN DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT/SALES PROCESSES



# Accountability for Broken Processes

Now that the most broken corporate processes are on the table, a key question emerges: Who do employees blame? Colleagues? Their supervisor? Or the CEO? The answer depends on which department's processes you're looking at, according to our study.

When it comes to broken IT processes like technology troubleshooting, a significant majority of respondents are quick to blame IT staffers rather than corporate higher-ups: 73 percent of respondents directly blame IT staff for IT-related issues. However, perception of accountability is more concentrated around the department's leadership, with 43 percent blaming the IT director/CIO versus the 30 percent who hold IT workers accountable. Only 13 percent of total respondents blame their company's CEO for IT shortcomings. Yet specifically among the IT workers surveyed, one quarter assign responsibility for broken IT processes to their company's CEO.







Although accountability centers around IT workers for IT issues, that is not the case for HR as it relates to employee onboarding: Only 53 percent of respondents hold HR workers accountable for onboarding failings. Compared to IT, a much larger percentage (20 percent) hold the CEO accountable.

Perceived accountability for broken administrative and document management/sales processes is more evenly dispersed. In terms of administrative processes — such as promotions, raise negotiations and the annual performance review system — blame is evenly spread among CEOs (34 percent), HR directors (29 percent) and direct supervisors (26 percent). There is a similar distribution for broken document management/sales processes, with blame distributed across sales directors (28 percent), CEOs (25 percent), IT directors (15 percent) and direct supervisors (15 percent).

**Only 53 percent of respondents hold HR workers accountable for onboarding failings**

### SELF-HANDLING OF IT, MOST POPULAR METHODS



# The IT Promptness Problem — and its Consequences

For all of the broken processes our study uncovered, there's one that emerged across demographics: a lack of prompt IT service.

Of those surveyed who point to broken IT processes, a mere 16 percent say their IT department is extremely prompt in handling service requests, while more than one-quarter say their department is either not very prompt or not prompt at all.

The absence of prompt IT service directly leads employees to engage in shadow IT — a practice that inherently places company data at risk. In fact, 40 percent of respondents say they've used unsanctioned devices or apps as a direct result of unresolved IT issues.

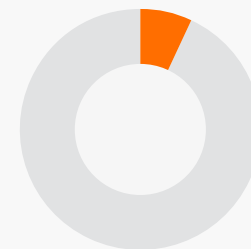
## IT PROMPTNESS: IN-OFFICE VS. REMOTE IT TEAMS

### In-office IT



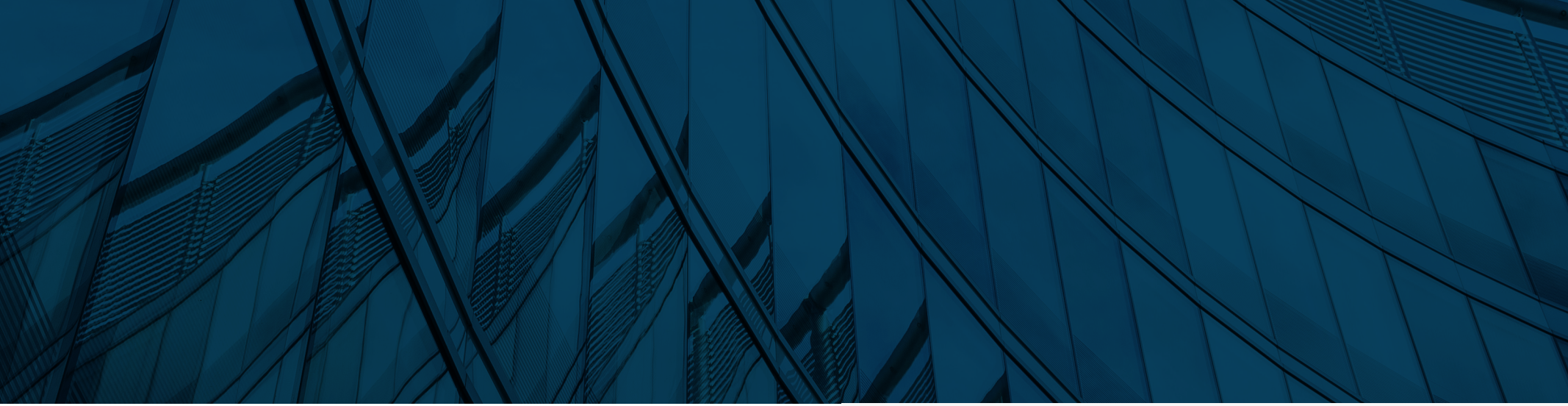
**24%**  
of employees report  
very prompt service

### Remote IT



**7%**  
of employees report  
very prompt service





Millennials — individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 — are much more likely than their older colleagues to engage in shadow IT when they don't receive proper IT service: 46 percent of millennials have used an unsanctioned app or device in the absence of IT issues resolution compared to 23 percent of baby boomers. But ironically enough, the biggest culprits of shadow IT are IT employees themselves, 60 percent of whom have used unsanctioned apps or devices because of unresolved IT problems.

**“IT IS EXTREMELY PROMPT IN HANDLING SERVICE REQUESTS”**



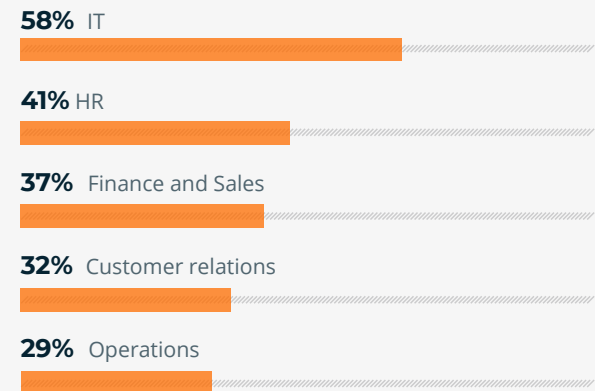
**43%**  
of IT workers  
agree



**16%**  
of overall  
respondents  
agree

**“BROKEN PROCESSES PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN MY DECISION TO LOOK FOR OTHER JOBS”**

(Departmental breakdown)





# The Career Advancement Conundrum

Nothing fuels turnover like the absence of a clear career path. When employees can't envision a trajectory of advancement at their current employer, they begin looking for greener pastures.

Our research identified a close relationship between broken administrative processes — including annual performance reviews, promotions, and raise negotiations — and a perceived lack of career advancement potential. Among surveyed employees who cited broken administrative processes within their organization, more than half do not feel their company defines and follows a process for personal career advancement — and a mere 13 percent feel that this process is “very clearly” defined.

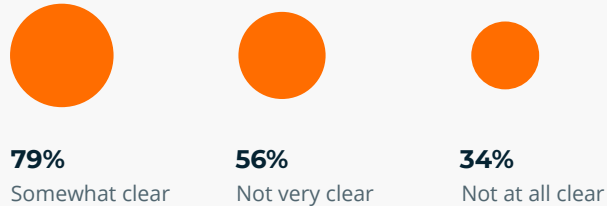
How can employees have faith in their career growth at a company where they can't trust that the annual performance review system works properly?



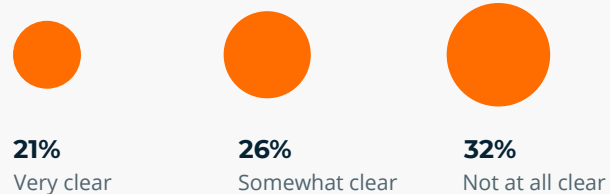


## THE LINK BETWEEN CLEARLY DEFINED ADVANCEMENT PROCESSES AND SUPERVISOR RELATIONS

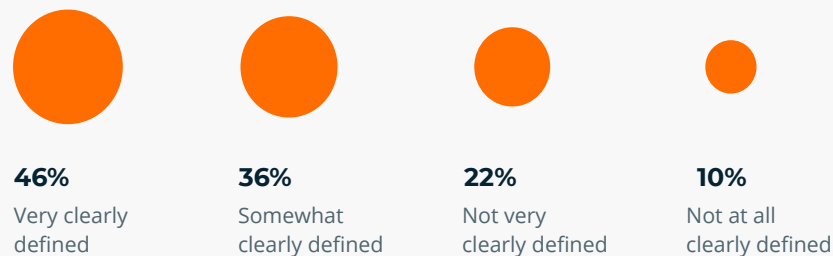
### Comfort talking career with supervisor



### Blame supervisor for broken processes



### Employees who expect to stay beyond 5 years



Unclear internal company messaging about career advancement does more than confuse employees; it also creates a communicative gulf between employees and their direct supervisors — often leading to mounting discomfort and resentment. The less clear an employee says their company's process for career advancement is, the more uncomfortable they are starting an advancement-related conversation with their direct supervisor.

A lack of clarity about company-level processes for advancement also appears to fuel a sense that the employee's direct supervisor is to blame for broken administrative processes.

Unsurprisingly, unclear advancement-related processes send workers out the door: 63 percent of employees who say processes for advancement are not clearly defined are looking for new jobs. By contrast, companies that clearly define a path for advancement within one's role have a much greater likelihood of retaining employees past the elusive five-year mark.

**63% of employees who say processes for advancement are not clearly defined are looking for new jobs**

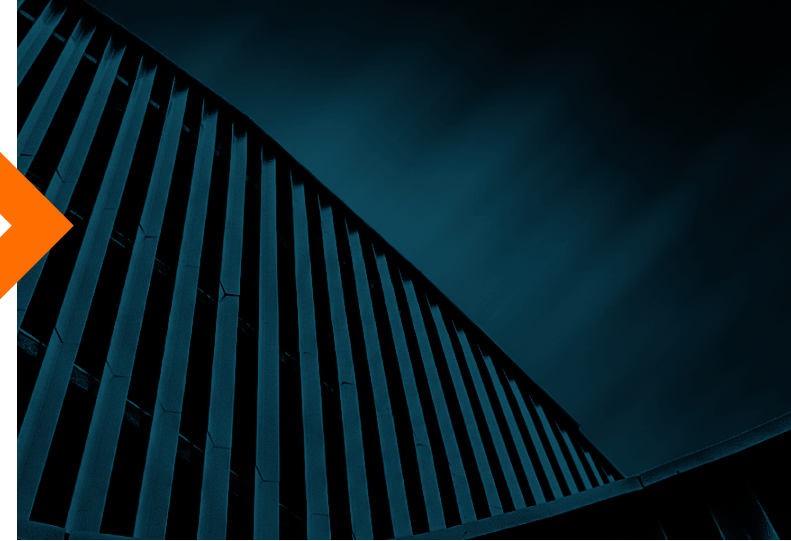
Punching in and Phoning out:

# The Toll of Broken Processes on Employee Productivity and Morale

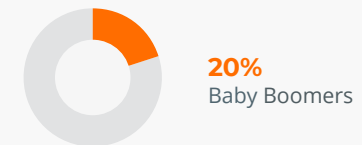
A third of employees are currently looking for other jobs. And it's not just millennials who are looking to get out the door: Gen X-ers — those between the ages of 36 to 51 — are almost as likely to be actively hunting.

The overwhelming number of active job-seekers (86 percent) say their company's broken processes are a factor behind their decision. Compared to the overall survey group, active job-seekers are notably more likely to point to specific processes as being broken, from IT (72 percent vs. 58 percent) to onboarding (71 percent vs. 52 percent) to administrative processes (70 percent vs. 44 percent).

Beyond fueling attrition, broken processes prevent employees from feeling they can grow in their roles. Over two-thirds of respondents say their company's broken processes prevent them from maximizing their potential, with 25 percent strongly feeling that broken processes preclude them from achieving their potential. Given these findings, it's not surprising that the majority of respondents — 53 percent — don't see themselves staying at their current company longer than five years.



## ACTIVE JOB HUNTERS, BY GENERATION



Repairing Broken Processes:

# Four Top-Down Action Items

Technology can help eliminate broken corporate processes, but this work can't happen in silos or overnight.

Broken processes are often deeply embedded in corporate culture, making them challenging to pinpoint and eliminate. Companies that perpetuate these broken processes will face an inevitable sequence of events: Employees will feel limited in their roles. They will actively look for other jobs. And they will leave. Meanwhile, the company will continuously shell out money to recruit and onboard new hires, only to have the cycle begin again.



That's not a pretty picture. The good news: Employers can make significant strides toward stopping the cycle of attrition by proactively addressing broken processes. Based on our research and expertise, we've identified four areas where companies can start:

➤ **More closely tie IT to line of business workers**

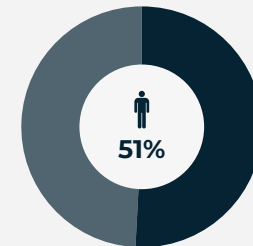
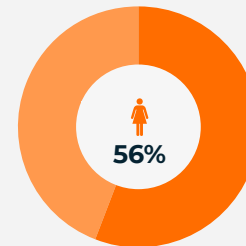
Only half of employees blame HR for onboarding issues and less than a third of respondents hold sales teams accountable for broken sales processes. Yet when it comes to IT problems, roughly three-quarters of employees turn a critical eye to the IT department. This finding suggests that workers perceive IT as its own entity, separately accountable from the rest of the company in a way that HR and sales are not.

To ameliorate problems like a lack of prompt IT service and difficulties requesting new devices, companies need to first close the gap between IT and the rest of the business. This begins by ensuring IT decision makers have a seat at the table at high-level business discussions and are more connected to line of business employees.

To forge these connections, businesses must examine their internal workflows with an eye toward identifying and repairing the sources of disconnect between IT and the rest of the business. Workflow analytics tools can go a long way toward providing companies with actionable data to better tie IT to the line of business. With clear lines of sight into automated processes within the enterprise, everyone can see which workflows are working well — and should be replicated and repeated in other areas — and which ones need to be optimized for better results.

## GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES REGARDING ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES

Women are slightly more likely than men to think there are broken admin processes in their organizations.



### Of these employees:

**52%** v. **41%**

Report that raise negotiation processes are broken

**25%** v. **17%**

Report that processes for reporting unethical behavior are broken

**57%** v. **48%**

Report that promotion processes are broken

**17%** v. **24%**

Comfort starting advancement conversations with supervisor



### ➤ Eliminate paper from the onboarding process

Company onboarding processes aren't working, as 58 percent of our survey respondents revealed. And there's one common denominator among some of the most frequently-identified broken onboarding processes: Paper.

From onboarding paperwork to job performance documents to healthcare enrollment forms, these are all processes in which paper is partially to blame for wasted time and money. Whether you're a government department or a health technology company, pursuing paperless processes has proven results in cutting costs and driving efficiency.<sup>3</sup>

### ➤ Identify processes that can be streamlined and automated

One of the main reasons an internal process becomes broken is that it's handled manually — and manual handling quickly leads to inconsistencies and confusion. *Want a new computer? Catch your IT person at the water cooler! Need to request a sick day? Just put a sticky note on HR's desk!*

With many of the broken processes we highlighted, there are opportunities for streamlining and automation to play transformative roles. From automating simple processes like submitting PTO requests to more sophisticated ones like delineating a workflow for annual performance reviews, process and content-centric automation tools can help drive businesses toward more efficient, collaborative and optimized workflows.



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nintex.com/resources/case-studies/abu-dhabi-case-study>;  
<https://www.nintex.com/resources/case-studies/dms-health-technologies-operations-case-study>

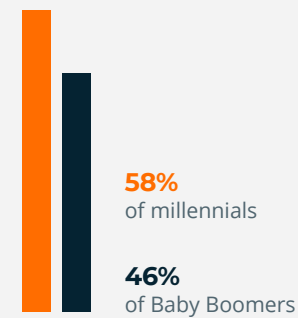
## ➤ Clearly define a process for advancement

Without clearly defined processes for advancement, companies can't expect to have happy employees. Among employees who say their company's processes for advancement are "not very clearly" or "not at all clearly" defined, only 10 and 4 percent, respectively, rank themselves as "very happy" at work. Comparatively, 61 percent of employees with clearly defined advancement processes are very happy on the job. That stark contrast speaks for itself.

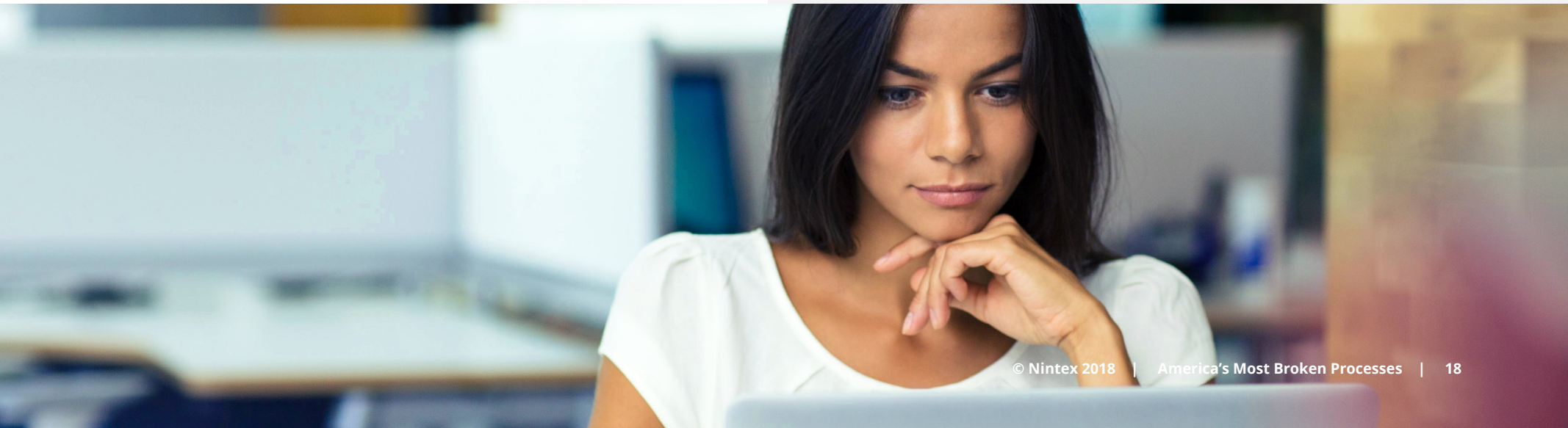
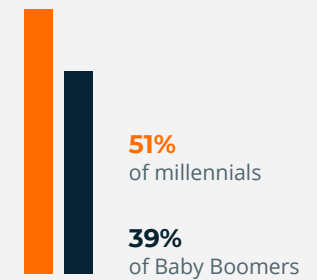
To clearly define a process for advancement, companies must evaluate and evolve the administrative processes that are tied to career progress — namely, annual performance reviews, promotions and raise negotiations. Without first fixing these functions, enterprises will not be able to provide employees a clear path for growth and continued success.

## MILLENNIALS ARE MORE LIKELY TO FEEL JOB GROWTH-RELATED PROCESSES ARE BROKEN

### Promotion processes are broken:



### Raise negotiation processes are broken:





# About Nintex

Nintex is the global standard for process management and automation. Today more than 8,000 public and private sector clients across 90 countries turn to the Nintex Platform to accelerate progress on their digital transformation journeys by quickly and easily managing, automating and optimizing business processes. Learn more by visiting [www.nintex.com](http://www.nintex.com) and experience how Nintex and its global partner network are shaping the future of Intelligent Process Automation (IPA).

