Marketing to Generation Y

Chapter 4

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Journal: Ad Age Digital, August 2, 2012

Article: “Millennials Want to Party With Your Brand But On Their Own Terms.”

 The article by Erin Mulligan explains a new marketing aspect to Generation Y. Generation Y is the children of the baby boomers also referred to as the “echo boomers” or millennials. Even though millennials are constantly keeping up with various social networks, like Twitter and Facebook, they trust advice from strangers and look elsewhere to find information on purchasing products or services. Millennials are three times as large as Generation X. The millennials large population forces companies to focus their marketing strategies towards them.

 Generation Y or otherwise known as millennials are young people aged from 17-34. They are expected to spend $200 billion annually and in their expected lifetime $10 trillion. After reading this article we have learned that Generation Y is more likely to trust a stranger. Companies that reach out to the normal social media sites aren’t doing everything they can to sell their products To get information about a product or service millennials are looking towards blogs and sites for reviews and tips on what to buy or where to go. A way to really connect to the millennials is to encourage people to share their opinions on blogs and review sites. Many traveling companies have figured out how to effectively market to the millenials by encouraging them to write reviews which helps bring back loyal customers. Millennial travelers share their experience by posting photos, reviews and check-ins on social networks. Companies can make it easy for millennials to promote their products no matter their location. It is important when companies provide feedback to millennials because they want to be heard. Brands are important to this generation, so companies who make it easy for millennials to connect with their brands will be a step ahead of competition and generate more revenue. Although the process of getting people to talk about your brand is a lengthy process, but in the long run it is well worth it.

**Millennials Want to Party With Your Brand But On Their Own Terms**

**Millennials Put Their Friends First But They Trust Expert Strangers**

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[RSS feed](http://adage.com/rss-author.php?id=3707) *Published:* [*August 02, 2012*](http://adage.com/results?endeca=1&return=endeca&search_offset=0&search_order_by=score&search_phrase=08/02/2012)

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Too many brands think if they've got a Facebook page, a Twitter account, and maybe an Instagram or Pinterest feed, they're doing all they can to reach the social generation. But millennials trust strangers over friends – so if your whole millennial marketing strategy is limited to social networks, you're not hosting the right party.

Boomers may be big spenders, but their kids will be the largest consumer generation in history. Young people aged 17-34 today – the millennials or Gen Y – will spend more than $200 billion annually starting in 2017, and [$10 trillion in their lifetimes](http://www.genbuy.net/).

But with every brand clamoring for Gen Y's attention, how can you gain mindshare among the most mobile, tech-savvy, social generation in history? The answer is to host a killer party they won't want to miss. For a brand, that means creating engaging content for millennials to consume and share with friends; offering ways for them to share their opinions on your brand; and making it easy for them to find "expert" opinions on your products.

Everyone knows it takes a mix of magic, planning, and execution to host an unforgettable party. So before you can get young people to come to your brand party, you have to understand the motives and behaviors of this unique generation. Millennials are the first generation to wring 26 hours out of a 24-hour day by multitasking on multiple devices at once; 80% of millennials report [using two or more Internet devices while watching TV](http://www.fastcompany.com/1753945/the-cure-for-add-vertising).

Just because millennials are always connected, however, doesn't mean they're listening. They only absorb a fraction of what they hear, read, and see, because they live in a world of information overload. Getting their attention is difficult, but worth the effort. Millennials form fierce brand loyalty, with 70% saying they [always come back to brands they love](http://www.edelman.com/insights/special/8095/8095whitepaper.pdf).

**Let the Experts Speak**
Though millennials are seen as putting friends above all else, they actually trust strangers with relevant information and experiences the most when it comes to making purchase decisions. Some 84% of millennials said social opinions influence their purchase decisions, and 51% said they trust "strangers" more than friends, according to a report by Bazaarvoice and Kelton Research.

In other words, if a young person is planning a backpacking trip through Europe, she won't ask for advice on a social network where perhaps only one friend has ever taken such a trip. Instead, millennials seek out blogs, sites, and applications where experienced travelers share tips about the best hostels, deals on train tickets, and hidden restaurants.

That means the only way to really connect with millennials is to encourage everyone who uses your products or services to share their opinions – then distribute this content far and wide. The more content consumers create about a brand or product – and the more widely marketers distribute this content across retail websites, in-store, and via social and mobile channels – the more likely young buyers will come across this authentic content created by "strangers" during the exact moments they're deciding what to buy.

**Encourage Millennials to Share**
Some brands are already getting millennial marketing right. Chief among them are [travel companies](http://www.bazaarvoice.com/static/mtwp/MT-Whitepaper.pdf) that realize the huge potential spending power of young consumers. Travel spending by millennials rose 20% in 2010, making them the [fastest-growing age segment for travel](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/13/business/young-travelers-drive-changes-in-hotel-industry.html?_r=3&scp=1&sq=millennials&st=cse). By encouraging millennials to share and consume authentic opinions, travel brands have an opportunity to capture their loyalty now, and keep it for the future.

Travel brands like Starwood Resorts have encouraged all travelers to contribute reviews of not just their hotels, but surrounding restaurants, destinations, nightclubs, shops, and neighborhoods to create a deep bench of "expert" content that appeals to young travelers. (After all, young people don't go somewhere to sit inside a hotel, but instead are active explorers who want to experience destinations "like a local.") Millennial travelers in particular share widely while traveling by posting reviews, photos, check-ins, and posts that show up in various social feeds. These brands have also made sharing even easier by creating mobile applications that let travelers check in and post photos and reviews directly to Facebook and other networks as well as search for nearby recommendations and reviews from other travelers.

Any type of brand can encourage this type of content sharing. Make it easy for millennials to consume and share content about your brand no matter where they are: in a dressing room sharing outfit ideas with a friend via your mobile app, calling up product reviews on their phones in store, or posting photos of their newest purchases to Facebook.

However you let them share, make sure to respond to their suggestions and feedback. Millennials take a lot of time to share their opinions – and they want to be "heard."

Shaady Ghaddessy, Marketing Manager for Starwood's W Austin hotel, gets a daily summary report of reviews and ratings and responds, directly from the General Manager's email address, to those who have legitimate complaints or particularly interesting comments.

Jason Dorsey, a noted millennials expert and Chief Strategy Officer at the Center for Generation Kinetics, sums it up nicely: "Millennials know not everyone will love every travel experience, but they do expect responsiveness and empathy to questions, comments, and complaints. How you handle online interactions – not necessarily achieving resolution, but the approach – can have a big impact on attracting future customers."

Connecting with millennials is not rocket science. They want to express themselves, be heard, and learn from others. Marketers that make it easy for young consumers to interact with their brands, each other, and the wider web community will be the first in line to capture some of the millennials' $10 trillion in spending. And if you make interacting with your brand fun and authentic, millennials will reward you with continued purchases all throughout their life. After all, no one ever wants a great party to end.