

# pointofview

## The **5 Truths** That Define Millennials

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# Ipsos

**GAME CHANGERS**



## Background

It seems hard to get away from the word 'Millennial' these days. Everywhere you look there are new articles, studies, findings and revelations about how brands can better engage with and tap into this group of consumers. And why wouldn't they want to? Millennials are on the cusp of having more spending power than any other generation in history: an estimated \$200 billion annually by 2017. Understanding this group of consumers is critical for marketers — what motivates them, keeps them up at night, shapes their behavior and attitudes, and so on. To answer these questions, we have to know how to engage them in research.

Millennials are known for doing things their own way, and this is no different when it comes to research. Traditional methods have proven ineffective in capturing their interest. This is especially the case for product tests, where low engagement and interest leads to under-representation on online panels, and low accountability means low response rates at the recall stage among those who have agreed to test a product. That said, there is a research solution that is well-suited to engage this generation of digital natives, with their insatiable appetite for collaboration and always-on connection to the web, and that is a private online community.

## Online Communities

When we talk about a private community, we are specifically talking about a custom recruited group of people, brought into an online environment that is password-protected. Membership is invite-only, and content is curated by the host of the community (the brand in partnership with Ipsos). A private community has many advantages, but it can be summed up into three core benefits: it's focused, it's fast and it's flexible.

So, what makes a private online community the perfect solution to better understand Millennial behavior? To answer this, let's look at five overarching truths about this generation.

# The 5 Truths That Define Millennials

## Truth 1

**Millennials expect a stage on which their voice can be heard.**

Millennials are eager to share — so get them talking! According to a recent study conducted by MediaPost, 87% of Millennials agree that brands should get consumers like them to give opinions before creating new products. They want, or rather, they expect, the brands that they purchase from to put them first. Millennials get satisfaction knowing that their opinion matters, that it is important and that it has an impact on a product. The companies that take this into consideration will be the winners.

## Truth 2

**Millennials love to consume and share content online, especially video, and especially on YouTube.**

Millennials are sharing more content than ever before, and of any other generation. While there is an endless array of sites in the social media sphere, YouTube continues to be the dominant player with this group. According to Nielsen data, YouTube reaches almost 50% of the 18- to 34- year old population — more than any cable network!



### Truth 3

#### **Millennials are using images more than text to communicate.**

Visuals are big with this group of consumers. Consider this: a Pew Research Center study found that 53% of young adults (aged 18-29) are on Instagram, compared to 21% of the entire adult population. In our own research, we've found that Millennials are also the most likely of any generation to post photos or comments about products, retailers and brands on social media sites. Specifically, 66% of Millennials post photos or comments about products, retailers, brands, etc. on social media sites (compared to 58% of Gen X and 40% of Boomers), and 69% of Millennials pin products and product information on Pinterest (compared to 56% of Gen X and 34% of Boomers).

### Truth 4

#### **Millennials are all over mobile.**

Millennials came of age with the Internet and smartphones, so there's little surprise that they are defined as a highly connected, plugged in and mobile generation. A Nielsen study on the matter found that over 85% of Millennials in the U.S. own smartphones, the highest smartphone penetration rate of any other generation. A study that we conducted in collaboration with Google found that on a typical day, for the 18- to 34-year olds who own a smartphone, the smartphone reaches them more than any other device. And for most, that's even when they are getting some shut eye — 83% of Millennials say that they sleep with their smartphones, compared to 50% of Boomers.

### Truth 5

#### **Millennials are hyper-connected.**

Millennials are an on-the-go and always-on generation. The evolution in technology has enabled them to be connected at all times and everywhere. For this demographic, social media outweighs email for communicating: on an average day, Millennials share roughly six pieces of content through social media, and only five through email.

## Some Guiding Strategies

These five truths illustrate the value in using private online communities for reaching and engaging with this diverse segment of consumers. Online communities mimic the dynamics of the social web and tap into the unique behaviors of Millennials to provide a platform that enable brands to ask, listen, discuss and collaborate in real-time. Here's a summary of tips for engaging Millennials in research communities.

- **Millennials want to be heard, so involve them in your product development. Communities are a fantastic platform to engage in continuous conversation about their opinions, objectives, the brands they use, and more.**
- **Leverage video and images to appeal to Millennials as well as to learn from them. Instead of asking them to tell you what they think, ask them to show you. Research shows that they live and breathe on YouTube, Instagram and Pinterest, so you will achieve better engagement by doing so.**
- **Take a mobile-first approach when speaking with the Millennial consumer. They want to be easy to engage, wherever and whenever they wish. Online communities are portable, providing a seamless cross-platform experience by leveraging responsive design across desktop, mobile and tablet devices. And, being a 24/7 resource that is always on and always ready, it provides immediate access to Millennials.**
- **Create a relationship, even if short-term, to enhance the research results. They want to connect, interact and most importantly, feel valued.**

Following these tips will help build an online community that provides insights into the attitudes and behaviors of Millennials, informs decisions, and ultimately, inspires business growth. Social media has created a platform that allows consumers to engage with and inform brands, and for market research, we are applying these truths to inform how we engage in our online communities to build deeper human insight.

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