THE MILLENNIAL

IMPACT

RESEARCH

**RESEARCH BY** 



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# INTRODUCTION

## THE 2013 MILLENNIAL IMPACT REPORT

Since 2009, the Millennial Impact Report has uncovered comprehensive data that reveals this rising generation is eager to connect, get involved, and give to causes they're passionate about. And over that time, we've zeroed in on the Millennial behaviors of greatest interest to nonprofits—first their trends in giving, then in service, and now in communication.

For those new to the Millennial Impact Report, here are the 'need-to-know' trends that have emerged in the past few years:

## MILLENNIALS PREFER TO CONNECT VIA TECHNOLOGY

They use websites and search engines primarily for information-gathering, finding volunteer opportunities, and donating online. They rely on social media and email for communicating and connecting with their networks, while mobile technology gives them instant access to all these channels.

## MILLENNIALS SHARE IN MICRO WAYS

Their interactions with nonprofit organizations are likely to be immediate and impulsive. When inspired, they will act quickly in a number of ways, from small donations to short volunteer stints, provided that the opportunities are present and the barriers to entry are low.

## MILLENNIALS FACILITATE (AND RELY ON) PEER INFLUENCE

Peer influence plays an important role in motivating Millennials to volunteer, attend events, participate in programs, and give. Even if Millennials can't give as much as other demographic groups, they nonetheless are willing to help raise funds for causes they care about, usually by calling on friends and family.

## MILLENNIALS VOLUNTEER ALONG A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT

Millennials are most likely to get hands-on with causes they care about when organizations offer a range of volunteer opportunities, from one-time commitments to long-term, pro-bono skills-based opportunities. Ultimately, they want to lend their knowledge, expertise, and time to help nonprofits. And when this generation forms long-term volunteer relationships, they tend to give larger gifts, as well as encourage their friends and family to contribute, too.

## MILLENNIALS GIVE TO HAVE AN IMPACT

Millennials are consistent in their desire to see how dollars translate into people helped. They want their contributions, no matter the type or amount, to help achieve tangible results for a cause. Yes, members of this generation are more likely to give smaller amounts to multiple organizations than to focus their giving on any one recipient. But the stronger their relationship with an organization, the more likely they are to give larger gifts over time.

## **HOW CAN MY NONPROFIT FULLY INVEST IN THIS GENERATION?**

Enter the 2013 Millennial Impact Report, which reveals that Millennials aren't interested in structures, institutions, and organizations, but rather in the people they help and the issues they support. The key for nonprofits, therefore, is to build a comprehensive Millennial engagement platform that invites them to participate in the cause and maximize their involvement.

As such, this year's report dives deeper into understanding the influence of peer engagement, design, and messaging, and how it all combines to encourage Millennials to act in the moment. What's more, the report introduces a new onboarding system for Millennial engagement that will help transform invested Millennials not just into donors, but also into champions, evangelists, and long-term supporters. Regardless of their budget or size, nonprofit organizations have a tremendous opportunity to start thinking holistically about this rising generation.

# **ABOUT THE RESEARCH**

## **METHODOLOGY**

For the 2013 Millennial Impact Report, Achieve gathered information from an online survey distributed to Millennials through 14 research partners, as well as conducted usability testing of nine nonprofits' online presence [website, social media pages (Facebook and Twitter), emails, and mobile]. For this study, Millennials were defined as anyone born between the years 1979-1994.

## **SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

The survey conducted was the fourth consecutive Millennial Impact survey with responses from 2,665 individuals. Of the respondents, 60% earned an undergraduate degree and 24% earned a master's degree. Most were full-time employees (65%). The survey was open from February 1, 2013 to March 15, 2013. The research included in this report is also supported by the past three years of Millennial research, which has surveyed a total of 11,675 people. It is important to note that the report reflects views from a sample population of the Millennial generation.

## **RESEARCH PARTNERS**

- Advocates for Youth
- ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital
- American Pianists Association
- AmeriCorps Alums
- GiveCorps
- Kiwanis International Foundation/Circle K International
- Maymount Foundation
- ONE
- One Percent Foundation
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Pi Lambda Theta
- Repair the World
- Seattle Works
- The Nature Conservancy

## **USER TESTING OF MILLENNIALS**

- User testing conducted March 4, 2013 to March 20, 2013
- User tests included 100 participants ages 20-35
- User tests included video-recorded feedback and usability testing on messaging and online presence [website, social media pages (Facebook and Twitter), emails, and mobile].

## **RESEARCH TEAM**

## LEAD RESEARCH PARTNER



- Derrick Feldmann, CEO
- Joanna Nixon, Strategy Consultant



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This year, Achieve gathered information from an online survey distributed to Millennials through 14 research partners, and, for the first time, conducted usability testing of nine nonprofits' online presence that included video feedback.

**The top takeaway:** Millennials first support causes they are passionate about (rather than institutions), so it's up to organizations to inspire them and show them that their support can make a tangible difference on the wider issue.

**The question for nonprofits becomes then**: How can we fully invest in this generation, immerse them in the cause, and maximize the impact of their interest, time, and giving?



## CONNECT

- Millennials prefer to share information about the cause, not the organization itself. This preference moves savvy organizations away from traditional PR and towards content expertise on a cause.
- Smartphone usage continues to rise, as mobile devices best enable the connectivity and news information gathering from peers, mobile content sources, and organizations that Millennials seek. Some methods for attracting the mobile-friendly Millennial audience include:
  - a) crafting mobile-friendly email content that calls readers to action
  - b) posting regularly on Facebook, especially with images (the most shared item)
  - writing news or action-oriented headlines to deliver organizational news
- Organizations should think "mobile first" and focus on responsive design as well as content, including navigation, context around the organization's work, and success stories. It's imperative that organizations' websites clearly show their work, demonstrate how potential constituents can help, and offer ways people can get involved.

- Take note: Millennials who want constant updates on an organization no longer rely on or return to websites to receive that information. Instead, they use websites first to learn about the organization, and then to connect with its social networks to stay updated. The smoother and more integrated the online experience, the higher the chances for conversion along any point of the engagement pathway.
- Millennials are highly selective about what organizations they follow in a crowded and noisy media landscape, connecting actively to 1-5 organizations on social media. Given the rise of supportive activism such as sharing and signing petitions, as well as other forms of microvolunteering where the norm is not to be on-site with the organization, social media presents an opportunity to witness the organization's action at work with the people it serves.
- Organizations will know their message is resonating when Millennials are compelled to share their content. It's an instant feedback loop that tells organizations what this audience finds interesting and worth disseminating. Sharing, in fact, is a form of indirect advocacy, in that it furthers education about the cause and draws other people to the issue. The more that nonprofits can inspire sharing, the better chance they have of capturing Millennials passion about their cause.

## **INVOLVE**

- Millennials view volunteer opportunities as a
  way to socially connect with like-minded peers,
  which moves them beyond technology (social
  networking) to in-person action. It's especially
  helpful when organizations craft marketing
  messages that highlight the peer involvement—
  for example, "Join 20 other people like you at
  Clean-Up Day this Saturday."
- Further, volunteer programs that facilitate networking for Millennials maximize this generation's inherent social connectedness.
   Designing programming with this benefit in mind will ultimately help retain young professionals and give them opportunities to broaden their skillsets among groups of people invested in the same issue.
- The report also shows that offering online training in place of in-person training is attractive to Millennials, with the added benefit of allowing participants to train and serve anywhere. This generation also wants to know upfront what their time will achieve, so sharing positive, direct results signals to Millennials that you value and respect their time.



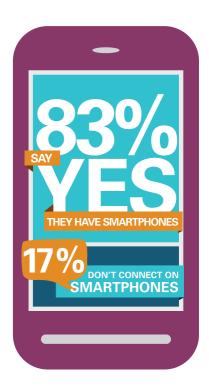


## **GIVE**

- From an organization's perspective, donation requests that focus on how the gift will benefit the recipients will garner higher response.
   What's more, fundraising on Millennials' preferred channels (websites and email as opposed to telemarketing) significantly increases chances for conversion.
- While Millennials don't give a lot, they do want to give what they have. One new finding this year is that 52% of respondents said they'd be interested in monthly giving. This format offers nonprofits an opportunity to experiment with soliciting smaller but more regular gifts.
- Millennials showed significant interest in using their network—family and friends—to fundraise on behalf of causes they were passionate about. Run/Race/Walk events are the highest peer fundraising methods by Millennials with a historic presence within school and collegebased programs. However, given these events' cyclical nature, they sometimes swell short-term participation numbers without always leading to long-term retention.
- Another, less cyclical trend in peer fundraising is that Millennials are starting to ask for donations in lieu of gifts for birthdays and other events. This trend is worth watching (and capitalizing on) as social networks enable and facilitate such giving with greater reach and speed.

# THE MILLENNIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

# CONNECT



MORE THAN

OOO OF RESPONDENTS
LIKED IT MOST WHEN NONPROFITS
SHARED STORIES ABOUT
SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS
OR THE PEOPLE THEY HELP



1

Millennial Respondant

@MillGen13

Educate me about your organization, and challenge me to think and reinforce my caring.







•••

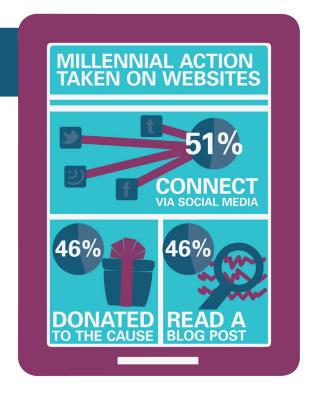
75%
OF MILLENNIALS
LIKE, RETWEET, OR
SHARE CONTENT
ON SOCAL MEDIA

## **KEEP THE WEBSITE UPDATED!!**

Millennials' biggest website pet peeve is when the information has not been recently updated.



HEAR WHAT MILLENNIALS ARE SAYING!
www.themillennialimpact.com/2013research



# THE MILLENNIAL 2013 IMPACT INVOLVE RESEARCH INVOLVE

How can I help Millennials get involved?

## **FOLLOW THE VOLUNTEER CONTINUUM**









MILLENNIALS WERE MORE INTERESTED IN GETTING INVOLVED FOR...
NETWORKING & GAINING PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE







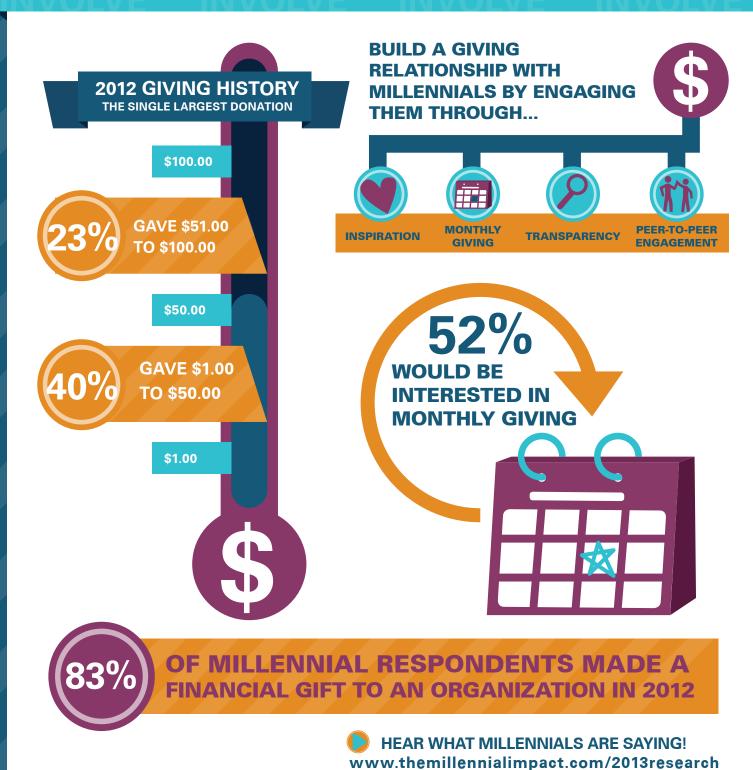
MILLENNIALS' TOP THREE MOTIVATIONS
FOR GETTING INVOLVED

HEAR WHAT MILLENNIALS ARE SAYING!
www.themillennialimpact.com/2013research



72%
OF MILLENNIALS
ARE INTERESTED
IN PARTICIPATING
IN A NONPROFIT
YOUNG
PROFESSIONAL
GROUP

# THE MILLENNIAL MILLENNIAL MILLENNIAL CONTROL C



# CONNECT

# SHARING IS CARING... ABOUT YOUR MESSAGE

Most nonprofits already know the basic pieces they should put in place to capture Millennials: Have an up-to-date, well-designed website. Make it mobile-friendly. Be present on social media such as Facebook and Twitter. Follow up with relevant, easy-to-read emails.

But these channels are simply that—channels. The real draw for Millennials, especially in today's attention-fragmented media landscape, is a compelling message that inspires them toward impulsive sharing and contributing. Moreover, these messages need to maintain "real time relevance" for Millennials, in that it connects with and pertains to their interests in the moment as well as over time.

So it's up to nonprofits to create the right message that resonates with Millennials, consider what impulse they might have, and then create ways to fulfill it. This year's research provides insight into how organizations can make that happen.

# **CONNECT: MOBILE**



# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## **MOBILE-FRIENDLY IS MILLENNIAL-FRIENDLY**

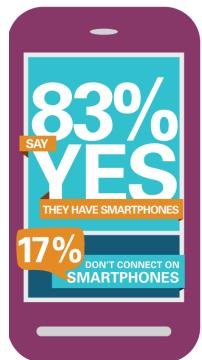
Smartphone ownership continued its rise this year to 83% of respondents. More telling is how they use their devices to connect with nonprofits. The majority of respondents most often use their smartphones to read emails and articles from nonprofits (80%) as well as check Facebook (70%).

They also like it best when organizations have mobile-friendly websites (80%) and provide news or action-oriented headlines that link to more information or next steps (59%).



Conversely, Millennials' biggest pet peeves are

trying to navigate non-mobile-friendly sites (76%), finding some information missing or not available (65%), and not being able to find the details they want—contact information, for example—quickly and easily (52%).



# ACTION TAKEN BY MILLENNIALS FOR A NONPROFIT ON A SMARTPHONE

- 1. READ EMAILS
- 2. FOLLOW ON FACEBOOK
- 3. READ ARTICLES
- 4. FOLLOW ON TWITTER
- 5. SHARE A PHOTO OR EVENT
- 6. CHECK-IN AT THE NONPROFIT OR EVENT
- 7. WATCH VIDEOS
- 8. DONATE
- 9. SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER
- **10. TEXT ALERTS**



Feedback from the online user testing confirmed these experiences. Mobile website turn-offs included text that was too small for a mobile screen, making it difficult to read. Testers also disliked non-intuitive navigation that didn't allow them to zero in on the organization's "who-what-why," in addition to donation buttons that didn't adequately explain or outline the reasons to give.

On the other hand, when sites offered intuitive, logical navigation and responsive functionality that made the site easier to read on a mobile device, testers felt they more quickly understood the organization's mission and its primary call to action.



CHECK IT OUT!

Watch this video of users discussing a mobile site at themillennialimpact. com/2013research





# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Smartphone usage continues to rise, as mobile devices best enable the connectivity and news information gathering from peers, mobile content sources, and organizations that Millennials seek.
- Some methods for attracting a Millennial audience include:
  - a) crafting mobile-friendly email content that calls readers to action
  - b) posting regularly on Facebook, especially with images (the most shared item)
  - c) writing news or action-oriented headlines to deliver organizational news (as corroborated in the research)
- In thinking "mobile first," organizations should focus on responsive design as well as content, including navigation, context around the organization's work, and success stories.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## **ENABLE IMPULSIVITY**

Focus on the right content to deliver in a mobile-friendly website environment to spur Millennials to action.

# THINK "MOBILE FIRST" WHEN DESIGNING ONLINE EXPERIENCES

This means simplifying your message so that users understand your mission immediately, making the text readable for a small device, and making buttons easily clickable for a mobile touchscreen. The smoother the experience the more easily Millennials will understand your cause, be inspired by your mission, and act.



Not having a clear site limits a Millennial's ability to connect. Describing a site this user states, "I could miss something easily because I am zoomed in [...} because it is meant for a desktop."



## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of users discussing a mobile site at themillennialimpact. com/2013research

# DO

Make sure the "About" section is easy to find.

Make your organization's purpose clear and central on your mobile homepage.

Make buttons large enough so that the user can easily click on them.





# DON'T

Do not make the text too small to read on a mobile screen

Do not clutter the space with unnecessary ads or content that is not valuable.

CONNECT

# **CONNECT:** SOCIAL MEDIA



## RESEARCH FINDINGS

## **BECOME ONE OF THE FIVE**

Nearly half of respondents (49%) actively follow one to five organizations on social media—a tiny slice of the pie when you consider the universe of nonprofits and causes competing for attention. And within that universe, the quality of the social media interactions plays a significant role in how Millennials perceive and engage with content.

ON SOCIAL

Always be aware of your audience and your messaging. It does not matter the media outlet, appropriate messaging can pay off. This user compliments the organization saying, "It's about being part of something rather than just feeling sorry for someone." and "It definitely gives me a better impression of this site.

USER

More than 60% of respondents liked it most when nonprofits shared stories about successful projects or the people they'd helped. In the words of one survey participant, "Educate me about [your] organization and challenge me to think and reinforce my caring."

In keeping with Millennials' overall interest in causes rather than organizations themselves, respondents also appreciated learning information related to the broader issue, not just about the specific nonprofit. As one respondent put it, "Give me information about what is going on in the field, what [you] are doing about it, and how I can help without necessarily donating money all the time."



Compare this to respondents' pet peeves, which nearly tied at "constantly being asked for money or help" (69%) and "seeing the same posts over and over again" (69%). Related to that, close to 39% said they prefer organizations talk to

them as people, rather than with formal PR language.

When it came to taking action via social media, three-quarters of respondents liked, retweeted, or shared posts, video, or images. Secondary actions included signing a petition/pledge (47%) and donating (45%). A fair number of respondents were also likely to share a request for help with their network (40%).





## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video discussing how messaging at themillennialimpact. com/2013research

## **ACTION TAKEN BY MILLENNIALS FROM A NONPROFIT SOCIAL MEDIA POST**

- 1. LIKED, RETWEETED, OR SHARED **POSTS, VIDEO OR IMAGES**
- 2. SIGNED A PETITION OR PLEDGE
- **MADE A DONATION**
- 4. SHARED WITH MY NETWORK A REQUEST FOR HELP
- 5. SIGNED UP TO VOLUNTEER
- 6. REGISTERED OR PURCHASED A **TICKET TO AN EVENT**
- 7. BOUGHT MERCHANDISE (T-SHIRT, HAT, BAG, STICKERS, ETC)
- 8. JOINED A COMMITTEE





## WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Millennials are highly selective about what organizations they engage within a crowded and noisy marketplace. Even peer influence, though it might initially attract a Millennial to click or read, may not be enough to persuade them to follow within social networks.
- Social media presents an opportunity to witness an organization's action at work with the people it serves. Organizations who still prioritize fundraising asks over storytelling are missing an opportunity to enable sharing, the primary action taken by Millennials on social media.
- Millennials prefer to share information about the cause, not the organization itself. This preference moves savvy organizations away from traditional PR and towards content expertise on a cause topic.
- Petition and pledge signing is a leading action performed in social media. Millennials are using
  this light, fast form of advocacy within social networks to show support for causes and issues
  they or their peers care about. Collecting these signatures provides organizations with an
  opportunity to educate the signers more about the cause and deepen their support.
- Millennials value authenticity, variety, and actionable information. True community management
  goes beyond scheduling updates and monitoring retweets; it creates an honest, friendly
  environment where followers are treated not as ATM machines, but as collaborators.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## **HONE YOUR MESSAGING**

Social media sharing creates an immediate feedback loop that helps organizations show how deeply their message is resonating with Millennials. Ask these questions of your organization and adapt the answers into content to test:

- How can you educate the Millennial audience about the broader cause?
- How does your organization uniquely contribute to that greater issue?
- How can your programs and design entice your audience to read more?

Remember, relate your content to the greater cause, not just around what your specific organization is doing.

## **MAP YOUR CONTENT**

Developing rich social media experiences requires organizations to devote internal resources—human and financial—to social media engagement.

Build a content schedule that includes what topics you'll cover, outlines when and where you'll deploy it, and identifies ways program staff can contribute materials.

Collect personal stories and photos of people you have helped to inspire Millennials to be passionate about your cause.

Think about the content from their perspective—what would be most interesting for them to read—rather than thinking solely about what your organization needs from them. The more that a Millennial resonates with your cause, the more likely they are to share that content with their friends.

DO

Share personal stories of individuals that your organization has helped.



# DON'

Do not include too much text, but rather include a short story with a photo.



MORE THAN

OOO OF RESPONDENTS
LIKED IT MOST WHEN NONPROFITS
SHARED STORIES ABOUT
SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS
OR THE PEOPLE THEY HELP



Social media is a great opportunity to connect with Millennials but you must strive for engaging conversations. When utilizing social media as a resource, use compelling imagery that is that is relevant to your cause or issue, create an action, portray the "who-what-why", and engage in conversational posts.









## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch users discuss social media posts from nonprofits at themillennialimpact. com/2013research

# **CONNECT:** EMAIL



## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

# COMMUNICATE THE OPPORTUNITIES

Similar to social media, email newsletters are also competing for attention in a noisy market. More than 65% of respondents receive email or e-newsletters from 1-5 different nonprofit organizations.

In the past year, respondents took one or more of the following actions as a result of an email request: signed a petition or pledge (52%), donated (52%), and shared or forwarded news or updates (49%).

Email content plays a critical role here. Millennial respondents liked it best when the emails they received had a calendar of upcoming events (57%), provided lots of short, timely updates with links to full articles (57%), and shared success stories related to the organization's programmatic work (54%).

However, frequency also impacted Millennials' response. Their No. 1 email pet peeve was when nonprofits emailed too frequently, with 71.5% saying, "I always have something in my inbox from them."

# ACTION TAKEN BY MILLENNIALS FROM A NONPROFIT EMAIL

- 1. SIGNED A PETITION OR PLEDGE
- 2. MADE A DONATION
- 3. SHARED OR FORWARDED NEWS AND UPDATES
- 4. SIGNED UP TO VOLUNTEER
- 5. REGISTERED OR PURCHASED A TICKET TO AN EVENT
- 6. SHARED A REQUEST FOR HELP
- 7. BOUGHT MERCHANDISE (T-SHIRT, HAT, BAG, STICKERS)
- 8. JOINED A COMMITTEE



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

 Supportive activism such as sharing and signing petitions is a significant action Millennials take

Emails can incorporate these items into the engagement pathway to deepen individual engagement as well as encourage peer influence, which can draw more supporters to the cause. Given that concise, action-oriented content—donate, sign, volunteer, etc.—is preferred content to receive in email, organizations have an opportunity to realign their content to include actionable items amid educational, brand-building stories.

For example, a monthly newsletter could contain the most recent update from the field, a new blog post from the Executive Director discussing trends in the broader cause, and a petition around a time-sensitive advocacy action.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## **INSPIRE ACTION**

Successful emails communicate the opportunities for recipients to get involved in the issue or cause, and then give them an immediate way to do so.

Remember to keep the action relevant to the message. Asking a new subscriber to donate in the first email is premature; rather, educate them to better invest in the cause's success, then suggest a timely advocacy action for them to take, then lead them towards donating.

## **COMMUNICATE OUTCOME AND FOLLOW UP**

When posting petitions related to your cause, be sure that you are creating a petition that is connected to some outcome and follow up with those who signed the petition to show them your progress.

## DO

Show a clear call to action in your email.

Give your readers a chance to connect with your cause before asking them to donate.





Do not include too many competing calls to action.

DON'

Do not make the email too text heavy—Millennials are not going to take the time to read everything—focus on headlines with links to more information.



Limit the amount of text to read. Millennials want information quickly and efficiently. Intrigue their interest and compel them to take action to learn more and to share.



## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of users describing content at the millennial impact.com/2013 research



CONNECT: EMAIL 17

# **CONNECT:** WEBSITES



# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## YOUR MESSAGE'S CROSSROADS

Coming in at 51%, the most frequent, specific action Millennials took on websites in the past year was to connect via social media (Twitter, Facebook, blogs, RSS feeds). The second-most frequent actions: donate (46%) and read a blog post (46%).

Similar to email, respondents liked it best when websites included a calendar of upcoming events, success stories, and research, stats, and news related to the cause.

## Keep the website updated!

The biggest turnoff for close to 75% of respondents was when information hadn't been updated recently.

# **Explain more** succinctly what it is exactly that you do.

## **ACTION TAKEN BY MILLENNIALS** FROM A NONPROFIT WEBSITE

- 1. CONNECTED TO SOCIAL MEDIA (TWITTER, FACEBOOK, BLOGS, RSS FEEDS, ETC)
- 2. MADE A DONATION
- **READ A BLOG POST**
- SIGNED UP FOR AN EMAIL **NEWSLETTER**
- 5. SIGNED A PETITION OR **PLEDGE**
- 6. SIGNED UP TO VOLUNTEER
- **REGISTERED OR BOUGHT TICKETS TO AN EVENT**
- 8. BOUGHT MERCHANDISE (T-SHIRT, HAT, BAG, STICKERS, ETC)
- **JOINED A COMMITTEE**



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Websites are portals to action, giving signposts for an organization's top information. It's imperative that organizations' websites clearly show their work, demonstrate how potential constituents can help with current projects and events, and offer ways people can get involved in the near future.
- Millennials use websites as the default location to find basic information about an organization. They will most likely go there first if they want to find out what the organization does, find location and hours, or details on upcoming events. Think of your website as the foundation for your organization, the place where most Millennials will default when looking for information, but use social media as the tool to stay connected with Millennials on a more regular basis.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

# MAKE THE BASICS OF YOUR WEBSITE STANDOUT

Given that Millennials' primary interest when visiting a website is to get information about an organization and its current projects, websites essentially becomes portals to action. Construct your website to offer the core information upfront; feature immediate opportunities to get involved (whether on social media or in person); and provide plenty of shareable, actionable content—images of the people you're helping, educational infographics, videos, timely advocacy

alerts, etc.—that will inspire Millennials to engage their peers via social media in addressing the issue.

It is very important the information on your website looks professional and is up-to-date, otherwise you will quickly lose the trust of Millennials visiting the website.

## MAKE IT EASY TO DONATE!

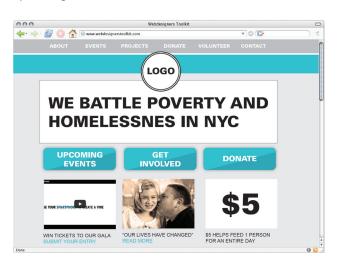
If a Millennial has to click through too many pages before figuring out how to donate to your organization, they will quickly lose interest.

DON'I

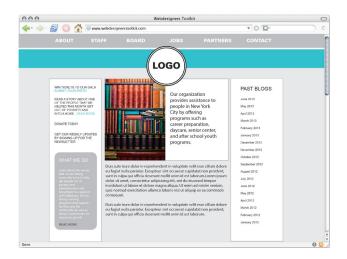
## DO)

Make it clear how to get involved with your organization.

Be sure to include a way to donate on your homepage.



Do not add unnecessary information on the homepage—keep it simple.





The user groups rate seamless, integrated experiences higher than disjointed ones. They were less enthusiastic when organizations failed to explain who they were or didn't provide context for their calls to action. One user tester put it this way in response to one organization's website: "Explain more succinctly what it is exactly that you do."



## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of users discussing nonprofit websites at themillennialimpact. com/2013research



CONNECT: WEBSITES 19

# **CONNECT: SOCIAL SHARING**



# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## **AMPLIFY YOUR MESSAGE**

As we've seen year after year in the Millennial Impact reports, sharing is in Millennials' DNA, and is often the first action taken that demonstrates their interest in a cause. As stated earlier, 75% of respondents like, retweet, or share content on social media; an additional 51% have shared or forwarded updates in the past year on email; and 22% connect with nonprofits on mobile by sharing a photo, news update, or event.

Respondents appreciated when nonprofits used images and videos across their websites, emails, and social media (44%). Such content is also proving to be the stickiest, as the majority of respondents were more likely to like, retweet, and share posts that had visual content. One user tester said, "If you have a site that I come to and the first thing I see is a picture, that's a plus for me," while another said the video on one test site was "excellent" and "made [her] want to know more."

Of course, not just any visual will do. Respondents and testers alike spoke about the need for relevant, high-quality photography, video, or infographics. As a tester said of one organization.

"The photos on their Facebook feed concretely illustrate the work that is being done. [They present] sharable facts with great photos."

# 75% OF MILLENNIALS LIKE, RETWEET, OR SHARE CONTENT ON SOCAL MEDIA



If you have a site that I come to and the first thing I see is a picture, thats a plus for me.



## WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Organizations will know their message is resonating when Millennials are compelled to share their content. It's an instant feedback loop that tells organizations what this audience finds interesting and worth disseminating.
- Sharing, in fact, is a form of indirect advocacy, in that it furthers education about the cause and draws other people to the issue. To this end, organizations should focus on crafting messages that help Millennials share the information.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## THINK VISUAL

Capitalize on the growing use of visual formats to communicate your message and story—literally a "snapshot" of your work that translates across a variety of platforms. Formats include photographs, infographics, and videos.

# PROVIDE MESSAGES THAT SPARK SHARING

Help Millennials understand that they should share the message so that more people are helped. Showing a message's potential for amplification can encourage them to share with friends more quickly.

## **TEST WHAT'S SHAREABLE**

Take advantage of online channels' analytics and track how your content performs. What has captured your audience's interest? What content are they sharing the most? What channel is enabling the most sharing? Then test specific elements—for example, headlines, type and placement of photos, or video length—to see which versions increase sharing. Each organization is unique.



Millennials are increasingly visual, making inspiring imagery even more important. Be mindful of what your photos say about your organization and cause or issue.



Watch this video of users discussing visual messaging at themillennialimpact. com/2013research

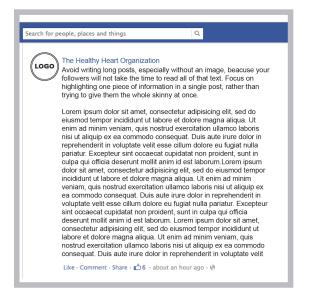
# DO

Include photos, infographics and videos as sharable content.



<u>DON'T</u>

Do not write a full article of text—you want to entice your readers to want to learn more.



# INVOLVE

## BENEFIT FROM MILLENNIALS' PURSUIT OF PASSION

According to the 2013 Millennial Impact Report, 73% of Millennials volunteered for a nonprofit in 2012. Their motivations: More than three-quarters were passionate about the cause or issue, while 67% felt they could make an impact for a cause they cared about.

Again, Millennials are supporting the issue rather than the organization, and this distinction reflects what drives them to move beyond browsing channels and get active. This generation wants to support a cause, help other people, and become part of a community that's equally excited and eager to make a difference.

# **INVOLVE**



# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## THE VALUE OF TIME

Millennials' chief motivations for getting involved were: working on a cause they are passionate about (79%), meeting new people who care about the same cause or issue (56%), and being able to lend pro-bono skills and expertise (46%).



Their biggest pet peeves were not having much to do while volunteering and

having their time wasted (69%), plus not knowing exactly what they'll be doing when they volunteer (60%). Of particular note is respondents' reaction to in-person training. On this point, 47% deplored having to "attend long training sessions in person for things that could be explained virtually," indicating an opportunity for organizations to revisit how they structure and deliver training.

Organizations who value time as much as they do donations send a strong signal to their supporters about how volunteerism directly benefits the cause's constituency.

# HOW CAN NONPROFITS WALK THAT TALK?

- 1. Develop meaningful, productive opportunities for contributors.
- Share the outcomes of each activity or hour spent—for example, how tutoring a high school student for one hour a week leads to greater rates of college acceptance.

When volunteers feel their time is well spent and highly valued, they are more likely to return and deepen their commitment.

## WHY MILLENNIALS GET INVOLVED

- 1. PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE OR ISSUE
- 2. FELT THEY COULD MAKE AN IMPACT FOR A CAUSE THEY CARE ABOUT
- 3. TO CONNECT AND NETWORK WITH LIKE MINDED PEOPLE
- 4. TO UTILIZE PROFESSIONAL SKILLS OR EXPERTISE
- 5. FAMILY OR FRIENDS
  RECOMMENDED THE
  VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY
- 6. RECEIVED A FREE TICKET, T-SHIRT OR OTHER PRIZES



Millennials want clear navigation. Make sure the call to action is dominant and compelling. Once a user has taken the next step to get involved, be sure your action plan is evident.





## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of a user discussing a nonprofit website at themillennialimpact.com/2013research





# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## **INVOLVEMENT'S MANY FORMS**

The question organizations should be asking themselves then becomes, how can I help Millennials get involved, particularly in an opportunistic, impulsive way?

As discussed in last year's Millennial Impact Report, it's important for nonprofits to create a continuum of volunteer engagement that supports a variety of commitments. This year's research dug deeper into a few other ways Millennials are interested in participating in a cause.

## 1. Supportive Activism

These actions require little time or commitment, and lend themselves best to impulsive involvement. As discussed in the "Connect" section, examples include signing petitions, contacting legislators, and sharing social media posts.

Though the input is relatively light, it shows that the action-taker is beginning to take interest in the cause and, with a little cultivation, can be set on a path of deeper involvement.

## 2. Young Nonprofit Professional Groups

According to the 2013 Millennial Impact Report, close to 72% of respondents said they are interested in joining a young nonprofit professional group, partially to meet people their age with similar interests (56%), and partially to broaden their skillset for future professional use (43%).

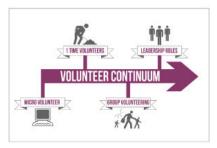
Note: This desire tends to correlate with slightly older Millennials (ages 26-35) farther along in their career paths.

## 3. Ongoing Leadership

Providing paths for Millennial volunteers to join an organization's board or advisory committee is another way to capitalize on their desire for deeper engagement. This year, 30% of respondents were interested in such a role, but aren't currently involved, and a large majority (86%) said their main reason for joining would be because they are passionate about the cause.

This figure indicates a significant untapped market for organizations, as it represents an active, mission-driven group of young people ready to share their skills and passion on behalf of their causes.

## **2012 CONTINUUM**



Download the 2012 Millennial Impact Report

## 2013 CONTINUUM

## SUPPORTIVE ACTIVISM

- SIGN A PETITION
- CONTACT LEGISLATORS
- SHARING SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

# YOUNG NONPROFIT PROFESSIONAL GROUP

- MEET PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR INTEREST
- BROADEN SKILLSET FOR FUTURE

## **ONGOING LEADERSHIP**

- DESIRE FOR DEEPER INVOLVEMENT
- ACTIVE, MISSION-DRIVEN YOUNG PEOPLE

INVOLVE 24



# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## **OFFER INTANGIBLE REWARDS**

Getting to connect with the beneficiaries of their service motivates Millennials—in one respondent's words, "seeing the difference that I make."

In addition, feeling effective and useful is often its own reward; as one survey participant shared, "Lots of nonprofits have tiny staffs, and they are stressed out. I like doing even the most mundane tasks if I know it has freed up time or reduced stress."

That said, nonprofits should still deliver other benefits to their volunteers to encourage their continued support. Respondents tended to be more interested in intrinsic benefits such as networking (51%) and gaining professional expertise (61%) than in tangible discounts or gifts.

As one survey participant put it, "I would volunteer a lot more if it meant I was able to connect with higher up staff members in the organization. Often, though, you don't meet anyone except the volunteer coordinator."

# If they have ways to further develop a career, that makes them even better in my book.



User testers echoed these themes. When shown a list of benefits for joining an alumni group they were not persuaded by discounts and were interested in the professional development and networking.

In the words of one user tester upon encountering an organization's webinars, "If they have ways of further developing a career, that makes them even better in my book."



## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of users discussing volunteer rewards at themillennialimpact.com/2013research

## TOP REASONS TO JOIN AMERICORPS ALUMS

Share

Save 15% or more on car insurance!

GEICO and AmeriCorps Alums are working together to thank you for your service! Mention that you are an AmeriCorps Alum when you contact GEICO for a free quote, and see how much you could be saving!

• No more (complicated) taxes!

While we can't do away with your taxes completely, we can make your life a whole lot easier. The Beehive, powered by H&R Block, will help you file your taxes come Spring time. Fast, free, and effective!

• Share your expertise!

AmeriCorps members have a lot to figure out: food stamps, health insurance, supplementary income, and other headache-inducing things. As an alum, and expert in navigating the AmeriCorps lifestyle, your insight is an invaluable asset to the current members. Help us make their term of service amazing!

Professional Development

We have some amazing current and former AmeriCorps members, who have incredibly diverse skill sets. Take advantage of this resource! Come learn from the best and brightest in the nation: join our monthly career webinars.

Networking!

Friend us (and not just on Facebook)! Come hang out with service-oriented, like-minded individuals, and make lifelong friends with current members and fellow alums.

Continued Service

INVOLVE 25



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Millennials are more passionate about an organization's contribution to the greater cause—how many people you've helped or change you've effected—than they are to the institution itself
- Advance online training and knowing the benefits of the volunteer experience are key interests for Millennials, and also demonstrate that you value and respect their time.
- Millennials view volunteer opportunities as a way to socially connect with likeminded peers, which moves them beyond technology (social networking) to inperson action. It's especially helpful when organizations craft marketing messages that highlight peer involvement. For example, "Join 20 other people like you at Clean-Up Day this Saturday."
- Further, volunteer programs that facilitate networking for Millennials maximize this
  generation's inherent social connectedness. Designing programming with this benefit
  in mind will ultimately help retain young professionals.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

## **DEVELOP A CONTINUUM OF SUPPORT**

What activities can your organization create to allow Millennials to share your content, volunteer for events and give to your cause?

As much as possible, show them how they are helping you make a difference and most importantly, thank them for their support and their time.

## TRAIN ANYWHERE—SERVE EVERYWHERE

Today's technology removes the barrier of having everyone present for training (and also appeals to a generation that prefers virtual training anyway).

Develop online training modules that allow your volunteers to learn—or serve—from anywhere.

## **DEVELOP OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL SKILLS**

Once supporters are invested in an organization, they become more willing to dedicate more time, assume leadership, and make financial contributions within their budget. So the extra investment is well worth it for nonprofits.

You should also utilize Millennials' professional skills when they volunteer, which not only gives Millennials a reason to be more connected to an organization, but could greatly benefit the organization in the long run.

## **DON'T FOCUS ON MATERIAL INCENTIVES**

Keep in mind that Millennials do not necessarily need "stuff" as incentives; they prefer professional development opportunities and networking more than t-shirts and swag.

INVOLVE 26

# GIVE

# **INSPIRE POTENTIAL DONORS**

Organizations need monetary donations as much as they need time, so it benefits them to encourage Millennial giving. The good news? Millennials are already passionate about their issues and eager to contribute. The realistic news? Given their earning potential at this stage in their lives, they won't be able to give huge amounts—yet.

The key to activating Millennial donors is for organizations to understand that they're building toward future giving. So, as with the volunteer continuum, it benefits nonprofits to provide a range of giving options to better meet Millennials where they are and show how any and every amount makes a difference.

Organizations can spark a giving relationship with Millennials through a four-pronged approach—inspiration, monthly giving options, transparency, and peer-to-peer engagement.

# **GIVE**



# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

# SHOW WHAT GIFTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Overall, close to 83% of respondents made a financial gift to an organization in 2012. What's equally important is how they made those donations and how they prefer to give going forward. The overwhelming majority—a combined 84%—gave or wants to give via website, while giving in person came in a distant second at 48%.



Ranked last with 11% was giving over the phone, which linked directly to Millennials' biggest

giving-related pet peeve: receiving telemarketing calls (69%). This aligns with this generation's inclination to communicate digitally via text, email or social media rather than on the phone.

Millennials are most likely to donate to a nonprofit when they feel inspired by the organization (69%) and have specific examples of how their gifts will impact the organization's work (49%). One user tester said in response to an education website,

"I would donate if I knew more about the school, the students, or [saw] a section that spotlighted what a particular scholarship recipient is doing [...] on campus to stay active and support the campus."

Organizations can encourage Millennials to give by spotlighting accomplishments, sharing positive firsthand accounts from recipients of the aid, and demonstrating how gifts lead to results. For example, profiling a family who just moved into their Habitat for Humanity house after a year of volunteer work, sweat equity, and \$30,000 raised. As a user tester said of one organization's website, "It is about being part of something, rather than feeling sorry for someone, which I really like."

## **HOW MILLENNIALS PREFER TO GIVE**

- 1. ONLINE WEBSITE
- 2. IN-PERSON (DIRECTLY TO A PERSON OR AT AN EVENT)
- 3. SMARTPHONE (MOBILE WEBSITE)
- 4. MAIL
- 5. PAYROLL DEDUCTION
- 6. GROUPON, LIVING SOCIAL, OR OTHER OFFER
- 7. TEXT
- 8. OVER THE PHONE

## **WHY MILLENNIALS GIVE**

- 1. THEY FEEL INSPIRED BY THE NONPROFIT
- 2. THERE IS A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF HOW THEIR GIFT WILL MAKE AN IMPACT
- 3. THEIR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED
- 4. THE NONPROFIT HELPS ME OR SOMEONE I KNOW
- 5. A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND ASKS ME TO GIVE
- 6. THERE IS A FUNDRAISING GOAL SPECIFIED
- 7. I AM ON A BOARD OR IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION



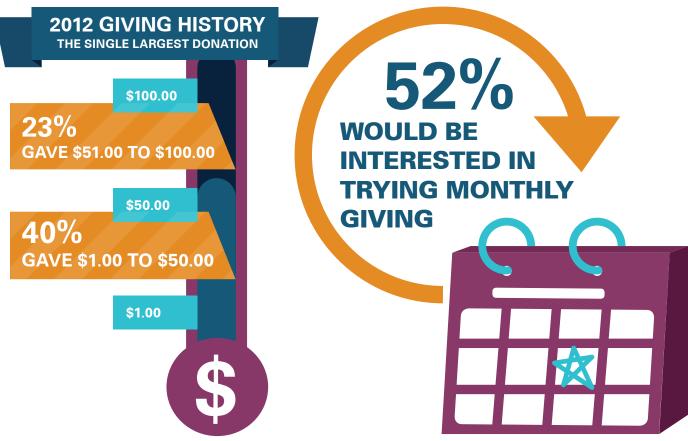
# **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

## **CONSIDER MONTHLY GIVING**

Let's be honest: Millennials simply aren't as well-positioned to give larger amounts at this point in their lives. Consider their giving history in 2012: Nearly 40% of respondents gave amounts between \$1-50, and another 23% gave at \$51-100 levels.

However, while they can't give a lot, they do want to give what they have. One new finding this year is that 52% of respondents said they'd be interested in monthly giving. This format offers nonprofits an opportunity to experiment with soliciting smaller but more regular gifts. For example, if organizations were to ask for lower donation amounts—say, \$10/month for 12 months instead of one \$120 payment—they could see increased conversion as well as higher amounts donated over time.

To increase frequency of giving, organizations should regularly solicit feedback and report on what's happened on the ground. This will show supporters that their ongoing commitment is a worthwhile investment.





Hearkening back to this report's points in the "Involve" section, Millennials are also more likely to give when they volunteer with the organization (36%). Respondents echoed this takeaway in their comments; as one respondent said, "I have an emotional connection to the nonprofit and want to see it succeed."



## **CHECK IT OUT!**

Watch this video of a user's feelings about giving to nonprofits at the millennial impact.com/2013 research



# %

## **RESEARCH ANALYSIS**

# BE TRANSPARENT AND TRUSTWORTHY

Along those lines, Millennials like to see where their money is going; if it's making a tangible impact, the more likely they are to give again. Respondents echoed repeatedly in the comments that they wanted transparency on how the organization was using and maximizing the gift.

As discussed in last year's report, offering secure giving platforms on websites also helps build trust. In parallel with the rise in smartphone usage, Millennials' top concerns about security (57%) and maintaining privacy and proper use of their personal information (53%) now applies to mobile technology. Organizations that prominently display security information can help overcome donors' fears and encourage them to complete the transactions. This then bolsters giving via the primary channel Millennials use to connect with and influence each other—mobile phones.

# ACTIVATE PEER-TO-PEER ENGAGEMENT

Speaking of influence, nonprofits have an excellent opportunity to develop peer fundraising programs that draw on Millennials' networked lives to maximize giving. The potential is high—according to the 2013 Millennial Impact Report, nearly 70% of Millennials are willing to raise money on behalf of a nonprofit they care about.

Just as network support spurs volunteerism, so does peer-to-peer outreach enable greater giving. Peer fundraising is highly attractive to this generation;

- 64% fundraise for walk/run/cycling events
- 46% prefer asking people to donate to a designated nonprofit in lieu of physical gifts
- 45% of respondents are not afraid to ask family and friends for money when they feel strongly about a cause

70%
OF MILLENNIALS ARE WILLING TO RAISE MONEY ON BEHALF OF A NONPROFIT THEY CARE ABOUT



Website user testing revealed a similar inclination, as the testers rated most highly websites that gave clear context around their ask, highlighted stories of beneficiaries, and offered more details about where they'd direct current donations. As one tester commented, "Be transparent with [how you're using all the money] you are collecting. You say you don't need money for operating expenses, but then say you use part of the money for raising awareness, which to me means marketing. Just be transparent about where all the money goes."





Watch this video of a user discussing giving to nonprofits at the millennial impact. com/2013 research

GIVE 30



# WHAT DOES IT MEAN

- Donation requests that focus on how the gift will benefit the recipients will garner higher response. Organizations should tailor their fundraising asks accordingly.
- Fundraising on Millennials' preferred channels (websites and email as opposed to telemarketing) significantly increases chances for conversion.
- Millennials are starting to ask for more donations in lieu of gifts for birthdays and other
  events. This trend is worth watching (and capitalizing on) as social networks enable and
  facilitate such giving with greater reach and speed.
- Run/Race/Walk events are the highest peer fundraising methods by Millennials with a
  historic presence within school and college-based programs. However, these events tend
  to swell participation numbers and they don't always lead to long-term retention because
  when the original Millennial participant is no longer involved, his or her peer group goes
  with them. The takeaway? Showing up doesn't necessarily equal buy-in.



# WHAT YOU CAN DO NOW

# OPTIMIZE YOUR ONLINE GIVING PLATFORMS

The more secure your platforms, the better Millennials will feel about donating, particularly in impulsive moments. Be sure to thank them, even for small gifts. Also consider looking in to monthly giving options, where Millennials can opt in to giving a specified amount each month to the organization through direct deposit.

# REPORT BACK ON PREVIOUS GIFTS

Demonstrate how gifts have affected beneficiaries. How many people have been helped? How many milestones reached? How many lives saved, changed, etc.? What was achieved that would not have been possible without the donor's gift?

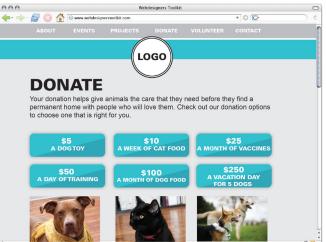
## DO 0

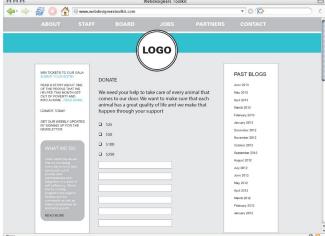
Show how the money donated goes towards specific projects.

Include photos of who or what the money donated goes towards.

<u>DON'T</u>

Do not make the donation page generic—show how dollars helps the cause.





GIVE

# CONCLUSION

# What does all the connecting, involving, and giving add up to when it comes to truly engaging Millennials?

Based on the last four years of the Millennial Impact Report, we know the baseline includes connecting with them via technology, offering micro ways to get involved and give, facilitating peer influence, offering a continuum of volunteer options, and sharing the results of their donations.

But now it's time to build off this foundation. The nonprofit field has reached the point where it must move beyond simply inviting Millennials in to incorporating them into significant, cause-based, outcomes-driven work—in short, the real work of engagement.

## FROM MINIMUM TO MAXIMUM

This year, to help your organization move from minimum investment to maximum return, we are introducing the **Millennial Impact Benchmarks**. We've touched on elements of the Benchmarks throughout the report, but on a high level they encompass (in order):

## 1. Millennial Inviting

No matter an organization's size or resources, it can adopt the strategies and cultural changes to take the first step to connect and involve Millennials. This level includes putting in place the baseline technologies and messaging that ensure Millennials participate in your organization's communication channels, volunteer programs, and fundraising calls to action.

## 2. Millennial Immersion

Organizations that reach the benchmarks of this level have designed programs with Millennials, not just for them. At this stage, Millennials are actively participating in unique ways to help the cause enhance awareness and outreach efforts in the community.

## 3. Millennial Impact

The ultimate goal—the pinnacle of a Millennial engagement strategy—is to provide leadership, service, and truly transformational opportunities for Millennials to affect the direction and impact of the community.

If your organization has done it right, Millennial engagement will become part of your culture—a modus operandi rather than a "nice to have." Even better? As you adjust your approach for one audience, you get better, faster, and more effective overall, transforming your organization from the inside out.

Now, we know some of you will want to start immediately, while others will disagree that the steps are necessary. But we believe it's time to be **bold**. We want organizations to capture this demographic now for greatest return later. **And every organization can reach this level by following BUILD**.

This approach is formally known as the Millennial Engagement platform, an action-based rubric introduced in Cause for Change (2013, John Wiley & Sons, http://www.amazon.com/Cause-Change-Nonprofit-Millennial-Engagement/dp/1118348265) that helps organizations create the infrastructure for a long-term Millennial engagement strategy. At the heart of the platform are the BUILD cultural components, which guide nonprofits on how best to allocate resources, time, and organizational energy to reach this coveted generation.

# **BUILD YOUR ORGANIZATION**

Here's how any organization—even those starting from the very beginning—can follow the **BUILD** path to change their culture and craft an effective Millennial strategy:

- Be unified as an organization in working with this generation. Help all leaders, both volunteer and paid, understand and agree on the need to engage Millennials.
- Understand their environment and its complexities. Appreciate its current state, what this generation experienced growing up, and how rapid advancements of technology and culture have shaped their involvement with your organization.
- Identify key changemakers, those Millennials seeking to make a difference with your organization. These could be staff, board members, volunteers, and donors. Don't be distracted by stories of Millennials who don't care. These are "outliers," and every generation has them. You must find those who want to work with you and make change happen.
- **Lead by engagement rather than just by participation.** Engagement means you understand how Millennials want to communicate, participate, lead, and challenge the organization to do better. Focus on conversational and relationship involvement with your organization.
- **Determine success.** What does Millennial success look like for your organization? Create foundational standards or benchmarks. Create realistic and incremental goals that will not hinder ongoing deployment of Millennial programming.

## IS YOUR ORGANIZATION READY TO ENGAGE MILLENNIALS IN YOUR WORK?

Then take advantage of the Millennial Impact Benchmarks from this year's report, which can guide organizations and lay a strong foundation for ongoing outreach.

To access the Millennial Impact Benchmarks please visit www.themillennialimpact.com/benchmarks.

2013 BENCHMARKS			
	INVITING	<b>IMMERSION</b>	IMPACT
CONNECT	Mobile-Friendly Website     Social Media     Email     Website	Action Center     Ambassadors	Supporting Activism to Organizing Activism System
INVOLVE	Micro-volunteering     Millennial Group     Volunteering     Committee Engagement     Advisory Board	Pro Bono Skills     Board Participation	Young Professional Models     Full Continuum of Involvement     Program Design and Idea Generation
GIVE	Online Giving     Reports Impact of Gifts     Peer Fundraising	Direct Gifts Towards Interests     Opportunities to Visit and See Impact of Gifts	Peer Small Group Giving Circles
CULTURE	BUILD Acceptance	Transparency Leadership-Inviting Solutions-Inspired Work/Life Integration Mentorship	Reverse Mentorship     Professional and Leadership Development for Staff     Intergenerational Staff Team Problem-Solving

# THANK YOU

Thank you to the principal research and insights sponsor, The Case Foundation

