

What Millennials Want: How To Please Digital Natives

There was a time when you could publish ads in a newspaper, magazine or even on television and instantly grab any 20 or 30-something's attention. But times are changing. Traditional advertising is no longer the means to a millennial's heart, and certainly not to their wallet. Millennials have started distrusting old fashioned marketing and social media has stepped right up to fill that gap.

A recent study conducted by Annalect shows that 47% of millennials claim that social media has introduced them to new brands while 71% are more likely to buy from brands they like on Facebook or follow on Twitter. The study further found that Facebook alone influences millennials' purchasing decisions more than any other channel. It shows that word of mouth marketing for the masses works. And this does not even take into account the power of Instagram.

In 2013, KPMG found that 71% of companies claimed social media was impacting business, and experiential marketing and digital experiences were being sought over anything else. So what are millennials looking for?

Quality is key

Attractive, easy-to-use websites, well-designed pages, things that stand out, stimulate and engage them, is a must. Everything from the website to the social pages is a company's "shop front" and cannot be neglected.

Millennials want to feel connected

Last year, sports brand Adidas used 30,000 runners of the Boston Marathon to create personalized videos of participants to promote its latest running apparel. Not only did this create a connection with those participants, but it worked to connect viewers too. The video garnered 100,000 views within the first two days of its release, but its effects were felt long after.

Yes, it was a celebration of the 30-year partnership between Adidas and the Boston Athletic Association and aimed to drive the hype of the 2018 Boston Marathon edition running shoe, but it also created a community. Each of those runners felt Adidas had served them.

Instant gratification is expected

This means that the click-through chain is key. The cross-over between platforms is not only convenient but essential if digital is to translate into dollars. Think about Netflix and Facebook: viewers can easily share their favorite series and movies with friends. Or Instagram, offering the ability to shop on the app or swipe up to access web links in stories.

A brand's use of technology for mobile users is also a major part of the criteria for

millennials. In research, more than half (55%) expect a company to have a mobile-friendly app or website, with over half (52%) claiming that a company's use of technology is a factor in making purchases over brand name.

Brands need to show they care

Brands need to show that they stand for something bigger than the product they're selling. In 2017, Airbnb took a risk and piggy-backed on politics to create a brand message that matters: "we all belong" The advert racked up almost 5 million views within its first month on YouTube and 100,000 views on Instagram. The result? They capitalized on a trending topic that took a stance on an important social issue with global ramifications while reinforcing positive consumer perceptions about the brand.

It's about unique experiences, not a copy-and-paste

Millennials are chasing experiences. Not just any experience, but one that feels handcrafted especially for them. Take traveling, for instance - they want to go to that remote place they saw on Instagram, or the hotel room their favorite influencer stayed in.

They are more adventurous and hungry for experience. They want to do more than just lay on beaches or go on package tours doing the same as everyone else. The largest travel accounts on the likes of Instagram aren't showing off hotels, they're showing off places, historical sites, cultures, and nature.

Millennials don't want the buffet life of holidays gone by. They expect well presented creative food. "How will this look on my feed?" is what the millennial is thinking.

"Eco-Friendly" is the word

Still using the traveling example, Millennials don't want the tourist shows where elephants are treated cruelly and tortured for the sake of tourism. Rather, they want the elephant sanctuary that supports rescued elephants. More and more are looking for an eco-resort or active holiday because lifestyles are changing. They are becoming healthier and more conscious travelers.

Matthew Sliedrecht, director of marketing at Cleartrip

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