



It Takes More than a Facebook Page: Attracting the Millennial Donor

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A big myth in fundraising is that donor solicitation is "one size fits all." It's not. The "Greatest Generation," Baby Boomer, and Millennial (Gen X, Y, and Millennial) donor each has different philanthropic attitudes, and fundraisers need to understand that and tailor their approach accordingly.

How do you reach the younger donor? It's a huge topic, and there are a lot of great suggestions out there. Here are a few tips to get you thinking in the right direction.

- Communication is a two-way street. Social media channels allow Millennials to receive information and comment on it. This back-and-forth interaction is what they are used to, and they want that same capability from the organizations they support. Give them the platform to do just that.
- They want results. NOW. This is not the generation you approach for endowment or pooled appeal gifts where the impact is seen in the long-term. Instant gratification is commonplace to them, and they want it in their philanthropy as well. They prefer funding specific projects that have (relatively) immediate results and want to see how their individual involvement has contributed to those results.
- The rules of engagement have changed. Boomers and "Greatest Gens" look for the recognition they get from supporting an institution. That isn't enough for Millennials. They are more focused on the issues, not the organization, and want to be active problem solvers. To them, getting their hands dirty and participating in the organization's work is their way to ensure results are achieved. Give them meaningful and varied hands-on volunteer opportunities so they can participate in the work you're doing.

- With a little help from my friends. This is a connected generation, with huge peer networks, and they view introducing their peers to your organization as an extension of their philanthropy. They want opportunities to collaborate with their friends, so develop volunteer activities where they work together to advocate for the cause, solve problems, or advance organizational goals.
- Save your stamps. Millennial communities exist primarily in virtual space, so you aren't going to reach them through more traditional print mail. They aren't used to receiving snail mail and will no doubt toss yours. Rely instead on e-mail and your website. According to the 2012 Millennial Impact Report, 65% of Millennials consult an institution's website first when seeking information and go directly to the "About" page. A concisely presented mission and simple navigation to other pages of interest such as volunteer opportunities, events, and donating will keep them exploring. E-mails should be for specific purposes, like volunteer opportunities and events, which are clearly indicated in the subject heading.

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