



## Millennials are actually more generous than anybody realizes



We know that millennials are different. They're not working the same way as their parents. They aren't marrying in the same way. And they aren't motivated by work to give to charity or volunteer.

But that doesn't mean they're more selfish than their parents, according to a new report.

While previous generations may have been motivated to volunteer or donate by their companies, millennials are much more likely to be influenced by their peers than by their supervisors, 65 percent to 44 percent. And only 11 percent had their donation deducted from their paycheck, a method that for older generations was often considered the standard way to give at the office.

That's according to the latest Millennial Impact Report, one of a series by the research group Achieve and sponsored by the Case Foundation, looking at what charitable causes millennials support and what influences this generation to give away their time and money.

That stingy participation in traditional workplace corporate social responsibility programs may have helped forge the notion that the famously self-involved millennials are selfish. A recent Reason-Rupe poll shows that a majority of Americans, including millennials themselves, describe the generation as "selfish" and "entitled."

But while they may not be donating at the office, millennials, now the largest living generation, are donating. Big time -- even as they carry high levels of

student loan debt, have had to navigate a tough job market and may have had to move back into their parents' homes before getting on their feet.

The report, which surveyed more than 2,500 millennial employees and managers in small and large firms, found that 84 percent made a charitable donation in 2014. Of those givers, only 22 percent said their donation was solicited through their company. Fully 78 percent made donations on their own.

"This is not your father's corporate social responsibility anymore," said Jean Case, a former executive at AOL and chief executive of the Case Foundation. "The old style, top-down strategies and campaigns for charitable giving coming from the CEO just don't resonate with this generation." Instead, millennials are by themselves giving time and money to causes that matter to them. And companies, the report argues, must adapt to this "seismic shift" in giving – listening to millennials' passions; offering employees, not just the CEO and managers, opportunities to set the company giving agenda; and giving time to employees to volunteer their skills and talents to do good in the world.

Millennials aren't just clicking their smartphones and donating cash, even if they're smartphone savvy. In fact, in 2009, the year of the first Millennial Impact Report, 19 percent of Millennials donated via text on their smartphones. This year, the share fell to 17 percent.

"We're finding you still have to activate this group to get on board to do something," said report author Derrick Feldman, president and founder of Achieve. "Yes, technology is an exciting tool. But to move someone to action still requires a messenger, a message and a purpose."

The report found that 70 percent of millennials spent at least an hour volunteering their time to a cause they cared about, with more than one-third volunteering 11 hours or more. Forty-five percent participated in a company-wide volunteer day. Thirty-two percent used paid time off to volunteer and 16 percent took unpaid time off to volunteer.

Seventy-seven percent of millennials said they're more likely to volunteer when they can use their specific skills or expertise to benefit a cause.

"I personally refer to millennials as the next 'Great Generation' because the degree of generosity that we're seeing from them is quite impressive," Case

said. "One common theme among all young people, it was true of Baby Boomers and Gen Xers at this age – they're idealistic. The big difference, when we began looking at millennials, is that they're turning their idealism into action in a very real way."

A survey by the Pew Research Center found that, whereas a generation ago, when Baby Boomers were in their 20s, they held a gloomier view of the future than older generations, the reverse is true of millennials, with the youngest generation showing the most optimism.

Today, 49 percent of millennials say the country's best years are ahead, compared to 42 percent of Gen Xers, 44 percent of Baby Boomers and 39 percent of the Silent Generation.

By Brigid Schulte, The Washington Post