

NEW CONE COMMUNICATIONS RESEARCH CONFIRMS MILLENNIALS AS AMERICA'S MOST ARDENT CSR SUPPORTERS, BUT MARKED DIFFERENCES REVEALED AMONG THIS DIVERSE GENERATION

Life-stage, gender and other key factors impact how different Millennial audiences will engage in CSR

BOSTON (September 23, 2015) – From buying products associated with a cause they care about to using their online networks to amplify social and environmental messages, Millennials are universally more engaged in corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts, according to the newly released [2015 Cone Communications Millennial CSR Study](#). The study, the most comprehensive snapshot of how Millennials engage with CSR efforts in the U.S., reveals more than nine-in-10 Millennials would switch brands to one associated with a cause (91% vs. 85% U.S. average) and two-thirds use social media to engage around CSR (66% vs. 53% U.S. average).

The study examines the unique attitudes, perceptions and behaviors of different Millennial segments, including the [young Millennial](#), [mature Millennial](#), [Millennial female](#), [Millennial male](#), [affluent Millennial](#) and [Millennial mom](#).

“This research reiterates the significant differences in how gender, life-stage and income level impact how Millennials want to be engaged in CSR efforts,” says [Lisa Manley](#), executive vice president, [CSR Strategy](#), [Cone Communications](#). “With different priorities and drivers, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ message won’t inspire mass action within this generation. To appeal to a diverse Millennial audience, businesses need to understand the unique drivers and preferences of each segment to tailor their content, communications and channels for greatest impact.”

Millennials Willing to Take Action to Support CSR

Millennials are more fervent in their support of corporate social and environmental efforts and are, above and beyond, more likely to say they would participate in CSR initiatives if given the opportunity. This enthusiastic group is more willing to:

- Purchase a product with a social or environmental benefit (87% vs. 83% U.S. average)
- Tell friends and family about CSR efforts (82% vs. 72% U.S. average)
- Voice opinions to a company about its CSR efforts (70% vs. 60% U.S. average)
- Volunteer for a cause supported by a company they trust (74% vs. 56% U.S. average)

Yet, Millennials are also prepared to make personal sacrifices to make an impact on issues they care about – whether that’s paying more for a product (70% vs. 66% U.S. average), sharing products rather than buying (66% vs. 56% U.S. average) or taking a pay cut to work for a responsible company (62% vs. 56% U.S. average).

Millennials Use Social Media to Amplify for Impact

Millennials, as digital natives, believe social media can be their megaphone to make an impact on issues they care about. This group is far more likely to use social media to address or engage with companies around social and environmental issues (66% vs. 53% U.S. average). Although most Millennials turn to social channels to share and learn, there is also a portion that uses this medium as an avenue to participate in a direct dialogue with companies or contribute to CSR efforts:

- 38% share positive information about companies and issues they care about (vs. 30% U.S. average)
- 33% learn more about specific companies and issues (vs. 27% U.S. average)

- 26% share negative information about companies and issues they care about (vs. 21% U.S. average)
- 18% directly communicate with companies around issues (vs. 14% U.S. average)
- 17% contribute directly to an effort led by a company (vs. 12% U.S. average)

“Millennials have come of age, into the shopping aisles and the workplace,” says **Manley**. “This hyper-connected generation is consuming media at an unprecedented pace. With social and environmental issues constantly in their social media feeds and inboxes, they simply can’t ignore how their decisions impact the world around them.”

Reaching Millennials with CSR Communications

Engaging Millennials in CSR efforts can trigger a positive advantage to company reputation and bottom-line. Millennials want companies to tell them how they are striving to improve the world around them and more than nine-in-10 (93%) feel better about companies upon learning of those efforts. However, companies must reach Millennials with the right content via the preferred mix of communications channels.

Traditional communications channels just won’t cut it with this wired audience. Although Millennials still look to the product package as a valuable resource for CSR information (19% vs. 18% U.S. average), they are more likely to utilize social media than the average American (18% vs. 12% U.S. average) and less likely to see advertising (11% vs. 17% U.S. average) as effective. And Millennials want to be entertained and engaged with CSR content – this group prioritizes videos (36% vs. 29% U.S. average), infographics (26% vs. 16% U.S. average) and games (15% vs. 8% U.S. average) when learning about company CSR commitments.

“The shift from traditional advertising to social media will be game-changing moving forward as companies try to break through to this always-on audience,” says Whitney Dailey, senior supervisor, **CSR Planning and Insights, Cone Communications**. “In a world where CSR content and messages must compete for attention against cat memes and trending hashtags, it’s more important than ever before to bring CSR information to life through compelling content, visual storytelling and interactive experiences.”

Engaging Millennials, Not a “One-Size-Fits-All” Solution

Marketers may be too quick to bucket all Millennials under the same communications and engagement strategies, but the research reveals marked nuances among age groups, gender, income and life stage. It’s important to hyper-target specific Millennial segments with the preferred type of CSR content in the most effective communications channel with the desired call-to-action.

Young Millennial (18-24): This enthusiastic group is unbridled in their support of CSR efforts from what they purchase to where they volunteer. This group is the most likely to factor in a company’s CSR commitments when deciding where to work and is even willing to take a pay cut to work for a responsible company:

- Most likely to consider CSR when deciding where to work (82% vs. 75% mature Millennial)
- Most willing population to take a pay cut to work for a responsible company (66% vs. 61% mature Millennial)
- Most likely to use social media to engage around CSR efforts (73% vs. 64% mature Millennial)

Mature Millennial (25-34): Mature Millennials represent another group with enthusiastic support of CSR initiatives, but engagement drops when it comes to reported actions. One likely cause – this group questions their ability to make an impact:

- Gap between intent and action: 86% would buy a product with a social or environmental benefit, if given the opportunity (vs. 88% young Millennial); 57% have bought a product in the past 12 months (vs. 65% young Millennial)
- Less likely to believe they can make a significant impact through purchases (25% vs. 36% young Millennial)
- Preferred communications channels: On-pack (19%), social media (17%), company website (13%), media (12%) and advertising (11%)

Female Millennial: CSR is a core factor in the shopping aisle for this group, as Millennial women see their buying power as the strongest way to show support for companies addressing issues they care about. But to win the hearts and wallets of female Millennials, they need to see results:

- Two-thirds (64%) of Millennial females have bought a product associated with a cause in the past 12 months (vs. 54% Millennial male)
- Among the most likely to seek out responsible products whenever possible (86% vs. 76% Millennial male)
- Among the most likely to hold companies accountable for producing results (86% vs. 77% Millennial male)

Male Millennial: Millennial males, while still proponents of CSR efforts, are less enthusiastic than their female counterparts. For this audience, CSR is more of a reputation protector than a purchase driver:

- Most likely to say they won't pay attention to a company's CSR efforts until something goes wrong (64% vs. 53% Millennial female)
- 83% would purchase a product with a social or environmental benefit, if given the opportunity (vs. 90% Millennial female)
- Prioritize data and numbers related to impact (30% vs. 18% Millennial female) over stories

Affluent Millennial (\$100,000+ HH income): One of the more supportive segments of CSR efforts, this group is willing to put dollars, donations or "do-good" actions in front of the issues they care about. Affluent Millennials are dedicated to doing the right thing whether or not they see the results of such actions:

- Most likely to say they'd switch brands to one that supports a good cause (95% vs. 85% U.S. average)
- Most likely to follow donation intent with action, 82% of affluent Millennials said they'd donate to a charity and 81% have donated in the past 12 months
- Most willing group to pay more (79% vs. 66% U.S. average) or consume less (84% vs. 78% U.S. average)

Millennial Mom: Millennial moms see CSR as part and parcel with their everyday life decisions – from the products they buy to the companies they support in their local communities. They stand ready to champion companies that align with their values through purchase and sharing information with their networks:

- Most likely to assume companies are being responsible as possible until they hear otherwise (54% vs. 49% U.S. average)
- Most likely to consider CSR in everyday decisions such as which companies do business in their communities (89% vs. 84% U.S. average), what they buy and where they shop (87% vs. 80% U.S. average) and which products and services they recommend to others (88% vs. 78% U.S. average)
- Most likely to say they would voice their opinions on company CSR efforts through comments on company websites, blogs or reviews (78% vs. 60% U.S. average)



Millennials are likely to switch brands to one that is associated with a good cause, given similar price and quality:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Very/Somewhat likely (net)	85%	91%	88%	94%	92%	91%	95%	94%
Very likely	26%	39%	37%	41%	45%	37%	42%	40%
Somewhat likely	60%	52%	51%	53%	47%	54%	53%	55%
Not very/Not at all likely (net)	15%	9%	12%	6%	8%	9%	5%	6%
Not very likely	13%	7%	9%	5%	8%	7%	4%	2%
Not at all likely	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	3%	1%	4%

Millennials want to get engaged with corporate social responsibility efforts:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
If I learned of a company's irresponsible or deceptive business practices, I would stop buying its products	85%	88%	85%	90%	91%	87%	90%	91%
If given the opportunity, I would buy a product with a social and/or environmental benefit	83%	87%	83%	90%	88%	86%	88%	88%
I would tell my friends and family about a company's CSR efforts	72%	82%	77%	86%	81%	82%	80%	88%
If given the opportunity, I would donate to a charity supported by a company I trust	71%	80%	76%	84%	80%	80%	82%	87%
If given the opportunity, I would voice my opinion to a company about its corporate social responsibility efforts (e.g., provide comments on the company's website or blog; review products)	60%	70%	66%	73%	73%	69%	65%	78%
If given the opportunity, I would volunteer for a cause supported by a company I trust	56%	74%	69%	79%	76%	74%	71%	82%

In the past 12 months, Millennials indicate they have:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Made a donation	69%	67%	61%	73%	65%	67%	81%	75%
Bought a product with a social and/or environmental benefit	56%	59%	54%	64%	65%	57%	66%	62%
Boycotted (refused to purchase) a company's products/services upon learning it behaved irresponsibly	48%	51%	50%	52%	58%	49%	51%	54%
Volunteered	40%	50%	49%	51%	60%	47%	61%	48%
Told friends or family about a company's corporate social responsibility efforts	39%	45%	45%	46%	53%	43%	44%	44%
Researched a company's business practices or support of social and environmental issues	37%	40%	41%	39%	44%	38%	45%	38%
Given their opinions and feedback about a company's responsibility efforts directly to that company	34%	38%	37%	39%	44%	37%	40%	38%

Millennials consider a company's social and environmental commitments before making important decisions:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Which companies they want to see doing business in their communities	84%	86%	83%	89%	88%	85%	87%	89%
What to buy or where to shop	80%	81%	76%	87%	85%	80%	81%	87%
Which products and services to recommend to people	78%	81%	77%	86%	86%	80%	81%	88%
Where to work	73%	76%	72%	80%	82%	75%	74%	76%
Which stocks or mutual funds to invest in	60%	61%	57%	64%	67%	59%	60%	63%

Millennial likeliness to personally address social or environmental issues:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They would be willing to consume/purchase fewer products to preserve natural resources	78%	79%	77%	81%	77%	80%	84%	78%
They would be willing to buy a product from an unknown brand if it had strong social or environmental commitments	74%	74%	71%	77%	77%	73%	73%	77%
They would be willing to pay more for a socially or environmentally responsible product	66%	70%	66%	75%	71%	70%	79%	71%
They would be willing to borrow or share products rather than buy new ones	56%	66%	67%	65%	65%	66%	64%	67%
They would choose to work for a socially responsible company, even if the salary would be less than at other companies	56%	62%	60%	65%	66%	61%	58%	60%
They would purchase a product of a lesser quality or efficacy if it was more socially or environmentally responsible	49%	55%	52%	58%	59%	54%	52%	61%

When a company supports a social or environmental issue, Millennials say they:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Have a more positive image of that company	91%	93%	90%	95%	93%	92%	96%	95%
Would be more likely to trust the company	87%	89%	87%	92%	93%	89%	92%	91%
Would be more loyal to the company (i.e., continue buying the company's products/services)	87%	87%	84%	91%	85%	88%	88%	90%

Millennials believe companies have made an impact on social and environmental issues:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Companies have made a significant positive impact on social and environmental issues	23%	20%	19%	22%	23%	19%	22%	23%
Companies have had a moderately positive impact	46%	50%	49%	51%	48%	50%	52%	53%
Companies have had minimal positive impact	28%	27%	29%	25%	26%	27%	23%	21%
Companies have had no impact	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%

Millennials believe their purchases can impact social and environmental issues:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They believe they can have a significant positive impact through their purchasing decisions	24%	27%	26%	28%	36%	25%	24%	29%
They believe they can make a moderate impact	41%	42%	36%	48%	43%	42%	45%	46%
They believe they can make a minimal impact	26%	23%	28%	18%	15%	25%	27%	19%
They don't believe they have any impact	9%	8%	10%	6%	6%	9%	4%	6%

Reasons preventing Millennials from purchasing socially or environmentally responsible products/services:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
There is not always an option to purchase these products or services	84%	83%	82%	84%	85%	83%	85%	84%
They think these products or services will cost more	80%	79%	80%	79%	77%	80%	82%	77%
They don't have the time to seek out these products or services	59%	65%	65%	65%	67%	64%	72%	64%
They don't know what social or environmental claims they should prioritize	59%	61%	62%	59%	69%	58%	61%	59%
They don't believe the quality of these products or services are as high	53%	55%	57%	52%	61%	53%	55%	48%

Millennial sentiment about companies involved in CSR:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They would like to see more of the products, services, or retailers they use support worthy social and/or environmental issues	89%	90%	87%	92%	87%	90%	92%	91%
They believe it's okay if a company is not perfect, as long as it is honest about its efforts	89%	88%	87%	90%	87%	89%	92%	87%
They want companies to tell them what they're doing to operate more responsibly or to support social and environmental issues	85%	87%	83%	90%	86%	87%	90%	88%
They expect companies to do more than make a profit; they must operate responsibly to address social and environmental issues	87%	86%	82%	90%	88%	85%	90%	89%
Whenever possible, they try to purchase products or services that are socially and/or environmentally responsible	82%	81%	76%	86%	80%	81%	83%	86%
They are confused by the messages companies use to talk about their social and environmental efforts and impacts	58%	54%	57%	51%	55%	54%	48%	53%

Millennials' feelings about companies' social and environmental commitments:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They assume companies are striving to be as responsible as possible until they learn otherwise	49%	48%	47%	48%	52%	46%	43%	54%
They don't believe companies are striving to be as responsible as possible until they hear information about their positive commitments and efforts	51%	52%	53%	52%	48%	54%	57%	46%

Millennials want to relate to CSR efforts:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
When companies use social or environmental terms or words they don't understand, they will ignore those messages altogether	60%	60%	61%	60%	67%	59%	64%	63%
Companies need to do a better job showing how their social and environmental efforts are personally relevant to them	86%	85%	83%	87%	85%	85%	89%	90%

Millennials' attention paid to companies' social and environmental efforts:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They expect companies to report on the progress of their social and environmental efforts	82%	81%	79%	82%	84%	80%	77%	80%
If a company makes social and environmental commitments, they hold it accountable for producing and communicating results	81%	82%	77%	86%	86%	81%	79%	85%
They only pay attention to a company's social or environmental efforts if it is going above and beyond what other companies are doing	63%	64%	64%	65%	69%	63%	66%	62%
They don't really pay attention to a company's social or environmental efforts until something goes wrong (e.g., a company is called out for wrongdoing, a company fails to meet its commitments)	54%	58%	64%	53%	60%	58%	60%	52%

Millennials' actions in relation to companies' social or environmental efforts and operations:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Reward a company for operating responsibly (e.g., by purchasing their products or speaking positively about it)	27%	32%	31%	33%	36%	31%	35%	37%
Punish a company for irresponsible behavior (e.g., by boycotting or speaking out against it)	12%	14%	18%	11%	13%	14%	17%	12%
Equally likely to reward or punish a company based on how it operates	47%	40%	37%	43%	37%	41%	41%	41%
Whether or not a company operates responsibly does not affect their actions	14%	14%	15%	12%	14%	14%	6%	10%

Millennials use social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter) to address and/or engage with companies around social and environmental issues:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
They use social media to address or engage with companies around social and environmental issues	53%	66%	62%	70%	73%	64%	60%	71%
They don't use social media to address or engage with companies around social and environmental issues	47%	34%	38%	30%	27%	36%	40%	29%

Millennials use social media in various ways to address and/or engage with companies around social and environmental issues:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
To share positive information about companies and issues they care about with people in their networks	30%	38%	33%	43%	43%	37%	37%	42%
To learn more about specific companies and issues	27%	33%	29%	36%	39%	31%	23%	37%
To share negative information about companies and issues they care about with people in their networks	21%	26%	22%	29%	28%	25%	30%	26%
To directly communicate with companies around these issues	14%	18%	17%	19%	27%	15%	14%	16%
To contribute directly to an effort led by a company (e.g., pledge, volunteer, or donate)	12%	17%	14%	20%	22%	15%	12%	20%
To recruit others in their networks to contribute directly to an effort led by a company	10%	15%	15%	14%	17%	14%	15%	12%

The most effective communication channels for information about social and environmental programs and products:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
On the product or its package/label	18%	19%	16%	22%	20%	19%	21%	19%
Social media (e.g., Facebook or Twitter)	12%	18%	14%	22%	23%	17%	15%	22%
On the company's website	13%	12%	15%	10%	10%	13%	14%	8%
Advertising (e.g., print, broadcast or online)	17%	11%	11%	11%	9%	11%	13%	13%
Media (e.g., stories and interviews in the local paper)	13%	11%	15%	8%	10%	12%	17%	8%
In store (e.g., store employees or in-store signage)	10%	10%	11%	8%	9%	10%	5%	9%
Cell/mobile phone	5%	7%	7%	7%	9%	6%	4%	7%
Company-sponsored community events (e.g., a charity walk or concert)	6%	6%	6%	6%	3%	7%	6%	6%
Through the mail	9%	6%	5%	7%	7%	6%	6%	9%

Millennials are likely to use resources when shopping in a store to learn about a company's/product's social or environmental commitments or impacts:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Product package	84%	85%	81%	89%	85%	85%	84%	88%
Signs around the store or on the shelf	80%	81%	75%	87%	84%	80%	87%	87%
Store employees	47%	50%	47%	53%	59%	48%	42%	56%
Guest center or customer service	44%	45%	43%	47%	52%	43%	35%	51%
Their mobile devices	44%	63%	60%	65%	70%	61%	54%	67%

When hearing of a company's social or environmental commitments or results, Millennials prefer to hear information in the form of:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Stories of impact (e.g., profile of a person positively impacted due to efforts, story of a community's growth due to efforts)	17%	23%	23%	23%	27%	22%	18%	23%
Numbers or data related to impact (e.g., number of people positively impacted, amount of natural resources protected)	17%	24%	30%	18%	21%	25%	38%	18%
Both are equally important	66%	53%	48%	58%	52%	53%	43%	58%

Millennials who have read a company's csr report in the last 12 months:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Yes	17%	23%	24%	21%	28%	21%	26%	20%
No	83%	78%	76%	80%	72%	79%	74%	81%

If interested in a company's csr report, Millennials prefer to see information in the form of a:

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Brief written summary	42%	42%	37%	46%	45%	41%	50%	39%
Interactive website	36%	38%	34%	42%	33%	39%	33%	46%
Video	29%	36%	38%	34%	46%	33%	32%	33%
Infographic	16%	26%	28%	24%	29%	25%	30%	16%
Comprehensive written report	18%	20%	20%	19%	25%	18%	18%	16%
Game	8%	15%	21%	10%	25%	13%	10%	8%
None of these/they are not interested in learning about a company's CSR report	17%	14%	13%	16%	15%	14%	11%	16%

Millennial familiarity with social and environmental terms:

Summary of *“I could easily define this term and provide examples”*

	US	Millennial	Millennial Male	Millennial Female	18-24	25-34	Affluent Millennial	Millennial Mom
Climate change	60%	59%	61%	58%	60%	59%	71%	51%
Biodegradable	62%	58%	59%	58%	51%	60%	71%	55%
Renewable resources	56%	57%	60%	53%	59%	56%	65%	47%
Greenhouse gas emissions	48%	47%	52%	42%	51%	46%	58%	34%
GMOs	33%	38%	36%	40%	38%	38%	38%	38%
Supply chain	41%	38%	43%	33%	34%	39%	47%	34%
Fair trade	41%	37%	37%	38%	39%	37%	39%	35%
Carbon offsets	25%	27%	31%	22%	22%	28%	30%	19%
Conflict minerals	17%	22%	27%	17%	23%	22%	27%	12%
Palm oil	24%	22%	23%	21%	30%	20%	19%	19%

For a copy of the complete report, please visit www.conecomm.com/research.

About the Research

The 2015 Cone Communications Millennial CSR Study presents the findings of an online survey conducted February 18 – March 6, 2015 by Ebiquity among a demographically representative random sample of 1,003 adults, comprising 500 men and 503 women, ages 18-34. The margin of error associated with a sample of this size is $\pm 3\%$ at a 95% level of confidence.

About Cone Communications

Cone Communications (www.conecomm.com) is a public relations and marketing agency known for igniting brands with high-impact strategies and programs based in deep insights, unique subject matter expertise and innovation. Focusing on key areas such as corporate social responsibility, cause marketing, nonprofit marketing, corporate communications and brand marketing – the agency is positioned to help clients achieve both business and societal outcomes. Cone Communications is a part of Diversified Agency Services, a division of Omnicom Group Inc.

About the DAS Group of Companies

The DAS Group of Companies, a division of Omnicom Group Inc. (NYSE: OMC) (www.omnicomgroup.com), is a global group of marketing services companies. DAS includes over 200 companies in the following marketing disciplines: specialty, PR, healthcare, CRM, events, promotional marketing, branding and research. Operating through a combination of networks and regional organizations, DAS serves international, regional, national and local clients through more than 700 offices in 71 countries.