

# 8 Rules of Marketing to Millennials

Up to this point, there has not existed a more complex and nontraditional generation than Millennials. That is, individuals who were born between 1978-1995. These 77.5 million individuals grew up in an age of technology and global connections—where handwritten letters only existed in romantic movies and children learned how to navigate an iPod before learning how to tie their shoes.

This is a generation of ideas and personal choice. This independent generation is all about making their own decisions and customizing things to suit their values, needs and desires. When it comes to marketing, Millennials know what they want and won't settle for anything that falls short of meeting their expectations. Companies are realizing this and are forced to reevaluate their current marketing strategies in order to win the attention and loyalty of this generation.

This white paper explores the values of this generation and provides you with the 8 rules of marketing to Millennials.

# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #1:

### DON'T CREATE PROBLEMS, SOLVE THEM.

Relative to previous generations, Millennials desire control in order to eliminate any potential problems before making a decision. We see this with the delay in traditional lifestyles such as marriage and starting a family. [Katie Elfering](#), a consumer strategist, explains in her research titled “Inside the Millennial Mind” that this delay is a result of this generation’s desire to have the best of both worlds—without having to confront any problems. Their unwillingness to surrender one for the other leads to the integration of different lifestyles.

They still want marriage and a family, but not the kind their parents strived for—with the cookie-cutter suburban home and white picket fence. Instead, Millennials are determined to maintain the youthful, urban city lifestyle and career while still being able to pursue the traditional family lifestyle. This presents multiple challenges for Millennials, which also opens up opportunities for brands to solve. This generation likes solutions, so your brand has to reassure them that you can solve their problems and prep them for the next life stage. Brands must demonstrate how they can add value to Millennials’ already complicated lifestyle.

Target immediately used this platform to successfully launch [City Target](#), smaller stores that are located in the heart of a city’s downtown area. As previously mentioned, Millennials want to be able to raise a family in urban cities without having to drive a far distance outside of the city to get their groceries and supplies for the home. So Target strategically brought these things to them by building stores that cater to the urban city lifestyle. In doing this, Target markets to Millennials by recognizing the desires of this generation and executing a solution that adds value and convenience to their lives.



City Target – Chicago



City Target – Seattle



City Target – San Francisco

# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #2:

**DON'T JUST TELL THEM WHAT YOUR PRODUCT IS OR CAN DO.  
SHOW THEM HOW IT WILL MAKE THEM FEEL.**

Millennials are deeply rooted in internal feelings. According to [CEB](#), loyalty, success, and happiness are some of the top values of this generation—which are values that were not considered as important by previous generations. Their decision to buy a product is based on how it will make them feel.

This could be a result of the unfortunate economy that Millennials grew up in—an era punctuated by the largest economic decline since the Great Depression, the 911 terrorist attacks, the increasing concerns of global warming, etc. The uncertainty of their circumstances and future has shaped Millennials to be present-focused and to want to make things work for their current happiness. In an unstable environment, Millennials look for secure products they can trust. And rather than dwelling the negative, they look for the positive.

Guinness beer markets right to the viewer's emotions with their feel-good, “[Friendship](#)” commercial. This 60-second spot featured six friends playing wheelchair basketball. A twist at the end reveals that only one of the men actually needs the wheelchair, while his friends all get up from their wheelchairs to walk to a pub for a post-basketball beer.

The commercial inspires the loyalty and enjoyment of friendship—with an added value of Guinness beer.

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Rather than telling the audience what their product is, Guinness captures an intimate moment between friends while being sure to keep their product at the center of it all. Marketing to emotions was a success with the spot receiving more than 9 million views on YouTube within a month. Get this generation feeling good and they'll want to share your brand with everyone they know. That's marketing that feels good and goes viral.



# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #3:

### INSPIRE TO DO GOOD.

Now more than ever, we are able to quickly exchange information and get news about the world because of the development of technology. This global connection has inspired Millennials to support social issues and causes that they believe in. **The release of the 2014 Millennial Impact Report showed that 87 percent donated money to an organization that supported a cause they were passionate about,** and that online giving has only grown (up by 7.9 percent in 2016). This constant exchange of information around the world has raised awareness for issues such as poverty, human trafficking, malnutrition, etc. and encourages this generation to step in to make a difference.

This being said, Millennials are a proactive generation that desires to change the world. So there's no hesitation when it comes to supporting a product or service that contributes to a greater cause. Companies such as Starbucks and LUSH cosmetics have captured the attention of Millennials through their inspiration to do good.

In March 2017, **Starbucks** promised to hire 25,000 veterans and military spouses by 2025. This is an expansion of their vow to hire 10,000 veterans, which the company met a year early. These sort of goals show Millennials that Starbucks is not only dedicated to good service, but to making the community a better place.

Another contender for giving back would be **LUSH Cosmetics**. The company is an advocate for animals and

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the environment in its ethical buying, fighting animal testing, and lack of plastic packaging. The company uses naked packaging to reduce waste and features an online Charity Pot where 100 percent of donations go to grassroots organizations. In this way, LUSH Cosmetics helps consumers make a positive global impact.

So when marketing to Millennials, your brand should inspire to do good. Starbucks and LUSH Cosmetics do this on the first page of their websites. Millennials don't just want to know how your product is going to do good for them as a consumer. But in purchasing your product, how are they doing good for others? For this generation, it's no longer just a brand. It's a movement.



# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #4:

### CREATE SOMETHING THAT CAN BE SHARED.

With the Internet and social media playing a huge role in their lives, Millennials are all about social status and sharing their personal information with others. So brands can't just create a positive brand experience. They have to create a positive and shareable brand experience that facilitates the social sharing of their consumers.

What does this mean? **Brands need to give their consumers a platform to spread the word about their product—especially Millennials, who have a network size that is more than four times that of the generation before them.** A survey conducted by [Annalect](#) found that 47 percent of Millennials who owned a smart phone discovered brands from “someone else following/liking/pinning/tweeting information on social media.”

Nike took its brand and created the [Nike+ Running App](#), which allows users to share their fitness goals and achievements with others. This social community allows individuals to map their routes, track their distance, and it even projects real-time cheers for every like or comment they receive from a friend. Nike extends personal fitness goals into a social event, while at the same time markets its brand. Users might not be able to share their running shoes or workout gear, but Nike uses a mobile app to design a platform for its brand to spread and be shared.

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The Nike+ Running App allows you to share your fitness goals and progress with others.

# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #5:

### GOOD DESIGN IS MANDATORY.

Good design is no longer a bonus for Millennials. It has become an expectation. We live in an era that is extremely motivated by visual stimulation, which explains this generation's craze over social media. Social media has extended beyond its original text-based medium and is a perfect demonstration of the gravitation toward visual platforms. For example, Instagram and Pinterest, two of the fastest-growing social networks within the past few years, are visual-heavy mediums that help contribute to finding and sharing images and photography.

Simply put, if your product doesn't make a good first impression, Millennials will most likely not think to look twice and may quickly move on to the next aesthetically pleasing thing that grabs their attention.

It's not just about the product. Millennials are also about the delivery of their purchases. That means energy must not only go into creating a great product, but also in presenting the brand or product in a visually creative way.

We see these innovations take place with brands such as **eos**. What was once just another lip balm has now been given personality, style, and creative packaging. These "smooth spheres" give a fun look to help prevent your lips from chapping. In addition, the traditional and trusty brand, Campbell's, launched its **Go Soups** as a strategy to market to Millennials. With a decline in canned soup sales, Campbell's redesigned its

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look to be colorful and youthful—not to mention, the soup now comes in a plastic pouch in order to “convey freshness.” Since the launch, Campbell’s Go Soups have increased its sales by eight percent in 2015. They’ve also launched the soup marketing campaign via a Tumblr website and partnered up with Spotify for a music download service. Campbell’s is working hard to target this generation by renovating its look and displaying it through mediums that are popular to Millennials. eos and Campbell’s are two examples of how brands are marketing to Millennials by redesigning products in a way that complements the personality of the target audience. It’s a product you can trust—and it looks good.



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Campbell's Go Soups

# Millennial Marketing Rule #6:

## SAY GOODBYE TO CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT.

Say goodbye to the days when brands would hire a celebrity spokesperson. Millennials are looking to everyday, relatable people for product influence and reviews. Rather than relying on the advocacy of celebrities, this generation appreciates the unfiltered honesty of bloggers, vloggers, and YouTube personalities. **A 2016 report by Marketplace found 70 percent of Millennials are completely unfazed by celebrity endorsement.**

Brand credibility is earned when the products are represented by individuals who are in the same boat as the consumers, not celebrities who pretend to be. When brands have real-life people talking about their problems and how a product can help solve it, the brand is more likely to earn this generation's trust. The unscripted transparency of bloggers or vloggers connects with the audience and makes them feel like the brand and its products are made for everyday people like them.

Many YouTubers post **unboxing** videos, where they open the newest **Loot Crate** or Apple product on camera. It's a symbiotic relationship, with both parties wanting the most views. **Jonathan Morrison**, a YouTuber with over two million subscribers, is known for his review of laptop and phone products. Channels like his are a great way to get viewers and quality video content.

Or you could work your product into a makeup tutorial. Nikkie of **NikkieTutorials** has 7.1 million subscribers

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who visit the makeup tutorials channel. Each video includes different makeup products with brand shoutouts and the option to buy even more products under the video.



WORLD'S MOST PIGMENTED EYESHADOW PALETTE?? | NikkieTutorials

NikkieTutorials 7.1M 1,830,391 views

103,001 likes 1,114 comments

Shop "most pigmented eyeshadow palette" Sponsored

Product	Price	Brand
	\$8.00	BH Cosmetics
	\$14.50	Ultra Beauty
	\$8.00	BH Cosmetics
	\$16.00	Ultra Beauty

Nikkie Tutorials' Youtube channel

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Lastly, there are sponsored shoutouts cited at the end of a video. **Cinemasins** is film critic channel known for spinning classic movies and new releases. With almost 7 million subscribers, they are known for making personalized ads for Naturebox and other products at the end of each video (Like this **NatureBox** commercial, which starts at the 17:22 mark). Typically, the ad offers a discount to viewers, so you can keep track of how well your ad is working. And viewers can see the channel's **favorite snacks**. This method allows the YouTuber some creative freedom while the product is endorsed to its target audience.

## CINEMASINS FAVORITES



**Big Island Pineapple**  
4.5 oz  
~~\$5.99~~ **\$3.99 (SAVE 33%)**



**White Cheddar Caramel Popcorn**  
3 oz  
~~\$3.29~~ **\$2.99 (SAVE 9%)**



**Vanilla Bean Wafers**  
5 oz  
~~\$3.79~~ **\$3.29 (SAVE 13%)**

Remember, endorsements don't need to involve top YouTube stars. Smaller stars in niche groups might be best for reaching your target audience. Even smaller channels like **Domics** and **PeanutButterGamer** with 4.2 million and 1.7 million subscribers are known for sponsored videos. What's important is finding a sponsor that already fits your product, instead of forcing a celebrity into the picture.

# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #7:

### DON'T COMPROMISE WHO YOU ARE.

Work hard to reach Millennials, but don't lose your brand identity in the process of trying to appease this generation.

Millennials are known to be a generation that refuses to "fit the mold." As previously mentioned, this is a generation of individuality and personal choice. So just like Millennials do every day, brands need to be confident of their identity and own up to who they are. Millennials value brands that stay true to their identity.

Around its 120 anniversary, Coca-Cola has retained a relatively similar design and recipe. Adding a new touch, the brand's **Share a Coke** campaign really took off in Australia in 2011. Keeping their classic design, Coca-Cola replaced the name of their brand with over a thousand common names, from Zack to Jessica to Yesenia. The campaign then expanded to the U.S. in 2013, where it was just as successful. The combination of the classic design with a personal twist took off, resulting in the company's **rise in sales** for the first time in years. 2017 marks a revamp of the campaign, with more names and even **last names**.

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It's coming...

WITH OVER A  
THOUSAND NAMES

#ShareaCoke.



# Millennial Marketing

## Rule #8:

### Make them laugh.

This generation values humor. **Eighty-eight percent** of Millennials say that humor is vital to this generation's definition of themselves. That being said, marketing with humor can be a great way to capture attention and get people talking about your brand.

Old Spice, an American brand of male grooming products, is known for their quirky, satirical humor. From the brand's humorous commercial series to its social media presence, and even down to the laughter that comes with its packaging, Old Spice aims to make their audience laugh—especially Millennials. We see the success of this marketing tactic with Old Spice being the number one most-viewed sponsored channel on YouTube in 2012. Within the first two days of launching its **Twitter page**, Old Spice gained 80,000 followers. And the brand's **Facebook page**, which posts humorous videos, increased interaction by 800 percent and sales figures by 107 percent.

Old Spice's type of humor is known as absurdism, one of the two trending types of humor among Millennials. We already mentioned instability is the norm, and a way to cope with fear is with humor. Specifically, self-depreciation and absurdism have become popular ways to face uncertain circumstances.

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**Old Spice** @OldSpice  
 TWEETS 3,632 FOLLOWING 1,071 FOLLOWERS 221K **Follow**

**Tweets** All / No replies

**Old Spice** @OldSpice · Mar 26  
 Some friends are best left on your face, but, as you see, here at OldSpice we disagree with that statement completely [bit.ly/OSShaver](http://bit.ly/OSShaver)  
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 Hide media Reply Retweet Favorite More

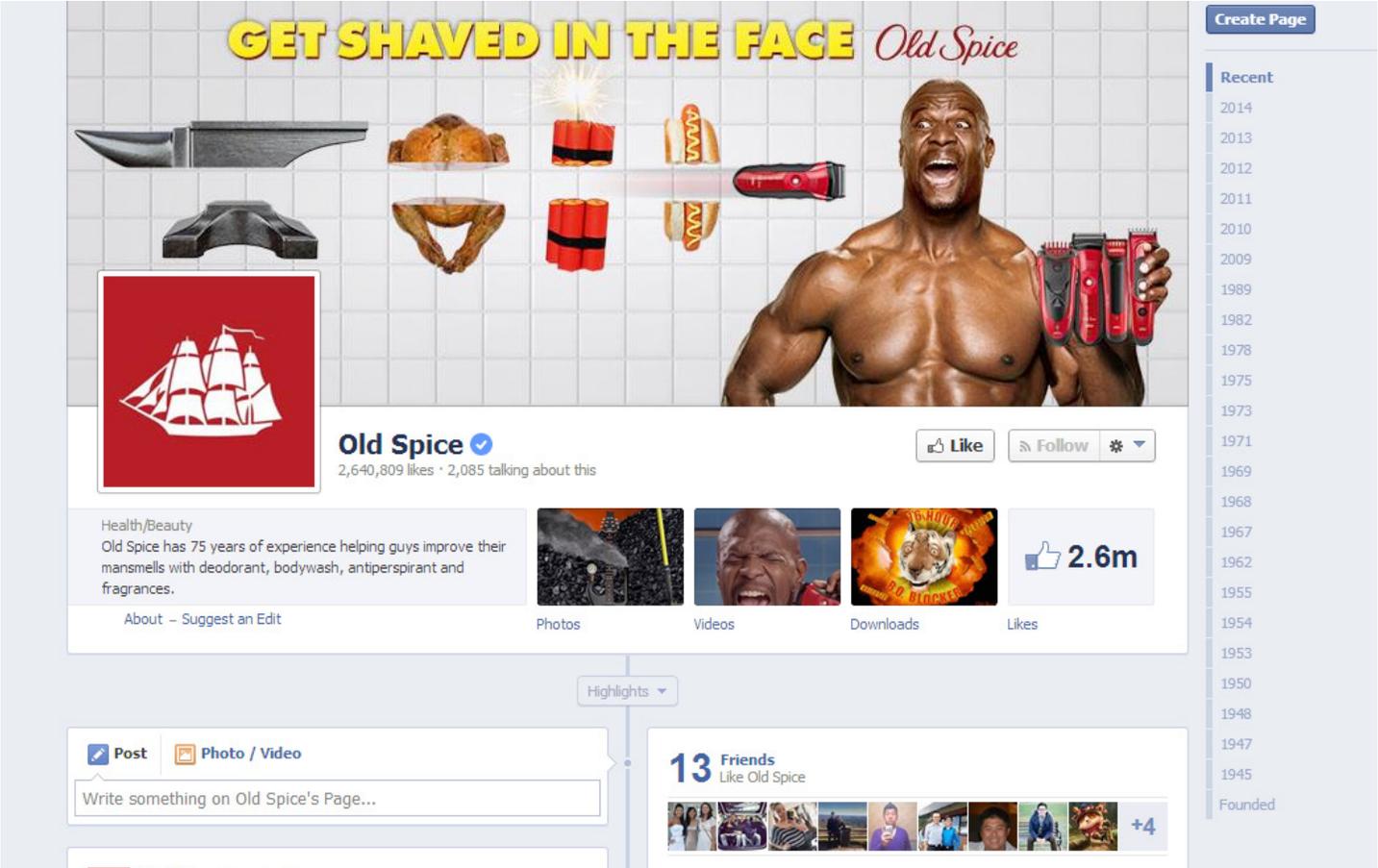
YouTube  
 Old Spice | Get Shaved in the Face

 **Old Spice** @OldSpice · May 6  
 If looks could smell, eyes would have noses so everything would smell weird and this is probably a bad idea.  
 Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

 **Old Spice** @OldSpice · Apr 24  
 Not trying to stir up controversy, but if ninjas are so good how do we all know what they look like? #openfordiscussion  
 Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

 **Old Spice** @OldSpice · Apr 16  
 Do you think zombies might eat other zombies if they simply smelled better?  
 Expand Reply Retweet Favorite More

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Old Spice Facebook



When it comes to humor, it's not a good idea to make fun of Millennials. It's best to poke fun at yourself, like Arby's did back in 2014. When the company messed up with their contract with Pepsi, they made a **commercial** to make up for it. And it was hilarious, becoming the most viewed commercial on their YouTube channel to date. The clever ad even attracted the attention of popular media such as **Business Insider** and the **Wall Street Journal**.



Lack of control is also expressed through absurdism, where nonsensical humor parallels the unreachable standards and absurd circumstances Millennials face in society. This type of humor can be seen in the Skittles commercial **Bleachers**, where viewers sit through bizarre acting and odd dialogue without explanation. The ad got almost 100 million views on YouTube. While some found the ad to be too strange for their taste, the majority of feedback was positive.



Today, brands are looking at the largest and most influential generation. Their ability to know what they want, their desire to do what makes them feel good, and their spending power are a few of the reasons why Millennials have become highly empowered consumers.

Millennials are driving trends, so unless marketers work hard to redefine engagement and brand loyalty to this new type of consumer, they'll find themselves easily pushed aside. Knowing the values and understanding the needs of this generation is crucial for brands to deliver the right message—which will win them the attention and loyalty of Millennials.

We get Millennials. So if you want to get this niche audience also, talk to us. Contact Ellyn Davidson, president, at [EDavidson@brogan.com](mailto:EDavidson@brogan.com).