



DIMENSIONS

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Drawing Millennial Women Closer to Your Mission to Engage, Inspire and Motivate a Lifetime of Giving

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The Millennial Generation

As a donor generational cohort, the Millennial generation—individuals born since 1981—will turn 30 this year. Also known as Gen Y or Generation Me, they comprise approximately 75 million people—20 percent of the U.S. population—and roughly one-third of the workforce.

The Millennial generation is often associated with texting, Facebook and new communication technologies and platforms. (We witnessed a first wave of giving from this generation in response to the Haitian earthquake). However, new studies indicate that the Millennial generation donors want to be engaged in a different way.

Shifting Perceptions to Engage Millennial Donors

To attract and tap this reservoir of donors, fund development officers will need to understand Millennials—and what motivates them to give—as they engage this important subset.

According to the *2010 Millennial Donor Study*, this generation of women and men not only wants to give financially, they want to affect change and create direction, and they want

access to the organization's board leadership. And, while connected by technology and social media, Millennials are more motivated to give and volunteer as a result of personal engagement and human connection.

Key Millennial donor findings include:

- 91 percent of Millennial donors are at least somewhat likely to respond to a face-to-face request for money for a nonprofit;
- 55.2 percent are likely or highly likely to respond to a specific request or particular project;
- 71.9 percent do not need to volunteer before they give;
- 86.3 percent want details about a nonprofit's programs and services before they support;
- 60.5 percent want access to board and executive leadership;
- 74.6 percent of millennial donors would be likely or highly likely to give if asked by a family member;
- 62.8 percent said they would be likely or highly likely to give if asked by a friend;
- 71.7 percent said they would be willing to communicate with friends and family about ways to be involved in an organization they support;

- 93 percent preferred e-mail for receiving information, followed by Facebook 23.8 percent, and print at 26.9 percent.

— *2010 Millennial Donor Study*

What Sets the Millennial Generation of Women Donors Apart?

Women's education and income continue to rise in the 21st century. The percentage of women in the workforce almost doubled in the second half of last century, from 32 percent to 62 percent. Women's median income has increased over 60 percent over the past 30 years, while men's median income has hardly increased at all. The percentage of women in college has also grown steadily from 42 percent in 1970 to 56 percent in 2000. According to several studies, women now comprise the majority of college degree recipients. In addition, the number of female entrepreneurs is exploding: 10.4 million firms, with 50 percent or more ownership by women, generate \$1.9 trillion in annual sales; and employ 12.8 million people, according to *The Center for Women's Business Research*.

What does all this mean to fundraisers? That we better be paying attention to women—including the Millennials!

How can nonprofits cross the generational frontier?

The Boomer's Daughters

As the daughters of Boomers, Millennial women are part of the first generation born into a true high-tech society. They are civic-minded, even more than their parents are, and have a value structure that includes lifelong learning and a work-life balance. They are wired for collaboration and enjoy group work. Millennials, as a whole, value a strong social commitment, enjoy technology and networking and are well-informed.

Oftentimes, these women have had diverse educational experiences. They have also witnessed ethnic diversity in action in advertising, television, and in political and business leadership positions. These circumstances have helped Millennial women embrace a multicultural environment and expand their global view of the world.

Engaging Millennial Women in Philanthropy

Women, especially Millennial women, respond to a “world” message. They see themselves as global citizens. Therefore, they are more likely than any other female generation to cite the desire to make the world a better place as a key motivator for their philanthropy.

Studies show that Millennial women are more likely to support organizations that incorporate their values and match their giving motives. These motivations often include:

- Meeting the basic needs of the very poor;
- Helping the poor help themselves (a hand up, not just a handout);
- Making their community better;

- Accepting responsibility to help those with less.

Women in general tend to spread out their giving by making gifts to a variety of charities, while men tend to concentrate their giving on a few organizations. Those who volunteer are likely to provide financial support to the same organizations where they or family members contribute their time, because they feel connected to the cause and to the community, and they give to organizations that have had an impact on them or someone they know personally. They prefer to donate anonymously; however, they like to receive a thank you in private. Women are more likely to respond to crisis situations and give to organizations with a single purpose. Finally, they are more inclined to help in a *relational* manner, placing more emphasis on personal contact with and care of the individual.

Women, as a group, give not just with the head, but with their whole heart.

Implications of Gender and Generational Differences

Seeking a Work-Life Balance

Even more than the generations that preceded them, the women in this generation are seeking a work-life balance. Therefore, nonprofits must view them in a different light from older generations by beginning to find new and meaningful ways to join with women on their terms. This may include revamping traditional messages that no longer work for this generation of women.

What Does this Mean for Fundraisers?

Gen X is entering its peak earning years and the Millennials are not

far behind. In response, nonprofits will need to shift their perceptions, fundraising strategies and tactics to draw Millennials into involvement and giving. Specifically, if fundraisers want to attract Millennial women, they will need to change their approach and become more relationship-based while they increase information and involvement.

An Increase in Donor Engagement

When it comes to requests for their time and money, Millennial women want to be engaged. Many of the personal strategies that your fund development offices may have reserved for older or major donors may need to be re-shifted and re-set to align with the wants and needs of Millennial women.

An Increase in Information and Involvement

Before Millennial women are willing to support a nonprofit, they not only want specific details about the nonprofit's programs and services, they want an opportunity to directly connect with leadership and have a voice in the organization's direction.

A Widening Sphere of Influence

However, once engaged, Millennials are more than willing to act as nonprofit champions to bring their friends and families on board, through involvement, investment and volunteerism.

Create a Millennial Plan for Women

How do you attract the next generation of women donors without compromising current revenue from mature donors? Evidence suggests that women who participate

in donor education programs are more likely to give larger gifts, to give unrestricted gifts, to develop a long-term giving plan and to hold leadership roles on nonprofit boards. This is especially true for Millennial women. Begin by creating a plan for your Millennial women donors that incorporates technology, social media, involvement and volunteer roles—and that builds solid relationships.

Technology and social networking are a way of life for many Millennial women. Embrace technology! Your women donors do. Millennials are comfortable buying, selling and donating online. Ensure that your organization has an easy-to-use online giving program and that your website is easy to navigate. Remember that websites are often consulted before women write checks, join an event or volunteer.

Millennials donate via the web more often than through direct mail—and all indications are that this trend will increase in the coming years. Direct mail has a future, but it will need to evolve. Carefully consider packaging, content and style. Consider reallocating a portion of your budget to focus on web and social media initiatives.

SMS and text messaging are accepted forms of solicitation. But women still want to know how their gifts were used before they make another gift to your organization. Communicate with them! Create an e-newsletter with short, to-the-point paragraphs. Young women are busy building their careers and family. Make it easy for them to receive and process your nonprofit's information via e-mail or their Smartphone.

Involvement leads to investment. Get women involved with your organization. The more they volunteer, the more likely they will make a financial gift. You may want to consider a young professionals committee. Emphasize fun and networking opportunities. Incorporate women into your strategic planning and organizational development. Be sure to provide opportunities to work closely with those in leadership. Embrace the Millennial women's entrepreneurial spirit, don't squash it. The benefits will far outweigh your expectations.

Engage those around your women donors and build relationships with them. Word of mouth is crucial! Trusted friends, colleagues, and family can be your best allies. Younger donors are more likely to support a charity when people close to them ask, versus the charity asking them. Share inspirational stories with friends so that they, in turn, share them on behalf of your organization. Plan for a long-term return on investment for relationship-building efforts with Millennial women, rather than a quick result. Focus on ways to build relationships with these women. Not all Millennial women are able to financially contribute to a nonprofit upfront, but they support charities in a variety of other ways—from donating goods, attending events, joining advocacy campaigns, promoting charities online, and helping to fundraise. Don't overlook energy, enthusiasm and ideas—they are important to nonprofits, too.

Looking to the Future

Debra J. Mesch, director and lead researcher for the Women's Philanthropy Institute at the Indiana

University Center on Philanthropy, noted, "If you do not pay attention to women, you will lose out on a huge audience. This trend will continue as women continue to gain income, education, and wealth. Women also outlive men, so you really have to pay attention to women as donors."

Do not underestimate the financial power of your younger women donors—they may in fact be just as generous as older donors. They give consistently with their income, education level, frequency of religious attendance and marital status. Therefore, as women continue to earn more, their total charitable giving will increase as well.

Keep in mind: Millennial women take philanthropy very seriously and their commitment will continue to grow with time. Begin today to draw Millennial women closer to your mission to engage, inspire and motivate them for a lifetime of giving.

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