

SIX ESSENTIAL TACTICS FOR MARKETING TO MILLENNIALS

Practices need to rethink their marketing tactics to attract the 'selfie generation'. **Wendy Lewis** offers tips for rocking your mobile marketing and social media to get their attention



THERE ARE OVER 83 MILLION millennials in the US between the ages of 18 and 34, which is roughly 27% of the population, and they are expected to spend more than \$200 billion annually by 2017. They are considered the largest generation by population size.

YOLO (You Only Live Once) is the millennial battle cry; they strive to be first time experiencers. Millennials have high expectations about the way they want to connect with brands and aesthetic practices. Responsiveness and personalization are among the keys to win them over. They also like free stuff, coupons, rewards, loyalty programs, and unique benefits. As with any good relationship, loyalty, and affection is never a one-way street.

Since this group of patients is on a mission to jump on the latest and greatest innovations, the landscape of tactics used to reach them is different from the ways we have come to traditionally market to attract new patients. Although millennials are a diverse group, they do share certain characteristics, one of which is that they do not want to age like their parents did. The criteria

they use to evaluate brands is also different from other generations, and is often about price and social responsibility. They expect to be listened to.

For example, the 18-22 year old set are called 'collegians' who have limited time and an even more limited budget. They are into facial exfoliations, microdermabrasion, IPLs, acne therapies, and laser hair removal. The more affluent may consider rhinoplasty and chin implants. Whereas 23-28 year olds are young professionals and grad students who want to look polished and professional and have a little more to spend on themselves. They may consider lip fillers, lasers for browns and reds, non-surgical fat reduction, cellulite therapies, in addition to what their younger peers are interested in. Surgeries may include breast augmentation, breast reduction, and body shaping.

Millennials of the older group, ages 29-34, have grown up, and may be more experienced with medical aesthetic treatments. They often have had friends and parents who have undergone procedures, and are well educated on

what can be done. Those who are single also have their own money and may be able to afford to spend on themselves, whereas mothers may turn to mommy makeover procedures to get their bodies back post >

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▷ childbirth. The opportunities with this patient segment are substantial.

1 Leverage technology

Mobile marketing is a growing trend across the board. When you consider that 86% of millennials in the US own smartphones, and 83% of them text more than they use their phones, text messaging takes on new meaning to target this generation².

For the most part, millennials have never known a world without the Internet and social media. They grew up on Xanga, MySpace and Facebook. As a result, you can't just take the same messages you use for other patient segments and repackage them to resonate with them.

To excel at mobile marketing, first consider the basics. Your landing pages must be optimized for mobile. They need to be formatted so that they are not too graphics-intensive, load times need to be short even with slower connections, and the most important information must be easily readable on a very small screen. To keep users engaged, your call to action should be clear and front and center, so they don't have to hunt to figure out what to click on next.

Mobile ads via Facebook and Instagram can be effective to target this group of patients. Ads that tend to play well include some form of an exclusive offer or special reward. If you are dispensing products, direct e-commerce can be built in, so that purchasing becomes seamless. Leveraging technology today means being fast and flexible. Instant gratification is paramount; think Uber and the Starbucks app.

Millennials respond positively to innovation and convenience. Text messaging has become the method of choice to confirm, cancel, and reschedule appointments in this age group. Free WiFi in the waiting room is also a huge plus since they are always connected.

Engaging these users in interesting social content is also a critical success factor. Don't stress out too much over copywriting, editing, and photo editing because you may not have time. Millennials move fast so you need to pick up the pace or the moment will be lost forever.

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2 Keeping it real

Authenticity counts big with millennials. They gravitate towards original voices and fresh ideas, and they expect you to speak their language in a real and consistent way.

Great visuals definitely make a difference, and video is everything. The trend is definitely toward short, engaging video content. At a minimum, you must have an easy and fast way to make and post videos to all your social media channels, not just Snapchat and Instagram.

Although there is no tried-and-true formula that works all the time, sometimes you just get lucky and your video unexpectedly takes off or goes viral because people easily relate to it. The human feel-good factor is more important than getting the image, visual or video near perfect.

Start by filming something poignant or funny. Write a caption of what comes to mind. Highlight what is unique and original to find your audience. You will know when you have hit their sweet-spot because they will respond in a positive way—or not.

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3 Be relevant and engaging

Millennials are the most non-traditional generation so far, and they view life in a unique way. Target millennials based on social groups. For example, you can focus your attention on segments that are drawn to social causes, like a green lifestyle, saving the planet, or a vegan way of life. Look for those who avidly follow specific social media personalities. Millennials are much more likely to have a strong attachment to these social identities.

Millennials are most heavily influenced by their peers and online networks, and they cite their friends as their major source of information. This means that if you can engage a customer base within this generation and create brand evangelists, you may be able to get better results than with more traditional and expensive forms of online marketing. The best way to get your message across to



them is to have millennials spreading the word for you.

You need to be relevant, engaging, and build a community as you share your products and services, or millennials may just ignore you as just part of their jam packed 24/7 connected universe. Marketing to millennials requires flexibility because their preferences are constantly in a state of flux. The more segmentation you can achieve, the more return you can get from your marketing budget. Not all millennials think the same way or respond to the same things. Try out a few campaigns to vet the approach before investing heavily in any one tactic.

Keep up with the celebrities and influencers that your millennial targets follow to learn what is trending and pick up on the hashtags they are using on social media.

4 Go where they go

You can't reach millennials if you're not visible where they are. Make it easy for them to find you and to do that, you have to stand out from the pack. Millennials are most commonly interacting with brands via social media (49%) or a brand's owned websites (54%)³.

Instagram and Snapchat are the frontrunners for reaching this group at the moment. YouTube and Vine are also



important. This is where millennial shoppers go for information to make purchasing decisions and they do it through their phones, not their laptops. At a minimum, you should have a presence there.

Millennials want to be engaged with content that makes them laugh, helps them learn something and connects them to interesting ideas and people, and that means the content is so much more than direct promotion of your products. Be where they are, and then have fun. They appreciate personalized, funny, clever, and helpful content marketing to drive loyalty and purchasing decisions

What defines fun? Fun and engaging content could be a video of how to get ready for girls' night or DIY decorating ideas for a college dorm. Short videos are popular and are more engaging than static content for this patient population. Their attention spans are incredibly brief.

The brilliant new Groupon television ad campaign targeting millennials says it all. The theme centers around a stuffy rich older couple in a mansion (like their parents), versus happy, fun-loving, adventuresome millennials diving,

playing, cooking, etc.—“There are two kinds of people in this world, The Haves and the Have-Dones. At Groupon, we applaud the Have-Dones because they know that they've done, they will always have. If you're going to own something, own the experience.”⁴

5 Talk the talk

Talk to millennials the way they talk, in a literal and figurative sense. This means brushing up on how best to use their language, but in a way that grabs their attention. You will also want to master the art of using emojis.

Millennials are easily distracted and they multitask, so they don't always have time to spell out words, which can leave adults scratching our heads in dismay. For example 'very' becomes 'v', 'pretty' is just 'p'.

6 Customize your offering

Millennials are big bargain shoppers and are cautious about how they spend their cash. Value for money is one of their main

goals for making a purchasing decision. In fact, 63% of millennials regularly search social media platforms for coupons² and 80% of them participate in loyalty programs¹. Strategies that catch their eye may include a VIP loyalty program, package series, and treatment bundling, BOGO (buy one, get one), samples, mini treatments, refer a friend bonus, etc.

They are also opting for adventures over garden-variety products and standard treatments, so think about ways to weave compelling experiences into your marketing strategy. If members of this generation associate your brand with something new and exciting, they will be more likely to support you by referring their friends.

Adventure doesn't have to take the form of flashy parties or free treatments. It can be something as simple as offering customized surprises. For example, they thrive on samples and trial sizes, since they are the generation that gave birth to subscription boxes, such as Birchbox, FabFitFun, and Ipsy. They love getting something customized just for them, because after all, they are so special. Consider creating your own practice subscription box to target this group.

Enlist loyal patients into a program and invite them to come in to get their gift when you bring on a new sunscreen, topical acne gel, or masque. Ask for their opinion of a new fully-loaded skin treatment, and brand it just for them. When they are having a treatment, offer them the option of playing their own music or give them a selection of age-appropriate artists and tunes.

Designing an event strategy to appeal to millennials' need for unique experiences is a big plus for practices. They enjoy parties, behind the scenes peeks, and exclusive events where they can watch, try, and buy. They also tend to bring friends along so have extra food, drinks, and seating on hand. One thing you can count on, millennials are not shy about sharing. They love to take pictures, filter them to look cool, and post on their social platforms, which can boost your exposure.

Get on board the 'M' train

If this new way of thinking seems overwhelming, you may want to add a few millennials to your staff to help decipher these strategies. They can help keep you hip and relevant, and you can give them a job, which many of them sorely need these days. But don't expect them to stay too long; millennials are always looking for their next promotion, raise, perk, or a better 'work/life balance'.

Each brand experience strategy has its own advantages and disadvantages, but always stay true and authentic to your brand to win the hearts—and dollars—of these highly coveted customers.

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