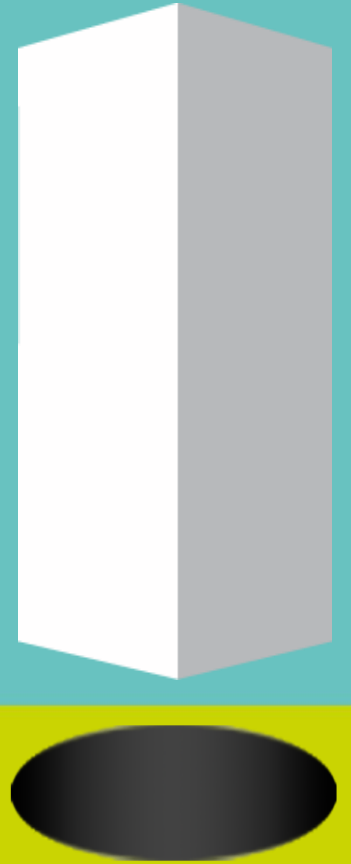


# THE GENERATION OF CONTRADICTIONS



In the not-too-distant future, a new generation of consumers will have a profound impact on the market.

Here come the Millennials.



# MEET THE MILLENNIALS

## They are....

- Optimistic
- Inclusive
- Globally conscious
- Socially aware
- Tech-savvy
- Tolerant
- Eager
- Multitaskers

....but that's just the beginning of who they really are.



# THE IMPACT

Millennials, also known as Gen Y or Echo Boomers, were born between 1978 and 2000 and are the largest cohort group in American history.

They are 77 million strong.

They make up 25% of the U.S. population—the biggest group of young adults since the 1970s. And they're the most ethnically diverse.



# THE GREATEST INFLUENCES

**FAMILY**

Millennials are the most “wanted” children of all time. They are comfortable being dependent.

**TECHNOLOGY**

Technology has been with them since an early age, creating a seamless fusion between their lives and their digital devices.



# THE GREATEST INFLUENCES

## @FAMILY

Parents of Millennials truly *wanted* children. Parenthood was a lifestyle to embrace, rather than a necessary responsibility or obligation. So they became involved—super involved—with their kids.

The result? Millennials were raised to feel special. They were told they can “do anything” and “be anything,” always with the love and support of their attentive parents.

Millennials have **fewer** fights with their parents than older adults report having had with their parents.

Millennials contact their parents **10X** a week; most are Facebook friends.

**41%** of Boomer parents currently support their grown kids financially.



# THE GREATEST INFLUENCES

## @TECHNOLOGY

“They have been immersed in technology from an early age, and they don’t remember what the world was like before cell phones, computers, and the Internet. Theirs is an always-on, always-connected generation.”

(Career Builder.com, 2011)

**57%** of total adults sleep next to their cell phones—yet **83%** of Millennials do.

**74%** of students believe it’s okay to text during school; **one-in-three** teens say they’ve used text shortcuts (“u”, “4”, “imho”) in their homework.

**32%** of Millennials believe it’s okay to “call in sick” via text and **11%** think it’s okay to quit a job or ask for a raise via text.



# THE NEW FINANCIAL POWER

They spend \$172 billion annually—  
and they're influential beyond their years.



“Within a few short years, Gen Y will have more spending power than Boomers. They’re a giant bulge in the population, and they’re moving into their high-spending ‘home and kids’ years. Additionally, Gen Y’s taste in everything from cars to clothing is highly influential.”

(Kit Yarrow, Ph.D.)

# THE GENERATION OF CONTRADICTIONS

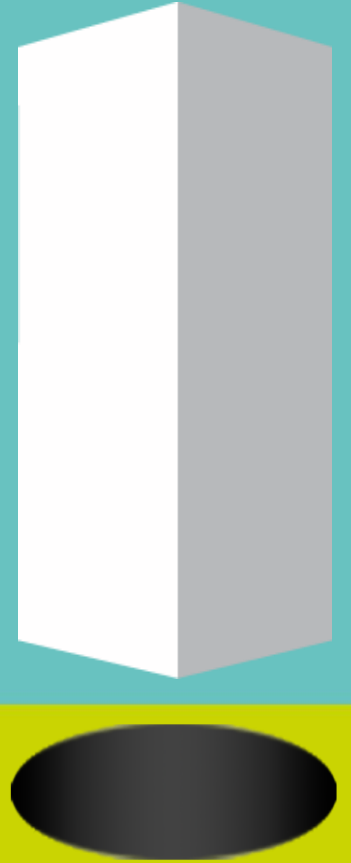
When you move beyond the facts and figures, perhaps what makes this generation so distinct is how they think, feel and act.

Unlike previous generations, Millennials can't be described with a short list of related characteristics. Rather, they exhibit beliefs and behaviors that on the surface appear to be at odds.

But, in fact, these “contradictions” are simply the richness and texture that define and dimensionalize this group—a generation that has already started to put its unique stamp on the world.



# THE CONTRADICTIONS



# CONTRADICTIONS: FIVE THEMES

1. Powerful, Yet Invisible

2. Overstimulated, Yet Undernourished

3. Experts, In Training

4. Want to Play, Yet Not Accustomed to Losing

5. Brand Involved, Marketing Resistant



# 1. POWERFUL, YET INVISIBLE

Millennials are collectively a powerful and influential force in society—and they know it. Used to working in teams, they adhere to the belief that “together, we can accomplish more.”

**Yet** individually, they feel invisible. They see themselves as unique and want to be acknowledged as such. If they could show their true selves to everyone, they believe the world would see incredible, capable, interesting individuals. Because that’s how they feel inside.



# 1. POWERFUL, YET INVISIBLE

This is the generation who elected a president. They just press the “Like” button to become part of a social movement. But because all their “power” lies behind a keyboard, they ultimately feel invisible.



## 2. OVERSTIMULATED, YET UNDERNOURISHED

From texting to tweeting, instant messaging to emailing and wall posting, Millennials are hyperstimulated by their technology tools. It's as close to 24/7 as it gets.

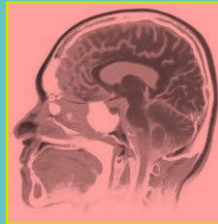
Yet the reduced time spent with face-to-face interaction deprives this generation of the satisfying emotional connection the human spirit craves. In addition, they're slower to build the skills necessary to have essential interpersonal, in-person relationships.



## 2. OVERSTIMULATED, YET UNDERNOURISHED

Kaiser Family Foundation found that more screen time and fewer face-to-face personal connections decrease the neurons that fire in the prefrontal cortex—the empathy and adaptability epicenter of the brain.

The Institute for Social Research found that college students today show less empathy when compared with college students from previous generations.



## 2. OVERSTIMULATED, YET UNDERNOURISHED

“If you’ve had a full day and haven’t had time to eat and you have an empty stomach, you could drink a whole bottle of water and make yourself feel full. But you wouldn’t have taken in any calories. And that’s sort of what social networking feels like. It fills you up, but there’s not a lot of substance to it. Social networking allows for a broad sense of community, but little depth of community and intimacy.”

(Dr. Doreen Dodgen Magee, Psychologist)



## 2. OVERSTIMULATED, YET UNDERNOURISHED

To help nourish the soul and engage in more personal, face-to-face activities, Millennials have turned to the ultimate people connector—**food**.

Food plays a big role in their lives. Cooking and dining out with friends provide fulfilling social connectivity. Food also excites Millennials' natural desire for stimulation—for both their palates and their interest in experiencing new cultures. And it's cool—there's badge value associated with culinary intelligence.



## 2. OVERSTIMULATED, YET UNDERNOURISHED



“Gen Y has become Gen G—the gourmet generation; for many young people, cooking is the hot new trend, becoming at once theater, entertainment, self-definition, status and creative expression.”

*(The Christian Science Monitor)*

### 3. EXPERTS, IN TRAINING

*“They love to feel masterful.”*  
(Kit Yarrow)



**Yet** they insist on explicit instructions. Millennials have been given less responsibility than previous generations so they haven't developed all of the skills to do things on their own. But they've been researching things since an early age and feel that they can figure things out. So they gravitate toward products that allow them to do-it-themselves in a structured way.

### 3. EXPERTS, IN TRAINING



Etsy, a handmade online marketplace, was cofounded by Millennial Rob Kalin. He wanted an online forum where he could sell his homemade furniture. When he couldn't find a place on the Internet that did just that, Etsy was born.

According to NPD Group, Millennials are doing more of their own car maintenance and repair.



## 4. WANT TO PLAY, YET NOT ACCUSTOMED TO LOSING

Millennials have a strong desire to achieve something great. From a young age, they have been told, “You can do anything.” They truly believe they can “conquer the world.”

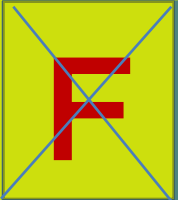
*“My parents are cheerleaders pushing me to do my very best.”*

(TRU Facebook Panel)



**Yet** they find themselves in uncharted territory when they don't achieve or do everything right. They're unaccustomed to criticism, and they sometimes fear that they—or the choices they make—are not good enough.

## 4. WANT TO PLAY, YET NOT ACCUSTOMED TO LOSING



In many states, the dreaded “F” has been abolished from the grade books.

The report cards now show marks of an “E” or an “I” for incomplete. F’s are considered too harsh, too permanent, and not encouraging enough.

*No Child Left Behind*—the educational reform designed to improve student achievement—was enacted in 2001 when Millennials were in their prime schooling years.



## 4. WANT TO PLAY, YET NOT ACCUSTOMED TO LOSING

Researchers believe that the focus on boosting self-esteem is the reason Millennials have an “everybody wins” mentality.

The booming trophy industry is a case in point. “The trophy used to symbolize a great achievement for the best, but today it’s a common reward for anything.”

For young people, a trophy is a symbol that says that even if they lost, they still did a good job.



## 5. BRAND INVOLVED, MARKETING RESISTANT

Millennials like brands. Brands help them tell their unique story. Brands tell others what they believe in. They have a “what you own says who you are” mentality.

Yet they say they see through marketing “rhetoric.” They don’t want to be told what to do by companies.



# 5. BRAND INVOLVED, MARKETING RESISTANT

## Millennial Brand Values Indexed vs. Older Adults (35+)

Show others I have succeeded	191
Show the world where I am heading	176
Help me achieve more in the future	138
Help me feel attractive	129
Make me feel like I've attained important milestones in my life	126



## 5. BRAND INVOLVED, MARKETING RESISTANT

Despite the fact that they don't feel they're on a secure financial footing, they still routinely buy brands as "necessities" that other generations would consider to be luxuries.

Previous generations viewed the \$300 pair of shoes as a badge of honor they awarded themselves once they felt they had made it. Many Gen Y women see the shoes as a necessity, yet still live at home with their parents because they cannot afford to move out.



## 5. BRAND INVOLVED, MARKETING RESISTANT

“Gen Y has a love/hate relationship with marketing. They love brands, and they talk about them more than anything else, but they hate the interruptive model of advertising.... they like to see ads tailored to them.”

(Carol Phillips)



So that's a snapshot of what will certainly be a constantly deepening path to connecting with this multifaceted, ever-evolving new generation of consumers.

They're called Millennials. Or Gen Y. Or Echo Boomers.

Whatever name you give them, they can definitely be described as The Generation of Contradictions.

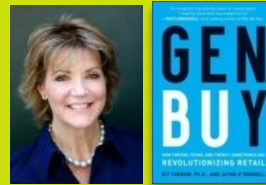


# IMPLICATIONS

1. **Create a distinct plan to reach Millennials.** They're unique, and proud of it.
2. **Give them opportunities to join your brand.** They're accustomed to being part of a group.
3. **Allow them to feel like winners.** They want to win, and they don't mind others winning too.
4. **They thrive on stimulating experiences.** They'll spend more time with you if they're actively engaged.
5. **Speak *with* them, not *to* them.** They'll embrace you more eagerly if they don't feel like you are telling them what to do.
6. **Embrace the idea of family.** They do.
7. **Celebrate the contradictions that define Millennials.** They will shape business and culture for years to come.



# SOURCES OF INSPIRATION



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Author, Professor at  
Golden Gate  
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Dr. Doreen Dodgen Magee,  
Psychologist Specializing in  
Impact of Overuse of  
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