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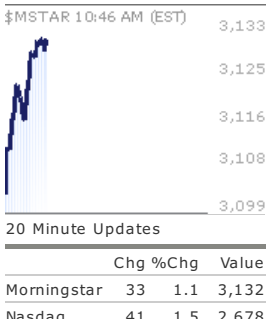
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Guerrilla Sales & Marketing

Understand Gen Y To Reach Them

By Lori Turner

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Editor's Note: This is the first in a two-part series.

Gen Y is misunderstood – in the workplace and to businesses targeting this generation. Often described as the “entitled generation” with a less-than-stellar work ethic, there’s more to this generation than meets the eye. Failure to understand what drives this group can be costly.

They have more money of their own to spend than any prior generation. In addition to wielding their own financial power, they strongly influence the purchases of their Boomer parents as well – making them a force to be reckoned with.

Also called “Millennials,” they are ages 16 to 33 and make up 28 percent of the U.S. population. They are 80 million strong – making this generation the second largest since the Baby Boomers, which barely outpace Gen Y these days.

Gen Y is very plugged in. Internet, reality TV and digital music are major influencers. Computers are more important than TV, because they can find TV programming on the Internet as well.

Not distinguishing well between “want” and “need,” they’re often willing to spend unwisely on the “next cool thing.” They are, however, more brand-loyal than the generation before them. Lock in that loyalty at an early age, or risk this generation finding your brand irrelevant.

While they can be quick to buy, they don’t like to feel they’re being sold to. They appreciate a more authentic approach. Give them the basic information that allows them to make an informed decision versus taking a strong-armed sales approach. With that said, this generation likes to be wowed and is particularly receptive to outrageous guerrilla-marketing approaches – especially when they stumble upon them on their own.

They are multitaskers and love the instant access of the digital age. If your website is slow or clunky, they’re gone in an instant. Don’t count on this generation to give your out-of-date brand a second chance.

As kids, their Baby Boomer parents hovered over their every activity, catering to their every need and treating them like fragile crystal. For this reason, Gen Y feels entitled to having it their way. They want products personalized around their needs, and they want them fast.

They’re not absent of work ethic, however. They merely appreciate a better balance than their Gen X counterparts. Gen Y would prefer to work for a greater vision or a cause that they can get excited about.

Due to tragedies like 9/11 and the Columbine school shooting, Gen Y wants to cure the world of its problems. So speak to this group about your greater purpose rather than what you’re trying to sell, and you’re more likely to connect.

Generation Y is conservative and family-focused. They often marry young. With both parents often working, they’ve spent more time alone



Lori Turner-Wilson

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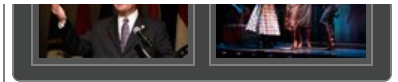
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than other generations, thus the desire for a strong sense of family.

Check back next week for the communication channels and messaging strategies that resonate most with Generation Y.

Lori Turner is an award-winning columnist and managing partner of RedRover Sales & Marketing, www.redrovercompany.com. You can follow RedRover on Twitter (@redrovercompany and @loriturner) and Facebook (facebook.com/redrovercompany).



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