

10 MUST-KNOW FACTS ABOUT POST-MILLENNIALS

Today's teens are tomorrow's consumers and employees. If businesses are to earn their trust and loyalty, understanding what makes them tick will be crucial, writes futurist **Will Higham**



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It's time to stop using the term "millennials" to describe young people – unless you consider anyone aged 25 to 40 young. Today's teens and early 20-somethings are a new generation, very different from their older siblings. They've been called gen Z, centennials and social natives, but I'll refer to them as post-millennials (PMs). Whichever label you prefer, you need to take notice of them. They have distinctive attitudes – and, if they're not buying from you and/or working for you now, they soon will be.

Gen-Z entrepreneur: Henry Patterson is a co-founder of Not Before Tea, a brand of children's goods based on a book called *The Adventures of Sherb and Pip*, which he wrote in 2014, aged 10

01 / THE FEAR FACTOR

PMs constitute one of the most stressed and anxious young generations we have seen. They've grown up in an age of austerity under considerable educational and career pressure. Eight out of 10 rank good grades or career success as a top priority. According to one recent survey, they're more aware of the *Wall Street Journal* than they are of *Vice* magazine. They are risk-averse, financially conservative and worried about what the future holds for them.

02 / DIY ENTHUSIASTS

PMs are aware that they are walking an uncertain path and they don't believe that they can rely on others for help. As customers, they'll prefer enablement to spoon-feeding. As employees, they'll be far from the "entitled millennials" that many employers complain about. Eight out of 10 want to be their own boss – and many will be. Those that choose salaried employment will still have an entrepreneurial attitude. They will probably expect autonomy and relish it.

03 / 'FRAMILY' TIES

DIY doesn't mean "do it alone" – PMs are more community-spirited than millennials. They view "framily" (friends and family) as key. They're happy to spend leisure time with parents and are in no hurry to leave home. As consumers, they'll value family-owned companies and brands that treat their customers like family.

04 / GOOD, CLEAN FUN

If you thought millennials were less hedonistic than previous generations, wait until you meet the PMs – rates of drinking, recreational drug use and teen pregnancy are plummeting. Expect food to overtake drink as the main passion of tomorrow's leisure consumers as they seek more innocent pastimes, and for traditional bar culture to decline as a result. >>

PEOPLE TRY TO PUT US D-DOWN...

The tales behind the generation-naming game

Lost generation (born 1883-90)

While living in France after the first world war, American writer Gertrude Stein once witnessed a garage owner berating one of his junior mechanics for working too slowly. He said: "*Vous êtes tous une génération perdue.*" (You are all a lost generation.) Stein related his exasperated taunt to her protégé, Ernest Hemingway. He popularised the term "lost generation" in his 1926 novel *The Sun Also Rises*, referring to the veterans of the war.

Interbellum generation (1903-13)

This cohort came of age between the wars, but amid the decade-long Great Depression that started in 1929.

The greatest generation (1910-24)

US news anchor Tom Brokaw came up with this epithet in 1998 for those who'd fought in the second world war. They are characterised as industrious, thrifty and honourable.

Silent generation (1923-44)

A 1951 article in *Time* described those who had come of age at the end of the war as "fairly hard-working and saying almost nothing", preferring instead to keep their heads down and lead "normal" lives.

Post-war baby boomers (1945-64)

Thought to be the first cohort to pay much attention to generation gaps, the boomers were wealthier and healthier (thanks to the NHS) than their predecessors.

Gen X (1961-79)

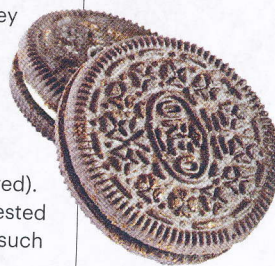
Xers are supposedly the work-hard, play-hard breed who grew up before the digital age but paved the way for today's ultra-connected world. Douglas Coupland's 1991 novel *Generation X* popularised the term's use as a label for this cohort, although it had been applied to previous youth movements.

Re-rewind: the humble cassette tape is becoming an increasingly popular music format among post-millennials



05 / ICONOCLASTIC BAND

As consumers, PMs will be less bound by convention. Don't assume that, just because they're not hedonists, they are conformists. In fact, they love a break from tradition – for instance, the unconventionally flavoured limited-edition Doritos and Oreos (pictured). They're also far less interested in classic status symbols such as cars or watches.



06 / ACCESS, NOT OWNERSHIP

As old status symbols lose their shine, so too will may other items that people have traditionally coveted. PMs have grown up in an era characterised by "peak stuff" (the point of too much choice); a shortage of storage space as they remain longer in the parental home; and the rise of rental and streaming services. Welcome to the age of "access-ship" over ownership.

07 / VALUERS OF TIME

Living through recession and austerity has made PMs savvy consumers with a sophisticated approach to value. For them, it's not only about financial cost: they appreciate value for time as well as value for money. They may also be more willing than millennials to pay for previously "free" products

and services, as long as these are of good quality, easy to use and genuinely beneficial. This factor is already proving profitable for Spotify and Netflix. It could also be a boon for publishers operating subscription models.

08 / TIME FOR VALUES

Although they are financially conservative, PMs are typically socially progressive. They won't tolerate discrimination and, as consumers, they will value honesty and openness from companies that champion sustainability, diversity and social responsibility.

09 / QUICK TO JUDGE

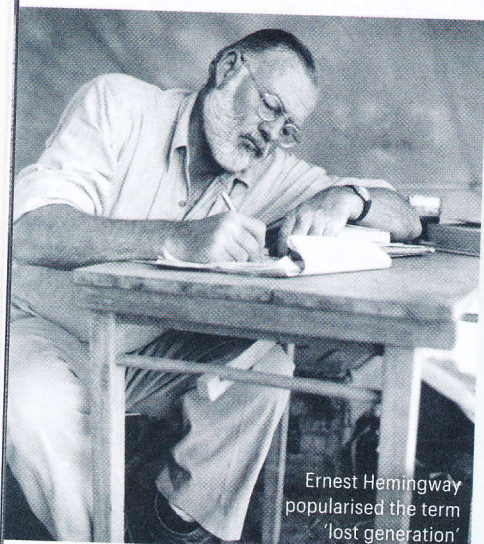
PMs have grown up in a "noisy" environment, full of marketing messages. As a result, they've learnt to make quick choices based on speed-reading information. It's something that's been honed by a childhood of video gaming. As customers, they will seek lots of detail too, but they'll want it in an easily digestible format.

10 / ANALOGUE JAMMING

Don't be fooled into thinking that, because they're digital natives, PMs love technology unreservedly. They actually like face-to-face retail as much as they do e-commerce, while their favourite leisure activities are often low-tech. When it comes to music, for instance, they may like Spotify but they love vinyl records and now even cassettes. Retro products and pursuits evoke an era of simplicity, honesty and comfort – things that PMs really like. **d.**

DID YOU KNOW...

"Woke" is the word *du jour* for both millennials and post-millennials? It has origins in African-American vernacular and is normally used to describe people who are socially aware, particularly in matters of discrimination. In 2017 US comedy show *Saturday Night Live* screened a spoof advert for "Levi's Wokes, a style-neutral, gender-non-conforming denim for a generation that defies labels". As the kids today say: "Stay woke."



Ernest Hemingway popularised the term 'lost generation'