

ENVIRONICS

RESEARCH

How Canadian Millennials Give

Research made possible by the Rideau Hall Foundation

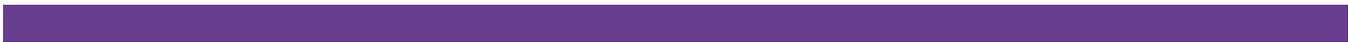
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Executive summary

A unique research project was conducted with Millennials to better understand what motivates them to give (particularly in terms of their social values, or underlying mindsets and motivations for giving), what giving means to them, and how they develop the social values associated with giving.

The **social values profile of Millennials** who give to charitable causes indicates that this is a group motivated by: having *choice and personal control*; making decisions based on *logic and reason*; a desire to *make a difference* and achieve measurable results; a desire to be *personally involved* and experience the impact of their gift; and wanting to see benefits at the *local community level*.

The results of the focus groups with Millennials confirm that for many, **giving is an interaction**; they are not content to give and walk away. They appear to be searching for connection, and welcome the intensity of direct and personal giving experiences (i.e., giving directly to the person in need). This suggests an opportunity for organizations to **improve their engagement** with Millennials, to motivate financial donations but also to access their “time and talent” (i.e., activate volunteerism).

The rational/logical side of these Millennials means that they are also looking for **evidence** of the impact of their donation. There is a fair amount of skepticism that donations are currently being used to fully benefit those who need it.

Giving appears to be a learned behaviour. Millennials’ giving habits often become ingrained in childhood – as do the associated social values. While Millennials themselves are now beyond childhood, there is an opportunity to engage with them as parents (as they negotiate the childrearing years), encouraging them to provide their children with giving experiences like they themselves had.

When we understand what motivates Millennials to give, we are **better equipped to communicate with them** in a relevant and productive way. Ultimately, the results suggest that Millennials don’t have a dramatically different orientation towards charitable giving, but do have unique perspectives on the topic. Thus, strategies designed to communicate with Millennials should consider what they want from their giving experience.

This research forms part of the **Giving Behaviour Project**, established by the Rideau Hall Foundation (RHF). The Giving Behaviour Project is an effort to better understand the current giving landscape in Canada, and to use that knowledge to help strengthen the evidence base of fundraising practices. It is central to the RHF’s goal to widen the circle of giving by reinforcing giving as a fundamental Canadian value.

Research background

Objectives

The Rideau Hall Foundation is undertaking a project to deepen our understanding of the factors that motivate Canadians to give, and the barriers that may limit their ability to do so.

One focus for the project is Millennials, as the future of charitable giving in Canada. Millennials are the generation born between 1980 and 1995. In 2017, they are between 22 and 37 years old.

Environics has developed a unique social values-based segmentation of Millennials, which was used as the starting point for this research exploring the social values which impact giving behaviour.

Previous research has shown that likelihood to donate and donation amounts increase with age, but also vary across Millennials' segments. The current research set out to explore the reasons for this variation in giving behavior, with the following three objectives:

1. What are the social values that impact ("drive") charitable giving among Millennials?
2. What does "giving" mean to Millennials? Is a new definition required?
3. How are the social values that impact giving behavior learned or acquired?

What are social values and why are they important?

Social values are a person's fundamental postures or world views that set the context in which they react to situations, events, opportunities and challenges. Values are formed early in life (largely set by the mid-teens) but can evolve slowly over time through education and life experiences. Values are what connect us to the underlying cultural and personal narratives through which we make sense of the world.

Ultimately, charities want to move individuals along the "giving continuum", turning non-donors into donors, and motivating current donors to give more. Values profiles help inform the strategy to achieve these objectives, in two key ways:

- Identifying *who* are the types of individuals to whom we want to target marketing efforts
- Guiding *how* we frame our communications and messaging to resonate with the values of these individuals

The Canadian Millennial social values tribes

Environics has identified six different "tribes" of Millennials based on their social values. The following are thumbnail descriptions of each tribe; more detailed profiles are provided in the Appendix.



Bros and Brittanys (38% of Millennials)

These are the “mainstream.” Young urban and suburban Millennials not looking to change the world. They start their day with a cup of Tim’s and end it with a beer. They are enthusiastic users of technology.



Engaged Idealists (19% of Millennials)

Popular archetypes of Millennials are based on this type. Skewed female and in B.C., they are socially aware and engaged. They tend to hold progressive values and are ambitious. Highly connected and heavy tech users.



New Traditionalists (10% of Millennials)

Being spiritual and religious, this segment believes in a traditional family structure and have a more conservative mindset. They are practical consumers who watch their money, and have a low need for status recognition.



Critical Counterculture (4% of Millennials)

These Millennials are civic-minded, ethical consumers, with a global consciousness. They are skeptical of advertising and approach consumption in a more utilitarian fashion.



Diverse Strivers (10% of Millennials)

They love crowds, attention and pursue intensity in all they do. They are connected to their communities, believe in duty and want to get ahead. They also love to spend money, caring about their appearance and wanting brand-name products.



Lone Wolves (19% of Millennials)

This segment actively disengages from society and rejects authority. They are rebelling *without* a cause. They are simply skeptical about the world and what it has to offer.

Methodology

Objective 1: Two key data sources were used:

- Data from the Environics Institute study, based on 3,000 Millennials, including whether they gave to a charity, donation amount and approximately 30 values items used to classify Millennials into segments
- Environics Research's full social values database (76 values, measured by 100+ question items) was imputed into the data set

A multivariate statistical technique called driver analysis was used to help identify the motivating factors (what are the "buttons to push").

Objectives 2 and 3: More than 200 Millennials were recruited to submit video responses to our research questions.

- Participants were recruited from social media and an online panel, and were paid a nominal incentive. RHF and Environics were identified as project partners to confirm legitimacy and encourage participation.
- Participants were directed to a customized website to complete a mini-survey that identifies their segment, and were asked to record a 2-3 minute video response to one of the research questions. Consent was requested for permission to publicly share the videos. A small number of the submissions have been compiled into video summaries that illustrate the key themes we heard.

Objective 1: What are the social values linked to charitable giving among Millennials?

Givers are higher on *personal control*, and lower on *acceptance of violence, anomie & aimlessness* and *time stress*

Among Millennials, givers are more likely to have a great sense of being in control of their lives (and accordingly, more likely to reject the chaos of violence and feelings of alienation and time stress). These values speak to the *types of people* who are more likely to feel able to give, but also their *motivation for giving*: it is a personal choice over which they have control.

Millennials' giving is also motivated by the values of *emotional control* and *social learning*

In addition to personal control, givers value *emotional control*. They prefer to look at things in a logical way and want to base their decisions on reason. This suggests that – even when they care very strongly about a cause – it is important that their rational and reasoned concerns are answered and addressed. It also speaks to a desire to measure or demonstrate the impact of their gift, to ensure it's going to make a difference.

Another motivator for giving is *social learning*. They want more than handing over their donation; they want to be involved and experience its impact. In part, this reflects interest in and curiosity about others. It also reflects “enlightened self-interest”, or the idea of getting some benefit for themselves. For example, a charity could provide access to the people or animals that it assists, so that donors can better understand who/what they are supporting.

Givers are more likely to hold the values of *religiosity* and *community involvement*, suggesting that youth groups and local community are springboards for reaching Millennials.

Millennials who give are motivated by *community involvement*. They are driven by the “micro”, immediate or close-knit impact of their efforts. Implications for charities include using more grassroots, small-scale events as good opportunities to intercept and connect with people. What can charities offer in terms of interesting knowledge about a neighbourhood or town (e.g., how many local residents have been supported) that appeals to this shared value? Can donor incentives show support for local residents (e.g., thanks for your donation, here is a small craft made by a local artisan).

Religiosity is as much about fulfilling religious morals as appealing to organized religion, for example, the principle of helping those in need or those who are not as well-off as you. Strategies that build off this value could include reaching out to youth groups across denominations, to become advocates for the cause and partners in fundraising activities.

Implications

When we understand what motivates Millennials to give, we are better equipped to communicate with them in a relevant and productive way. Each charity has different objectives and capacities, and thus will need to develop strategies unique to them. To the extent possible, these strategies should consider what Millennials want from their giving experience:

- ✓ Choice/personal control over their donation
- ✓ Understanding of how their donation is being used/transparency/ accountability
- ✓ To make a difference/achieve measurable results
- ✓ To be personally involved/experience the impact of their gift
- ✓ To see the benefits at a local, community level

Objective 2: What does “giving” mean to Millennials?

For Millennials, giving is an interaction; they are not content to give and walk away.

Millennials express a desire for both a *respectful* and a *meaningful* interaction in how they give to causes. They want giving to be an opportunity for connection – that is, an active rather than a passive act.

Likely related to this preference, some Millennials believe that giving time or talent is preferable to giving money. Some echo the oft-heard idea that it’s better to teach someone a skill rather than do it for them; others suggest that personal involvement demonstrates a greater commitment to the cause (“*Give your whole heart and self to that cause.*”) This is possibly a belief that needs to be addressed – that giving money is “not as good as” giving of yourself.

There is also some recognition that the manner of giving depends on the charity and what it needs, as well as on the individual and what they are able or prepared to give (e.g., they may not be able to afford a financial donation, but can volunteer time).

Social media has a role to play, but does not replace other ways of giving

There is a consensus that “liking” a cause on Facebook is useful in boosting awareness of a charity or cause, but otherwise is not an impactful form of giving. A few even suggest that Facebook “likes” are a slippery slope towards *less* engagement, since it contributes to the feeling of having done something when the individual has not contributed what a charity truly needs.

Millennials are generally both rational and skeptical about giving

Millennials’ ideal “ask” is polite, direct/honest (i.e., there is clearly a real, tangible need), and involves a personal request. This is notably consistent with the earlier findings that the social values of “givers” include rationality, logic and control; calm/a lack of time pressure; and, rejection of aggression.

Many want to understand the true value of their donation, in terms of knowing where the money is going and ensuring it gets to those in need. Notably, for some, there is a real lack of trust in charities and how they use charitable donations.

Millennials want to give in the way that makes the most sense for them to provide value

To the extent possible, it is valuable to understand your “target audience” and customize the approach/request accordingly. For example, some are motivated to make an immediate, off-the-cuff donation; others want time to do research. Some are driven by fun and engagement, while others want to donate to what they are passionate about.

Implications

Consistent with the social values profile of Millennial donors, these results provide further evidence that Millennials are not content with “passive” donations; they would prefer direct involvement and evidence that their support is helping. Ideally, this also means finding ways for Millennials to contribute that best match their capacity, skills and talents.

Rather than the complexity of appealing to all types of Millennials, it will be most efficient and effective to identify the audience most oriented towards your organization's cause. Who are they, what makes them tick, what appeals to them and what turns them off? This understanding can help inform an approach that is as unique and specialized as the individuals themselves.

Objective 3: How are the social values that impact giving learned or acquired?

Childhood experiences often serve as the foundation for Millennials' giving habits.

When Millennials discuss their first or most memorable experience with giving, a few key themes arise:

- Parents and grandparents are a major source of influence about giving, either through explicit instruction or through the implicit example they set. These experiences help giving become ingrained early on, like the development of social values themselves.
- Other memorable giving experiences happen as part of a group, such as with friends or as part of a school group. Joy of being part of a group and realization of what can be achieved when people work together.

There is considerable power in a direct interaction with the recipient.

The most impactful experiences tend to involve direct interaction with the person in need. Often Millennials refer to feeling a *connection*, through the reaction of the individual or seeing the benefit of the action, even for the smallest gestures or donations. For others, the direct connection is through a family member who is affected and needs help.

Often but not always, the circumstances are “jarring”, pushing them out of their everyday reality and shifting their frame of understanding the world (e.g. a neighbour’s house fire, a family cancer diagnosis). Such experiences tend to be associated with intense emotions (joy, fear) and a realization of how lucky the giver is in their family, community or country.

Implications

Millennials appear to be looking for connection. As a charitable organization, how can you make their giving experience as direct and personal as possible? How can you bring together the giver and the recipient (virtually, if not physically), making the act of giving a little more intimate?

One example is to build a social platform for giving as a form of connection. This goes beyond social media. Instead, it focuses on the power of community (through schools, partner or stakeholder organizations, community groups, peer-to-peer groups) to build a sense of belonging and reinforce giving habits.

Consider building engagement with parents of young children. As Millennials navigate the childrearing stage, it provides an opportunity to get them involved (i.e., encouraging them to educate and influence their children). This also supports the development of giving behaviours – and their associated social values – in the next generation.

Appendix: Detailed profiles of Millennials' tribes



Bros & Brittanys (38% of Millennials)

This is the largest group, making up one-third of the generation. Bros & Brittanys are avid risk-takers who pursue thrills and excitement, and are enthusiastic consumers. They are Millennials who work hard to get paid and have the lifestyle they want. They embrace technology and appreciate social connectivity. Looking good and being respected is important to them—and, as such, they like to stay current with the latest trends. These Millennials are not looking to change the world and sometimes they don't feel in control of their destinies. Time for an escape and a little fun like catching a concert, beer and HD sports in the man cave or a girls' night out are important to them.

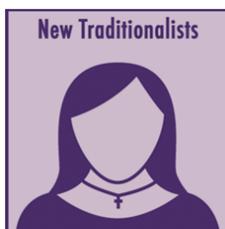
As the largest of all tribes, Bros & Brittanys tend to define the mainstream demographically. Compared with other tribes they are more likely to be Quebecers, male, a bit older, living with a partner (but in common-law rather than marriage), and employed full-time versus being in school. Bros & Brittanys are one of the tribes most likely to be born in Canada and ethnically white, but are also well-represented by ethnic Chinese. They have average level incomes and just below average educational attainment.



Engaged Idealists (19% of Millennials)

Engaged Idealists are Millennials on steroids: engaged, sociable, energetic, experience-seeking and idealistic. They believe in contributing as much as possible to their relationships, careers and communities—and the reward for their efforts is personal growth and development. These Millennials believe that their actions matter, shaping their lives and the world around them. They recognize that their environment is complex, but feel confident in their ability to navigate it. They want interesting, meaningful careers that let them express themselves and use the creativity that is central to their identity. Money is nice, but the quality of their work experiences is a higher priority. They also try to have time for spontaneous fun, which they see as an important part of a happy, balanced life.

Engaged Idealists are primarily Canadian-born and mostly identify ethnically as white. They are the most female of the groups (at 60%), a bit younger than average, and are most present in Ontario (but also with solid western representation). Engaged Idealists are among those most likely to be living with a partner or spouse (versus with family or roommates), but no more likely to be married/common-law, and less apt to have children (being somewhat younger). They are among the most educated of tribes (behind only Critical Counterculturists) and have slightly higher than average household incomes.



New Traditionalists (10% of Millennials)

As their name suggests, New Traditionalists hold many values that would not be out of place in the 1950s—but their outlook also reflects some distinctly 21st century

concerns, including an interest in environmental issues. These Millennials are more religious and spiritual than others: Religion is an important part of their lives and central to their identity. They believe in staying true to the values with which they were brought up, particularly towards conservative family and gender roles. New Traditionalists also value traditional modes of etiquette and propriety: appropriate dress, good manners, respect for elders, a tidy home. They respect authority figures more so than their peers, report a stronger sense of duty, and a greater sense of identification with their family roots and ancestors.

New Traditionalists are the oldest and most established of the Millennial tribes. They are also more likely than average to be female, to be married (but not common-law) and have children (and those who are not yet married or parents are most likely to want these in their future). This tribe is slightly over-represented in Alberta and Manitoba. Along with Diverse Strivers, this group has a high proportion of immigrants, and a broad ethnic mix (especially those identifying as Black). New Traditionalists are somewhat less apt to be employed full-time, with a higher than average number not looking for work (likely stay-at-home mothers). They have a higher than average level of education, and the highest household incomes of any tribe (in part because of being older and married).



Critical Counterculture (4% of Millennials)

Millennials in the Critical Counterculture segment are the engaged, critical young people sometimes featured in stories about 20-somethings building businesses, pursuing groundbreaking online activism, and otherwise shaking up the world. They share many of the same progressive values as Engaged Idealists: They believe in gender equality, are at ease with diversity of all kinds, and reject discrimination and injustice. But while Engaged Idealists see the world through a social and emotional lens – pursuing authentic relationships and experiences, and striving to express their true selves – the gold standard for Critical Counterculturists is clear-eyed rationality. They reject status and authority they see as illegitimate or superficial; they don't mind leading when they can add value to a project, but would hate for someone to judge them by their jeans or smartphone.

This is by far the smallest of the Millennial tribes. Critical Counterculturists are equally likely to be male or female, they are most likely to fit into the middle age range (27 to 31), and present in British Columbia. They stand out most as being the least family-oriented of tribes: They are most likely to be single and have no children, and are most keen to keep it that way. Critical Counterculturists are also by far the most educated group (one in five has a graduate degree), although their household incomes are a bit below average. This tribe is one of three (along with Diverse Strivers and New Traditionalists) with a higher proportion of immigrants, but most also identify ethnically as white (e.g., anglophones arriving from the USA and Europe).



Diverse Strivers (10% of Millennials)

To Diverse Strivers, 'making it' in life, and doing things that bring new and intense experiences are top priorities. These Millennials crave material success and they push themselves to achieve it in a number of ways. They work hard in their careers and pursue personal challenges (like marathons or marathon hot yoga sessions) in

the off-hours. They strive to inspire respect in those closest to them by doing their duty, and being upstanding members of their families and communities. They take care to look good, and have the latest gadgets and toys to maintain a sharp and successful appearance. Diverse Strivers report high levels of vitality—they love crowds, attention and pursue intensity in all they do—and they need every bit of their energy to keep pushing forward toward their goals; they never stop building their resumes to satisfy their ambitions and impress others.

Diverse Strivers are the most multicultural of the Millennial tribes. They are most likely to be born in another country, and to have a non-white ethnic background, especially South Asian but also others (Black, Latino, Chinese). This group is also more male than female, younger in age than most other tribes, and tends to be concentrated in Ontario (especially in the GTA). Despite being younger, they are as likely as average to be married (but not common-law) and to have children; Diverse Strivers not yet married or parents are among those most keen to want this in their future. Being younger, they are more likely to be students, although they have average employment and household income levels.



Lone Wolves

Lone Wolves (19% of Millennials)

Deeply skeptical of authority, and lacking strong social and emotional connections, Lone Wolves resemble the stereotypical Gen Xers of the 1990s: cool and standoffish. These Millennials are solitary, and favour keeping life simple and straightforward. They are seldom involved in community events and rarely feel strongly connected to what’s going on in society at large. Still, whereas some people feeling disconnected from society are angry or hostile to others, Lone Wolves are low-key (e.g., they are not xenophobic or sexist). If disaffected Gen Xers’ motto was “Whatever,” perhaps the Lone Wolves’ words to live by are “I’m not hurting anyone. Just let me be.”

Despite stereotypes, Lone Wolves are equally likely to be male or female, as well as being somewhat older than average, and most concentrated in Quebec. They are among the most native-born and ethnically white of tribes (along with Engaged Idealists). Their domestic arrangements are comparable to Millennials overall in terms being married and having children; but Lone Wolves not yet settled in this way are by far the least interested of any tribe in getting married or having kids. Among the tribes, they are least likely to be employed full-time or currently in school, and among those most apt to be not looking for work (along with New Traditionalists, but for different reasons). This tribe has the highest proportion of Millennials without post-secondary education and household incomes under \$30K.