

# 'Unboxing' Design tips for the millennials

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*Four key points to consider while designing successful brands & Product experiences for the millennial consumers*

A YOUNG college boy is in a supermarket, staring at a shelf that has a variety of soft drinks. He is confused as to which one he should buy. With all the choices available, he finally picks up a can of cola which is designed to be split into two, and has a hashtag that says, "#SplitShareSocialize".

A millennial always wants to be well connected via the trendy means of social media. It is very likely that a number of millennials will have no memory of a world without mobile phones, advanced cameras, text, email, and web searching. The Internet has opened a larger number of ways to this era than ever.

In the current times, Millennials are often considered as the pioneers of today's social causes, and early adopters of the most recent innovations. They are even estimated to predict the future business patterns and are expected to have an annual purchasing power of more than \$200 billion by 2017.

It is therefore not a surprise that brands are also turning their attention to find ways to design and appeal to the millennials. Millennials are frequently exposed to technology, giving them a unique status compared to older generations like the Gen Xers and the Baby Boomers. Accordingly, design considerations should be unique to this generation, simply because millennials enjoy doing things their own way.

What do we need to understand about millennials? There are a number of key elements to be taken into consideration when designing products for millennials. Below are some key aspects designers and brands need to think while building brands for the millennials.

## Make mobile devices a part of the experience

Millennials spend good amount of time on their smartphones. Therefore, incorporating codes on the products which can be accessed by mobile devices to extend the overall experience is an important design element which needs to be considered. This could involve providing scan codes or handles which will enable the user to get product information, connect with a community, play games with users or even enjoy some

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unique experiences with new technologies like augmented reality.

E-Commerce and M-Commerce is changing the landscape of the entire shopping experience. Millennials are known to review their products online through Tweets, Facebook status messages and "unboxing" experiences. Unboxing, especially, is something that many millennials enjoy doing, while sharing their experience online. This lies in the user experience, where the user is able to share the process of unboxing the product, for the first time, with a larger audience. Additionally, using hashtags or relating the product to a social media campaign, gets millennials more involved in experiencing the product and thereby influences buying decisions.

## Customization and personalization are key elements

Millennials have high level of self-awareness and would seek opportunities which allows them to make a statement. A design which easily allows customization is the way to go. Millennials like to be treated as a partner, a contributor and not just a purchaser. For example, Do It Yourself (DIY) products are quite popular amongst the millennial group, as they feel involved, and are customizing the products in their own way, making it personal. Furthermore, if they make the product on their own, it has some form of emotional connect. Of course, the most common way to create emotional connect is through a well thought out advertisement, that connects with the consumer emotionally. It could be related to relationships, comedy, the environment and/or social issues.

Oreo, one of the biggest cookie brands in the United States for instance, rolled out its "Color filled" feature in November 2015. Color-filled allows consumers to personalize their cookie packaging by selecting a design theme, color graphics and their own personalized message through the product website. The goal behind this initiative was to expand Oreo's e-commerce market to \$1 billion by 2020. By using features that appeal to the specific demands of an entire consumer generation, the company

aims to leverage Millennial-gear trends to grow business online.

Thus, while millennials are always connected, they also enjoy human connection. It is pertinent that the service that comes with the product is as good in person, as it is online. Millennials want brands that are transparent and unique – brands that have value and are able to connect to, personally. The best way to do this is to with them – how will the product make them feel? How will it benefit them?

## Bring in elements of social awareness

Millennials closely follow social causes, and stand up for these causes than any other generational group in today's society. They are more conscious when it comes to buying products that will benefit them, as well as the greater good. If a product is environment friendly, or if a percentage of the purchasing price is donated to a good cause, millennials are more likely to purchase these products.

A very well-known example is of Puma Shoe box which is popularly called "clever little bag". Puma and Fuse project had collaborated to design a shoebox which uses less material through clever design which transformed the brand's supply chain, saving millions in electricity, fuel, and water.

Thus Millennials believe in personal connect. They have personal beliefs and a lot of these are based on social awareness. Creating a brand that partakes in creating social awareness on a particular issue, will help the millennial connect with the brand at a more personal level.

## Incorporate an intuitive design and user experience

Millennials are more inclined to brands that have invested in a simple design with seamless user experience that has showcased commitment to its consumers, beyond just the interface.

Take for instance, Orient Electric, a major electrical manufacturer, has launched a smart celling fan 'Orient Ecogale'. Targeting the millennials, Orient Electric gave considerable importance to design to create a key differentiator. Tata Elxsi was commissioned with the task to do the design and user interface for this unique fan that would not only offers new functionality, but would also be aesthetically appealing to the next-generation.

By blending design and technology, Orient Electric and Tata Elxsi ensured that something as common as ceiling fans looked more trendy, sustainable and interactive, appealing to the millennials.

To conclude, Millennials are well-

connected and an enthusiastic group. They have the desire to innovate, they contribute positively to their work, social and personal lives. Technology and development of technology gives them the freedom to access what they need, in order to achieve these desires. Technology enables them to multitask, keeping them in touch with both the connected and the human world. It is important to keep a note of how the millennial group is evolving, as they will continue to do so. Designing for them will be an evolving process, which is why it is imperative to recognize this generation and design products tactically to suit their taste and requirements. ■



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