

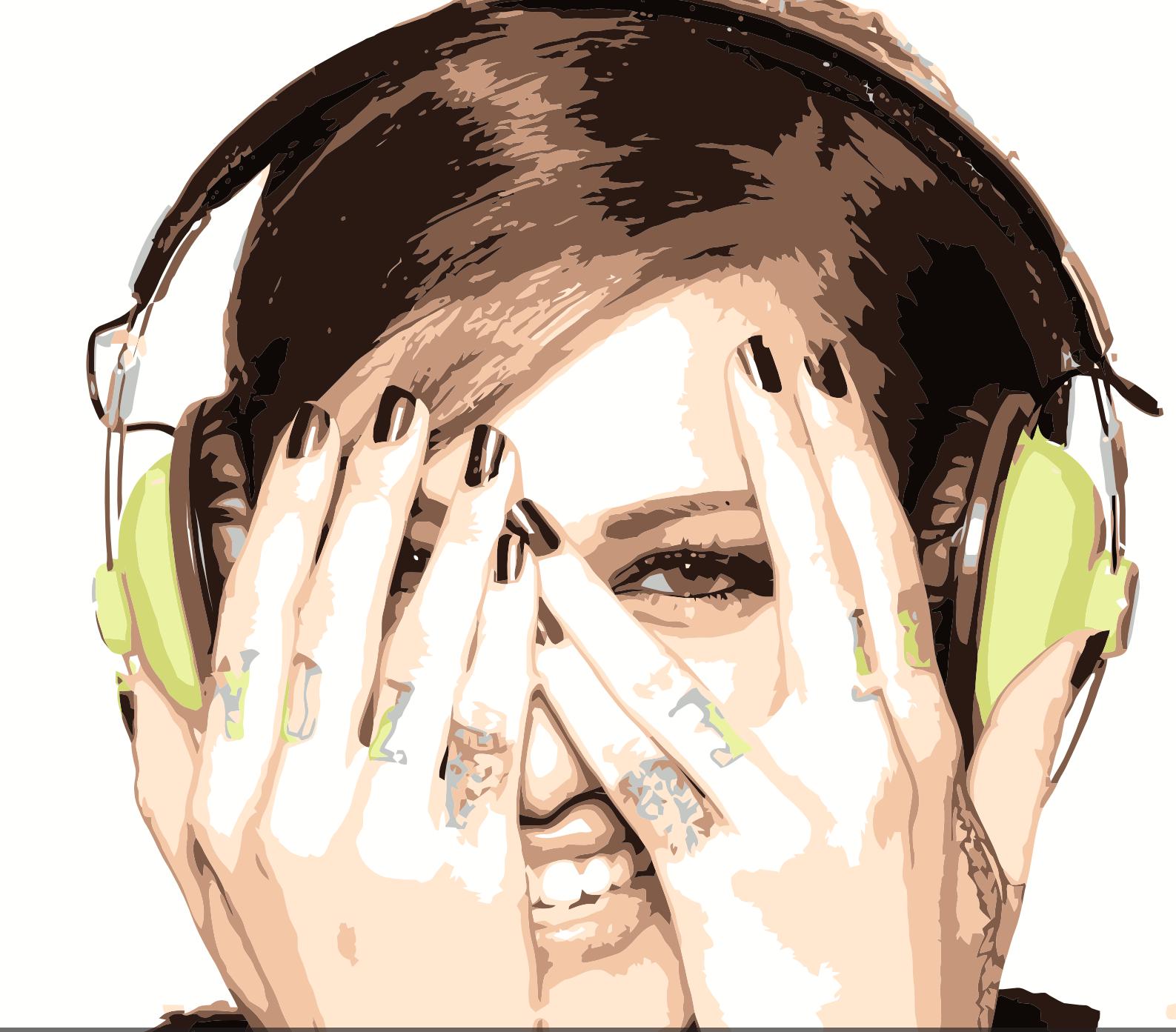


EURO RSCG WORLDWIDE

# Prosumer Report

Vol. 11, 2011

**MILLENNIALS:**  
The Challenger  
Generation



### **Who Are Prosumers?**

*They are today's leading influencers and market drivers. These proactive and informed consumers have always been important, but they have grown even more powerful thanks to their skillful embrace of new technologies and, especially, social media. Euro RSCG has been tracking Prosumers for more than a decade and in that time has interviewed well over 50,000 adults around the globe. Prosumers are important to us because, beyond their own economic impact, they influence the brand choices and consumption behaviors of others. Simply put, what Prosumers are doing today, mainstream consumers are likely to be doing six to 18 months from now. We invite you to learn more about Prosumers and our Prosumer studies at [www.prosumer-report.com](http://www.prosumer-report.com).*

Since the century's start, we've heard a profusion of terms used to describe the generation born between the mid-1980s and early 2000s: *digital natives*, coined by Mark Prensky to emphasize their break from the analogue generations that had gone before; *millennials*, to designate them as children of the new millennium; *gen Y*, to indicate they followed gen X, or *gen why*, in a nod to their questioning natures; *echo boomers*, to underscore their large numbers; and so on. Our inability to settle on a single moniker offers proof that this is a generation difficult to pigeonhole – and even harder to understand. Our trouble may well lie in the fact that we are attempting to view these young men and women through the prism of the baby boomer generation – using criteria of little relevance to those just now coming of age.

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# Millennial Generation

So, how do we go about developing a firmer understanding of the members of this generation, whom Euro RSCG has chosen to call millennials? We must identify what sets them apart from earlier generations and what holds them together as a demographic – looking at their shared values, strengths, and points of promise. Three important differences are immediately apparent:

## **Millennials live in an ultra-connected world in which constraints of time and space have all but disappeared.**

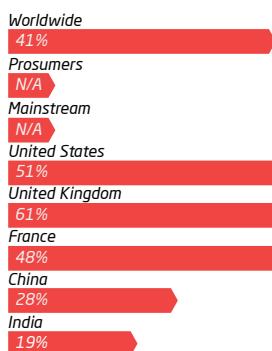
It has been said many times before, but it bears repeating: Thanks to the Web and social media, virtually everything is but a click away for this generation. They don't consider the unprecedented period of technological innovation into which they were born extraordinary; it is simply "the way things are." This affects how they conceptualize and problem-solve. They are more iterative than linear, more prone to multitasking than monotasking. For them, digital is more habit than tool; it is simply the way they interact with their environments, as natural as eating and drinking. A plurality of respondents to Euro RSCG's Millennials survey – especially those in Western markets – agreed that being "more digital" is the biggest distinction between the younger generation and their elders.

## **They were born into a post-communist, one-model world.**

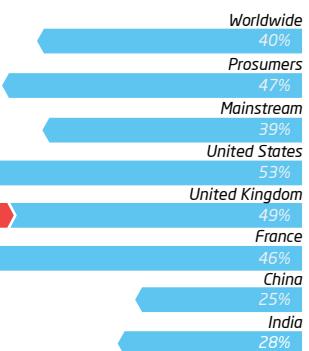
Too young to remember the Berlin Wall as anything but a pile of rubble, the Soviet Union, or the Cold War, millennials have known only the model of liberal capitalism. While conflicts and pockets of totalitarianism remain, these young people have grown up in an unprecedented period of political and

## WHAT IS THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR GENERATION AND THE PREVIOUS ONE?

### **Age: 40-55** The younger generation is more digital



### **Age: 18-25** My generation is more digital



**Prosumer Point:** Across generations, Prosumers are more technologically minded than the mainstream. Millennial Prosumers were significantly more likely than others to cite "being more digital" as the most important factor that sets their generation apart.

economic standardization. And this impacts their relationship with the world and their notion of conflict: For the most part, they believe in continuity and gradual change rather than ideological schisms born of competing economic theories. There is little notion of "us vs. them" on a global scale.

**They live in a time of uncertainty, with a shifting geopolitical balance.**

Whereas their parents grew up in a world largely divided by the Cold War, today's young people live under the even less predictable and equally unsettling specter of terrorism. Their reference points are 9/11, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and religion-based enmities and uprisings. They have no way of knowing where the next bomb will detonate, where the next atrocity will occur. And this means *they value adaptation over planning, flexibility and compromise over intransigence*. Long-range planning has grown obsolete.

As philosopher Antonio Gramsci noted about his own time nearly a century ago, we are living in a period in which "the old world is dying and the new is yet to be born." In an age in which the world seems hesitant and unsure, millennial youth represent a force for change and reinvention.

In this study we explore the paradoxes of a generation that is inventing, day after day, a way of living that embraces both continuity and change, a strategy not of revolution but of slow yet deep evolution. And we'll examine how this applies in two specific fields: the workplace and consumerism.

**Our Methodology**

Working with our research partners at MicroDialogue, Euro RSCG Worldwide fielded an online survey in five countries – China, France, India, the United Kingdom, and the United States – in summer 2010. In each country, we questioned 600 respondents, equally split between men and women and divided between two age cohorts: 500 millennials aged 18 to 25 (average age 22.4) and 100 adults aged 40 to 55 (average age 47.1). Total sample: 3,004. All data in this report come solely from the millennials sample except where otherwise indicated.

We included the older sample in our study of the millennial generation in order to better understand intergenerational perceptions and distinctions. The inclusion of both developed and emerging markets gives us insights into intragenerational differences in Western countries (where everyone appears to have "been there, done that") and the East (where so much remains to be invented and explored).

Select charts are included in this report.

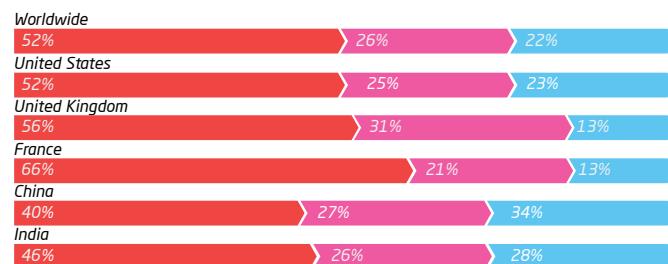


# Stop Viewing Youth Through Outdated Stereotypes

I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMON VALUES WITH THE YOUNG GENERATION

Age:  
40-55

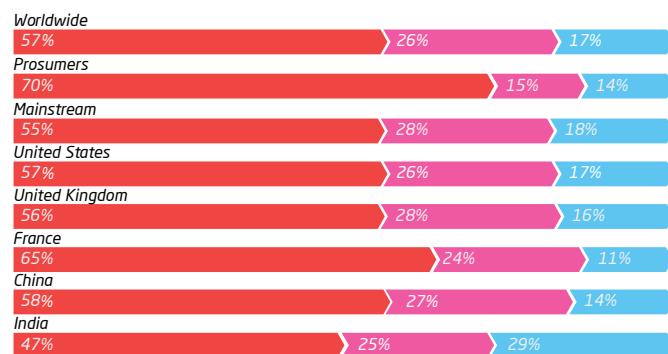
Disagree  
Neither  
Agree



I DON'T HAVE ANY COMMON VALUES WITH THE PREVIOUS GENERATION

Age:  
18-25

Disagree  
Neither  
Agree



## Stereotype No. 1: "I say 'no,' therefore I am."

In the 1960s, being young meant being "against" — against bourgeois values, against the so-called military-industrial complex, against authority of all types, and against the mores of the older generation. Youth expressed themselves by adopting a new, decadent form of music and sexually provocative clothing, at once shocking their elders and establishing their individualism. Parents and youth lived in two very different worlds.

Today, in contrast, young and old inhabit a single world, enjoying virtually the same things and sharing key values. We have entered what might be called the Reconciliation Age. The millennials in our survey sample firmly rejected the notion that they don't hold values in common with the older generations — a notion dismissed by the 40-55 cohort as well. Young and old listen to much the same music, use the same technologies (though there are differences), and engage in many of the same activities. We can see this connection in the advertising campaign of European fashion brand Comptoir des Cotonniers, which shows mothers and daughters sharing everything — from clothes to secrets and social engagements. While young baby boomers in the 1960s and 1970s famously vowed not to trust anyone over age 30, their children and grandchildren have no such qualms about the older set.

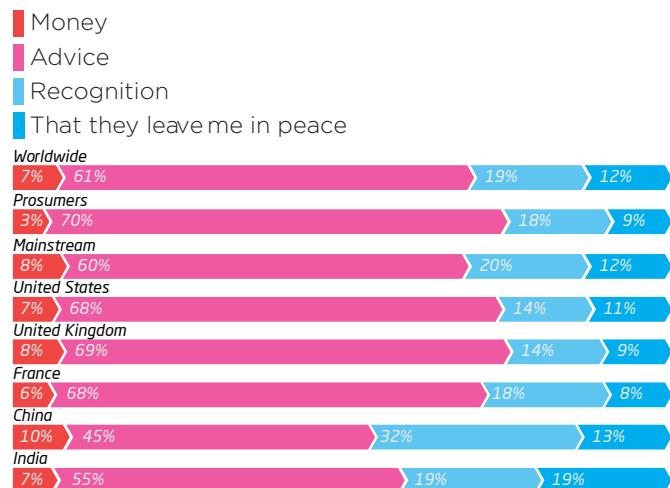
## **Stereotype No. 2: "They think of parents only as their personal ATMs."**

Smart phones and social media give millennials all sorts of ways to communicate and socialize. And they make full use of that capability: 56 percent say social networking sites are a main way they stay connected with friends.

This constant connectivity – including instant access to friends and entertainment – is how millennials communicate and socialize, conduct business, and explore the world. And, if they so choose, they can use these same tools to minimize or even avoid contact with anyone, including their parents. They enjoy a level of freedom and control heretofore unknown to youth. Interestingly – and in contrast to the clichés of young people viewing their parents only as a steady source of cash – our study found that millennials in the five markets actually want to interact with their parents. They look to them less as a source of money than as a repository of advice and information. Six in 10 millennial respondents rely on their parents for advice, while only 7 percent admitted their greatest expectation was to receive money from them. As significant, these young people are more apt to want recognition from their parents than to want to be left in peace.

This is not a generation looking to tune out its elders but to learn from them and be guided by them. It might be expected that these digital natives would value Web-based information above all other sources. After all, with the Internet and social media, the world is open. They can find what they want, when they want simply by clicking on Wikipedia or Googling it. This generation's entire approach to education – beginning well before secondary school – has changed.

### **WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM THE PREVIOUS GENERATION?**

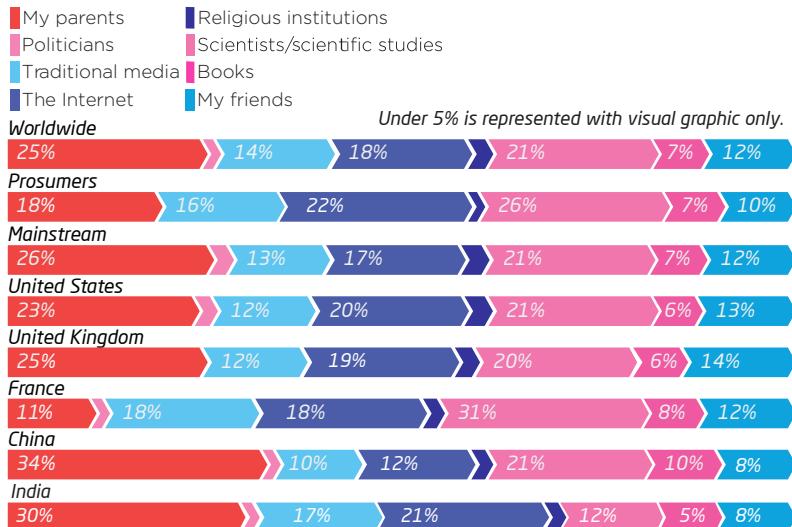


**Prosumer Point:** Prossumers are significantly more apt than their mainstream counterparts to value their parents as dispensers of advice rather than money. This is in keeping with their greater-than-average hunger for information and knowledge.

**When I was at college I spent all my time at the library.  
Today my son, who's a college student, is at home. He has  
everything accessible to him at the tip of his fingers.**

**— Irene B., Internet publisher, New York**

TO TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE WORLD, I TRUST...



**Prosumer Point:** It is a strong Prosumer tendency to pursue multiple avenues in the search for information. Whereas mainstream respondents cited their parents as their most trusted source of information, Prosumer millennials give more credence to experts in science and to the knowledge they can cull from information sources online and in traditional media. These are men and women who dig deep and wide.

IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT MY PARENTS TRUST ME

## Age: 18-25 ■ Agree

*Worldwide*

92%

*Prosumers*

95%

*Mainstream*

92%

*United States*

90%

*United Kingdom*

91%

*France*

92%

*China*

92%

*India*

95%

RELIGION WILL BE A MORE IMPORTANT PART OF MY LIFE THAN IT  
WAS FOR MY PARENTS

## Age: 18-25 ■ Disagree ■ Neither ■ Agree

*Worldwide*

63%

22%

16%

*Prosumers*

66%

17%

16%

*Mainstream*

61%

23%

16%

*United States*

48%

29%

23%

*United Kingdom*

68%

21%

12%

*France*

74%

17%

9%

*China*

74%

17%

8%

*India*

46%

25%

29%

Yet in every single market other than France, millennials were more apt to cite their parents as their most trusted source of information, above the Internet, above traditional media, above their friends, and especially above politicians and religious institutions. Looking at the global sample, only science and scientists come close to the level of trust parents engender, although there are differences by country: While the American and British respondents were just about equally likely to trust science and the Internet (with parents still eking out a first-place finish), the French and Chinese were significantly more likely to trust science over the Web. In India, the Internet is considered significantly more trustworthy as a source of information than the pronouncements of scientists.

Further evidence of the respect this young generation accords its parents comes from the statement "It is very important to me that my parents trust me." Whereas young baby boomers would have been loath to admit they were interested in earning their parents' high regard, members of this new generation are almost unanimous in their desire for their parents' trust, ranging from a (not at all) low of 90 percent in the United States to a high of 95 percent in India.

The clear lack of trust in politicians and religious leaders speaks to the current dearth of respected authority figures in societies around the globe. With these traditional sources of immutable "truths" removed from the equation, parents wield greater influence in this era of disinformation and suspect motives. The dismal scores reaped by religious leaders also are in keeping with what appears to be a broad movement away from religiosity: Only 16 percent of the millennials surveyed said religion will be a more important part of their lives than it was for their parents, while nearly two-thirds (63 percent) disagreed, including 43 percent who disagreed strongly. Just more than two-thirds of the sample (67 percent) believe the world will be less religious in 2030 than it is today.



### Stereotype No. 3: "They are disenchanted and cynical."

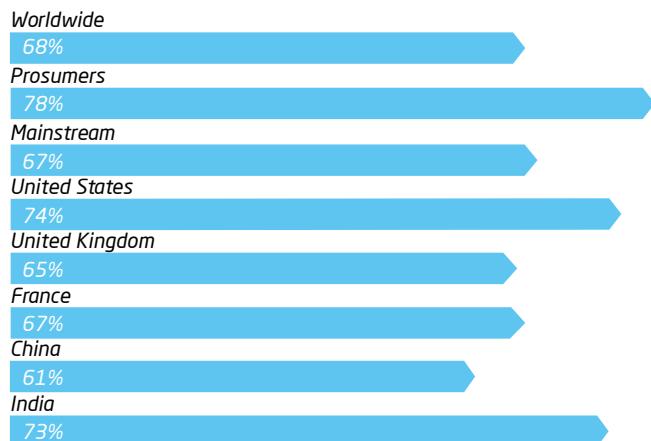
Millennials are made to suffer for the sins of their forebears, it seems: Many older adults assume this generation is marked by the same sort of apathy and cynicism ascribed to the "slacker" gen Xers. And young people do have plenty to complain about, after all, what with having had their childhoods punctuated by terrorist atrocities and their young adulthoods taking place in the midst of a global recession. And yet we have found that millennials are able to distance their own lives from the daunting problems – socioeconomic, political, environmental – they see all around them. Despite an abundance of uncertainties and fears, more than two-thirds of young people (68 percent) consider themselves happy, while only 13 percent take the opposing view.

Declarations of happiness were remarkably consistent across all five markets, with Americans and Indians only slightly more likely than the rest to be happy. Least happy: Chinese youth, but, even there, six in 10 are living on the sunny side. Four in 10 millennials – and a majority of Indians and Americans – consider themselves not only happy but actually happier than other people their age, while only two in 10 believe they are less happy than most of their peers.

On an individual level, millennials are able to appreciate the positives in their lives. For the most part, they were born into a world that desired them, and they are not locked in battle with their parents. Their countries are relatively stable, and their prospects are encouraging – even if, in the Western markets, they are unlikely to surpass the standards of living enjoyed by earlier generations.

I CONSIDER MYSELF HAPPY

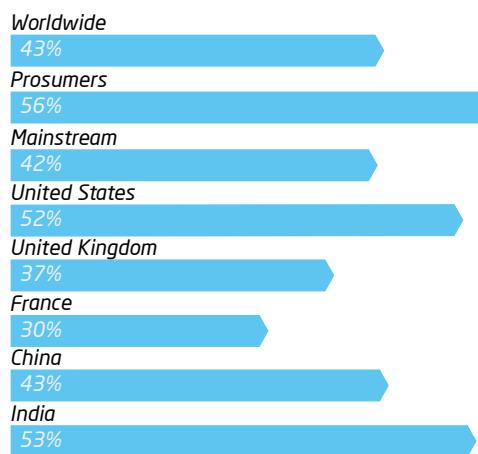
Age:  
18-25 ■ Agree



**Prosumer Point:** Is Prosumerism a key to happiness?  
Perhaps so. Prossumers scored higher on the happiness statements across each of the five markets.

I CONSIDER MYSELF HAPPIER THAN OTHER PEOPLE MY AGE

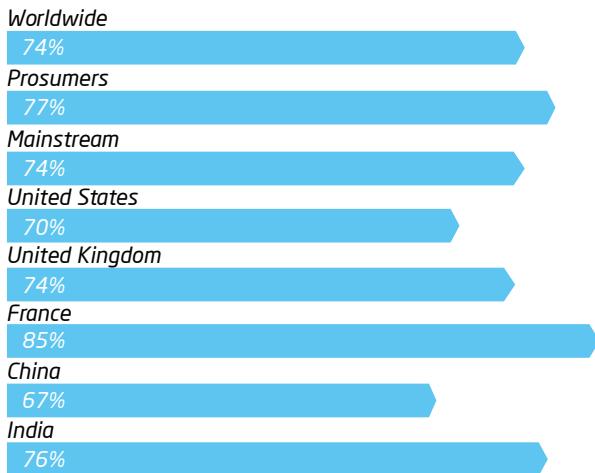
Age:  
18-25 ■ Agree



IN 20 YEARS, THE WORLD WILL BE MORE DANGEROUS

## Age: 18-25

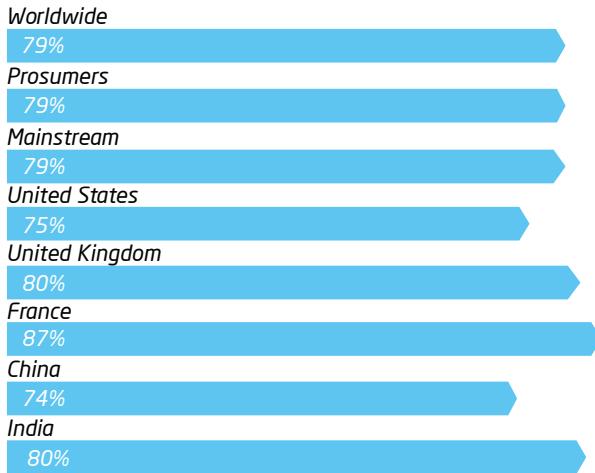
■ Agree



IN 20 YEARS, THE WORLD WILL BE MORE POLLUTED

## Age: 18-25

■ Agree



On a societal level, however, millennials are keenly aware of the many issues facing their cities, countries, and world. So while they are optimistic about their own prospects, they worry about the future in general. They believe, for instance, that in 20 years the world will be more dangerous (74 percent agree overall, including 85 percent in France), more polluted (79 percent), and less peaceful (63 percent). And, while a majority (54 percent) expect the world to be wealthier in 2030, nearly as many (52 percent) believe it will also be less egalitarian. In other words, the divide between rich and poor will continue to grow. (As might be expected, the emerging markets of India and China went their own way on that last statement, believing the world will grow both richer and more egalitarian.)



# Millennials Seek a Compromise Between Continuity and Change

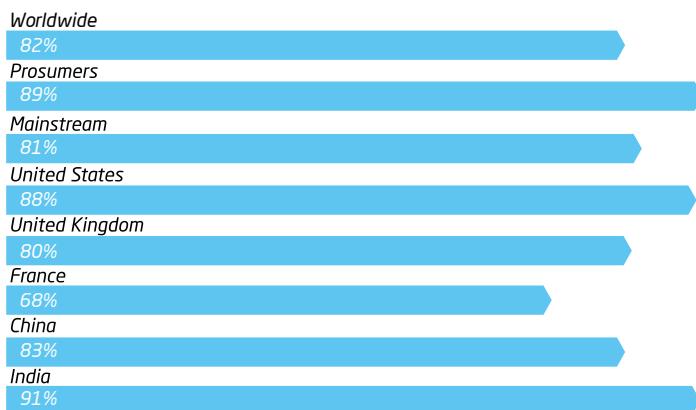
Today's youth are unequivocal about the need for change: 92 percent of millennials believe the world must undergo real change, as do 82 percent of older respondents.

While change is something millennials seek, they are mindful of the challenges ahead: Half the global millennial sample (51 percent) admit to feeling powerless in the face of the world's problems. However, there are two important qualifiers: First, only 16 percent agreed strongly with that statement. Second, the global figure is skewed by the French response: Nearly two-thirds of French respondents admit to a sense of powerlessness, compared with just four in 10 Americans, Indians, and Chinese. French youth are also significantly more likely to believe the world cannot change because power is concentrated in the hands of the few and the rich. Slightly more than three-quarters of French millennials feel this way, whereas less than half of the more optimistic Americans and Chinese do so.

Whatever their doubts and concerns, millennials are determined to overcome them in order to help build a better future: 84 percent believe their generation has a duty to change the world, and 82 percent are convinced they have the power to do so.

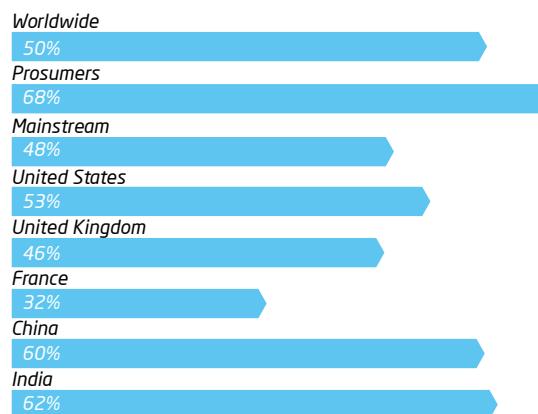
MY GENERATION HAS THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD

## Age: 18-25 ■ Agree



I HAVE MORE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD  
THAN MY PARENTS DID AT MY AGE

## Age: 18-25 ■ Agree



Why the strong sense of empowerment?  
We see two key factors at play:

### **They have faith in themselves and the trust of their elders.**

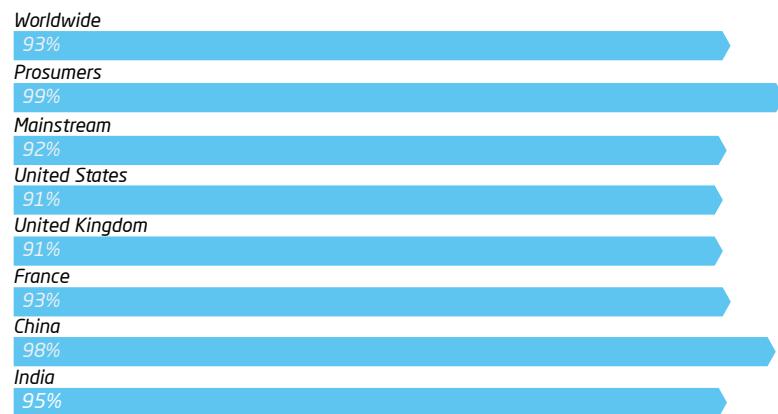
Nearly all the millennials surveyed – 93 percent – consider it very important to have faith in themselves, and they clearly do in this regard. Faith in their generation's power to effect change is particularly strong in the emerging market of India (91 percent believe the millennial generation has the power to change the world) and in the can-do U.S. (88 percent). Once more, France emerges as the pessimist in the group, with only 68 percent of millennials expressing faith in their generation. And that pessimism extends to older respondents as well: Only around one-third of French respondents aged 40 to 55 believe today's youth have more power than their own generation to change the world. This compares with a global total of 63 percent and totals of 84 and 75 percent, respectively, in India and China. Interestingly, a majority of millennials believe it is women, not men, who will lead change. (For additional insights, see the *Prosumer Report* "Gender Shift: Are Women the New Men?" at [www.prosumer-report.com](http://www.prosumer-report.com).)

### **They have the right tools for change.**

The millennial generation is convinced it has what it takes to change the world because it believes in the power of individuals, working together, over the power of governments and entrenched political institutions. This is a generation that perceives being involved with an NGO or charitable organization as a faster pathway to change than working within a political party. They are also keenly aware of the power accorded them by social media and consumerism. They are rejecting the traditional "hard" power (e.g., politics, violent protest) in favor of a softer approach that emphasizes creativity, collaboration, and community.

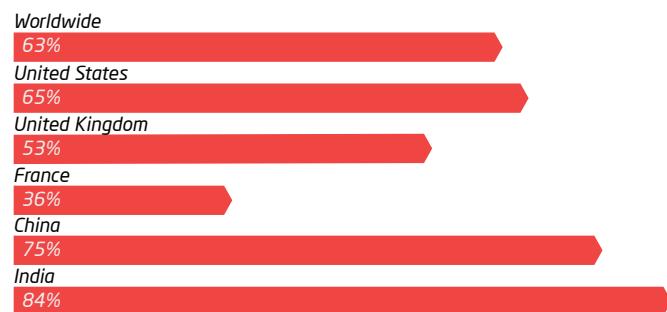
IT'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR ME THAT I HAVE FAITH IN MYSELF

**Age:**  
**18-25** ■ Agree



TODAY'S YOUTH HAVE MORE POWER THAN MY  
GENERATION TO CHANGE THE WORLD

**Age:**  
**40-55** ■ Agree



# The Rise of Soft Power

Revolution was the rallying cry of the baby boom generation, many of whom sought the wholesale overturning of governments and cultures. For their millennial grandchildren, "Burn baby, burn" has given way to something more moderate and considered.

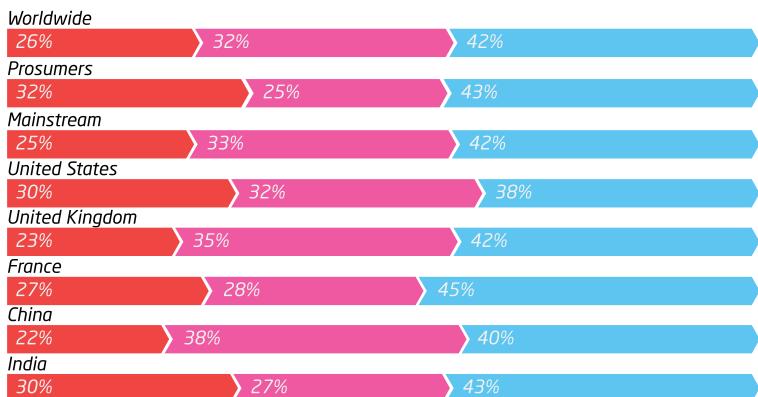
What do millennials regard as the most important quality they need to improve the world? Coming in dead last out of a selection of eight possible responses was "armed fighting." And even "peaceful protest" was second to last. Looking at the overall sample (not shown in chart), the most important "weapons" today's youth believe they possess are determination and creativity, followed by courage, kindness, faith, energy, and empathy. No raised fists here.

For this first post-ideological generation, change is a lot less political and a lot more personal. Personal because millennials see a myriad of ways in which they can make some small contribution to change on their own – through their spending, eco-conscious behaviors, and persuasive blogging, for example – and also because the change they seek has everything to do with people and very little to do with political ideology. Their concept of change is not about rioting and power grabs but about gradual improvements brought about by incremental changes in behaviors and attitudes. Only 39 percent of millennials agree "there will be no change without a revolution," while 29 percent disagree with the notion and 32 percent are neutral. A plurality (42 percent) say they don't believe in revolution at all. For them, change is something that's gradual – slow but enduring. They adhere to the Gandhian notion that you should "be the change you want to see in the world."

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT QUALITIES YOUR GENERATION NEEDS TO POSSESS?



I DON'T BELIEVE IN REVOLUTION; CHANGE IS GRADUAL, WITH MUTATION AND SLOW-BUT-DEEP ALTERATIONS





What steps do they believe people should take in order to bring about change? While 58 percent (ranging from 48 percent in France to 70 percent in India) believe "starting new political movements" is key, the most popular responses were decidedly more personal and aimed squarely at economic and environmental sustainability: 63 percent believe people should drive less, and 62 percent say people should consume less. The idea of reducing consumption is particularly valued in the hyperconsumerist cultures of the U.S. and U.K. (chosen by 75 and 78 percent of those samples, respectively). Not surprisingly, respondents from India — poised to overtake China as the world's most populous country — were most likely to agree (85 percent) that having fewer children is the most important change people can make.

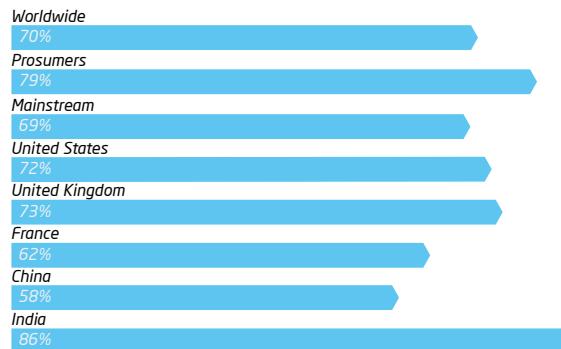
Two increasingly powerful tools are being called into play by change-focused millennials:

### Social Media

Sixty-one percent of millennials think social media is the "new power of youth," and 70 percent consider it a force for change. In fact, they consider "the people, empowered by social media" a greater agent of change than politics — by a margin of more than two to one. Having witnessed the influence and power of social networking in Iran's Green Revolution, the ousting of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, and other events, young people understand this new medium's capacity as a tool for organization, protest, and, yes, change. And they are also aware of the pivotal role their generation is playing in growing and developing new socially and politically active uses for social media. Millennials are spearheading action campaigns aimed at everything from preserving the natural world to protecting the victims of abuse. For additional insights, please see Euro RSCG's white paper "Millennials and Social Media" at [www.eurorscgsocial.com](http://www.eurorscgsocial.com).

### SOCIAL MEDIA IS A FORCE FOR CHANGE

## Age: 18-25 | Agree

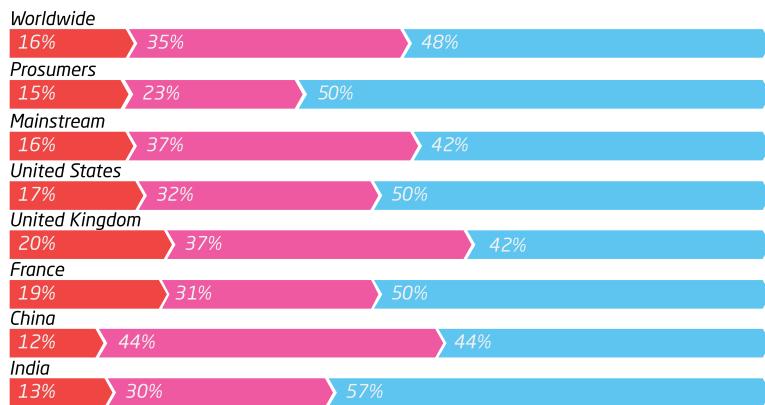


**Prosumer Point:** Prossumers are a driving force behind the growth and new uses of social media, and that is reflected in their survey responses. They are far more likely than the mainstream to be convinced of social media's power and utility. And a majority believe social networking will be the most powerful agent of change — above politics, above corporations, and above consumerism.

I BELIEVE THAT THE THINGS I CONSUME HAVE MORE POWER TO CHANGE THINGS THAN THE PEOPLE I VOTE FOR

Age:  
18-25

Disagree  
Neither  
Agree



### Conscientious Consumption

As noted previously, nearly two-thirds of millennials believe reducing consumption is an important pathway to global change. And nearly half believe the things they consume have more power to change things than the people they vote for. In other words, product choices trump politics. And so do corporations: 40 percent believe corporations have a greater capacity than governments to create change, while only 27 percent disagree. These figures show a real disaffection between youth and politics; there is little sense of faith in politicians and governmental leaders to solve the world's problems. That explains why at the global youth forum One Young World in 2010, the most applauded guest was not highly respected former United Nations secretary-general Kofi Annan but Muhammad Yunus, founder of Grameen Bank and champion of the microcredit movement. Youth understand that business solutions can very often be more expedient and successful than political devices.

What's the greatest obstacle youth face in their quest for change? Lack of generational unity – cited by 30 percent – was the most popular answer. By coming together through social media and acting collectively as a consumer force, this generation, we believe, has the potential to change the world in meaningful and positive ways.

GOVERNMENTS HAVE LESS POWER THAN  
CORPORATIONS/COMPANIES TO CHANGE THINGS

**Age:**  
**18-25**

- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree

*Worldwide*



*Prosumers*



*Mainstream*



*United States*



*United Kingdom*



*France*



*China*



*India*



**Prosumer Point:** Prosumers are opinionated and decisive. Forty of the statements in our survey included a "neither agree nor disagree" option, allowing respondents to avoid making a commitment in either direction. In every single instance, Prosumers were less likely to choose that "safe" choice – and typically by a sizeable margin.

WHAT ARE THE YOUTH OF TODAY LACKING MOST IF THEY  
WANT TO BE A GREATER FORCE FOR CHANGE?

**Age:**  
**18-25**

- Money
- Power
- Faith
- Envy
- Self-confidence
- Trust from the rest of society
- The ability to unite
- Time

*Worldwide*



*Prosumers*



*Mainstream*



*United States*



*United Kingdom*



*France*



*China*



*India*





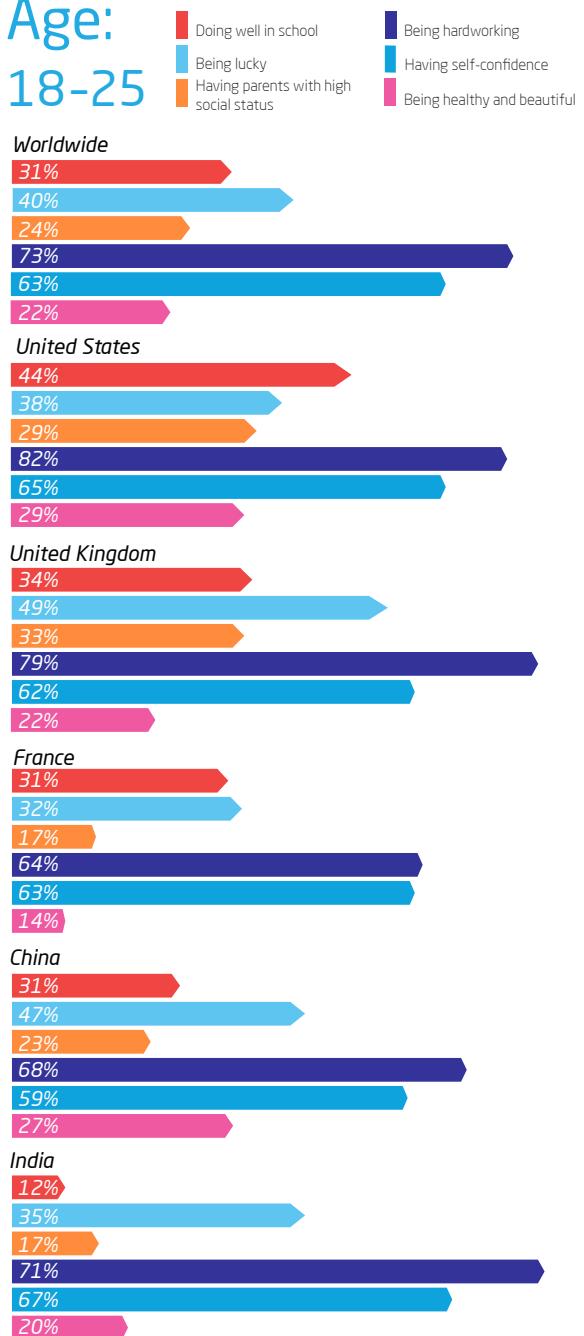
# How Millennials Will Change the Workplace

We live in a world of superficiality and instant fame. Celebrity is conferred on those who do nothing more than post a silly video on YouTube or appear on a so-called reality show. In what seemed to be no time at all, the heavily (fake) tanned and hard-partying Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi went from an appearance on an episode of MTV's "Is She Really Going Out with Him?" to being a cast member on "Jersey Shore" – to ringing the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange, being one of the most popular Halloween costumes in the U.S. (2010), and being signed to write a book. A lack of substance reigns supreme.

In this atmosphere, one might presume that young people would be disinclined to work hard and pay their dues, expecting instead the sort of instant fame and fortune they see bestowed upon their media-magnet peers. In reality, the millennial generation considers effort and attitude the most important ingredients for success: 73 percent cited "being hardworking" as key to achievement, and 63 percent said "having self-confidence" is vital. In sharp contrast, the way one looks and the social status of one's parents were cited as important by less than a quarter of the sample. No matter how much evidence they see to the contrary, the young still believe in the meritocratic model.

HOW DO YOU THINK PEOPLE BECOME SUCCESSFUL?

Age:  
18-25



## WHAT DO YOU LOOK AT FIRST WHEN CHOOSING A JOB?



*Under 5% is represented with visual graphic only.*

This doesn't mean they are naïve. Millennials have developed a pragmatic and utilitarian approach to the work world. For them, work is primarily about earning money (45 percent chose this response) rather than such "softer" aims as personal fulfillment (25 percent) or being a productive member of society (12 percent). They live, after all, in a capitalist society and understand they must earn a living to survive. That said, salary is only one factor they look at when considering a job offer – and, for nearly three-quarters of them, it's not even the most important one. When asked to choose the single most important factor in a job, 37 percent cited the ability to balance work and life, while just 28 percent cited salary and 23 percent said work atmosphere. Combining the scores for life-work balance and atmosphere, it is clear that millennials expect at least some degree of happiness in their work situations. Money is not a sufficient counterbalance to misery.

The unique way in which this new generation interacts with and views the world will bring about three important workplace shifts.

## Novelty and Learning as Major Drivers

It's hardly news that millennials are multitaskers, switching easily between technologies and topics, and quickly bored. Their proactive, nonlinear approach to their personal lives extends into the workplace as well. Millennials value variety and learning; they like to pick through a wide array of sources to pull out the information of most interest and relevance to them, and they prefer to take an individualized approach to organization and planning.

Their work style relies heavily on the four Cs of customization, communication, collaboration, and creativity. When we asked what their biggest career strengths were vis-à-vis older generations, they were most apt to cite their greater creativity (33 percent), followed by their skills as communicators (26 percent), and speed (25 percent). For millennials, work is more of an ongoing process than discrete projects with clear beginning and end points. And, rather than work in isolation and start any project from scratch, they are more likely than their elders to adapt existing work to their own needs, collaborating with others both online and offline along the way.

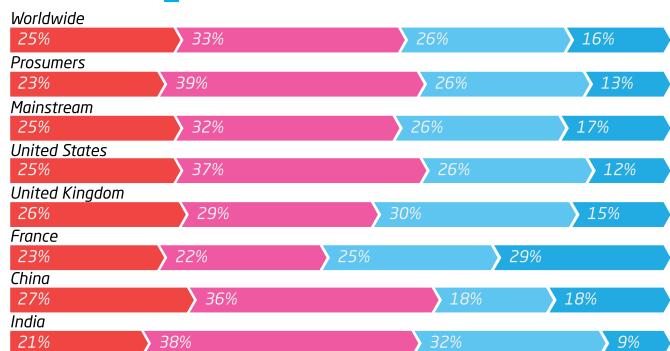
Smart employers are making changes in their processes to get the most out of these young workers. For example, GE has created an internal social networking site – MarkNet – to allow its thousands of marketing professionals around the world to work together, regardless of location, job level, or discipline. Participants can engage in conversations, ask questions, and share links to information.

Millennials also have been found to require more feedback than earlier generations, part and parcel of having grown up in an era of helicopter parenting and trophies-for-everyone. They expect regular input and praise. A 2008 survey by Ernst & Young found, for instance, that 65 percent of millennial workers consider it important that they be provided "detailed guidance in daily work." In response, the firm instituted an online "Feedback Zone," where employees can solicit input and advice.

COMPARED WITH PREVIOUS GENERATIONS, I BELIEVE MY GREATEST CAREER STRENGTH IS...

**Age: 18-25**

- I'm faster
- I'm more creative
- I communicate better with my colleagues
- I have a more international profile



The flipside of the need for constant feedback is millennials' unwillingness to go along with the notion that expertise is something earned over the course of decades rather than years or even months. This generation came of age in a time of rapid change and technological advancement. Growing up, they were apt to be the family technology experts, and so the idea that they might know more about something than their elders – that they might actually qualify as "experts" on specific topics – is not at all foreign to them. They want to be accorded the respect they feel is their due and to be appreciated for their contributions. They know full well that, with new disciplines and categories emerging every day, sometimes it is youth who are the "old hands." When asked what would be the best sign they are doing well within their company, 46 percent of our millennial sample said "being recognized as an expert in the field," while only 25 percent said "a promotion" and 20 percent said "a raise in salary."

## A Switch from "Toolbox Management" to "Goal Management"

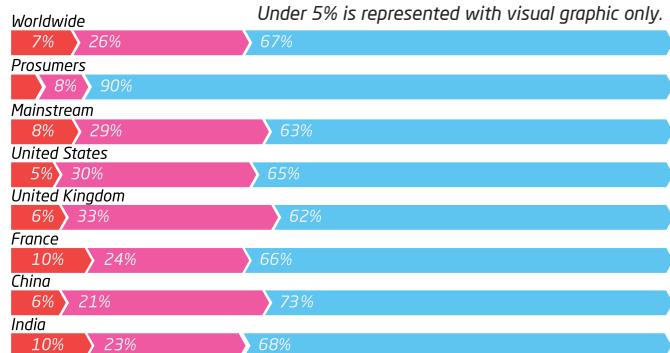
Millennials think in terms of objectives rather than restrictive recipes and standardized approaches. Being creative and collaborative means they work better when allowed to choose the tools and pathways they consider most effective in moving them toward the goal. Smart businesses will give their young employees clearly stated missions, the tools and feedback they need, and let them blaze new trails. We can expect more companies to make the most of entrepreneurially minded millennials by allowing them sufficient time and latitude to pursue projects of their own choosing. Google has derived much success from its policy of permitting its engineers to devote 20 percent of their time to company-related projects that interest them. This has served not just as a valuable recruitment and motivational tool, but also as a fertile source of ideas. Gmail and Google News have both been cited as results of independent projects.

## Purpose Beyond Profits

Just as consumers are seeking to partner with brands that have some greater purpose than churning out profits, so, too, are millennial job-seekers gravitating toward companies and organizations with a more socially minded purpose. Research by Experience, Inc. in the U.S. found that 81 percent of college students and recent graduates said it's important to them to work for a company that is green-friendly, green-conscious, or green-certified. And 79 percent said that, faced with two similar offers, they would be more likely to accept a position with the organization that is greener. It may not be entirely altruistic: 67 percent of our millennial sample believe the most successful businesses in the future will be those that practice sustainability, a notion with which only 7 percent disagreed.

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES IN THE FUTURE WILL BE THOSE THAT PRACTICE SUSTAINABILITY

Age:  
18-25



**Prosumer Point:** Prosumers have been leaders in the green movement, paying closer attention than average to the environmental impact of the products they buy and the companies with which they do business. This study shows that they are also far more likely than their mainstream counterparts (90 percent vs. 63 percent) to believe that sustainability, going forward, will be a key determinant in a company's success.

# How Does This Apply to Their Consumption Habits?

The best way to describe millennials' relation with brands is *personal*. They see the brands and products they buy not just as utilitarian but as reflections of themselves, including their personalities and values. When asked what they expect from a brand, millennials were most apt to say they want it to be useful in their daily lives, followed by its having the ability to allow them to express themselves.

The extent to which they see the brands they buy as an extension of self can be seen clearly in responses to the question "When deciding between two brands, what are the most important considerations?" Faced with six possible responses, millennials' first choice was "It has a solid reputation and reflects positively on me," followed closely by "It listens to me, asks my opinion and takes my views into consideration." What came in dead last? Special offers and preferred-customer benefits. Millennials are more concerned with the substance of a company and how it comports itself than with any short-term incentives it might be able to provide.

As a consequence of this more personalized approach to brands, millennials flock to businesses that help them express their creativity and feel good about their purchases and usage: Apple, BlackBerry, eBay, Facebook, YouTube, to name a few. Brands such as these help young people build their social identities, and that's of great importance to them: 58 percent of the sample agreed, "It is important to me to find brands that reflect my personality."

## WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM A BRAND?

**Age:**  
**18-25**

*Shown in order  
of importance,  
from top*

*Worldwide*

That it is useful  
in my daily life

That it allows me to  
express myself

That it brings  
me status

That it makes  
me dream

**Prosumer Point:** Our decade-long study of Prosumers has shown that they are more than averagely interested in brands and expect more from them. This new study confirms Prosumers' affinity for brands and, specifically, their desire to find brand partners that reflect their personalities (a factor of importance to more than three-quarters of Prosumers but only slightly more than half of the mainstream).

## WHEN DECIDING BETWEEN TWO BRANDS, WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS?

**Age:  
18-25**

*Shown in  
order of  
importance,  
from top*

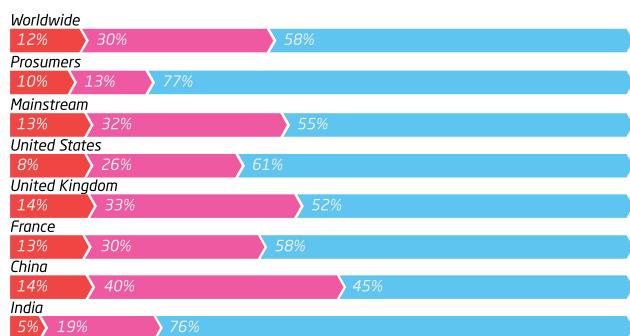
### *Worldwide*

- That it has a solid reputation and reflects positively on me
- That it's innovative and offers something new
- That it listens to me, asks my opinion, and takes my views into consideration
- That it respects people in its manufacturing processes
- That it respects the environment
- That it gives me special offers and preferred-customer benefits

## IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO FIND BRANDS THAT REFLECT MY PERSONALITY

**Age:  
18-25**

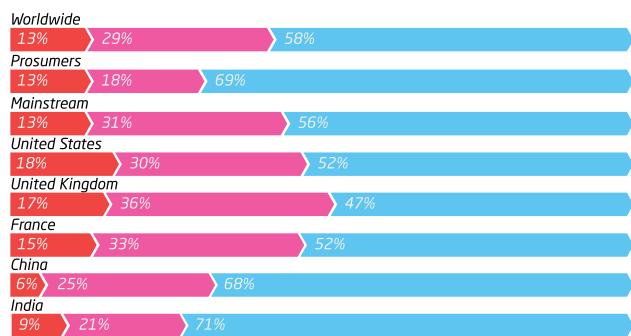
- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree



## IT IS IMPORTANT FOR ME TO FIND BRANDS THAT I'M LOYAL TO

**Age:  
18-25**

- Disagree
- Neither
- Agree



## Additional Insights

### **Millennials are searching for “compass” brands.**

Despite a reputation for flitting from one brand to another, 56 percent of mainstream millennials and 69 percent of Prosumers believe it's important to find brands to which they can be loyal. And that makes sense given the more personal approach this generation takes to brand relationships. They want to find brands in which they can believe — and that will reflect positively on them — over the long term.

### **They want brands that make them feel good about themselves.**

This and earlier Euro RSCG surveys show that millennials want to partner with brands that respect the environment and the people they touch (customers, employees, supply chain). It is part of the broader consumer movement toward conscientious consumption. (For additional insights, see the *Prosumer Report* "The New Consumer in the Era of Mindful Spending" at [www.prosumer-report.com](http://www.prosumer-report.com).)

### **Millennials want to be connected to brands that boost their social status.**

This means brands need to communicate reasons their customers are set apart. Apple has done this brilliantly with its emphasis on creativity and (noncorporate) individuality. With its "Most Interesting Man in the World" campaign, Dos Equis taps into young men's desire for both status and pleasure.

### **Brands must build ongoing relationships and points of connectivity.**

Millennials want to be able to connect with brands — and receive help and information from them — instantaneously and easily. They want brand partners to fit seamlessly into their social worlds. Best Buy's Twelpforce is a great example of how to do it right. A collective force of the company's technology professionals offers advice and information and solves problems around the clock via Twitter. Nike Running involves customers and others in a global running community, offering everything from motivation and training advice to information on local running clubs and races.



The millennial generation is going to change the world, including how we work and consume. Our industry – indeed, every industry – would do well to learn from them and adapt to them. The extended era of the baby boomers is drawing to a close.



EURO RSCG WORLDWIDE

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