

2016-04-07 – 14:53 – How to turn Millennials into Members

[Start of recorded material 00:00:02]

Lori: Hi everyone, we're going to get started in approximately seven minutes.

[00:06:55] Hello, everyone. Welcome. Welcome to the fourth day of Wild Apricot's membership growth online summit, where we've had a free webinar every single day this week. And I have to say, it's been an incredible week of learning so far.

For those who weren't able to join, I'm just going to give you a quick recap. So on Monday we learned how to build a marketing funnel with John Haydon, and then on Tuesday we had two sessions on how to build Facebook ads and Google ads. And then yesterday we had Amy Sample-Ward, CEO of the Non-profit Technology Network, sharing how to best approach social media to engage our membership, which was fantastic – I definitely recommend watching that.

And today we are thrilled to have Sarah Sladeck, the Gen-Y expert herself, teaching us how we can turn Millennials into members, so we're super-excited about this session today.

So I see people are still logging on, so I'm just going to quickly go through some logistics.

So first, my name is Lori, I'm the Community Manager here. And on chat, helping you with your questions or technical issues, is Terry Ibele, he's our Content Manager. And keep in mind, as participants, you are muted, so we can't hear you. And if you're having any issues, just try turning up the volume on your computer to hear us better.

And we can interact with you however on chat, and so we're going to actually really encourage you to use your chat box in this session. And we're also going to encourage you to use the raise your hand feature on your menu, because Sarah's going to ask you a few questions and we're basically trying to make this as interactive as we can.

And for those of you on Twitter, you can tweet about this session, and we encourage you to do so. You can use the hashtag there, `wasummit2016`, and there's a special giveaway today – this is our second one of the summit – whoever tweets the most, there will be three lucky winners. You can, thanks to Sarah, a free copy of her books – *The End of Membership as We Know It*, and *Knowing Gen-Y*, so these are great books. So start tweeting, share images, just get the word out and get a free book.

And then of course, if you're earning CA credits by attending for the full hour today, you are eligible to earn a credit. And we are recording all of this, and you will get a recording of all the webinars for the summit next week, but we'll also be updating a page that Terry can

share with you in the meantime, so that you can access some of the other days I've just mentioned.

Okay, so now I am going to introduce Sarah, and Sarah is the CEO of XYZ University, the only company in North America that specialises in helping organisations engage younger generations. As we mentioned before, she's the author of several books, including Knowing Y: Engage the Next Generation Now, that came out in 2014, and a very popular book that came out in 2011, called The End of Membership as We Know It.

And she's presented on generational topics to audiences around the world, so Sarah really knows what motivates and inspires this generation. And what she's going to tell us in this presentation is that every association's success really begins with knowing Gen-Y.

So quickly just outside of work, we like sharing personal things about our presenters. Sarah is a nature photographer, a cake decorator and she's learning how to play the guitar, so that's really fun.

So thank you, Sarah, for joining us. Welcome. I'm going to pass presenter control over to you now, and take it away, Sarah.

Sarah S: Okay, fabulous. Well, welcome, everyone. I am so happy to be here and hanging out with Wild Apricot fans. And I am experiencing a technical difficulty, so if you hang on one moment. I don't know if you're seeing my screen on your end, but mine just went blank. There we go.

Let's try this again, one more time. I love technology, right.

Lori: You'll just want to maximise it. So if you hit the icon at the bottom of your left screen there, right, it shows the presenter view – yeah, the third little button over – that should do the trick.

Sarah S: Yeah. One second – it looks like my program just rebooted. Well, so one second here. I will get started, because I know at the beginning of my presentation we just – I have visuals..

So yes, as Lori was mentioning, I am the CEO of XYZ University and that is the only company in North America actually that - ---, is it working? Yay!

Lori: It's working, yay!

Sarah S: Okay, fabulous. All right, good. The only company in North America that specialises in helping organisations engage younger generations, and also I'm the author of two books that she mentioned, and at the end of today's webinar, I will have a discount code for a brand new online course called Millennials to Members, which of course is what we're talking about today.

So first of all I want to welcome you to the end of membership as we know it. As ominous as it sounds, we know that we are indeed at the end of an era, and we know we're at the end of an era for a few key reasons.

The first one is a declining economy. We are recovering from the worst recession our country has seen in over seventy years, but we actually haven't had a stable economy since the dotcom bubble burst. And that changes membership, because now, whether I'm paying five dollars for membership or five hundred dollars, I'm demanding a greater return on my investment.

But it is especially a defining trait for the generation that has come of age during this economic recession. And I'll be talking more about that later on.

The second reason we know we're at the end of an era is due to rapidly changing technology. We've had more technology developed in just the last five years than in the last fifty, and we never really stop to think about that, but that's changing everything about the way we live, work and do business, and it's certainly changing membership.

And the third reason we know we're at the end of an era, which we're delving into in greater detail today, is the demographic shift. So what's really kind of fascinating is that last year, 2015, Baby Boomers are no longer the majority of the workforce; it is now Generation Y, also known as the Millennials. And to put that into perspective, this generation is turning this year between the age of twenty one and thirty four. So as the majority of the workforce, they're a very young majority.

But also perhaps even more importantly, we are seeing the largest shift in human capital in history. We're actually experiencing that right now. Baby Boomers have been the majority of the workforce for thirty four years. So with a younger demographic coming into power, that introduces all kinds of changes – change we're not even fully aware of quite yet.

So I'd like to ask you to raise your hand if your association or your non-profit is struggling to engage Millennials, and Lori will kind of keep a watch there on who is raising their hand, but now is your time to press that ---.

Engaging these Millennials seems a little bit of an uphill battle, and I'll get back to that in just a moment. If you are experiencing difficulty engaging this generation, you're not alone, so that's the good news. We actually see, according to data, that about 62% of membership associations are experiencing flat or declining membership, and the greatest challenge – their greatest reason for that decline – is because they're having trouble engaging younger members, and there's a reason for that.

Lori, I'm curious to know, did many people raise their hands on that last question about difficulty engaging Millennials?

Lori: I'm seeing a lot of yesses came in, and Emily shared this one comment, you know, every move they make upsets the Baby Boomers. So some people are sharing some of the challenges that come with that too, some exclamation marks besides those yesses as well.

Sarah S: Right, okay, excellent point, Emily. Well, as we look at the composition of the US workforce, you know, contrary to popular belief, Baby Boomers have been declining for some time. They were such a large generation, but at the end of the last year, they were about 30% of the workforce, whereas Gen-Y, the Millennials, have slowly been increasing and by the end of the year last year, were almost 40%. Gen-X is sandwiched in the middle, a very small population by comparison, only 22% of the workforce. And we're starting to see another generation come onto the scene, Gen-Z.

So here's an interesting question as we start to think about Millennials and the future: so now raise your hand if you've taken a selfie in the last seven days. In the last week, have you taken a selfie? And I'll touch back with Lori here in a moment as she watches those results come in.

Now selfies - you may be asking yourself okay, where is Sarah going with this? What the heck does that have to do with membership? Well, actually quite a lot. You know, if you paid attention, we've been seeing selfies and pop culture really emerge here in the past couple of years. Kind of sky-rocketed – everybody – celebrities and athletes have been taking selfies, and this is something that I call the trickle-up effect.

You see, every major trend or fad tends to start with the youngest generation and eventually trickles up and influences the masses. If you think about rock 'n roll, Harley Davidson, Facebook. You know, it wasn't that long ago that Facebook was designed by college students for college students. Now we have grandmas and grandpas on Facebook – it trickled up.

The selfie is yet another example of that; the word selfie, the concept of the selfie, was first introduced in 2004 by a Millennial, and it took almost a decade – in 2013 selfie became Oxford Dictionary's Word of the Year. So it took almost ten years, but it eventually trickled up.

And that's why I want to really impress upon you today the importance of paying close attention to what the youngest generation is doing, what they value, what their interests are, because whether we like it or not, it's probably going to trickle up and influence you too.

So Lori, do we have many people on today's webinar who have taken a selfie in the last week?

Lori: We definitely have a lot of yesses here, but there's also some noes. Stephanie said no, Jenny said no, Ellen said no, Casey and Vicki said no. So I'm actually surprised seeing noes. Jené, ---, Debby – but there's also quite a lot of – and more noes coming in, so the other noes are not afraid to say no, we have not taken selfies.

I mean, wow, even more noes. Okay, there's actually probably more noes than yesses at this point. Okay, so Terry just said he's a super-yes. I'm a super-yes; I think we're all super-yesses here.

Sarah S: All right, that's great feedback. So if you're one of those people that haven't taken a selfie recently – people under – little known trivia – people under the age of thirty on average take one selfie a week, and for older adults, they're taking them just a few times a year. So just, you know, again, something to be aware of as we get into that Millennial mindset.

Now we are horrible, horrible, horrible about accepting the youngest generation, and the Millennials are no exception. It wasn't that long ago that people were saying, ugh, the Baby Boomers – they are just hippies and tree huggers. And then Gen-X --- of age and they were slacker, and then we have the Millennials coming to age and we were actually calling them on the cover of Time Magazine lazy, entitled narcissists, who still live with their parents.

I don't know what it is, whether it's fear of death or something else – fear of change, but our society kind of has this process of really criticising the youngest generation. And I'm sure you or someone you know has used one of these excuses at some point as to why the Millennials aren't engaging. I mean, come on, they don't value membership, they're busy starting careers, they want everything online, they [unintelligible words 00:21:13] they're getting married, they don't have jobs, they're having kids, they are [unintelligible 00:21:16], they're entitled, they're broke, they're lazy.

It certainly wouldn't be our fault, it has to be their fault, right. It has to be some character flaw, as to why they are engaging, because our association or our non-profit, whatever organisation it is that you're representing, it's so phenomenal that the Millennials have no reason not to want to join, so it must be – it must be a character flaw. Well, I hope that by the end of our time together, you're kind of rethinking that.

But before we talk about the future, I want to just very briefly go into the past, and before I do that, I have the generations here by age range, the four main generations in the workforce today. Big and bold in yellow, it's the generation we're going to talk about in greater detail, but the other generations do play an important role as we think about our association and succession planning, and thinking about the future and all kinds of things.

My question to you before we move on – and again I'll circle back with Lori and see – but which generation are you? Are you a Baby Boomer, Gen-Xer, a Gen-Y, also known as a Millennial, or a Gen-Z? If you want to put that in your checkbox, I'll circle back with Lori in just a moment.

So let's start very briefly through this path in history; I mean, how the heck did we get here with Millennials and all this narcissism talk and difficulty getting people to engage?

Well, if we start with the Baby Boomers, born 1946 to 1964, you're looking at the typical grade school picture of the Boomer generation, and notice how everyone kind of looks the same – everyone has similar haircuts and dark shoes and similar outfits. I'll get back to that in just a moment.

But Boomers were raised during the most wealthiest, prosperous time in the United States; it was a post-war era, there were ample job opportunities, more people attending college, and Boomers were raised were raised to aspire for this idea of the American dream, that you get a great job and you would work your way up and get a great house, have 2.5 kids.

But they were also raised to follow very similar path as the generation that came before them and the generation that came before them, in that you'll go to school, you'll get a job, you will get married, you would have kids, in that order. Most American households could only afford one television at this point in time and everybody watched [unintelligible 00:24:08] Family from [unintelligible 00:24:09] together. And you would get a job and you would work in that job, sometimes for the same company, until you retired.

And then boom, in 1965 we saw a huge wave of change and Generation X was born. They're called Gen-X, because they're born at the crossroads of cultural and social change.

So I'm going to pause here for just a moment. Lori, any idea, do we have more Boomers, more Xers, more Millennials on this call?

Lori: Yeah, it looks like there's quite an array, but I would say it is mostly Boomers attending right now, but there are a lot of – okay, all the Gen-Xers are just putting in now. I'm a Gen-Xer, so there's a fair amount of Gen-Xers here, and there are some Millennials on here too. So – and Terry sitting next to me, is a Millennial.

So there's a good array, but lots of Boomers, and John said he's just an old fart with no generational label.

Sarah S: Okay, well there you go. I guess you don't own it, right. Okay, so to the other extreme on the [unintelligible 00:25:20] 1965 and [unintelligible 00:25:21] sounds like we have a lot of experts, so you'll relate to some of these comments.

Now it's a time of tremendous social change, and one of the best visuals I can show is of the Beatles, because the Beatles came on the scene at the tail end of the Boomer generation – 1964. And notice once again how everyone kind of looks the same.

But just three years later in to the Gen-X era, the Beatles look like this, so obviously there's something going on, there's a little bit of change happening. And this is really key. Anyone born 1964 and earlier was raised to value conformity, but for anyone born 1965 and later, they've been raised to value individuality, and so that is a landmark major shift that occurred, especially for associations. The shift from joining associations is the right thing to do and being loyal to it, to joining because it's something that is important and meaningful to you personally.

And some people blame this man for the shift from conformity to individuality, because all of a sudden we had a childhood educator telling children you are special, you are unique, do what makes you happy. And for parents of Xers, doing what makes you happy, maybe that meant divorce - almost overnight the divorce rate skyrocketed.

And Gen-X – you know, this is before after-school programs and childcare, and so Gen-X became the first generation of latchkey children, largely raised in two-parent working, or single parent homes.

And then in the late seventies, that introduced thirty or --- forty years of massive layoffs, downsizing, mergers; Gen-X became the first generation never to have known job security. In 1980 cable television arrived – it might not seem like a very big deal, but all of a sudden you had access to news twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Sometimes that news is good news, but most of the time it's bad news and now we have a generation being raised observing in great detail all this negativity, including the nation's leaders lying, failing to deliver on their promises.

But we saw the dawn of customisation. That's a term that hasn't gone away and certainly has influenced membership, as well as the dawn of globalisation. And with that, this generation was having [unintelligible 00:27:59].

But by and large just a lot of change in a very condensed period of time, and that led to a lot of rebellion. So bonus points for those Xers in the crowd who know the name of [unintelligible 00:28:11].

But then boom, this brings us up to the Millennial generation, also known as Generation Y. And we find another wave of social change, major change, between 1982 and 1995. The Millennials have some of the same influences as Xers; they too have seen the nation's leaders lie and fail to deliver on their promises. They've actually seen the fall of entire corporations, due to unethical practices.

But there have been some radically different influences as well, such as a lot of violence close to home from school shootings to September 11. So we saw the pendulum shift from really hands-off parenting with Gen-X, to extreme hands-on, or helicopter parenting with Generation Y and Millennials.

In fact, the Millennials are the most protected, supervised, provided-for generation in history. Think about car seats, bike helmets and never eating in a cafeteria that serves peanut butter, or after college, living at home with Mum and Dad. They've been dubbed the trophy generation, because they've always been rewarded for participation, not achievement. They're the first generation to experience that. They're also the first generation to be raised using technology.

And while we all know that, you might not fully comprehend what that means, because this generation will always rank access to technology on the same level as access to oxygen and freedom. Yes, if you've never known life without technology, evidently you can't really fathom life without technology.

They've had a very rocky transition from college to career, having come of age during and immediately following the worst recession our country's seen in seventy years. But as I mentioned previously, that's about to change, because they became the majority in the workforce just this last year.

Now another huge wave of change – 1996 till about 2012 or so, and this is Generation Z. We'll start hearing more about these – you've got to be prepared to talk about them, because believe it or not, Millennials are getting a bit old school; we're starting to think about now, the next generation, Gen-Z, because the oldest Zees this year turn twenty, so they're starting to enter college and career.

They not only never have known life without technology, they've always known it to be mobile – literally at their fingertips. They've grown up during an era that really celebrates diversity and inclusion. Think about anti-bullying campaigns, marriage equality campaigns, and they've also been raised during a time that celebrates heroes – many, many, many examples of child and teen movies and literature has a hero at the centre of the story. You're just seeing a few examples here.

And we're starting to kind of move towards [unintelligible 00:31:27]; we're seeing robots being developed in other countries. If Sir Richard Branson gets his way, pretty soon we'll have space travel and people going to the moon or living on Mars.

And so as we go back to the Baby Boomers to bring it up to present day, it really boils down to one word, and that is change – really crazy, fast, unprecedented change. We've seen, in a fairly short period of time, our values redefined, culture – organisational culture – you know, it

wasn't that long ago that everything went according to Roberts Rules of Order, and everything was very formal and buttoned down.

--- very casual and our approach to work is becoming flexible and mobile, so approach to work has been redefined. So doesn't all that beg the question, okay, what about membership? What about my association? What about my job? Don't I have to also rethink and potentially redefine what membership means?

As I mentioned previously, there's this defining gap between Boomers and the generations that follow, and that is this shift from conformity to individuality – conformity for the Boomers and individuality for every generation thereafter. And there is another defining shift between the generations that not many people talk about – it starts with the Millennials, which is our topic today. And that is the shift from an industrial era – Boomers and Xers were raised in an industrial era, and that goes back to some of those processes – linear thinking, Roberts Rules of Order – we do it this way, because we've always done it that way. Those are remnants of the industrial era.

Whereas Millennials, and now Gen-Z, are the first generations of the post-industrial era. That means they are the first generation to be raised during an era of technology, innovation, knowledge. So it's not surprising then, that for the first time in a really long time – perhaps the first time ever – we have a generation questioning what it means to belong to your associations. They're saying to themselves, I don't feel that I belong, I don't feel engaged. And there is a reason for that, because they're seeing the world very differently as the post-industrial generations.

But there are also four major shifts we have seen in the Millennial mindset. These are defining characteristics of this generation that are unique to them in comparison to any other generation. So I will briefly go through these four things.

The first defining characteristic is that they are a generation that's come of age during a recession. So as I mentioned, if you put that into stark contrast from the Boomers, who were raised during the wealthiest, most prosperous time in America, and they were raised to aspire for the American dream, they were raised to acquire a lot of stuff, because they could afford stuff.

Well, now we have a generation that's experiencing extreme debt; they are the most debt-ridden generation – student loan debt has exceeded credit card debt for our nation. So if you can't afford the American dream, what do you value? You value access to assets via technology, partly because you're a post-industrial generation, and partly because you can afford things like, you know, the sharing economy. You can afford to share goods and products, and you are opting to share, as opposed to own.

Now if we think about the membership process, where you buy your membership once a year and you pay for it, whether you're using that membership or not, and it's very much an ownership trait and mentality. Millennials are kind of saying, you know, I'm looking at this menu of member benefits and then kind of wondering here what's valuable. Am I going to use this in the course of the year? Is there anything I can get for free, or less money elsewhere? Can I share some of these goods and services?

It's interesting, Millennials kind of say to themselves, I don't need [unintelligible 00:36:16]; I'm not going to acquire stuff, especially stuff that I don't need. What I do need is a hole in the wall, so I'm going to look for places where I can find, you know, Craig's List, again, kind of that sharing economy mentality. You're looking for places where you can actually rent a drill rather than buy a drill for that one hole in the wall.

So that means then that membership organisations are more challenged than ever before to provide things that are exclusive, things that their members can't get anywhere else, because that is where real value lies, especially in a recession era.

And we have seen time emerge as the commodity. Think about it: if you are a Millennial you've been raised among recession, you've been raised among terrorism, incredible debt; there's been a lot of things in your young life totally outside of your control.

So as we see Millennials morph into young adults, we see them really value more than anything, their time, because they can control their time. They control who they spend their time with, it's how they spend their time, and they want to make sure they're getting the most value for their time.

So that leads us to this question, if you're trying to figure out how to appeal to [unintelligible 00:37:45], it's really thinking about, what do we provide that's incredibly useful and valuable, immediately and preferably something they can't get anywhere else; they have to join your association to get that benefit. There is no competition.

And so that's my question for you: if you would share in the chat box – share what do you provide your members that's incredibly useful and valuable – if there are some best practices or good ideas out there, you share them with the others. Lori will watch your responses and I will circle back with her on that in just a little bit. We're talking about things that are really useful and valuable.

I often encourage associations to think of themselves as an iPhone. You know, an iPhone isn't cheap, that people want to pay for it, because you can pretty much live your whole life on an iPhone. It's beautiful, it's useful, it's valuable.

Oh, and one other thing, you want to make sure that you don't guess what younger people find useful or valuable – there's this in this cartoon – I don't know why he won't sit or roll over; I gave him this great sweater. The same characteristics that motivated other generations aren't necessarily going to motivate this generation.

One of the best practices you can institute is just simply thirty people in thirty days; ask them a couple of questions about your organisation. You know, if we wanted to engage people who are in your age category, if we want to engage your peers and create a most amazing membership experience possible, what would you recommend that we do? And asking thirty people under the age of thirty in thirty days, and getting many rich answers to those types of questions as possible, that will give you great insight to the Millennial generation.

Keep in mind that all your money that comes into your organisation is really based on your ability to, number one, solve the problem, and number two, engage your members. So if you are solving the right problems for the Millennials – if you don't really know what they need solved – and if you're failing at engaging them in your community, then they're not going to join.

That takes us right back to square one and that question of, do I really feel like I belong?

Our second major trend-defining characteristic is digital natives. And for the digital natives, obviously they've been raised during technology – technology boom. They've never known life without it. The rest of you are digital immigrants.

But we've certainly learned to adapt to a world driven by technology. You're seeing a snapshot of what happens every sixty seconds via technology: 278000 tweets, 1.4 million minutes on Skype – I mean, it's crazy. Wal-Mart is having 17000 transactions on Walmart.com, so we're doing well with technology.

But let's now think of technology as a tool. I want you to think about it – I want you to think about it like a digital native, because if you've never known life without technology, you've always known globalisation, that you can connect to people very easily, regardless of where you live, work and do business.

You have always known, if you are a digital native, you have always known instant gratification – you can text it, select it, everything is available right at your fingertips. You have always known customisation to reign supreme. You just have to go to a Starbucks. But also, you've always been able to customise your media, your wardrobe, your technology. Customisation is king for a digital native.

You have always known the world to be engaged in this authentic incredible dialogue, and your opinion actually matters. You can post

reviews, people are listening and reading and watching and you are engaged all the time in conversations, and it matters. That's the life of a digital native.

So it's really thinking about – because we know that if you have to be really transparent and review-driven, that you're constantly vying to get trust and authenticity from your Millennials as well as other audiences. So asking, okay, not just are we tech savvy, but it's really thinking about the values that have shaped the digital native. Globalisation – now we're thinking globally. Instant gratification – do things move fast in our association? Are we authentic? Are we engaged in people in dialogue, are we transparent and trustworthy? Do we allow people to customise their membership experiences? Because that's [part 00:43:06] of a digital native.

Okay, so getting back to the question I posed earlier, in regards to the recession, the question was, what are you providing that's very useful and valuable to your members? Lori, did we have any really good ideas?

Lori: Yeah, I mean, I'm seeing lots of stuff that I think we're all pretty familiar with, so Milla here says, I mean, Milla has actually a two-pronged strategy: she uses a Rockwell ambassador group that is essential for her street team – if they go out and they recruit new members, and then they give free membership in return for a list of actions. So if you recruit a new member, you get something in return. So that's kind of her strategy.

Mentorship is a big one – I'm seeing that a lot. Sometimes it's like physical assets, so Diane, I'm assuming this is a photography group; she gives free studio rental, things like that. Discounts are coming up a lot, and then these networking opportunities. So access to experts and research and meeting up with other people who have something in common with you.

And then I'm seeing training and a lot of education. So I think these are things we're pretty familiar with in the association world, I would say. What do you think, Sarah?

Sarah S: Yeah, I think these are great, you know, and I [unintelligible 00:44:36] really investigate and find out what you could provide that's unique, as well as valuable, because the market is pushing you to do more and more of that all the time, so it's good. Thanks for sharing, everyone.

I do have another question here, coming up: our third defining trait of this generation is that they are migrators, and this essentially means they're migrating away from some things that have been known since the beginning of time to some really radically different things. And part of that is that they are the most protected, supervised provided-for generation in history, so that's a defining characteristic.

Now I'm curious – my next question is, what's the average age of your board members? So if you want to type that into the chat, what's the average age of your board members. Lori will watch for those and we'll see if we can kind of hone in on an age range. But while we're waiting for those to come in, I will move on with the content.

One of the things we're seeing is a migration away from hierarchy. And guess what, we've had hierarchy since the beginning of time. Think about the caveman days; it's always been that the person with the most experience in any type of society is considered the elder and wisest, and therefore has the most power.

Well, for the first time in history, we're seeing that every generation now has something to learn and something to teach, and now it's the first generation as opposed to the industrial era, Millennials have a lot to teach and they're really pushing towards more inclusion, less hierarchy, more of a [unintelligible 00:46:25] type of organisational structure.

And we see a lot of Millennials wanting to start up their own companies. They're very entrepreneurial-minded, very creative. They're migrating towards that kind of small business start-up mentality.

But imagine, if this was you, part of the most protected, supervised generation - here's you as a Millennial child, being shuttled off to a [unintelligible words 00:46:51]. Well, as a young adult we see Millennials kind of saying, you know what, I don't want to live in that bubble anymore, and actually they're migrating towards more adventure and travel and risk and challenge and experiences.

We've actually seen the evolution of something called The Experience Economy, because they really value a great experience. They value connectivity, whether that's in person or online or a little bit of both, as you're seeing in this particular snapshot. They want to be in constant connectivity, even though a lot of times their elders say well, that's not connectivity; you have to be in community, you have to be in meetings and things like that. But they would argue, no, I'm in connectivity with people all over the world, all the time.

And they're migrating towards more convenience. We can see this with urban redevelopment in every major metropolitan ---, that Millennials are saying, I want to be in close proximity to where I work and do business, they're migrating towards making a difference. What every generation has said they want to do, this generation truly puts their money where their mouth is. In fact, more than 85% actually will make purchasing decisions based on an organisation or company's commitment to a cause.

So associations, take note, and non-profits, take note, because you have great causes. Are you really tying your messaging and your marketing to those great causes? You know, that's why we saw for a while Coca

Cola wasn't trying to sell you a tasty beverage, they were saying by buying our beverage you're going to help save the polar bears, and Millennials buy into it, they love it.

So then the question becomes, hey, are we delivering in values created by migration? Are we thinking about being a flatter, more inclusive organisation. Are we incorporating things like adventure and connectivity, convenience? And that idea – are we really and truly capitalising and making a difference for the benefit of our members, the benefit of our industry?

Lori, what do you think the age range came in as far as average age of board members?

Lori: So I would have to say that the most common age that came up was fifty – fifty to fifty five – and then there are some – a chunk of people with sixty five and up, and then some people with more the forty to forty five range, and a few with the younger, like in the thirties, but very few.

Mostly fifties – so fifty I would say is the average.

Sarah S: All right. So a lot of Boomers in leadership and some of these concepts, again, when we talk about move from an industrial era to a post-industrial, you know, the industrial era really loved hierarchy, not [unintelligible 00:50:00]. Loved being predictable, not adventure; loved face-to-face interaction, not necessarily connectivity in the broader scope of things.

So you can begin to see how, if you have an older board or if you have a very homogenous group of people in leadership all around the same age, that's going to be detrimental to the future of your association. So really incorporating those Millennial mindsets are important.

One other thing I just want to point out in regards to migration, is the idea that people are drawn more to outcomes, not features. And this is especially true for Millennials. They're going to ask, really and truly, how does membership make a difference in members' lives, not just people's lives, but in members' lives. So in other words, if I'm going to join, how will this experience make a difference in my life? They want to know that, they're going to demand to know that.

The last defining characteristic is that they are trophy kids. Millennials are these first generation to be rewarded for participation and not achievement. And so as they become young adults, they have this really ingrained need that is unique to them, this ingrained need for ROI – Return On Investment, and that’s why they really question, why they’re really skeptical and they really study products and organisations before they buy. It’s because their values were shaped by that trophy kid mentality.

The trophy kid concept kind of runs on three core engines, but first and foremost, it’s happiness. I’m not happy - if I don’t feel positive about who I’m with and how I’m spending my time, I am not going to engage, period. Gen-Xers and Boomers tend to be more patient, I guess. They’ll tinker, they’ll work on an association, they’ll tweet things, they’ll make and create it into something that’s better, happier, more efficient, but Millennials expect it to just be built into the fabric. They don’t want to wait for it. So happiness is first and foremost.

Second of all is of course rewards, but that doesn’t necessarily mean trophies, it’s just recognition; I don’t want to be a number, I want to be a name. I want you to notice me, I don’t want to be ignored, I don’t want to be lost in the sea of people. And a service component: that includes customer service to me, as well as the opportunity to serve others and do good and make a difference.

Now as we were talking about previously, there trickle-up effect with all this; there’s trickle-up effect with happiness. I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but a lot of brands have been pitching the idea of happiness. It wasn’t that long ago we had a bestselling single by Pharrell Williams called Happy – that is not coincidence. Happiness is a movement that started with the Millennial generation. It has trickled up and influenced the masses.

Same with rewards. You know, you can't go into many restaurants or retailers without being asked to be part of a loyalty or perks program of some sort. Ladies and Gentlemen, that’s just another form of trophy; you’re getting rewarded just for --- it’s a [unintelligible 00:53:34] for showing up, so there is trickle-up effect there as well.

But it’s very, very clear what Millennials value, and you know, getting back to that happiness piece, you know, they want a job where they can make an impact, they want meaningful relationships, they want personal fulfillment, and [once they're at work] they're definitely going to want that from their membership experience. They're going to demand to know how is this experience going to make my life easier, happier and just better? Which is, once again is where your value is.

But there’s something else I wanted to share with you that I think is really kind of [unintelligible 00:54:14]. Our firm did a study of several hundred Millennials about what is it that gets you to engage with an association. And we found that almost universally among these

Millennials, there is an identical cycle of engagement – or expectation of engagement.

First and foremost they want to be invited. You know, Boomers and Xers and, you know, just the history of associations are that here we are, you need to join us because it's the right thing to do and you will find us.

Well, now Millennials are saying, you know, I want to be invited to participated. I want the association to reach out to me. And many, many times in our survey work we found Millennials said well, I just haven't joined, because I haven't been invited to. So that invitation piece is really important.

Once they're invited to attend a conference or meeting, or to join, whatever the case may be, once they show up, they want to immediately feel like they belong. And to them, feeling like they belong means they're noticing that the association is doing the things I mentioned in today's presentation. They notice that technology is readily available; decisions are quickly made; things are fun, adventurous, challenging, interesting. The leader is visionary, there's an opportunity for them to get on a board or a committee.

And that brings me to my next point. They immediately feel welcomed, they immediately feel like they belong and there is an immediate opportunity to do something so that they can somehow engage right away and make a difference in the organisation. And once they do their thing - volunteering or leading something, whatever it may be – once they do something, they are thanked and they are invited to once again continue to do something else, or to attend something else, and the cycle repeats.

So Millennials aren't wallflowers. They want to be invited to the dance, that's first and foremost, and once they get to the dance, they aren't wallflowers. They don't want to sit and wait for an opportunity to engage; they expect to have the opportunity to engage immediately, and that goes back to being part of the most protected, supervised generation in history, the trophy generation.

They have been raised with this equality in their households; their parents treated them as little adults, they've been carefully tended to, so it's not a surprise that when they go into organisations, they expect to right away have a great relationship with whomever they're engaging with, and that there's an opportunity to do something.

So thinking like a trophy kid, I would challenge you to really scrutinise everything from what your office lobby looks like, to how you answer the phone, to what the website experience is like, to what an event experience is like. Really look at every single touchpoint that you have with a member, and ask yourself, can we improve that? Are we doing the absolute best we can, considering that we have a generation that

really wants to feel like they belong, really wants to feel happy, really wants to engage? But are we creating a place where they want to engage?

So when you think about these four defining characteristics – recession [unintelligible 00:58:04], digital native, migrators, trophy kids – I hope that you kind of get a better idea and understanding what drives Millennial engagement and values.

And I want to come back to this list, the list I shared with you at the beginning of the webinar. All these excuses as to why Millennials don't engage – and I hope that you're looking at this list now and you're kind of saying to yourself, huh, maybe Sarah's right; maybe it's not their fault. Maybe we aren't creating a place that's inclusive of Millennials. Maybe we're not thinking like a digital native, a recession [unintelligible 00:58:46], a migrator or a trophy kid. Maybe we need to rethink what it means to belong to our association and to really do some outreach to Millennials to create a place where they feel like they belong.

And so much of that requires being visionary, not ever comfortable with status quo or resting on your laurels. There have been more change in the past few decades than at any other time in history, and the change shows no sign of slowing or stopping. We have a new generation, Gen-Z, into --- now, and we're still struggling in many cases – many associations are still struggling to engage Gen-X. So we're behind; we've got to start thinking visionary thinking about the future, and engaging these younger generations.

Steve Jobs had a great quote – I absolutely love this quote. He would always encourage his peers to think not about the past, but about the future. Nothing is as blinding as a strategy and approach or a product line that has worked before. Let's not ask what are we doing with the generation behind; let's ask what can we do that's a generation better, because that is where success is.

So Ladies and Gentlemen, now you know a little bit more about how to turn Millennials into members, and as I mentioned at the beginning of today's webinar, we do have a new online course called Millennials to Members – how about that?

And you can find out more about it at millennialstomembers.com – use the [unintelligible 01:00:32] code, Apricot 50 when you go to checkout, and you'll get \$50 off between now and April 30th – it expires April 30th, but you'll get \$50 off on your course.

I thank you for participating in today's webinar. I think Lori has some comments, and we might have time for a couple of questions.

Lori: Oh yeah, definitely. We've got some good questions here. So the first one from Chelsea. So she works with an international organisation and

she's just wondering if these defining characteristics for the generations actually also work abroad. I don't know if you know much about that?

Sarah S: Yes, I do. There's been research done and it's very, very similar. In all developed nations we see very similar qualities internationally among Millennials. Where they differ a little bit would be third world countries, but in all first world developed nations, we see very similar characteristics across the board with generations.

Lori: [Irrelevant dialogue 01:01:46] So lots of questions here too about getting Millennials onto boards. So you know, some people are saying they just don't have the time, or they feel entitled being on a board, because they don't have the experience. So what's the best way to get – this is from Jaime – so what's the best way to get Millennials to volunteer for an organisation, or to be a board member, or just to do one thing, I guess, was his question.

Sarah S: Well, I would treat it much like you would a job description. Again, Millennials are really – for them, time is a commodity, it's their most valuable resource, it's the only thing they can really afford and control right now. So they're very, very cautious about how they spend their time.

So if you're asking them to volunteer or to serve on a board, you need to really explain, just like you would for a job, this is the amount of time we're looking for, this is the type of skills that we're looking for, and this is what you will learn and this is what you'll be asked to contribute, or do.

And if you can help them to understand that their participation will make a difference, that's good. You know, we find that Millennials were hesitant to join boards or other volunteer opportunities when they feel like it will be a waste of time, they don't want to just sit in four-hour meetings or eight-hour meetings, deliberating and discussing. That to them seems like some version of hell, so they want it to be ...

Also, I see a lot of organisations make the mistake of just appointing one token Millennial onto the board, and that is usually a recipe for disaster, because the minute a young person speaks up and has a different idea, and says why don't we do some of this via Skype, it will be more efficient, then the rest of the board goes, what? Why would we do that? We've never done it that way. You know, they're immediately squelched and then they don't want to contribute or share anymore.

The most successful organisations – and this is true for profit, non-profit, all types of organisations – is to have a multi-generational board, where you are drawing from insights and experiences from Baby Boomers, Xers, and Millennials.

Lori: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. They say diversity leads to innovation, so that's a great piece of advice. And actually I wanted to share – Heidi

said what they started doing was, they hold Millennial meetups, which are kind of like focus groups, and now they have a Millennial advisory committee and that really helped and that totally works for them.

So that's good advice.

Sarah S: Yeah, that's fine.

Lori: So maybe one last, quick question: Vicki asked – okay, so all this knowledge is great, but where do you start? How do you invite them in? Do you start online? Like how do you even get them to get engaged in the first place?

Sarah S: So the very first thing – and I did mention it, I'll mention it again – it sounds extremely basic, but I've seen it work over and over again. Simply challenge your team or start yourself – challenge yourself to have thirty conversations in thirty days with people under the age of thirty. And it sounds overwhelming, but if you are just asking young people a few key questions – things you want to know about the organisation – and if you're asking how can we engage young people like yourself, how can we create a membership that's really appealing to young people like you?

And you know, we've given this exercise to many organisations and some of them in fact talk to people that they meet at the grocery store; some of them talk to relatives, some of them talk to actual members or prospects. But it doesn't really matter who you're talking to, as long as you're kind of getting that dialogue flowing. And we have found that has kick-started a lot of associations. It kick-starts their – first of all kind of changes their mindset. It fuels them with a ton of ideas and insights. It's the first step towards building relationships with many Millennials who want to be asked their opinion, want to be invited. And we just find it's the fuel for the fire that's needed to start a Millennial outreach effort.

Ask by asking some questions – simple questions – to thirty people in thirty days.

Lori: Great, and that's a great tip – or one great take-away or an action that you can do for your own organisation to end this off.

So thank you so much, Sarah, for joining us, and just a reminder everyone, she's got that course and you can get a discount code using Apricot 50. So maybe Terry, show that quickly in the chatbox.

And I see people logging off, so I'm just going to say thank you and let you guys quickly know about tomorrow's presentation coming up. Sorry, couldn't see my screen here. So we have Robbie Kellman-Baxter, who's going to kind of take what Sarah did today and expand on that and talk about that membership model, how to really innovate

your membership model. And she wrote the Membership Economy, so she's got a lot of great insights on that.

So thank you again, Sarah, for joining, thank you everyone else. For anyone who's new to Wild Apricot, we provide membership management software and you can try us out for thirty days for free. And if you need some more one-on-one coaching around that, you can always e-mail us at coaches@wildapricot.com.

Okay, thanks everyone, have a wonderful rest of day.

Sarah S: Thank you.

Lori: Thank you, Sarah.

[End of recorded material 01:08:12]