

*Improving the lives of women and girls
 through programs leading to social
 and economic empowerment.*

## Soroptimist International of the Americas

**Millennials: Generational Profile**

**Born 1982-2000**

**Age range in 2017: 17-35**

**Generational Outlook: Hopeful**

This generation is the future of SIA! Also known as Generation Y, Millennials are the largest population in the world and by 2025, they will be 75% of the global workforce. They have been wrongly referred to as entitled, self-centered, attention-deficit, immature, and incapable of interpersonal communication. In reality, they are goal-oriented doers, can easily multitask, and like the Baby Boomers, they are team players. Don’t underestimate the value of bringing younger, Millennial members into your club!

Unlike their older Generation X counterparts, Millennials have a very positive outlook on the world. Driven by personal happiness and valuing customized experiences, Millennials believe they can and will make an impact. They want to make a difference by giving their support to a cause they care about.

Just like Generation X, they don’t like to be sold to. They will actively research prices and read reviews before making a purchase—they trust those more than advertisers’ promises. They are not shy about “sharing” personal information—both online and offline. Millennials will also freely “share” what they like and don’t like. In an age of social media and reality television shows, this is normal for Millennials. The concept of sharing also resonates with Millennials when it comes to material objects, for example Zipcars (car sharing) and AirBnB (vacation property sharing).

Millennials have high expectations and their patience is short—they grew up with instant gratification through technology. They are the first generation to grow up with the Internet—they do not remember a time when it didn’t exist. They are in a word—connected. Working with technology is second nature to them and has given them a global perspective. To this generation, “community” is not necessarily local, but a global network that is easily accessible.

Growing up, prior generations were given independence and freedom, for example unsupervised playtime—leaving the house on a bike in the morning and returning for dinner. Millennials were shielded, reared with structure, and every activity was scheduled to focus on learning and achievement.

Their parents (mostly Baby Boomers and older Generation Xers) gave up free time to focus solely on them and were very protective (bike helmets, car seats, making sure cafeterias didn’t have peanut butter, etc.). This type of behavior has forged strong family relationships. Millennials value the opinions and recommendations of their parents and actively seek out their advice.

When they were children, Millennials were treated as adults—given equal voice in the household, even influencing the majority of household purchases such as food, computers, vacations, cars, etc. This has led them to a lack of understanding and dislike of hierarchy. On the flipside, with such highly involved and protective parents, failure can be very scary to them. Millennials may be challenged in the areas of independence and new tasks that require problem-solving skills.

Millennials are assertive and their confidence level is high—they were constantly praised when growing up and rewarded for participation, not just for their achievements. For example, at work they will be enthusiastic and ready to jump in and get straight to making things happen, but they need clear direction and regular reassurance that they are on the right track. Gaining new skills (personally and professionally) is expected with this group as well as new roles/responsibilities every 12-24 months. In that vein, they are eager to take on leadership roles, but they may shy away from those roles that require an extended or undefined time commitment. They excel at leading individual projects on an ad hoc basis. Flexibility and building friendships with their co-workers in the workplace is also important to Millennials.

Characteristics of Millennials

*Values*

* Self-expression is more important than self-control
* Marketing and branding self is important
* Seek to balance lifestyle and work, with more focus on lifestyle
* Respect must be earned; it is not freely granted based on age, authority or title

*Attributes*

* Adapt rapidly and are resilient
* Crave change and challenge
* Create constantly
* Committed and loyal when dedicated to an idea, cause or product
* Accept others of diverse backgrounds easily and openly
* Global in perspective

*Work style*

* Want to know how what they do fits into the big picture
* Need to understand how everything fits together
* View their work as an expression of themselves, not as a definition of themselves
* Exceptional multi-taskers—need more than one activity happening at a time
* Seek flexibility in work hours and dress code

*Sources and References*

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