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RESEARCH

Generation Y: Brands Must Be Honest, Engaging

By Celeste Altus on March 30, 2012 5:49 PM

Anyone struggling to understand Generation Y, a.k.a. the millennials, and their relationship to brands has a lot of work ahead of him.

This generation is not defined by technology; it is very open, but distrustful; and it is at the center of a cultural shift. That info is among the findings in a new report by [Onesixtyfourth](#), a New York-based brand consultancy. The sociological findings help explain the worldview of many millennials, defined as young people born between 1980 and 1995.



To simplify: they like engaging brands, ones that are fluid and changing, and those that are open and honest with consumers. A brand has to stand for something. It has to own up to its mistakes. And it also has to want to make a difference in the world.

“My favorite brands are brands I feel connected to,” said one millennial, quoted in the report. Some examples? Gen Y thinks highly of [Apple](#), [Innocent Drinks](#), [LuluLemon](#), Spotify, Stella Artois, and [Ugg](#), among others the report shows.

The findings can help big companies like Ford and General Motors that are [trying to appeal](#) to the twentysomethings by opening Silicon Valley offices and advertising on MTV. Wine companies are so itchy [to make them customers](#), they have tried to lure in Gen Y with wine names like “OMG!!! Chardonnay.”

Some of the points in the report are surprising: such as Gen Yers saying they are tired of being characterized as the tech generation. For them, there was never life without things like the World Wide Web, so technology is a given, not a definition.

Take a look at the CultureQ report “Millennials, Rewriting the Cultural Story for Brands” one mash-up at a time, [here](#).

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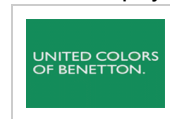
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Well...the title states the obvious thing; brands always had to be honest and engaging. What has changed, however, is the ease with how we acquire information and communicate with others. Therefore, I believe the biggest change we observe today is increased risk in finding out which companies are NOT being honest and engaging.

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