

# The Hashtag Army

## Millennials Online



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BY DEIRDRE CARROLL / SENIOR EDITOR

**NEW YORK** If you've been following along with VM's Millennial Project, you already know that Millennials (people currently aged 18-34) are the first generation of "Digital Natives." Meaning, they are the only generation for which the internet, mobile technology and social media haven't been something they had to adapt to. A digital world has been fundamental to their development; its language one they inherently understand. It doesn't take much to realize if you want to engage with them as an audience you need to be tech savvy and hit them where they are—online.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce reported that Millennials are two and half times more likely to be early adopters of technology than older generations. Forbes cited a MasterCard survey that supports these findings, reporting that 53 percent of Millennials ranked technology as their top passion with computer and electronic stores ranked among their top five spending categories.

It isn't surprising then to learn that nearly all in this cohort have a cellphone or that 83 percent say that they sleep with their smartphones. They are literally connected 24 hours a day.

As sharers, Facebook is where they are spending most of their time. Some 80 percent of Millennials have profiles and 20 percent update their status multiple times per day (as of December 2014), according to MarketingCharts.com. On average, they have 319 Facebook friends, while Boomers have an average of 120. After Facebook, 41 percent are on Twitter, 27 percent are on Instagram and 22 percent are on Pinterest.

And it when it comes to brands or the eyewear buying experience, it is worth noting that 55 percent of Millennials have posted a "selfie" on a social media site. In fact, Millennials stand out when it comes to producing and uploading online content—60 percent of them do, compared with non-Millennials who come in at 20 percent. Meaning their favorite brands and retail experiences get spread out over those larger networks instantaneously and the word spreads quickly.

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# Some More 'Native' #s

## 2.5x



Millennials are 2.5x more likely to be early adopters of technology than are older generations.

## 1.8hours



In an eight-hour workday, people spend approximately one hour on social media sites. Though already a large percentage of the workday, it is even larger for Millennials who spend about 1.8 hours on social media sites.

## 96%



Nearly all Millennials (96%) reported having a cell phone in 2013.

## 27 times per hour



Millennials switch their attention between media platforms 27 times per hour.



# 52%



52% of Millennials said they use social media to “like” a brand; while 39% post product reviews.

# And yet... 41%



of them say that brands don't take young people seriously enough.

# Twice



as many Millennials as Boomers check prices, look up product information, or search for promotions on their mobile devices while in a store.



#### Sources:

U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, “The Millennial Generation Research Review,” Sally Seppanen and Wendy Gualtieri, 2009-2012.

Forbes, “Tight Budgets Don’t Mean Millennials Won’t Pony Up For iPhones And Chipotle,” October 2013

Boston Consulting Group Center for Consumer and Customer Insight, “The Reciprocity Principle: How Millennials Are Changing the Face of Marketing Forever,” January 2014

Pew Research Center, “Millennials in Adulthood,” March 2014

Havas Worldwide, “Hashtag Nation: Marketing to the Selfie Generation,” September 2014

Nielsen, Millennials—Breaking the Myths, 2014

MarketingCharts.com, “Trends in American Adults’ Social Networking Use,” January 2015

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MARCH 2, 2015

# Optical Retail P.O.V.



“MyEyeDr.’s digital and social media campaigning reaches Millennials where they are—online. But that’s just the first step. Through brand ambassador programs and partnerships with bloggers, we are connecting with Millennials through the influencers that they take fashion and lifestyle cues from.”

## Cindy Keil Olson

*Eye Care Associates, a MyEyeDr. company, Raleigh-Durham, N.C.*



“So many circles overlap in that age group. Everyone is connected in some way, be it through Instagram or Facebook. So, you have to make sure whatever you say is authentic. There is noise everywhere, you can’t just be part of the noise. People who are engaged in these ways know the difference between noise and content.”

## Julia Gogosha

*Gogosha Optique, Los Angeles, Calif.*



“I willingly take pictures for people to survey their friends. It’s something I see becoming more popular. Being virtually connected to someone instantly saves time and helps close the sale. Younger Millennials are less apt to return otherwise because if they get an idea of what they want in store, it’s easy to pop online and find something for a lower price.”

## Heather Stearns

*Fields of Vision Eye Care, Lebanon, N.H.*



“Millennials take a lot of selfies and they text them to their friends for their opinions. When they pick up their completed pair, they do it again and post them online, especially on Facebook, and tag us. We’ve had success with in-store marketing to this group by asking them to ‘Like’ us for a chance to win something. It’s instant and they stay connected to us.”

## Carissa Dunphy

*Duvall Advanced Family Eyecare, Duvall, Wash.*

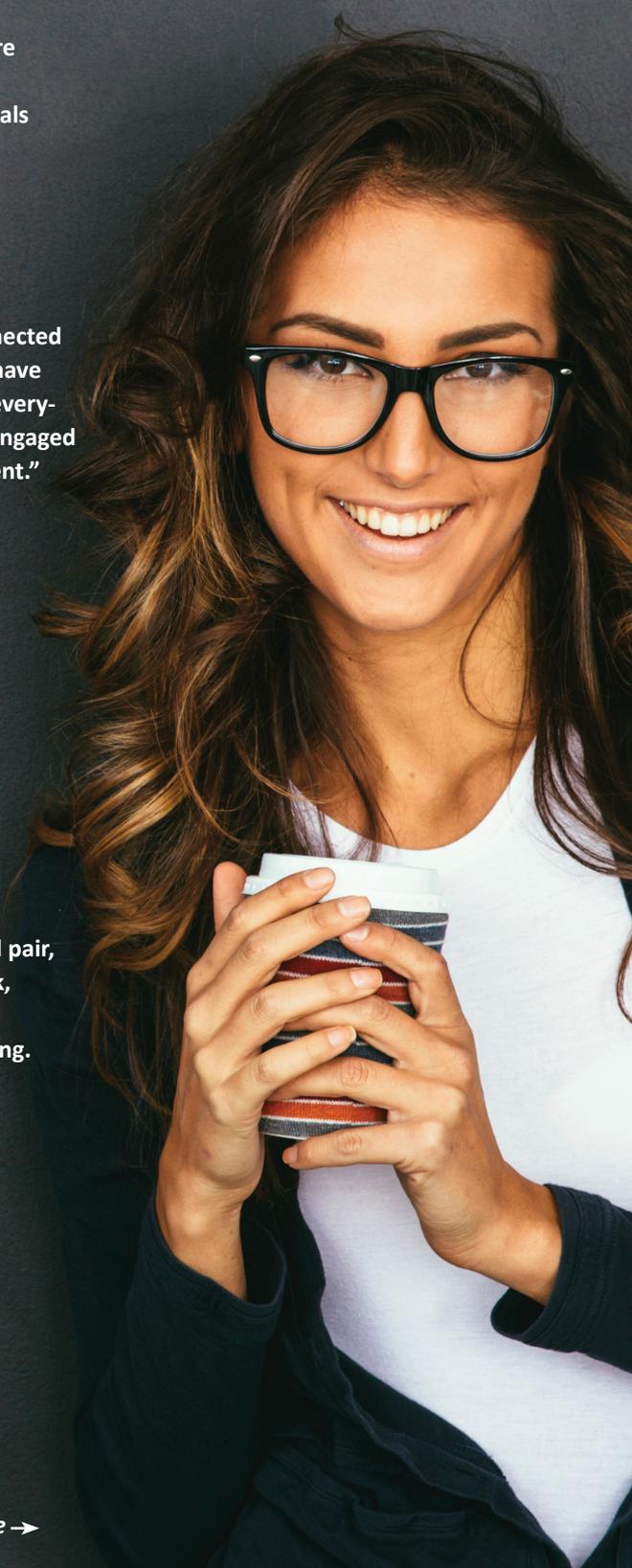


“The Millennials that shop in our boutique all seem to utilize multiple means of technology to help aid them in making their decision. It could be anything from googling a celebrity to match the frame style, taking selfies to post on Instagram to get insta-feedback, or using our touch-screen computer to see all of the color options available in a particular frame style.”

## Tiffany Welch

*Sight Optical Boutique, Grand Rapids, Mich.*

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# Project Review...



**V**ision Monday's Millennial Project is well underway, but in case you've missed anything, let's review. The Millennial Project is a year-long, integrated, multimedia initiative that will explore the characteristics of today's Millennials to help optical retailers and ECPs better understand the influence of this game-changing customer segment, the influence that they're having on the business and how essential it is to find relevance with these emerging eyewear and eyecare customers.

In January, we invited you to "Meet the Millennials" and introduced you to the "Generation that Defies Description." This ex-

tensive overview of a demographic that is hard to pin down set the tone for the subject specific stories set to come throughout 2015. In February, we looked at Millennial Women with "A New Breed," and of course in this issue, we've covered Millennials as digital natives.

These stories will be followed by four more targeted Front Lines features focused on topics like Millennial men; Millennials' vision and Rx needs, their spending habits and how to market to them, as well as Millennial ECPs and how they shape their practices. ■

—Deirdre Carroll

The Millennial Project resource site, located at [www.VisionMonday.com/MillennialProject](http://www.VisionMonday.com/MillennialProject), is the destination for all things Millennial throughout the year. Currently housing all the content Vision Monday and sister publication, 20/20 Magazine, have produced thus far, it will be populated regularly with a curated selection of pertinent content from across the web of particular use to the optical industry. It will also contain up-to-the-minute information on the two VM Live Millennial Project events planned for this year.



The Jan. 19 cover story introduced the generation and laid the foundation for more in-depth stories to come throughout the year.



The Feb. 16 special feature shed some light on one of the most vocal sub-groups of the Millennial generation—women—with "A New Breed."

