

Want to get male millennials on board with your cause? Focus on feelings

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Michèle Paulin

"Selfish" may be the adjective most often attached to millennials. But new research from Concordia University shows that the young men and

women who make up the millennial generation aren't so self-centred when it comes to supporting charities—as long as marketers use the right tactics for each gender.

The forthcoming study in *The Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* confirms stereotypes and reveals an important paradox. When asked to support charitable causes, millennials—those born between 1980 and 2000—respond best to [social media](#) campaigns emphasizing how others benefit rather than how they benefit themselves. While the innate empathy of [women](#) spurs them to action, men need to be approached with an emotional appeal.

"Facebook is the most important tool for engaging millennials in charitable causes because it lets them get involved, find out more and spread the word," says the study's senior author Michèle Paulin, professor of marketing at Concordia's John Molson School of Business. "Because participation in social media is by nature an emotional experience, non-profits that want to engage millennials need to focus on the feelings of their potential young donors."

In campaigns targeted at both millennial women and men, marketers must focus on how others will benefit from their donations—be it money, time or other support. However, they need to keep two key factors in mind:

1. Female millennials tend to automatically engage with a cause on an emotional level;
2. Male millennials need specific emotional prods appealing to their empathetic concern for the cause and the underlying moral value of how their supportive actions will benefit others.

"Our findings can help charitable organizations and their corporate partners take the right approach to garner millennials' support for social

causes," says professor Paulin, who had more than 500 students interact with two charitable appeals on Facebook for the study. "To be successful, charities using social media have to take into account the [gender](#) of their audience, as well as the type of event."

Above all, she cautions, it's important for non-profit marketers to view millennials as individuals rather than as a homogenous generation.

The future success of non-profits lies in sustaining the involvement of [millennials](#) through their engagement in social network sites. However, they aren't necessarily loyal to a single cause or organization. Rather, they act as free agents to organize, mobilize, raise funds and communicate with their peers.

More information: [www.tandfonline.com/toc/wnon20 ...
current#.VHiib2TF-QM](http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/wnon20...current#.VHiib2TF-QM)

Provided by Concordia University

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