Who are the Millennials?

Nine Types of Millennial Students: Where They Are, What They Want, and How to Serve Them

Millennials compose a growing number of seats in continuing and professional education programs, but despite common stereotypes, the generation is far from one-dimensional. Use the matrix below to align your marketing strategy, program offerings, and student services with the student segments most likely to enroll in current and future programs.

1. Determine a Personal Trait
   - Values a stable, long-term career in an established field or company with lock-step opportunities for advancement; wants to achieve and sustain financial independence
   - FIND ME IN: Areas with large college-educated, middle class populations (Midwest, Mid-Atlantic states)
   - COURSES OF INTEREST: Leadership, Project Management
   - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Content applicable to current role and next promotion

2. Determine a Professional Trait
   - Values the flexibility of self-employment over the accountability of 9–5 work
   - Wants ample time to pursue other professional or personal commitments
   - FIND ME IN: Large metropolitan areas with no shortage of potential clients
   - COURSES OF INTEREST: Digital Media, Event Planning
   - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Mix of creative and business-focused content to navigate self-employment

3. Identify Your Millennial Student
   - Has the confidence (and disposable income) to address business opportunities in their region or field
   - Wants to leave a lasting legacy on industry, community, or family
   - FIND ME IN: Cities full of risk-taking business partners and investors (San Francisco, Austin, New York)
   - COURSES OF INTEREST: Entrepreneurship, Design Thinking
   - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Accelerated completion time to launch venture before competitors

- **Company Women**
  - Pursues roles in corporate wellness, diversity, sustainability, or socially conscious investing at mission-driven companies, when finances require them to choose private-sector work
  - FIND ME IN: Growing cities with socially conscious populations (Seattle, Portland, Denver)
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Corporate Social Responsibility, Diversity and Inclusion
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Opportunity to interact with (and interview with) mission-driven companies

- **Corporate Opt-Outs**
  - Makes a living off of creative self-employment or other flexible opportunities; uneasy with working for “big business” in a traditional 9–5 environment
  - FIND ME IN: Creative enclaves (Brooklyn, Los Angeles); industrial cities with a low cost of living (Detroit, Pittsburgh)
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Graphic Design, Web Design, Creative Writing
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Required portfolio to recruit clients, despite lack of professional experience

- **Mission-Driven Business Leaders**
  - Seeks employment in stable organizations and industries to support a growing family; prioritizes roles with generous benefits packages and opportunities for advancement
  - FIND ME IN: Areas with large immigrant populations or large religious communities
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Management, Finance, Allied Health
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Flexible, part-time format that fits alongside personal and professional commitments

- **Corporate Skeptics**
  - Wants to earn additional income, pursue a personal passion, or ease themselves back into the workforce via flexible, part-time work that fits alongside personal commitments
  - FIND ME IN: Areas with a low cost of living for single-income families
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Interior Design, Blogging
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Self-paced, asynchronous programs that don’t detract from family responsibilities

- **Income Supplementers**
  - Makes the personal, academic, and professional decisions most likely to ensure financial success
  - Finds a structured corporate environment detrimental to personal and professional growth, opting to “be their own boss” through freelance and contract-based projects
  - FIND ME IN: Large metropolitan areas with no shortage of potential clients
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Digital Media, Event Planning
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Mix of creative and business-focused content to navigate self-employment

- **Small Business Owners**
  - Inherits or creates a small business that provides employment to friends and family and an investment to pass on to children or other relatives
  - FIND ME IN: Rural areas and communities with strong family ties
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Conflict Resolution, Estate and Trust Planning
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Personal coaching sessions that apply course content to unique family dynamics

- **Nonprofit Leaders**
  - Prioritizes meaning—not money—when selecting a profession and professional education programs, but despite common stereotypes, the generation is far from one-dimensional.
  - Identification of potential clients
  - Required portfolio to recruit clients, despite lack of professional experience
  - FIND ME IN: Socially conscious and ethically diverse communities (Philadelphia, Minneapolis)
  - COURSES OF INTEREST: Social Entrepreneurship, Sustainability
  - DESIRED PROGRAM ATTRIBUTES: Built-in mentorship component to gain access to social networks and donors

- **Small Business Owners**
  - Draws to the high-risk, high-reward world of start-ups; sees an unfilled niche in their industry or thinks they could do a better job than the competitors
  - Identifies opportunities for nonprofit organizations that address unmet needs in their community or in the world, inspired by volunteer work and international travel
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