

VOLUME 13

KEEPING UP WITH THE MILLENNIALS

Learn how to connect with millennial couples by being social,
thinking mobile and keeping it personal

INTRODUCTION

The WedInsights Series is designed to provide wedding professionals with relevant consumer and business insights. Each month, we'll focus on a particular topic – drawing on data from consumer behaviors and opinions, and provide actionable insights for your business.

In this report, we focus on **Millennials** by offering insights into questions such as:

- Who are today's Millennials?
- How do Millennials utilize technology during the planning process?
- How do Millennials engage with social media?
- What are key differences between Millennials and other generations?
- How do Millennials prefer to communicate with wedding professionals?

In order to provide the most relevant and up-to-date data, WeddingWire conducts a variety of research throughout the year with more than 50,000 wedding professionals, engaged and newlywed couples across the country. Together with behavioral data analyzed by our own data scientists, WeddingWire uses internal data to calculate overall estimates which we present throughout this report, unless otherwise noted.

NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MARKET INSIGHTS:

“As consumers, we are highly influenced by our peers, the friends that we make during our adolescent and teen years and even the celebrities we see on TV and online. Millennials are no different! What sets this latest generation apart from GenX and Boomers, is that Millennials have grown up entirely in a digital age with widespread availability of technology and online tools to find information, find connection with others, and express their personal identity.

While Millennials are tending to delay marriage more than prior generations (in order to pay off those student loans and set a path toward financial stability) we will see many more Millennials choosing to get married in the coming years. To serve this group, wedding pros need to be increasingly tech-savvy, quick to respond to inquiries and create your own custom content that users can easily read, digest and share with others.”



Andy Whittaker
Director of Market Insights
WeddingWire



For questions or to submit future topic suggestions, please email wedinsights@weddingwire.com.

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND MILLENNIALS

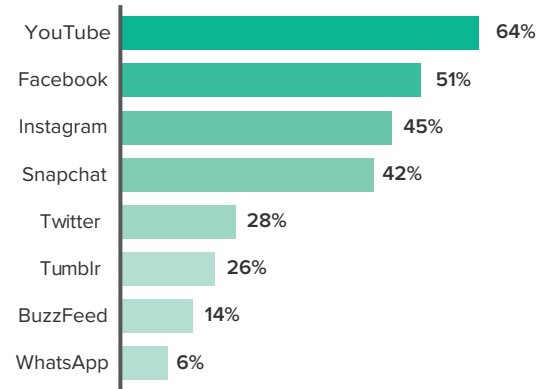
MILLENNIALS ARE THE CORE TO YOUR BUSINESS

- Millennials (also known as Gen Y), whose current age ranges from 16 – 34, accounts for roughly 25% of today's US population; making them the largest living generation at around 85 million people. By 2017, U.S. Millennials are estimated to spend roughly \$200 billion annually and in less than 10 years, will make up 75% of the workplace and comprise of the majority of the consumer market.¹
- Millennials are at the age where major life events are taking place, like graduating, buying a house and getting married. More than 80% of WeddingWire couples are Millennials and knowing where they are in their life stage is key for understanding how to communicate.
- Millennials may be stereotyped as entitled and addicted to digital devices, but in reality they're looking for acceptance, purpose and self-expression. When thinking of how these traits carry over into the wedding industry, **Millennials are looking for highly personalized weddings and self-impose a lot of pressure to have the perfect wedding** - since it'll likely be published on social media for the world to see (and react).



WHERE MILLENNIALS SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME (SITES/APPS)

Source: Social Media Today, Q3 2015



"I don't know why but I was so upset over how few likes I got when I posted I was engaged. I hate that I care! Why is social media so important to me when I have a great fiancé and family that is happy for us?!"

– Brenda D., Tennessee

TECHNOLOGY IS A MILLENNIALS BEST FRIEND

- There is no denying that Millennials are technologically driven, as they are the first generation to grow up with smartphones. In fact, **87% of Millennials report having their smartphones on them at all times and spend 4 ½ hours each day** on their phone. Plus, roughly 50% use 3 different devices daily.²
- Between social media, YouTube, Apps, Spotify, Netflix and more, this generation is accustomed to getting information on-demand in a short, concise way. They're also visual buyers and learners, which is why image-based social media sites such as Instagram and Snapchat have shown tremendous growth over the past few years. Nearly all (89%) of Millennials report using social media.
- Millennials crave content that is personalized and geared towards their interests. In fact, Millennials are 7X more likely to give personal information to a trusted brand if it helps result in more relevant offers.³

HOW MILLENNIALS STACK UP AGAINST OTHER GENERATIONS

MILLENNIALS ARE DELAYING MARRIAGE

- Today, 59% of Millennials are single and have never been married, the largest percent in any generation. In 1960 women married at 20 and men at 23, whereas now the average woman gets married at 30 and man at 32. While the majority hopes to settle down one day, marriage is taking the back seat to things like independent financial stability and career aspirations.
- A recent study shows that Millennials who earn \$75K+ are more likely to be married (51%) than those who earn less than \$30K per year (19%).⁴

MILLENNIALS WANT A HIGHLY-PERSONALIZED DAY BUT FACE SIMILAR PLANNING CHALLENGES

- When it comes time to say “I Do”, Millennials are doing things in their own way. Joint proposals are on the rise in addition to unique engagement rings (think: distinctive shape or colored stone). Plus, personalization as mentioned earlier is as a large focus throughout the ceremony and reception from writing their own vows to hometown food displays and custom hashtags.



“I like wine and my fiancé is big into whiskey so we are setting up a “whiskey lounge” with some rented vintage furniture (think leather pub chairs, lots of brass, etc). We are also big into indie/acoustic singer-songwriter type music, so we have a musician coming to play acoustic guitar for the ceremony and cocktail hour.”

– Shannon M., California

- Over the past 10 years we’ve continued to see overall guest count decrease, regardless of age, whereas the total spend per guest is on the rise. Couples are willing to spend extra on each guest in order to really personalize their big day and make it memorable and unique. Millennials spend on average \$31,000 on their wedding, whereas GenX spends \$24,000 with fewer guests.



TODAY’S GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES

Source: WeddingWire 2015 Newlywed Survey

	MILLENNIALS	GENX
FIRST WEDDING FOR BOTH	94%	46%
ENGAGEMENT LENGTH	13 months	11 months
NUMBER IN WEDDING PARTY	10	7
GUEST SIZE	130	100
NUMBER OF VENDORS HIRED	11	9

- However, when it comes to wedding planning and the challenges they face, Millennials aren’t much different than the rest. When asking Millennials and GenX what challenges they face during the planning process, the results were the exact same: budgeting, guest size, finding vendors, knowing if they’re on the right track and making decisions.

WHAT ONLINE RESOURCES MILLENNIALS USE TO PLAN

COUPLES ARE ACCUSTOMED TO FINDING INFORMATION QUICKLY AND ON MULTIPLE PLATFORMS

- Today, couples are spending **80% of their time wedding planning online and over 30% are planning from mobile devices**; making it essential to have a strong multi-channel presence. In fact, 3 out of 4 visitors leave a mobile site due to a bad user experience and over 60% will visit another site when they can't easily find the information they're looking for.



"I'm on my iPhone all the time. It's my lifeline! I use it to email with my vendors, browse for inspiration during my long commute and love to tag my bridesmaids on Instagram when I see a beautiful dress or centerpiece. It's such a convenient way for me to plan with my hectic schedule."

– Marisa M., New York

- The average millennial has 6+ different social media accounts and utilizes various platforms to fulfill all of their wedding planning needs.⁵ From finding inspiration on Pinterest, to seeing the quality of a vendor's work on Instagram, couples are often liking, tagging, commenting and pinning your content. While you don't need to be a master of all social sites, it's important to pick a few key ones to focus on.
- Mobile planning usage peaks from 8-10PM, often when couples are bored, in bed and while multi-tasking, making it ever more important to have short, visual, attention-grabbing content.

COUPLES EXPECT A QUICK AND PERSONALIZED EMAIL RESPONSE

- Millennials are all about convenience and instant gratification, which explains a lot about their preferred communication style. While texting is the dominant form of communication among Millennials, emailing is still their preferred outreach to vendors. **Over 80% of couples use emails to inquire about a vendor's product or service and expect to hear back within 24 hours**, if not sooner. Data also shows the quicker a vendor's responds, the more likely a client is to perceive the quality of the product or service to be higher.
- Since couples are emailing and submitting leads at all hours of the day and night, it's important to think through your communication strategy. While an autoreply might work if it contains useful information not found elsewhere, most couples are looking for a personal response to their questions. Twenty-five percent of couples find vendor responses are not personalized, leaving a mediocre first impression.



Don't let a delayed response keep you from booking a client. With [Messages](#), a new free feature from WeddingWire, you can reply easily to leads, manage client conversations, and track your bookings all in one place. All while using your own email address!

External Sources: 1 Luth Research, 2015 | 2 & 3 SDL Research, 2014 | 4 Forbes, 2014 | 5 Global Web Index, 2015

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR WEDDING PROFESSIONALS

Successfully working and communicating with Millennials can sound like a daunting task if you're unfamiliar with their reliance on technology. Follow these tips to get your business Millennial friendly in no time!



1. Make your mobile site a priority

Millennials are the “mobile generation”, everything they do or want to do can be done on-the-go. Therefore a non-existent or bad mobile website can be an instant deal breaker for this group. Do a full sweep of your online properties from your mobile website down to your emails and make sure the content is easily digestible (and layout is responsive) on smartphones and tablet devices.



2. Step up your social media presence

Millennials spend about 5 ½ hours on social media daily, most of the time via mobile devices, so it's important for your business to have an active presence online and to post interesting, relevant content that will grab their attention. Keep your content visual and whimsical – incorporate useful videos, tips or advice! Use hashtags to focus on key topics and don't forget to interact with followers, prospective clients and other industry pros.



3. Communicate in a timely fashion

Millennials are programmed to get everything on-demand. Remember to respond within 24 hours to inquiries, because besides being courteous, doing so lets your clients know they are important. Also, be sure to respond to an inquiry in the same format you received it (i.e., if your client emails, send an email; if your client calls, return with a call).



4. Keep the conversation short, simple and to the point

Roughly 70% of WeddingWire consumer emails are opened on mobile devices, so show them what they need to see in the most concise way possible. If communication persists, then ask for a more formal follow-up conversation when it's convenient for all.



5. Make their experience personal

Millennials are straying away from traditional weddings and instead incorporating elements into their weddings that represent them as a couple and their history together. In fact, this is a larger trend we're seeing regardless of the couple's age. Make sure to listen to the needs and wants of the couple and help brainstorm ways to make it a unique once-in-a-lifetime event.



6. Don't ignore your other clients

Just because we're focusing on Millennials, these tips and tricks are relevant for ALL of your customers. Thinking about age and generation is one helpful way to think about where your customers are in their life stage and how can you best serve and meet their needs.



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