

**TO:** Dr. Karen Kuralt

**FROM:** Lisa Westbrook

**DATE:** June 27, 2014

**SUBJECT:** Design Portfolio Project 4: "Millennials" Infographic

### **Introduction and Purpose**

This document is an infographic depicting various findings by the Pew Research Center on the "Millennial Generation:" people aged 18-33 as of 2014. The intended purpose is to educate readers about millennials by revealing the qualities that define this generation. The primary users of this document are probably users of social media, since that is where infographics tend to be disseminated--and the primary users of social media are younger people (such as Millennials). However, if it was published in a magazine, the audience would be more broad and would include members of other generations as well.

### **Description of the Users/Readers**

As I designed this infographic, I kept two audiences in mind: Millennials themselves, as well as people in older generations. Millennials would be interested to learn more about how their generation is defined, and would see where their own lives and views compare with the majority of other Millennials. Readers from older generations (such as Generation X, Baby Boomers, and the Silent Generation) might be interested in seeing how the values and qualities of Millennials compare to their own age groups. When both audiences look at the infographic, I know that they will expect to see complex information displayed in a way that makes it easy to comprehend, so I tried to keep that in mind with my design.

### **Description of the Context and Design Constraints**

Part of the difficulty in designing an infographic is that it doesn't require following many of the "rules" that apply to other types of design. With an article, brochure, or manual, I have a general idea of what the end product will look like. With an infographic, the possibilities are endless--which is both exciting and intimidating at the same time. Infographics can also benefit from advanced knowledge of design software such as Photoshop or Illustrator, since designers have more options on how to display the information in an interesting way. Since I'm not as familiar with those programs, I had to rely on my knowledge of InDesign (which is in no way limiting--it just would have been better if I knew how to use Photoshop or Illustrator). With this design, I also had to make rhetorical decisions about what information to include and omit. I wanted to provide a broad view of the Millennial generation, but I could not include every detail from the report, so I decided to leave out some details that might be

viewed as negative by older readers (such as 55% of Millennials posting “selfies” on social media).

## **Design Rationale**

Since an infographic is rarely a multi-page document (that would defeat the purpose of displaying information concisely), I used a one-page template in InDesign. I knew that in this form, the infographic could be exported as a .jpg to easily share it on the web--as Customer Magnetism, a digital marketing agency, recommends on their website: “make it easy to share or embed the infographic” for maximum exposure. Color was tricky for this design. I wanted bright colors that caught the reader’s attention, but I also needed the document to be readable. My final version has a slate gray background with Pantone Mimosa (yellow) and Pantone Blue Iris. Customer Magnetism also encourages infographic designers to “avoid white backgrounds,” so I decided on the gray background with a two color approach for readability: since the colors are complementary and contrasting, it is easy to read them on top of each other, and the gray background is a relief from the brightness of the yellow. Typography was also an important consideration, since there is a lot of text on the infographic. I wanted to use a modern font to suit the topic (“Millennials” are considered the “modern” generation), so I went with Futura. Futura is attractive and readable, but it also has several different variations (Condensed, Extra Bold Condensed, Medium, and Medium Italic), which created contrast in the infographic without making it too busy with different fonts. While the options for arrangement in an infographic are practically endless, I decided to go with a directional graphic, which helps “navigate readers through information” according to Daniel Adams at instantshift.com, in the article “What Are Infographics and Why are They Important?”. The yellow boxes contain the main details of the infographic, while the blue boxes contain extra information regarding each main detail. I used color to lead the reader: the main flow of the chart is in yellow with a larger stroke, while smaller blue lines connect main details to extra information.

## **Design Evolution**

In my first draft of the infographic, I used three Pantone colors: Blue Iris for the background and Mimosa and Emerald for text and text boxes. While I initially liked the effect, when I revisited it I noticed that there was “dazzling” due to all of the bright colors. I decided that the blue background was not a good choice, and replaced it with a slate gray. I much prefer the revision--it is more visually appealing, and it is easier to read. In an alternate draft, I tried reorganizing the graphic in a more top-down structure using portrait orientation. However, the design looked crowded, and I decided that I preferred the original landscape orientation.

## **Design Assessment**

I was excited when we originally received this assignment--infographics are so interesting to me, since they essentially combine the work of writing and design. You must choose details carefully, but you must also present them creatively and attractively. I have considered working in the creation of infographics in my English class, since students could creatively depict information regarding the current text we are reading. However, I have never designed one myself, so I was glad that this project gave me the opportunity. I do wish that I had more experience using Photoshop or Illustrator, since I think I could have made a more professional looking infographic in those programs, but I am pleased with the way this one turned out.