

Millennials' Perceptions of Minnesota's State History: Who Manages It & How Well?

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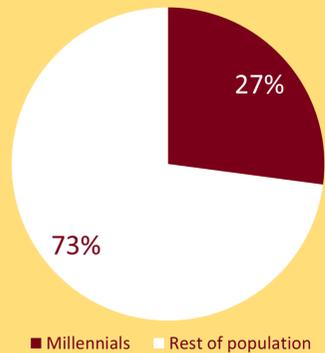


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The University of Minnesota Tourism Center is a collaboration of University of Minnesota Extension and College of Food, Agriculture & Natural Resource Sciences

Background

Millennials, born between 1980 and 1997, represent roughly one-quarter of the U.S. population (Figure 1). Given their proportion & growing influence, serving & engaging with millennials is essential for organizations of all types, including those emphasizing leisure, tourism & cultural-heritage attractions.



Select millennial highlights

- 61% white, non-Hispanic although most racially diverse generation (Fry, 2015)
- ½ college educated (Pew Research Center, 2010)
- Tech savvy (Pew Research Center, 2010)
- Rarely join professional groups (Achieve and JGA, 2011)
- Most likely to financially support causes of social justice (Cohen, 2014)
- 4% visit museums overall (Phillips, 2010)

Figure 1. Percentage of millennials within the U.S. population (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Baseline information on organizational awareness & perceived quality is important to move forward on effective service & engagement. Brand equity refers to the value of the brand to its owner & includes 4 major dimensions: Awareness, Image, Quality, and Loyalty (Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Aaker, 1991; Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Armed with details on these dimensions, organizations can optimize marketing, management, and development efforts.

The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS), a dynamic and widely-recognized leader in historic preservation and education, recognized this informational need & worked with the Tourism Center to assess its brand equity. This poster reports on **key questions of millennial Awareness & Quality of MNHS.**

Methods

Questionnaire	Online, based on past research Administered through Qualtrics (online program)
Questions	Awareness of MNHS site management (choice of several organizations) Awareness of MNHS services/programs (5 point Likert scale) Perceived quality (5 point Likert scale)
Sample	Purchased panel from Research Now 361 Minnesota residents Non-MNHS member Born between 1980 & 1993
Full report	See http://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/167701

Results

Awareness: Who manages Minnesota's state history?

- 2 of 4 sites were accurately identified as MNHS managed: Mill City Museum and Minnesota History Center (Figure 2). Respondents were divided over the management of both the Forest History Center and Split Rock Lighthouse.



63%



62%



39 %



9%

Figure 2: Percentage of millennials who correctly identified specific historic site management, 2015 (n= 360-361)

- Majority of millennials were familiar with just 2 of 20 MNHS activities



Museums



Historic Sites

Quality: How well does MNHS manage its historic sites?

The majority of millennials agreed:

9/11 programs are high quality **Q Q Q Q Q** 50%

They admire MNHS **A A A A A** 53%

They are likely to recommend MNHS **R R R R R R R R R R** 84%

Discussion & Implications

Despite relative low familiarity with MNHS, Millennials perceive a high level of quality provided by MNHS. This signifies *MNHS is recognized as a reputable, trustworthy source for Minnesota history.*

Low familiarity with MNHS services among millennials should not be discouraging. As millennials agree that MNHS is a well-respected & important organization, what remains to be changed is a matter of awareness, not perception. *Millennials need to be engaged through social media technology. Peer recommendations is the "gold standard" for engagement with this group.*

Trust itself is a key component for increasing brand equity. This existing trusting relationship must continue to grow to engage a larger proportion of the millennial demographic. When MNHS targets programs at millennials, the *trust component must be foremost in program thinking.* Millennials appear to be very cognizant of quality and will expect the best from MNHS services.