



Who's Buying Puppies Now? Marketing to the Millennial Generation

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Have you noticed that young people today are quite a bit different than the Baby Boomer generation?

The Millennials, or Generation Y as they've been called, are now 25 to 35 years old and coming into their biggest purchasing years.

Today's quick read gives you an overview of who they are and how to market your animals to them.

A lot of younger people today grew up in lifestyles completely unlike what anyone over 50 experienced. They spent more time on the computer or cell phone than climbing trees and helping load the hay. So we might wonder if they even have a love for pets. The post-war prosperity had put a chicken in every pot, a car in every garage and a dog in every yard. Well, there's good news and bad news.



Extensive market research, published on [The Next Web](#), surveyed 25000 individuals. The results reveal that 52% of adults in the 35 to 49 age group own a dog, and the Millennials are not far behind, with 47% owning dogs. Some things never change!

What is changing is how to reach them. There are 80 million of them, with 200 billion dollars buying power. How do you get your puppies in front of them?

The Millennial generation tends to shop for pets more in big-box stores or online, rather than specialty shops. Combine this fact with the trend (thank you HSUS) of cities restricting their pet shops from selling anything but shelter "rescue" animals, and your marketing strategy may take a new direction.

Here's more scoop on the Millennials

1. **Technology.** They expect current technology to be a part of their pet-purchasing experience. They do everything on iPads and cellphones. They must have pictures, immediately, and video, and they want pictures of your kennel, and a link to your credentials/license, and while they're at it they'll google (search) your name for any bad reports. They want to stay in touch by texting the first week with their new puppy, and would appreciate links to online articles about how to potty train him. The more you can meet their need for information through their handheld devices, the more share you're going to have in the market.
2. **Technology.** Yup. Again. Specifically, APPS. Small programs that run on tablets, phones, and iPads that help them with owning a pet. The more you know about them and can offer recommendations, the more these buyers are going to appreciate your kennel. What am I talking about? There are apps that monitor your dog's vital signs and relay them to your phone, apps that coach a puppy owner thru potty training, apps that allow you to track you pet by gps, apps that keep a diary of your pets daily diet and exercise. There are apps for everything, and this generation loves them. (They're fun as well as useful!)
3. **Green and Holistic.** This generation grew up recycling everything and attending Earth Day events. They were taught to be conscientious of what they consume and how they live in a way that generations before them were not. A large segment of them gravitate to kennels that raise pets holistically and care about the ecology of the area. What does this mean for a kennel? Holistic breeding includes: limiting vaccinations, using natural remedies rather than drugs from the vet's pharmacy, providing non-fluoridated water, choosing organic feeds, giving natural toys rather than BPA plastic toys, etc. An eco-friendly kennel puts effort into: recycling, re-purposing, composting, keeping toxic cleansers and chemicals out of water supply, using renewable energy sources, minimizing use of electricity, etc.
4. **Education.** The Millennials have a higher median household income than Baby Boomers had, probably because they have the highest college attendance of any generation to date. Impulse purchases of pets will still happen, but these folks are very educated purchasers who tend to put a lot of time into researching before they buy:

which breed? what size animal? how much time will the pet require of me? will it be good with children? Breeders will do well to provide lots of specific information in a readable format.

5. **Networking.** More than any other generation, Millennials like to share ideas with friends (and strangers) to gather information for decision-making. With technology at their fingertips, they routinely quiz others via Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. about anything that's going on in their lives. Helping them connect with others who have purchased pets from you, or with breed clubs, dog walking groups, etc. will earn you high marks.
6. **Speed and Ease.** Millennials are accustomed to being able to buy anything with "one click ordering" on their mobile device. Are your pages and pages of contracts going to kill the sale? Can you streamline your sales process, perhaps via a mobile-friendly website?
7. **Engagement.** Young people today don't like companies that sell to them. They like companies that bring them interesting, relevant information and become a part of their lives in a way that makes life easier. So you're not just selling a dog anymore... you can sell YOURSELF as their go-to counselor on all things pet-related. Plan on keeping in touch with your customers, by email, text or a Facebook page that sends them your updates.
8. **New Values.** Baby Boomers valued justice, integrity, family, practicality and duty. The dominant values of Millennials are: happiness, passion, diversity, sharing and discovery. Can you see how those values are driving the current trend to "rescue" shelter pets? to prefer a mixed breed mutt with one good eye to a purebred beauty? to make a social statement with a one-of-a-kind pet? Something to ponder after dinner, folks. How will you promote your kennel in a way that appeals to the values of a new generation?

Hope this helps you understand the pet owners of tomorrow. If you can give them something to be inspired about, learn their ways of connecting, and respect their intelligence, you have a fighting chance.

More About the Millennials and What They Want (Links)

[APPS PET OWNERS WANT](#)

[GREEN PETS ARE HIP](#)

[GOING NATURAL WITH YOUR DOG](#)

[A DIRECTORY OF HOLISTIC PET BREEDERS](#)

This [infographic](#) completes your education!