The Art of Attraction

How to Grow Your Millennial Arts Audience
Why Millennials?

The arts have always brought communities together to explore reality, creativity, and the power of personal expression. And a new generation of art enthusiasts is emerging to embrace today’s arts scene. Meet the millennials, America’s largest generation, showing strong numbers, passion, and promise for all things arts.

Beyond their sheer number power, millennials (born 1980 to 1996) account for $1.3 trillion in direct annual spend.¹ They also place high value on life experiences—ideal for the arts community which naturally offers rich, engaging content.

Eventbrite, a global ticketing platform and events marketplace that has supported thousands of performing and visual arts events, wanted to further understand the intricacies of the younger generation in regards to the arts. Eventbrite and global insights company Kelton conducted a research study to explore how millennials engage with the arts today, and how their preferences can shape the arts landscape in the future.

The following report is a summary of findings from a nationwide survey that drew from a large random sample of those in the U.S. who attended a performing or visual arts event in the past 12 months. The results unveil key insights about the millennial arts audience, new ways to attract the next generation of arts enthusiasts to more events, and how to turn a younger audience into devoted attendees for years to come.

Millennials Heart Art

Millennials yearn for unique, live experiences. And that’s exactly what the arts can deliver. Maybe this is why 78% of millennials surveyed agree that the arts are relevant to their personal interests. Even more telling, 74% of millennials believe that the arts are relevant to their entire generation.

When Eventbrite asked about arts, millennials said “more”

70% of millennials who recently attended a performing or visual arts event expressed they’d like to do so more often. Four out of ten (40%) said they plan to attend even more events in the next 12 months.

Millennials believe the arts are:

- Relevant to their personal interests: 78%
- Relevant to their generation: 74%
- Events they would like to attend more often: 70%

Millennials voice why they attend arts events:

- "To expand horizons and learn from new experiences"
- "To do something different"
- "Gives me a chance to socialize with friends"

It’s clear that millennials want to attend more arts events, but what will actually get them through the doors? Turns out, what they’d love to see from arts events is pretty simple to satisfy.
What Millennials Want from the Arts

**Creative Freedom: Spontaneity and Flexibility in Schedules**

Did you know that more than one in three (35%) millennials believe performing and visual arts events are a struggle to squeeze into their schedules?

While more hours can’t be added to the day, offering more flexibility can allow the younger generation to consume the arts at their convenience. One in five (20%) millennials said they’d consider attending more arts events if they had the ability to come late or leave early, for example. And while the majority of millennials prefer to purchase tickets in advance, having the option to make last-minute plans is definitely appealing. One in four (25%) millennials prefer to buy their tickets on the day of the arts event rather than in advance.

**Loosen Up a Little: Booze, Dress, and Tech Rules**

- **The way to millennials’ hearts is through their mouths.** No surprise here—bites and booze attract the young folks. Two in three (66%) millennials prefer arts events that have food, and over half (58%) prefer events that serve alcohol. 31% of millennials would attend more arts events if they could nosh and sip on something during the show. And the arts community is more than willing to quench this thirst. In 2014, Eventbrite saw over 60% growth of performing and visual arts events that were alcohol-friendly.

- **Dress code is a form of self-expression.** Millennials embrace the tradition and formality around arts events and appreciate the opportunity to dress to impress at fancier gatherings—35% of millennials would rather attend an arts event that’s formal instead of casual. Nearly half of millennials (49%) even said they think performing and visual arts events are not dressy enough. While formality can be a draw for some millennials, they don’t want to be forced into a tux. 63% of millennials would prefer events without the rules of a dress code, proving a little creative freedom can go a long way!

- **Let ‘em snap a selfie or capture the moment.** Cameras and phones are traditionally a no-no, but allowing photography and technology could make arts events more enticing (and engaging) for younger patrons. More than one in five (23%) millennials would go to more shows and exhibitions if they could take pictures during the event.

**Looking to Mingle**

Millennials are a social bunch. 64% attend arts events with friends, with unmarried millennials even more likely to go with a peer group (74%). And they want to mingle! 42% of this generation said they’d prefer going to events where they get to meet new people, and 32% would go to more events if there were people their age or friends in attendance. Adding a social component, like a happy hour or reception, would inspire 23% of millennials to frequent more arts events. In 2014 alone, Eventbrite saw performing and visual arts events with happy or cocktail hours grow by over 80%.
Freebies, Discounts, and Deals, Oh My

Spending an average of $280 on performing or visual arts events in the past year, millennials are willing to dig deep for arts events. In fact, one in five (20%) millennials spent $500 or more on arts events this past year. And though they’re willing to spend, 42% of this group believes that most arts events are on the pricey side. One fast way to attract millennials to arts events? Make more of ‘em free, or offer discounts to draw a bigger crowd. This can be an opportunity to attract newer millennial audiences that can grow into loyal fans and to encourage existing attendees to attend more. 42% of the younger generation said they’d attend more events if they were free and 32% would attend more if price cuts like discount package deals were offered. This is especially true for millennials with household incomes lower than $50K, with 53% expressing they’d attend more arts events if they were free, and 39% saying they’d attend more events if they offered package discounts.

Experiences with a Twist

Millennials are looking for new, unique experiences, and specifically seek this in performing and visual arts events. 63% of millennials prefer events that are different from other events they’ve attended, and 29% would go to more events if they were held in a unique or unexpected venue. Some millennials are even craving a closer, more interactive look at the performing and visual arts world. 43% would prefer to attend events that incorporate audience participation.

Millennials believe arts events are:

- **42%** Expensive to attend
- **35%** Hard to fit into schedule

### Millennials prefer arts events that:

- **66%** Serve food
- **63%** Are different from other events they’ve attended
- **63%** Have no dress code
- **58%** Serve alcohol
- **42%** Let them meet new people
- **35%** Are formal
Millennials would attend MORE arts events if there were / was:

- 42% More free events
- 37% A more convenient location
- 36% More free time in their schedule
- 32% Discount package deals, such as buying tickets to five events for the price of three
- 32% More events with friends or other people their age in attendance
- 31% The ability to eat or drink during the event
- 30% The ability to buy electronic tickets
- 30% The ability to pick seat in advance
- 30% The ability to wear anything they want
- 29% A unique or unexpected venue
- 23% The ability to take photos during the event
- 23% A social aspect, such as a happy hour or reception before or after the event
- 20% The ability to come late or leave early
# How Millennials Engage with the Arts

## Digital Discovery is Key

When it comes to event discovery for millennials, having an online presence is everything. More than 8 out of 10 (86%) millennials learn about performing or visual arts events from some kind of online resource—specifically social media (48%), online ads (28%), and blogs (25%). This is a contrasting behavior from older event-goers who are more likely than millennials to learn about arts events through traditional channels like ads on TV, in print media, or on the radio. If the arts community wants to reach millennials, incorporating digital into their marketing efforts is critical.

## Where arts audiences learn about events:

### Online Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online ads</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blogs</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Offline Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Millennials</th>
<th>Boomers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TV ads</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print media ads</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio ads</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
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Everyone’s a Critic, and that’s Just Fine!

Gone are the days when only arts critics have a say—millennials heavily rely on reviews from their peers and user-generated content. Many are open to choosing events the same way that they decide where to eat dinner or buy coffee; close to half (47%) of millennials would prefer to attend an event that’s recommended on a review site such as Yelp instead of by an arts critic or reviewer. Boomers, on the other hand, still prefer perspectives from the pros, with only 27% of the older generation preferring events recommended by review sites like Yelp.

Preferred sources for arts event recommendations:

- **Millennials**:
  - 47% Let them buy tickets online
  - 30% Have a website presence
  - 20% Have a Facebook or Twitter page
  - 19% Have a YouTube page

- **Boomers**:
  - 73% Arts critic or arts reviewer
  - 53% Review site, such as Yelp

Offline = Out of Touch

For many millennials, an online presence adds legitimacy to performing and visual arts events. Many members of this generation actually would steer clear of events that don’t have a website (30%), Facebook or Twitter page (20%), or a YouTube page (19%). If events aren’t online, how are social-happy millennials supposed to do their research and spread the word to friends? Not only is a digital presence important to millennials, digital tickets are critical too. Nearly 4 in 10 (39%) would be less likely to attend an arts event if it didn’t provide the ability to buy tickets online.
Engaging Beyond the Event

Millennials are highly engaged with arts events online, both before and after the show. Prior to attending an event, 40% of millennials post on social media about their upcoming plans. After the event ends, 45% of millennials post information online, and 27% write reviews on the web. And their activity doesn’t stop there: 35% of millennials also follow people associated with the event on social media.

This level of engagement often extends offline. 21% of millennials are likely to take a related class after the arts event, such as enrolling in dance lessons after visiting the ballet.

How millennials engage beyond the event:

- **40%**: Post on social media that I am planning to attend before the event
- **45%**: Post information online after the event, such as pictures or status updates
- **35%**: Follow people connected with the event, such as performers or directors, on social media after the event
- **27%**: Write a review online after the event
- **23%**: Sign up for a newsletter after the event
- **21%**: Take a class related to the event afterwards, such as a dance class after attending the ballet
The millennial arts audience is a new generation with unique needs and behaviors, and they’re eager to attend more events! Here are a few quick tips, based on survey findings, to help grow the next generation of art-lovers:

Get online. Millennials rely on digital platforms to find events and engage with the arts. It’s key that arts events employ digital marketing efforts, host event information online, and sell tickets online.

Bend the rules. While many millennials embrace the traditions of arts organizations, arts events may want to embrace the millennials’ busy schedules and offer more flexibility. Loose dress code, being photo-friendly, and incorporating food & drink can all help attract a younger crowd.

Be creative. Millennials are looking for live experiences with a twist. Think outside of the box with unique offerings like access to actors after the play, a funky venue, or some sort of special highlight they can look forward to.

Mingling makes for happy millennials. Millennials are highly social creatures. Incorporating receptions and happy hours into arts events lets them engage with one another—a major millennial plus.
Be sharable. Because it’s all about the social interactions—both face-to-face and online! Provide shareable content like picture-perfect moments at arts events which will encourage people to take photos with friends, and then go online to share them with more friends.

Discounts pay off. Offering free or discounted events every once in a while can inspire new audiences to explore different events and encourage fans to attend more.

By focusing on the unique needs and behaviors of millennials, the arts community can attract and engage this younger audience today, and keep them engaged for years to come.

Methodology

Data for the survey was collected by Kelton, a leading global insights and research firm, on behalf of Eventbrite. Survey was conducted between March 6th and March 11th, 2015 using a large random sample of millennials and boomers. Study includes 504 millennials (born 1980 to 1996) and 538 boomers (born 1946 to 1964). All respondents had attended a performing or visual arts event at least once in the last 12 months. For the study, a performing or visual arts event was defined as: musical, theater performance (non-musical), classical music concert, jazz concert, ballet, other dance performance (e.g. modern, folk, contemporary, traditional, tap), opera, or art museum, gallery or exhibit. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. For the millennials sample, the margin of error is +/- 4.4 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level; for the boomer sample, the margin of error is +/- 4.2 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.
About Eventbrite

Eventbrite is the global marketplace for live experiences that allows people to find and create events. Since 2006, the self-service platform has helped event organizers of all kinds to sell more tickets through robust technology and promotional tools, totaling $3.5 billion in gross ticket sales. In addition to providing technology for organizers, Eventbrite has become the destination for consumers looking to discover a variety of live experiences from small photography and yoga classes to large concerts and festivals with tens of thousands of attendees. More than 200 million tickets have been processed on the platform, and in 2014 alone, Eventbrite processed $1.5 billion in gross ticket sales for attendees in more than 180 countries. Eventbrite investors include Sequoia Capital, Tiger Global and T. Rowe Price.

Learn more at eventbrite.com/arts