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What Generation Y Can Teach Us About MLM

This could be the best thing that ever happened to you, your business and Network Marketing as a whole.

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1382 words | 5 pages

Generation Y.

They have lots of labels. And many of them are anti-label, so be careful how you use them. The Millennials . The Echo Boom. The Mega Generation.

Whatever name you choose to call them, get ready because they are sharp. They are re-defining the "rules" and are going to find their place on their own terms.

They communicate well and have a short attention span (not necessarily a bad thing). Smart companies are clamoring to figure out how to market to them. And, they are looking for something off the beaten path.

As a parent, you might be shaking your head. As a business person, you should be learning all you can about this group. Educate yourself and you'll stop shaking your head once you begin to understand this talented group who are everybody's future.

They are

•More afraid of being stuck at a desk for 45 years than taking the "risk" on a business of their own. In fact, they are being hailed as the most entrepreneurial generation yet

•Well connected to their high school and college friends. They are great communicators and use technology to deliver their message to the masses in seconds
•Not afraid of technology and, in fact, require it. They much prefer text messaging over email.
•Are socially conscious and responsible; show them more than the money; show them a cause and a way to make a difference
•Interested in self development; mentoring and love diversity
•Spontaneous and quick decision makers. Don't make a plan with them for next month; send them a text a few hours before and event and they'll show up
•Aware that we live in uncertain times and they aren't waiting around for next year; next week or anything. Show them results now!

Where have they been all of my life?

And, what can we, as network marketers, learn from this hip, trendy, "right now" group that is poised to join our ranks in droves? More than you might imagine so sit down; listen up and let yourself be schooled on a few things that can transform your business.

Gen Y, and specifically the current age group from 18-30 are calling their own shots and moving to their own beat. They resist many of the "old school" notions that their parents grew up with such as – "Go to college; Get a job; Work hard; retire in 45 years and ***then*** start living!" As a parent, this may be hard for you to accept, but let's face it. This concept is not working especially well for the masses.

Gen Y is looking for more. That doesn't mean that they don't or won't go to college, but corporate America holds no interest for a large majority of this group. They watched the Enron/WorldCom and other corporate scandals. They have lived through their parent's downsizing; layoffs and constant stress around a job and money.

> ***Why settle for this when, for a very low investment and a little technical knowledge about the Internet, one can start a virtual business that operates worldwide 24/7?***

No boss, no alarm clock, no suits. Oh, and tattoos and a little body piercing aren't going to ruffle any feathers!

They are looking for more than a paycheck. They aren't afraid of working, but why shouldn't work be fun? And why shouldn't their friends be part of it? And what is the point of an office, anyway? Why not work from anywhere?

The large majority of Gen Y is still in touch with their high school and college friends thanks to social networks online such as FaceBook and MySpace. Text messaging helps as well.

They can spread the word about any new venture they might find fun, appealing and profitable in a matter of minutes. When was the last time that happened in your network marketing business?

> ***Gen Y considers technology their third arm. This means that the local Starbuck's can actually be superior than a home office or a cubicle somewhere.***

With internet access and a MySpace page, they are open for business. We could all benefit from the portable office concept. After all, how many times have you been interrupted by well meaning friends and family members who think that because you work from home, you are accessible at any hour?

I personally utilize my Starbucks office at least twice a week for serious focus time and to get away from email; laundry; the phone and doorbell. Give it a try and see if you don't get a lot more accomplished.

> ***Because they are such a socially conscious and responsible generation, be prepared to show more than just the money.***

They demand eco-friendly products; companies with a mission and something that creates fun and lifestyle. Show them something simple; something to get passionate about; something fun that will create an income that allows them to enjoy life ***now*** and not wait for retirement. Then, get out of the way.

Spend some time learning what the values are of Gen Y and why these things matter to them. Understand their values, then link your opportunity to their values and you have a home run.

Gen Y has been a very experimental group and love diversity. Where generations before them stuck to the mainstream and didn't want to be "different", this generation is about being unique and accepting others at face value without worrying about everyone being little clones. They are very individual and aren't interested in "duplicable systems" as much as they want proven principles. Being "indie" is widely accepted and valued.

So, what does this mean for you and your network marketing business?

If the Fortune 500 companies are paying attention, you should be, too.

One or two Gen Y leaders in your business might change your business attitude as well. Let me explain.

First of all, they are smart and creative. Give them the business basics and then turn them loose to build their own network. Don't even think about the Tuesday night local meeting. Ain't gonna happen.

Don't overload them with emails (which they rarely check) and don't try to conform them into traditional network marketing concepts such as "make a list." They have a list and it resides at MySpace.com, FaceBook.com or Ojeez.com and they already know how to approach that list.

Don't worry if they don't need you for 3 way calls; showing the plan; or motivating their group. It's nothing personal. They have it wired already.

Where are you going to find this target market? Well, not on your list, most likely; nor through ads or mall walking. Your best bet is to tap into the power of technology and get yourself a MySpace profile and begin to network. Don't go in blasting your opportunity, but instead take a sincere interest in building relationships and getting to know this intriguing group.

They know how to check you out and check your business out as well. Most likely, they'll let you know that they have an interest. Keep is simple and say very little. They will find what they need to know online and might even sign up without so much as an email or phone conversation.

Relax, have some fun and "Chillax." Embrace this new way of having fun and building a business. This could be the best thing that ever happened to you, your business and Network Marketing as a whole.

I don't know about you, but I'm off to meet some new friends on Facebook and Twitter. I hope to see you there. This is one trend you don't want to miss.

Jackie Ulmer is a network marketing veteran, industry coach and MLM author. She’s built a solid six figure income using the Internet to build her Network Marketing business while maintaining the roles of wife, mom, cab driver, and social coordinator. Her passion is empowering women and young entrepreneurs to believe in themselves and reach for the stars. Get to know her better and sign up for her newsletter at http://www.streetsmartwealth.com

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