



“(Millennials are) an important group that may in fact help grow the game if the golf industry is willing to start looking at things a little differently.”

**MARK WOODWARD**, *Contributing Editor*

## Just saying...

**T**he other day I was sitting in my office with a young colleague and we started talking about the growth of the game initiatives in golf and in general the state of the industry. The conversation was all over the place until she mentioned something about the golf industry missing out on targeting one segment of the population that you don't hear much about in reference to growing the game of golf. This group is called the Millennials.

This colleague of mine has been in the golf business for over 12 years and she happens to be a Millennial. She pointed out to me that, as an industry, we have developed or tried to develop many programs related to getting more people involved in the game of golf. Groups include juniors, women, minorities etc., but most programs don't specifically address the 20- to 30-year-old age group.

This is an important group that may in fact help grow the game if the golf industry is willing to start looking at things a little differently.

Millennials are different. If you really put some thought into this age group in our society, they truly are an interesting group of people. They are

extremely tech-savvy, as technology has boomed since they were born. They aren't used to having to be at a job from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. They are a generation that is not going to settle because they saw their parents settle, particularly in reference to their jobs. To them, it's OK to have four to five jobs on their résumé by the time they are 30.

If you have Millennials working for you, it's important that you adapt. They respond better to coaching than bossing. They are the future and bosses need to realize this difference. If you don't, they have no problem going down the street and selling themselves to the next boss.

In most cases Millennials aren't as concerned about hav-

ing a long career in one job as they are with having a great lifestyle. Millennials place a higher value on actual experiences than they do on tangible items. They may be willing to pay a premium for a good golfing experience if it were a more enjoyable and possibly even a “less stuffy” activity.

So with all of this in mind, here we have a very large portion of our population that strongly feels that lifestyle is important and this could obviously include recreational activities, like golf. Why don't we recognize this as an industry and try harder to attract them to the game? The truth is, other industries are way ahead of golf and have adapted to this segment of the population by making their

businesses more welcoming and accommodating.

Things as simple as allowing cell phones on the golf course, not worrying so much about dress codes, tattoos and appearance could go a long way to bringing more of these young people into the game. Let's face it, they may not want to play 18 holes of golf and take four to five hours to do it.

The bottom line is, they want to have fun. As an industry we have been talking for years that we need to make golf more fun. I believe if we did, more Millennials would want to participate. After all, they are more into hanging with their friends and socializing than becoming the best golfers in the world.

Now it's a well-known fact that I'm a baby-boomer and I'm certainly not overly qualified to talk about how to go about targeting Millennials, but my very astute colleague caused me to think about things differently. If we as an industry want to really grow the game, it is imperative that we look at things differently than we traditionally have in the past and maybe target this segment more aggressively. Their money is just as valuable as any other segment of our population.

Just saying.

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