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How Your Financial #Brand Can Reach #Millennials on #Instagram

By **Stefanie McLeod** In **Advertising & Marketing**, **Financial Services Marketing**, **Social Media**

In today's mobile-driven, app-crazy world, Instagram's omnipresence and popularity is old news. How financial institutions can leverage its upward mobility to build their targets, however, is another story. Instagram, which has steadily grown since its 2010 launch, continues to attract new users every day, boasting **600 million monthly users** as of December 2016 (a 100 million user increase from June 2016). An overwhelming 55% of 18- to 29-year-olds and 28% of 30- to 49-year-olds online **use Instagram**, which is a significant representation of the highly coveted millennial generation–**92% of whom** expressed their distrust of financial institutions.
So, how do you reach your financial institution's largest untapped audience?

Form an emotional connection.

While past generations sought professionalism and hard bottom lines to confirm a financial institution's capability, millennials are drawn to brands that are warm and relatable, with a "people first" ideology. Ads that focus on the end-result of your services–like a young family buying their first home with your mortgage product or exciting travel experiences made possible by your credit cards or personal loans–are going to resonate more than cold, impersonal ads.

Humanize your brand.

Millennials are more likely to engage in advertising that is clever, subversive and **funny**–one that is transparent in its products and friendly in tone. They connect more with brands that feel honest and authentic above all else. **An international study** found that authentic brand characteristics such as communicating honestly about products and services (91%) and environmental impact and sustainability measures (87%) are valued over product utility (61%), brand appeal (60%) and popularity (39%).

Get them involved.

There's an obvious connection between Instagram users and how much millennials enjoy posting pictures of their lives. This has led financial institutions to think outside the box on how to engage with their audience. TD Bank and Polaroid's #ShouldaBeenAVideo campaign urged Instagrammers to share pictures that would have made compelling videos for the chance to win a new Polaroid Cube and $5,000. The campaign garnered thousands of posts and its sponsored Instagram post received over 13,000 views. US Bank's #ISaveSoICan campaign featured some of Instagram's top influencers illustrating reasons to start saving money now. By creating a campaign that actively engages your audience, you're increasing your brand awareness and building loyal followers.

Share how your brand gives back.

Millennials are incredibly philanthropic and expect brands to be, too. According to the **Millennial Impact Report**, 52% donated to social issue causes, 64% signed a petition, 36% participated in a demonstration and 46% volunteered for a cause in 2016. Considering **90% of Americans** are more likely to trust brands that care about making a difference, it's easy to see why it's vital for your financial institution to share Instagram pictures and stories illustrating your commitment to making a positive difference.

Financial institutions have many barriers to overcome when marketing to millennials. By building an identity and following on Instagram, your brand will not only engage its target audience, it will create a trustworthy relationship with the generation that boasts a **62% brand loyalty rate**–and that picture is worth a thousand words.

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