

A Millennial recruitment and retention blueprint for Home Economics professional associations

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Abstract

This paper draws on (a) generational analysis theory, (b) demographic, character, and value profiles of the Millennial Generation (aged 18-26), and (c) the literature on association membership trends to develop a strategic Millennial blueprint for Home Economics professional associations. The premise of the paper is that if Home Economics organisations are able to demonstrate, and then deliver, a commitment to Millennial professionals, these same professionals will commit to the associations, and the profession.

The profession is at a convergent moment that needs to be managed and cultivated, with part of this process entailing new respect for the Millennial Generation (Pendergast, 2008, 2009). Baby Boomer Home Economics professionals (aged 47-64) feel a need for stability, balance, validation, and support. Generation X Home Economics professionals (aged 27-46) need to be retained (to feel challenged, rewarded, and recognised). Millennial professionals (Generation Ys, working aged 18-26) need to be *attracted* to the profession in the first place, and once this is achieved, university socialisation and attendant professional associations have to *continue to appeal* to them (McGregor, 2006; Pendergast, 2006, 2008, 2009; West, 2007).

Even though the Millennial Generation is in huge demand in the workplace, there is no guarantee they are going to be demanding careers in Home Economics. They have to be *convinced* of the contributions they can make to the profession and attendant associations, and that they will be supported in this role. We are challenged by this requirement. Pendergast (2009) explains that commitment to professional work is a function of age. The Millennial Generation are not at the age yet where they feel any professional commitment, making it imperative that we future-proof the profession by being ready for them when they *come of age, professionally*. This paper, written by a Baby Boomer and a Millennial, shares a discussion of what might be involved in the process of attracting and respecting this cohort, the most significant generation in the 100-year history of our profession, aside from our founders.

Several papers presented at the 2008 International Federation of Home Economics (IFHE) congress are published in this issue of the *International Journal of Home Economics*, including a paper by Pendergast (2008) on generational dynamics. Following her lead, we also drew on generational analysis theory, while turning to the literature on association trends, to develop a strategic Millennial recruitment and retention blueprint for Home Economics professional associations. Our profession is experiencing declining membership due to retirements and fewer entrants into the profession (Clarke, 2000). A smaller and changing membership base means Home Economics associations have to get ahead of the game. These associations must

understand the Millennial generation, and find out *what makes them tick* (Day, 2008; Smith, 2008).

To that end, as part of our analysis, we created a very detailed profile of the Millennial generation, drawing from a wide-ranging discussion of the values, beliefs, and character traits often attributed to this generation (Cranston, 2008; DiGilio & Lynn-Nelson, 2004; Howe & Strauss, 2000; Martin & Tulgan, 2001; McBride & Nief, 2008; NAS Recruitment Communications, 2006; Pooley, 2005; Rothberg, 2007; Smith, 2008). We also created a demographic profile (see Beaton, 2007; Deloitte Development, 2005; Liesse, 2007; Lynch, 2007; Sobon, 2001). After creating a long list of characteristics (n=30), we explored the collection for themes, choosing four to organise the Millennial profile: technological prowess (n=4), workplace needs and preferences (n=13), meaningful engagements (n=6), and leadership and authority orientations (n=6) (see Figure 1). We used this profile to prepare a four-pronged model for professional associations servicing and benefitting from Millennial professionals, the focus of this paper.

Figure 1: Themes informing a values, beliefs, and character profile of Millennial professionals



Generational analysis theory

Pendergast (2006, 2008, 2009) is the first to bring generational theory to the Home Economics professional dialogue. Generational analysts agree that each generation (spanning 20 years) has its own defining experiences, and an identifiable set of assumptions, values, attitudes,

and approaches to life. Each generation is influenced by the political, social, economic, cultural, and technological environment of that period. Each generation acquires *shared* aspirations about their role in society (McCrary, 2006; Notter, 2007; Strauss & Howe, 1991, 1999; Washburn, 2000). Readers can find detailed discussions of the nuances of generational theory in Pendergast's discussion of generational dynamics (2008) and her broader overview of the theory in her 2009 article on future-proofing the profession using insights from generational theory. This paper focuses on a discussion of professional association trends and how these trends can inform future-proofing Home Economics.

Professional association trends

In order to engage in realistic planning, Home Economics associations need to augment a deep appreciation of the character of the Millennial Generation with an awareness of the trends faced by professional associations. The current association *business environment* and culture is a direct result of the values, experiences, and needs of the Boomer Generation, and, to a lesser extent, Generation X. With the coming of age of the Millennial generation, things will have to change. Modern professional associations need a critical mass for long-term sustainable growth and impact, and Boomers are retiring en masse (Clarke, 2000; West, 2007). Two recent studies widely respected in the study of association trends in North America were consulted for this paper. These studies were tendered by Brooks (2007) and Dalton and Dignam (2007; see also Dalton & Inzeo, 2007). We are convinced that Home Economics associations can draw on the insights from these studies to position themselves within this milieu.

Projected membership growth

Brooks (2007) reports that, overall, associations in the United States of America (USA) are projecting a very nominal increase in membership over the next 10 years (55 million in 2015, up from 51 million in 2005, an 8% increase). Obviously, not every association is going to benefit from this trend, especially those already experiencing membership decline, like Home Economics associations (Clarke, 2000). The latter are unlucky in that they are experiencing a widespread devaluing of their services, despite that their remit is deeply needed in society at this time. In particular, citing USA Bureau of Labour statistics, Brooks reports that education, child care, and elder care will experience the least job growth. On the other hand, he notes that *high-end idea* professions are ascending as are their associations, including higher education, information technology (IT), design, consulting, and financial services. Brooks explains that these *idea professions* are characterised as having entrepreneurship and creativity, traits to which Millennials are deeply drawn. Conversely, Millennials are also very civic- and community-oriented, intimating they can be drawn to associations focused on care, nurturance, and education, if the messaging is right and authentic—that includes Home Economics associations.

Millennial memberships

Although, in general, Generation X and Boomers are more likely to belong to an association (33%) than are Millennials (24%), digging deeper, we discover that this statistic is misleading. When one looks at the pattern for *each group* when it is 25 years of age (the age of leading edge Millennials), one can see that 24% of Millennials belong to professional associations,

compared to 15% of Generation X, and only 12% of Boomers when they were aged 25 (Brooks, 2007). This pattern suggests that Millennials will opt to belong to professional associations *if* they are attracted to the mission and purpose. This implies that they should be actively recruited and nurtured with resonate messaging. We found an intriguing account of their opinions about association memberships at a young Millennial's blog (see Figure 2). A careful read of Bob's Blog reveals some of the dominant values held by this generation: a sense of entitlement; self image of an up-and-coming star and a legacy in the waiting; a penchant for networking, dovetailing, and multitasking; and a need to feel valued, appreciated, involved, and accommodated.

Figure 2: A Millennial's opinions about association membership

Young professionals have strong opinions about the benefits of belonging to an association, including Bob (age 25), a young professional. We learn at his Blog that Bob (a microcosm of Millennials) feels that professional memberships break down barriers between employers and the profession. They allow people to attach to a profession as well as a job or position, remembering that Millennials change jobs often while retaining connections to a large profession or sector. Through memberships, they can build a network of industry or sector peers *and* they can gain increased insights into their chosen career, different than those gained on the job. Being able to join an association tells Millennials that the association is acknowledging them as young professionals in the field, more so if discounts and lower fees are in place. The latter help them make a stronger case to employers to pay the fees for them. Bob suggests that association memberships help keep up-and-coming stars involved and engaged, better to advance the profession and field of interest. Finally, he posits that today's new Millennial members will be tomorrow's leaders, so why not start the legacy now?

(Bob at Young Association Professional Blog, personal communication posted December 8, 2007).
<http://youngassociationprofessional.blogspot.com/2007/12/what-is-minimum-age-for-your-membership.html>

Brooks (2007) predicts that associations providing the right benefits and opportunities will prosper. This forecast means associations have to understand the new generation of practitioners and respect the tensions that exist between them and the established members (Boomers and Generation Xers—see Figure 2). His findings provide encouragement for Home Economics associations and insights for their recruiting initiatives, vis-à-vis the Millennial generation. A telling example is his finding that those who belong to professional associations report higher job prestige (57% compared to 43% for non-association members). They tend to earn 50% more, and are much more likely to report high job and life satisfaction (45% compared to 36% for non-members). Because job prestige, higher earnings, and high job and life satisfaction are keystones of the Millennial generation, Home Economics associations need to pay attention to Brooks's insights.

Benefits of Membership

One challenge for struggling professional associations (including Home Economics associations) is that members of Generation X and Generation Y are half as likely to join a fee-based organisation than previous generations (Brooks, 2007). A somewhat contradictory finding is that a cost-benefit calculation is not the key reason people decide to join an organisation; rather, it is a balance of personal benefits and the value that joining offers to the larger community of interest, the profession (Dalton & Dignam, 2007). Dalton and

Dignam's (2007) timely study focuses on how satisfied professionals *are* with their memberships. They approach this topic from two perspectives: (a) satisfaction with how membership benefits people personally, and (b) satisfaction with how membership benefits the field. They further break this down by generations (pp. 37-39). They discover large differences between the four *living* generations (Silents [Pre-War], Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, defined as under 30 years of age). Of interest to this discussion are their findings vis-à-vis Millennials.

In more detail, Dalton and Dignam (2007) find that Millennials believe: (a) professional development and educational programs, (b) access to career information and employment opportunities, and (c) opportunities to network with other professionals in their field are very important benefits that are *not* being delivered satisfactorily by associations. While Millennials feel more positive about (d) opportunities to gain leadership experiences, they are far less satisfied with the ability of associations to deliver this benefit than were other generations.

Dalton and Dignam (2007) also report on Millennials' feelings about the benefits that associations bring to the field in general. They reference four different benefits of membership, noting that, although Millennials feel these benefits are important, they also feel that associations are not satisfactorily delivering. In descending order, Millennials are least satisfied with the ability of associations to: (a) promote greater public awareness of contributions from the field, (b) support student education and entry into the field, (c) promote greater appreciation of the role and value of the field among practitioners, and (d) provide standards that support quality. Home Economics associations need to keep both frames of satisfaction in the forefront of their recruitment and enrichment strategies—personal benefits and benefits to the field.

More on Millennial professionals

Dalton and Dignam's (2007) study refutes the perception that the unique attributes of the Millennial Generation spell doom for the future of associations. Their one caveat is that this doom may be warranted if associations cannot find ways to meet this generation's need for networking and accessing information sources. As well, associations should not underestimate the benefits to be gained from engaging Millennials in ad-hoc involvement with writing, presenting, and reviewing the content of any association initiative. Their worldview is quite revealing and valuable, leading to more meaningful and authentic initiatives.

Furthermore, Dalton and Dignam (2007) find that women working in female-dominated settings have a greater sense of value from their association memberships than do women in more gender-balanced settings. This is a valuable insight for a basically women-based membership, such as Home Economics associations. Many work in the more gender-balanced academy. Ironically, at a time when fewer Home Economics professionals are entering the academy and many are leaving or retiring, Dalton and Dignam find that academics are among the strongest association supporters. They are the least likely to drop out, most likely to volunteer, and far more likely to promote associations.

Dalton and Inzeo (2007) also find that half of the respondents in their study had dropped membership in an association, and that people are more likely to do this now (55%) than 15 years ago (50%), a 10% increase. Given the upward trend to leave an organisation after joining, Home Economics associations need to bear this in mind as they design strategies for recruiting and retaining Millennials. If Millennials are not engaged or do not feel valued, they will simply leave. A way to engage them is with technology (McIntosh, 2008). In general, people who join professional associations today are increasingly comfortable with high-tech; yet, they still require high-touch experiences filled with human meaning, especially members of the Millennial Generation (Brooks, 2007).

Perceived need for associations

Dalton and Inzeo (2007) find that, regardless of whether people are members of professional associations or not, close to three quarters agree that there is just the right number of professional associations to choose from in their area of professional interest. Also, despite membership status, half of the respondents (51%) feel that the need for associations in 5 years time will be the same as now, if not greater (40%). This belief is a positive finding for Home Economics, a profession with very few associations focused on the profession in general (respecting that there is a proliferation of specialisation associations). Also, associations can capitalise on the perception that professional associations will be needed in the future even more than they are today, and that Millennial professionals will be *the* energy core of these associations.

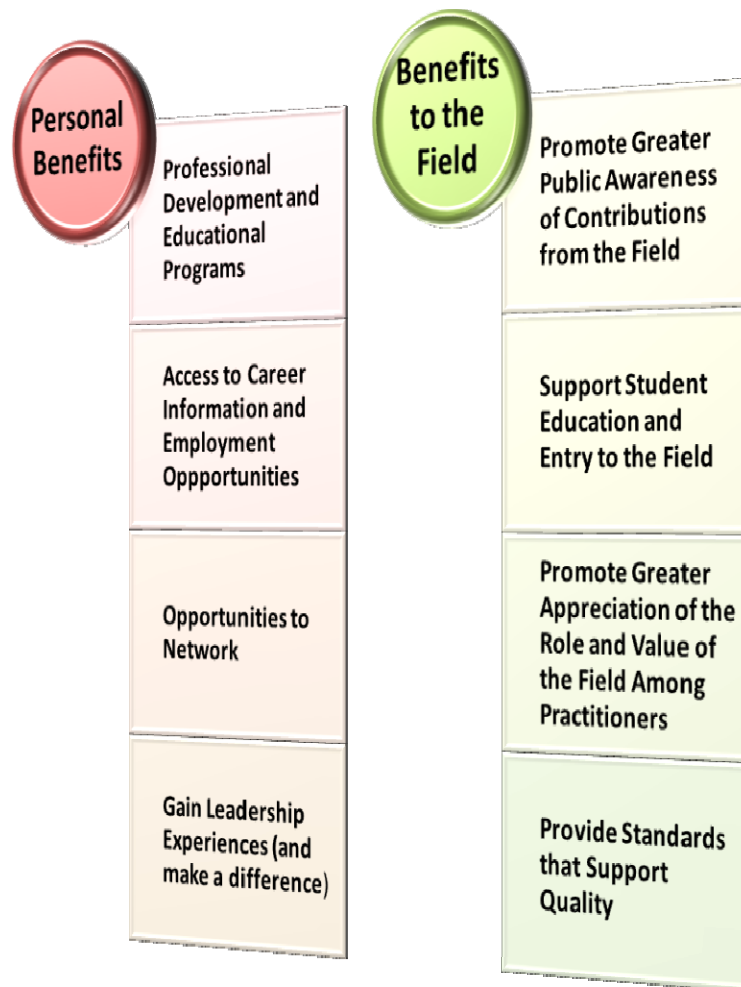
Millennial recruitment and retention blueprint

By way of a summary, associations need to *sell* Millennials on their organisation, convincing them that they can gain new skills, and that there will be a chance to use the ones they have now. Millennials need to be convinced that joining the association will be a springboard for their career, *and* a way to serve the larger community, and the field. The organisation has to create a corporate culture that is stimulating and structured to allow Millennials to grow, contribute, and gather transportable skills (Harvey, 2008). Knowledge of generational profiles and association trends enriches professional associations' cross-generational conversations about how best to reach, serve, respect, and enrich membership (Notter, 2007).

Given the information shared in this paper so far, it is a given that what worked for previous generations of Home Economics professionals, by way of recruitment, socialisation, and professional enrichment, may not work for the Millennial generation—their learning styles, values, habits, icons, and points of reference are simply too different. Taking into account the nature of the Millennial generation, and the association membership trends with which Home Economics associations are dealing, we respectfully offer a strategic Millennial blueprint for consideration by associations servicing members of this profession. (* See author notes at end.) We refrain from suggesting how to manage them in the workplace or in higher education settings (as learners); instead, we focus on how to attract and inspire them within the context of professional associations. We use Dalton and Dignam's (2007) taxonomy of personal and professional benefits as a way to present our ideas about how to appeal to and respect their character traits, values, beliefs, attitudes, and learning styles (see Figure 3). We recognise that Pendergast (2009) includes strategies for attracting and retaining Millennial

professionals (at pages 519-520). Although there is some redundancy between her specific strategies and ours, we feel the model we used to organise our strategies is a useful and innovative contribution to the ongoing discourse that Pendergast (2006) started with her keynote in Finland on this topic. Figure 4 shares a snapshot of some of the more leading-edge initiatives contained in the following text.

Figure 3: Taxonomy of Personal and Professional Association Membership Benefits (Dalton & Dignam, 2007)



Personal benefits

Professional development and educational programs

- Organise professional development experiences around essential *learnings* (intellectual and philosophical competencies and predispositions) rather than just content/subjects;
- They are the most educated generation in history. To continue to cultivate the attributes of lifelong learners, associations have to continually train them,

especially using modules and units to ensure information is delivered in bites. While training, keep the messages short and repeat the key messages, using multi-mode technologies;

- Because they prefer to gain and use transferable skills, they need to become generalists with portable, general knowledge that is not job- or firm-specific. Do this in combination with becoming expert novices (good at *continually learning* new knowledge, skills, abilities, and world views, Pendergast, 2006);
- Although they want to be told the answers and how to do things, they have to learn how to deal with uncertainty, ambiguity, change, and complexity. Any professional inservicing or socialisation initiatives need to bear this trait in mind;
- Professional development (PD) initiatives also need to teach and further augment the Millennial's existing collaboration, cooperative interaction, and team work skills;
- PD efforts need to employ digital, online platforms to recruit, (re)train, and retain them, and to aid their professional growth and development;
- They appreciate a combination of high-tech proficiency (e.g., websites) and personal contacts (high-touch);
- They have and appreciate energy, so plan dynamic PD events rather than stagnant, conventional approaches;
- They are a racially and ethnically diverse generation, meaning they are generally more accepting and less judgmental of others. This cultural trait has to be managed and respected during recruitment and professional enrichment activities;
- Because they value a sense of community, consider combining meetings and learning events with entertainment, thereby creating a *feeling of community*;
- They have come from a social, empowered, collaborative, and technology-driven environment, so increase engagement by making sure enrichment activities are not offered in isolation; and,
- Because they are high achievers and want to get ahead, plan and deliver summer and ongoing online training opportunities.

Access to career information and employment opportunities

- Establish career or professional development blogs and support Friendster, MySpace, and Facebook social networking connections;
- This generation likes to scope out an organisation first, looking for possibilities and opportunities. To aid them in this pursuit, prepare and provide a lot of information about the organisation, in many high-tech, colourful, upbeat, and modern formats and recruitment campaigns; and,
- Create an Interactive BioPAGE where Millennials and others can update their professional bios at their leisure.

Opportunities to network

- Offer conference travel top-ups to draw them to events (this way, they can meet and collaborate with others and expand their networks);
- If they like what the organisation is offering them, and what they can bring to the organisation, they can tell their huge network of friends with a click of a mouse (especially via blogs) or a button on their cell-phone or Blackberry;
- Consider Millennials as your best ambassadors (they tell each other *everything*), and create a Home Economics ambassador program as well as a branding initiative for the organisation; and,
- Focus on the good consequences of good behaviour. One slogan might be: *join the association so you can learn and be networked, thereby improving your chances of being there for yourself and others.*

Gain leadership experiences (and make a difference)

- Present Millennials with the challenges facing the profession and families; they are not afraid to work, and they relish taking a stand for something bigger than themselves; they want to produce something worthwhile;
- They are great sources of innovation, so involve them at every facet of the organisation;
- They crave mentoring, and partner well with mentors; also, they like to be mentors. So, establish generational mentoring systems.
- Associations need to inspire them to dream bigger, rather than just motivate them;
- Because they want to try new things (or become an overall expert), design customised advancement plans for them to move around within the organisation; they value very clear progression tracks. Remember, they are multitaskers (at least with technology);
- They need to know, regularly, how well they are doing. So, provide feedback-oriented leadership. They do not mind monthly, regular meetings. Performance reviews should be on a quarterly basis rather than annually;
- Because they are interested in the big picture, and in exposing themselves to as many different aspects of the organisation as possible, take steps to include them in future scenario-building and forecasting exercises; share the vision of the organisation. If they embrace it, they will not fade into the background;
- Generate group projects and initiatives, and recruit Millennials to lead them. Assign a more senior member as a mentor and guide in these projects;
- Associations may have to rethink their hierarchal organisational structure because Millennials prefer egalitarian leadership styles; and,
- Associations that traditionally employ a deliberative approach will have to become future-focused, able to rapidly make decisions so strategies do not

become obsolete; perpetually up-to-date Millennials will not stand for dated and stagnant policies and strategies; include them in the leadership process.

Figure 4: Snapshot of Innovative Millennial Strategies for Home Economics Associations

- Create an interactive BioPAGE
- Position association as civic-minded
- Provide feedback-oriented leadership
- Create Home Economics ambassador program
- Customise advancement plans for lateral and upward movement within the association
- Customise new slogans, often
- Create generational mentoring systems
- Create peer mentoring systems
- Develop membership discounts for Millennial teams (recruit teams of Millennials)
- Offer a lapsed membership alumni program
- Create a Rising-Star membership category, a reduced fee to entice young professionals. This initiative gives them an opportunity to join for a significant discount;
- Offer discounts for referrals, especially group/team referrals
- Choose a Millennial as the organisational gatekeeper (the go-to-person)
- Target Assistant Professors and new teachers
- Offer conference travel top-ups
- Offer tuition top-ups
- Actively work with employers

Benefits to the field

Promote greater public awareness of contributions from the field

- Making the case that professional associations are a key part of civil society will appeal to Millennials, who are very civic-oriented;
- The identity of who pays association dues (self or others) does not affect the Millennials' perception of the value and benefit of becoming a member. In light of this, Home Economics associations could develop a strategy to convince employers of the value of Millennials belonging to their association, and the value of paying the Millennial professional's membership fee; and,
- Associations must create and deliver deliberate and convincing messages for a variety of publics about the positive contributions of the field.

Support student education and entry into the field

- Consider tuition top-up bursaries (many Millennials want to go to graduate school);

- Maintain an incredibly efficient gatekeeper because they do not deal well with waiting in line for bureaucracy; they will simply go elsewhere. The ideal go-to candidate is a fellow Millennial;
- Because they have such a lived experience with, and value of, teams, consider recruiting teams of young Millennial professionals (giving team discounts for memberships);
- Consider Millennials as your best ambassadors (they tell each other *everything*). Create a Home Economics ambassador program, as well as a branding initiative for the organisation;
- They tend to move around a lot (coming and going from organisations and jobs); be ready for this by designing a lapsed membership alumni program letting them know that the door is always open, that they are needed and valued;
- Offer a *rising star membership*, a reduced fee to entice young professionals. This initiative gives them an opportunity to join for a significant discount;
- Set a discount for referrals, appreciating that Millennials love to network and share information with peers;
- Appreciating that the back end of the adult aged Millennials (aged 18-24) may be different than the leading edge (aged 25-30), do appropriate research and prepare different messages for this contingency;
- Because many new teachers are from the Millennial Generation, target teachers when recruiting and developing professional enrichment experiences; and,
- Continue to promote and facilitate the creation of web-based and real-time communities of practice, both as learning centres and as venues for professional community building.

Promote greater appreciation of the role and value of the field among practitioners

- Because academics are among the strongest association supporters, Home Economics associations should actively target assistant professors who are in a unique position to influence entry-level Millennials;
- Worthy of repeating, foster a culture of mentoring and self-accolades, and create ambassadors for the profession;
- With a Millennial bend, continue with the national, state, and local conferences and gatherings but with special attention to professional community-building and respectful conversations and dialogue circles;
- Draw on the self-managed mentoring initiatives provided by, for example, Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) to facilitate self-reflection leading to wider intraprofession respect for the field (see <http://kon.org/Mentoring/index.html>); and,

- Again, follow the lead from KON and develop *webs of inclusion* that lead to lasting networks, which can transform people, and bring them together http://kon.org/leadership/web_inclusion.html.

Provide standards that support quality

- Continue to maintain up-to-date certification opportunities and content, thereby ensuring Millennials that the association is providing quality standards;
- In some countries, Home Economics professionals can be registered with the state and licensed to practice; the professional standards that inform related legislation have to be kept current;
- Continue to update and promote national standards for Home Economics and allied fields.
- Continue to update the emerging “body of knowledge” statement, soliciting Millennial input;
- Augment and redesign university degree programs to reflect the changing knowledge base and attendant competencies (e.g., McGregor & MacCleave, 2007); and,
- Create and enforce Codes of Professional Conduct or Codes of Ethics to ensure both accountability and integrity in practice.

Discussion

Millennials are being billed both as high-maintenance and high-performers, seen as both a challenge and a deep opportunity for growth and dynamics within the profession (Pendergast, 2006, 2008, 2009). As a caveat, although Home Economics associations need to personify generations, they should not generalise the stereotype developed for the Millennial Generation to all Millennial individuals. Generalisations about generations can be avoided simply by engaging with each person. They will be able to tell you if they feel they *fit the profile* (Notter, 2007). As James McIntosh (2008, p. 128), a UK Millennial (or self-described Gen Cusp), said recently at the IFHE Congress, “Just ask us.”

A powerful way to ensure a high level of engagement is through purposeful mentoring of Millennial professionals by current Home Economics professionals from both Generation X and the Boomers, and vice versa; Millennials have much to teach previous generations. Each generation can learn from the other, especially if each acknowledges and respects individual value systems and approaches to life and work (see Table 1, drawn from Buckley, Beu, Novicevic, & Sigerstad, 2001; Hammill, 2005; Kasina, 2005; Thielfoldt & Scheef, 2005; and Zemka, Raines, & Filipczak, 1999).

Again, we face a challenge. Pendergast (2009) explains that Millennials expect to move up the leadership position ladder based on demonstrated merit, instead of the current *waiting-in-line-for-seniority* mentality. The profession has to find a way to manage the tensions that will emerge when the Boomers and their value system retire and slide down the professional ladder at the same time the Millennials with their value system are climbing up the same ladder (again see Table 1). Better yet, the current generation of Home Economists inadvertently may be creating a very crowded nest if they stay involved in leadership

Table 1: Comparison of value premises of Boomers, Generation Xers and Millennials

Boomers Aged 47-64	Generation X Aged 27-46	Millennials (Generation Y) Aged 18-26
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • individualism • self sufficient • rejected establishment but now value sensitive authority figures • question authority • low trust levels • family and friends • health and wellness • value freedom of choice • value change • value competition • value success • personal growth and fulfilment • optimistic • self-promotion • self-absorbed • workaholic • work to get ahead and move up the ladder • desire quality • work for consensus • win someone to their side • like holding meetings • like micro-managing • need hands-on involvement • like sharing personal visions • like loose structures, task forces, temporariness • feel honoured when asked to speak publically about work • value inspiration and motivational support • value conformance to team norms • value conflict resolution • value being open • value a community of individuals and feeling connected • value a mix of spontaneity and discipline • try to balance materialism a generosity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-resilient • independent • sceptical • self-centred • efficient and pragmatic • good at juggling things and managing processes • value creativity • value access to information, lots of it • scarcity mentality • economically conservative • low perceived job security • appreciate directness and being up-front • appreciate specific, focused feedback • can seem aloof and isolated because they value individual autonomy • accept (tolerate) diversity • varying interpersonal skills • comfortable with winning and losing • not civic minded • do things their own way • reject rules • suspicious of bureaucracy • friends are not family • cautious in commitments • won't sacrifice life for work • entrepreneurial spirit • resist micro-management (find it intrusive and untrusting) • perceive structure as inhibitive • prefer projects • like access to best office and technologies • like working on computer-aided projects • want to advance on their accomplishments not on how well they play the political game 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feel they are special • like to be nurtured • need a supervised environment and structure • plan and are goal-directed • team oriented • active in communities • live for and through technology • very civic minded • social activists • celebrate diversity • reinvent rules • curious • naive about how workplace functions (not work savvy) • work is a means to personal fulfilment • work has to be meaningful • friends equal family • entrepreneurial • tolerant • social with peers • impatient with advancement • extreme fun • drawn to competence • value education and skills building • value mentoring and guidance • like positive reinforcement

positions in their retirement years, at the same time the Millennial Home Economists may want to move into these positions. Part of future-proofing Home Economics may involve helping Boomer Home Economists learn to let go, make room, and move over—to share power as well as different notions of leadership.

It goes without saying that Home Economics associations will need to embrace technology as a critical component of their operational infrastructure (Pendergast, 2009). Failing to make this ongoing investment will limit any Home Economics association's ability to meet the new expectations of the Millennial Generation (McIntosh, 2008; West, 2007). More importantly, Millennials need to feel there is an alignment between their personal values and those espoused by organisation(s). This alignment means the latter must ensure that its culture is authentic, and that its policies and practices align with its espoused core mission and values, and with the goods and services offered by the association (Clarke, 2000; Rose, 2007).

Conclusion

Home Economics associations have to adopt creative flexibility and be willing to adapt their recruitment, socialisation, and training initiatives (when deemed appropriate). These adaptations will help convince Millennials that Home Economics associations are aware of the subtle nuances that *make them tick* as a generation (DiGilio & Lynn-Nelson, 2004), and as a Home Economics professional. The Millennial blueprint shared in this paper is one such initiative, and it is needed. As one example, AAFCS membership declines 3% every year, and has done so for the past 30 years (Clarke, 2000). The need to maintain and increase membership is critical to each Home Economics organisation's survival, and that of the profession at large.

Importantly, the Millennial blueprint shared in this paper conforms to Clarke's (2000) theoretical model of *membership response motivation* for professional associations. It accounts for all six elements of membership: (a) respect for geographical separation (bridged with technological innovations); (b) acknowledgment of cultural diversity; (c) retention of the profession's history while respecting its future potential; (d) political and leadership opportunities; (e) psychological attachment to a meaningful mission and goals; and (f) social interaction, plus a socially significant mission and agenda. If Home Economics organisations are able to demonstrate and deliver a commitment to Millennial professionals, these same professionals will commit to the associations and to the profession. Ending with a cliché—the future of the profession depends on it.

Authors' note

*For clarification, we had in mind such organisations as the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) and all state affiliates, the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Association (FCSEA) and state affiliates, Kappa Omicron Nu (KON) and affiliates, the International Federation of Home Economics and its regional offices, the Canadian Home Economics Foundation (CHEF), provincial associations in Canada, and the Home Economics Institute of Australia (HEIA). All sister organisations on the other continents can benefit from this blueprint, if their demographics merit the adoption of such strategies.

Biographies

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