

Empowering millennials through mobility

 By [Des Fenner](#)

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Globally the generation born in the early 80's to the early 2000's is changing the game - more specifically: how they communicate with businesses, what and how they purchase and what they value most.



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In South Africa, millennials have a unique set of challenges that shape how they engage. Regardless of these challenges they are the consumers to watch: they are the generation driven by technology and sharing thoughts and ideas on social media platforms. Like it or not; this generation will influence the success or failure of many businesses.

Taking all of this in to consideration; they are the go-getter generation that has a yearning to be mobile.

According to a population report by Statistics South Africa, there are approximately 14,5 million millennials in South Africa, or 26.5 % of the population. Taking a step back we need to be cognisant that there are obvious differences with millennial groups from various countries and continents, where the technological mobility era has brought along similarities. One of these is that South African millennials want to buy cars and rent houses.

Education first

Forbes partnered with Elite Daily on a comprehensive study on millennials and reported that in South Africa, many millennials still live with their parents due to the economy and crushing student debt. As such, 61% can't afford a house and would rather own a car than own a house, as it's more affordable. In conjunction with this, millennials are only getting married, having children and getting decent paying jobs later in life, compared to previous generations.

A study by GFK highlights that this generation is responsible for some large shifts in mind-set that have had a major impact on brand requirements to win the favour of millennials. The data supports global finding that millennials are better educated, 84% of millennials have completed a matric or some level of tertiary education compared to the older generations of 58% with 11% having completed a university or other post grad degree as compared to 7% to older generations.

With greater access to education, they are more self-assured and believe that they control their own destiny. They strive for social recognition and status.

Getting mobile

This yearning to be in control of their own destiny is – in large part – what drives millennials to be mobile. At the core: mobility equals empowerment.

In South Africa, being mobile enables you to go out, earn money and define your own destiny. To some extent it feeds the entrepreneurial passion. Importantly, however, given the economic situation of many South Africans, this access to mobility needs to be reliable, safe and affordable.

They want to be self-funded successful business owners and they want to oversee their financial futures. To that extent there is a movement towards “the sharing economy” and this can be seen through organisations such as RentMyRide which is a private car rental service. This will take some time getting off the ground so in the interim new working millennials are spending their time online searching for private car sales by the owner in the hope to save the “traditional” mark-up dealerships place on the vehicles. There is a distinct need for affordable, reliable vehicles for millennials that will speak to their request for mobility.

With this as a backdrop business needs to acknowledge the fact that millennials have high expectations of brands – they want products that are tailored to their personal quirks. For car brands this goes further than just the “quirky” car – they want financing that suits their needs and pockets. Additionally, they love collaboration and like to be involved in making products more relevant to their personal lives. For these consumers disruption has become the norm and hence they expect marketers to come up with innovations that they didn't even know that they needed.

South African millennials are looking for more simple solutions to their complicated life's problems and their request for authenticity demands that brands are transparent, honest and consistent not only in their messaging but on what they promise to deliver.

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