



You Say You Want a Revolution?

From the recent Live Earth concert to the YouTube presidential debates to the thinkMTV campaign, young consumers are putting their brand on their efforts to enact change in the United States. Recent voting turnout data seem to support the notion that young adults are getting more involved: In the 2006 midterm elections, voter turnout rates for individuals ages 18-29 increased three percentage points over 2002 (up to 25%), reversing a trend in declining rates since 1982. (1) While such trends are encouraging, the numbers still reflect a vast minority of the overall young adult population. The question remains: Do young people really care—and more specifically—will they take action? This week's MONITOR Minute investigates Echo Boomers' attitudes and behaviors around making a lasting contribution, using the MindBase® attitudinal segmentation.

Passion for Change

Expressive consumers—the MindBase segment most strongly represented by Echo Boomers—want to make their mark. Whether it's being a good citizen (showing an increase of 15 percentage points over two years) or taking a leadership role in their community (showing the highest percentage of any MindBase segment), these individuals are thinking about leaving a positive legacy. Clearly the passion for involvement and activism exists in the Expressive segment. Yet today, their attitudes still exceed their behaviors. When it comes to getting their hands dirty, these consumers are actually less likely to say they've voted, signed a petition or made changes in their lifestyle to live in a more environmentally friendly way. So why does this gap between thoughts and behaviors exist?

Understanding the “Why”

Despite their aspirations, Expressive consumers simply don't feel that they're in a position to address the issues facing our country at this time. For them, it really comes down to a hierarchy of needs—the need to take care of themselves trumps the need to take care of less personally affecting concerns. The effort required to establish themselves in work, family and financial spheres pushes activism to the back seat. It is an expression of iPriority, as Expressive consumers realize that they must focus on getting themselves in a good place before they can truly devote energy, time and money to help others.

Yankelovich MindBase

Yankelovich MindBase, an attitudinal segmentation derived from the Yankelovich MONITOR® study respondents and based on motivations, values and marketplace priorities, can help marketers identify those who lead the trends and those who are more reticent. The MindBase segment examined in this Minute, **I Am Expressive**, tends to be composed of Echo Boomer individuals.

About Echoes



Birth Years

Ages in 2007:	16-28
Birth Years:	1979-1991
Approx. 2007 Population:	51 million

MONITOR data collected in 2006; population size from U.S. Census Population Estimates, October 2006; Echoes refer to adults 16+ in MONITOR survey, not the entire Echoes generation (MONITOR tracks only Echoes who are 16 and older).

However, this doesn't imply that Expressive consumers should be excluded from calls to action. Rather, it demonstrates that getting these individuals to engage involves creating a mutually beneficial situation. Efforts to help the greater good that also fit seamlessly into their current lifestyle, or aid them in getting ahead, will resonate strongly with their passions while also addressing the reality of their current situations. To truly connect with this group—and get them to act—businesses must show that they understand the limited capacity and other priorities Expressive consumers have now.

Implications and Opportunities

- When trying to get Expressive consumers involved, offer tiers of participation. Allow them to get their foot in the door by donating whatever time or money they have now, even if it's minimal.
 - **Help them establish their devotion to a cause early on.** It can potentially lead to greater contributions down the line, when they're in a position to do so.
 - **Consider how to employ technology that can help create access.** Time and money might be lacking, but young folks can make a contribution from their PCs, laptops or mobile phones.
- Speak to the personally relevant benefits Expressive consumers receive from their engagement. Go from the abstract to the tangible; show how their involvement actually benefits their own immediate well-being and contributes to the cause.
- When launching activism or charity campaigns, leverage attitudes via tools such as MindBase to create strong connections with the values of current customers and prospects.

Bottom Line

Expressive consumers care about leaving a lasting footprint on the country, but they don't yet feel completely empowered to make an impact today. Show them the importance of marrying their passions with action, even if they are not able to throw in all of their time and monetary resources. Help them make their passions a reality by taking their primary lifestyle needs into account. Start these young consumers down the path of creating a lasting legacy of positive social change.

Did You Know



Among consumers ages 18-26: (2)

- 62% agree, "I prefer to work for a company that provides opportunities for me to apply my skills to benefit nonprofit organizations."
- 70% agree, "Companies should use volunteering as a professional development tool."
- 50% agree, "An employee's involvement in the community should be considered as part of his or her performance."



Characteristics extremely/very important to the way others see you: A good citizen	2004	2006
Total Population	74%	76%
I Am Expressive	58	73

	Total Population	I Am Expressive
I have yet to create the legacy I want to leave behind	66%	76%
The contributions and impact of my generation have been a disappointment compared to what we could have done	47	59
<i>Signs of success and accomplishment:</i> Being a leader in your community	30	38
I am finally in a position where I can give time and attention to the really important issues facing this country	35	29
Voted in past year as a form of activism	54	48
Signed a petition in past year as a form of activism	34	25
Have not begun acting in more environmentally conscious ways than had been previously*	27	35
I am willing to make significant changes in my lifestyle and my habits to live in a more environmentally responsible way (8-10 on an 11-point scale, where 10 = "Strongly agree")*	36	30

* 2007 Yankelovich MONITOR Perspective: *Going Green*

Running with It

- **Nonprofit Board Leadership Program:** Columbia University's program (and similar programs available at USC-Berkeley, the University of Chicago and Northwestern University) connects MBA students with nonprofit boards to work on specialized projects each semester. The program allows student to make an immediate impact without requiring a large amount of time. It also provides crucial networking opportunities that can help them land a job after graduation.
- **Salesforce.com:** Understanding young adults' desire to volunteer but lack of time (and money) to do so, Salesforce.com gives 1% of profits to the Salesforce.com Foundation, which pays for its employees to volunteer 1% of their work time.
- **Moveon.org:** Technology empowers would-be activists to sign petitions for various causes—such as preserving government funding for PBS and NPR—and reach out to government leaders and decision makers.

MONITOR Resources

MONITOR 2006/2007 *State of the Consumer Report*: iPriority

2007 Yankelovich MONITOR Perspective: *Going Green*



Sources

(1) "[Youth Voter Turnout Increases in 2006](#)," Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, June 2007

(2) "[Highlights of 2007 Deloitte Volunteer IMPACT Survey](#)," Deloitte & Touch USA, LLP