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## 10 Insights for Engaging Millennials in Education Programs

So you've succeeded in recruiting Millennial members to your association. Now you have to focus on keeping them involved, inspired and interested. A recent study of Millennials from Buzz Marketing Group found 58% belong to a professional organization or community, and 92% believe that membership in today's professional organizations provides strong opportunities for them. Members of the fastest-growing segment of the workforce are striving to grow in their careers and make a difference in the work that they do. While the interests and priorities of this generation are diverse, studies show that Millennials favor experiences over physical things and purpose over profit.

**HOLLY AMATANGELO**  
Director of Education & Learning Services  
SmithBucklin

Holly Amatangelo is director of Education & Learning Services at SmithBucklin, an INCON Partner and association management and services company based in Chicago and Washington D.C. For more trends, issues and developments, see SmithBucklin's [2017 edition of Circuit](#). Contact [Holly](#) or visit SmithBucklin's [website](#).

Associations that make an effort to engage members with innovative education experiences will find that these opportunities will resonate with all generations, not just Millennials. Here are 10 tips to make your association education engaging and satisfying for Millennials as well as your broader membership.

### 1. Assess current knowledge

Breaking into a new industry or profession can be overwhelming. New association members want to learn, but they don't know what they don't know. Rather than immediately jumping in, make assessing their current knowledge the first priority. Look closely at what they want, then tailor it, create it and deliver it.

### 2. Seek out the unconventional

Education methods such as instructor-led courses, structured sessions and certification are now evolving in unconventional ways. One evolving education method is formalized peer-to-peer education, because it has been shown that event attendees frequently remember conversations with peers more vividly than formal lectures.

### 3. Disrupt the structure

Unstructured education sessions are also becoming more and more common. This format features minimal predetermined topics and allows attendees to lead instead of having facilitators control the session. It can be achieved by including a guided discussion time during an education program, or by allowing attendees to vote at the beginning of a session on what specific topics will be featured.

### 4. Take it online and keep it mobile

For busy professionals juggling personal and job-related responsibilities, a self-paced online

training program is a convenient alternative to a traditional classroom experience. With an online program, professionals have the flexibility to learn anywhere, anytime and at a pace that works for them. Webinars and podcasts are useful and popular ways for members to educate themselves on their own time. Also make sure all online content is mobile optimized.

### 5. Enlist industry experts

To ensure the education program reflects core competencies and need-to-know information, enlist the help of industry experts such as board members, association executives and industry partners. These experts were once newcomers to the industry too. They can provide real-world insights, everyday tips and tricks, and no-nonsense advice to guide new professionals through this transition.

### 6. Keep it visual

Think beyond the written word. Valuable information can be found in videos, infographics, photos, webinars, social media posts, podcasts and more. These different communication options can deliver great impact, especially to visual learners.

### 7. Be purpose-led

Research indicates that a focus on purpose directly impacts an association's ability to interest, attract and retain the best talent. Instill a sense of purpose in all association activities and in the education that is provided.

### 8. Reach multiple audiences

It is important to create educational content that is appropriate for different career levels. Some new professionals are recent university graduates, while others are making a midlife career change.

Your content should fully immerse new industry professionals into their roles as quickly as possible, no matter their amount of experience. You can design intense immersion programs that engage members from any career-level.

### 9. Offer digital credentialing

Digital badging is a relatively new way to showcase credentialing. Badges offer a visual representation of a specific accomplishment that can be shared on social media, embedded in digital resumes and displayed on personal websites.

### 10. Provide frequent touchpoints

Millennials want regular interaction with their association. An association can achieve this by continually providing attractive content – through blogs, newsletters and with active social media channels – that delivers news, education and opportunities to broaden their community. Strive to capture the wealth of knowledge of the more experienced association's members by encouraging them to share their experiences. Frequent touchpoints cement the association as the primary source that members turn to when they need information about the profession or industry it represents.

Retaining young professional members means offering inspiring, interesting and educational opportunities they cannot find anywhere else. With thoughtful planning, leveraging other members' expertise and creative thinking, you can create a satisfying experience. You can also cultivate future leaders in the industry and strengthen your organization.

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