

Millennial Mojo

Convention keynote to address the importance of collaborating with the next generation

Ravi Hutheesing will be a featured keynote speaker at the 97th State Education Convention, Jan. 17-19 in Milwaukee. Ravi has built his brand globally as a cultural-entrepreneur. His philosophies and strategies have helped businesses, educators, and over a million people throughout the Americas, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia bridge generational and cultural divides. Additionally, the U.S. State Department engages Ravi as a cultural diplomat to create programs worldwide that foster cultural exchange and mutual understanding.

His worldwide visibility skyrocketed as the guitarist for triple Grammy nominee, Hanson. Their massive fan base of the earliest millennials made them the top-selling band in the world around the turn of the millennium. Ravi has performed on stages that include the White House, Madison Square Garden, *Tonight Show*, *Good Morning America*, and, among others, *Saturday Night Live*.

As a cultural diplomat, Ravi first went to Russia in 2015 on behalf of the U.S. State Department and delivered a series of lectures on artist-entrepreneurship and youth leadership. In 2016, he went to Indonesia — the world's largest Muslim population — and created a songwriting camp for millennials from southeast Asian nations, showcasing how arts and entrepreneurship can bridge the most

severe cultural and religious divides.

Ravi conducted songwriting and cultural entrepreneurship programs in 2017 in Iraq which included four students from Mosul — liberated from ISIS just three days before — and Lebanon which included work in Syrian refugee camps. The State Department also contracted him to be a judge for the prestigious 2017-18 American Music Abroad program, for which a select group of artists will tour and represent American culture overseas. Currently, he serves as the Director of Youth Engagement and Cultural Entrepreneurship for the Association of American Voices — a non-profit organization that has been conducting cross-cultural engagement with audiences in over 140 nations worldwide and administers some of the most effective cultural diplomacy programs of the U.S. State Department.

Ravi also partners with Shanti Bhavan Children's Project in India, which serves as a home and non-sectarian boarding school providing a holistic upbringing in a high-quality educational setting for the poorest of the poor. Given proper care, support, and educational opportunities, these children are able to succeed in life and bring about social change to their communities. Current graduates are employed by American Express, Goldman Sachs, Deloitte, and others, and the school is the subject of the Netflix series, "Daughters of Destiny."



Connecting With the Next Generation

by Ravi Hutheesing

How will the largest generation on the planet reinvent education, entrepreneurship, and human capital? They may achieve world peace in the process, if we let them.

Millennials are not to be ignored. They are the largest generation and in less than one year these 17-35 year olds will be the most economically influential in the global economy. The future looks bright for those embracing millennial culture.

One can best influence the actions of millennials by being relevant and relatable. Drawing comparisons to boomers often evokes negativity and condescension toward youth — a tendency that repeats itself with every generation. However, we all have many more commonalities than we do differences and therefore one must develop empathy.

The collapse of Wall Street, 9/11, the rising cost of education, and a decreasing number of jobs is largely

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the palette from which millennials paint. PEW Research reports that interests in religion and military have hit an all-time low, likely due to terrorism emphasizing religious conflict and the astronomical cost of war.

Meaningful activities outweigh profit since high finance equates to corporate greed. Millennials are the most educated generation to date, but heavily scrutinize the value of highly regarded institutions that ultimately drown students in a sea of debt. Why invest in the future when the promise has defaulted? Moreover, PEW Research reports that by 2030, 38 percent of the job market will be outsourced to technology. Neither of the major presidential candidates during our last election

discussed this issue nor the impact of artificial intelligence, and that is part of the reason why millennials did not show up at to vote.

Millennials are truth seekers who value people and purpose over products and profits. They are skeptical of authority, lack patience for bureaucracy, and relate best to peers within an electronic social context. They are not as technologically savvy as they are technologically transparent — mobile devices are extensions of their beings and a seamless means for self-expression to cultivate social circles. Previous generations found like-minded friends locally by wearing sports team jerseys and rock band t-shirts. Today, we broadcast “likes” globally

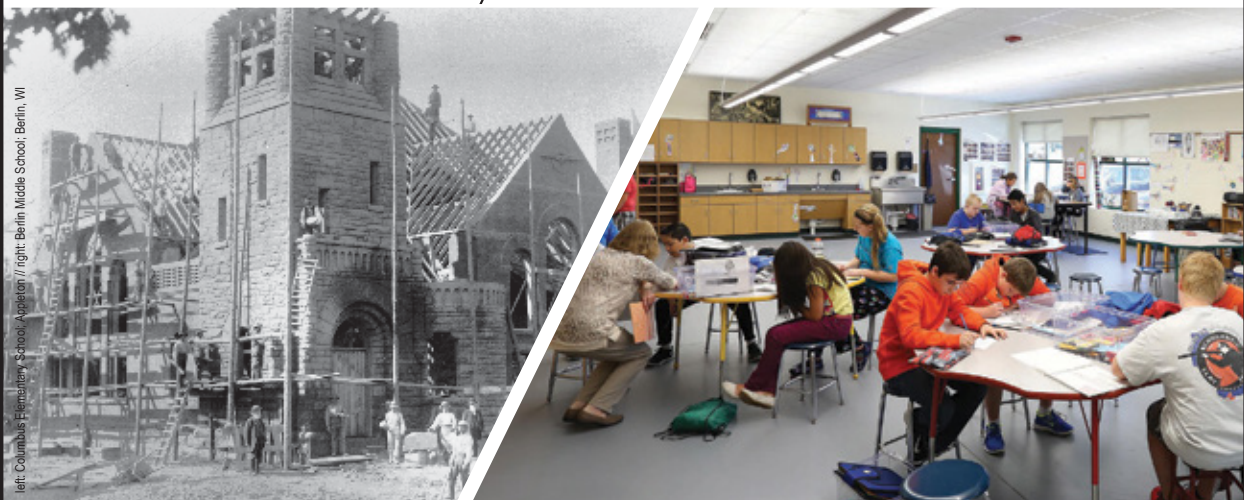
on social media and instantly engage with respondents. Millennials are consequently the most socially connected and diverse generation.

They don't look at their phones; they look through them at the world on the other side. Racial, social, and cultural differences are less important to them, and they would much rather come together to make the world a better place if we let them rather than saddling them with “baggage” from previous generations. They wholeheartedly represent Gandhi's message of “Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

I am optimistic about a future under the leadership of millennials. ■

Ravi Hutheesing, Global Keynote Speaker, RaviUnites.com

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