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## Generation Y: Exposed, Explored, Explained

NEW BOOK HIGHLIGHTS SUCCESSES BY MEMBERS OF THE NEWEST GENERATION OF YOUNG ADULTS AND OFFERS INSIGHTS ABOUT HOW TO APPEAL TO THIS GROUP

Political leaders want their votes. Businesses want their disposable income.

Bea Fields – an internationally renowned leadership consultant and author – recently completed a socio-economic study of Generation Y and its potential economic and political power. Her new book detailing her findings -- **Millennial Leaders: Success Stories from Today's Most Brilliant Generation Y Leaders** -- highlights a number of Gen-Yers who have already made a name for themselves, and also offers plenty of insight and advice for political and business leaders seeking to tap into this burgeoning market of young adults.

Generation Y – people born after 1977 -- represents more than 70 million consumers in the United States. Members of this group earn a total annual income of about \$211 billion, and spend approximately \$172 billion per year.

"Generation Y represents a massive group of influencers — the largest, and the most cutting edge generation in our history," says Fields. "They cut their teeth on technology, grew up with the knowledge they could do anything -- because their parents and teachers told them so -- and a desire to make a difference in their world."

Fields points out that Generation Y cannot be reached through traditional marketing channels. "What worked with their parents and grandparents won't work with this group," she says. "Direct mail, print ads, and television advertising bounce off these powerful consumers like bullets against Superman's chest."

So how do you reach this group when they can choose their own music without listening to a commercial radio station, can block outsiders from their social circles, and only refer to newspapers when they need packing material to move on to their next venue?

"If you're serious about marketing to this group, you need to think outside the box," says Fields. "You need to take your marketing efforts where these young people are. Gen-Yers are very tech-savvy. You need to integrate technological innovations like podcasts, and social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace into your marketing plan."

Fields cautions that any marketing efforts targeting Generation Y need to easily be defined by Gen-Yers as "cool." She cites Barack Obama's presidential campaign, and Apple as examples of two current institutions that are meeting that standard and successfully marketing to Generation Y.

"I think Apple, with their iPods and Macs, is a good example of a company that has successfully tapped into this market," says Fields. "Apple founder Steve Jobs said he wanted to make the design of the Apple iBook so cool that users would want to 'lick the screen.' That's the kind of thinking that will draw Generation Y to what you are selling."