



*An opportunity like Generation Y hasn't been dealt to marketers since the baby boom.*

# Generation Y: Impactful, stressed out

By Barbara Katz, HealthFocus International

An opportunity like Generation Y – also known as the Echo Boomers or Millennials – “hasn’t been dealt to marketers since the baby boom hit,” according to *BusinessWeek*.

At 60 million strong, this group – born between 1979 and 1994 – is three times the size of Generation X and rivals the size of their parents’ generation, the baby boomers at 72 million.

In addition to numbers, Generation Y is an attitudinal force to be reckoned with. These kids live life differently than their parents. They are a “here and now” generation that is interested in maximizing their current life experience, not working hard now to fund some future dream of retirement.

*USA Today* says, “Unlike the generations that have gone before them, Gen Y has been pampered, nurtured and programmed with a slew of activities since they were toddlers, meaning they are both high-performance and high-maintenance.”

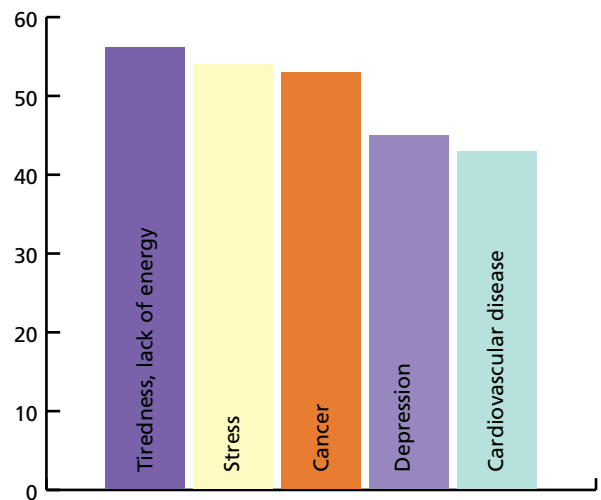
Gen Y wants to have it all now because the era in which they have been raised has taught them that now may be all they have. So, while driven, motivated and engaged, they do seek work-life balance. It’s not that they don’t want to work hard, but they insist on working at something they like. They are loyal only to themselves and their families, and they will change jobs – and change brands – without hesitation.

According to what the 18-29-year-old age cohort tells us in the HealthFocus Trend Study, their main source of media is the Internet. They spend less time than the general shopper population with many traditional sources of media, particularly television and newspapers, but more of them listen often to radio and read more general interest magazines, such as *People* and *Sports Illustrated*.

When it comes to health and wellness, Gen Y is less concerned about most things than the general shopping population – no surprise. However, a marked and concerning difference emerges in their levels of stress and fatigue. According to the HealthFocus Trend Study, their key health concerns do not mirror the general population. Their top five concerns (in order) are tiredness, stress, cancer, depression and cardiovascular disease. Twenty-eight percent of 18-29-year-olds report being affected by depression. This is five percentage points higher than the general shopper population, a significant difference.

Twenty-eight percent describe their diets as unhealthy versus only 19 percent of the total shopper population; almost half of

## TOP HEALTH CONCERNS AMONG 18-29-YEAR-OLDS



Source: HealthFocus International Trend Study

them wish they had time to exercise more versus a third of the total shopper population; and 29 percent say they smoke as compared to 19 percent of the total shopper population.

In response to stress and packed lives, Gen Y has two key emerging areas of nutritional interest: energy and immunity. When asked which areas of nutrition or health they want to learn more about or want more information on, foods that boost the immune system tops the list. Also included in their top five are high-energy foods and foods that generally enhance health.

Interesting but not surprising is the fact that when it comes to levels of concern about different food safety and nutritional issues, such as trans fats, Gen Y has less concern than the total shopper population. This makes sense. Younger people generally have a greater sense of invincibility and tend to worry less in general about things they don’t perceive as affecting them.

But it also makes it more significant they are so concerned about tiredness, stress and depression. It seems to me like this is a pretty clear message in regard to the health and nutrition areas of interest for this powerful force in the marketplace. **HF**

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