

User Experience: 5 Tips for Designing Products to Appeal to Millennials

BY [SOYUN KIM](#) ON JANUARY 4, 2018

You may have a great idea and polished advertising to go with it, but, for some reason, millennials don't seem to click with your product. Do you ever wonder why? What can you do about it?

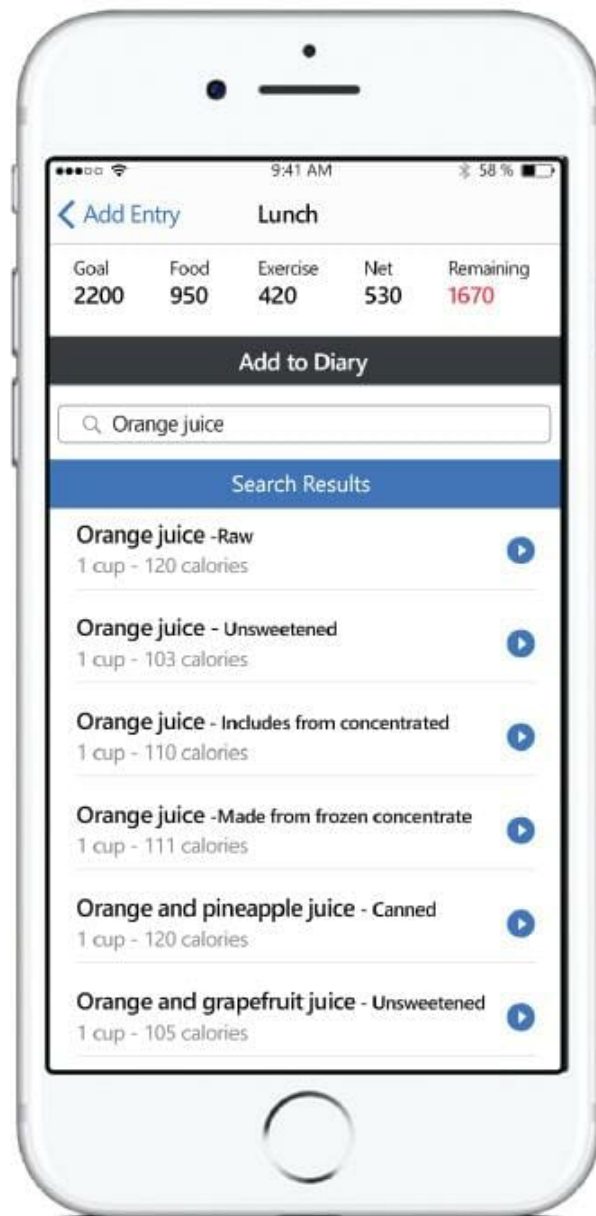
Millennials are one of the largest generations by number, and will soon make up 50% of the global workforce according to [PWC](#). But when it comes to customer loyalty, millennials are different. Research has shown that they are [less influenced by advertising](#) than other generations, so companies have been struggling to engage with them.

But there is the opportunity to connect with millennials in the communication of your product and brand. So for anyone who wants to connect with millennials, or is even just thinking about how they can build a better digital product, here are some tips to help your brand through User Experience (UX) design.

1. Find the user's pain points with existing solutions, and figure out the deep root of the problems

Having empathy with the user is a hot topic. Seeing the product from the user's point of view gives you an ability to create real solutions for their pain points. [When the pain from using another product is solved by your product, the user starts to engage with you and your brand.](#)

For example, most of the fitness/dietary app products today just end up giving data to the user rather than significant value – many of them will track your steps or your calorie intake. After a while, the user will stop using the app because they don't see any real-life results from it. It seems interesting and useful at first, but over time it becomes another form of work – inputting each ingredient and quantity can take up a lot of time.



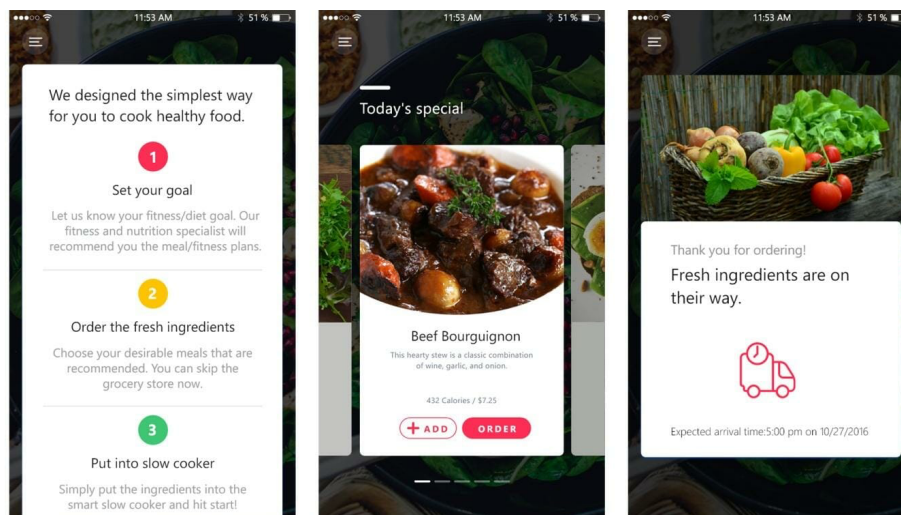
So the user's pain point might become: "I don't have enough time to cook, so I eat out. How do I tell how many calories I consume?" Many restaurants that show calorie intake give a large range, such as 400-

700 calories for a meal. Another pain point may be: “How do I deal with food cravings?,” which may need to be fixed at a more psychological level.

2. Create a solution that will lead to real-life results

Millennials have a “digital DNA”. Their lives have always been filled with new technologies; however, **studies show that many have started to crave more real-life interaction and results**. Companies like Amazon are acting to meet these needs by creating offline stores, such as [Whole Foods](#).

The best way to build muscle or to diet is not by reading articles about it or inputting and checking your data; it’s by doing the exercise and eating well. So for companies the best way to get real-life results is to design a product that enables your users to take action very easily. Here’s an example of an app that shows how easy it is to get fresh produce customized to your dietary and fitness goals. Simply put your fresh ingredient into the specially designed slow cooker.

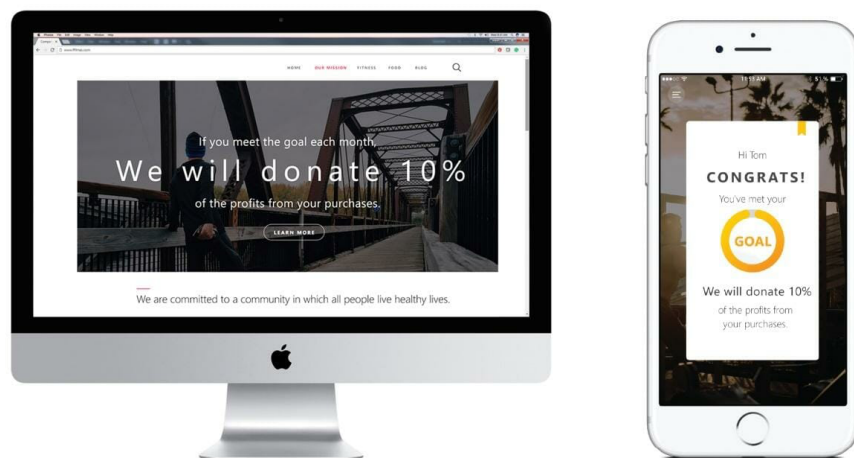


To make your user visit your app regularly, you must help them to create a routine that will stick. If you can create a solution like, “When I have a food craving, I will talk with a consultant in the app or I will check what other people are doing for their body”, then you create returning users.

3. Create your vision statement and communicate that in every touchpoint

Many studies, including Nielsen's on [Millennials – Breaking the Myths](#), show that millennials like the brands they perceive as authentic. They are also willing to pay more to companies that are active in a social cause. According to Enso's [2017 Brand World Value Index](#) research report, Toms Shoes ranks higher than Nike among millennials, which is significantly different from other generations. This is surprising given the difference in sizes between companies and functions of their products.

If you have a vision statement, communicate it actively. Rather than small text in the corner of your homepage saying “We donate 2% of profits,” you can share that information more boldly with millennial users — “If you lose X lbs this month, we will donate X\$ to fight childhood obesity.”



Millennials engage with brands that help them represent who they are. They wear your brand statement proudly to represent “I’m into well-being. I make healthier choices,” or “I’m into localism and regional pride.” Once they align with your vision statement, they start to create brand loyalty.

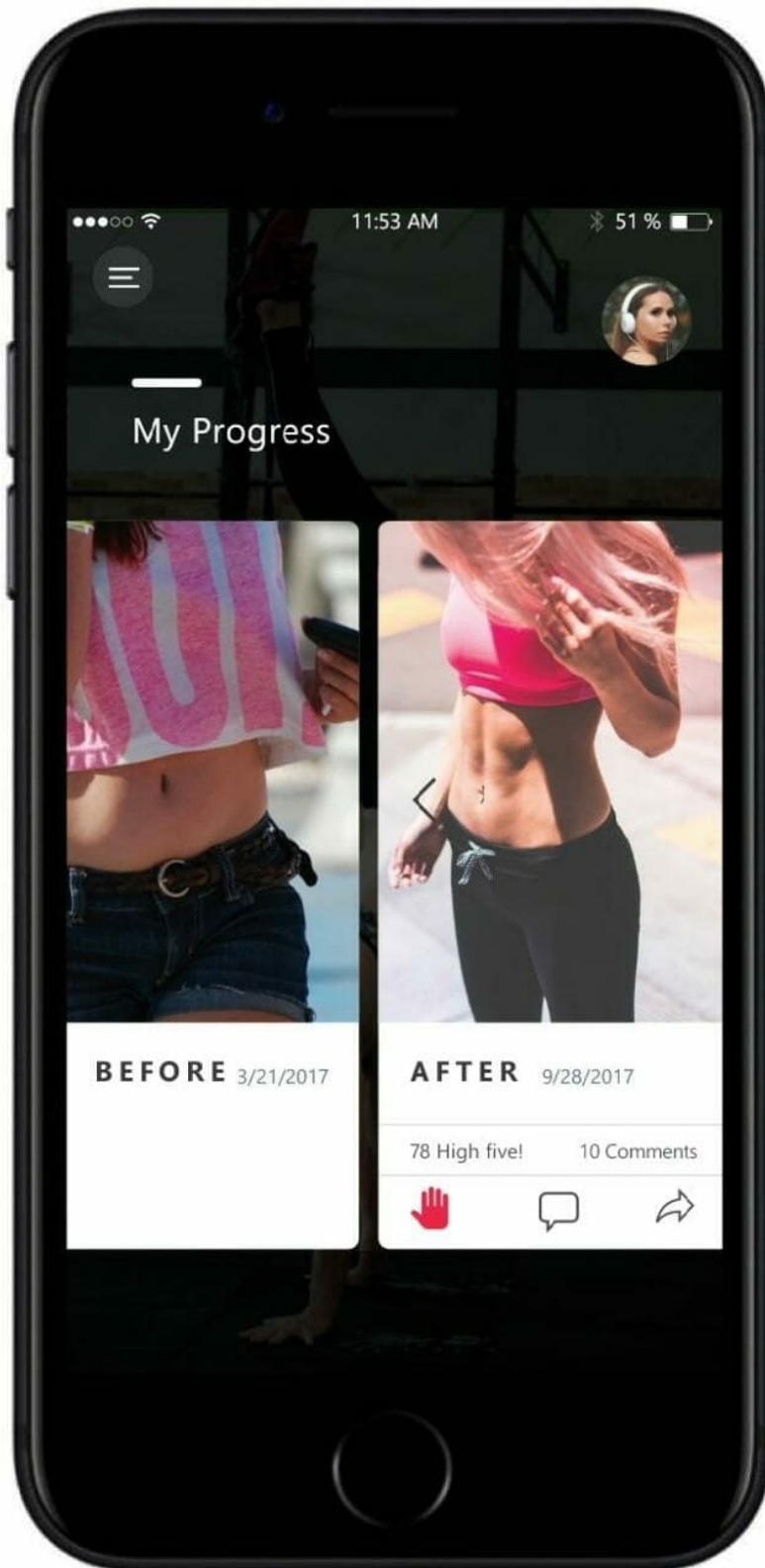
One thing to keep in mind is that your brand should be true to what you’re doing. Don’t make a brand statement that you can’t keep. In the digital age everything is so transparent, it’s easy for anyone to figure out if you’re doing it or not, and we all appreciate honesty and authenticity.

4. Create commitment by giving rewards and feedback

Rewards are one of the most important elements driving users to return to an app/website, both physiologically and psychologically.

Every time a user gets a reward, their brain releases dopamine, giving them a feeling of euphoria. The reward doesn't need to be tangible, it can be as simple as positive encouragement – “Good job!” or “High five! You ran 35 minutes today.”

Other people's feedback is another form of reward. You can create better user engagement by making it easy to share to a community. On Facebook, for example, getting a “like” releases dopamine.



If you create a community of people with a similar goal of losing weight, users can share their progress with less hesitation. Many people hesitate to share before and after pictures with their Facebook friends, but in a community with similar goals, there's a reason to

share. When the user gets feedback, their commitment becomes stronger, along with their sense of community between users. Now they have more reasons to come back to your app/website.

5. Bring the user to your team by treating them like your team

Humans mirror each other's activity or feelings. In our brains, we have special neurons called mirror neurons. Our bodies are programmed to imitate from the moment we're born, which is how babies learn. **If your writing treats users as a part of your team, they're more likely to mirror that and think of you as a team.** They may feel more engaged with your statement. Millennials, interestingly, **care about collective success** as much as individual success.



If you share with your users: "We generated 50k in funding to fight childhood obesity, thanks for making it happen," they feel empowered. They feel like the healthy food they bought, which

made their life easier, contributed at the same time to this cause. They feel like they became part of the team and the brand. They feel good by contributing the team's success.

Conclusion

By building engagement and commitment from your users in this way, **your brand's success becomes their personal success**. This is how you can build strong trust and engagement with millennials. Building brand loyalty is a two-way street.

Other Sources

[Millennials are Seeking Purpose and Innovation](#) – Universum

[The Millennial Paradox: A Generation Uncovered](#) – Landor



ABOUT [SOYUN KIM](#)

Soyun Kim is Senior Product Designer at StudioRed, an award-winning product development consultancy in Silicon Valley providing design research; industrial and UI/UX design; mechanical, structural and optical engineering; prototyping; and production services. Before joining StudioRed, Soyun worked with GoPro Inc, fuseproject, RKS and Lunar design where her clients included HP, LG, JBL, Hamilton medical, Unilever, SC Johnson, SanDisk, and Epson. Her work has been recognized by Industrial Designers Society of America (IDSA), Western District Student Merit Awards, IDEA, Core77, CES Innovation Awards, Spark Awards and Good Design Awards. You can see her work at www.studiored.com.

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[Jenny Wanger](#) • 6 days ago

Fair points. Out of curiosity, why is any of this targeted specifically at millenials? This seems to be UX principles that apply well whether it's millenials or not. I don't know anyone who would prefer a brand that's inauthentic, or rather go through more steps to get something done. Is there data that shows that millenials react more to any of these points?

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