

The Commune-ity Meeting Hyphen Session Notes Session by Adam Shaw

Hyphen Mission: Hyphen seeks to connect 18-30 year olds To Service...With Purpose... Through Resources...For a Mission.

Our Vision: We long to see Hyphen thrive and expand at a local and district level, and we also look for this ministry to grow nationally and internationally. As the Hyphen Team, we are grateful for the foundation that has been laid during the first five years this ministry has existed. Now, it's time to build. It's time to grow. It's time to beat every statistic that would say this generation will not stay in church, will not know their God, and will not make it to Heaven. We believe this generation is hungry for an encounter and an experience with God that will change their life and change their world!

That is why we are here to help you today...

Hyphen's key demographic is the millennial generation. Time doesn't permit me to talk at length about the post-modern culture that millennials occupy. There are many resources out there. Post-modern culture is something I did a lab on at Commune-ity 2012 if you're looking for an apostolic student pastor's perspective.

So without giving much backstory here are some key characteristics that should give insight into millennial generation and shape our approach to ministering to them.

Millennials are social and love social spaces. Rudy Miick, FCSI, principal of **Miick & Associates**, a Boulder, Colo.-based restaurant consultancy. said "'I've been looking into more 30-inch by 48-inch tables instead of 30-inch by 30-inch deuces that can comfortably seat a 4-top or expand to 6 with 2 seats on each end," he says. Miick has also experimented with using tables with leaves or extensions that can accommodate larger groups on a moment's notice. Reason being, many Millennials like to join already seated groups of friends as the dining progresses."¹,

Choices as revealed by on demand approach to media consumption.

Twitter and Facebook has opened up the doors for the millennial generation to have personal access...they expect this.

Involvement: Hyphens want to serve. Give them an opportunity and they will be loyal to the brand.

¹ Levine, <http://rddmag.com/development/features/50-designing-for-millennials>, accessed Aug 6, 2014

Depth and spirituality...

Lost: A Pew Research poll found that the number of Americans who are religiously unaffiliated rose to almost 20%—a nearly 5% leap in just the last five years. In the subsequent months, a Gallup poll showed similar numbers, and most recently, in March 2013, a poll from UC-Berkeley and Duke University similarly found religious affiliation in the U.S. is at its lowest point since it began to be tracked.

One common thread in every survey has been the significant number of Millennials among these “Nones.” The initial Pew survey found that nearly one-in-three members of the Millennial generation (32%) has no religious affiliation. Recent surveys by the Barna Group have shed light on this trend by examining those 18- to 29-year-olds who used to identify themselves closely with faith and the church, but who have since begun to wrestle with that identity. In fact, between high school and turning 30, 43% of these once-active Millennials drop out of regular church attendance—that amounts to eight million twentysomethings who have, for various reasons, given up on church or Christianity.²

On the basis of this generational snapshot, let’s look at principles.

I will give principles because there is no cookie cutter model. But I will be illustrating how some of these principles can be practically applied in a Hyphen party, breakout session, small group and retreat. I will be making the application when I talk about the principle so you can see how each event can make it come alive.

Prepare yourself: If you’re going to lead a group...be a reader and an avid studier of millennial culture and the issues hyphens are facing. We need to articulate our faith and apply it to the biggest cultural issues. Saying you don’t know is ok as long as you go out and search for the answer and come back with a response. Millennials want depth, you must be deep. Zite...great app

Know your objectives, and measure your success accordingly: are often forgotten in evaluation. Focusing on objectives will always help an event to become a movement. Defining your win, will let you know if you actually won.

Rest of my time will be split up in explaining principles based around two words. Be. Offer.

BE:

authentic: Be true to yourself. Things need to be organic and never forced. Don't be an intellectual if you're not. Don't try to be cool...you won't be. Be true to your personality, history, calling and character. **Authenticity also equals vulnerability and transparency when communicating.** Hyphens are more inclined to relational authority

² <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/teens-nextgen/612-three-spiritual-journeys-of-millennials#.U-MC0V5qbLQ>

than positional authority, maximize impact through intentional transparency and vulnerability. If people feel like they know you, they'll trust what you have to say.

Implications: Hyphen Small group: be open about your own struggles and fears. This creates a safe space for others to be open about theirs.

Unexpected: Offer a different experience and format from traditional Pentecostal Church. Back to back speakers, unique responses that don't include your typical altar call etc...

Implications:Hyphen small group ~ Keep it different! I have monthly Hyphen meetings/get-together events and I always change up the location

"I also like to change up the speakers so they are not always hearing from just me. I especially love hearing from the Hyphens in my group. Occasionally I will pre-select a few of my Hyphens to give a short 3-4 minute talk on certain aspects of a topic. It is great when Hyphens can hear from their peers."

Implications: Designing your space. (show picture of floor plan for Hyphen Retreat) Less is more - have a couple of great design pieces that are DIY. Millennials want excellence. Don't worry about having a bunch of cheap dollar store stuff - have once great piece. However don't forget the importance of realizing your design can reinforce or detract from your mission

Deep: Hyphens come from two contexts. Churched and unchurched. Churched Hyphens have heard all the cliché's and unchurched have no insight into our "code." **Therefore if we want to impact the churched and unchurched together all communicated and produced content must be deep and cliché free.**

Deal with cultural and societal issues and connect them to the scripture.

Millennials want to talk about the issues. Among Millennials who no longer identify with their childhood religion, nearly one-third say that negative teachings about, or treatment of, gay and lesbian people was either a somewhat important (17%) or very important (14%) factor in their disaffiliation from religion.³

Trust me they want to talk about the issues. Challenge cultural worldviews in light of the Bible. **They want to know that we as apostolics have a reasoned response that reveals that we have thought and prayed deeply about the issues.**

Implications: Hyphen Breakout/Retreat: Hyphen Breakout Session: Be choosy with speaker(s) Get right to the point. Offer practical, life oriented tools or challenging discipleship concepts. **For a breakout/Service/Retreat we get speakers up to the floor after two songs.**

³ <http://publicreligion.org/research/2014/02/2014-lgbt-survey/>

Have a panel discussion where people can text in. Talk about issues but do it always in a redemptive way. You never know who may be there.

When planning a breakout, retreat or small group remember content is king! I love creativity, I love production value but they've come for the content. Spend more time on developing a winning lesson, sermon, small group discussion and they will return.

Allow them to talk about the issues, don't be afraid to tackle issues in media...just be well read. **They need to know we have a voice**

Be Creative, Be Progressive but Make sure your event is Pentecostal. As much as that sounds so simple, it's very important to pastors and to young adults. Sometimes, we want to be creative and progressive that we ignorantly overlook our values. Particularly, the move of the Holy Ghost (if there is a worship/teaching element). When there's the move of the Holy Ghost, people will talk about it. Pastors will support your events. and it works for church and unchurched.

Deep = spiritual not just intellectual. In our panel...gifts of the Spirit were in operation. Allow authenticity and depth to be your emphasis it will shine a bright light on the brokenness in the room giving the Holy Ghost opportunity to work. Be flexible and Spirit-led...Be scheduled but don't be bound by it...depth will get them talking more than anything else.

Inclusive: For young adults, by young adults, of young adults: Focus, involve, invite them to take ownership... Listen to what young adults have to say build programming based on feedback. After all it's for them. Surveys (show feedback form) They want to be heard but like to do it online. Risk averse thing again. Empower them, they want to be activated. Built our set. Cultural and gender diversity.

Offer:

Opportunities for relationship connections.

Implications: All events ~ Icebreakers to get the crowd talking. Find one person you don't know, tell them where you're from, your name and one awkward childhood story.

Have lots of time for organic conversations...meaning not forced, not planned. People just sitting and talking. To **Facilitate/create social spaces that allow for interaction ... we use board games.** Old School ones from the 90s. Early church was built in community and doctrine and the manifestation of the spirit. We have the last two down. We could do better with community. When we do we will win with Hyphens. Many are lonely.

OH Hyphen Hangout (Thursday Night of Campmeeting):

Directly following the Thursday evening service all Hyphens are invited to join us at Rule 3 which is bowling alley approximately 15 miles away. We reserve a private bowling room and 2 outdoor sand volleyball courts. A \$10 admission includes unlimited bowling, rental shoes, volleyball, pizza, and fountain drinks.

Ability to interact with staff and speakers: no special rooms for speakers...accessibility is very important.

Choices: show research on millennial a la carte approach to digital entertainment consumption and show how this reveals a cultural value that should shape how we design our events.

Party: Going to a restaurant gives choices. Party, if large enough invite food trucks. Offer EX: Ontario Youth Food Trucks

Small group party: ~I always like to have some kind of food/snack and in order to keep costs down I send out a list of what I need the week before the event and everyone signs up for something to bring. I have done a lot of different kinds of "make your own"/"bars" which go over well with my group. Ice cream sandwich bar, smoothie bar, cheese and chocolate are some of our favorites. This creates excitement for the event and gives my Hyphens some ownership over it and gives them some choices.

Hyphen Day/Retreat: Offer breakouts on various topics. Food choices.

Marketing to Millenials:
infographic on marketing

Being cost effective.

For example:

Retreats can be limited to a one night or one day program.

Larger churches (including non-UPCI) maybe willing to donate the use of their space, or allow use for a minimal offering.

Use local pastors, or young ministers and be up front about the low budget.

Cheap doesn't have to mean low quality. At our annual Nexus meeting, our budget was miniscule, but we got creative with giving out freebies. We asked people in our church to save cardboard food boxes. We cut out rectangles and sandwiched note cards between them. With the use of a hole puncher and some twine we made some great little notebooks to hand out at the door. It went perfect with our theme of "organic". At our zero budget service, we skyped in a local pastor's wife who happened to be in the hospital. We had special prayer for her, and she said a few words to the attendees at the service

Social media is the best free marketing tool. Drive your marketing with photos and quick videos.

This session ended with a Q & A Discussion.

To hear this session live, you can purchase a Commune-ity Meeting 2014 Dropcard at:
<http://dropcards.com/general-youth-division/content/index.php>