Letter from Andrew Plepler, Global Corporate Social Responsibility Executive

We are excited to share the results from the Bank of America/USA TODAY Better Money Habits Millennial Report, which measures millennials’ attitudes and priorities around money, taking a close look at how these relate to lifestyle choices.

Millennials are a group that will shape our nation’s economic and political landscape for decades to come, which is why we took an opportunity to gain insight into their “money mindset.”

What we found was fascinating: millennials are confident in their ability to manage their finances and are optimistic about the future, and many are taking steps to secure their finances in the short term. Yet, the long term paints a different picture—a staggering number are not saving for retirement and struggle with saving in general. They’re living in the now, spending and saving for experiences rather than home ownership and retirement. Many live paycheck to paycheck, carry large amounts of student debt and are still receiving regular financial support from their families.

It is critical that millennials are set up for financial success, and that starts with making sure they have the right education and resources. Bank of America has partnered with Khan Academy – a non-profit with the mission of providing a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere – to provide practical, actionable financial education through BetterMoneyHabits.com. Free, objective and open to all, this online education resource delivers easy-to-understand information on a wide range of personal finance topics. The content hits on the core issues this group faces, like tackling college debt, navigating a first paycheck and renting or buying a home.

We hope these findings create awareness and discussion around the issues facing this generation and that consumers utilize Better Money Habits™ as a resource to help inform these important financial milestones.

Methodology

The Bank of America/USA Today Better Money Habits Millennial Report was conducted online among 1,001 adults during the period of October 9 – October 20, 2014 by GfK Public Affairs and Corporate Communication, using GfK’s KnowledgePanel®, a statistically representative sample source used to yield results that are projectable to the American population. To qualify, Millennials had to be 18 to 34 years old. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 3.5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.
Perception vs. reality: millennials express confidence and optimism, but realities paint another picture

Millennials are confident in their ability to manage their finances, with two-thirds saying they have good financial habits. Sixty percent say they are excellent or good at living within their means, and 62 percent report they believe they are more financially responsible than people give them credit for. **What does a millennial who self-identifies as having good financial habits look like?**

- 82% went to college
- 77% are saving every month
- 60% are excellent/good at living within their means
- 57% are financially independent
- 40% owed $0 on their credit cards after their most recent payments

Millennials also express optimism for the future:

- 80% believe they will be better off or as well off as their parents
- 20% think they will be worse off than their parents
- 53% live paycheck to paycheck
- 50% no financial cushion if they lost their job

The difference between perception and reality is striking; while many millennials believe they make sound short-term financial choices, a majority characterize their financial situation as fair/poor.
Millennials worry about their finances
Perhaps as a result, many display good financial behavior in the short term.

- 1 in 2 pay their credit card in full every month
- 35% limit their spending by only carrying cash
- 59% of millennials who save are saving for an emergency fund
- 58% save regularly each month
- 53% say they are good at reducing their debt

...Yet many may not be taking key steps for the long term
Many find it difficult to pay off debts and to save.

- 1 in 5 haven't started saving
- 33% have a 401(k), 16 percent have an IRA
- 59% have less than $5,000 in savings
- 53% have a student loan

In rating their handling of various financial situations, most millennials believe they do a good job in reducing their debt, but far fewer feel they are doing well at saving for emergencies or saving for retirement.

Millennials believe they are “good” or “excellent” at...

- Saving for Emergencies
  - 36%
  - 38%
  - 35%

- Saving for Retirement
  - Total 31%
  - Age 18-25 27%
  - Age 26-34 33%
Student debt levels holding millennials back?

The amount of millennials’ student loan debt is particularly pronounced, especially for those aged 26-29.

Average student loan debt by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Average Debt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-21yrs</td>
<td>$6.8K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25 yrs</td>
<td>$15.2K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-29 yrs</td>
<td>$24.5K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34 yrs</td>
<td>$15K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student loan debt levels tend to be higher for millennials who:

- Are older
  - 8% of millennials aged 26-34 reported having
  - $100K or more of student loan debt
- Have a credit card
  - Student loan debt levels average $19.3K vs. $7.9K for those who have a credit card vs. those who do not have a credit card
- Live outside their parents’ home
  - Average student loan debt levels by household
    - $17.7K vs. $8.1K
    - Live outside vs. Live at home
- Live in urban environments
  - Average student loan debt levels by environment
    - $17.8K vs. $14.2K vs. $9.5K
    - Urban vs. Suburban vs. Rural
- Make more money
  - Average student loan debt levels by income
    - $9.7K vs. $17.2K vs. $17K
    - making under $35k vs. making $35-74K vs. making $75K+

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Fears and stress levels: millennials admit to worrying, but still remain hopeful in the short term

With many millennials coming of age during the financial crisis, concerns over their financial and professional futures are to be expected. Nearly three-quarters of millennials worry about their current financial situation -- almost one-third report worrying about it often. Career path and savings goals are the top causes of stress.

I feel stressed or anxious about...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My career path</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not putting enough money into savings</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accomplishing what I think I should have by now</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending more than I should</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facing adulthood or really ‘being an adult’</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt from student loans/college education</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paying my rent/mortgage</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not planning and saving for retirement</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit card debt</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The costs of raising a child</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Losing my job</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a committed relationship</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Millennials redefining the American Dream

While they have many worries, millennials are still focused on the short term, with a tendency to prioritize positive life experiences instead of investing in the long term.

**Millennials believe:**
- **40%** salary is more important than doing what they love
- **73%** that when it comes to deciding what to study in school, the income they could make in that field of study was very/somewhat important

**HAVING MADE IT MEANS...**
- **70%** being able to afford anything i.e. travel, treating friends/family, etc.
- **40%** having their dream home
- **40%** having a career that does good for others

**SUCCESS IS...**
- **24%** Rising to ‘the top’ of their chosen career

**THEY ARE SAVING FOR...**

- **33%** Retirement
- **59%** Emergency Fund
- **32%** Buying A House
- **33%** A New Car
- **35%** Vacation/Travel

Respondents Who Identify as Having Good/Excellent Financial Habits
- **42%**
- **45%**
- **45%**

Respondents Who Identify as Having Fair/Poor Financial Habits
- **33%**
- **28%**
- **28%**

Totals
- **62%**
- **51%**
- **33%**

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Short-term thinking related to parental support?
Millennials haven’t completely left the nest

Many have labeled millennials as the “Boomerang” generation due to their propensity to move back in with their parents after college. With 35 percent of millennials receiving regular financial support from their parents or other family members, is this the new normal for the millennial generation? Eighty percent of those who receive support regularly said they “know a lot of friends their age” who are getting help from parents and 55 percent of those who receive financial help openly and honestly discuss it with their friends.

Since you have become of independent adult age, which of the following things do your parents or other family members regularly provide you with financial assistance on?

- Cell phone bill (35)
- Groceries (25)
- Unexpected expenses (21)
- Clothing (20)
- Health insurance (17)
- Car or truck expenses (16)
- Rent/mortgage payments (16)
- Money for vacations (15)
- Money for credit card emergencies (9)
- Any (net) (8)

It’s not just younger millennials without jobs who are getting help. In fact, those making more than $75,000 per year were more likely to get help from their parents.

When do you expect to stop receiving financial support from your parents?

- After more than 10 years (8%)
- Within the next 5-10 years (17%)
- Within the next 2-4 years (27%)
- Within the next year (47%)

Is their dependence on their parents causing them to delay certain adult decisions? The majority (59 percent) don’t worry that they aren’t doing more adult things, like having kids or saving for a home. While many don’t plan to stay dependent, staying in their parents’ care is appealing.
Many agree that parents prepared them to manage their finances, but could have started earlier

Parents have had a large influence in how their millennial children think about money. Interesting differences in attitudes toward parents exist between older and younger millennials: Older millennials, much more than younger ones, believe they are more knowledgeable about money than their parents were at their age.

Of those who stated “My parents taught me about money...”

- **My parents taught me about money**
  - Total: 68%
  - Age 18-25: 72%
  - Age 26-34: 64%
  - **By gender**
    - Men: 71%
    - Women: 64%
  - **By financial situation**
    - Excellent/good: 67%
    - Fair/poor: 62%
  - **By income**
    - > $35K: 63%
    - $35k-74K: 63%
    - $75K+: 74%

- **My parents provided me with almost everything I wanted as a child**
  - Total: 57%
  - Age 18-25: 65%
  - Age 26-34: 50%

- **My parents are more careful than I am about budgeting their money**
  - Total: 51%
  - Age 18-25: 57%
  - Age 26-34: 46%

- **I am more knowledgeable about finances than my parents were at my age**
  - Total: 49%
  - Age 18-25: 45%
  - Age 26-34: 54%

- **I am more financially dependent on my parents than me parents were at the same age**
  - Total: 40%
  - Age 18-25: 47%
  - Age 26-34: 33%

**MOST THINK THEIR PARENTS DID A GOOD JOB**

- 60% feel that their parents have prepared them to manage their own finances

**SOME THINK THEIR PARENTS COULD HAVE DONE MORE**

- 47% wish their parents had started talking to them about money sooner
- 38% agree their parents should have prepared them better to manage their own finances
About Better Money Habits™

Bank of America has made a substantial commitment to address the need for financial knowledge by partnering with Khan Academy – a non-profit with the mission of providing a free, world-class education for anyone, anywhere. Together, they’ve developed BetterMoneyHabits.com – a free, objective online financial resource that pairs Khan Academy’s expertise in online learning with the financial expertise of Bank of America. The customizable experience breaks down concepts and provides practical, actionable steps to strengthen the connection between financial knowledge and behavior.

Bank of America

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