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September 14, 2016,
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MILLENNIAL
RUNNING
STUDY



PHASE II

Presented by:  running USA

Sponsored by:  RacePartner™

Research by:  ACHIEVE

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- Millennial Running Study
millennialrunningstudy.com
- RacePartner
racepartner.com
- Running USA
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The list below defines how the research team uses specific terms throughout this report.

Cause work – any activity that is philanthropic in nature

Frequent/fitness runner – a runner type distinction chosen by respondents who most agreed with the statement, “I run to maintain or improve my health and/or fitness”

Fun run – any noncompetitive running event

Millennial – an individual born 1980-2000

Millennial generation – a group of individuals born between the years of 1980-2000, also referred to as Generation Y

Obstacle event participant – a runner type distinction chosen by respondents who most agreed with the statement, “I participate in events that usually require me to overcome obstacles and get muddy”

Running event – a public, organized run/race/walk event, typically in lengths of 5K (3.1 miles), 10K (6.2 miles), half-marathon (13.1 miles), marathon (26.2 miles) and ultra-distance (more than 26.2 miles)

Runner type/type of runner – the distinction a respondent self-selected to describe their commitment to and/or behavior within the sport of running (e.g., serious competitive runner, recreational runner, etc.); also referred to periodically as “runner category,” “runner subgroup” and “runner distinction”

Serious competitive runner – a runner type distinction chosen by respondents who most agreed with the statement, “I vigorously train in an attempt to always run my best time”

Walker/jogger/recreational runner – a runner type distinction chosen by respondents who most agreed with the statement, “I participate in events mostly to have fun, be with friends or for a cause-related purpose”

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About the Research

The Millennial Running Study, presented by Running USA, sponsored by RacePartner and with research by Achieve, is the first of its kind that focuses specifically on the millennial generation within the endurance sports industry.

The purpose of this research is to understand the attitudes and behaviors of millennial (born 1980-2000) runners toward their participation in run/race/walk events, with the goal of using these data to direct the way events are executed in the future.

As a reminder, the term “running events” is used to describe public, organized run/race/walk events. These events are typically in lengths of 5K (3.1 miles), 10K (6.2 miles), half-marathon (13.1 miles), marathon (26.2 miles) and ultra-distance (more than 26.2 miles).

This focus on the millennial generation is not to compare it to generations of the past; it is instead to predict and prepare for views and behaviors of the future.

The Millennial Running Study is presented in two phases:

Phase I: Quantitative Survey

Released February 2016

The initial Millennial Running Study report detailed quantitative findings from Phase I of the study. Phase I findings were based on responses from millennial running event finishers about their reported behavior toward and perceptions of running events as well as their motivations for participating in these types of events. The Phase I report was based solely on quantitative methodology distributed via an online survey.

Phase II: Data Analysis

by Gender & Runner Type and Qualitative Validation

The second and final phase of the Millennial Running Study further examines quantitative data from Phase I and analyzes trends in data as broken out by gender and runner type. In addition, Phase II includes qualitative feedback from personal interviews in order to compare anecdotal comments and experiences with the data detailed in the initial report.

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Methodology

Phase I of the Millennial Running Study included findings of a quantitative online survey, fielded in October 2015, of which 24,067 millennial runners attempted (but not all completed). Of the 16,792 respondents who completed the survey, 15,631 were millennials. Both phases of the Millennial Running Study discuss the findings of millennial respondents only.

An estimated 18,173,000 millennials aged 18-34 are joggers/runners,¹ which established a 99-percent confidence level for the quantitative sample of millennial runners, with a margin of error of approximately 1 percent.

To uncover the trends related to this generation's attitudes, behaviors and perceptions, the Achieve research team designed a multi-staged, mixed-methods research study. In an attempt to recruit a nationally representative sample, Achieve worked in collaboration with Running USA to identify research partners that hosted running events with high rates of millennial participation.

Once applications were received, invited research partners were selected as part of the sample based on the following: geographic location, number of event participants, number of millennial event participants, type of event and participant demographics. When the recruiting process ended, 24 research partners agreed to participate; 16 research partners disseminated surveys to participants of their events.

For Phase II of the Millennial Running Study, Achieve took a deeper look at Phase I findings to identify trends by gender and type of runner. This update also includes commentary from qualitative interviews in an effort to further explain and support elements of millennial runners' health and fitness, running experience and philanthropy, with a focused examination of their interest and participation in event volunteerism.

As a part of the initial survey, respondents were asked to indicate if they wanted to participate in the qualitative phase of the study. From those affirming responses, a small subsample was selected to participate in digitally recorded, short, semi-structured personal interviews. Seven male millennial runners and nine female millennial runners (n=16) were interviewed and shared their experiences. These interviews, although few in number, elicited consistent responses and were therefore appropriate for providing valuable insight into the "why" of the data collected during the initial quantitative phase of this study.

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¹ <http://www.runningusa.org/2014-running-industry-report?returnTo=annual-reports>

Millennial Runner Respondents (Phase 1 Survey)

Born 1980-2000

15,631 Total Respondents



**73%
FEMALE**



**27%
MALE**

Race/ethnicity:

79% White

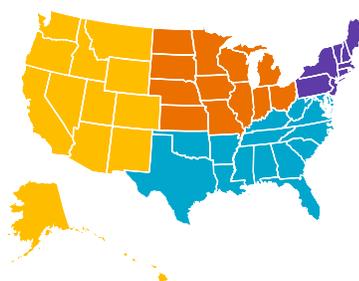
10% Hispanic/Latino(a)

5% Asian

2% Black

2% Other

2% Prefer Not to Answer



94% Live in the U.S.

34% in Midwest

28% in West

27% in South

11% in Northeast

Marital Status:

47% Single, Never Married

40% Married

10% Living with Partner

Employment:

79% Employed Full-Time

5% Employed Part-Time

10% Students

Education:

47% have earned Bachelor's Degrees

28% have earned Master's Degrees

6% have earned a Professional Degree

4% have earned a Doctorate Degree

Annual Income (*Unpartnered or unmarried respondents reported personal income only; partner/married respondents reported household income.*):

50% earned between \$50,001-\$150,000

18% earned between \$50,001-\$75,000

15% earned between \$75,001-\$100,000

17% earned between \$100,001-\$150,000

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Introduction

The sport of running isn't just enduring – it's been growing and thriving for the past several years. According to Running USA's 2015 **State of the Sport** report, running events increased 300 percent from 1990 to 2013 and held strong in 2014.² Some of that growth and sustainability can be attributed to the millennial generation. Nearly 42 million Americans are considered runners/joggers today, and approximately 18,173,000 of those are between the ages of 18 and 34 years old.³ Millennials (born 1980-2000) now account for more than a quarter of our nation's population,⁴ which speaks to their profound ability to change the norms of the workplace, philanthropy, culture, technology, recreation and societal behavior – including the sport of running.

The purpose of this study is to understand the attitudes and behaviors of millennial runners toward their participation in run/race/walk events: what motivates them to register for and participate in events, why they are interested in running and fitness, and how causes play a role in their choice of running events. This release of the study includes, where appropriate, some comparison of aggregate data collected from Phase I as well as a deeper look at findings in an effort to identify trends by gender and type of runner. In addition, this report also includes commentary from qualitative interviews in an effort to further explain and support elements of millennial runners' health and fitness, running experience and philanthropy, with a focused examination of their interest and participation in event volunteerism.

As with Phase I, these data should be used to direct the way events are executed in the future targeting runners from this generation.

Also as with the Phase I release, this report is separated into three categories: *Health & Fitness*, *Experience* and *Philanthropy*, in which the research team sought to answer questions such as:

- How do millennial runners view, participate in and engage with institutions that facilitate running events?
- How will this generation redefine the sport and industry of running? Do causes have an impact on a millennial runner's decision to participate in a running event?
- How can event directors harness this data to change the way they create and execute events in the future?

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² <http://www.runningusa.org/2015-state-of-sport-us-trends>

³ <http://www.runningusa.org/2014-running-industry-report?returnTo=annual-reports>

⁴ <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2015/cb15-113.html>

Findings

As with Phase I of this study, Phase II findings are separated into three main sections: health and fitness, experience and philanthropy (including event volunteerism). Each section includes an in-depth look at key quantitative trends by gender (male or female) and runner type as well as responses from qualitative interviews.

The majority of millennial runner respondents to the Phase I survey identified as female (73%), compared to male (27%). Other data sources reflect this discrepancy of gender balance in the industry, such as Running USA's 2015 State of the Sport – U.S. Race Trends report which found that female runners made up 57 percent of finishers (10.7 million women vs. 8 million men).

When looking at findings by runner type, responses are aggregated by respondents who self-selected into one of four categories based on the one they deemed most descriptive of their running commitment and/or behavior:

- Serious competitive runner (I vigorously train in an attempt to always run my best time)
- Frequent/fitness runner (I run to maintain or improve my health and/or fitness)
- Walker/jogger/recreational runner (I participate in events mostly to have fun, be with friends or for a cause-related purpose)
- Obstacle event participant (I participate in events that usually require me to overcome obstacles and get muddy)

Within the Phase I survey, the majority of millennial runner respondents identified as a frequent/fitness runner (65%). Less than 20 percent of respondents indicated they consider themselves to be serious competitive runners (18%) or walker/jogger/recreational runners (16%), and only 1 percent of respondents indicated they consider themselves to be obstacle event participants.

By gender, the majority of each, males and females, both considered themselves to be frequent/fitness runners. However, many more male respondents than females identified as serious competitive runners, and female millennial runner respondents outnumbered males when identifying as walker/jogger/recreational runners.

GENDER

73% FEMALE

27% MALE

RUNNER TYPE

18% - Serious competitive runner

16% - Walker/jogger/recreational runner

▶ 65% - Frequent/fitness runner

1% - Obstacle event participant

RUNNER TYPE BY GENDER

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER: 29% MALE | 14% FEMALE

WALKER/JOGGER/RECREATIONAL RUNNER: 10% MALE | 18% FEMALE

▶ FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER: 59% MALE | 67% FEMALE

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT: 2% MALE | 1% FEMALE

Before you read...

Keep the following items in mind when reading this report:

- As a reminder, this study analyzes millennial runners who participate in competitive running events (such as 5Ks, half-marathons, etc.), not millennial participants of noncompetitive, exclusively charity-driven events.
- This report discusses the findings of preferences of millennial runners who completed the Phase I survey. Though the research team believes the information to reflect a representative sample of millennial runners across the country, such a statement cannot be made for certain at this time. As such, findings related to “millennials” or “millennial runners” throughout this survey are referring to the millennial runner respondents who completed the Phase I survey.
- Due to rounding, not all data points discussed within this report total 100 percent.

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Health and Fitness

As learned in Phase I, millennial runners run for health above all other reasons. Nearly two-thirds of respondents report being frequent or fitness runners, which by the definition provided in the survey means they run to maintain or increase their health and well-being. But how do millennial runners feel about their own health, and how does running fit into that self-assessment?

The majority of the overall sample, as found in Phase I, reported their health as “very good,” while nearly equal percentages reported their health as either “excellent” or “good.” Nearly three-quarters of respondents considered themselves at a “healthy weight,” with most of the remaining respondents reporting themselves as “overweight.” Only very small percentages indicated they are either underweight or obese.

In addition, although nearly three-quarters of respondents indicated they were “fit,” the sample was nearly equally divided by respondents who were content with their fitness level and those who were not.

The beliefs of the overall sample are similarly reflected by respondents of both genders. The majority of both male and female respondents believe themselves to be in very good health, at a healthy weight and fit; both genders are split on their contentedness with their fitness level.

How do millennial runners feel about their own health?

	MALE	FEMALE
EXCELLENT HEALTH	28%	23%
VERY GOOD HEALTH	47%	52%
GOOD HEALTH	22%	23%
FAIR HEALTH	3%	2%
UNDERWEIGHT	3%	1%
A HEALTHY WEIGHT	74%	74%
OVERWEIGHT	22%	23%
OBESE	1%	1%
FIT	77%	73%
OUT OF SHAPE; WORKING TO IMPROVE MY FITNESS	23%	26%
OUT OF SHAPE; NOT WORKING TO IMPROVE MY FITNESS	1%	1%
CONTENT WITH FITNESS LEVEL	50%	51%
NOT CONTENT WITH FITNESS LEVEL	50%	49%

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Health distinctions by runner type, however, quite differ from that of the overall sample. Serious competitive runners by far indicated the best health: The majority believe themselves to be in excellent health (52%), at a healthy weight (88%) and fit (94%), and almost two-thirds (64%) are content with their fitness level. Frequent fitness runners and obstacle event participants most closely resemble the overall sample, though nearly two-thirds (62%) of obstacle event participants are not content with their fitness level (compared to 49% of the overall sample and 48% of frequent/fitness runners).

Recreational runners provided the weakest/poorest assessment of their health of all runner types. Nearly half (45%) of respondents in this runner category indicated their health as “good,” though the next-largest response (38%) indicated it was “very good.” Only about half (51%) of recreational runners believe themselves to be at a healthy weight, and 42 percent indicated they are overweight. More than half (58%) responded that they are out of shape but working to improve their fitness, and, like obstacle event participants, two-thirds (68%) are not content with their fitness level.

How do millennial runners feel about their own health based on their runner type?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
EXCELLENT HEALTH	52%	20%	7%	19%
VERY GOOD HEALTH	41%	56%	38%	52%
GOOD HEALTH	6%	22%	45%	25%
FAIR HEALTH	0%	1%	9%	3%
POOR HEALTH	0%	0%	1%	0%
UNDERWEIGHT	3%	2%	1%	4%
A HEALTHY WEIGHT	88%	75%	51%	73%
OVERWEIGHT	8%	22%	42%	23%
OBESE	0%	1%	5%	0%
FIT	94%	77%	38%	72%
OUT OF SHAPE; WORKING TO IMPROVE MY FITNESS	6%	22%	58%	27%
OUT OF SHAPE; NOT WORKING TO IMPROVE MY FITNESS	0%	0%	3%	0%
CONTENT WITH FITNESS LEVEL	64%	52%	32%	38%
NOT CONTENT WITH FITNESS LEVEL	36%	48%	68%	62%

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When asked to rank, in order, the three factors that most motivate them to participate in running events, the Phase I report found that overall, millennial runner respondents' top three motivations for participating in running events are:

1. To improve physical health (increase fitness, decrease weight, etc.)
2. To maintain physical health (maintain fitness, maintain weight, etc.)
3. To run in a new or unique environment

This order of motivators remained consistent across both genders and the majority of runner categories. Nearly half of both male and female respondents indicated they are most motivated to participate in running events to improve their health. About a quarter of respondents in both genders chose their secondary motivation as maintaining health, and tertiary motivation as running in a new and unique environment. Some gender differences between preferences can be seen in other types of motivators, however. For example, more male respondents than female rank the competitive aspects of running events as a motivator, and female respondents more than male appear to view the social aspects of running events as motivators.

Motivation to participate in running events by gender

MOTIVATION 1	MALE	FEMALE
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	45%	48%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	25%	30%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	4%	5%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	15%	7%
TO RUN IN A NEW OR UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT	4%	4%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	3%	2%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	1%	2%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	1%	2%
OTHER	1%	1%

MOTIVATION 2	MALE	FEMALE
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	14%	11%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	25%	22%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	13%	18%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	19%	13%
TO RUN IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT OR UNIQUE VENUE	15%	16%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	6%	9%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	4%	5%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	3%	5%
OTHER	1%	1%

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Motivation to participate in running events by gender (continued)

MOTIVATION 3	MALE	FEMALE
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	6%	5%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	9%	7%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	19%	22%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	17%	14%
TO RUN IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT OR UNIQUE VENUE	26%	26%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	9%	8%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	4%	5%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	7%	11%
OTHER	3%	3%

Slightly more differences can be seen when comparing types of runners. Half of runners in all categories except serious competitive runners ranked improving health as their top motivator for participating in running events. For serious competitive runners, the competitive aspects of running events just slightly outranked health improvements (32% versus 31%, respectively).

Respondents' second motivation for participating in running events differed more greatly by runner type. Again, the greatest amount of serious competitive runners indicated that the competitive aspects of events motivated them to participate in running events, while frequent/fitness and obstacle event participants did so to maintain their physical health. Recreational runners, however, indicated they were more motivated to participate in events because of the social aspects of such events.

The greatest number of respondents across all runner groups deemed the environment/venue as their third motivator for participating in running events.

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Motivation to participate in running events by running type

MOTIVATION 1	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	31%	51%	51%	50%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	24%	33%	17%	17%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	3%	3%	13%	7%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	32%	4%	1%	10%
TO RUN IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT OR UNIQUE VENUE	3%	4%	5%	7%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/ MEDITATIVE HEALTH	3%	2%	3%	1%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/ MEDITATIVE HEALTH	2%	2%	1%	2%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	0%	1%	6%	3%
OTHER	1%	1%	2%	3%

MOTIVATION 2	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	15%	11%	13%	9%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	21%	23%	21%	25%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	13%	17%	22%	20%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	27%	14%	4%	12%
TO RUN IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT OR UNIQUE VENUE	13%	16%	16%	20%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/ MEDITATIVE HEALTH	5%	9%	7%	3%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/ MEDITATIVE HEALTH	4%	5%	3%	4%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	2%	4%	12%	6%
OTHER	1%	1%	1%	1%

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Motivation to participate in running events by running type (continued)

MOTIVATION 3	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
TO IMPROVE MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (INCREASE MY FITNESS, DECREASE MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	6%	4%	7%	6%
TO MAINTAIN MY PHYSICAL HEALTH (MAINTAIN MY FITNESS, MAINTAIN MY WEIGHT, ETC.)	12%	6%	9%	10%
THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	21%	20%	22%	15%
THE COMPETITIVE ASPECT OF RUNNING EVENTS	18%	16%	6%	16%
TO RUN IN A NEW ENVIRONMENT OR UNIQUE VENUE	24%	26%	24%	31%
TO IMPROVE MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	7%	9%	8%	4%
TO MAINTAIN MY SPIRITUAL/MEDITATIVE HEALTH	6%	5%	2%	2%
TO SUPPORT A CHARITY OR FUNDRAISING EVENT	4%	10%	18%	11%
OTHER	2%	3%	4%	5%

As was seen in Phase I survey data, most millennial runners haven't been running long – but they are already dedicated, regardless of whether they're in training for a running event. In Phase I, nearly half of all respondents indicated they have been running between one and five years. Fewer than a third of all respondents indicated they had been running 6–10 or 11–25 years, and nearly no respondents had been running 26+ years.

This data holds true when looking at responses by gender: 48 percent of males and 49 percent of females have been running 1–5 years, followed by 6–10 years (27% males; 28% females) and then 11–25 years (24% males; 23% females).

Q: How many total years have you been running?

	MALE	FEMALE
1–5 YEARS	48%	49%
6–10 YEARS	27%	28%
11–25 YEARS	24%	23%
26+ YEARS	1%	0%

By runner type, however, the data changes slightly from the aggregate responses of Phase I. Frequent/fitness runners most closely follow the overall data as well as the data by gender. Serious competitive runners, though, are more likely to either have been running 1-5 years (36%) or 11-25 years (35%), with a smaller percentage running 6-10 years (29%). Nearly two-thirds of both walkers/joggers/recreational runners and obstacle event participants have been running 1-5 years (63% and 62%, respectively), with smaller percentages reporting 6-10 years or 11-25 years of running.

Q: How many total years have you been running?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER/ RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
1-5 YEARS	36%	49%	63%	62%
6-10 YEARS	29%	29%	23%	19%
11-25 YEARS	35%	22%	14%	19%
26+ YEARS	0%	0%	0%	0%

In addition to the length of time committed to the sport, the research team also sought to understand how frequently millennial runners run, both when training for a running event and when not in training.

The highest percentages of both male and female runners report training for a few months before events, followed by those runners who train all year. Interestingly, higher percentages of men (32%) than women (21%) train all year, while higher percentages of women (56%) than men (45%) report training for a few months before an event.

Q: Generally, how far in advance do you begin training for your event?

	MALE	FEMALE
I DON'T TRAIN FOR EVENTS	5%	4%
I TRAIN FOR A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT	10%	10%
I TRAIN FOR A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT	45%	56%
I TRAIN FOR SIX MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE THE EVENT	9%	9%
I TRAIN ALL YEAR	32%	21%

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When examining training schedules by type of runner, more serious competitive runners report training all year than any of the other groups of runners. Among other runner categories, the highest percentages of runners report training for a few months before the event.

Q: Generally, how far in advance do you begin training for your event?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER/ RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
I DON'T TRAIN FOR EVENTS	0%	3%	12%	13%
I TRAIN FOR A FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE EVENT	2%	9%	21%	20%
I TRAIN FOR A FEW MONTHS BEFORE THE EVENT	39%	58%	49%	40%
I TRAIN FOR SIX MONTHS OR MORE BEFORE THE EVENT	9%	9%	9%	7%
I TRAIN ALL YEAR	50%	20%	9%	20%

While there were no differences between male and female runners' running frequency when not training for events (see chart below), much higher percentages of serious/competitive runners and frequent/fitness runners than recreational runners/walkers/joggers and obstacle event participants run throughout the year even if they are not training for an event. Responses varied among recreational runners and obstacle event participants for all choices.

Q: If you are not training for an event, how often do you typically run?

	MALE	FEMALE
I DON'T RUN IF I'M NOT TRAINING FOR AN EVENT	4%	4%
I RUN A FEW WEEKS DURING THE YEAR	5%	5%
I RUN A FEW MONTHS DURING THE YEAR	7%	7%
I RUN SIX MONTHS OR MORE DURING THE YEAR	8%	8%
I RUN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, EVEN IF I'M NOT TRAINING FOR AN EVENT	76%	76%

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Q: If you are not training for an event, how often do you typically run?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER/ RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
I DON'T RUN IF I'M NOT TRAINING FOR AN EVENT	2%	2%	14%	12%
I RUN A FEW WEEKS DURING THE YEAR	1%	3%	19%	12%
I RUN A FEW MONTHS DURING THE YEAR	2%	6%	19%	15%
I RUN SIX MONTHS OR MORE DURING THE YEAR	3%	9%	8%	7%
I RUN THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, EVEN IF I'M NOT TRAINING FOR AN EVENT	92%	80%	40%	54%

As is shown in the data from Phase I, running is one of the most important pieces to a millennial runners' maintenance and improvement of health. But personal interviews with millennial runners revealed that running does more than just impact one's physical health; it also improved and maintained their emotional and mental health – which some interviewees pointed out was just as important as physicality.

Said one female millennial runner, "It's become part of my identity. It's something that, **when you meet someone who is a runner, you immediately identify with them.** And that time outside is quiet time—time to think, time to de-stress, time to move, to get sunlight—those kinds of things."

Interviewees pointed to physical health as motivation for one to begin running, but that the emotional and mental benefits – as well as the personal satisfaction one feels while running – are the main reasons they continued running. These three levels or categories of running benefits resonated with the majority of interviewees. Specifically, many indicated they run to:

- Lose weight (physical health)
- Decrease stress and increase happiness; to have a "meditative experience" through time to think and just be (emotional/mental health)
- Do something they enjoy, continue their love of running and being outside or in the community, and increase their mileage for longer races (personal satisfaction)

"It pretty much gave me a reason to get up in the morning."

MALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

One male millennial runner echoed this transition from physical health to mental and/or personal satisfaction: “I was overweight two years ago...But I’ve lost 80 pounds in the past two years through my running. It’s now a daily thing. I’ve Boston qualified so I’ve become, not an elite runner, but a very dedicated and skilled runner now. Before doing the obstacle course [two years ago], I’d never even run a 5k. These past two years, I’ve really found a calling in running...I found my stress levels decreased significantly at work, and that I was happier on a daily basis. It pretty much gave me a reason to get up in the morning.”

“It’s my main activity to accomplish health,” said one female millennial runner. “I know we’re supposed to do things like weight training and resistance training and bah, blah, blah. And I watch what I eat maybe 85 percent of the time. But I know those things don’t have a lot of impact on me; they don’t have the same multi-tasking effect for me. They don’t get me excited. I don’t plan for them. **So when I think about my long-term health, I think about a running plan.**”

Another female millennial runner agreed with many of these sentiments: “I began running in college, honestly, just to avoid the freshman 15 [pound weight gain]. Since then, it’s become my stress relief – mentally, physically, emotionally. Running kind of grounds me...And it’s my time to think. It’s my time to wake up and get my body going for the day. When I’m stressed, it’s a stress reliever. It’s kind of cathartic. I never regret any runs that I do, but I always regret the ones that I don’t.”

The same female millennial runner commented on the role running plays in her overall fitness: “Fitness for me is when I’m mentally and physically centered. Fitness is a part of my day like brushing my teeth is a part of my day...and running is a big part of that. Running is a part of my routine, a part of my day. Beyond the physical aspect of it, there’s the added mental and emotional health pieces that it adds for me. **It helps me take care of myself. And if I can take care of myself, I can take care of my family, my job and my responsibilities.**”

Another male millennial runner also discussed why and how running was a part of his routine, as well as the physical, emotional and mental health benefits it afforded him. “Running is the most efficient use of my time. Honestly, it’s the easiest thing to do, and I can do it on my own time. [It’s the best] bang for your buck, as far as exercise goes. It’s better...you know, with biking, I have to set aside one hour, two hours to get the same workout as I would get from 45 minutes of running. And I like the endorphin rush in general. I feel weird if I don’t run during the day. It’s a habit; it’s part of my routine. It’s a good time for me to have alone time and a good time for me to think. Some people have other things that are meditative, but for me **running is that time where I can just run through stuff in my head and think about things and just kind of shut my brain off to the outside world.**”

“I never regret any runs that I do, but I always regret the ones that I don’t.”

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

Health and Fitness: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Millennial runners tend to believe they are in good health, and they run to maintain and/or improve their health above all other reasons. For example, many of the interviewees indicated they began running in an effort to become healthier (e.g., lose weight and become more fit). And though the respondents who identified in the survey as walkers/joggers/recreational runners reported the lowest levels of health, fitness and contentment with their fitness, they also were the highest percentage of respondents who are working to improve their fitness.

These benefits span physical health: While physical health and fitness may be the initial motivation for new runners to take up the sport, interviewees cited the mental and emotional benefits as the factors that keep them running.

Once a millennial categorizes him or herself as a “runner,” no matter the type, it appears the sport becomes an integral part of his or her identity. Running isn’t just an activity millennial runners enjoy participating in; it is a part of who they are, how they see themselves and what they represent. It becomes a daily routine, an escape, a restorative practice and more, increasing their abilities to perform in other areas of their lives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Cultivate “relationships”** with millennial runners who participate in your events. When communicating with and planning events for this generation of runners, strive to incorporate elements of personalization through marketing efforts. For example, if your running event includes a 5K, a half-marathon and a full marathon, make sure your emails to participants are specific to their race length. Remember, your event isn’t just providing a running event – you are providing an opportunity for these runners to take care of themselves and just “be.”
- 2. Incorporate elements of (or information about) mental and emotional health** into communications about your event. When interacting with millennial event participants or when offering information about your running event, provide opportunities for this generation of runners to learn more and/or practice aspects of meditation, yoga, etc. as a part of your running event.

EMBARGOED UNTIL September 14, 2016, 10AM EST

The Experience

Phase I found that second to health and fitness, millennial runners participate in running events for the overall experience, and especially to experience a new place. As mentioned in the previous section, running in a new or unique environment ranked as the third motivation for running among millennial runner respondents of both genders and all runner types. Additional aspects of running events also draw in millennial runners, such as the type and length of event, cost and social features.

When choosing running events to participate in, millennial runners within this study were very much focused on the type and length of run. Overall, Phase I showed that events focused on running draw more interest than fun or untimed runs. In addition, aggregate responses within Phase I showed the half-marathon (13.1 miles) and 5K (3.1 miles) are the most popular race lengths with millennial runners, in terms of races respondents had run in the past 12 months. Half-marathons were also the most popular events that respondents indicated wanting to run in the following year, followed by a 10Ks (6.2 miles) and 5Ks.

These trends hold true on nearly all accounts for respondents of both genders. The highest percentages of male respondents reported finishing a half-marathon (65%) in the past 12 months, followed by a 5K (61%) and a 10K (48%). Females tied for half-marathon and 5K participation (66%), followed by 10K (48%).

Of the running events respondents want or plan to run in the next year, half-marathons also ranked highest for respondents of both genders (79% for males, 83% for females), followed by 10Ks (60% for males, 68% for females) and 5Ks (59% for males, 63% for females). Fifty-eight percent of males also want to run a full marathon (26.2 miles) in the next year, compared to just 41 percent of females.

Q: Which of the following running or run/race/walk events have you finished in the past 12 months? Which would you want to run in the next 12 months?

	FINISHED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS		WANT TO RUN IN THE NEXT YEAR	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
FUN RUNS/UNTIMED RUNS	18%	25%	19%	29%
5K (3.1 MILES)	61%	66%	59%	63%
10K (6.2 MILES)	48%	48%	60%	68%
HALF-MARATHON (13.1 MILES)	65%	66%	79%	83%
MARATHON (26.2 MILES)	41%	26%	58%	41%
ULTRA DISTANCE (MORE THAN 26.2 MILES)	4%	2%	13%	7%
ROAD RUNNING RELAY	7%	7%	15%	15%
OBSTACLE EVENT (E.G., MUD RUN)	13%	11%	25%	25%
TRIATHLON	11%	8%	25%	19%
OTHER	8%	11%	6%	5%

Event length preference slightly differed by runner distinction – though respondents in all runner categories still prefer competitive running events over fun runs. Half-marathons ranked in the top two choices of events respondents have finished in the past year for all runner types except obstacle event participants; half-marathons also ranked in the top two choices of events respondents want to run in the coming year for all runner types.

Half-marathons, followed by 5Ks, were the top responses for both serious competitive runners and frequent/fitness runners as the events they have finished in the past 12 months.. Recreational runners/walkers/joggers reported the most participation and interest in 5Ks followed by half-marathons, while obstacle event participants, unsurprisingly, responded highest to obstacle events.

Q: Which of the following running or run/walk events have you finished in the past 12 months? Which would you want to run in the next 12 months?

	FINISHED IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS				WANT TO RUN IN THE NEXT YEAR			
	SCR	FFR	RR	OEP	SCR	FFR	RR	OEP
FUN RUNS/UNTIMED RUNS	16%	22%	30%	44%	14%	25%	43%	47%
5K (3.1 MILES)	68%	63%	66%	69%	65%	58%	68%	61%
10K (6.2 MILES)	59%	48%	35%	39%	70%	65%	62%	51%
HALF-MARATHON (13.1 MILES)	78%	67%	44%	41%	89%	84%	65%	64%
MARATHON (26.2 MILES)	59%	27%	12%	16%	76%	44%	21%	29%
ULTRA DISTANCE (MORE THAN 26.2 MILES)	7%	2%	1%	1%	19%	7%	2%	7%
ROAD RUNNING RELAY	11%	7%	2%	3%	24%	15%	8%	12%
OBSTACLE EVENT (E.G. MUD RUN)	9%	12%	11%	80%	15%	25%	29%	87%
TRIATHLON	16%	8%	4%	5%	28%	20%	12%	23%
OTHER	12%	10%	8%	6%	7%	5%	5%	6%

NOTE: SCR – SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER RR – WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER
 FFR – FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER OEP – OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

EMBARGOED UNTIL September 14, 2016, 10AM EST

When seeking out and learning about events, millennial runners primarily turn to digital and social media above other types of communication or referral sources. Collectively, Phase I found that 64 percent of millennial respondents use social media to learn about events, followed by internet search (57%). By gender, social media and internet search ranked as the top two choices for both males and females. More males, however, indicated using the internet (62%) than social media (54%), while more females used social media (68%) than the internet (55%).

Of those who use social media to learn about events, aggregate responses from Phase I overwhelmingly indicated millennial runners use Facebook (95%), followed by Instagram (39%) and Twitter (29%). Facebook also ranked highest by gender, as 93 percent of males and 96 percent of females reported using the platform to learn about events. Twitter was the second-highest platform for male respondents (41%), followed by Instagram (35%), while females indicated more Instagram use (41%) than Twitter (23%). All other platforms ranked fairly low for respondents of both genders.

Q: How do you usually learn about events that you would like to participate in?

	MALE	FEMALE
SOCIAL MEDIA	54%	68%
WEBSITE, PLEASE SPECIFY...	20%	21%
E-NEWSLETTER, PLEASE SPECIFY...	7%	10%
NATIONAL MAGAZINE, PLEASE SPECIFY...	7%	9%
RUNNING STORE	26%	28%
RUNNING OR FITNESS EXPOS	22%	27%
FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS	41%	37%
INTERNET SEARCH	62%	55%
BLOG	4%	4%
NEWSPAPER	4%	2%
OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY...	5%	8%

Q: Which social media platforms do you use to learn about these events?

	MALE	FEMALE
TWITTER	41%	23%
FACEBOOK	93%	96%
INSTAGRAM	35%	41%
LINKEDIN	6%	4%
PINTEREST	2%	11%
TUMBLR	1%	1%
YOUTUBE	12%	3%
GOOGLE+	5%	4%
OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY...	1%	0%
NONE	1%	0%

Slightly more serious competitive runners report learning about events through internet search (66%) than social media (58%); however, the opposite is true for the other three types of runners. When using social media to learn about events, all types of runners report using Facebook most often, followed by Instagram and then Twitter.

Q: How do you usually learn about events that you would like to participate in?

	SCR	FFR	RR	OEP
SOCIAL MEDIA	58%	63%	71%	78%
WEBSITE, PLEASE SPECIFY...	28%	20%	16%	19%
E-NEWSLETTER, PLEASE SPECIFY...	9%	10%	9%	7%
NATIONAL MAGAZINE, PLEASE SPECIFY...	13%	8%	4%	4%
RUNNING STORE	35%	27%	19%	13%
RUNNING OR FITNESS EXPOS	31%	25%	19%	20%
FACE-TO-FACE CONTACTS	39%	38%	38%	45%
INTERNET SEARCH	66%	58%	44%	58%
BLOG	6%	4%	2%	4%
NEWSPAPER	2%	3%	3%	2%
OTHER, PLEASE SPECIFY...	6%	7%	9%	9%

NOTE: SCR – SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER RR – WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER
 FFR – FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER OEP – OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

Q: Which social media platforms do you use to learn about these events?

	SCR	FFR	RR	OEP
TWITTER	34%	26%	24%	25%
FACEBOOK	95%	96%	95%	98%
INSTAGRAM	43%	39%	37%	35%
LINKEDIN	5%	4%	5%	5%
PINTEREST	6%	9%	12%	14%
TUMBLR	1%	1%	2%	1%
YOUTUBE	7%	5%	6%	9%
GOOGLE+	5%	5%	4%	3%

NOTE: SCR – SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER RR – WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER
 FFR – FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER OEP – OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

EMBARGOED UNTIL September 14, 2016, 10AM EST

When looking at the elements of running events that are most important, somewhat important and not at all important to a millennial runner's decision to participate, some variations can be discerned by gender and runner type.

Collectively, millennial respondents in Phase I rated the top five important elements of events as running event distance, cost, timed events, instant results as one finishes the event and quality of branded items/giveaways ("swag"). By gender, male and female respondents both rate the event distance as the most important element that determines their interest or participation, though their opinions and rankings differ for other options.

Top five important elements of events that influence participation:

Rated Important to Very Important

MALE

1. Running event distance (94%)
2. Timed events (80%)
3. The cost of a running event (78%)
4. Instant results as one finishes the event (76%)
5. Timing alerts throughout the event (60%)

FEMALE

1. Running event distance (95%)
2. The cost of a running event (86%)
3. Instant results as one finishes the event (74%)
4. Timed events (74%)
5. Quality of other event-branded items/giveaways (66%)

Event distance was the most important element by all runner categories with the exception of obstacle event participants, who rated the event cost as the element that most influences participation. Though also present in the top five for all categories, cost of a running event is much less important to serious competitive runners than it is to frequent/fitness runners, recreational runners and obstacle event participants.

Other variations can be seen among this subgroup of millennial runners in both response and ranking. Participating in running events with friends, for example, is important to both recreational runners and obstacle event participants but not to serious competitive runners or frequent/fitness runners. Quality of event swag is in the top five of all runner categories except serious competitive runners, and only serious competitive runners included timing alerts throughout the event in their top five.

EMBARGOED UNTIL September 14, 2016, 10AM EST

Top five important elements of events that influence participation:

Rated Important to Very Important

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

1. Running event distance (97%)
2. Timed events (93%)
3. Instant results as one finishes the event (82%)
4. The cost of a running event (80%)
5. Timing alerts throughout the event (63%)

FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

1. Running event distance (96%)
2. The cost of a running event (85%)
3. Timed events (77%)
4. Instant results as one finishes the event (74%)
5. Quality of other event-branded items/giveaways (65%)

RECREATIONAL RUNNER/WALKER/JOGGER

1. Running event distance (89%)
2. The cost of a running event (87%)
3. Participating in running events with friends (76%)
4. Quality of other event-branded items/giveaways (69%)
5. Instant results as one finishes the event (67%)

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

1. The cost of a running event (88%)
2. Running event distance (85%)
3. Quality of other event-branded items/giveaways (75%)
4. Participating in running events with friends (74%)
5. Instant results as one finishes the event (70%)

In looking at the event elements that do not have an impact on a runner's decision to participate, overall responses from Phase I of the study included the event sponsor, age group awards and event-generated social media. These elements can be seen in responses of both genders and all runner categories with a few variations in rankings. Additional elements are also included when looking at this question by subgroup. For example, females, as well as all runner categories except serious/competitive runners, are least influenced to participate in a running event if the course is certified or used as a qualifier; male runners also included they are least influenced to participate in an event because of the course's impact on the environment.

Elements that do not have an impact on a runner's decision to participate:

Rated Somewhat Important to Very Important

MALE

- A particular company is the event sponsor (63%)
- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event (46%)
- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line (44%)
- Age-group awards (43%)
- Consideration of the course's impact on the environment (41%)

FEMALE

- A particular company is the event sponsor (56%)
- Age-group awards (47%)
- Certified or qualifying course (40%)
- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event (38%)
- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line (38%)

Elements that do not have an impact on a runner’s decision to participate:

Rated Somewhat Important or Not At All Important

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

- A particular company is the event sponsor (62%)
- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event (44%)
- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line (42%)

FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

- A particular company is the event sponsor (58%)
- Age-group awards (48%)
- Certified or qualifying course (40%)
- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event (40%)
- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line (40%)

RECREATIONAL RUNNER/WALKER/JOGGER

- Age-group awards (60%)
- Certified or qualifying course (55%)
- A particular company is the event sponsor (50%)

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

- Certified or qualifying course (58%)
- A particular company is the event sponsor (55%)
- Age-group awards (52%)

Some elements had mixed reviews on a millennial runner’s decision to participate in an event, meaning a similar number of respondents within each subgroup ranked an element very important/important or somewhat important/not at all important. Pre-event expos were evenly split by both genders as well as serious competitive runners and frequent/fitness runners, while consideration of the course’s impact on the environment were given mixed responses by females and all runner types except recreational runners.

Elements that have mixed reviews on millennial runners’ decision to participate:

Rated Very Important or Important // Rated Somewhat Important or Not At All Important

MALE

- Certified or qualifying course

37%	Very Important / Important
33%	Somewhat Important / Not Important
- Pre-event expos with offerings like health screenings, product samples, merchandise sales, etc.

35%	Very Important / Important
39%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

FEMALE

- Consideration of the course’s impact on the environment

30%	Very Important / Important
35%	Somewhat Important / Not Important
- Pre-event expo that offers things like health screenings, product samples, merchandise sales, etc.

39%	Very Important / Important
33%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

Elements that have mixed reviews on millennial runners' decision to participate:

Rated Very Important or Important // Rated Somewhat Important or Not At All Important

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

- Consideration of the course's impact on the environment

30%	Very Important / Important
34%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Pre-event expos with offerings like health screenings, product samples, merchandise sales, etc.

37%	Very Important / Important
37%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

RECREATIONAL RUNNER/WALKER/JOGGER

- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event

31%	Very Important / Important
36%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line

30%	Very Important / Important
36%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

- Consideration of the course's impact on the environment

30%	Very Important / Important
36%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Pre-event expo that offers things like health screenings, product samples, merchandise sales, etc.

37%	Very Important / Important
35%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

- Consideration of the course's impact on the environment

32%	Very Important / Important
37%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Event-generated social media feeds in months, weeks and days before the event

32%	Very Important / Important
38%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

- Event-generated social media feeds from the course and finish line

33%	Very Important / Important
38%	Somewhat Important / Not Important

Many of these event preferences were validated and expounded upon during the qualitative phase of this investigation, as respondents indicated they are most likely to participate in events that are well-organized, provide challenge and offer new or interesting scenery.

When choosing events to participate in, interviewees expressed the most concern about how well the event is run and organized. **A well-run, well-organized running event appeared to be a very influential factor on a millennial runner's decision to participate multiple years in a row.**

One female millennial runner explained she liked larger-scale events because they tend to be more organized than smaller events: “I definitely prefer larger events. **I look for races that have good turnout, where people have said [the event] was well-organized before.** I don’t run a lot of small-town five-milers. I definitely like the bigger races because of amenities. Do I know when water stops are going to be, and are they really going to be there?”

When asked how she selects a running event, another female millennial runner responded, “I usually look at reviews of an event. **If an event has bad reviews, I usually won’t sign up for it...because if you don’t have good volunteers at an event and if you don’t have good planning, or if people report on an event website that it was poorly planned, poorly executed, I’m not interested.** I like things to go smoothly when I show up. I like to know where I’m supposed to be, when I’m supposed to be there, and how it’s going to go once I get there. A lot of times I’ll stick with reliable groups that I’ve done things with before – groups that have good reputations for putting on a good event that’s well-staffed and well-supported. Anytime I’ve done an event that was not well-thought-out or well-planned, I’ve found myself in a dangerous situation because they didn’t plan for the heat or because they didn’t put enough water stops out. **I’m not interested in being part of a situation where my safety is compromised.**”

On specific aspects runners appreciate within well-organized events, one male millennial runner shared: “I think the biggest thing that I look for after having a lot of races under my belt is organization. **Communication prior to**

the event, even up to the day of the event, is huge. And then, ease of access – understanding where it is, being able to sign up and see all the details – these are the must-haves for me. Another thing for me is knowing what the course is like. I’ve run some races that I really haven’t enjoyed and it’s mainly due to the course not being great, even if the organization and race are.” On one particular event he called “exceptional,” this interviewee said: “They did a great job staffing. The staffing across the entire course was unbelievable. There was more than enough people. Organizationally, it was all done correctly.”

In addition to organization and staffing, being presented with a new challenge is also influential in drawing millennial runners. This sentiment echoes survey data of the top five elements that influence respondents to participate in events (such as event distance, timed events and instant results).

One male millennial runner shared how the atmosphere of a running event influences his ability to challenge himself. **“Being at an event is being able to push yourself.** You set a goal, and you’re trying to beat your previous self, trying to improve yourself. That’s what pushes me. The atmosphere of these races, especially when running the bigger races with a lot of people, provides you a lot of people on the sidelines cheering you on.”

"If an event has bad reviews, I usually won't sign up for it."

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

A female millennial runner stated: “If I’m trying to achieve a new goal, I’m definitely going to do a running event. It’s a huge motivation. I like to pick races that are interesting – I find them a lot more exciting and motivating than going out and running around town.”

“I’m always training for an event because it keeps me motivated.”

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

Some millennial runners reported selecting multiple events during a 12-month period as a means of ongoing motivation to train. As one female millennial runner explained, “I’m always training for an event because it keeps me motivated. I try to pick four to six events a year to keep a goal constantly in front of me. It gives me the motivation to get up and run.”

Third, interviewees reported using running events to travel, which enhances the overall race experience, an opinion that is in line with the third-most motivating factor millennials run at all (i.e., to run in a new or unique environment).

One female millennial runner said, “I usually will try and go somewhere new if I can, or I’ll go home near where my parents live. [Running the race] is a built-in excuse to be there.”

One male millennial runner had even higher aspirations about traveling to run events: “I have an interest in running a marathon in every state and running the most popular marathons in the world.”

Another female millennial runner shared, “We combine vacations with races. I plan a lot of trips around [running events].”

When selecting which events to participate in, the same female interviewee said, “Geography or a neat place to visit [has an impact], but this can be overlooked if it’s a really great race. It’s always about the experience. But traveling to races is just not always possible to do year after year. If an event is local it’s about the race itself. It has to be well-run. Traveling to an event is about the total trip experience, so there has to be enough ‘stuff’ to be a good long weekend with the race being a part of that experience.”

In addition to race “must-haves,” the researchers also sought to understand which elements of a running event interest millennial runners. Phase I showed that millennial runner respondents are more likely to be interested in events that are well-known and have spectator opportunities; they are not very interested in training groups. These trends held true with respondents of both genders and all types of runners.

“I have an interest in running a marathon in every state and running the most popular marathons in the world.”

MALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

Among female respondents, traveling to an event as well as available VIP experiences had mixed reviews.

Participants are very interested in races with the following elements:

Rated Important to Very Important

MALE

- Participating in a highly regarded event (85%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (57%)

FEMALE

- Participating in a highly regarded event (84%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (59%)

Participants are not very interested in the following elements:

Rated Somewhat Interested to Not At All Interested

MALE

- Virtual or digital training groups (63%)
- In-person training groups (51%)

FEMALE

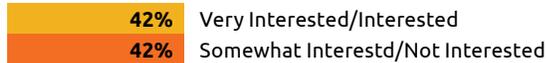
- Virtual or digital training groups (55%)
- In-person training groups (42%)

Elements that have mixed reviews on a millennial runner’s decision to participate:

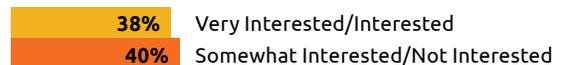
Rated Very Interested or Interested // Rated Somewhat Interested to Not At All Interested

FEMALE

- Traveling to an event more than three hours outside local community



- Event VIP experiences



Responses among runner type varied slightly more than gender. Serious competitive runners, for example, are very interested in traveling to an event more than three hours outside their local community. Recreational runners/walkers/joggers and obstacle event participants are not very interested in travel, while frequent/fitness runners had mixed opinions on the topic. On the other hand, all runner types except serious competitive runners are very interested in events with running apps; this topic had mixed reviews with serious runners.

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Participants are very interested in races with the following elements:

Rated Important to Very Important

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

- Participating in a highly regarded event (92%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (58%)
- Traveling to an event more than three hours outside local community (54%)

FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

- Participating in a highly regarded event (84%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (59%)
- Running apps (55%)

RECREATIONAL RUNNER/WALKER/JOGGER

- Participating in a highly regarded event (75%)
- Running apps (59%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (56%)

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

- Participating in a highly regarded event (83%)
- Special opportunities for spectators watching/supporting (56%)
- Running apps (52%)

Participants are not very interested in races with the following elements:

Rated Somewhat Interested to Not At All Interested

SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

- Virtual or digital training groups (64%)
- In-person training groups (49%)
- Event VIP experiences (45%)

FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

- Virtual or digital training groups (57%)
- In-person training groups (45%)
- Event VIP experiences (42%)

RECREATIONAL RUNNER/WALKER/JOGGER

- Traveling to an event more than three hours outside local community (50%)
- Virtual or digital training groups (50%)
- In-person training groups (40%)

OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT

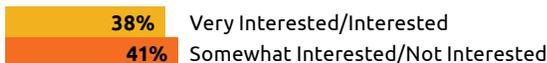
- Virtual or digital training groups (53%)
- In-person training groups (41%)
- Traveling to an event more than three hours outside local community (38%)

Participants are not very interested in races with the following elements:

Rated Somewhat Interested to Not At All Interested

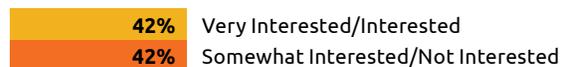
SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER

- Running apps



FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER

- Traveling to an event more than three hours outside local community



The Experience: KEY TAKEAWAYS

When looking at running events, it's clear the half-marathon is the most favored and completed by millennial runners, followed by 5Ks and 10Ks. These runners learn about races primarily through internet search and social media – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, in particular – though serious competitive runners favor internet over social.

Millennial runners sometimes use running events as a way to travel and experience new locations, but they most appreciate a well-run, well-organized event more than any other offering.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Consider incorporating the elements millennial runners deem most important,** especially for half-marathon and 5K/10K events. Take into account the running event distance and cost, as well as instant results and quality “swag.” In addition, consider creating special opportunities for spectators, such as an app, special seating and more.
- 2. Diversify the outlets through which you market your events** as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are popular for nearly every segment of runner to learn about events. Also ensure your event utilizes digital marketing and is available in internet search to capture more competitive serious runners. Use the appropriate channel based on the type of runner your event attracts or hopes to attract.
- 3. Focus on creating a well-organized event** and share information about the course and event in advance. Millennial runners appreciate the ability to be prepared and have set expectations going into a race; day-of organization ranks very highly with this generation of runners. Take time and care to ensure your event is well-staffed with appropriate numbers of volunteers and water stations, etc.

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Philanthropy

The final section of this study focused on philanthropy and millennial runners' involvement with causes through their participation in running events. Since the release of Phase I of the Millennial Running Study, the research team has collected numerous questions about and interest in how to recruit and retain volunteers for running events. As such, this section briefly will look at how causes/charities influence millennial runners to participate in running events, though it will focus primarily on the volunteerism aspect of philanthropy and running events.

Phase I of the Millennial Running Study found that though nearly all respondents have participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity, the cause wasn't the primary reason they participated. When looking at this trend by gender, female respondents were slightly more likely than males to have ever participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity; no real trends could be discerned by runner type.

Q: Have you ever participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity?

	MALE	FEMALE
YES	81%	87%
NO	13%	9%
UNSURE	6%	4%

Q: Have you participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity during the past 12 months?

	MALE	FEMALE
YES	76%	76%
NO	20%	20%
UNSURE	4%	4%

Q: Have you ever participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
YES	85%	86%	86%	87%
NO	10%	10%	10%	10%
UNSURE	4%	5%	4%	4%

Q: Have you participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity during the past 12 months?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
YES	80%	76%	75%	81%
NO	16%	21%	21%	17%
UNSURE	4%	4%	4%	2%

Female respondents were also more likely than males to have chosen to participate in a running event because of the charitable aspect. By runner type, recreational runners/walkers/joggers were much more likely than other types of runners to participate due to a cause or charity.

Q: Have you chosen to participate in running events primarily because you wanted to support the cause or charity that the event supported or because you were interested in participating in that event?

	MALE	FEMALE
PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE CAUSE OR CHARITY THE EVENT SUPPORTED	29%	36%
PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE EVENT AND NOT THE CAUSE OR CHARITY IT SUPPORTED	63%	56%
UNSURE	7%	8%

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE CAUSE OR CHARITY THE EVENT SUPPORTED	27%	33%	45%	33%
PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN THE EVENT AND NOT THE CAUSE OR CHARITY IT SUPPORTED	65%	59%	47%	59%
UNSURE	7%	8%	8%	8%

While nearly two-thirds of male (61%) and more than half of female (56%) millennial runners indicated that participating in running events was not their primary way to support causes or charities, more than two-thirds of women (79%) compared to 71 percent of men indicated they planned to participate in running events that supported a cause or charity during the next 1-2 years. In addition, nearly half (45%) of recreational runners/walkers/joggers responded they have participated in events because of the cause or charity it supported, and 81 percent of runners in this category plan to do so in the next 1-2 years.

Q: During the next 1-2 years, do you plan to participate in running events that support a cause or charity?

	MALE	FEMALE
YES	71%	79%
NO	7%	4%
UNSURE	22%	17%

Q: Have you participated in a running event that supported a cause or charity during the past 12 months?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
YES	73%	77%	81%	78%
NO	6%	4%	4%	7%
UNSURE	20%	18%	16%	15%

Through personal interviews, millennial runners repeatedly indicated that volunteers are an aspect of a well-run event. However, when asked about their own volunteering at running events, millennial runners were not overly involved, although they did provide valuable insight into how events might be able to recruit millennial volunteers.

Only about a third of male (30%) or female (36%) respondents have ever volunteered for a running event. However, nearly half (45%) of serious competitive runners have ever volunteered for a running event, compared to a third or less of other runner types. Of those who have ever volunteered, the primary responsibility of the majority of respondents was to help with day-of tasks.

Q: Have you ever volunteered for a running event?

	MALE	FEMALE
YES	30%	36%
NO	70%	64%

Q: How did you volunteer for that event?

	MALE	FEMALE
HELPED WITH TASKS ON THE DAY(S) BEFORE THE EVENT	40%	41%
HELPED WITH TASKS ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT	82%	83%
HELPED WITH THE LOGISTICAL PLANNING OF THE EVENT	16%	15%
RECRUITED OTHER VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH THE EVENT	18%	18%
OTHER	4%	4%

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Q: Have you ever volunteered for a running event?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
YES	45%	33%	28%	32%
NO	55%	67%	72%	68%

Q: How did you volunteer for that event?

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
HELPED WITH TASKS ON THE DAY(S) BEFORE THE EVENT	46%	40%	42%	30%
HELPED WITH TASKS ON THE DAY OF THE EVENT	83%	83%	80%	83%
HELPED WITH THE LOGISTICAL PLANNING OF THE EVENT	18%	14%	15%	6%
RECRUITED OTHER VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH THE EVENT	19%	18%	20%	21%
OTHER	6%	3%	4%	4%

Aggregate responses from Phase I showed that millennial respondents primarily volunteered for running events because of their passion for the cause/charity the event supported, followed by receiving incentives or encouragement from a friend. This trend holds true for runners of all types except obstacle event participants, most of whom volunteered because he/she received an incentive. Serious competitive runners also indicated they had volunteered because they knew they could use their skills to benefit the event.

By gender, males were more likely to volunteer because of encouragement from a friend or for receiving an incentive; the cause itself was third-most influential for respondents of this gender.

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Q: Why did you volunteer?

	MALES	FEMALES
I RECEIVED AN INCENTIVE FOR VOLUNTEERING	32%	33%
IT INVOLVED A COMPETITION	4%	2%
AN EVENT ORGANIZER ENCOURAGED ME TO VOLUNTEER	23%	21%
A FRIEND ENCOURAGED ME TO VOLUNTEER	34%	30%
I WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE THE EVENT SUPPORTED	31%	36%
I KNEW I COULD USE MY SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE EVENT	25%	23%
IT FULFILLED A SERVICE REQUIREMENT (EX. FOR SCHOOL OR A CLUB)	15%	15%
I'M NOT SURE	3%	2%
OTHER	13%	17%

	SERIOUS COMPETITIVE RUNNER	FREQUENT/ FITNESS RUNNER	WALKER/JOGGER RECREATIONAL RUNNER	OBSTACLE EVENT PARTICIPANT
I RECEIVED AN INCENTIVE FOR VOLUNTEERING	30%	33%	33%	52%
IT INVOLVED A COMPETITION	3%	2%	3%	8%
AN EVENT ORGANIZER ENCOURAGED ME TO VOLUNTEER	24%	21%	21%	8%
A FRIEND ENCOURAGED ME TO VOLUNTEER	28%	31%	35%	15%
I WAS PASSIONATE ABOUT THE CAUSE THE EVENT SUPPORTED	32%	35%	36%	28%
I KNEW I COULD USE MY SKILLS TO BENEFIT THE EVENT	29%	22%	20%	21%
IT FULFILLED A SERVICE REQUIREMENT (EX. FOR SCHOOL OR A CLUB)	13%	16%	18%	10%
I'M NOT SURE	2%	2%	4%	2%
OTHER	18%	15%	13%	9%

What factors have the potential to influence millennial runners to volunteer? Like with the collective results from Phase I, the majority of respondents of both genders and runner type are more likely to volunteer if a friend or family member is a fellow volunteer or event participant, if they receive an incentive or if they can use their specific skills or expertise. Also in line with the aggregate response, competition is not much of an influencing factor in getting a millennial runner to volunteer – though males slightly more than females are more likely to be influenced by competition. Fulfilling a service requirement was responded to with mixed reviews within all runner categories and with both males and female.

Millennial runners like to volunteer in groups because the social aspect and being with people they know are important to them. As one female millennial runner put it, “I wouldn’t go by myself. **I would go with a friend and/or my husband.** So until someone goes with me...”

“I wouldn’t [volunteer] by myself.”

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

One millennial male runner echoed this feeling.

“[Volunteering at an event] is a ‘hanging out’ experience, a group experience. **I would volunteer with my church or friend group.**”

Another female runner, who had volunteered in the past for a running event that supported a cause about which she was passionate, said, “It’s really knowing someone who volunteers at a race that makes a difference. To just show up or to call, though – that’s a big hurdle. Being the odd man out is a pretty big barrier to overcome.”

That same female respondent gave event directors a few recommendations for recruiting volunteers. “Events should really advertise that there is room to volunteer. Show how inviting other volunteers and the atmosphere are, **and how native groups of people or organized groups can get involved in volunteering.**”

Interviewees also suggested offering volunteers free or reduced registrations for future events as an incentive when recruiting. Said one female respondent, “We run a lot. It would be cool to volunteer. **Being able to run for a future event for free would be an enticing incentive to volunteer.**”

Another female millennial runner agreed: “I would probably volunteer more if volunteering saves you a spot in next year’s race or a future race.”

Yet another female runner said, “If you offered volunteers a discount on another race – that would definitely get me to volunteer. **If I volunteered at Race A and then got 50% off for Race B...that’s a good incentive to get people out there.**”

“Events should really advertise that there is room to volunteer.”

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

“I would probably volunteer more if volunteering saves you a spot in next year’s race or a future race.”

FEMALE MILLENNIAL RUNNER

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Philanthropy: KEY TAKEAWAYS

Most millennial runners do not select events as a means to support a specific cause or charity, although women and recreational runners/walkers/joggers are more interested in participating in events that support causes/charities than other categories of runner. Millennials appear to support causes and charities of interest through non-running event avenues. They may make donations towards a charity as a part of their registration, but are not likely to solely select a running event because it supports a cause or charity.

In addition, the majority of millennial runners have not volunteered for an event – but they would do so if they could participate in groups of their choosing (primarily friends and family members) or if they would receive free or reduced registrations to future events.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. If your event includes or is focused on walking/jogging, **consider creating a partnership** with a cause or a charity as a part of your event. Event directors organizing longer-distance runs – and perhaps more serious/competitive running events – may not want to incorporate the support of causes or charities into their events as it is not an influential factor with this group of runners.
2. **Provide easy opportunities for millennial runners to volunteer** with groups of their own construction. In addition, consider offering free or reduced registration to future running events as an incentive for millennial volunteering.

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Millennial runners run to promote health, prevent disease and find mental clarity.

Running is an activity that millennials have identified as an efficient way to benefit not only their physical health but to also sustain positive mental and emotional health. First as a way to lose weight and then a way to decompress and think, running is a part of who they are, how they see themselves and what they represent. It becomes a daily routine, an escape, a restorative practice and more, increasing their abilities to perform in other areas of their lives.

RECOMMENDATION

Event materials, communications, sponsors and race obstacles may want to speak to healthy lifestyles – both physical and emotional – and may also want to focus on whole-person development. Realize that running is an identity to this generation, and speak to participants about more than just your event.

Millennial runners appreciate events that are well-organized and challenging.

The data from this phase of the research continues to reveal that the half-marathon is the most popular event; however, when looking across runner types and among runners of both genders, there is a trend for millennial runners to want to increase the distance of the events they had run during the past 12 months. Above all, millennial runners gravitate toward and become loyal to races that are well-organized both before and during the event.

RECOMMENDATION

Take time and care to ensure your event is well-staffed with appropriate numbers of volunteers and water stations, etc. and that this information is communicated to participants well in advance. In addition, consider looking at your current event registration and implement ways to communicate with these individuals about the possibility of running the next longer distance(s) (e.g., cultivating a runner base for increasingly longer events). Communications could include training “advice” for increasing distances, or anything that would assist millennial runners in furthering their fitness and preparing for the increased challenge of the next event.

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Most millennial runners do not select events as a means to support a specific cause or charity.

As with the findings of Phase I, the majority of millennial runners do not participate in running events because of the philanthropic aspect. In addition, most millennial runners have not volunteered for an event – but they would do so if they could participate in groups of their choosing (primarily friends and family members) or if they would receive free or reduced registrations to future events.

RECOMMENDATION

Communicate to millennial runners the importance of event volunteers. This generation of runners have articulated that they appreciate well-run and well-orchestrated events and have even identified some of their best experiences have been at events teeming with engaged volunteers. Encourage participants to give back for those quality experiences in a meaningful way (e.g., paying it forward by volunteering at an event so others may also enjoy a well-run and well-orchestrated event). To assist in the success of this ask and in the uptake, provide opportunities for millennial runners to volunteer as a part of a group of their choosing. Finally, provide valuable incentives, such as reduced or free registration to another event you offer, as a thank-you for their volunteerism.

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Conclusion

To millennial runners, health isn't a fad – it's a lifestyle. This generation of runners are more than just conscious of their health; they actively seek to improve and maintain it long-term, and they integrate running as a mode of health promotion and disease prevention.

As the next generation of event volunteers, it is vital to cultivate millennial runners now. Appropriate communications, approaches and incentives can serve as ways to draw in this expansive group of potential volunteers, and current race directors can consider identifying organizations that serve physically active millennials (e.g., teams, workout groups and clubs, etc.) and target them with meaningful information about the importance of volunteering at running events.

It is up to event directors to leverage the information in this report in order to plan and execute the best events that will appeal to this generation. Through communication, organization and understanding of this generation, event directors will be well suited to capture and hold the interests of millennial runners today and into the future.

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