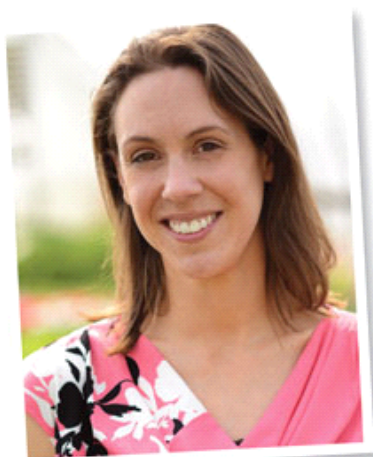


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The Kids Are Alright

Jennifer Polanz



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Ah, to be 26 again. That's a pretty cool time of life, when you're still young and a bit reckless, but you actually have some money (or at least you think you do) and some time to waste.

Today's 26-year-olds make up the largest numbers of any age group in the U.S., which means they're also a marketer's dream. That's according to a recent Wall Street Journal article passed along by a colleague, which also stated that 25-, 24- and 27-year-olds follow closely behind (in that order). These are young adults looking to make big decisions about their life, like where they'll reside, what they'll value, who they'll take along for the ride and whether or not they'll have kids.

The good news is while Millennials initially threw us for a loop (they're moving in to the cities and renting!), they're now starting to act like every other generation (sort of) and buying homes. In fact, they're the single largest

group of homebuyers this year. Of course, these homebuyers will need landscapes, tools and houseplants. Oh, the houseplants.

By now you've seen the cover of our magazine (whiplash, it's 1976, baby)—houseplants and macramé are back with a vengeance. It's an interesting reason why, too. You'll have to turn to page 24 to see what Ellen Wells found out when she broached the topic with multiple experts in the field.

These young Millennials were raised with HGTV, DIY and Food Network playing in the background, so they're well aware of the latest trends in home and food. That means you need to be on trend, too, in your stores. See what colors and design trends will keep you hip for spring 2018. Look for inspiration from outside the industry, too, with a quick take on trendy retailers.

To say many of these new customers who are coming into your stores won't know a hosta from a heuchera is an understatement. It's vital to adjust your approach and we're not just talking about Millennials anymore—people of all ages are starting to venture in to our little oasis of peace that we know as the green industry. Valerie Nalls, our 2015 Young Retailer Award winner, tackled how to cater to newbie gardeners.

Going back to the beginning, the title is a reference to The Who song, which they recorded baby-faced in 1965 when guitarist and the song's author Pete Townshend was just 20 years old. It was before his signature guitar-smashing antics on stage—really before anything of note related to The Who. It fit for me because The Who went on to

become a respected band, changing the face (and the eardrums) of rock 'n roll. I think Millennials are moving out of that baby-faced stage now, finding their feet, and they will make big changes themselves. Let's stay flexible and figure out their needs—if we do that, we'll be along for the ride with them as they grow (personally and vegetatively).

Here's to the next 20 years. **GP**