



A Conversation with JSwipe Founder on Millennial Philanthropy

David Yarus has closely watched as marketing evolved from its not-so-distant past into the highly-connected, digital industry that it has become today. Now, as the founder of the JSwipe Jewish dating app and the MLLNNL creative agency, he puts his vast knowledge and innovative marketing techniques to work every day to help change the world.

I sat down with David to talk about “The Love Study” that he conducted with JSwipe users, as well as on his thoughts on getting millennials involved in philanthropy.

David started JSwipe 5 years ago, and since then, has been invited to speak at countless Jewish conferences, federations, foundations, and organizations. Though he continues to be impressed by the work that these groups regularly accomplish, he was alarmed at what he took to be a lack of critical dialogue about the millennial Jewish experience. In fact, as he pointed out, there was almost no discussion between the Jewish “establishment” – which he affectionately calls “Big Jewish” – and their millennials who, as a whole, are a lot less affiliated than previous generations.

The token, brief conversations that do occur, he said, don’t address the core of how millennials feel about supporting Jewish organizations and lifestyles. Instead, it seemed as if actually productive conversations were intentionally avoided, as they had the potential to bring up sensitive or uncomfortable topics.

This need for real discussion – which would finally tackle issues that David had been personally dealing with himself – is what inspired the development of “The Love Study”: the first study to effectively give a voice to a generation and create the necessary space for a real dialogue to take place.

“How,” he asked, “Can we create a bridge that continues the essence of what generations past practiced and want for us, but also maintains *our* truth?”

After 4,000 answers were coded thematically and proportionally, the Love Study revealed something surprising: 70% of millennial respondents financially supported Jewish organizations, with Chabad as the most supported.

Clearly, unlike what many “establishment” Jewish organizations believe, millennial Jews are more than willing to support organizations that speak to them. All that remains now, he argues, is for a conversation to be had.

David believes that, at its core, the conversation needs to be about “co-creation.” In other words, organizations need to figure out how to not only plainly communicate their mission and their purpose, but how to incorporate new, millennial ideas into those goals. They need to ask a simple question: “How can we combine our resources with your creativity to make something great happen?”

So how should your nonprofit communicate those ideas? By answering these three questions:

1. Where is my money going?
2. Can I direct where it's going?
3. Where can I have the greatest dollar-for-dollar impact?

In such a universally connected world, he points out, donors have a bevy of organizations from every corner of the earth to choose from; when so many causes out there speak to the millennial donor – someone who really does want to make a difference – how can you make sure that your voice and mission can be heard above the rest?

“Talk to them, empower them, trust them, and co-create with them,” David says. As long as you’re showing and documenting your important work in an organic fashion, involve your prospective millennial donors, and they will give.

Enjoy our conversation! <https://youtu.be/UJBxC2E8bxk>

<https://ejewishphilanthropy.com/a-conversation-with-jswipe-founder-on-millennial-philanthropy>