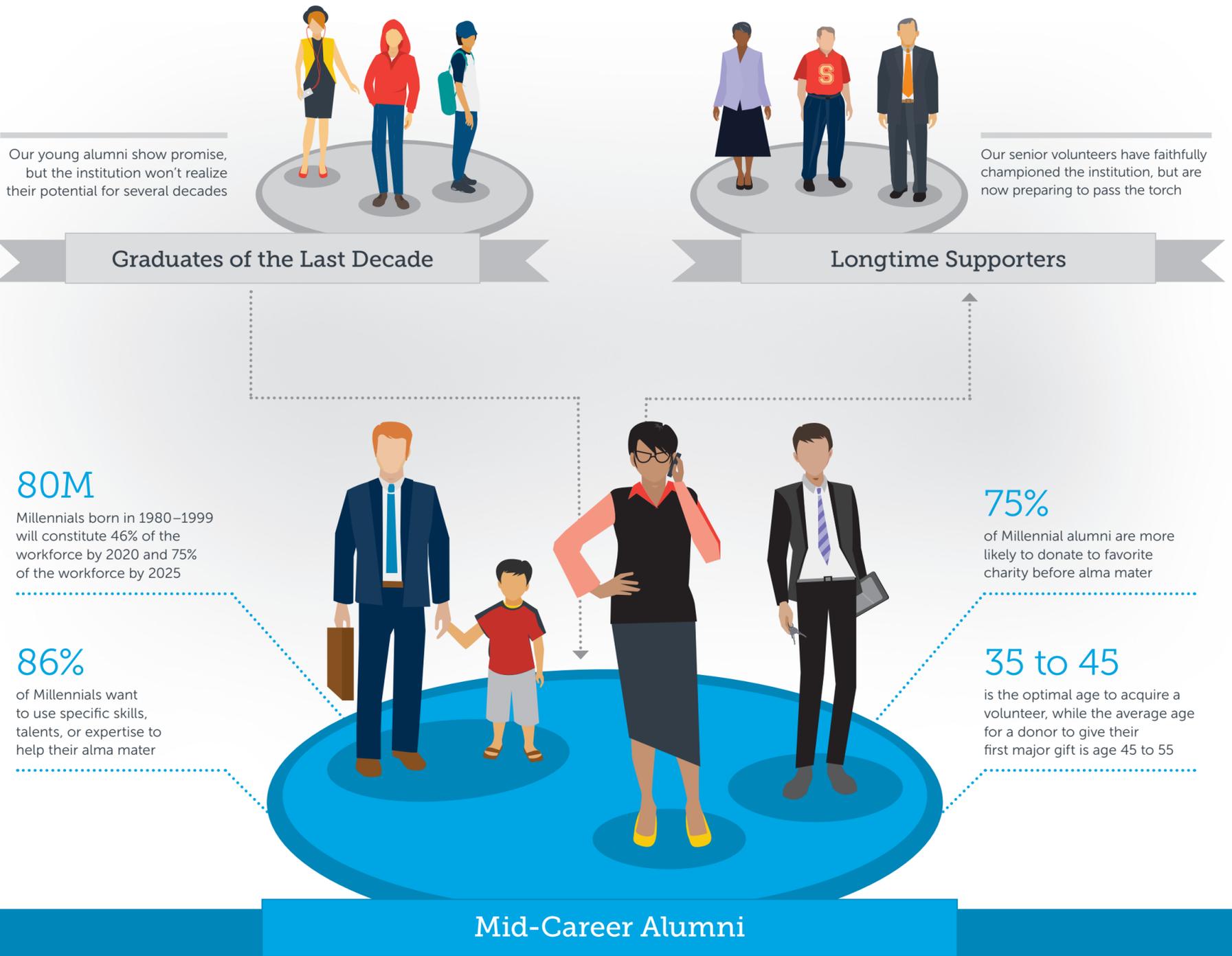# The New Rules of Engagement

Five Strategies for Building the Next Generation of Alumni Leaders and Volunteers

Today's alumni want to go "all in" as donors and volunteers with the causes they care about. In this increasingly competitive philanthropic landscape, simply invoking loyalty and duty to one's alma mater isn't effective. Mid-career alumni in their 30s and 40s are the greatest unrealized opportunity for colleges and universities: they are the largest alumni cohort, the least involved, and just a few years away from peak earning potential. Because their funds will follow where their time and talents flow, now is the ideal time to attract them as volunteers.

Do you know what it takes to engage them?

Our young alumni show promise, but the institution won't realize their potential for several decades

Graduates of the Last Decade

Our senior volunteers have faithfully championed the institution, but are now preparing to pass the torch

Longtime Supporters

80M

Millennials born in 1980–1999 will constitute 46% of the workforce by 2020 and 75% of the workforce by 2025

86%

of Millennials want to use specific skills, talents, or expertise to help their alma mater

75%

of Millennial alumni are more likely to donate to favorite charity before alma mater

35 to 45

is the optimal age to acquire a volunteer, while the average age for a donor to give their first major gift is age 45 to 55

Mid-Career Alumni

RULE #1

Make It Easy to Say Yes

Shift to one-time, short-term, or episodic engagements with clearly communicated parameters and purpose

TACTICS

- 24- to 72-Hour Volunteer Strike Forces
- Reunion "Micro-volunteer" Roles
- 30-Minute Mentorship

RULE #2

Meet Them Where They Are

Create convenient and accessible volunteer roles that allow alumni to participate in their workplaces, regions, or online

TACTICS

- Corporate Alumni Chapters
- Social Media Ambassadors
- Digital Content Connectors

RULE #3

Broker Smarter Matches

Proactively identify high-potential alumni volunteers and match them with mass-customizable, skills-based roles

TACTICS

- Volunteer Affinity Detectors
- High-Potential Alumni Leader Pipeline Development
- Faculty-Friendly Classroom Volunteer Opportunities

RULE #4

Embrace the "Me" Factor

Emphasize the two-way value proposition for volunteers and communicate their impact

TACTICS

- "Insider Access" Volunteer Conference
- Digital Badges, Online Leaderboards, and Gamification Tactics
- Online Opportunity Portals for Cause Communities

RULE #5

Cultivate Campus Allies

Partner with other units to develop roles that offer substantive experiences with students and faculty

TACTICS

- "Ghost Volunteer" Identification Form
- Venture Fund for Innovative Volunteer Roles
- University-Wide Volunteer Engagement Offices

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Learn how to instill the rules of engagement in your organization

eab.com/newrulesofengagement