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6 Things Marketers Need to Know About Gen Z

Generation Z, those born between the mid-1990s and early 2000s, is the first generation of digital natives. They are constantly digitally connected. This should make them easily accessible to marketers. But they're also extremely digital-savvy with clear expectations and uses for social platforms. Marketers need to craft specific strategies that target what's important to this generation and that resonate with an entirely new set of personal values.

The facts about Generation Z, aka Gen Z

Age: 0 to 23 years

Population: 90.3 million

Buying power: \$143.2 billion

Demographics: Most diverse generation ever; will make up 32% of the global population in 2019¹

¹ Bloomberg News, Gen Z Is Set to Outnumber Millennials Within a Year, August 20, 2018



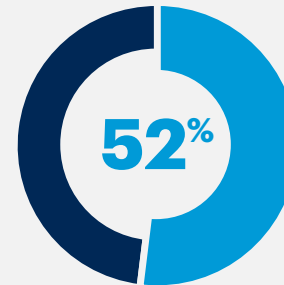
1. Be social media savvy

Gen Z is the most diverse generation ever; Gen Zers are also deeply invested in digital. As digital natives, these consumers are highly critical of the benefits and impacts of too much internet and social media use. They manage their social media platforms and brand as closely as a professional marketer.

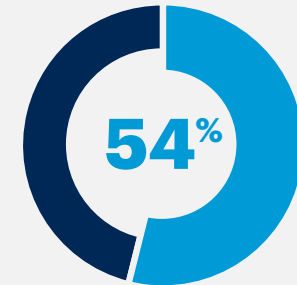
“Because of this, and the fact that two-thirds of marketing budgets are invested in digital channels to target this audience, CMOs must be evermore mindful of how they are engaging Gen Z,” says [Jack Mackinnon](#), Senior Principal Analyst, Gartner Research & Advisory.

A Mindful Majority Is Readjusting

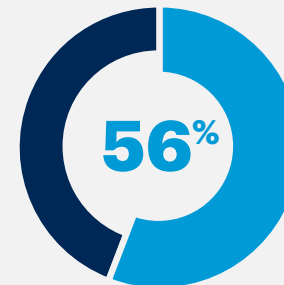
Percentage of Consumers Who Agree With the Following Statements:



have unplugged from social media.¹



expect to use social media less as they get older.²



have deleted social media app.³

Base: U.S. consumers 13+

Sources:

1 Gartner Consumer Values & Lifestyle Survey, October 2018; Q: “What activities have you done for mental/emotional health: unplug from technology”

2 Gartner Gen Z Survey, September 2018; Q: “Please read the below statements and indicate which you agree with more. A. As I get older, I will probably start using social media less frequently.”

3 Gartner Consumer Social Media Survey, January 2019; Q: “Have you deleted or stopped using any social media platforms?”

2. Boost their image

Gen Z consumers are 1.5 times more likely to follow a brand that provides content that boosts their own image, according to Gartner. Where previous generations were concerned with fitting in, Gen Zers are breaking that mold by creating and enjoying greater freedom to test and shape an identity that stands out.

46% of Gen Zers agree, “the more Likes I receive on social media, the better I feel” — all with the intent of adding value to their followers’ online experience. When looking for informative and inspirational content to share, they want it to meet one of three requirements: 1) it interests or excites me, 2) it will make my friends laugh, or 3) it expresses how I’m feeling.

“If you want Gen Z as loyal customers, you have to let them do the driving,” says Mackinnon. “Effective marketers need to embrace the sidecar role with enthusiasm and position their brand strategy around boosting Gen Z’s own personal brand. It isn’t about you, it’s about them.”

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What Gen Z Shares Follows the Rules of Engagement

What Are the Main Reasons You Share on Social Media?

1 

To share something I am interested or excited about

2 

To make my friends laugh

3 

To express how I am feeling

Q: “What is your motivation to follow brands and companies on social media? Please select all that apply.”

Base: U.S. consumers 13+; n = 2538

Source: Gartner Consumer Social Media Survey, January 2019.

3. Be inspirational

Eighty-one percent of Gen Zers follow friends online, but only about 30% are following brands. That's challenging for marketers looking for followers. The good news is that this generation does look to brands for informative and inspirational content. Brands looking to truly connect with this generation need to perfect two aspects of their digital campaigns — an effective strategy and content that resonates with Gen Zers.

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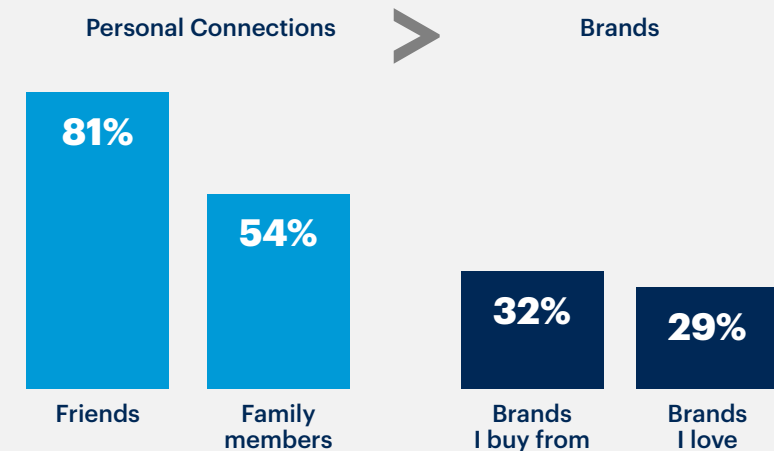
4. Be (vocally) socially conscious

From Lyft offering free rides to last year's March For Our Lives protest to Serena Williams' stereotype-smashing feminism for Nike, Gen Zers expect brands to engage with social and political issues. And it greatly affects how and where they spend their \$143.2 billion in buying power.

In fact, 40% of Gen Zers say they will only buy from companies that align with their values and 50% say they won't buy from a company whose leadership (i.e., CEO/owner/spokesperson) they view negatively. Being able to take a stance on an important and relevant social issue that is appropriate for the brand, is key to capturing the attention, loyalty and wallet share of Gen Z.

Gen Z Isn't Online for the Brands

Which of the Following Groups Do You Follow on Social Media?



Q: "Which of the following groups do you follow on social media?"
 Source: Gartner 2018 Gen Z Survey, September 2018
 Base: Gen Z consumers 13 – 22, n = 1031

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5. Demonstrate platform expertise

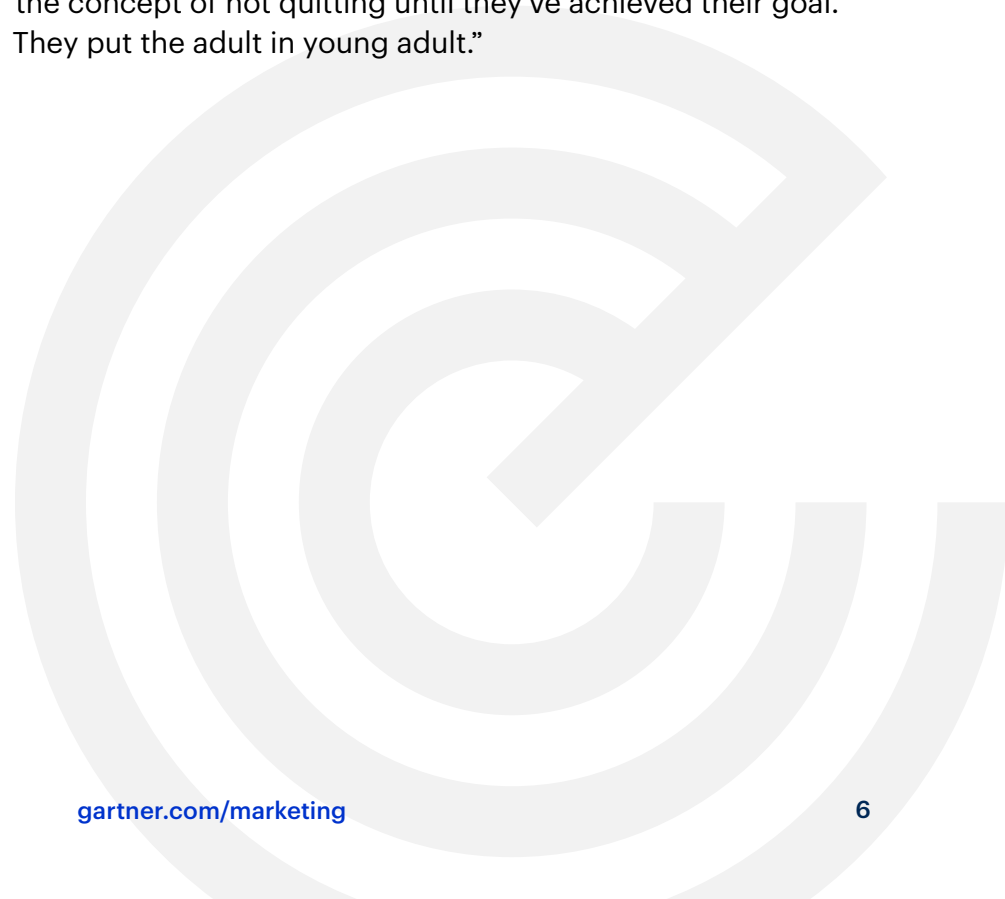
While millennials (those born between the early 1980s and early 2000s) were limited to Myspace and Facebook, Gen Zers have many more options, which means marketers need to know where they are. As an added complication, Gen Zers are partial to routinely changing which platform dominates their social media focus. Marketers must ensure their strategy balances across social media platforms — Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter and YouTube must all have a unique and relevant engagement strategy.

And the strategy shouldn't be cutting and pasting across all the platforms. Craft a unique post that leverages that platform's etiquette expectations and technical features in the most effective way. For example, stick to mixed media on Facebook, pithy comments on Twitter and take advantage of the visual storytelling for Instagram.

6. Leverage their values (not millennials')

Every effective digital strategy needs relevant and compelling content, and the content that is most relevant for Gen Zers is rooted in their personal values. As with millennials, identity, creativity and passion are still in the top 20 values for Gen Z. But they also value tenacity and expertise as top personal values. In addition, Gen Zers are the first to report that “fun” is now less important than it once was for previous generations.

“This is indicative of a much more serious generation than what we've seen in the past,” says Mackinnon. “Gen Z values the concept of not quitting until they've achieved their goal. They put the adult in young adult.”



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