

Keep an eye on Generation Z

What marketers also need to keep on their radar is the approaching 'Generation Z', who it seems have 'wised up' about the future somewhat after going through the global recession with their families.

"Generation Z have developed their personalities and life skills "in a socio-economic environment marked by chaos, uncertainty, volatility and complexity", a research report by agency [Sparks & Honey](#) states.

Titled '[Meet Generation Z: Forget everything you learned about Millennials](#)', the report unpacks this more enlightened and confident generation of youngsters: "They have also grown up in a diverse environment, where modern families come in all colours and sizes, where gender roles and norms are blurring, and they live in multi-generational households. Generation Z share many of the same values as the 'Great Generation', living as they do with their grandparents and older siblings ('boomerang' Millennials moving back home)."

Snackable content

They are the ultimate consumers of "snack media" as research studies suggest that "their brains have evolved to process more information at faster speeds, handling bigger mental challenges as a result. They are also less active, spend more time in front of a computer, but are also more concerned about the world's social problems than previous generations.



Syda Productions via [123RF](#)

They are gravitating to live-streaming media, such as Twitch and Ustream. This is how agency Sparks & Honey advises marketers to connect with Gen Z, because they are: more tech innate, able to use five screens; think in 4D; share judiciously; are active volunteers; blended (race and gender); believe in togetherness; are mature; communicate with images; make stuff; have humility; are future focused; realists; want to work for success; and have a collective conscious.

In order to connect with them, marketers must:

1. Depict them as diverse (ethnically, sexually, fashionably).
2. Talk in images: emojis, symbols, pictures, videos.
3. Communicate more frequently in shorter bursts of 'snackable content'.
4. Don't talk down... talk to them as adults, even about global topics.
5. Assume they have opinions and are vocal, influencing family decisions.
6. Make stuff - or help Gen Z make stuff (they're industrious).
7. Tap into their entrepreneurial spirit.
8. Be humble.
9. Give them control and preference settings.
10. Collaborate with them and help them collaborate with others.
11. Tell your story across multiple screens.
12. Live stream with them - or give them live streaming access.
13. Optimise your search results (they do their internet research).
14. Talk to them about value (they care about the cost of things).
15. Include a social cause that they can fight for.
16. Have your house in order (in terms of sustainability).
17. Help them build expertise... they want to be experts.
18. Tease (think: ephemeral, puzzles, surprises and games).
19. Feed their curiosity.

20. Feed them.

Future plans

The majority of Generation Z are still teenagers born in the mid-90s or later and at high school, under the age of 18, but this generation are already planning their futures because they think they may not get jobs and aren't thrilled by the prospects of crippling student loans. These are some of the highlights from the [research by Northeastern University in the US, released in November 2014](#), as reported by *Fast Company*:

- 60% of respondents are concerned about having enough money, and 64% are worried about getting a job. They have no illusions about corporate job security and over four in 10 think they'll work for themselves in their careers. 63% of respondents also think entrepreneurship should be a college subject. 55% plan to live or study abroad in the future.
- They think college is important, but are not keen on the idea of college debt. They are also not that optimistic about online degrees. 85% said they want to be taught practical skills in college such as financial planning and saving for the future. 79% believe their college education should include some form of professional experience such as internships. 61% said the gap between rich and poor is harmful to their generation.
- Interestingly, Generation Z seem to be more tech-adverse than Millennials, interested more in human interaction than talking to their friends via social media. Researchers thought this might be because over half these kids have been cyber-bullied or stalked online.
- They are liberal about social issues, believing trans-gender people should have equal rights and that everyone should have the right to marry or become a citizen. Two thirds think health care should be free for all.
- 69% said their parents are their top role models.
- 29% indicated their main source for information about major events is online news sources such as CNN.com or NYTimes.com, compared with just 12% who said they get news from what their friends post online.

- 38% already make most of their purchases online.

More information is available at [Northeastern Innovation Survey](#) and via [download \(pdf\)](#).

**Trends curated by [Louise Marsland](#), specialist editor of Biz Trends 2015.*

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