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White Paper

Summer Interns 2019

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Who is Gen Z?

Generation Z, the true **digital natives**, account for 55 million people in the U.S. born between 1995 and 2012. By 2020, Gen Z is projected to have a purchasing power of \$3 trillion. Generation Z can be divided into Gen Z adults and Gen Z teens due to the stark differences in these stages of life. Many Gen Z teens are in high school facing common stressors like cyberbullying, figuring out their identity and starting a career path. Gen Z adults are far more developed – as many as 16% of Gen Z adults are either married or a parent.

Gen Z struggles with pressures to fit in with society and to have a successful career and future. For teens, their main pressures are getting good grades and impressing their parents. Their favorite activities include hanging out with friends, playing video games and watching their favorite TV shows. Despite the myth that Gen Z only communicates with their friends via text and social media, research shows that 53% prefer face-to-face conversations.

Few Gen Zers are financially independent, since they are primarily living with their parents or on limited entry-level salaries.

Gen Z teens' average weekly income is less than \$25. Teens rely on their parents for money when they need it, and unfortunately, only one-quarter of them are saving for college. Gen Z mirrors Millennials in that **the main focus of their 20s is kick-starting their careers**, pushing the standard of becoming parents or getting married further back.

Social media is also shown to increase anxiety among Gen Z. 52% of Gen Z adults say that social media makes them feel left out, compared to 30% of Gen Z teens. Generation Z engages with brands on social media, and they are heavily influenced by people with a large following on Instagram. They trust influencers more than brands because they see them as real, honest people.

Gen Zers are competitive, good multitaskers and **they crave independence**. 72% of Gen Z high school students want to own their own business, which is more than any previous generation (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).

Client Profiles

Gen Z Teens

Gen Z Adults



Zoey
13 Years Old

- + Spends 3.5 hours a day on her phone.
- + Active Snapchatter and Instagrammer, has multiple photo editing apps.
- + Makes group Tik Tok videos with her friends after school.
- + Spends 6 hours per week on YouTube.
- + She loves reading life hacks, beauty tips or celeb news on BuzzFeed and People.
- + Gets her news from Snapchat and from the local news station.



Olivia
22 Years Old

- + Spends 4 hours a day on her phone.
- + Uses Snapchat and Instagram and follows fashion, beauty and fitness influencers.
- + As a recent graduate, she stresses about student debt and getting a good job.
- + Gets most of her news from news apps, The New York Times email newsletter and The Betches Sup podcast. She also looks through the Cosmopolitan and BuzzFeed Snapchat stories.



Adam
15 Years Old

- + Spends 3.25 hours a day on his phone.
- + YouTube, Snapchat and Twitch are his favorite platforms.
- + Plays sports after school, then games with his friends before dinner.
- + Spends 1.5 hours a day playing video games with friends after school.
- + Gets his news from Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook. Pays more attention to news that is in a quick video format.



Evan
19 Years Old

- + Spends 3 hours a day on his phone.
- + Uses Snapchat and Instagram and follows accounts like Barstool Sports and World Star.
- + Plays 2 hours of Fortnite each day and loves the freedom of college life.
- + Enjoys watching ESPN and professional gamers on YouTube.
- + Gets most of his news from Reddit, but fact-checks it with publications like The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times.

News + Lifestyle Media Consumption

What are Gen Z's habits and attitudes toward news?

22% of Gen Z feels that social media is very important when it comes to finding information and staying up-to-date on current events. In fact, 58% of Gen Z used their smart phone instead of a computer to visit a website for news in the past month, and 23% use a traditional news app on their phone regularly. Gen Z turns to social media to be knowledgeable about their favorite celebrities and influencers; 33% of Gen Z feel the need to keep up with celebrity news and gossip. With an attention span of only eight seconds, Gen Z prefers visual and audible content rather than text, and interacts with video the most because it engages them most. For this reason, YouTube, Facebook videos and podcasts are extremely popular among Gen Z adults, with 72% of Gen Z watching YouTube daily and one in five Gen Zers listening to podcasts weekly (Durfy, 2019). They seek out content relating to art, design, entertainment and advice, while steering away from sports news (GfK MRI, 2018).



62% say it is important to keep up with news and current affairs, but only 18% feel the need to check the news daily.

■ Say news is important ■ Check news daily

Average Amount of Media Consumed

Gen Z is not completely abandoning traditional media, although they are consuming far less than previous generations. Gen Z's media consumption rates are as follows:

-  7.6 magazines read per month
-  11.5 newspapers read per month
-  19 hours of radio listened to per week
-  21.5 hours of TV watched per week
-  32.1 hours spent on the internet (via computer) per week

Gen Z vs. Millennial Media Consumption Habits

A recent study comparing Gen Z and Millennial media consumption habits found that online media outlets that resonate with Millennials do not always resonate with Gen Z adults. The study looked at both traditional and newer outlets, including BuzzFeed, Cheddar, CNN, HuffPost, The Intercept, The New York Times, The New Yorker, The Outline, Ozy, Time, The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. Outlets that were created before 2000 had a much higher favorability among Gen Z, which could be attributed to the lack of credibility that comes with newer media outlets.

Gen Z is known to have the highest "BS" filter when it comes to consuming information. Growing up in an era of fake news, Gen Z can quickly detect when information is unreliable and when news sources are not credible. Gen Z knows that much of what they read needs to be fact checked, which is why they do not rely on only one news source. As digital natives, they have grown up being told not to trust everything they read on the internet. However, Gen Zers trust information

they read on the internet more than information they see on TV. Another reason for this is likely the style of content in these newer media outlets. One participant in the study noted, "some of the more Gen Z oriented news sources are pretty patronizing...in a way that presumes that people who are young are also stupid." Online websites for traditional media outlets that resonate with Gen Z include CNN, HuffPost, The New York Times, USA Today and The Wall Street Journal (Guaglione, 2019).



The New York Times

Media List

BuzzFeed



Ade Onibada, News Reporter, BuzzFeed

Onibada covers the intersection of news and pop culture for BuzzFeed, often looking at how social issues interact with politics and entertainment. She often comments on issues of diversity.

Recent: [The New Agent 007 Is Reportedly Black British Actor Lashana Lynch](#)



Nora Dominick, TV and Pop Culture Writer, BuzzFeed

Dominick is an expert in all things television, engaging with many fans through her favorite pastime: live tweeting. Her work is often featured on BuzzFeed's Snapchat story.

Recent: [23 TV Shows That Only Lasted One Season, But Are Worth Binge-Watching](#)

CNN



Kate Trafecante, Multimedia Journalist, CNN

Trafecante is a business journalist and producer, frequently covering stories on company initiatives in terms of corporate social responsibility and corporate values.

Recent: [Secret deodorant to contribute \\$529,000 to US women's soccer to address pay gap](#)



Lisa Respers France, Senior Entertainment Writer, CNN

France is an avid reader and music enthusiast, making her CNN's go-to for all things entertainment. She keeps readers up-to-date on everything they need to know about their favorite celebrities.

Recent: [Madonna makes powerful statement against gun violence in 'God Control' video](#)

COSMOPOLITAN



Brooke Shunatona, Senior Beauty Editor, Cosmopolitan

Shunatona looks at all the latest beauty products and makeup trends, giving readers all the beauty inspiration they could dream of for Halloween, Coachella and everyday glam. Her work is frequently featured on Cosmo's Snapchat story.

Recent: [Everything We Know So Far About Lady Gaga's New Makeup Line](#)



Gabrielle Kassel, Sex & Wellness Writer, Cosmopolitan

Kassel is a self-proclaimed fitness junkie, providing wellness tips and debunking self-care fads. Her articles have also appeared in publications including Well & Good, Health and Shape.

Recent: [Here's What's Up With Charcoal Toothpaste - in Case You're Curious](#)

ESPN



Emily Rand, Staff Writer, ESPN

Rand specializes in covering esports, the growing industry embracing the intersection of sports and video games.

Recent: [What we learned from the Eastern region Rift Rivals](#)



Richard Lapchick, Contributing Writer, ESPN

Sport business management professor and writer, Lapchick is a frequent contributor to ESPN, specializing in issues of diversity and ethics within professional and collegiate sports.

Recent: [The 2018 Major League Soccer Racial and Gender Report Card](#)

Forbes



Paul Tassi, Contributing Writer, Forbes

Tassi covers the ins and outs of gaming, looking at news, opinion, technology and Internet games. He also writes about pop culture in the entertainment space, including television and movies.

Recent: [The Nintendo Switch Lite, Handheld-Only, Launches This Fall As The Cheapest Console On The Market](#)



Madeline Berg, Reporter, Forbes

Berg covers the intersection of Hollywood and money, looking at the most successful people alive today, especially if they are women. She has also covered media, food, shopping and education.

Recent: [Kylie Jenner, Beyonce And The Highest-Paid Women In Entertainment 2019](#)

HUFFPOST



Brittany Wong, Senior Lifestyle Reporter, HuffPost

From workplace advice to relationship tips, Wong has all the answers for HuffPost readers. While she mostly covers love, sex and relationships, she also writes about career and wellness.

Recent: [How To Network When You're An Introvert](#)



Danielle Gonzalez, Lifestyle Commerce Specialist, HuffPost

Gonzalez tells readers all about the fashion, beauty and home products they need today. As HuffPost's resident commerce guru, she shares only the best and the trendiest.

Recent: [Everything In This New Line Of Clean Beauty Is Under \\$8](#)

The New York Times



Jonah Engel Bromwich, Style Writer, New York Times

Bromwich covers news in the style space, from influencer collaborations to trends and fashion conversations on social.

Recent: [What if Being a YouTube Celebrity Is Actually Backbreaking Work?](#)



Amanda Hess, Critic At Large, New York Times

Hess covers Internet culture and trends for the Arts section of The New York Times. Prior, her work appeared in publications including Elle, Slate and ESPN.

Recent: [It's Slime. And It's Satisfying.](#)

POPSUGAR.



Perri Konecky, Assistant Editor, Trending and Viral Features, Popsugar

Konecky's focus is on trending topics including celebrity news, fashion, sports and entertainment. She tells it how it is and keeps readers informed on the doings of their famous "friends."

Recent: [Kylie Jenner Took Stormi and All Her Girls to Turks and Caicos For a Lavish Vacation](#)



Kelsey Castanon, Senior Beauty Editor, Popsugar

Popsugar's very own beauty guru Castanon breaks down all the biggest beauty trends and new products on the market. She shares the best glam from every Hollywood event to give readers a look into celebrity beauty and style.

Recent: [Exactly How Much an LGBTQ+ Person Spends on Beauty For Pride](#)

REFINERY29



[Sarah Midkiff, Staff Writer, Refinery29](#)

An accomplished musician herself, Midkiff is the perfect person to cover music, entertainment, celebrity news and Internet culture for Refinery29. Her work spans topics from subcultures to astrology to aliens.

Recent: [What Is The Raid On Area 51 & Will A Million People Really Storm It To See Aliens?](#)



[Natalie Morin, Editorial Assistant, Refinery29](#)

As a pop music junkie and pop culture fanatic, Morin covers anything that is fun and newsworthy. Whether it is TV shows, reality stars or beauty trends, Morin knows the ins and outs it all.

Recent: [Here's What Real People Think About The U.S. Women's Soccer Team Demanding Equal Pay](#)

Sports Illustrated



[Emily Caron, Staff Writer, Sports Illustrated](#)

Caron is a news and college sports writer for SI, focusing on NCAA basketball and football. She also covers a wide range of professional and amateur sports from a news angle.

Recent: [Serena Williams: 'The Day I Stop Fighting for Equality Will Be the Day I'm in My Grave'](#)



[Ben Baskin, Staff Writer, Sports Illustrated](#)

As a former NFL Reporter, Baskin covers professional and college sports for SI. While football is still his area of focus, he also covers sports from a news and pop culture angle.

Recent: [The Best Athlete-Turned-Rapper? It's Arian Foster. \(Just Ask Him\)](#)

USA TODAY



[Carly Mallenbaum, Multimedia Journalist, USA Today](#)

Mallenbaum writes about the intersections of entertainment, fashion, food, commerce and pop culture. She considers herself a celebrity expert, and she loves a red carpet.

Recent: [Sorry, Phoebe: Pottery Barn announces 'Friends' collection, Apothecary Table included](#)



[Marc Saltzman, Gaming Writer, USA Today](#)

Declaring himself a "Technology Evangelist," Saltzman is an expert in all things tech. His specialties include consumer electronics, Internet trends and interactive entertainment.

Recent: [Explore augmented reality with 'Harry Potter,' 'Jurassic World,' and 'Angry Birds' games](#)

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



[Ray A. Smith, Fashion Writer, The Wall Street Journal](#)

Smith is a fashion and style writer covering everything from business to trends, with an added emphasis on men's fashion. He often covers issues of diversity in the fashion and beauty space.

Recent: [Beauty Brands Focus on Women of Color](#)



[Jeanette Settembre, Lifestyle Contributor, The Wall Street Journal](#)

Settembre covers all things lifestyle, from celebrity happenings and retail to health and career.

Recent: [John Legend Thinks He and Chrissy Teigen Could Have a Variety Show](#)

Social + Digital Trends

What platforms do Gen Z use?

Gen Z uses Snapchat, Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Gen Z uses fewer platforms more frequently, compared to other generations who use more platforms less frequently. The top platforms used by Gen Z are **YouTube** and **Facebook**, followed by Instagram, Twitter and Facebook Messenger.

How are they using them?

Gen Z uses these platforms for **brand discovery**, getting friends' **opinions** and product **reviews**. Instagram is popular for brand discovery, whereas Snapchat is commonly used for getting friends' opinions while users are shopping in-store. Below are more statistics about how Gen Z uses social media:



10%
of Gen Z's followings are brands
(Hodak, 2018)



37%
use Snapchat to get opinions when shopping in-store
(Hodak, 2018)



45%
use Instagram for brand discovery
(Hodak, 2018)



2.75 hrs
out of 3 average hours a day spent on phones is spent on social media
(Hodak, 2018)



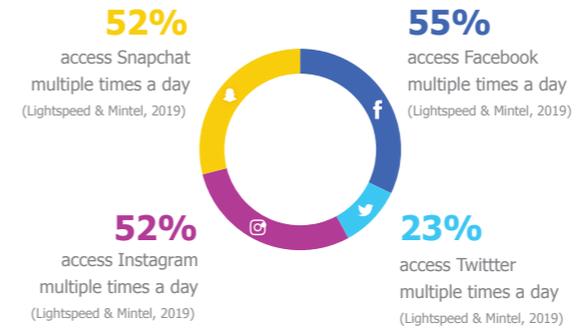
2x more likely
to turn to YouTube for product reviews than Millennials
(Hodak, 2018)

How do they learn about products and where do they buy them?

According to a study by Lightspeed and Mintel, "More than half say they have learned about a product or service from a social media account." 45% have purchased a product they saw on their social media feeds. Kylie Jenner became the youngest self-made billionaire due in part to advertising her cosmetics line on social media. 67% of Gen Z consumers use their phones to **research purchases** they are considering. 71% said they **enjoy shopping in store** to understand what is in style (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).

What influencers do Gen Z follow?

Gen Z tends to follow older influencers because they like to be treated and seen as older than they are. They like to see lives that are aspirational but that are still



relatable in style, interests or age. Influencers are more popular now than ever; defined by the number of followers, it is becoming a trendy and desired job.

Gen Z follows influencers to get **inspiration** for their own lives, stay up-to-date, learn new things and get product recommendations from a trusted source.

James Charles, a popular beauty guru with over 10 million subscribers and 10 million Instagram followers, has turned his social presence into a millionaire lifestyle. James is open with his struggles about being gay and is always welcoming new fans. James shares his first house tour, hundreds of makeup tutorials and singing videos. Other influencers with high followings



PewDiePie
97% of his 17.4M Instagram followers are Gen Z
(Julius, 2019)



Logan Paul
89% of his 16M Instagram followers are Gen Z
(Julius, 2019)



James Charles
85% of his 15.6M Instagram followers are Gen Z
(Julius, 2019)

are **PewDiePie**, a gamer, and **Logan Paul**, an adventure vlogger. Gen Z loves nano-influencers because they are "not famous" and viewed as more trustworthy. Kylie Jenner, DJ Khaled and JoJo Siwa are other major influencers on Instagram (Julius, 2019).

What new/emerging platforms is Gen Z using?

Tik Tok is a mobile-only video creation app that allows users to post 15-second videos of them performing skits to different background music, with a wide variety of editing abilities and visual effects to share with their followers. It attracts around 500 million monthly users, most of whom belong to Gen Z. Tik Tok appeals to Gen Z's short attention span, keeping them interested and engaged. Tik Tok content feels less scripted than edited photos on other platforms, making users feel like they truly know each other.

Twitch is an online game streaming service owned by Amazon. It is extremely popular within the young gamer community and attracts around two million streamers every month. Twitch has 15 million active daily viewers with an engagement rate of 106 minutes watched per person per day. Two-thirds of Gen Z males say that gaming is a core component of who they are. On Twitch, people can connect with those who have similar interests and form bonds without ever meeting in person. Three out of four Gen Z males say Twitch helps them stay close with their friends.

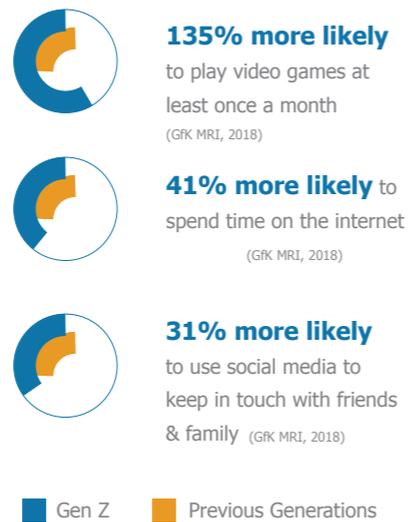
Leisure + Purpose

What does Gen Z do in their free time?

More than anything, Gen Z values time spent with the people they love. A common misconception about Gen Z is that they would rather spend time on their phones than with other people. In reality, Gen Z sees social media and mobile technology as **a tool to extend their connection** with loved ones as opposed to a replacement for quality time. According to a study by Pew Research Center, 69% of teens who describe themselves as “constantly online” are more likely to spend time with friends in person than those who do not. In addition, as teens, Gen Z is the most connected to their parents compared to other generations (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019). Another priority for Gen Z in their free time is **interactivity**. Many teens prefer video games to watching television shows or movies because it provides them with a sense of agency in their entertainment.



Gen Z is no longer satisfied by simply sitting and watching, **they want to find ways to get involved** (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019). Below are some statistics comparing the habits of Gen Z’s to previous generations:



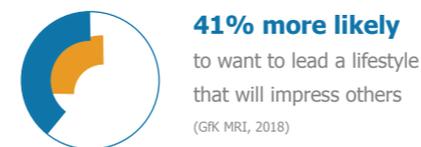
What issues/causes do they care about?

Passion + Hard Work: Gen Z uses their personal **passions** to fuel their career paths, and they rank passion to be just as important as work-life balance. They exhibit confidence in exploring lines of work that bring them internal joy and feelings

of validation and success. A large component of their self-worth comes from their work ethic and how it is recognized by the people they look up to (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).

Pressure + Perfectionism: Gen Z teens and young adults feel a lot of pressure to make their parents proud. For teens, this means good **grades and college acceptances**, while for young adults this means **job security and success**. This pressure translates online as well, as Gen Z curates their social media accounts to reflect a “perfect” life (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).

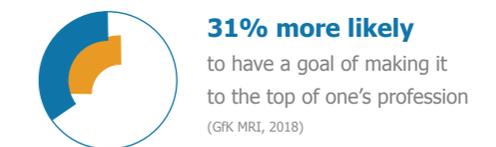
Image + Aesthetic: Social media has significantly increased Gen Zers’ desire to create a complex and consistent image for themselves, online and off. On a commercial level, this has led to Gen Z’s increased awareness of the brands they interact with, as they want to engage with brands that embody **morals and principles** that resonate with them. Gen Z wants to feel represented, and they seek out that feeling through their choice of brands. (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).



■ Gen Z ■ Previous Generations

Politics + Social Issues: The social topics at the forefront of the minds of Gen Zers include **affordable education, healthcare gun control, racial equality, LGBTQ rights and the legalization of marijuana** (Iqbal, 2018). That said, Gen Z is less likely to engage with social issues than prior generations, and fewer than half reported feeling strongly about social and political issues. (Wheeler, “Every,” n.d.). However, they do care about the motives of the brands they interact with, and to them, actions speak louder than words. Gen Z would rather see direct corporate social responsibility efforts than charitable donations (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019).

Diversity + Inclusivity: As the **most diverse and educated generation yet**, Gen Z is opening minds and rejecting labels (Claveria, 2019). They are confident in experimenting in areas like sexuality, and they are eager and willing to embrace hard conversations about topics like mental illness. This comes with how deeply Gen Z cares about self-care and personal wellness in all forms (Iqbal, 2018).



Design + Creative Elements

What visuals resonate with Gen Z on social?

Gen Z is attracted to the latest trends, whatever those may be. These trends are often short lived, so designers have to stay up to date and on their toes. Since the trends are always changing, there is no one style of design that can be labeled "Gen Z." However, there are some strong starting points for any "trendy" Gen Z design - break the rules, maintain a fixed color palette with consistent typography, throw in trendy seasonal launches, twist the conventional and **be fearless with experimentation**. The most important thing to remember when it comes to designing for a Gen Z audience is, "If it catches your eye and makes you look twice, it will do the same for Gen Z" (The Creative Cloud Team, 2017).

What would designs for a Gen Z audience look like?

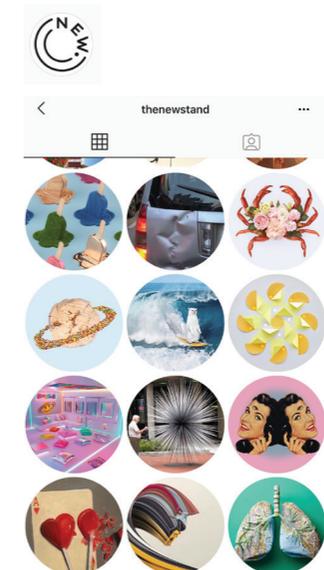
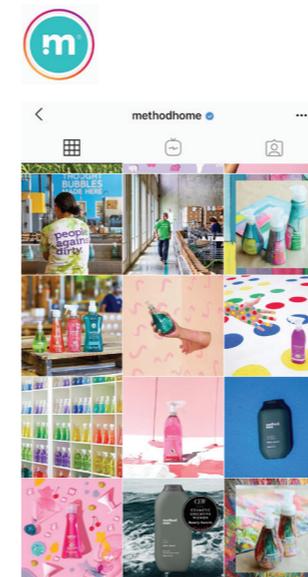
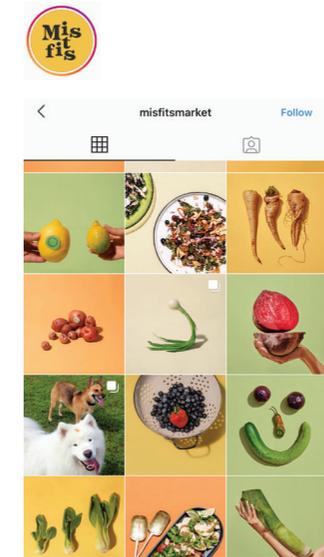
A simple, bright color palette, unexpected font treatment and an innovative layout are sure to catch the attention of the quick-paced

Gen Z consumer. When it comes to user experience design, clarity and usability are extra important. According to a study done by American Express, 23% of Gen Zers will drop a brand over poorly designed mobile features (French, 2018). Gen Z also craves genuine connection, so any design that is **interactive** or personal to the audience is a great way to get Gen Z to pause their scrolling and look at the product. Designs must be **quick to absorb**, with a direct, clear message that has a fun and clever twist (Méro, 2019). Another important thing to note when designing for Gen Z is to understand that they want to be treated as adults. The Adobe Creative Cloud Team wrote in a study, "Today's six-year-olds think and act in many ways like the 14-year-olds from two decades ago" (2017).

What does Gen Z crave in their designs?

Visually, Gen Z craves clarity. Designs that get to the point and **cut out any extra noise** are most successful in a constant, stimulating stream of social media. Gen Zers

also desire an emotional connection with their brands, where what they are saying and selling feels **real, personal and intentional**. Within this, Gen Z also lean towards open, fluid brands who use less labels and stereotypes and a more **inclusive**, welcoming stance to their audience. Functionless design does not fly with Gen Z – "Design needs to be as digitally intuitive as they are." They seek a more legitimate and impactful voice in a brand with a strong brand ethos (Méro, 2019). If the brand does not live up to their **values**, Gen Z will see right through them. A characteristic unique to Gen Z is their desire for **stability**, comfort and familiarity (French, 2018). They want to feel included in the process and voice of a brand. Last but not least, keep in mind the **shareability** of your designs and platforms. Gen Z live digitally, so the more **clear, concise and trendy** your design is, the more likely it is for Gen Z to share it (The Creative Cloud Team, 2017).



Instagram Polls



Corn Flakes: 261
K+: 569

Borges: 136
Five: 676

Almond Breeze: 190
Califa: 662

Kind: 550
Go Macro: 303

Maybelline: 176
Glossier: 596

CeraVe: 179
Versed: 634

Total: 830

Total: 812

Total: 852

Total: 853

Total: 776

Total: 813

As supplemental research, five Gen Z adults put polls on their Instagram stories. **Winners** of each poll are written in yellow.

They asked their followers to choose a brand based strictly on aesthetics, disregarding any preconceived notions they had about the products shown.

Since there is no way to trust that everyone voted according to the rules, this research is included simply as an interesting anecdote.

Row One contains a mixture of classic brands, busier graphic treatment, more use of photography and colors with higher saturation.

Row Two contains a mixture of newer brands, simple graphic treatment, illustrative qualities and simpler, paler color schemes.

Five out of the 6 polls resulted in higher votes amongst **Row Two**.

Gen Z Brand Qualities

How does Gen Z interact with brands?

Gen Z interacts with brands much differently than previous generations have. Growing up during a major economic recession gave them an early understanding of the relationship of cost and value. While Millennials' high spending habits mirror the economic prosperity of their youth, Gen Z's spending is much lower. (Livingston, 2019).

Also known as the iGeneration, Gen Zers have always had access to smartphones. The enormous amount of information always at their fingertips serves as a tool that Gen Z consults before any buying decision. 46% of Gen Z research products on their phone before making a purchase. Gen Zers are not afraid to voice their opinions about brands and experiences because they value the brands that they interact with. 73% of Gen Z consumers have written some type of online review. (MassLive Media, 2019)

What does Gen Z like to buy?

Unlike Millennials, Gen Zers would rather put their money toward tangible items than experiences. 60% of Gen Z says they value a cool product over a cool experience, while only 40% of Millennials say the same. Gen Z also tends to care a lot less about the uniqueness of a product compared to older generations. They are more interested in products that are trending for a short period of time. Gen Z shows a drastic decrease in brand loyalty from other generations (Segran, 2017). Only 16% shop consistently at the same store for clothing (MassLive Media, 2019).

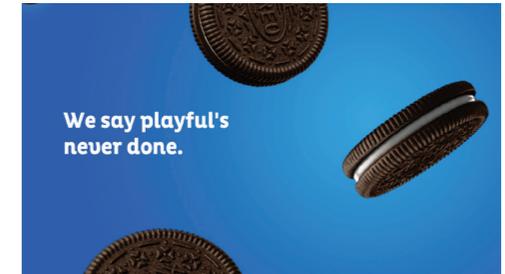
What does Gen Z care about?

Gen Z cares about what companies stand for and how their products are made, making them increasingly skeptical of big corporations. 87% of general consumers would purchase a product if an issue advocated for by the brand resonated with them (Levine, 2019). Personalization is

the key to keeping Gen Z's attention, so it is important for brands to create marketing strategies that do not feel mass-produced (Alemany, 2019).

What are some examples of brands that Gen Z care about?

A few brands that Gen Zers are drawn to include Nike, Oreo, Xbox, Netflix and Doritos. Gen Z prefers brands who stand for social issues and are not afraid to take risks in their marketing campaigns (Premack, 2018). For example, Nike has taken many controversial social stands, and Gen Z has actually grown more loyal to them as a result. Brands like Oreo and Doritos stay popular because they constantly invent new, "weird" flavors that surprise consumers and keep them interested.



Case Study #1

Travel/Transportation: #SouthwestStorytellers

Opportunity:

84% of Gen Z travelers said social media influences their travel in terms of deals, promotions and destinations (Knightley, 2019). So how could Southwest Airlines leverage big social advocates to inform, engage and inspire customers in a new way? By creating the domestic airline industry's first-ever **long-term social ambassador program** (Williams, "Southwest," 2019).

Approach:

Southwest aimed to create a library of high-quality influencer-generated content to be shared across all of their channels to raise awareness for new programs, offerings and initiatives. To find the best of the best, **they asked influencers** in all sectors to create travel content from their hometowns with the hashtag #SouthwestStorytellers. The 11 influencers selected to make up the Class of 2018 included waterskiers, adventure filmmakers, country singers, lifestyle bloggers and even retired NFL players. The Class of 2018 reflects the diversity of Southwest's customer base, which was important to the airline (Southwest Airlines, n.d.).

Insights:

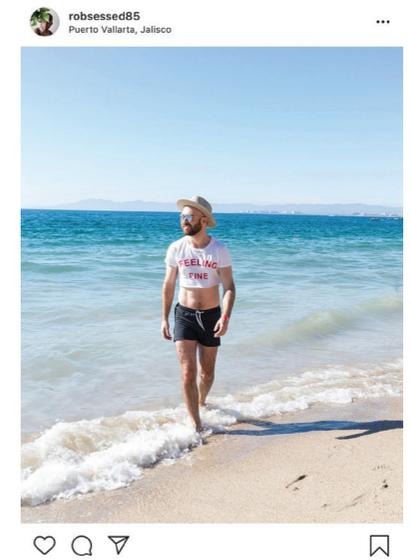
The #SouthwestStorytellers Class of 2018 **reached 29.4 million people** through their blogs, social channels and podcasts. This resulted in **1.1 million organic engagements** with Southwest-branded content, as well as **1,100 Southwest-branded social posts** as part of 20 digital campaigns created over the course of the year (Southwest Airlines, n.d.).

The biggest testament to the program's success, however, is that it is back for **round two**. So many influencers reached out to Southwest asking to get involved that Southwest decided to find a Class of 2019 on an even greater scale.

In the new program, anyone over the age of 21 with at least 2,500 Instagram followers can enter for the chance to become a #SouthwestStoryteller and earn e-passes for free travel, Southwest Rapid Rewards points and gift cards. All they have to do is post their best travel photo with a witty caption, tag @southwestair, and add #SouthwestStorytellers #Contest (Williams, "Southwest," 2019).

Gen Z Appeal:

Gen Z is **30% more likely to purchase a product recommended by an influencer than a celebrity** (GfK MRI, 2018). Southwest had the right idea with targeting influencers in many different industries to reach a diverse Gen Z audience. Even more so, **63% of Gen Z would rather hear from peers than celebrities** (GfK MRI, 2018), so opening the Class of 2019 to nano-influencers helps create a stronger sense of trust between Gen Z consumers and the Southwest brand. In addition, as Gen Z so greatly values opportunities to get involved with their favorite brands and interact directly (Lightspeed & Mintel, 2019), the 2,500-follower minimum **gives many members of Gen Z the opportunity** to become a #SouthwestStoryteller themselves.



Case Study #2

Food: Doritos' Spidey Sense Challenge

Opportunity:

Since superhero movies generated six billion dollars in the box office last year, Doritos decided to use this as an opportunity to capture Gen Z's video game fans. Specifically, **68% of Gen Z males agree that video games are part of their identity**. Doritos knew it could drum up excitement for the new Spider-Man movie by creating a chance for fans to catch a special glimpse (Williams, 2019).

Approach:

Doritos wanted to capitalize on the hype around the new Spider-Man movie and get fans engaged while exposing them to the perfect gaming snack. Doritos created a new packaging design, along with a digital campaign for the sweepstakes. Within the movie-branded products, there are codes that the consumer can enter online to win prizes. The grand prize winner could win a fully-paid trip to Europe (Kelly, C., & Levine, B, 2019). Not only were consumers tempted by prizes, but the codes also gave access to **an online game** that gives consumers a special

look at the new film. With Gen Z being so involved in the gaming industry, this was a great tactic to get people excited about the movie and send them running to buy a bag of Doritos.

Insights:

Since Gen Z is **135% more likely to play video games at least once per month than previous generations**, this is a great way for the most active social media users to learn about the game before the movie comes out (GfK MRI, 2018). Doritos' online Spider-Man game raises awareness for the Doritos brand while promoting the new Marvel film.



Doritos @Doritos · Jun 20

Want to score this Limited-Edition Doritos Spidey Suit? Tell us what super power Doritos gives you using **#IncognitoDoritos #Entry** for the chance to win! Rules @ bit.ly/2MXEpdC Be sure to check out **#SpiderManFarFromHome**, in theaters July 2!



Case Study #3

Consumer Tech: Bandersnatch – Interactive TV

Opportunity:

While Netflix is a giant in the movie streaming industry, competition from Amazon, YouTube and other well-known companies pushes them to find ways to stand out. As Gen Z gets older, they are projected to control over 44% of buying power by 2020. While Netflix is already widely popular among this demographic, it saw the opportunity to provide a way of watching TV that will keep Gen Z interested from start to finish and get them talking about the **experience** on social media (Wertz, 2019).

Approach:

Netflix released an **interactive** movie with six alternative endings where the viewer controls the fate of the main character. Netflix created a lot of buzz around the release and allowed their users to feel involved in the larger picture. This departure from their typical streaming model came from the awareness that “conventional television” does not have to remain “a one-way monologue, with no conversation or engagement.

For Gen Zers, the world of being a couch potato in front of passive television as we know it is probably coming to an end” (Orren, 2019).

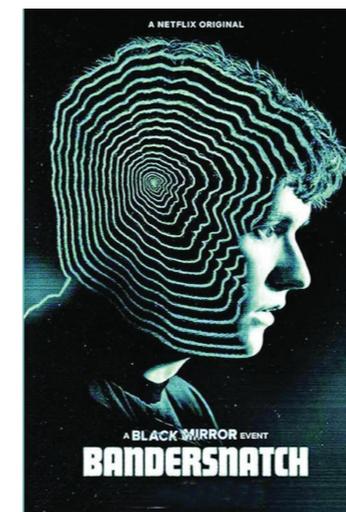
Insights:

The interactive nature of the film makes the entire experience more memorable and improves **engagement**. Also, by hyper-personalizing and hiding different “Easter eggs” within the film, Netflix made sure all users had a slightly different outcome and therefore created a **real conversation** that became a viral topic on social media. The film was the #1 Twitter trend for just under a week. Bandersnatch was Netflix’s “test run” for interactive television, and given its large success, they are contemplating creating a sector of the service for interactive TV (Damiani, 2019).

Gen Z Appeal:

As digital natives, Gen Z wants to **create media, not just consume it**. They place value on being culture creators. Most brands understand that Gen Z has an increasingly short

attention span and usually multitask while consuming media, so by creating a scenario where viewers are in charge of pushing the story along, they create even more interest (Martinolich, 2019). 73% of Gen Z say they will make a purchase or follow a recommendation based on what they see on social media. Since Bandersnatch was not marketed conventionally, it resonated with Gen Z and felt more like a tip from a friend than a major marketing strategy. Gen Z is **skeptical of large brands** but reports to have an average of 13 conversations about brands every day (Vincenzo, 2019). By making them feel as though they **experienced something special**, Netflix was able to infiltrate Gen Z conversations and receive free publicity that feels trustworthy.



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