

# Generation Z Lifestyle Characteristics

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Just when many companies are finally starting to understand millennials, a new generation is starting to emerge. Generation Z—people who were born from 1995 onwards—is making its presence known as people from this generation are starting to enter the workforce and earning their own income.

Marketers and market researchers still have a lot of work to do to deepen their understanding of this generation. Here are five characteristics that paint a picture of the Gen Z landscape.

## **1. Their media consumption habits differ from previous generations—even millennials.**

In 2015, Vision Critical conducted an exclusive study that exposes the changing media consumption habits of younger consumers. While Gen Z follows millennials closely, these two generations are not entirely identical when it comes to the social media networks they visit, the devices they use and how much TV content they consume.

Are Gen Z and millennials ignoring you?

- Some notable stats about the Generation Z characteristics:
  - On average, Gen Z uses their smartphones 15.4 hours per week—more than any other type of device.
  - Gen Z consume 13.2 hours of TV content per week—significantly less than boomers and Gen X.
  - There has been a 41 percent increase in the use of ad-blocking software in the past 12 months.

**RELATED RESOURCE:** *The Everything Guide to Generation Z*

## **2. They prefer cool products over cool experiences.**

Many studies have suggested that millennials are looking for great experiences, not great products. But the same is not necessarily true for Gen Z. Gen Z's expectations from the brands they buy from differ from what millennials are looking for.

## **3. Entrepreneurial and tech-savvy are two Generation Z characteristics.**

What makes the Gen Z employee tick?

#### **4. They respond to edgy campaigns.**

Traditional marketing doesn't work for Gen Z. Marketers need to embrace technology and new ways of storytelling. According to an infographic from Upfront Analytics, Gen Z customers respond to edgy and visual marketing tactics. Videos—especially short ones like those created via the social network Vine—work particularly well with young customers.

#### **5. They want to co-create culture—and they do.**

In 2015, the market research firm Wildness conducted a study on 12 to 24 year olds in the U.S. The company's top conclusion? This "post-internet generation" doesn't simply consume entertainment—they help create and shape it.

What we've uncovered in our research is that this is a generation of CCs (Culture Creators) that are redefining entertainment, consumption, the workplace and marketing. The CCs are empowered, connected, empathetic self-starters that want to stand out and make a difference in the world. They have created a new Cultural Currency that values uniqueness, authenticity, creativity, share ability and recognition. What's different for this generation is not as simple as the internet or technology. Technology is an important component, but what's changed is this generation's relationship with culture.

The study revealed that 80 percent of Gen Z say finding themselves creatively is important. Over 25 percent post original video on a weekly basis, while 65 percent enjoy creating and sharing content on social media.

### **Conclusion**

This article reiterates the need to engage with and understand Gen Z—an increasingly important group of customers who will help to shape the future. As Gen Zs enter the workforce and their purchasing power increases, companies can't afford to act within conventional assumptions or generational frameworks. A deeper understanding of Gen Z customers—one that is rooted in continuous, two-way dialogue—is required to deliver products, services and experiences that this elusive and evolving generation is looking for.

*By Matt Kleinschmit | December 4, 2015*

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