

Is Generation Z concerned about their future?

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Generation Z is more concerned about their future and less about their social media profile

Before the era of baby boomers came Generation X. Then there were the famous millennials. Not to be confused with the former, Generation Z is the very latest demographic to grace the world. Gen Z, however, are very different to their predecessors in that they have grown up through substantial change in technology, economics, society, communications and gender. They have grown up as part of the digitally disrupted world and are natives in social media – emojis are part of their own exclusive language. All of this means they have a very unique view of the world but there is much more to them than meets the eye. The rise of ‘[social seniors](#)’ – Ofcom found that the number of over 75s using social media doubled last year – has happened alongside another fundamental change amongst youth: they have grown up in the recession and are concerned about more

serious topics such as their career, education and future finances. For brands there is a very real challenge of communicating with the new generation without stereotyping them as just young and carefree. By ignoring the new rules of engagement, brands risk missing this audience entirely.

Generation sensible – moving away from experiences in favour of the future

Growing up in the recession is a very serious and difficult thing to do. As such, Gen Z is much more uncertain about their future and concerned about reaching their ultimate goal. This can be anything from finding the ideal career, securing their path to university or successfully growing up in a world where the gender lines are blurring. They are willing to broaden their horizons but understand the importance of saving money; they're less frivolous than generations before them.

Gen Z are accepting and open-minded, with gender bearing little impact on the people they surround themselves with and friendships they make. As gender lines blur, younger generations are increasingly flexible with how they define themselves. In fact, [research published](#) last year by YouGov found that today's youth in the UK are less likely to define themselves as entirely masculine or feminine than those before them.

This brings with it complex communications challenges for brands as they cannot rely on gender stereotypes that may well have a negative effect. This shift must be reflected in communications irrespective of whether you are a brand, organisation or industry body. Representing gender and sexuality with an inclusive message is more in line with how Gen Z see the world.

The best way to develop communications that resonate is to involve them in the creative process. By speaking to them, testing ideas with them or including them in your creative process you're less likely to miss the point and this generation completely.

LOL, GTG B4 my split social personality is revealed

There is a very special trick that Gen Z and only Gen Z are capable of doing; they can talk

in a language that many will not understand. It is almost an exclusive lexicon in that it can only be seen, viewed and interacted with on certain social platforms. Having a 'split social personality' means Gen Z intuitively switch between platforms depending on what they're doing, who they're talking to and what they're sharing. A post on Snapchat will be noticeably different to a post on Facebook, even if the content is exactly the same. Snapchat is likely going to be seen by a close-knit group of friends while Facebook might be open to family, friends and other groups of people they have "accrued" over time but no longer have much of a connection with.

Brands must recognise this and develop a communication plan that is adapted for each platform and stands out as authentic. A recent memorable use of emojis, for example, was during the launch of the film Deadpool. The [simple but effective campaign](#) distinguished the movie from the multitude of X-men films. Hijacking Valentine's Day was another smart move to attract viewers to watch the stand alone movie. This is the exact approach and language that brands have to take on board if they are to successfully connect with audiences, particularly amongst younger generations.

To build a lasting relationship, brands shouldn't rely on what they think will land but work with young creatives to develop thought-provoking messages. It's no longer a case of taking an idea off the shelf but more about developing meaningful messages with expert partners or teen creatives.

Without authenticity a brand will fall at the very first hurdle

Directly working with the younger generation is the key to developing a long-standing relationship with audience. After all, middle aged creatives are unlikely to land a message with the audience that think, behave and interact in entirely different ways. Building a tangible, social responsibility that places honesty at the very core of brands will also be integral to reaching out to Gen Z who are sensible and concerned about the future.

Even our recent research found that 40% of consumers have either stopped using or never used a brand because it had poor values, with a further 63% believing brands have a responsibility to give back to society. The world is changing and brands needs to catch up.

Remember: although Gen Z is still young, they care about their future and want to see exciting content that engages them.

If all else fails, just use an emoji 🍌

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