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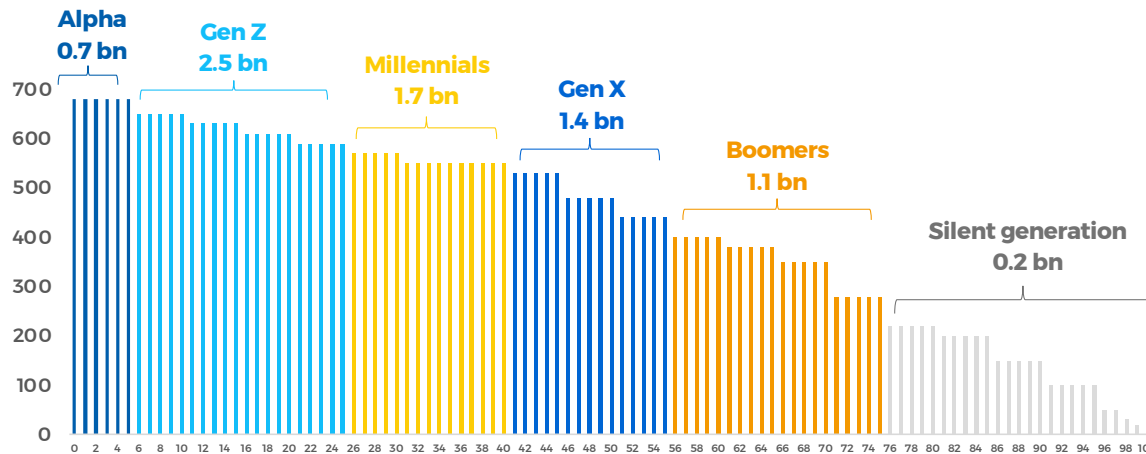
WHITEPAPER

The Gen Z & social media equation

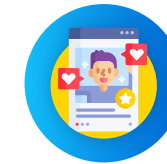


Gen Z, post-millennials,

iGeneration, zoomers...there are many names for the generation born between the late 90s and early 2000s. Quirky names aside, Gen Z has quickly become a force to be reckoned with and an increasingly important target group for brands and marketers. They're expected to become the largest global cohort by 2030, taking up 26% of the world's population.



Appealing to Gen Z is easier said than done. To truly grab the attention of Gen Z, brands need to gain a thorough understanding of who they are, what their characteristics, values, and behaviors are, and what they expect from the brands they buy from.



At MetrixLab, we believe in the power of insights and their ability to translate into meaningful action. We conducted a meta-analysis of various social media studies with Gen Z to uncover:

- What Gen Z's core values, interests, and purchasing influences are
- Where and how to grab Gen Z's attention
- How to tap into existing online communities
- How to leverage emerging online trends

We used statistical modelling and human enrichment to explore the different themes and topics predominant in the Gen Z social media landscape. All data derives from users aged 16+ years in compliance with GDPR regulations.

Understanding Gen Z

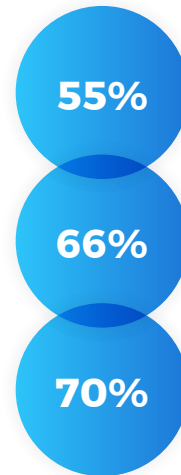
A hyper-connected generation

Gen Zers were born in the digital age. They grew up seeing exciting new technologies emerging – from Bluetooth and wireless internet to smartphones and tablets. They're tech-savvy, to say the least, and are accustomed to using digital communication for just about any and everything: education, work, entertainment, shopping, travel, you name it.

It should come as no surprise, then, that they spend an average of 3 hours per day online. Exposed to over 5000 ads daily, it's no wonder the average attention span of Gen Z is 8 seconds, according to [IAB UK](#).

Gen Z values socially responsible brands

Gen Z is arguably the most [socially conscious](#) generation out there. They care deeply about societal, environmental, and political issues, and they expect brands to care about these issues too:



[55%](#) of Gen Z opt for eco-friendly and socially responsible brands

[66%](#) of Gen Z are willing to pay higher prices for sustainable products

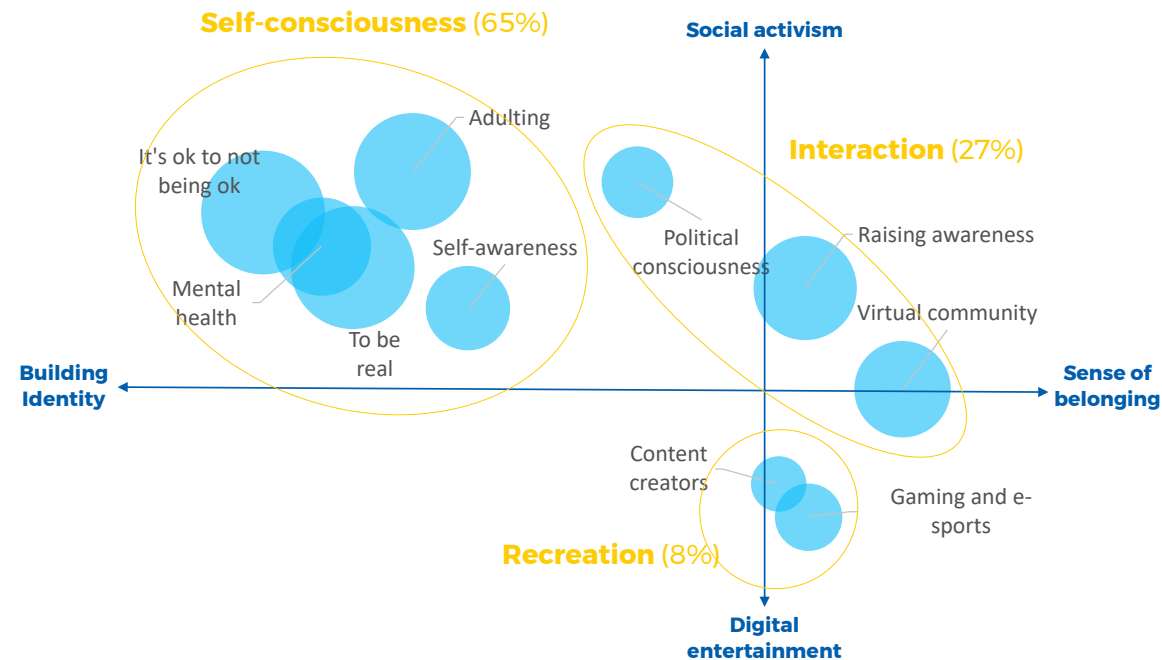
[70%](#) of Gen Z prefer buying from brands they consider to be ethical

Having grown up experiencing recession, inflation, and a pandemic, Gen Z is skeptical about their spending, especially when it comes to brands that claim to be socially responsible but don't walk the talk. Authenticity is a key tenet of Gen Z – they don't fall prey to [greenwashing](#) and unbacked claims of social responsibility.



The impact of social media

Social media plays an integral role in the everyday lives of Gen Z. The results from our study reveal a range of functions and prominent topics of conversation within the Gen Z social media landscape:



Gen Z's high social media consumption offers opportunities and constraints at the same time. On one hand, social media enables Gen Z to interact with people and brands, build (online) communities, raise awareness about social and political issues that matter to them, and more.

However, the constant influx of information and content has its downsides. Constant exposure to global issues like war and climate change, fear of missing out (FOMO), and poor body image are a few reasons that account for the fact that [27%](#) of Gen Z feel social media has a negative impact on mental health.



Content creators and consumers

Gen Zers are content creators and consumers, which differentiates them from older cohorts. As content consumers, they seek content that adds value, be it educational or for entertainment. As content creators, they leverage social media for self-expression, to showcase their creativity, or to entertain and educate others.

Gen Z uses social media to share opinions, habits, and interests, and to form communities with friends, like-minded people, and brands. For brands, social media opens avenues to learn about Gen Z, engage with them, and build brand loyalty.

With MetrixLab's Social Insights solutions, brands can dive into the vast pool of social media data, tune into what consumers are saying online, and uncover valuable insights the drive long-term success.

That's what Arrow Fastener, iconic American DIY brand has done for the last decade. Using Brand Fame, our Social Insights solution designed to monitor and improve brands' digital performance, Arrow Fastener was able to grow into an undisputed market leader. Today, Arrow Fastener boasts the best brand perception amongst competitors. Read the full case study [here](#).



Curious to know more about leveraging social media data?

[Visit our Social Insights solutions webpage](#)



Knowing who Gen Z is, what's important to them, and where they're active is the first step to winning them over.

Strategizing to win over Gen Z

To successfully tap into Gen Z communities, here are 4 questions to keep in mind when shaping your social media strategy:



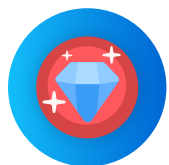
Are you establishing 2-way communication?

Responding to users who interact with your brand makes them feel acknowledged and can boost engagement. Co-creating with Gen Z through creative challenges and giveaways is a great way to do this.



Are you up to date with new platforms, features, and trends?

The social media landscape is ever-evolving, and it's important to stay up to date with all that's available out there. Leveraging new features and identifying new opportunities is key to differentiation.



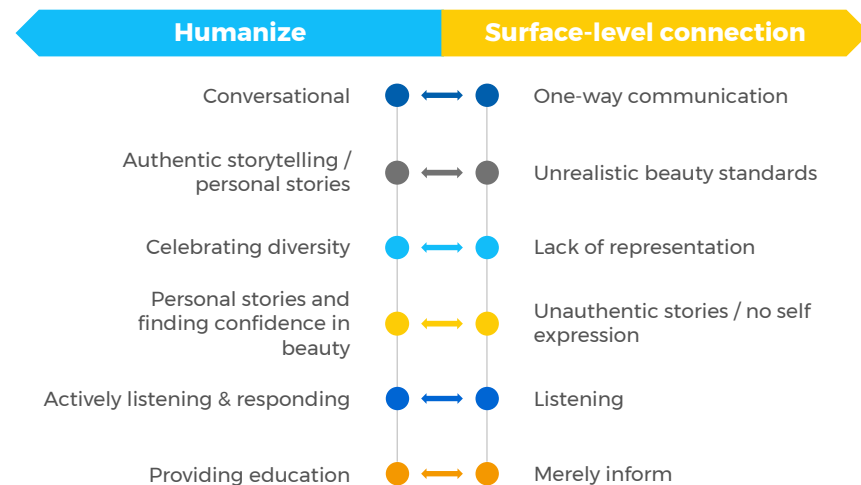
Are you being authentic in your communications?

Authenticity is key to resonating with Gen Z. Traditional marketing & sales tactics are less effective in drawing their attention. Which means brands must be smarter about how they target Gen Z.



Are you humanizing your brand?

It's important to show the people behind the brand and interact with users in a human way. This positively impacts brand perception.



Did you know...



...that social shopping is becoming increasingly popular among Gen Z? Social shopping offers consumers an immersive in-app shopping experience, while enabling brands to showcase and sell their products. It also provides users and creators to participate in affiliate programs, expanding the possibilities for brand and product promotion. Platforms like TikTok and YouTube are already starting to take advantage of social shopping, and no doubt others will soon follow suit.

From strategy to execution: 5 practical tips for social media success

1 Stay active where your audience is

As the first digital native generation, Gen Z is accustomed to multichannel digital retail and brand experiences. Stay top of mind by being active on multiple platforms. If you're unsure about which platforms to focus on, check out our article [How to identify the best social media platforms for your brand.](#)

2 Create compelling content

Creating content that resonates with Gen Z is key to grabbing (and keeping) their attention. Use a combination of educational and entertaining content to appeal to Gen Z, and don't forget to flex your creative muscle! Creativity is integral to differentiation and cutting through the content clutter.

One way in which brands are doing this is through gamification. Gen Zers are big on gaming, with [87%](#) claiming they play video games weekly. Leveraging gamification can be a great way to interact with Gen Z and build brand awareness.

Another way to stay ahead of the content curve is to collaborate with content creators and social influencers. Influencers are micro-celebrities, and their growing popularity is a testament to Gen Z's love for authenticity. By sharing real stories about their lives, influencers create content that audiences can resonate with.



3 Keep your content short and sweet

Platforms like [TikTok](#), YouTube, and Instagram cater to Gen Z's short attention spans. Short and snappy content that is designed to grab attention in the first few seconds works best.

4 Address the causes that matter to them

Topics like mental health awareness, sustainability, and social justice are of deep importance to Gen Z. Incorporating practices and policies that address the issues and topics that matter to your audience will take you a long way. Prioritizing diversity & inclusion, introducing sincere sustainable practices, and demonstrating accountability are a few examples of how brands can show Gen Z that their concerns are heard.

5 Show, don't tell

We've already discussed the importance of authenticity when it comes to engaging with Gen Z. The good news is that brands are recognizing and responding to this. Just look at BeReal, the social media app that asks users to post unfiltered photos of themselves at different times everyday. Users must post their photos within 2 minutes of receiving the notification, urging them to show their authentic, unfiltered selves in the moment.



We're also seeing the rise of deinfluencing, a trend centered on demystifying viral products.

Deinfluencing challenges the hype around products and brands by offering honest reviews that don't necessarily adhere to what everybody else is saying.

The bottom line is that transparency and authenticity hold the ticket to Gen Z's hearts. So instead of making unsupported claims about your sustainability promises, you're better off showing the progress being made on those initiatives.

Social media is a goldmine when it comes to extracting valuable information about your target audience. At the same time, it provides opportunities to translate those insights into meaningful action. Leverage the relationship between Gen Z and social media to set yourself up for success. Learn more about how we can help you get there by contacting one of our Social Insights experts today.



Want to learn more about how to leverage social media for your business?

[Contact one of our Social Insights experts today.](#)



About MetrixLab

MetrixLab provides consumer insights that drive smarter business decisions. A truly global digital research agency, we pioneer new technologies and integrate multiple data sources to push the boundaries of research. This enables our experts to provide high-quality insights at scale, at speed and for an unparalleled value. Our passion, expertise, and solutions enable our clients to succeed at product innovation, brand engagement, and consumer value. Active in over 90 countries, MetrixLab is a proud partner of more than half of the world's top 100 brands and part of Toluna.

About the author

Gilbert Saktue co-leads the Global Social Insights team at MetrixLab. Gilbert is passionate about creating insights from digital consumer behavior and has helped to grow some of the biggest and most exciting brands in the world. He is an advocate of using a scientific method to answer business questions and to challenge the status quo of insights.

Selin Varol, who co-leads MetrixLab's Global Social Insights team, is passionate about integrating academia and commercial social media insights to optimize digital communication. Through her articulate and strategic approach, she emphasizes the longevity of dynamic content for global scalability, underscoring the importance of understanding data. Her favorite method to achieve this is through writing and presenting to interested audiences.

Want to know more?

Contact one of
our experts

Learn more about
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