

What Gen Alpha's early obsession with beauty means for brands

Article

The **10-year-olds have taken over Sephora** in search of their favorite skincare and beauty brands, catching the eyes (and ire) of many TikTokers. But this trend has implications beyond angering older consumers, highlighting the purchasing power behind **Gen Alpha** and social media's role in product discovery.

Here's what brands can learn.

1. There's massive purchasing power behind Gen Alpha

The number of Gen Alphas worldwide will reach 2.5 billion this year, according to social researcher Mark McCrindle as reported by CNBC. And by the end of 2024, more than \$5.39 trillion will be spent on the cohort (per McCrindle's research cited by Harvard Business Review), outpacing millennials' \$2.5 trillion as of March 2023 and Gen Z's projected \$3 trillion purchasing power by 2030 (per ESW research and a March 2021 Oxford report, respectively, cited by Harvard Business Review).

To get a piece of that pie, marketers need to catch Gen Alpha's attention now—not in a few years when the generation enters adulthood.

- **Children's influence on household purchases takes hold around age 5**, when they become more skilled communicators and start attending school where peers begin informing their opinions, according to Morning Consult.
- While stores are the primary source of influence for Gen Alpha purchases, TV and online ads are also purchase drivers.

Beauty retailers like Sephora are winning over Gen Alphas because they give them the opportunity to sample the brands that they see online without having to commit to a purchase. Plus, store associates can educate them on how to properly use or apply products.

2. A social presence is a must

Social media platforms, particularly TikTok and YouTube, play a major role in how younger consumers find new products.

- Over half (51%) of Gen Alphas report first hearing about brands through YouTube videos, **per Razorfish**.
- Nearly as many (52.5%) Gen Z consumers used TikTok for shopping/product discovery in the last month, while 29.1% call it a “go-to” for discovery, according to our July 2023 survey. (This survey didn't include teens under the age of 15, but it's safe to say that Gen Alpha will continue Gen Z's use of TikTok for discovery.)

Some 6.5 million US consumers under the age of 11 will use social networks this year, according to our forecast. As more Gen Alphas come online, we expect that social's role in the

shopping experience will also grow, forcing more brands to establish their presence on platforms like TikTok and YouTube.

3. This isn't a passing phase

Teens report that they spend an average of \$324 a year on core beauty products (e.g., cosmetics, skincare, fragrance), up 23% YoY, according to Piper Sandler's Taking Stock With Teens survey.

While this survey doesn't include Gen Alpha, it is "a good leading indicator of where spending among other age groups is heading, particularly for preteens," Korinne Wolfmeyer, a senior research analyst who covers beauty and wellness at [Piper Sandler, told Elle](#).

Brands that secure loyalty with Gen Alpha now may be able to keep them as customers for years to come. But it's important to remember that the types of products they're into now will most certainly change as they get older, requiring brands to keep a close eye on what's trending among the generation.

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