

Gen Z doesn't trust big business

Article

Generation Z—which includes children, teens, and young adults born between 1997 and 2012—is the most racially, ethnically, and sexually diverse generation in history. As this cohort matures into a unique and powerful consumer bloc, brands hoping to win over Gen Zers must understand how they grew up, what they believe in, and what makes them tick.

Companies and brands hoping to win Gen Z's loyalty and patronage must first overcome their significant trust issues.

- Just **42%** of Gen Z said that they trust companies. This was lower than millennials (**50%**), though trust has fallen among both groups since 2018 (Salesforce).
- Only **48%** of Gen Zers worldwide thought businesses were having a positive impact on society (Deloitte).
- Only **53%** of Gen Zers said brands in general came across as authentic, much lower than the **61%** of millennials who said the same (Salesforce).
- Gen Z is more likely to respond favorably to advertising and marketing that shows real customers representing diverse audiences—and to identify with content that’s realistic and doesn’t appear overly polished (Salesforce).

They don’t want to feel exploited by companies that are collecting and using their personal information.

- Gen Zers are increasingly uncomfortable with how companies use their personal information and are becoming savvier and more cautious about what they divulge.
- They are less likely than older generations to feel comfortable seeing ads that have been personalized for them based on personal data that had been collected (W2O).
- Most still say they want personalization from brands to which they are loyal (Data Axle and Survey Monkey).
- Nearly equal shares of Gen Zers and millennials (**59%** versus **57%**) already feel they’ve lost control over how companies use their personal information (Salesforce).
- Just **39%** of Gen Z trusted brands to protect their information once they opted to share it (Fluent).

US Internet Users Who Want Personalization from Brands to Which They Are Loyal, by Generation, Aug 2021

% of respondents in each group



Source: Data Axle. "Generational Shifts in Marketing Preferences" conducted by SurveyMonkey, Sep 9, 2021

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Our Take: Gen Z is annoyed by lip service and has a strong “BS meter” for companies trying to mislead them or intentionally obfuscating information. Large brands hoping to win favor must prove they have their customers’—and society’s—best interests at heart with both words and deeds and must tread carefully when it comes to over-personalizing messaging or targeting it in ways that may be perceived as creepy or overreaching. Good practices will include communicating authentically and transparently, taking concrete steps to protect privacy, and aligning corporate mission and values with the causes and issues their customers care about.

Read the full report.

Report by Victoria Petrock Nov 12, 2021

US Generation Z Demographic and Psychographic Overview

