

How will Gen Z change shopping?

Article

Gen Zers make up about **20% of the US population**, and they're growing up. The digitally native generation has unique shopping habits after going through the pandemic during their formative years. From TikTok to the creator economy to payments trends, here's how our analysts predict Gen Z will change shopping.

TikTok takeover: Product discovery has gone online, even as most shopping remains in-store.

- Top-of-funnel activities will move even further online. "Search and discovery are moving onto new channels, and TikTok has been the big beneficiary, as long as it keeps its US business

going,” our analyst Sky Canaves said on a recent episode of our “**Behind the Numbers: Reimagining Retail**” podcast.

- Some 43% of US adult Gen Zers **start their product searches on TikTok**, according to Jungle Scout.

Creator economics: Creators and influencers aren’t just endorsing products—they’re developing them.

- Celebrity products aren’t new, but for Gen Zers, they’ve moved into the creator economy and are going to market a lot faster. “Creators have these tools to create and instantly market in a really viral way these products they’re coming out with,” said our analyst Blake Droesch.
- Prime, the beverage company founded by YouTubers Logan Paul and KSI, became the first creator product to have a Super Bowl ad this year, showing how the creator economy has become indistinguishable from the greater retail economy.
- Gen Z buys into influencer-branded products because of their focus on authenticity. “Fans want to believe that the celebrity or influencer is creating a product because they believe in it, not just because it’s a popular or trendy thing to do,” said Canaves.

Payments pay off: Innovations in payments will unlock more spend from Gen Z as buy now, pay later (BNPL) integration becomes even more seamless.

- **Apple announced its own BNPL** product last week, which could boost adoption even further. We already estimate that more than half (57.9%) of Gen Z digital buyers in the US use BNPL.
- “Buy now, pay later is one of these things that is not new, but the accessibility of it is just so much more prevalent and so heavily ingrained in our shopping now,” said Droesch.

Super app powers up: The US doesn’t have a popular super app combining messaging, social media, shopping, and payments. Apple could change that.

- “I think [Apple] has the best shot of creating the first super app to take off in the US,” said Canaves. “That’s really thanks to the hold of the iPhone on US teens and integration of payment services.”
- Gen Z expects this sort of seamless integration in ecommerce. And Gen Zers are more likely to change shopping habits than older generations, because theirs are still developing. If US

Gen Zers adopt a super app—whether from Apple or another company—the platform could catch on quickly with older adults the way TikTok has.

Circular growth: Gen Z and Gen Alpha have bought into resale.

- Resale appeals to younger generations for its affordability, nostalgic flair, and social cache.
- “Gen A definitely will be growing up taking resale for granted” as a normal way to shop, said Canaves. “There’s also that very strong community and social appeal that platforms like the fashion retail platform Depop really tap into.”
- Resale brings us back to TikTok: As the social aspect of resale has taken off, young shoppers boast thrifted finds and promote their own Depop shops on the platform.

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