

# Gen Z no more focused on a brand's social values than older generations

## Article

Gen Z is slightly less concerned than any other generation about **buying from brands** that reflect their social values, according to December 2022 data from Morning Consult. This goes against the perception that Gen Z prioritizes social values more than older consumers. But the younger generation's values are distinct.

- While 59% of respondents across all generations prefer to buy from companies aligned with their social values, only 56% of Gen Zers agree.
- Among Gen Zers, 27% disagree that they prefer companies aligned with their social values, versus 21% of adults overall.

**Conflicting values:** CivicScience data from early last year suggests Gen Z does prioritize brand values.

- Some 35% of Gen Z adults surveyed prefer brands that champion social or political causes they support, compared to just 6% of those ages 55 and older.
- Gen Z is also more inclined than older generations to seek brands that follow sustainable practices, per CivicScience.

Gen Zers have **different priorities than older generations**, though they may still be inclined to spend regardless of if brands can meet those values.

**Breaking that down:** Older adults are more inclined to buy from brands that support the US military, while Gen Z is inclined to seek brands that support the Black Lives Matter movement and advocate for abortion access. Gen Z cares less than older generations do about companies operating in a repressive country, and less about global politics at large, according to Morning Consult.

Gen Z came of age alongside the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 and the overturning of **Roe v. Wade** in 2022. It's no surprise their social values reflect that experience. But it's interesting that their spending habits may not.

**Why might Gen Z care less about ethical consumerism?** One simple answer is spending power.

- Still new to the workforce, Gen Z has less money than older generations. US adults ages 18 to 24 make up just 12.2% of digital buyers, less than any older demographic. (People ages 25 to 34 account for 19.3%, for example.)
- Gen Zers are digitally native. They don't just want to be able to compare prices, they expect it.
- **Amazon, Walmart, and Target** were among Gen Z's top 10 favorite brands of 2022, according to a Morning Consult survey. The age group favors inexpensive, quick options.

- “We can especially see this paradox at work when it comes to fashion,” said our analyst Sky Canaves. “Even with less money to spend, Gen Z consumers are more likely than older generations to say they’re willing to spend more on sustainably produced apparel, but they’re also the driving force behind the rise of ultra-cheap, ultra-fast fashion from brands like Shein.”

### **Another possibility? Gen Z doesn’t trust companies to behave ethically.**

- Gen Z does not see US companies as “**arbiters of global ethics**,” according to Morning Consult. As a result, many in Gen Z aren’t prioritizing buying ethically because they don’t believe they can.
- “This generation may have a stronger sense of realism in terms of where they can make their influence felt,” noted Canaves. “They’ve experienced what can be achieved through online activism and how that spills over into the real world, and for the most part the impacts have been greatest in the US.”

**But keep in mind, most Gen Zers still prioritize ethical brands.** This data isn’t an excuse to throw social values out the window. But as Gen Z’s spending power increases, companies should take a look at how younger people’s priorities focus more on anti-racism, abortion rights, and domestic issues than older generations do.

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