



# Generation Z

## Who are they?

- Born between 1994 and 2010 -- a group that's comprised of high school students and younger, and is poised to become the most entrepreneurial generation we've ever seen.<sup>1 2</sup>
- More than a quarter of the U.S. population belongs to Generation Z.<sup>3</sup>
- By 2020, Gen Z will account for one-third of the U.S. population.<sup>4</sup>

## What makes them unique?

- 81% of Gen Zers are on social media.<sup>5</sup>
- Numerous reports say they are “individuals” and do not believe in living in “social norms”<sup>6</sup>
- Through internet and social media they speak their mind (not verbally in-person).<sup>7</sup>
- Gen Zers are much closer with their families than millennials – their parents/guardians are very important in their decision making process.<sup>8</sup>
  - 69% said their parents are their top role models.<sup>9</sup>
  - 90% will make sure their parents feel a planned purchase is affordable before going ahead with it..<sup>10</sup>
- 42% expect to work for themselves in their career, compared to 11% nationally.<sup>11</sup>
- They seek instant results.<sup>12</sup>
- Gen Zers think spatially and in 4D. They have always known how to zoom, pinch and swipe. They’ve grown up with hi-def, surround-sound, and 3D as well. 60 degree photography and film is their normal. Ultra slow motion and hi-speed video is their standard. Consequently, they lack situational awareness. They are oblivious to their surroundings and unable to give directions. Some speculate that Gen Z have become too reliant upon their devices.<sup>13</sup>
- 84% multitask with an Internet-connected device while watching TV.<sup>14</sup>
- They may see living with others as an intrusion on their space.<sup>15</sup>
- They’ve never known a non-digital world—one without smart devices and the Internet.<sup>16</sup>
- They are consistently seeking flexibility.<sup>17</sup>
- They are seeking to be treated like adults.<sup>18</sup>
- Their perspectives on lifestyle and finances have been influenced by the weight of the Great Recession.<sup>19</sup>
- Generation Z students grew up in a recession and are under no illusions about their prospects for employment after college.<sup>20</sup>
- When asked an open-ended question about today’s economy, members of Gen Z are most likely to be concerned about jobs and unemployment. This is the biggest spontaneous concern for a third (34%) of Gen Z.<sup>21</sup>
- If given \$500, members of Gen Z would be most likely to save it for nothing in particular (47%) or save it for college (34%). Three out of 10 (29%) would use it to cover living necessities.<sup>22</sup>
- 3 out of 10 (28%) members of Gen Z are optimistic about the future of the U.S. economy, and 4 out of 10 (39%) are pessimistic.<sup>23</sup>
- They feel an intense need to commit early.<sup>24</sup>
- Top three aspirations are financial stability (69%), securing a dream job (62%), and getting married (36%).<sup>25</sup>
- Their decisions aren’t always based in fact or logical reasoning.<sup>26</sup>
- 4 out of 10 members of Gen Z are concerned that they won’t be able to rely on Social Security in retirement.<sup>27</sup>
- What do they want from their job? Opportunity for growth (36%), fulfilling work (19%), stability (19%), a friendly work environment (10%), a flexible work schedule (7%), highest salary (6%), and corporate social responsibility programs (1%).<sup>28</sup>
- 31% are looking at online job boards for employment, followed by 29% at university career centers.<sup>29</sup>
- They’re easily intimidated by the recruiting process and might be afraid to confront administrators with questions or issues.<sup>30</sup>

## Academics:

- Gen Z is looking for a social and intuitive way to absorb the barrage of sights and sounds that make up today's advertising industry.<sup>31</sup>
- They are highly self-directed, demonstrated by a strong desire to work for themselves, study entrepreneurship, and design their own programs of study in college.<sup>32</sup>
- Nearly 3 out of 4 (72%) said that colleges should allow students to design their own course of study or major.<sup>33</sup>
- 76% wish their hobby would turn into a full-time job, compared to 50% of millennials.<sup>34</sup>
- 42% said they expect to work for themselves at some point, nearly four times higher than the actual percentage of self-employed Americans.<sup>35</sup>
- Majority (81%) believe obtaining a college degree is important to having a successful career.<sup>36</sup>
- 32% noted that finding a job was the biggest concern for their generation (the highest percentage, followed by 16% - the cost of education).<sup>37</sup> Despite this concern, 79% are optimistic that they will find a job in 5 months or less after graduation.<sup>38</sup>
- Generation Z appears to be particularly averse to student loan debt – 25% say they don't think any debt is manageable and 44% saying they could only handle debt payments of \$100 a month. Financial worries for Gen Z extend beyond college, with 64% saying they are concerned about being able to get a job and 60% expressing concern about having enough money.<sup>39</sup>
- When given a list of possible concerns, almost half (46%) of Gen Z respondents expressed concern about having a large student loan balance when they finish studying.<sup>40</sup>
- 21% are more concerned about the cost of education than millennials.<sup>41</sup>
- Generation Zers largely prefer a traditional undergraduate experience augmented by innovations that offer hands-on experiences and practical skills. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) favor integrating education programs with employer internships.<sup>42</sup>

## Communicating/Engaging with Gen Z:

- Gen Z prefers interactive communication.<sup>43</sup>
  - The majority of Gen Z say they prefer in-person communications with managers (51%), as opposed to emailing (16%) or instant messaging (11%).<sup>44</sup>
- Go to them, don't beg them to come to you<sup>45</sup> Share, like, tweet.<sup>46</sup>
- Feed their curiosity.<sup>47</sup>
  - Tap into the entrepreneurial spirit. Make stuff and help Gen Z make stuff. Collaborate with them and help them collaborate with others. Educate and build expertise, they want to be experts. Help them to achieve it.<sup>48</sup>
- Don't belittle them.<sup>49</sup>
- Provide easy, consumable format.<sup>50</sup>
  - Get to the point right away.<sup>51</sup>
  - Communicate through "snackable" content.<sup>52</sup>
- While Generation Y initiated text messages as a norm, Generation Z prefers communicating through images, icons and symbols.<sup>53</sup>
  - Gen Z's attention spans are getting shorter as well, explaining their preference for video and images rather than text.<sup>54</sup>
  - They are the ultimate consumers of snack media. They communicate in bite sizes. Punchy headlines or razor sharp text resonate much better than lengthy chunks of words or long winded passages.<sup>55</sup>
  - They communicate in symbols. They speak in emoticons and emojis. The symbols provide context and create subtext for their private conversations. Text has effectively been replaced by images. This communication is speedier as well. Gen Zers are agile communicators. They are accustomed to rapid-fire banter and commentary.<sup>56</sup>
- Be authentic; skip the buzzwords.<sup>57</sup>
- Communicate across multiple platforms.<sup>58</sup>
- Focus on their future (i.e. how will they reach their career and life goals).<sup>59</sup>
- See them as diverse.<sup>60</sup>

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1 Source: Dr. Jim Hundrieser, VP Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, Plymouth State University, Presented at the Ruffalo Noel Levitz Conference, July 8, 2015.

2 <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/231048>

3 National Education Association, July 13, 2015 <http://neatoday.org/2015/07/13/here-comes-generation-z-what-makes-them-tick/>

4 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/step-aside-millennials-gen-z-has-arrived-lance-shields>

5 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

6 Id.

7 Id.

8 Id.

9 National survey from Northeastern University, November 18, 2014 <http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2014/11/generation-z-survey/>

10 [http://www.jwtintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/F\\_INTERNAL\\_Gen\\_Z\\_0418122.pdf](http://www.jwtintelligence.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/F_INTERNAL_Gen_Z_0418122.pdf)

11 Market Place, November 17, 2014 <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/education/learningcurve/meet-generation-z>

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13 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/step-aside-millennials-gen-z-has-arrived-lance-shields>

14 <http://www.marketingprofs.com/charts/2013/10462/gen-z-trusts-mobile-social-content-more-than-other-generations>

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16 National Education Association, July 13, 2015 <http://neatoday.org/2015/07/13/here-comes-generation-z-what-makes-them-tick/>

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18 Id.

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20 Generation Z Goes To College, Jossey-Bass <http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-1119143454,miniSiteCd-JBHIGHERED.html>

21 Ameritrade Survey, May 2013 [http://www.amtd.com/files/doc\\_downloads/research/Gen\\_Z\\_and\\_Money\\_2013\\_Research\\_Report\\_Sept\\_2013\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.amtd.com/files/doc_downloads/research/Gen_Z_and_Money_2013_Research_Report_Sept_2013_FINAL.pdf)

22 Id.

23 Id.

24 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

25 Adecco Survey <http://www.adeccousa.com/employers/resources/Pages/generation-z-vs-millennials-infographic.aspx>

26 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

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29 Id.

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31 Atlantic, 2015

32 National survey from Northeastern University, November 18, 2014 <http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2014/11/generation-z-survey/>

33 Id.

34 <http://time.com/6693/coming-soon-to-your-office-gen-z/>

35 National survey from Northeastern University, November 18, 2014 <http://www.northeastern.edu/news/2014/11/generation-z-survey/>

36 Id.

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45 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

46 Id.

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48 Id.

49 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

50 Id.

51 Id.

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52 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/step-aside-millennials-gen-z-has-arrived-lance-shields>

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55 Id.

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57 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

58 <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/step-aside-millennials-gen-z-has-arrived-lance-shields>

59 Dr. Jim Hundrieser (2015).

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