

What Generation Z wants - how to attract the "next" generation to your brand and business

 By [Bronwyn Williams](#)

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Generation Z: The generational cohort born between 1997 and 2010. In South Africa, Generation Z is also known as the "Born Free" generation.



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Don't panic. Generation Alpha will still want free chicken-wings

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Diversity - Unique is the new normal

Generation Z is all about all kinds of diversity. They celebrate differences and uniqueness in terms of gender identification, sexual orientation, race, culture, style and body type. For example, a full 52% of American Generation Z's know someone who doesn't identify as heterosexual or cisgender (a person whose personal identity and gender corresponds with their birth sex).

Can your company culture accommodate such diversity?

Brand values - Is your brand "woke"?

Generation Z expects the businesses they work for and the brands they support to share their values of diversity and inclusivity. This means that businesses need to get "woke" and get comfortable with the idea of standing up for social justice issues.

'Woke': "Being woke means being aware. Knowing what's going on in the community, specifically in relation to racism and social injustice." [Urban Dictionary]

A good example of this trend is how Ben and Jerry's in Australia refused to serve any individual customer two scoops of the same ice cream until same-sex marriage was legalised in the country. Nike's choice to use the controversial football player, Colin Kaepernick, famous for "taking the knee" instead of standing for the American national anthem as a form of solidarity for the Black Lives Matter movement, as a spokesperson for the latest Nike campaign, is another example of brand activism.

Less stuff, more stories

Another key to understanding Generation Z is that the generation values experiences over ownership. Generation Z is the "Uber" generation. They understand that you don't have to own a car to get the end benefit of on-demand mobility. They are also incentivised to build their "social credit" by engaging in unique experiences and wearing unique, customised clothing that reflects their style and status as an independent thought leader, or "influencer".

If millennials were all about the sharing, communal economy, Generation Z is all about standing out.



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"Why would we want to work for you?"

Generation Z is the children of Generation X - the independent, driven, yuppies of the 1990's. Generation Z has inherited their parents drive, ambition and independence. Many are already successful entrepreneurs, even while they are still in school. If millennials are a challenge to manage, Generation Z poses an even bigger problem for employers: They may not need - or want - your job at all.

So, the question is - is your business ready for independent, individualistic Generation Z?

ABOUT BRONWYN WILLIAMS

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