

# If you want to win over Gen Z, be an unapologetic brand

By [Alwi Suleiman](#)

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Purpose, or the lack thereof, will make or break your brand in 2023 and beyond. There has never been a generation that is as passionate about sustainability and equality as Gen Z and regardless of what side of the political divide your brand chooses, no one in his right mind can deny the importance of these issues.



Alwi Suleiman, lead marketer at MuslimAd Network, says never been a generation that is as passionate about sustainability and equality as Gen Z

I started writing this column with the title *Why brands that do not adjust to a polarised world will perish in 2023*, but then I figured that it was perhaps too exaggerated.

Such brands will live in a state of vegetation, clinging on to dear life and hoping for a miracle to happen. We have lived in a world of shades of gray for many decades.

While a gray world is good because people relate to one another's pains and compromise their stances for the benefit of society, it is not the world we live in today!

Brands need to realise that and must tune their marketing strategies to fit into the world of black and white that we live in. This means your brand must become unapologetically clear on its stance or become irrelevant.



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## The role of deep polarisation

Donald Trump startled the world of politics in 2016 when he emerged as the first person ever elected president of the US who had no government or military experience.

While previous presidents attempted to unite the country after transitioning from the campaign trail to the White House, Trump's outspoken nature and commitment to fundamentally alter past customs and expectations of presidential behavior became a source of deep partisan divisions.

According to a 2019 poll by Pew Research, 71% of Democrats who were single and looking for love declared that they would undoubtedly or probably not accept being involved in a serious relationship with someone who voted for Trump in 2016.

Our polarised world is going nowhere, for now, as *CBS News* put it in their article *Social media's role in America's polarized political climate*: "Now, leading voices in academia and tech are saying that rather than simply reflecting the polarisation in society, platforms like Facebook and Twitter are helping to create it."

The issue is reinforced by the fact that those with partisan attitudes are more likely than others to receive information from and be swayed by media outlets that share their ideological perspectives in a fragmented and polarised media environment.



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## The role of Gen Z

From a business point of view Gen Z, a generation born between 1997 to 2012, will be the largest generation and most ethnically diverse at around 82 million strong.

Put in dollars, Gen Z has \$360bn to spend, and winning over the so-called "elusive generation" is vital for your business's future relevance.

Aligning your brand purpose with their values is a prerequisite for them to even start considering your brand. They are looking for your communication to reflect their values and aspirations.

Brands that stand up and participate in social issues and social change that are important to them will win them over. What they require from you is action and authenticity and they hate purpose washing.

## How to catch Gen Z's attention

1. Add purpose to your branding's DNA and make sure you are authentic and pragmatic about it.
2. More than half of Gen Z'ers prefer saving money instead of spending it so make sure you sell real value to this budget-conscious generation.
3. With average attention at eight seconds, you must create clear straight-to-the-point content. Short videos work tremendously well with Gen Z.

The list is much longer but these are the most important aspects that you will need to keep in mind when marketing to this purpose-driven audience with point #1 being the most important.

Whether your brand stays relevant is highly dependent on taking a stance and showing your values to today's main audience and creating a continuation of the same for tomorrow's main audience (Gen Z). If your brand does not wake up to this reality it will be crushed by its competitors that do so and do so unapologetically.

## ABOUT ALWI SULEIMAN

Alwi Suleiman has been in marketing since 2006 and has helped several businesses build their marketing strategies.  
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