

PREPARED BY:  
Richard Baker,  
Food Distribution Guy  
Published: August 2021

---



**GENERATION Z:  
UNDERSTAND ME, DON'T DEFINE ME!**

August 2021

Marketers, get acclimated with the next generation. Generation Z: Make room for Canada's connected, open and optimistic generation. Members of Gen Z are those born between 1997 and 2015. This puts their age group in the range of 6-24 years old in 2021. In 2019, Gen Z represented 25% of the Canadian population and \$50B in buying power.<sup>1</sup>

This report provides a summary of IRI's White Paper titled:

Understand Me, Don't Define Me!

## SUMMARY

- Age group in 2021 – 6-24 years old.
- Generation Z makes up 32% of the global population. In the US, they represent 20% of the population with an estimated direct buying power of \$143B.
- Gen Z is emerging as the world's largest and most diverse generation.
- The first generation of digital natives. Recognized as the most influential voice for which brands to purchase. They have the power to influence the shopping and buying decisions of their peers and prior generations.
- They wish to understand the value proposition of the brand. More than half of Gen Zs say they love to try different brands.
- 35% of this group say they are brand loyal —when they find something they like, they stick with it.
- This is a group of people whose focus is not binary; it is inclusive. It isn't about choosing A or B, it is about having the option to choose A and B.
- Gen Z is looking for brands with a social and environmental conscience, and a commitment to action. They must define the essence of the brand and why it exists.
- True bias to action. They want to change the world.
- Important issues to them:
  1. Be Heard – Heard to listen. Do not expect their opinion to be changed.
  2. Human Rights – Equality.
  3. Do What They Say – Make the world a better place. Buy brands that feel the same way.
- Business Implications:
  1. Transparency!, Authenticity!, Sustainability! Gen Z transparency fuels authenticity.
  2. Expectations of continuous change. You better evolve or you will become a dinosaur.
  3. The biggest user of social media platforms. Brands must create content to keep them engaged and learn how to engage on their platforms.
- Do's for Business:
  1. Brands – What will you stand for? Share your values.
  2. Be real – Listen to them.
  3. Give them a seat at the decision-making table.
  4. Empower them to make decisions.
- Focusing on Gen Z pays off\*: Brands that make the connection with this remarkable generation drive, on average, 14x greater dollar growth opportunity versus other generations.

### ***Gen Z Catch Phrase***

"I want What I Want When I Want It in a Way That I Want It"

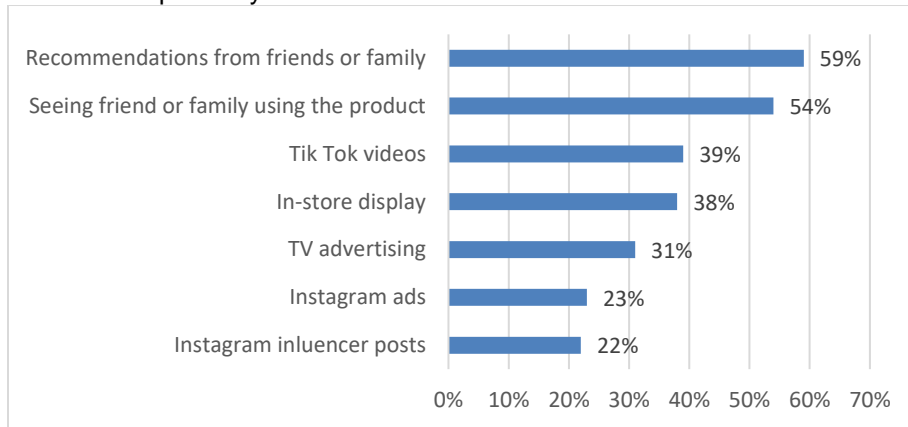
---

<sup>1</sup> Understanding Gen Z, Amplifysolutions, 2019

## PRODUCT DISCOVERY

- Gen Z is drawn in by the visual aspects of products and their merchandising. This is one of the most engaging parts of new product/brand discovery. They are keenly aware of product packaging and the messages it sends.
- Organic recommendations from family and friends carry more weight and are more likely to influence an actual purchase, than any other way that Gen Z may learn about a product/brand. (Refer to Chart 1).
- Over the past 3-months, food (87%) represented the number 1 category in which 17–23-year-old females purchased.

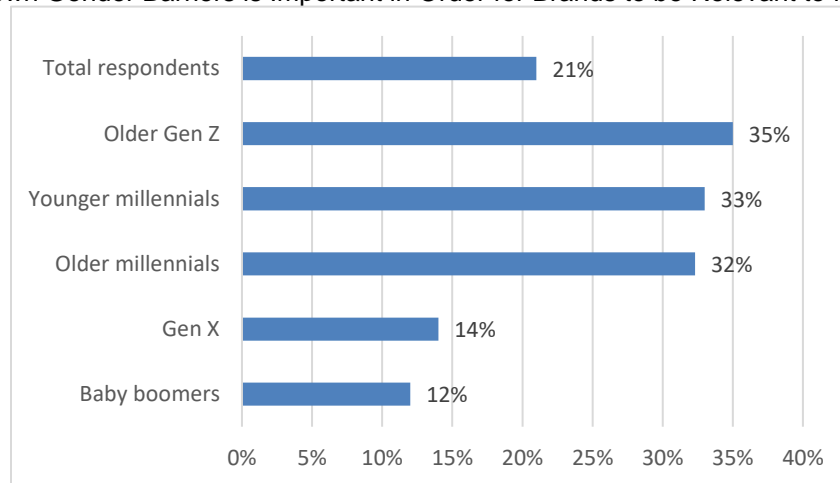
Chart 1  
Top 7 Ways Gen Z Learn About Product to Purchase



## RELEVANCY > NEUTRALITY

- The growing focus on gender and gender neutrality/fluidity is taken seriously across generations.
- +33% of females between the ages of 17-23 felt that breaking down gender barriers was important for brands to be relevant to their generation. (Refer to Chart 2).

Chart 2  
Breaking Down Gender Barriers is Important in Order for Brands to be Relevant to My Generation

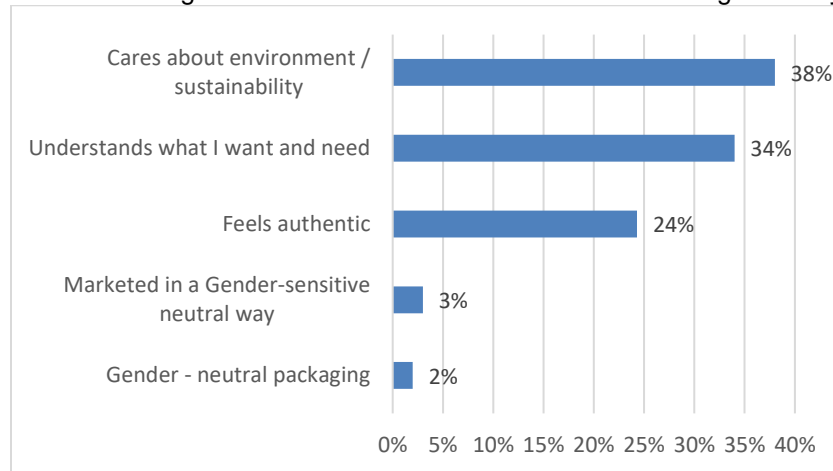


- Gen Zs tend to view gender as an unnecessary classification “bucket,” meaning that ultimately, how gender is portrayed in brand marketing and communications has little influence over their purchase decisions.
- “Brands being obvious about calling out diversity and fluidity is distracting and feels inauthentic. We want to see real people using real products that actually work.” Gen Z Focus Participant.

## BRAND LOYALTY

- Building loyalty among Gen Z's requires a commitment to understanding who they are, not your perception of who they are. This newest generation of shoppers is fiercely independent and expects brands to respect and appreciate what makes each of them unique.
- Brands must understand what Gen Z wants and needs before they will earn their dollars.

Chart 3  
% Naming as the Top 2 Characteristics Beyond Taste and Price that are Most Important When Deciding Which Brand of Food/Non-Alcoholic Beverages to Buy



- They value the freedom to conform and not conform.
- “The consistent feedback we heard from Gen Z was that gender in marketing isn’t as much about whether brands are portrayed as male, female or gender neutral. Rather, it is whether the entire “package” for the brand — everything from what the product is, to how it performs, to how the packaging looks, to its marketing and social media — is simple and authentic, and makes sense for what the brand is.”

## OMNI CHANNEL SHOPPER

- They largely rely on brick-and-mortar retailers. More than half of the 17- to 23-year-old females we surveyed displayed a preference for in-store shopping; only one-third preferred e-commerce.
- Shopping in-store isn’t just a means to an end, it is an experience that gives them an opportunity for fun, socializing, and experimentation.
- They are also disproportionately likely to shop for CPG products in the dollar channel, where their dollars stretch a bit further.

**Richard Baker**

Email: [richard@fooddistributionguy.com](mailto:richard@fooddistributionguy.com),

B: 416-768-7648

[www.Linkedin.com:richardecbaker](http://www.Linkedin.com:richardecbaker)

Website: [www.fooddistributionguy.com](http://www.fooddistributionguy.com)