

HUMAN8

READY FOR

# THE ZOOMERS?

Gen Z report: Australia edition



# SHORT ON TIME?

## 5 REPORT TAKE-AWAYS

1

### GEN Z x MENTAL WELL- BEING

46% of Gen Z in Australia feels stressed, yet they are all about dropping taboos on mental health struggles. As such, this 'it's OK to not be OK' generation expects brands to take on the role of coach, supporting them in prioritizing and discussing the topic of mental health.

2

### GEN Z x FINANCE

Redefining how to make money, Zoomers are self-educating in finance. For Australian Gen Z, a considerable share of their portfolio consists of cryptocurrencies, which shows their openness for new financial products. They expect from brands that they give accessible and actionable advice to support them in building financial resilience.

3

### GEN Z x METAVERSE

Embracing and shaping the metaverse, this always-on generation wants brands to create exciting experiences by seamlessly integrating the online and offline worlds.

4

### GEN Z x BRANDS

Having a strong focus on injustice, Gen Z wants brands to pursue social and environmental issues. 63% of Australian Gen Z is even willing to pay more for brands that try to have a positive impact on society. At the same time, they expect brands to provide a personalized, playful experience.

5

### GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Gen Z is determined to create a better future, with climate change and social issues such as racism being high on their agenda. And they expect the same from brands. One-off actions are a no-go; this generation wants to see ongoing social impact.



# REPORT NAVIGATION

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READY FOR  
THE ZOOMERS?**

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# ARE YOU READY FOR THE ZOOMERS?

Today, Gen Z is the world's largest generational cohort, accounting for one third of the global population. Also known as post-Millennials, the iGeneration, or Zoomers, they have the fastest-growing disposable income, which is expected to reach \$33 trillion over the next decade. No matter what you call this generation, your business's future is likely to depend on them.

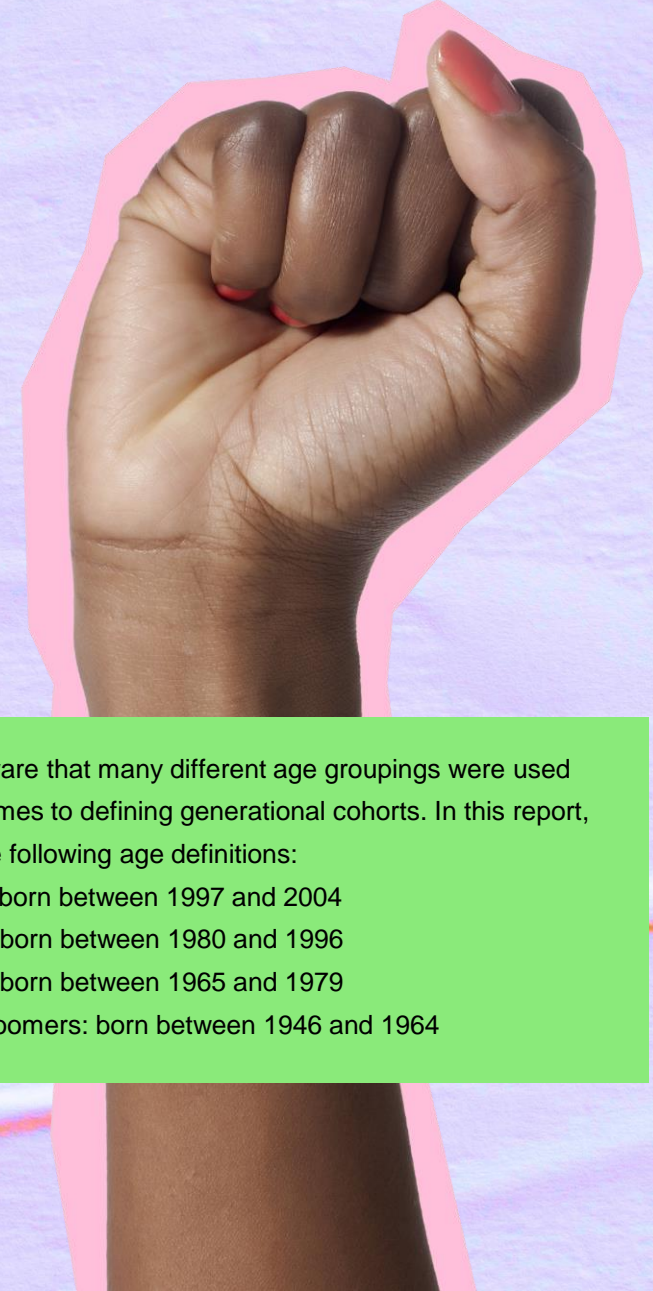
## Who is Gen Z?

Born into a tech-enabled world, this digitally native generation is social-media-literate, always-on, and hyper-informed. Online platforms are their means to be in the know, to stay connected, and above all, they allow them to amplify their voice. With movements like #MeToo and Black Lives Matter, this generation is not afraid to question authority and call out injustice. Growing up against the backdrop of social upheaval, climate change, and a global health crisis, this is a generation that struggles with mental well-being, but they don't hold back when talking about it. With many coming of age during the pandemic, the past two years put a mark on their lives and outlook on the future.

So, what characterizes these Zoomers, and how are they different from the generations before them? In this report, we shed a light on what makes Gen Z tick and what they expect from brands.

We are aware that many different age groupings were used when it comes to defining generational cohorts. In this report, we use the following age definitions:

- Gen Z: born between 1997 and 2004
- Gen Y: born between 1980 and 1996
- Gen X: born between 1965 and 1979
- Baby boomers: born between 1946 and 1964





# REPORT METHODOLOGY

To gain insight into Gen Z's attitude and behaviour, and how this differs from previous generations, we ran a global proprietary quantitative research piece with the four largest generational cohorts - Gen Z, Gen Y, Gen X and baby boomers.

The focus of this report is on the Australian market, where we surveyed 1,075 consumers in January-February 2022: 458 Gen Z, 212 Gen Y, 194 Gen X and 211 baby boomers. In this report, we will zoom in on generations separately, as well as highlight significant differences between the next generations (Gen Z and Gen Y) and the non-next generations (Gen X and Baby boomers).

	Gen Z	Gen Y	Gen X	Baby boomers
Born between	1997 – 2004 *	1980 – 1996	1965 – 1979	1946 – 1964
Sample size	458	212	194	211

*\* Taking into account ethical research guidelines, the survey focused on 18 years and older*





**01  
GEN Z x  
MENTAL WELL-  
BEING**

**STRESS, HAPPINESS & PANDEMIC**



# GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

## IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK

In Australia, 46% of Gen Z feels stressed, which is in line with the stress levels Gen Y (47%) and Gen X (45%) experience. Baby boomers, on the other hand, feel significantly less stressed (22%). The same trend is visible when it comes to overall happiness, with Gen Z, like Gen Y and Gen X, rating their happiness lower (6.6/10) compared to the older generational cohort (7.6/10). However, **Gen Z feels less responsible for their own happiness than the other generations** (60% Gen Z, 72% Gen Y, 75% Gen X, 88% baby boomers). This can be explained by how this generation is entering adulthood amidst a pandemic, where many of their happiness drivers (e.g. hanging out with friends) have been interrupted by this external force.

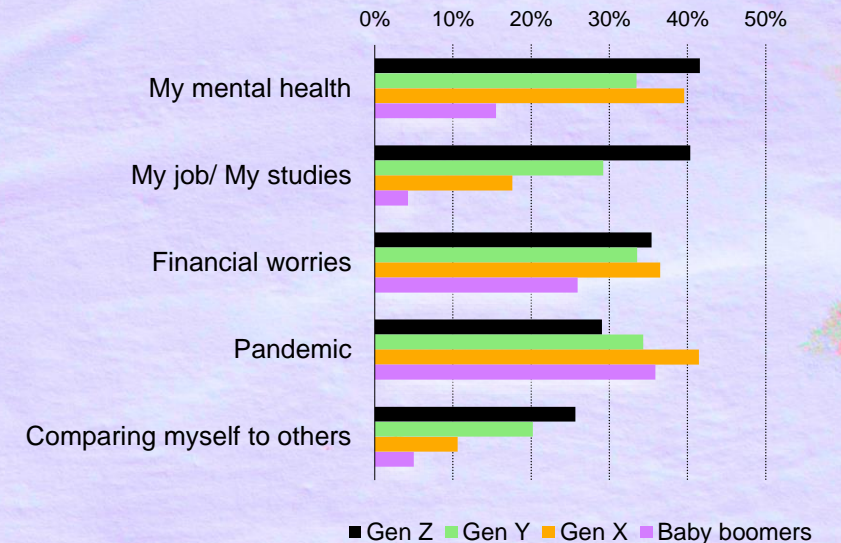
**Mental well-being (42%) and studies/ job (40%) are the biggest stressors for Gen Z.** Given the profound impact of COVID-19 on the Australian economy, financial worries and the pandemic are concerns that keep all generations awake at night. Similar to Gens Y & X, Gen Z is feeling the pressure on their mental health. Yet, this 'it's ok to not be ok' generation does not shy away from talking about their struggles. Gen Z is all about **dropping taboos** and being open about their mental health.

With social media an inherent part of their lives, **comparing themselves to others** (26%) and **external expectations** (18%) only add to the stress equation, something they have in common with Millennials (20% & 11% respectively) and which stands out from the older generations.

This results in a **'confidence crisis'** among the next generations, with 53% of Gen Z and 49% of Gen Y indicating they often lack self-assurance.

46%  
OF GEN Z  
FEELS  
STRESSED

## TOP SOURCES OF STRESS



## HEADSPACE x TAKE A STEP

Gen Z's focus on mental well-being can inspire brands to take on the role of life coach: supporting youngsters in prioritizing their mental health and encouraging discussions around the topic.

*Mental health app HeadSpace Australia recently launched the campaign 'Take a Step,' aimed at supporting the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth.*





# GEN Z x MENTAL WELL-BEING

## EMBRACING THE GREAT PAUSE TO FAST-FORWARD

While the pandemic has forced this post-Millennial generation to be home-schooled, attend prom virtually, graduate through Zoom, or start their first job in a remote-working context, Gen Z is showing a **greater resilience and optimism in dealing with the pandemic** compared to the older generations. **33% feels the pandemic has helped them learn a lot about themselves.**

More than any other generation, they used this time to **start new hobbies (34%)**, focus on **personal growth (33%)**, and **learn new skills (33%)**.

# 33%

OF GEN Z  
**FOCUSED ON PERSONAL GROWTH DURING THE PANDEMIC**

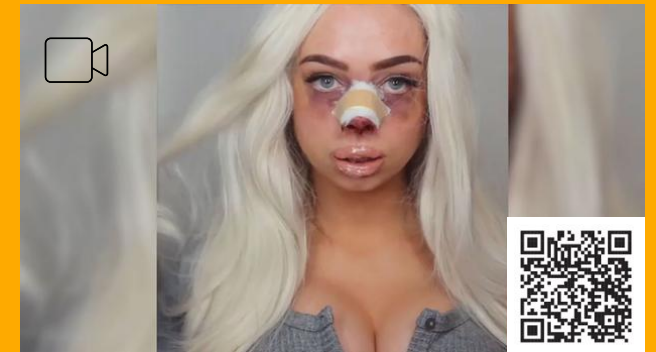
## UNLABELLED x BATTLING YOUTH SUICIDE

*Being bullied throughout their childhood, founders of Australian skincare brand Unlabelled wanted to help other youngsters avoid the same fate. The profits of their range of ethical and sustainable hand and body wash go towards resourcing organisations whose work is vital in preventing youth suicide.*



## SOCIAL MEDIA x MENTAL WELLBEING

Social media – and its unrealistic depictions and filtered images – is often cited as a contributing factor to mental health struggles. Our research shows that across generations, 3 in 5 feel social media brings a lot of **pressure on looks**. The next generations try to counter this by **showing their real-unfiltered self online (46%)** and **following influencers they can relate to (34%)**. Yet, **44% still tries to show the best version of themselves** on social media, indicating how they are struggling with this move towards more ‘realness’.



In the thought-provoking video ‘Am I pretty now’, makeup artist Karolina Maria – a Gen Z herself – raises awareness on the negative impact of social media on people’s self image. She says: “Don’t you ever compare yourself to someone else and think you are less, because only YOU are you, and you are BEAUTIFUL just the way you are.”





## 02 GEN Z x FINANCE

FROM FIN-FLUENCERS TO NFT ART



# GEN Z x FINANCE

## REDEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE MONEY

Growing up in the shadow of the 2008 financial crisis and against the backdrop of the COVID-19 recession, Australian Gen Z wants to write their own money rules. **45% has a side hustle**, (all while 1 in 3 Gen Zers works full-time), and this goes beyond traditional babysitting. Flirting with TikTok and YouTube algorithms, this generation turns their social game into a business plan in no time. **50% would like to start their own business**, taking their future in their own hands. This eagerness for entrepreneurship is something they have in common with Gen Y (46%).

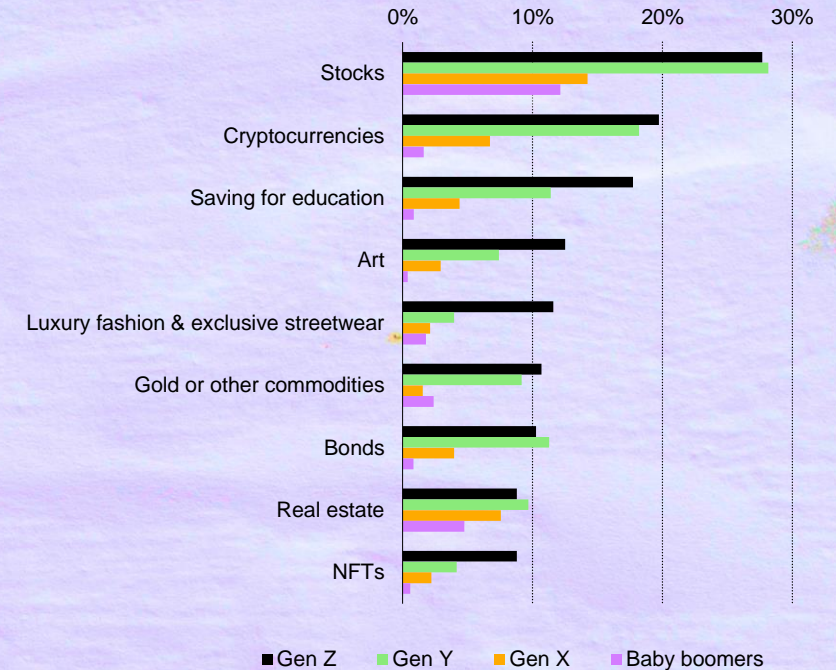
While Gen Z's disposable income does not (yet) reach the heights of that of Millennials, they are on par with their generational counterparts when it comes to financial investments with **65% of Gen Z having investment money** in the past year (vs 60% of Gen Y).

When zooming in on their investment portfolio, we again see a similar picture for Gens Z and Y. While **stocks** (28%) and **education funds** (13%) dominate the portfolio of the next generations, we see an appetite for new investment products like **cryptocurrencies** (19%). 35% even says they would like to be paid or get an allowance in crypto. Also when it comes to NFTs, these younger generations are taking the lead (6%). **21% even believes NFTs will increasingly replace physical artwork**, while this is as low as 6% for older generations. For Gen Z specifically, investment in luxury fashion and exclusive streetwear (12%) stands out in comparison to the older generations.

**65%**  
OF GEN Z  
**HAS  
INVESTED IN  
THE  
PAST YEAR**



## TOP INVESTMENT PRODUCTS



## MONEY AS A MEANS TO ENJOY LIFE

Compared to their older counterparts, the next generations are more focused on enjoying life, and **43% says they spend their money to live their best life** (vs 34% non-next generation).



# GEN Z x FINANCE

## DIGITAL FUELLING FINANCIAL LITERACY

52% of both Gen Z and Gen Y says their interest in financial planning and/or investing has increased in the last 2 years (vs 28% non-next generation).

Spending a lot of time online, the next generations easily find ways to improve their financial literacy. Rather than following expensive business courses, they **self-educate online**, for example by following influencers on social media. In fact, 29% follows these so called fin-fluencers for financial advice.

## THE RISE OF THE 'FIN-FLUENCER'

Gen Z increasingly consults social media such as TikTok – or should we say **FinTok**, or **StockTok** – for financial education. While social media **empowers** youth to take financial literacy in their own hands, following so-called 'fin-fluencers' also comes with a huge **risk of misinformation**. Without any financial background or legitimation, anyone can present themselves as an expert.

# 29%

OF GEN Z  
**FOLLOWS  
INFLUENCERS  
FOR FINANCIAL  
ADVICE**

## SNEAKERHEADS BOOST RESALE MARKET

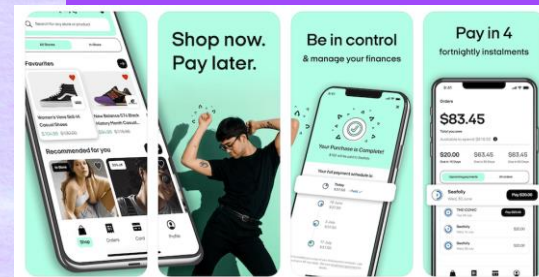


One of Gen Z's new favourite asset classes are sneakers. During the pandemic, the sneaker resale market boomed, giving Gen Z a lucrative side hustle. Cowen Equity Research even estimates that the sneaker market could be worth \$30 billion by 2030.

## MONEY BY AFTERPAY x MOBILE BANKING FOR YOUNGSTERS

Gen Z expects brands to support them with building financial resilience by providing accessible and actionable advice.

Fintech giant Afterpay has always sought to help its largely young, tech-savvy customer base make the most of their finances. With the launch of its Money by Afterpay app, the brand wants to empower Gen Z to 'build their money confidence', offering a broad array of digital services to help users set goals, track spending, and manage their money.







**03**  
**GEN Z x**  
**METAVEVERSE**  
WHAT IS IT LIKE ON THE OTHER SIDE?



# GEN Z x METaverse

## CONQUERING THE METaverse

Seamlessly blending physical and digital worlds, Gen Zers are true digital natives. For this 'always-on' generation, social media plays a central role in their everyday lives.

Being a **visual- and video-driven** generation, YouTube, TikTok, Instagram and Snapchat are the most popular platforms. While they turn to YouTube for **entertainment and tutorials**, TikTok provides a creative outlet for **memes and viral content**. Together with Instagram, the latter is also used for **digital activism**.

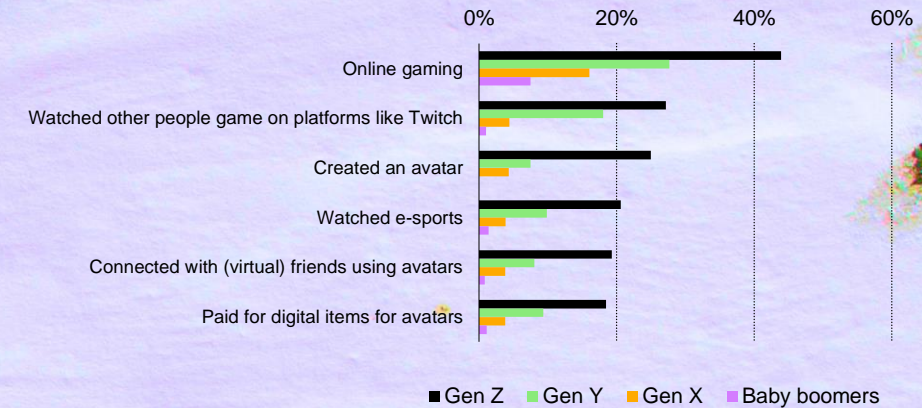
Next to these more traditional social media platforms, Gen Z is fully exploring the metaverse, from Fortnite to Animal Crossing to Minecraft and Roblox. Hanging out with friends in virtual worlds, creating an avatar and spending money on virtual outfits is nothing extraordinary to them. In fact, more than 4 in 5 have already engaged in metaverse activities, ranging from gaming (44%), or watching e-sports (21%) to connecting with friends using avatars (19%). **No generation will embrace and shape the metaverse more than Gen Z.**

# 77%

OF GEN Z  
**HAS  
ENGAGED IN  
METaverse  
ACTIVITIES**



## PARTICIPATION IN METaverse ACTIVITIES



## AUSTRALIAN OPEN x SWINGING INTO THE METaverse

Tennis tournament 'Australian Open' (AO) is held in Melbourne, and fans usually travel from all over the globe to experience the event. Yet, given the impact of the pandemic on travel and spending, the AO organizers decided it was time to speed up their introduction to the metaverse. In January 2022, the AO launched a virtual event on the metaverse platform Decentraland. By using a virtual reality headset, tennis fans could join the event and compete for virtual prizes via non-fungible tokens (NFTs) linked to live match data. Virtual presentations of key areas in Melbourne Park, including the Rod Laver Arena and Grand Slam Park, were open for the duration of the tournament.



# GEN Z x METAVERSE

## THE COST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Gen Z spends a lot of time online – even more during the pandemic when real-life interactions were put on hold – to such an extent that **33% feels anxious when they (must) disconnect from their socials**, which is similar to their Millennial counterparts (30%). The online world allows them to stay connected. **34% of Gen Z and Gen Y indicates they have quite some online friends they have never met face-to-face**. **30% even says hanging out with friends online is just as good as seeing them in person.**

**33%**  
OF GEN Z  
**FEELS  
ANXIOUS  
WHEN THEY  
(MUST)  
DISCONNECT  
FROM SOCIALS**

## THE COST OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Compared to their parents (Gen X and baby boomers), **the next generations have a more positive image of social-media companies**. Only 61% feels these companies have too much power (vs 77% non-next generation). They are **less wary about the (long-term) consequences of publicly-posted content** on social media (55% next generation vs 70% non-next generation) and **more open to brands using their personal data in return for personalized offers** (72% next generation vs 54% non-next generation).

But the next generations are not naïve when it comes to **protecting their privacy**, with **40% using encrypted messaging apps** (vs 19% non-next generation).

## MYAMI x DRESSING THE METAVERSE

Gen Z embraces brands that are present in the metaverse, but also enjoy offline interactions. The future will be about creating exciting experiences that seamlessly integrate the online and offline worlds.

*Start-up MYAMI launched a digital fashion line, aiming to dress the metaverse. The offline world does play into MYAMI's plans, as the brand got officially launched at the 2022 Melbourne Fashion Festival (MFF). On the closing runway, they showcased the digital-first piece, the 'flower bomb' dress, in the physical world. Following its runway debut, the garment was then minted into an NFT and auctioned.*







## 04 GEN Z x BRANDS

EXPECTATIONS TOWARDS BRANDS



# GEN Z x BRANDS

## SUSTAINABILITY AND INCLUSION SHAPE PURCHASE DECISIONS

When it comes to brand decisions, Gen Z pays attention to brand attributes that focus on **sustainability and inclusion**. This also translates into a willingness to pay more for brands that try to have a positive impact on society (63%), run their business in a sustainable way (57%), or use inclusive practices (56%). In fact, Gen Z is willing to pay more than older generational cohorts for brands that are black-owned (35%).

In comparison to older generations, **both Gen Z and Gen Y have a more positive image towards brands and see them less as money-making machines** (63% vs 86%). 39% even expects brands to create impact by commenting on news and social and political events (vs 27% non-next generation). Gen Z also takes this mindset to their work environment. More than any other generation, they find it important for their employer to be a company that gives back to society (30%).

**38%**  
OF GEN Z  
**IS WILLING TO  
PAY MORE  
FOR FEMALE-  
OWNED  
BRANDS**

## GEN Z's WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE FOR BRANDS THAT...



## POWER TO THE FEMALE COMMUNITY

More than the older generations, Gen Z (38%) and Gen Y (31%) are willing to pay more for brands that are female-owned.

*Social enterprise 'Female Owned' celebrates female-owned businesses in Australia. By building a directory to showcase their members, the organisation helps female-owned businesses to acquire more customers and increase brand awareness.*

**Female  
Owned**





# GEN Z x BRANDS

## GEN Z LOOKS FOR BRAND THAT REFLECT THEIR IDENTITY

Next to a focus on sustainability and inclusion, Gen Z seeks brands that are **authentic** (57%), care about **values that are important to them** (56%), **understand** them (49%), and allow for personalisation (45%).

More than their older counterparts, Gen Z and Gen Y show a greater **willingness to pay more for brands that support them in their life goals** (45%).

## ON A QUEST FOR HUMOUR AND PLAYFULNESS

In light of the pandemic, Gen Z also turned to brands for a spark of humour and playfulness, to help them cope with the gloomy reality. 52% is even **willing to pay more for brands that have a sense of humour and playfulness, which is also visible amongst Gen Y (46%)**.

Ans this goes beyond purchase decisions. When it comes to their job, more than any other generation **Gen Z finds the aspect of a 'fun working environment' important** (64%), which declines to 44% for Gen Y, 40% for Gen X and 39% for baby boomers.



## AUGUST x PERSONALISED SUSTAINABLE SKINCARE

Brands can win Gen Z hearts by showing they understand what this generation cares about, providing a personalised playful experience, while pursuing social and environmental impact.

*Skincare brand August believes in the 'flip it and reverse it' principle. Rather than pushing standardised products to consumers (industry > consumer), they are all about creating unique skincare based on consumers' needs (consumer > industry). Through a short survey, consumers can customize the formula to their skin type, goals and preferences. Thanks to this 'made to order formula', August only makes products that are needed. Their website reads: "Sustainable skincare is skincare where less products are made, bought, and used." Furthermore, the brand aims to use renewably sourced ingredients, recyclable packaging, and carbon-neutral shipping.*







**05  
GEN Z x  
SUSTAINABLE  
FUTURE**

UNCERTAINTY & INCLUSIVITY



# GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## FIGHTING INJUSTICE THROUGH THE POWER OF CLICKS

More than 1 in 2 Gen Zers feels uncertain about the future. This is not surprising, considering how the pandemic has caused a lot of turbulence in their journey towards adulthood.

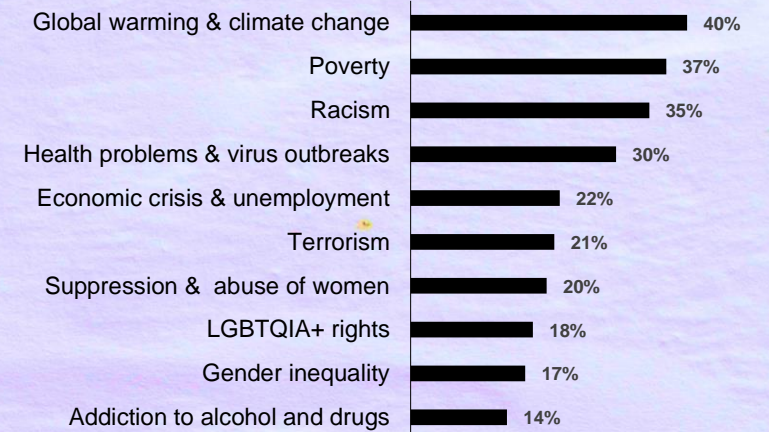
The top global issues that keep them up at night focus on **environmental concerns** and **social inequalities**. Since this generation is known to be the most diverse one in history, **diversity and inclusion** are on their mind in everything they do. More than any other generation, Gen Z is concerned about racism (35%) – with 35% even willing to pay more for black-owned brands – and LGBTQIA+ rights (18%). **Gender (stereotypes)** is another topic that is more present in the daily lives of Gen Z and Gen Y, as opposed to the older generations. 54% of Gen Z agrees there are still too many gender stereotypes, 47% states that gender identity is something that can change over time, and 45% personally knows someone who prefers to be addressed with gender neutral pronouns.

Nonetheless, it is a generation dedicated to create a better future for the generations to come. Gen Z uses **online channels to fight injustice**. 22% has already voiced their opinion on social media, compared to 17% Gen Y, 15% Gen X, and 13% baby boomers.

# 53%

OF GEN Z  
**FEELS  
UNCERTAIN  
ABOUT THE  
FUTURE**

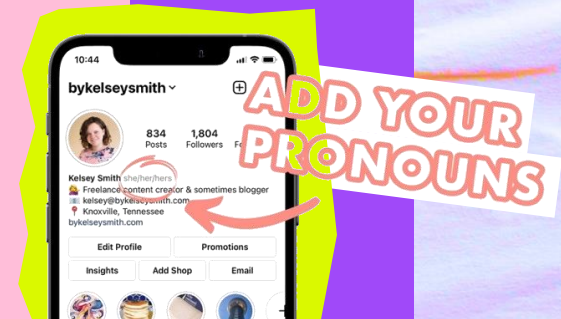
## TOP GLOBAL ISSUES GEN Z WOULD TACKLE



## INSTAGRAM x PRONOUNS

Gen Z is striving for gender liberation, and they value brands that acknowledge gender diversity and break gender stereotypes.

*In May 2021, Instagram launched a feature allowing users to add up to four pronouns to their profile from a list of dozens of options including he, she, they, ze, ve, etc. Users can even submit a request for pronouns that are not available in the existing list.*





# GEN Z x SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

## FIGHTING INJUSTICE THROUGH ONLINE AND OFFLINE ACTIVISM

Social media makes it easy for Gen Z to use the collective power of their clicks to make their voices heard. While boomers protested with sit-ins and picket signs, Gen Z is clicking for change. In fact, 28% follows accounts on social justice on social media, 22% voices their opinion on social issues on social media, and 12% participates in (online) protests. But they also roll up their sleeves; 29% cleaned up litter in the environment in the past months. When it comes to volunteering, Gen Z and baby boomers seem to have more time on their hands to engage in such activities (Gen Z: 22%, Gen Y: 13%, Gen X: 14%, BB: 22%). It's thus about combining online and offline actions to fight injustice.

This is also what '1 Million Women' does. This Australian movement urges women and girls to take action on climate change. The organization aims to get one million women to pledge to take small steps in their daily lives that save energy, reduce waste, cut pollution, and lead change. In the run-up to the 2022 Australian elections, 1 Million Women asked women to take a pledge to elect politicians who will commit to climate action. They helped them spread the word via engaging social media messages, using the hashtag #1MVOTINGFORCLIMATE. And successfully so, as 12 of the 14 seats that changed hands in the election were taken by women.



## WINKI SUITS x RIDING WAVES SUSTAINABLY

Gen Z challenges brands to demonstrate their ongoing social impact. Brands that try to jump the bandwagon with one-off actions risk being called out for green-washing or rainbow-washing.

*Winki suits creates vintage-inspired surf suits for women so they would feel more comfortable when riding waves. To do so, the brand collaborates with social enterprise Honor 1000 and their Blessed Project sewing program. The latter was created to rehabilitate young women who have been rescued from human trafficking. The Project aims to support these women by providing housing and emotional support, but also by helping them build new skills like sewing. The women will learn this trade as a form of therapy, an opportunity to learn a practical skill which provides the ability to provide an income for themselves.*





# IN-COMPANY PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS

Looking for a fresh dose of inspiration on Gen Z for your company's marketing or innovation teams?

Starting from the insights from our 2022 global proprietary quantitative research, Joeri Van den Bergh's new keynote 'Are you OK, Zoomers?' highlights how Gen Z shapes future consumer behaviour and what this means for brands.

Available in different workshop and presentation formats, this new thought-provoking keynote spotlights five future-proof platforms for innovation, branding and marketing to the world's largest generational cohort.

So, are you ready for the Zoomers?

Email [joeri.vandenbergh@wearehuman8.com](mailto:joeri.vandenbergh@wearehuman8.com) for more information and bookings.



Joeri Van den Bergh is **Future Consumer Expert** at Human8 and has extensive experience of all aspects of **marketing to teens and young adults**. His clients include global customers such as eBay, Coca-Cola, Spotify, Danone, IKEA, Heineken, Converse, Nestlé, AXA and Unilever for whom he has provided advice on how to target the youth market. He is an **AMA-awarded global thought leader and marketing** author on the impact of NextGen on marketing, on business and on consumer trends.



# HUMAN8

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