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MARKETING TO GENERATION Z

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Why produce this White Paper?

The under 18s have always been the great unknown in marketing circles. The over 18s have been around and you have an idea of how they think and have seen how they have behave. But the under 18s? They are much more of a mystery: what are their attitudes to work, media, education, society? Yet these attitudes will significantly impact on the ability of organisations to compete, deliver services and thrive.

From a people perspective, this is particularly significant as any organisation's success is ultimately determined by the quality of the people it attracts and its ability to engage and motivate them to contribute towards its goals.

This White Paper looks at today's under 18s with a view to understanding how to engage and market to them. We have come at this from what is essentially a 'talent' perspective i.e. what are the issues we need to consider when looking to attract and engage future and current employees; however, our conclusions are true for marketing generally.

We have framed our thinking in the context of generational change in that by most definitions, other than the most recent births, today's under 18s are part of Generation Z.

Contents

Introducing Generation Z

Definitions

Can you really generalise about a whole generation?

Why care about generations?

Workplace imperatives

Effective generational marketing

Values and culture

My Generation

Millennial rising

Hello Generation Z

Generation Z – the ‘first’ generation

The first global generation

The first caring generation

The first ‘I can see the value of brands’ generation

The first generation not to notice diversity

The first connected generation

The first visual generation

The first multi, multi-media generation

The first ‘really worried’ generation

Marketing to Generation Z

Grab their attention - very quickly

Make your front line content snackable

Visualisation always helps

Making it sharable

Conclusion

Let's start with some definitions

Generations: a group of individuals of similar ages whose members have experienced a noteworthy historical event within a set period of time with the result that a common generational consciousness develops. (Wikipedia)

The idea of generations is widely used to explain differences in behaviours between age groups: so we talk about 'generation gaps', my generation, older or younger generations.

If we can understand generational differences we can understand how best to market to each age group – this is as much the case for key talent issues such as recruitment, retention and engagement as it is mainstream marketing.

Generation Z: the common name used to describe the generation following Generation Y (aka Millennials) – there is no universal agreed date of birth for this generation but generally it is agreed the first were born in the mid-1990s and the last around 2010.

Can you really generalise about a whole generation?

When we consider Generation Z we are talking about a generation many of whom are under 10 so can we really make generalisations? Especially when there is not always a consensus on how they are thinking or even what to call them (iGeneration, Gen Tech, Gen Wii, Net Gen, Digital Natives, Gen Next, Post Gen and Plurals have all been variously suggested). Even if we do reach a consensus as regards a generation, isn't there always the danger of stereotyping? This is a good quote from E. Allan Lind, Duke University, USA on this topic:

“...as we try to understand the nature of generational differences **we often fall prey to our natural tendency to stereotype**, and this can make us perceive differences as greater than they in fact are. Second, we tend to see the differences in attitude or action that do exist as reflecting personality traits that prevail in each generation rather than reactions to age-linked differences in situation. **The end result is that we accept the characterizations of 'Generation X' or 'Generation Y' offered by the popular press.**”

It is also fair to say that it is easy to get carried away as regards the immediate impact of generational changes. In 2004 while working on some Generation Y analysis we found a lot of companies were predicting a 'sea change' in brand usage – as summed up by the quote below from Business Week

“Asked what brands are cool, these teens rattle off a list their parents blank on. Mudd. Paris Blues. In Vitro. Cement. What's over? Now, the names are familiar: Levi's. Converse. Nike. “They just went out of style,” shrugs Lori Silverman, 13, of Oyster Bay, N.Y.”

Which of these brands remains strong today, 14 years later? Actually the history of Levi's advertising is a great example of how big brands have in fact responded to generational shifts; just compare 1996's Space Man (with its parental v youth conflict) and the inclusive nature of 2014's 'just don't bore them'.

So we need to acknowledge at the outset that our conclusions may not be perfect but in making them we have combined a wide range of research both from Havas but also a range of recent surveys and analysis from around the world.

At this stage it would also seem appropriate to quote writer Rob Asghar who when contemplating the same question answered:

“Hell, yes, these are broad and sweeping generalizations, just like when we say, **“America chose Barack Obama as president in 2012”** even though nearly half of American voters wanted Mitt Romney. The White House doesn’t go unoccupied because of a lack of unanimity, and the same principle applies to this analysis. ”

Finally we would suggest that what we are chronicling are not necessarily seismic changes in behaviours; more an evolution that is leading to distinctly new behaviours amongst younger members of society. We are not saying these behaviours will not be shared by some older generations – just that they are more acute and find their natural home with Generation Z.

Why care about generations?

The core reason any organisation is interested in Generations is to enable them to vary marketing approaches to make it more relevant to the age group they want to communicate with. Thereby increasing the effectiveness of their marketing in terms of themes, sentiment, tone and media.

In the case of Talent and associated disciplines such as recruitment, retention and engagement, generational understanding helps firms adapt their marketing to connect with target markets but just as importantly provides powerful clues as to where to start connecting with and influencing people of different ages internally. In this regard three things in particular make it increasingly important to understand generations:

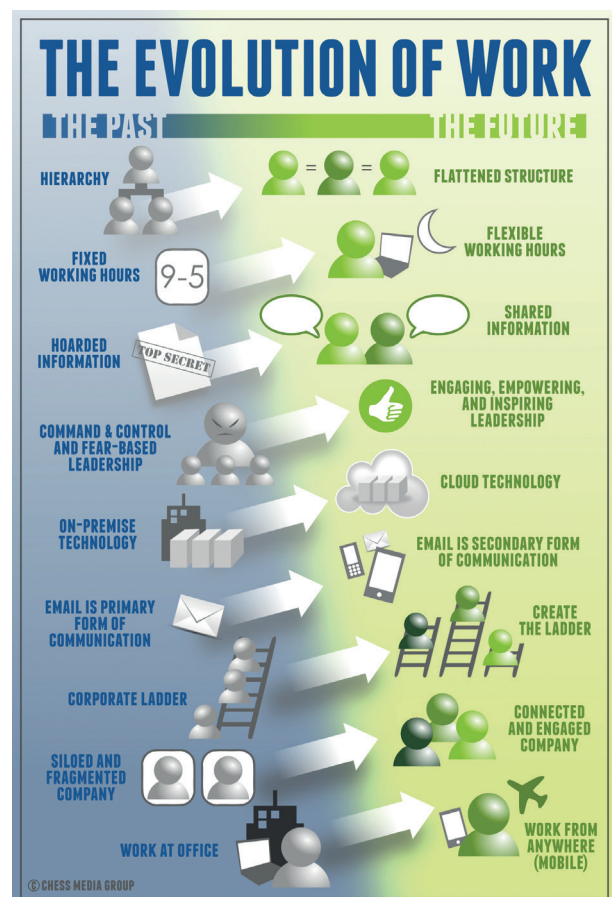
- Workplace imperatives;
- The desire for effective generational marketing;
- An increasing focus on the role of values and culture with employees and potential employees.

Workplace imperatives

There seems to be an ever-growing host of workplace challenges:

- What is the role of the physical workplace?
- What are the benefits of remote working?
- How should social media be used effectively and what access should employees have to it?
- How should training and development evolve?
- What is the role of technology?

The chart below (from Chess Media), nicely highlights the evolution of the workplace.



All these issues are complicated as now for the first time it is possible to have four generations working together; generations who are liable to have different attitudes to the world of work.

However, it seems to be younger generations that often clash with current working practices most acutely. A few years ago Johnson Controls Global did some research with 5,300 respondents worldwide (Generation Y). The research suggested the workplace itself can be a tremendous influence on working effectiveness and that Human Resources policies which actively promote flexible working and alternative ways of working will be more successful at attracting this up-and-coming workforce. So for example our younger generations:

- Tend to gravitate to employers that put a premium on **sustainability** and have ethical values (**96%** want an environmentally aware workplace);
- Prioritise which job to apply for based on **opportunities to learn**, work colleagues, corporate culture and values;
- Put a particular value on dedicated team and breakout spaces in many cases e.g. collaboration areas (a majority prefer in-person communications with managers);
- **Also tend to create an emotional connection with their workplace** – it is a space where they **socialise** with co-workers and a space which supports their health and wellbeing.

Many of these types of issues also emerge in a second workplace study from 2014 by Randstad which interviewed over 1,000 people. This study looked in particular at differences between Generation Y (ages 21 to 32) and Generation Z (ages 16 to 20). Differences included:

- Pace of work – Gen Z is not as inclined to work in a fast-pace environment: 59% of Gen Z report liking a fast pace, while 68% of Gen Y says the same;
- Gen Z and Gen Y both selected a corporate office space as their top work environment; however Gen Y (45%) has greater preference for a traditional office than Gen Z (28%).

The report's central conclusion is 'Employers have an opportunity to build employee retention and loyalty by addressing the different factors that motivate each generation to work hard and stay on board with their employer'.

Effective generational marketing

We are seeing unprecedented changes in media consumption and these changes are not uniform across the generations. Looking at the recent Havas Prosumer Report, Hashtag Nation ([view it at talentbites.com/genz](http://talentbites.com/genz)) – which looked in particular at communicating with 'younger' age groups – we suggested that what sets youth apart today is less what they think and more the tools they use. In this sense, for example, all social media are not the same. So, as we will see, Generation Z has a natural affinity with 'short term' messaging platforms such as Snapchat, Whisper and Secret. In this context many people argue that Generation Z has a better/deeper connection with many media platforms than older generations. Jimmy Wales, Co-Founder of Wikia articulates this perspective below:

"As the father of an upcoming GenZer, and through my experience creating and developing collaborative publishing platforms, it is clear that this generation is using technology in a way that is smarter, more involved and beneficial to their future....Everyone can learn from the ways in which this unbounded, younger generation interacts with technology and are able to quickly adapt to this rapidly changing media landscape."

Others may argue that the link with technology is more a dependency than an understanding. Either way, from a media perspective alone, understanding Generation Z is liable to lead to smarter, more effective connections.

Values and culture

Increasingly, organisations are coming to **actively** appreciate that it is as much their people as their products and services that differentiates them. By 'actively' we mean organisations have always said 'people are their greatest asset' but now they are actually acting on this – we are all 'people organisations' now! So organisations are putting an extra premium on retention and attraction.

When they have the choice people tend to want to work in organisations whose values they share (91% of candidates believe employer brand plays a key role in their decision to apply, according to Glassdoor) and this is a trend that is accelerating with Generation Z. In his book **The Talent Mandate**, Andrew Benett quotes Rackspace's Henry Sauer who says people:

"want to work in a place that lines up with their values and where they can pursue something beyond themselves and that is meaningful to the world."

The Talent Mandate further highlights that 94% of senior business leaders agree with Sauer's sentiments: 'companies with clear values have an edge in recruiting top candidates.'

In this context, businesses need to ensure their values and cultural perspectives attract and retain the kind of people who are going to add real value to their business, and are articulated in such a way that people understand them.

As Walt Freese (ex CEO of Ben & Jerry's) says:

"I strove to create a culture where people didn't need to park any part of themselves at the door, especially not their hearts and souls. I believe deeply that the success of any company is tied directly to the quality of its talent and its ability to utilise that talent. And that is where culture comes in: it allows you to create an environment in which you can effectively utilize talent".

While Generation Z is clearly not a completely homogenous group, by understanding its motivations, an organisation will be able to articulate its value and culture appropriately and hence connect with those within the generation most likely to connect with it comfortably.

So we feel this is a topic worth considering. Let's start by clarifying the parameters of our subject.

My Generation

People have been talking about generations since the concept was first developed by Karl Mannheim in the 1920s.

According to Mannheim's theory, people's attitudes and behaviours are significantly influenced by the events that occur as they grow up (both social and economic). So Mannheim describes a generation as a group of individuals of similar age whose members have experienced a noteworthy historical event within a set period of time.

A couple of key points make generations distinctive. Firstly, historical events have a particular impact on people in their younger years at a time when they can help shape those individuals' world views (obviously everyone, no matter what age, will experience the events, but the older you are the less they tend to have a fundamental impact on your future behaviour).

Secondly, the pace of social and historical change determines the speed with which generations develop and their distinctiveness (in eras with little change Generations may not develop). So today, at a time of rapid social change, we are seeing particularly distinct generations which evolve quickly, perhaps lasting only 15-20 years.

Millennial rising

Mannheim was working in the 1920s and the recent popularisation seems to have started with two authors – Strauss and Howe and their book **Generations**. They are also widely credited with coining the phrase ‘Millennial’. (Strauss and Howe felt not only were there distinct generations but that there was a pattern in terms of the behaviours of generations i.e. generations occurred in four social cycles which they called Turnings allowing you to predict the future behaviours of tomorrow’s generations).

Millennials or Generation Y have been the subject of more research and insight than any generation before them. As with Generation Z there are a wide variety of dates used to encompass Generation Y. We favour 1982-1995 putting their current age at between 19 and 32.

From a Talent perspective, they have a range of characteristics, some of which are highlighted in the following, pre 2004, quotes:

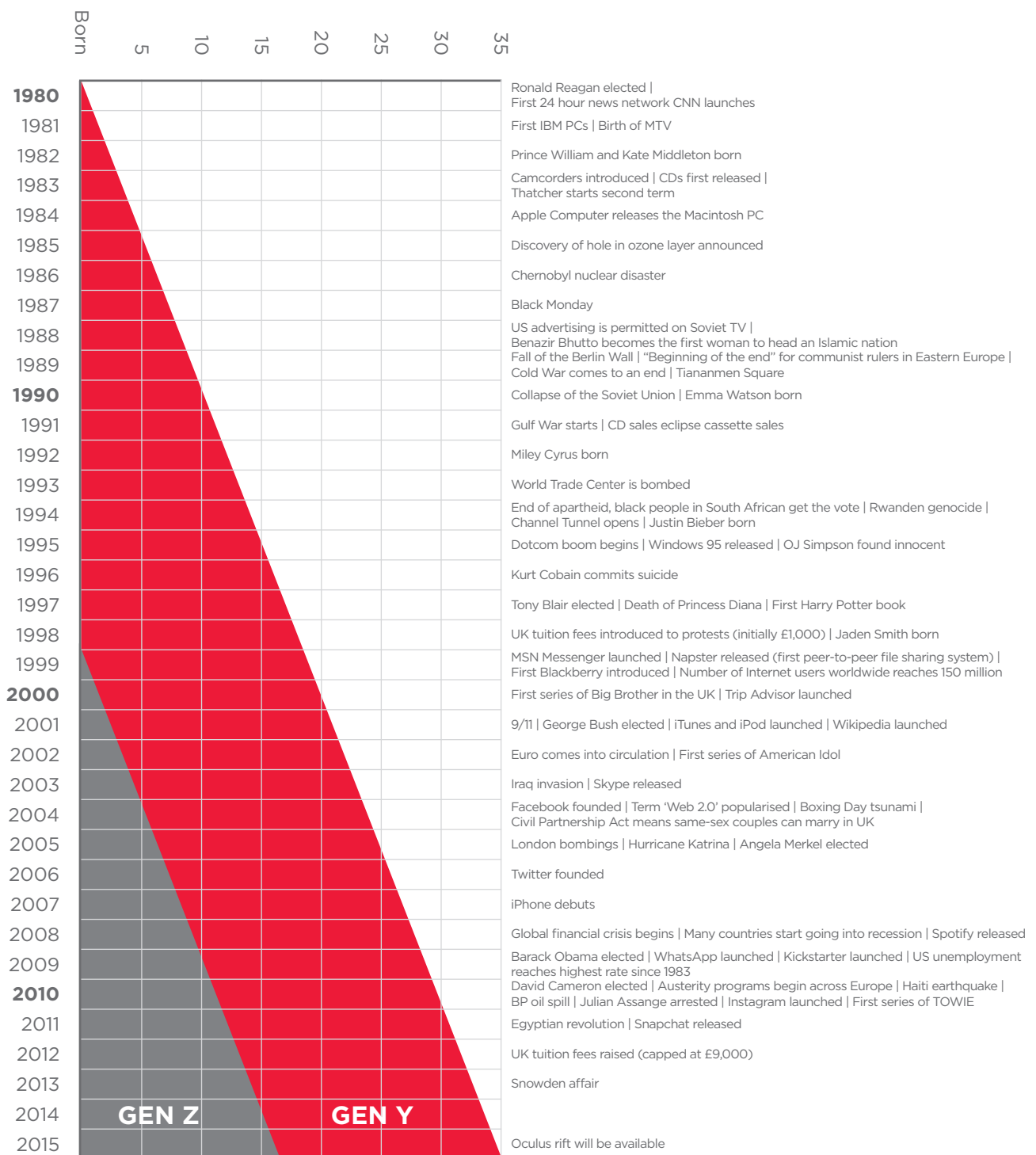
- “Known for their optimism, education, collaborative ability, open-mindedness, and drive, Generation Y is the hottest commodity on the job market.” (Spiro)
- “They care less about salaries, and more about flexible working, time to travel and a better work life balance.” (Observer)
- “They are ardent environmentalists. They adore technology and understand it as no generation before them did. They practically invented the Internet. They don’t vote: they distrust politics and prefer voluntarism.

They’re sceptical of corporations and impervious to traditional advertising”. (Plotz)

- “They are looking for organisations that offer more than money; they are looking for a working environment in which they can continue to learn. They also want flexibility and a real work-life balance. They simply aren’t prepared to mortgage their lives to the company.” (Austin)
- “They think, why stay in a job that you don’t really enjoy.” (Observer)
- “They want: long-term career development and multiple experiences within a single organisation, sense of purpose and meaning to the work, access to mentors and other company champions, work-life flexibility, tech-savvy work environment, primary loyalty is to networks before their employers.” (University of Liverpool)
- “Rather than making independent decisions based on core values, they live in a culture encouraging them to embrace community values, and to reach consensus.” (The Australian Leadership Foundation).

A lot of the characteristics outlined above are often linked now with Generation Z – demonstrating that the emergence of a generation is an evolution as opposed to a clean break from previous generations.

The foundations of Generation Z were laid in previous generations but what we see now is a far clearer articulation of many Gen Y traits combined with some very significant firsts. Thinking of generation theory, there were always going to be significant differences between Z and Y just because the events occurring in their formative years were very different: one Generation (Y) having its formative years in the largely buoyant 1990s and one Generation (Z) having its formative years in the depressed and sometimes depressing 000s.



Hello Generation Z

At Havas People we tend to define Generation Z as being born from 1996 onwards (we have picked 1996 as it was also the year Google was born. This is significant as Google and the technological and communication advances it represents is a cornerstone of the changes that have moulded Generation Z).

Below we have looked at a range of the key influences that helped mould both Y and Z (you will also notice that we have included Alphas – the very latest generation).

There are some very obvious ‘big ticket’ Z influences here such as:

- The rise of Google
- Instant Messaging
- iPhone launched
- 9/11, the Iraq wars and the war on terror
- Global financial crisis and recession
- Reality TV

Looking at technology alone there was a big jump from the ‘90s to the ‘00s, with wireless technology, high speed internet, vastly improved connectivity, instant messaging plus the social web all approaching maturity in the ‘00s. There is a nice quote from Bruce Tulgan at Rainmaker Thinking that sums up the impact of this change:

“The result is that those children of the 2000s simultaneously grew up way too fast and never grew up at all. They are privy to everything from a dangerously young age--- their access to information, ideas, images, and sounds is completely without precedent. At the same time, they are isolated and scheduled to a degree that children never have been. Their natural habitat is one of physical atomization and relative inactivity, but total continuous connectivity and communication. They are used to feeling worldly and precocious--- highly engaged in a virtual peer ecosystem--- while enjoying the discourse at least of protection and direction from parents, teachers, and counsellors.”

(This is not a generation without contradictions).

Of course there are a lot more influences and changes that are helping to create a distinctive generation. Blogger, Ella Ceron ([read more at talentbites.com/genz](http://talentbites.com/genz)) highlights 11 of these:

1. High fructose corn syrup is now evil
2. Television is now a learning tool
3. But too much television now rots your brain
4. Barbie and Disney princesses are now causes for poor self-esteem
5. Pluto is no longer a planet
6. Adult programming is now definitely for adults
7. Technology is no longer a novelty
8. Music is a sad state of affairs
9. Kids no longer base their schedule around a special television event
10. High-end designers now get kids in on the action
11. Today’s kids know everyone actually grows up

Back on point this is also a generation that is widely seen as liable to make excellent employees. To quote Dan Schawbel of Millennial Branding:

“Gen Z has a clear advantage over Gen Y because they appear to be more realistic instead of optimistic, are likely to be more career-minded, and can quickly adapt to new technology to work more effectively,” Schawbel said. “Additionally, since Gen Z has seen how much Gen Y has struggled in the recession, they come to the workplace better prepared, less entitled and more equipped to succeed.”

Generation Z – the ‘first’ generation

The pace of change surrounding Generation Z means it has developed a number of particularly distinctive characteristics – which we would describe as firsts. It is the first:

- Global generation
- Caring generation
- ‘I can see the value of brands’ generation
- Generation not to notice diversity
- Connected generation
- Visual generation
- Multi, multi-media generation
- ‘Really worried’ generation.

The first global generation

One of the things that strikes you about the world today is how homogenous it is becoming. You can see it in terms of retail brands: you can find a Starbucks, a McDonald’s or an Adidas store almost anywhere around the world; Facebook is used by 63% of social media users and available in 70 languages; YouTube is localised in 61 countries and across 61 languages; people are as likely to buy Apple or Nike products in Singapore as in Seattle; the same TV shows and films are watched around the world; English Premiership football has a global audience of 4.7 billion.

News is increasingly global. Just look at the interest in things such as the Pussy Riot trial or the Chilean miners; these are local events that captured the world’s imagination. For the first time people around the world are growing up against the same background. Common influences and geographical differences between people of similar age are starting to disappear in a process of common **cumulative cultural adaptation**.

So for the first time common generational traits are being shown by people of the same age around the world – for example this video from **Dr Jiajia & BigBro’s Show** in Singapore: [youtube.com/watch?v=qypKjzUOhBM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qypKjzUOhBM)

The young boy in the video is from Singapore but could just as easily be from London or New York. What he is saying has equal resonance around the world.

We are not saying everyone is the same – local culture and history has a big impact on creating divergent attitudes – but today for the first time people are more similar than not.

The first caring generation

By caring we mean caring for more than yourself – an active interest and concern for society and the world around you. We are not suggesting other generations did not care but that for many Generation Z it is a defining characteristic. According to a report by The Intelligence Group (Cassandra Report Z) – Generation Z:

- Is hyper-aware and concerned about man’s impact on the planet;
- Intends to change the world – determined to ‘make a difference’, with 26% currently volunteering;
- Has a conscience – 48% care about helping poor and sick, 80% support same sex marriage;
- Wants to play a hands-on role in change;
- Believes change can and should come from anyone anywhere;
- Expects constant innovation and has little patience for sacred cows.

The caring theme (and its impact on social entrepreneurialism) is also investigated in a report by Chivas with Ipsos MORI, which interviewed 1800 young professionals (YPs) in Mexico, Brazil, China, UK, US, and South Africa (although the research focused on young people generally – born 1982 to 2004 – as opposed to Generation Z specifically).

On career motivations, this research suggests the majority of YPs express uniform agreement that they would be more motivated to work for a company that creates some kind of positive social impact rather than one simply turning a profit. Fewer than one in 10 disagreed with this sentiment. To quote from the report:

“Reflecting on the goals of companies, the vast majority of YPs in every market agree that it is possible to combine profit with having a positive social impact. YPs in every market express agreement that large brands have the resources to play a significant role in solving some of the world’s larger problems. In particular, they believe large brands must assume greater responsibility in solving today’s global economic and environmental challenges. Most respondents also say that a business should be measured by more than just its financial performance, including all positive and negative social and environmental impacts. (Chivas report)

Respondents across all markets agree that business has a responsibility to their employees to provide them with opportunities to create value in society, beyond simply providing a pay cheque. You can already see the impact of this trait in today’s marketing – the marketing of Chivas is a good example:

[youtube.com/watch?v=VsmkSfAOK8U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsmkSfAOK8U)

But picking up on the international nature of today’s marketing you can see many of the same sentiments in an insurance ad from Thailand where a man does nice things for people, the environment (and a dog) without the expectation of reward, and gets rewarded anyway – an ad that’s had 25 million views since April 3, 2014!

[youtube.com/watch?v=uaWA2GbcnJU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaWA2GbcnJU)

The first ‘I can see the value of brands’ generation

This is the first generation to really love brands, not just as individual entities but as a concept. They see the benefits of strong brands in terms of paying for free services (such as Google or MSN) but also how brands can add intrinsic value to their interests and day-to-day lives. This is not to say they love all brands; just that as a basic principle they can see their value.

As we say in Hashtag Nation (a recent Havas report looking at the contrasting attitudes of generations to brands and based on 10,574 respondents aged 16+ in 29 markets across the world):

“This should not be taken to mean, however, that brand communicators have cracked the youth-marketing code. On the contrary, 4 in 10 respondents aged 16–34 complain that brands don’t take young people seriously enough. All too often, companies talk down to their youth targets, attempting to appeal to the lowest-common-denominator elements rather than take the time to develop a more nuanced approach.”
(Hashtag Nation)



The report found that:

- Nearly half of all young respondents characterise brands as “essential” to them;
- Sixty percent of young respondents consider brands to be “an important part of the creative content online.”

Young people want to be able to rely on brands to make their lives better and to help them stand out from the crowd. It’s a relationship built on mutual interests and trust.

Brands also need to recognise that they’re now dealing with a generation of consumers who are much savvier than their parents were at that age. Young people have an innate understanding of marketing and of their value as consumers. And they’re significantly more likely than older generations to believe they have the capacity to help a brand succeed or fail. And so as much as they recognise the importance of brands in their own lives, they see it as a relationship among equals — and they expect brands to treat them accordingly.

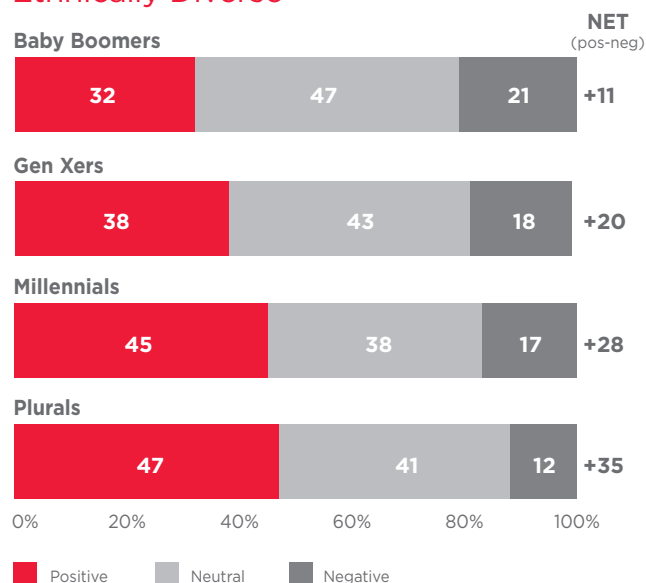
The first generation not to notice diversity



This is less about the generation becoming more diverse in terms, for example, of the ethnic makeup of the population (although it is: according to US Census projections released in 2008, the most recent data, only 54% of Generation Z are Caucasian). **It is about a generation that does not think about diversity because it is an inherent part of their DNA.**

In a report by Magid Generational Strategies it is even suggested that this diversity is the dominant trait of the generation hence the study calls them the ‘pluralist generation’. The report also highlights that only a small minority has negative views on diversity.

Opinion of America Becoming More Ethnically Diverse



Magid Generational Strategies, 2014

**What is significant
in this context
is that we have
a generation to
whom diversity
is the norm -
what they notice
is not diversity
but the lack of it.**

The first connected generation

McCann recently conducted a survey amongst 16-22 year olds in which they found:

Over half of 16-22 year olds surveyed would rather give up their sense of smell than an essential tech item.

It is fair to say that this is a tech-dependent generation (to paraphrase social commentator Jason Dorsey, 'they don't know how technology actually works, only that they can't live without it'.)

This is emphasised by the results of the Wikia survey which highlighted:

They are all connected for 1+ hours per day, but about half (46%) are connected 10+ hours per day. One-in-four (25%) is actively connected (checking email, messages, etc.) within five minutes of waking up, while nearly three-in-four (73%) are connected in an hour or less.

The Wikia survey looked at American youth but its findings are replicated, if not to this extreme in other surveys, for example research by Visa in Australia or JWT in the UK. The JWT survey showed that 90% of 8-17 year olds would find losing connection to the internet extremely upsetting, causing more anxiety than giving up their mobile, texting friends, buying new clothes and even receiving their allowance (interestingly it's the girls who are more reluctant to disconnect.)

Of course we need to put this in context. This is not a generation that dislikes face-to-face communication; plenty of research indicates that this remains everyone's favourite way to connect. For example, Randstad (looking at work preferences) suggests a majority of Gen Z prefer in-person communications with managers (51%), as opposed to emailing (16%) or instant messaging (11%). While the Visa survey suggests face-to-face is easily the most popular form of communication.

What makes this the first 'digital generation' however is not so much how many people are using technology – it is the central role it plays in people's lives.

This is the first generation to appreciate how technology can enhance lives and use it in this capacity naturally. To quote a recent Havas Media blog:

“What we're witnessing is surely the behavioural implication of living in the information age, where technology is seen as a 'sixth sense' (or fifth amongst those who'd given up smell). Alongside granting access to all the entertainment and social connections they'd ever need, technology and the Internet is seen as key to navigating through a world of curated identities, fake friends and information overload. It's no doubt unsurprising then, that Google is seen as the most admired brand and the one Gen Z would want to spend most time with.”

Technology is without doubt seen as beneficial to people's lives. Again looking at the Wikia survey, three-quarters (76%) agree that their experience with technology will help them reach their goals. Two-thirds (66%) agree that technology makes them feel like anything is possible.

This of course has all sorts of implications for the world of work, for example expectations as regards technology access, a greater focus on flexible working and an appreciation of how technology can be used effectively in business. To quote Microsoft's Theresa McHenry, for example:

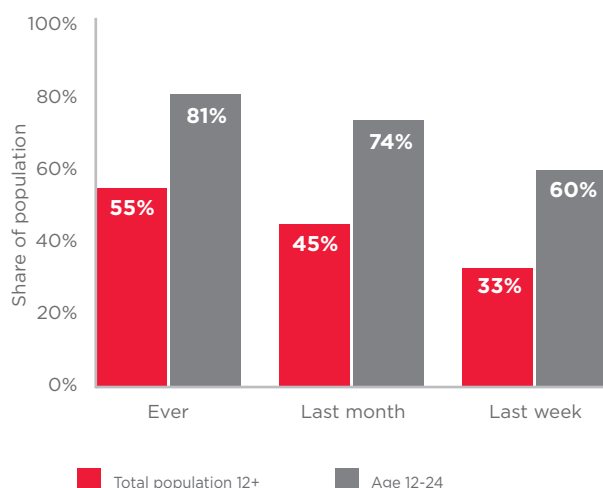
“Young people are looking for flexibility and won't see the value in commuting when they have technology to enable them to work effectively with their global peers.”

The first visual generation

Visually engaging platforms are at the core of Generation Z's media consumption (facilitated, of course, by vastly improved broadband and 4G connectivity) and the media platforms it uses tend to reflect this, most notably in terms of use of YouTube.

According to the Wikia survey nine-in-ten of 'GenZers' (93%) say they visit YouTube at least once a week and 54% visit multiple times per day. 93% is a very high percentage but this trend is reflected in other analysis and clearly younger generations have a far higher propensity to use YouTube than older generations, as is reflected in other surveys such as Statista.

Share of U.S. population who have used YouTube to watch music videos or listen to music as of February 2014, by occurrence



Statista, 2014

Other 'visual media' such as Instagram and Vine are also seeing significant growth, while older media such as Facebook have a significant focus on video sharing.

Of course the rise of video is, in some ways, just transference of people's love of TV onto a different platform. However, this generation's love of visualisation is linked in with factors such as a declining attention span which make visual media particularly attractive.

Actually there seems to be considerable debate about the actual length of Generation Z's attention span, ranging from Peter Shankman, who puts it at 2.8 seconds, which is roughly the amount of time it takes to read 140 characters or a headline, to 8 seconds (National Centre for Biotechnology Information, US National Library of Medicine) to other analysis that puts it at 10 or 12 seconds. **The point is it's not very long.** People such as Dr Edward Hallowell or Dr John Ratey have suggested that the generation is developing 'acquired attention deficit disorder'. As Dr Hallowell says, people have:

"...become so busy attending to so many inputs and outputs that you become increasingly distracted, irritable, impulsive, restless and, over the long term, underachieving...You live at a much more surface level."

Media will often have different roles in people's lives. A good example might be the teenager who uses Facebook for one set of social connections and Snapchat for a whole different set of people.

This situation is complicated as different sites require different approaches so content that is right for Pinterest may not be exactly right for Twitter.

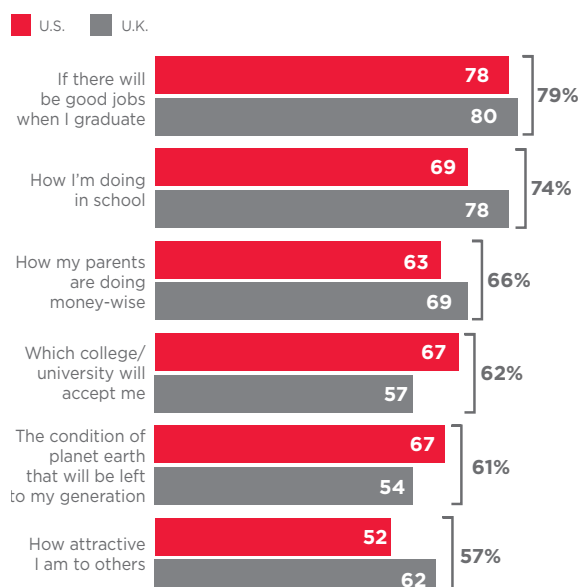
The first 'really worried' generation

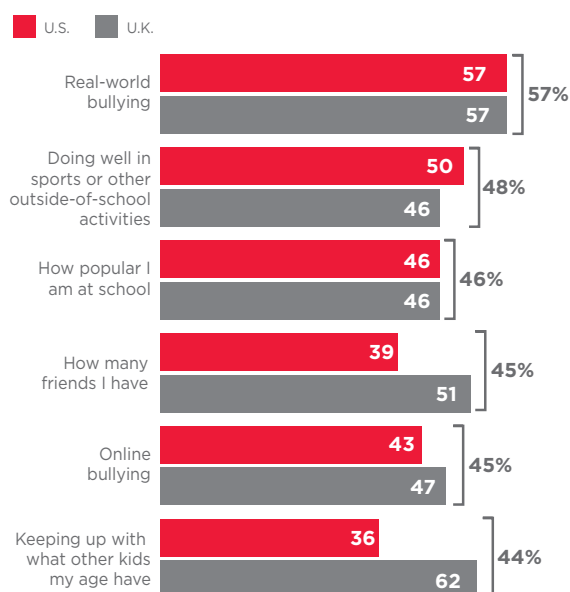
Tough All Over, but Worse in Europe's South

The chart displays the percentage of the population aged 25 years and over with tertiary education from 2004 to December 2013. The Y-axis represents the percentage, ranging from 0% to 70% in increments of 10%. The X-axis represents the years from 2004 to 2013. Five data series are shown: Greece (purple line), Spain (orange line), EU (green line), U.S. (red line), and Germany (blue line). Greece and Spain show a significant upward trend, starting around 15% in 2004 and reaching approximately 58% and 54% respectively by December 2013. The EU average shows a steady increase from about 15% to 23.3%. The U.S. and Germany show a slight decline, starting around 15% and ending at 13.5% and 7.7% respectively.

Country/Region	Percentage (%)
Greece	58.3%
Spain	54.6%
EU	23.3%
U.S.	13.5%
Germany	7.7%

Percentage who are worried about the following:





While they are worried about a lot of things, the greatest worries relate to education and careers.

For employers, however, this sense of worry means the generation is less likely to be 'revolutionary' compared with other generations – they are more concerned about prosaic things such as earning a living. So we see only a very small percentage (17%) agree "I don't have any common values with the previous generations" (Havas). Factors such as this can make this generation ideal employees as they are realistic about expectations, eager to learn and naturally integrate with other generations (in a way Generation Y found hard).

Marketing to Generation Z

Many of the 'firsts' we have considered lend themselves to specific marketing approaches. These approaches are not always new but they are of particular importance in relation to Generation Z. Here then are some suggestions.

Grab their attention - very quickly

As we have said, the attention span of Generation Z is short, which gives us a correspondingly short window to grab attention. This is compounded as we live in a world with very high volumes of information coming into people's lives throughout the day (it has been estimated that we are exposed to 3,000 promotional messages each day) - so we can't always just shout louder in our marketing.

So we would suggest communications:

- Highlight on the most interesting angle first (rather than building up to it)
- Get to the point quickly (you can follow up with detail later)
- Be succinct and clear – use 5 word sentences, bullet points, engaging headlines
- Use snackable content.

Make your front line content snackable

Ok 'snackable' has become a bit of a buzz-word but there is plenty of merit behind the concept. Here is an explanation from Mashable:

'Data - be it text, imagery or video - that consumers can quickly engage with, possibly on-the-go, possibly on a smaller screen, that will hopefully leave them hungry for more, similar content in the future'.

The Mashable definition of snackable content focuses on 'short-form content'; however, there is no reason long-form content cannot be snackable – it just needs to be segmented in such a way that a reader's attention is regularly refreshed perhaps with videos, infographics and other visuals.

We have kept this separate from 'grabbing attention' as just because something is snackable does not make it interesting.

Good snackable content will encourage trialing. Again to quote Mashable,

"It's easy to nibble and try without feeling that it's too much effort or the impact will be too negative."

Certain of our newer media such as Twitter and Snapchat lend themselves to snackable content in particular – but this is something that is important across all platforms. We would suggest there are a number of factors that help create snackable content:

- Obviously useful
- Hints at a broader story
- Great headline/attention grabber
- Visual (we process visuals more quickly than text and the right visuals will draw a reader in, create interest, help content stand out. To quote Ben Lerer of TMG "People don't really like to read, but they will make their choice via an image, then they'll read and then they're more likely to share.")

Visualisation always helps

So this is a 'visually orientated generation', a generation that responds positively to visual messaging. So how do we maximise the visual impact of our marketing for this audience?

Standout quotes – Visualisation does not always mean illustration. Quotes can be very powerful and are very popular in terms of sharing across platforms such as Pinterest.



Graphs, tables, charts – These can all be very effective in making a point quickly and 'sharably' and certainly help explain data and concepts.

Photos or images with text overlays – There are almost no media in which photographs will not add value.

Videos, Vines – For this generation, video is an obvious medium, not just in terms of individual videos such as the Twitter culture and recruitment video ([youtube.com/watch?v=vccZkELgEsU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vccZkELgEsU)) which has had over 1 million views...

...Or even the Google Maps Pokemon Master ad (actually more a talent mapping exercise) with over 16 million views... [youtube.com/watch?v=4YMD6xELI_k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YMD6xELI_k)

...But increasingly in shorter form content such as Vine. Unilever recently used Vine as part of its student recruitment campaign, encouraging undergraduates to produce Vines incorporating Unilever products. unilevergraduatesblog.co.uk/mbycompetition/

Sensible infographics and ‘snack-o-graphics’

– Infographics are a great way of visualising content and summarising a range of information digestibly. However, to quote Socially Sorted, ‘just because you can make a super-long infographic doesn’t mean you have to.’

Snack-o-graphics (or mini-infographics) –

These can be a stand-alone image or a series of images that are taken from a larger infographic. The key point is they get away from the overwhelming feel of many infographics by making each element snackable

Look at tie-ins with vloggers – The current generation of uber-popular bloggers are a great representation of the new communications paradigm. Content is largely self-generated, visual and structured (intentional or not) in a highly snackable way.

Working with vloggers combines a type of celebrity endorsement (many have millions of followers) with snackability, visuability and (with the right vlogger) empathy with your audience.

In a good example of using vloggers in marketing, UK vlogger Marcus Butler was recently used by youth site ‘Plotr’ to promote and explain their tool for helping young people match their aspirations with appropriate careers.

Remember your audience has an audience (making things sharable)

“What does Generation Z care about? Finding and sharing the best stuff in the world. They aren’t just consumers, they are curators. They not only discover brands and products but they evaluate them with brilliant objectivity, sift through them, and share the results.”

While this quote from Kathy Savitt on Mashable is a little over the top, clearly making things sharable is very important with this generation. (A recent survey from Glassdoor indicated 50% of people will share a bad recruitment experience and 64% a good one).

One of the distinctive aspects of the marketing landscape today is how many routes to sharing there are – so encouraging sharing across the main sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest (and increasingly for Generation Z, LinkedIn) is just the ‘tip of the iceberg’.

Any Generation Z media strategy needs to start by thinking across all the media it might require and how content might be repurposed and made as sharable as possible. This will range from the obvious e.g. linking content to hashtags to more elaborate initiatives for media such as Snapchat or Secret.

It is also worth thinking about why people would want to share.

According to the Wikia study among those who contribute to websites, 60% like to share their knowledge with others and 55% say they like to share their opinion with others. Only 31% of those who contribute to websites do so in order to feel good about themselves, and even fewer do so to show that they are smarter than others (14%).

So there are two key factors: sharing knowledge – perhaps an interesting aspect of a job opportunity, something they have learnt in training, a great on-boarding experience; and sharing their opinion – perhaps a view on company culture, work style etc. This is closely linked to another aspect of Gen Z marketing – honesty and credibility – which we look at later.

These motivations are liable to be encouraged and more positive if organisations respond and add value to their contributions by acknowledging and discussing them.

You can find good examples of this from firms such as Google on Twitter.

“Life at Google” gives you a good idea of what it is like to work at the company by sharing a range of culturally related thoughts, videos, pictures, slide shares etc. It is not specifically about jobs but it certainly promotes career options.

Virals – Of course the ultimate success of any sharing is when communications go viral. How and why materials go viral is not always easy predict. **Here are some suggestions:**

- People are more likely to share something if it provokes an emotional response. People naturally like to share but they feel more comfortable sharing something with a point – something that will provoke an emotion i.e. create a shared experience;
- People will share something if they think it will be useful – and this is often the case with much recruitment related material;
- People like to share things about themselves. “Sharing something about yourself is often a statement about what you believe in, what causes or values you align yourself with, and what, in particular, you love and identify with. So people are more likely to share if it helps them make a strong statement about themselves or who they would like to be.” (Buzzfeed)
- Positivity – extensive research by Johna Berger (Professor of Marketing at the University of Pennsylvania’s Wharton School) suggests that the more positive a message is, the better its chances of going viral i.e. people respond positively to messaging that reminds them that in a scary world, there are still positives (much of the same sentiment that is behind the popularity of books and films such as the Hunger Games);
- And as a ‘viral article’ on BuzzFeed highlighted, ‘never, under any circumstances, say the words “viral content”.’

Of course, this is not that new: Aristotle had many of the same ideas. In 350 BC he suggested there were three principles of sharable communications: ethos (ethical appeal), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logic). If communication has all three it will be very powerful. The video below for Cardstore – the world’s toughest job – is a good example of communication combining these elements, and has almost 2 million shares (23 million views).

[youtube.com/watch?v=HB3xM93rXbY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HB3xM93rXbY)

Embed diversity (in every sense of the word)

As we have seen, Generation Z is naturally diverse both in terms of their composition (in much of the world) but more importantly in terms of their world view. Generation Z is liable to expect diversity – they will notice if communications don’t reflect diversity and the same goes for workforce and opportunities. Indeed, they are liable to react negatively towards organisations that do not share their perspective as regards social inclusion and multiculturalism.

Have a look at a recent video by Total celebrating their 2014 Talent week at [talentbites.com/genz](https://www.talentbites.com/genz)

Speed up communications (physically and culturally)

This generation also expects rapid communication (almost real time) both in terms of response (questions, applications, feedback etc.) but also in terms of events and cultural change. Some commentators have coined a phrase FOMO (fear of missing out) to explain the need for instantaneous communication – so being culturally connected is critical.

One of the reasons instantaneous communication is seen as important is that it is so easy to achieve via live streaming media e.g. Facetime, Skype and bigger live streamers such as Twitch and Ustream; or response functionality on sites such as Twitter. (It is worth highlighting some of these streamers are huge. Twitch is the world's leading video

platform and community for gamers. More than 45 million gamers gather every month on Twitch to broadcast, watch and chat for example).

Plus increasingly brands, from a service and product perspective, are employing social media teams to ensure communications with customers are rapid, helpful and build brand loyalty – it is not unreasonable for Generation Z to expect the same for Talent-based communications.

How to respond: It's essential that listening and fast response are key tenets of your community management strategy. Simply by listening to user comments, answering questions or sharing feedback, Gen Z will feel you're a brand who cares. (Shoutlet)

**Remember they
will research you
– honesty, clarity
and credibility
need to anchor
communications.**

While we have talked about snackable instantaneous communications, we are not suggesting there is no depth to this generation. With so much information around they are looking for ways to identify content that will engage them. Once you have piqued their interest, they will investigate you and your claims (within recruitment this applies to over 60% according to Glassdoor).

A Generation Z investigation is liable to include a range of techniques:

- Search engines
- Social media
- Communities
- Company websites
- Contacts.

This means that from a communications perspective:

- Claims need to be corroborated (it is worth highlighting that according to Glassdoor research 65% of Millennials are more sceptical about claims made by employers than they were in 2011);
- Information should be consistent across an organisation and certainly geographically;
- Information should be easy to find (there should be no perception anything is being hidden);
- Social media should be listened to and responded to;
- Organisations should look to internal ambassadors to substantiate what they say;
- Communications should be underpinned with a brand advocacy programme.

Maintain the human element

It is easy to get carried away by Generation Z's reliance on technology. However, as we have said, this is not a generation that dislikes face-to-face contact. In fact it is exactly the opposite.

So although it may be tempting to put all marketing online and replicate face-to-face communications with social contacts, this could be counterproductive.

Attending careers fairs, university presentations, careers visits, face-to-face interviews and so on all still have their place and it is an important place. So we would suggest that social media, for example, is not used to replace face-to-face contact but to complement it and make it more effective.

Conclusion

When we talk about Generations we are always going to have to generalise and we are always going to have to accept that any group's characteristics are not the exclusive preserve of one age group.

However, our feeling is that with Generation Z we have something particularly distinctive: the events and opportunities that shaped this generation set against a pace of change more acute than ever before were always going to have a massive impact. The result is we have a generation that is distinctly different, and as the majority are still under 16 liable to become even more so.

The challenges this generation poses from a Talent and Marketing perspective are immense, primarily because it is so different from the generations that have preceded it. To put this into context, let's take another look at some of the 'firsts' that help define Generation Z:

- It is global – this alone was incredible and unconceivable even 25 years ago (the formative years of Generation Y) – common global media, global product launches, shared news and a similar take on popular culture have unified this generation globally. This means campaigns can be designed with a global audience in mind and in the talent space has put a premium on Global Employer Brands. It also means there are fewer cultural barriers to filling any vacancy with the best global talent.
- It is caring and sees a positive role for corporates in making the world a better place to live in – you can see the consequences of this in youth marketing already, as companies look to link purpose to consumption. From a talent perspective, caring requires organisations to think about and articulate more carefully their purpose and why they matter within society.

- It sees the value of brands and consequently has far greater expectations of a brand relationship (and sometimes far greater disappointments). In the Talent space this presents a range of opportunities and the chance to build closer relationships with candidates and employees.
- It does not see diversity – what it sees is any lack of it, making diversity almost an organisational 'hygiene factor' – who would work for, or with, an organisation that does not embrace diversity?
- We can also describe this as the first connected generation not so much because they are all using technology (although they are) but because of the central part technology plays in their lives: 24/7 connectivity to friends, information and media is an absolute given. In terms of workplace implications, this represents, probably, the biggest opportunity as it will require organisations to look seriously at all aspects of work culture from flexible working to internal communication.
- However, also shadowing this Generation is an aura of worry, and the biggest worry relates to careers: how can they develop the skills and find the opportunities that will ensure that they have not only jobs but ideally meaningful careers? Of course it can be argued that this sense of worry is liable to make them great workers (as they appreciate hard work and are always looking to augment their careers). It also puts pressure on employers to ensure they have put in place the opportunities for training and career development that are so important to this generation.

As the attitudes and beliefs of the generation have evolved, so have the opportunities and requirements to market to them. Actually the marketing requirements of Generation Z are liable to be appreciated across all generations but it is with them that we will see the biggest benefits. There are a range of initiatives that are liable to be particularly effective.

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- Making content 'snackable' and highly visual is easier said than done but the important thing to remember is that Generation Z does not have so much a short attention span. It is more that they quickly dismiss information they do not find of interest. Actually this is a generation with the means and the inclination to do in-depth research into things that interest them. And they will certainly hang around to investigate strong content.
 - It is certainly fair to say that visual content such as video is very important and organisations need to put this at the heart of their marketing. In doing so they also need to ensure this content is sharable (after all 60% of Generation Z like to share their knowledge with others) not just as this is an excellent way of enhancing distribution but because it gives content credibility and improves engagement with that content.

- Particularly in the Talent space, the need for honesty, clarity and credibility in communications is of fundamental importance particularly as evidence suggests that most young people are sceptical about claims made by employers. Certainly this puts a premium on things such as brand advocacy programmes.

The final point to make is that it is very easy to get caught up in the technology and range of media that can be used to communicate with Generation Z and this does present a host of opportunities. However, when it comes to marketing nothing beats one-on-one communications (particularly face-to-face) and this is something that will probably never change.

To find out more

To find out more about the sources used in this paper or for further recommended reading, please contact **Graeme Wright** on **+44 (0) 20 7022 4069** or email **graeme.wright@havaspeople.com**

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