

Marketing to Gen Z - Canada - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Who Gen Z are and how they live today.
- Gen Z's perceptions of themselves.
- Gen Z's brand activism and their reasons for boycotting.
- Gen Z's brand loyalty across a range of product categories.
- Which expenditures Gen Z pays for and which they get help with.
- How Gen Z would use a \$500 spending spree.
- How digital innovations are making Gen Z a unique consumer.

Gen Z is known to be a diverse generation but the true scope of that diversity illustrates how unique this group is. Gen Z isn't just racially diverse, but also culturally (50% have at least one parent born outside of Canada) and linguistically (27% can speak a foreign language proficiently). Furthermore, a quarter identify as LGBTQ+ – more than double the proportion of Canada overall. Not only does that mean that Gen Z is made up of a wide range of people from many different walks of life, it means that Gen Z has grown up among that diversity and has a broad scope of different perspectives and experiences.

Market factors are a key variable that sets one generation apart from another. Gen Zs are entering adulthood differently than those before them. Half of them live with their parents and the current housing market means that will remain the case for the foreseeable future. Even for those who do move out, housing density trends mean they'll live in smaller spaces than past generations and the normalization of remote work means those home spaces will need to be flexible. Gen Z's home life – as a function of external market factors – will therefore be an important differentiator for that generation compared to past ones.

As more Gen Zs reach adulthood and this consumer group grows, the prospects surrounding this cohort are generally positive – but the future is not without its challenges. Gen Zs are significantly more likely than other consumers



“Gen Z is still learning the ropes of adulthood, but now is the time for brands to make lasting connections with this consumer group.”

– **Scott Stewart, Associate Director, Lifestyles & Retail**

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to boycott brands/stores and have more complex reasons for doing so, such as workers' rights and environmental impact. That significantly complicates marketing strategies for brands trying to connect with these consumers as compared to older Canadians who are much more focused on traditional metrics like product quality and customer service.

That said, their attitudes towards brand values also create an opportunity. The increasing importance of how companies operate 'behind the scenes' means that the ones that can do so in line with Gen Z's values will stand out. Marketing to these consumers is more complex than in the past because there are more variables to consider – but that also means that there are more variables to differentiate with.

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