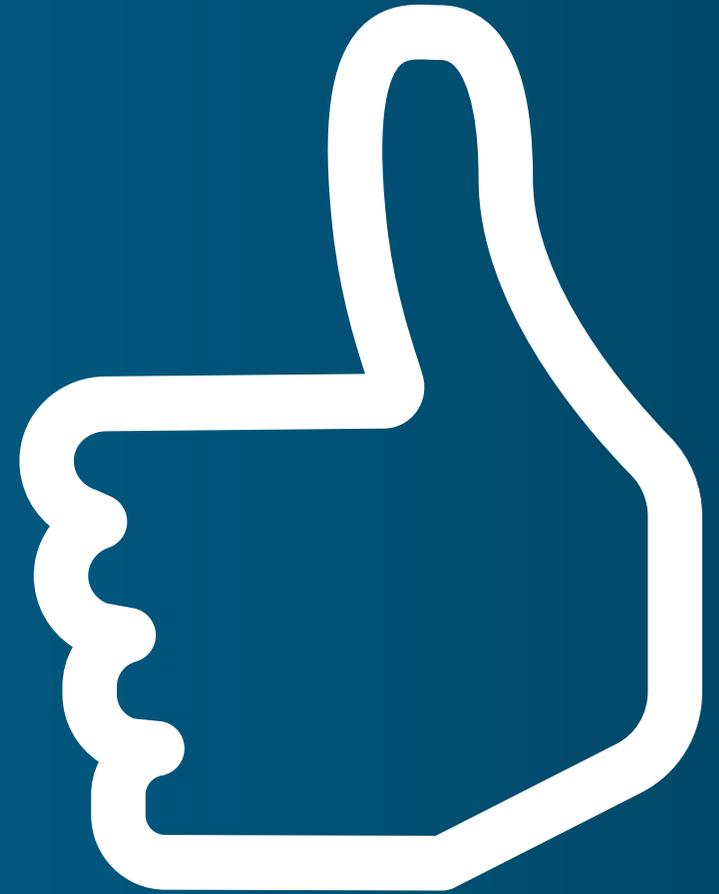


Monotype

# Build Better Customer Connections:

5 Lessons from Gen Z



**After years spent hidden in the shadows of Millennials, Generation Z is taking over the spotlight and making some serious waves in the process. Gen Zs are the first true digital natives, born between the late 1990's to the mid 2000's, and only know a world with Internet access, social media and smartphones.**

**This “YouTube generation” is tech-savvy and pragmatic, drives innovation and the way we consume media, and they're pushing brands and marketers to catch up in the process.**

### **Like, follow, read, repeat**

In an era of massive information (and advertising) overload, the brand-consumer relationship is a delicate dance. One misstep and a disgruntled customer will gladly find a new partner. Thanks to a mobile-first, visually rich, social and digital world, people expect flexibility, authenticity and consistency in every single interaction with a brand.

In order to keep your customers engaged and happy, look to the emerging behaviors and preferences of Generation Z as a beacon for what's to come.



# A 5-step plan

to building better customer connections



# 1. Be consistent

**The customer experience is a complex web of platforms, apps and social media, and in an increasingly visual world, people gravitate towards brands that stand out. Gen Z is no exception when it comes to aesthetics.**

Gen Z's digital native status affords them higher expectations than other generations, which carry over to brand consistency and seamlessness. Strive to create a uniform, recognizable experience across all touchpoints. One way to achieve this is to start with your brand's type, the language in which every message appears. And remember that aesthetic consistency is not just a matter of preference, as nearly a quarter of Gen Zs say the top reason for disowning a brand or product is poorly designed experience<sup>1</sup>.



## 2. Co-create

**Your best customers are your brand advocates and influencers. They may know your product, brand and audience better than you do, whether you're ready to admit that or not. Treat them as your most expert consultants and content creators.**

Having grown up in an era of Snapchat, Instagram, and constant connectivity, Gen Zs are already creating branded content and writing genuine reviews. They're ready to shape your brand and offerings, they just need a bit of guidance on the types of content to create and share. If you define productive ways for your customers to get involved (e.g. contests, giveaways, partnerships with reviewers) they will be more likely to spread your message in return.



# 3. Get real

**While traditional ad campaigns are not disappearing anytime soon, a more freeform, collaborative approach to marketing featuring user-generated content (UGC) is certainly on the rise. Today's consumers want to see real people and read genuine reviews before they're ready to commit. What's more, incorporating UGC, or "earned" content, into your marketing strategy can pay off well beyond accruing trust and likes. In fact, 53% of consumers say they are more likely to buy a product after seeing it featured in an image provided by a real customer<sup>2</sup>.**

Though visuals clearly play a huge role, people still look to written reviews when making purchase decisions – in fact, they're the second most trusted source to recommendations from family or friends<sup>3</sup>. Incorporating UGC into your marketing strategy can be more cost-effective than producing traditional media and will help build up your brand advocates in the process.

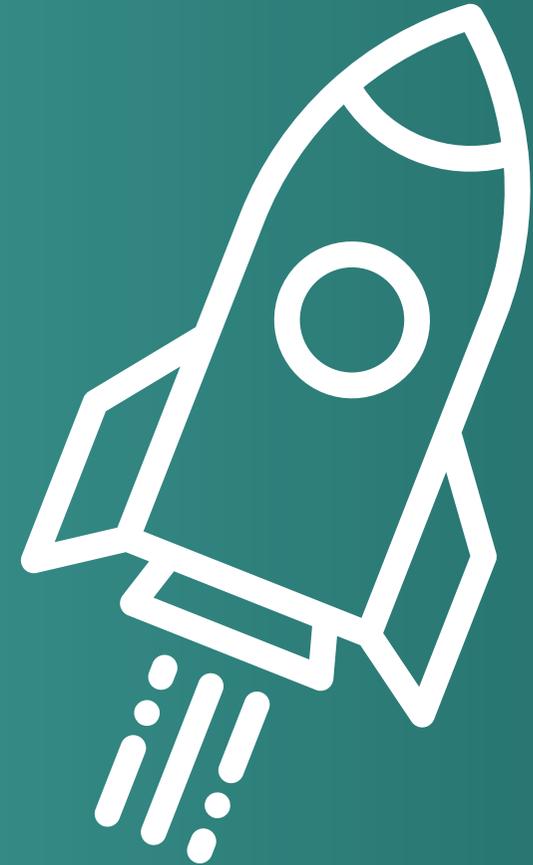


# 4. Build relationships

**An estimated 1 million teens are leaving Facebook each year<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, messaging apps have been the fastest growing online space over the past five years, surpassing social media networks in size and monthly active users<sup>5</sup>.**

Establishing a presence in messaging apps allows you to reach your customers in an increasingly personalized, contextual manner and become a part of the conversations they're already having. Create shareable branded content and leverage chatbots that offer real functional value – the mobile messaging space is perfectly suited for the hyper-personal, relevant outreach that people expect.

Just don't treat it like a bullhorn. Globally, 90% of consumers want to use messaging to communicate with brands, so consider each conversation in messaging apps as a dialogue and be ready to respond<sup>6</sup>.



# 5. Create a personalized experience

**Increased access to consumer data has created opportunities for marketers to personalize every outreach. Embrace the idea of contextual content and serve up exactly what people want, when they want it.**

While hyper-specific retargeting ads may have mixed reviews, Gen Zs demand personalized contact from brands, with 77% stating it is important for brands to reach out with relevant offers, promotions and messaging<sup>7</sup>. This also means brands have to continually measure and readjust, because consumer behavior moves faster than patterns can be established. Accept that what people want today might not be the case tomorrow.

The most successful brands are flexible, living, breathing entities that constantly reconfigure based on their customers' shifting needs.



# Put it in practice

**If Millennials inspired personalization in marketing, Gen Z's legacy will be pushing brands to be more authentic and go a step further to contextualize all content. Consumer attitudes towards data security have shifted, and people welcome closer relationships with brands so long as it results in a personalized experience.**

Let your customers shape your brand, embrace UGC and empower them to continue creating it. Leverage the platforms people are increasingly using to become a part of their conversations naturally. Pay special attention to visual consistency. Most importantly, don't get too set in your ways, acknowledge that consumer preferences and behaviors change at a rapid pace and the best brands are those who can retain authenticity while staying relevant.

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