



# Best Practices for Marketing to Gen Z

Understanding Collective Individuality: Unified in Uniqueness

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Generation Z represents a significant force in consumer culture. As this generation matures and enters the marketplace, their collective spending power is projected to reach trillions of dollars. However, to effectively tap into this burgeoning economic force, brands must recognize that Gen Z is not a monolithic group; rather, it is a segment composed of individuals who are fluid in their own identities, and forming groups where every individual looks different on any number of dimensions, from race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, to fashion choices. The importance of crafting nuanced marketing strategies that resonate with these segments cannot be overstated. It is essential for brands to delve deeper into the characteristics that define these segments within Gen Z—particularly with intersectional views by multicultural, gender, and sexuality.



## The Multicultural Landscape of Gen Z

GEN Z

50%+

self-identify as racial  
& ethnic minorities

One of the defining features of Generation Z is its multicultural makeup. Over 50% of Gen Z consumers identify as members of racial and ethnic minority groups, creating a rich tapestry of cultural experiences and perspectives. This diversity informs not only the values and priorities of individuals within this generation, but also their purchasing behaviors and brand affiliations. For brands seeking to connect with Gen Z, it is imperative to recognize that cultural nuances influence consumer choices significantly.

For example, a marketing strategy that resonates with a Hispanic segment of Gen Z may leverage themes of family, tradition, and community, while a campaign targeting a Black segment may focus on empowerment, representation, and social justice. And because these segments can overlap given the much higher frequency of mixed race identity within the segment, they borrow and resonate with each others' attitudes in ways not seen in older generations. Brands that fail to grasp these subtleties risk alienating potential customers who feel that their unique cultural identities are not understood or valued.



Moreover, understanding the multicultural dynamics within Gen Z extends beyond surface-level representations. Brands must acknowledge the intersectionality of identity, where race, culture, and other factors converge to shape individual experiences. This complexity necessitates a rich understanding of the various segments within the multicultural framework of Gen Z, enabling brands to tailor messaging that authentically resonates with each group.

## The LGBTQ+ Segment

GEN Z

28%

self-identify as LGBTQ+

In addition to multiculturalism, a significant portion of Generation Z—approximately 28%—identifies as LGBTQ+. This represents a marked departure from previous generations, where such identities were often marginalized or stigmatized. The acceptance and celebration of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are hallmarks of Gen Z culture, and this level of acceptance is notably high within the non-LGBTQ+ as well. Brands that seek to engage this segment must do so with sensitivity, recognizing that both the LGBTQ+ segment and its non-LGBTQ+ allies will be highly attuned to authentic representation.

It is crucial to recognize that the LGBTQ+ segment within Gen Z is not homogeneous.

Individuals within this group may have varying experiences based on their gender identity, sexual orientation, and cultural background. A marketing strategy that aims to appeal to the LGBTQ+ segment must therefore be multifaceted, addressing the unique challenges and aspirations of different identities while promoting inclusivity and support.

For instance, a campaign centered on gender identity may need to consider the specific needs of transgender and non-binary individuals, while a campaign aimed at gay consumers may focus on themes of love, acceptance, and community. Brands that successfully navigate these nuances will foster deeper connections with LGBTQ+ consumers, building brand loyalty and advocacy in a generation that prioritizes authenticity and social responsibility.



## Individuality versus Collectivism



Gen Z is the most diverse generation to date—yet they're unified in their uniqueness. A distinctive characteristic of Gen Z is their ability to transcend traditional notions of individuality and collectivism. While celebrating differences is a core feature of Gen Z culture, this generation exhibits a collective identity that embraces both personal expression and community connection. They are collectively individual, valuing unique perspectives while championing inclusivity.

What this means is that individuals bond and form groups as a function of their shared sense of difference from the norm, not just because they look the same.

This duality presents both opportunities and challenges for brands. On one hand, there is an opportunity to celebrate individuality through personalized marketing strategies that empower consumers to express themselves. On the other hand, brands must also foster a sense of belonging and community, recognizing that Gen Z consumers seek brands that align with their values and contribute to societal progress.

To effectively engage with Gen Z, brands must strike a balance between promoting individual expression and nurturing a sense of community.

This can be achieved through campaigns that highlight diverse voices, encourage self-expression, and create safe spaces for dialogue and connection. By doing so, brands can cultivate a sense of Brand Love and resonance that is particularly appealing to this generation.

## The Role of Cultural Intelligence

To navigate the complexities of Gen Z's segments, brands must leverage cultural intelligence. This involves utilizing data and insights that go beyond traditional demographics or psychographics - it is critical to dive into cultural drivers of country of origin, values and beliefs, intersectional experiences, role of family, social media and buying behavior. Recognizing the importance of cultural context, brands can develop strategies that resonate with the unique motivations and behaviors of different segments within Gen Z.



Collage serves as a powerful cultural intelligence engine that brands with curated insights that illuminate the “why” behind consumer behavior. By fusing consumer, category, and brand data, Collage equips brands with the knowledge needed to craft targeted marketing strategies that resonate with Gen Z's diverse segments. Understanding the “why” and underlying motivations driving decision-making enables brands to create meaningful connections that foster loyalty and increase revenue.

## The Unifying Drivers of Gen Z

While differences exist, there are also some core common threads that unify the Gen Z segment. Brands seeking to engage the multicultural segment of Gen Z might utilize Collage's insights to identify specific cultural touch points that resonate with different segments. For example, social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram serve as primary spaces where Gen Z engages with brands, sharing content and discovering new products. The reason these platforms resonate are that they emphasize visual storytelling, making them ideal for brands that create engaging and authentic content that captures attention. Additionally, influencer collaborations have become crucial; Gen Z tends to trust recommendations from influencers who represent their values and lifestyles, leading to authentic connections.



Experiential marketing has also gained traction, with pop-up events and interactive experiences allowing Gen Z consumers to engage with brands in meaningful ways prior to committing to purchase. Sustainability is also a significant activation point, as this generation values brands that prioritize environmental responsibility and transparency in their sourcing, manufacturing & shipping practices – an opportunity if your brand has a right to claim here. As user-generated content plays a vital role, with Gen Z embracing brands that encourage and showcase consumer creations, fostering a sense of community and belonging. Lastly, brands that focus on social justice issues and actively engage in conversations around diversity and inclusion resonate deeply, as Gen Z is driven by a desire for authenticity and purpose. Each of these touchpoints highlights the need for brands to adapt their strategies to align with the values and preferences of this diverse generation.



## Conclusion

Collage's data reveals that Collective Individuality is a defining Group Trait of Gen Z, capturing the segment's embrace of both their own uniqueness, as well as others'. But this is just one sliver of the Gen Z experience. Collage paints the full picture through Gen Z's two other defining Group Traits: Game-Changing and Pressured. Collage customers get full access to understand why it is important and how brands can activate.



As Generation Z continues to emerge as a dominant consumer force, it is essential for brands to recognize that this generation is not a homogeneous group. The diversity within Gen Z—encompassing multicultural backgrounds, gender and sexuality—presents both challenges and opportunities for marketers. To effectively engage with this generation, brands must develop nuanced marketing strategies that dive deeper into the segments within Gen Z, understanding the unique motivations and values that drive consumer behavior. Celebrate their collective individuality, while finding unity in their uniqueness.

By embracing cultural intelligence and leveraging insights that transcend traditional demographic categorizations, brands can create meaningful connections with Gen Z consumers. Celebrating individuality while fostering a sense of community will be

key to building Brand Love and resonance. As this generation continues to shape the future of consumer culture, brands that are willing to adapt and evolve will be well-positioned to thrive in an increasingly diverse marketplace.

Collage provides the deepest cultural intelligence and connects the dots for your brand between your growth targets, where your brand has a right to win, and how to activate.

Collage fuses together 26 billion primary data points to provide brands with curated insights on the why driving consumers' behaviors and decisions...and how to increase Brand Love and revenue. Contact us to learn why the world's leading brands trust Collage and how we can help you win today's consumers and future-proof your brand.

### ABOUT COLLAGE

Collage is the only cultural intelligence engine that fuses consumer, industry and brand data to provide brands with insights on the why behind consumers' behaviors – so they can act quickly to fuel growth. The company's data science engine provides unrivaled depth of cultural insight from 26 billion primary data points. With access to head-to-head brand, category, and industry competitive assessments plus original, consumer-driven studies and weekly additions, the world's leading brands rely on Collage to get a deep understanding of how to drive brand love and business growth by tapping into culture. The curated, always-on, easy-to-use digital access is flexible and cost-efficient for your business needs. Founded in 2009, culture has always been at the company's core. Collage is a National Minority Supplier Development Council (NMSDC) certified minority-owned small business.

