



Kelton

GenZ

Doesn't  
**NEED**  
your brand

5 Steps to win them over

# GEN Z DECODED

With **\$29B in buying power and up to \$333B in influence**, Gen Z remains a huge focus for marketers at Fortune 500s and challenger brands alike.

Considering Gen Z will make up a whopping **40% of consumers by 2020**, understanding what this generation wants and needs has never been more urgent.

In the following pages, we explore core Gen Z characteristics and shifts that have influenced their world, and what it takes to reach them.



**Kelton Global** is a full service strategic consultancy specializing in insight, strategy, and design. We help the world's biggest and best loved companies build brands for the next generation.

# Today you'll learn:

**What makes Gen Z different**

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**What they want and need**



**We asked 1,000 Gen Zers  
how they feel about  
brands today...**

\*Survey conducted among 1,000 US teens age 15-18.



**And Gen Z  
thinks most  
brands are  
getting it  
wrong.**





# 80%

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Think brands  
only care about  
making money



**3/5**  
**don't trust**  
**what**  
**brands say.**

# 70%

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Think brands try too  
hard to be cool





A photograph of three young adults standing in a hallway. On the left is a Black man with a beard, wearing a brown jacket over a plaid shirt. In the center is a woman with dark hair, wearing yellow-tinted glasses, a patterned scarf, and a denim jacket. On the right is a white man with a tattoo on his neck, wearing an orange t-shirt under a plaid jacket. The background is a hallway with fluorescent lights and a yellow and black striped barrier.

**57% feel  
brands try  
to label or**

**/ stereotype them. /**



**2/3  
think  
brands just  
add to  
the noise.**

**Meet Gen Z:**

**The**

**Make  
shit  
happen  
generation**



# Three critical things to know about Gen Z:

## They're Informed Reformers

- Gen Z was born into systems failure. They question everything from trust and faith in politics, religion, higher education, capitalism, public safety, and even objective truth.
- They're more aware and informed than previous youth generations.
- Unlike Millennials, more Gen Zers feel a responsibility to take action and make change.

## They're Identity Champions

- Gen Z is part of the most diverse, connected, and fluid generation to date – and it shows.
- They value their personal identities, and believe in every individual's ability to freely express themselves.
- They're highly empathetic to others' identities.
- They have a strong set of principles around ethics and fairness, and they want these values reflected in all of their choices.

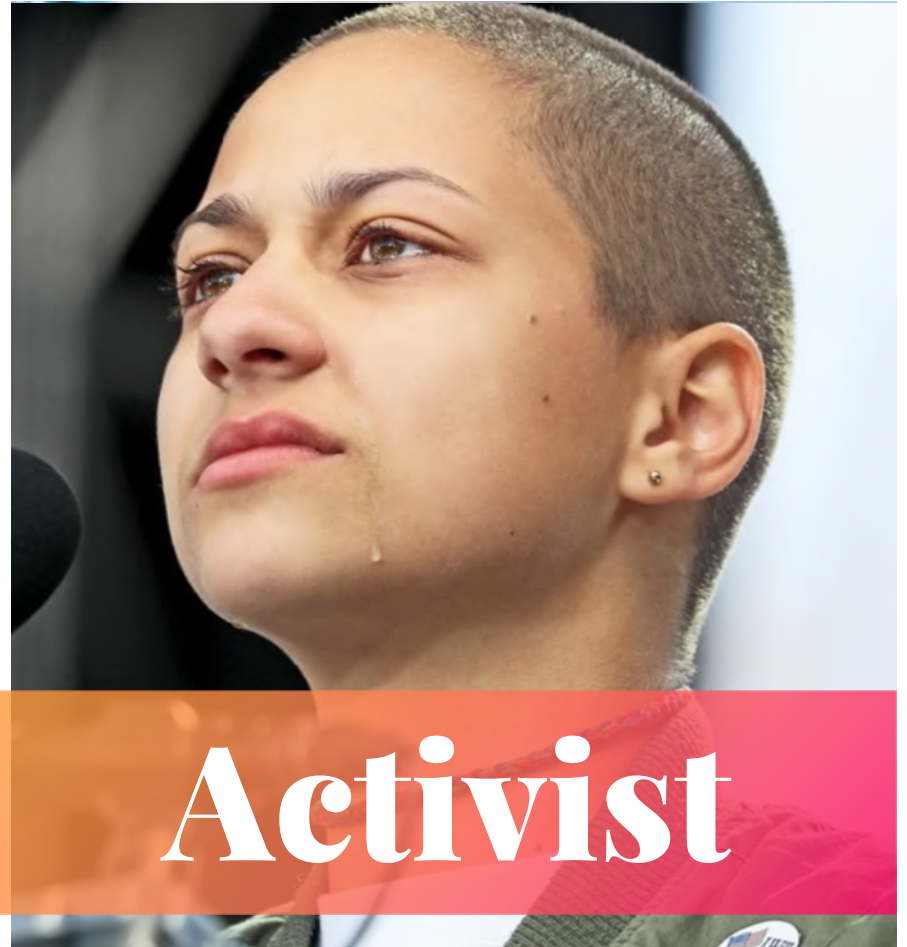
## They're Digital Powerhouses

- As the first generation to grow up with a screen in their hand, they are digital natives and being constantly plugged in is their normal.
- Gen Z may be glued to their screens, but look closer – they're using digital spaces to have dialogue, organize, gather inspiration, create, remix, find the truth, and broadcast their own.



# Gen Z steps up and speaks up when they see something as broken, wrong, or unjust.

Parkland survivor and activist, **Emma Gonzalez**, is an incredible example of this — working with her fellow students to call national attention to gun control reform and put pressure on government officials to prevent future mass shootings.



## Activist



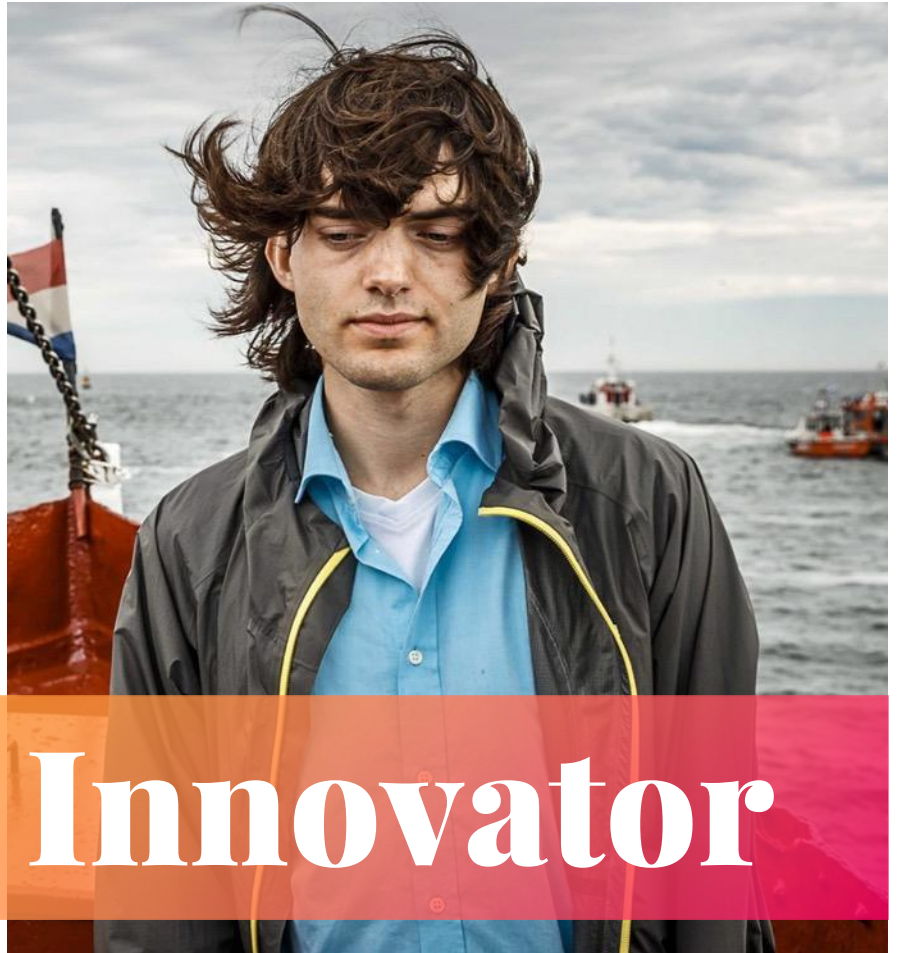
**Gen Z works  
together to create  
something bigger  
than the sum of its  
parts.**

**Mars and Sage** helped found the Art Hoe Collective as a way to create a safe space for young women of color to create and showcase their work when they saw a lack of such dedicated spaces.

**Collaborator**

# Gen Z takes charge when the powers that be don't take meaningful action.

**Boylan Slat**, environmentalist and founder of The Ocean Cleanup project, developed a system to contain and clean up the Great Pacific Ocean Garbage Patch, with the hopes to pave the way towards a plastic-free ocean by 2050.





**Gen Z doesn't  
subscribe to the  
mainstream  
definition of cool.**

**Billie Eilish**, the first person born after the year 2000 to have a #1 album, exemplifies Gen Z's individualistic "you do you" attitude. Her debut album pulls in an eclectic mix of genres to create something uniquely cohesive, yet uncategorizable.

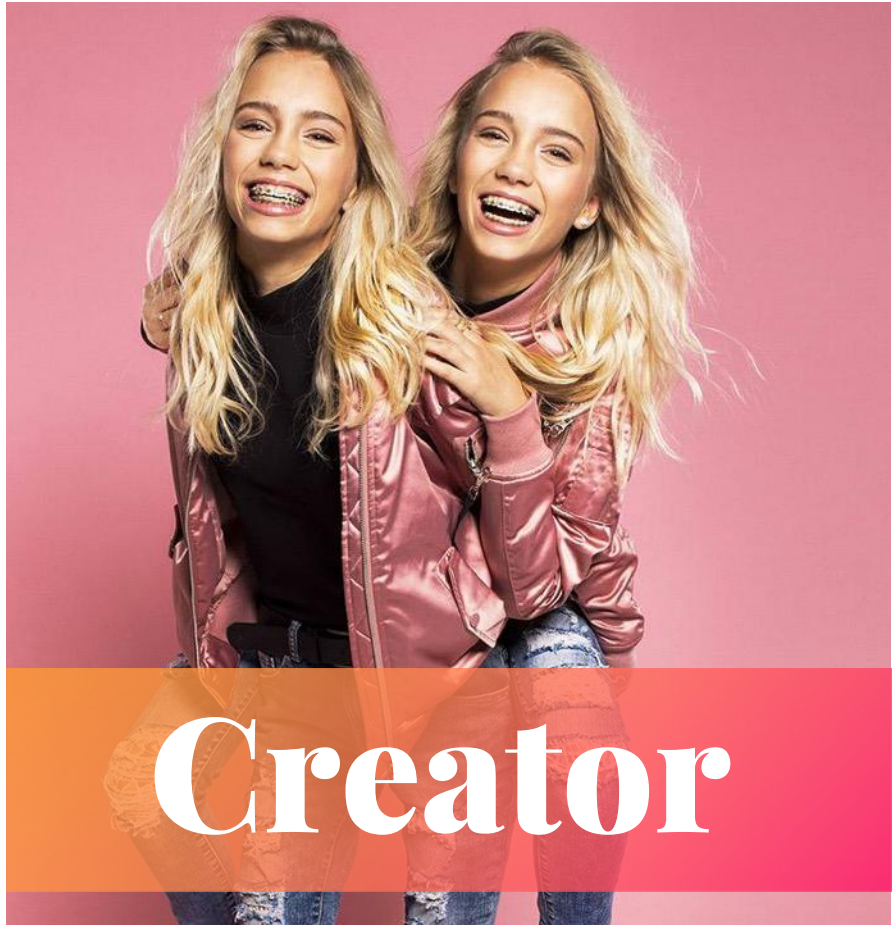


# Gen Z challenges standard binaries and rigid societal norms.

**Manny Gutierrez** or Manny MUA as he's known on Instagram, is a poster-child of the 'beauty boy' movement — challenging traditional notions of gender and making beauty history by becoming Maybelline's first male brand ambassador.



## Non-Conformist



# Creator

**Gen Z consumes +  
remixes content to  
express, connect,  
and entertain.**

German twins **Lisa and Lena Mantler** run one of the most followed accounts on TikTok (AKA, Vine 2.0) where they make bite sized lip-sync and dance videos along with other skits for their audience of over 30 million followers.

# Gen Z lives out their passions and values through pure hustle.

Referred to as “The Internet’s It Kid” and “Kanye’s protégé”, **Luka Sabbat** has built himself up as an influencer and created a concurrent modeling career by leveraging his personal brand of casual cool.



## Brand Builder



**If you want  
to be a part  
of their  
lives...**



A photograph of a group of young people, likely at a protest or rally, with a rainbow flag overlay. The image has a warm, orange-red tint. The text "help them make shit happen." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font. The text is flanked by two thin white diagonal lines.

**help them  
make shit happen.**

A vibrant, warm-toned photograph of four young people (three women and one man) celebrating. They are surrounded by a shower of colorful confetti. The person on the far left is a woman with dark hair, looking towards the camera. Next to her is a man wearing a black fedora, laughing with his mouth open. To his right is a woman with blonde hair and round sunglasses, blowing a kiss. On the far right is a man wearing a patterned headband and sunglasses, also blowing a kiss. The background is bright and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor party or festival setting. The overall mood is joyful and festive.

**How?**

**Our independent research study found  
Gen Z wants brands that...**

## ARE RELIABLE + TRUSTWORTHY

**58%** want brands that do what they say they're going to do. **51%** think brands make promises they can't keep.

## HELP ME BE MY BEST SELF

**48%** of Gen Zers want brands that help them be their best selves, and **47%** want brands that help them express themselves.

## HAVE A HIGHER PURPOSE

Almost two-thirds (**64%**) of teens think brands are just adding to the noise.

## OFFER QUALITY PRODUCTS + SERVICES

**28%** of Gen Zers want a brand that consistently delivers high quality products or services.

## INSPIRE AND EXCITE ME

Gen Z gravitates towards cool (**41%**), inspiring (**38%**), creative (**28%**), and exciting (**27%**) brands.

## ARE RECOMMENDED BY FRIENDS

**44%** believe brand messages are exaggerations or lies.







**Kelton**

LET'S CONNECT  
/ **Gen Z** /  
TO YOUR BRAND

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