Online purchase journey across generations

GWI.

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby boomers
Aged	(16–23)	(24–37)	(38–56)	(57–64)

1 Pre-purchase: brand research & discovery

Top 3 modes of brand research & discovery

% in each generation who...

Click these icons to explore data on our platform

Generation	...research brands or products online via:	%	...discover new brands and products via:	%
Gen Z	Social networks	51	Search engines	32
	Search engines	49	Ads seen on social media	31
	Consumer reviews	36	Ads seen on TV	30
Millennials	Search engines	51	Search engines	34
	Social networks	48	Ads seen on TV	31
	Consumer reviews	38	Ads seen on social media	29
Gen X	Search engines	56	Search engines	36
	Consumer reviews	40	Ads seen on TV	36
	Social networks	39	Word-of-mouth recommendations	32
Baby boomers	Search engines	61	Ads seen on TV	41
	Consumer reviews	43	Search engines	38
	Product/brand sites	40	Word-of-mouth-recommendations	36

59% of Baby boomers say they research a product online before buying it; higher than any other generation

Ecommerce sites increasingly appear in the pre-purchase phase, especially among Gen Z

% change between Q1-Q4 2020 in the portion of each generation who

	Research brands via product/brand sites	Discover brands via these sites: product/brand	Discover brands via these sites: online retail
Gen Z	+13%	+17%	+21%
All generations	+10%	+14%	+12%

Favorability scores* across ad formats

Average score assigned to these ad types based on how consumers describe them

0.60 0 -0.25

	TV	Email	Social	Web
Gen Z	0.44	0.23	0.22	0.08
Millennials	0.53	0.37	0.32	0.27
Gen X	0.44	0.27	0.05	0.02
Baby boomers	0.31	0.05	-0.23	-0.15

Spotlight on social media

Social media as a discovery channel: the whole picture

% who discover brands or products via social media**

	%
Gen Z	51%
Millennials	49%
Gen X	43%
Baby boomers	32%

Even among older consumers, social media acts as a digital mall

% who say the following are their main reasons for using social media

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby boomers
Finding products to purchase	27	28	25	20
Following celebrities or influencers	27	23	16	9
Seeing updates/content from their favorite brands	27	26	20	13

Baby boomers

In the U.S. and UK, boomers are the least likely to describe social media ads as personalized, relevant, or diverse – and less likely to feel represented in advertising

2 What drives a sale

Nearly everyone shops online – but not everyone prefers it

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby boomers
who have **purchased a product online** in the last month	77	81	79	74
who typically **prefer to shop online**	60	62	57	47

How to cater the shopping experience to different age groups

% in each age group who say the following would most induce them to buy a product online (sorted by over-index)

Average internet user (IDX 1.00)

Generation		IDX	%
Gen Z	Lots of "likes" or good comments on social media	1.17	26
	Exclusive content or services	1.17	18
	Click & Collect delivery	1.14	17
Millennials	Option to use "buy" button on a social network	1.15	14
	Live-chat box so you can speak to the company	1.11	16
	Entry into competitions	1.09	15
Gen X	Free delivery	1.05	55
	Loyalty points	1.05	28
	Coupons and discounts	1.04	42
Baby boomers	Free delivery	1.23	65
	Easy returns policy	1.22	40
	Quick/easy online checkout process	1.08	32

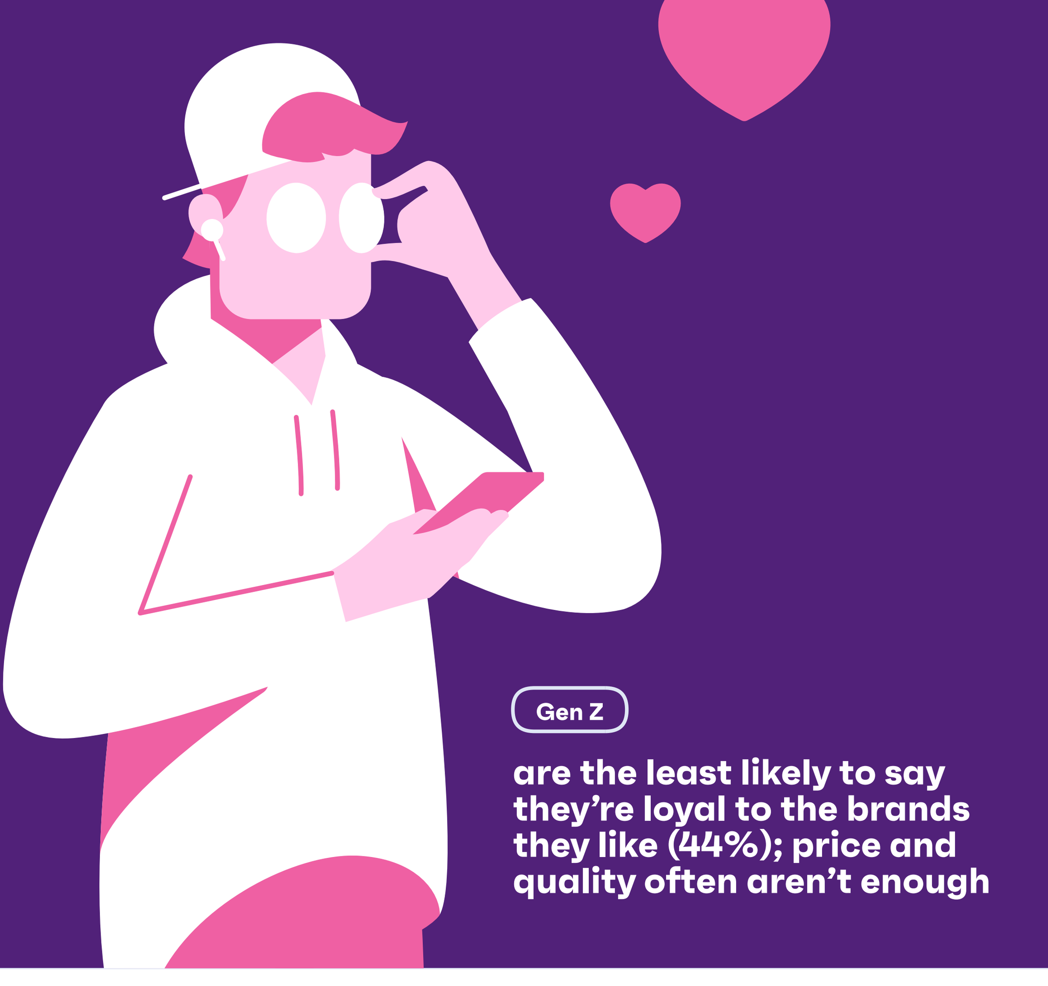
What consumers most want from ads

% U.S./UK consumers in each age group who most want ads to do the following

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby boomers
Be entertaining	42	40	38	28
Give me product information	40	45	52	57
Provide discounts/special offers	37	36	40	43
Be relevant to me/my identity	34	28	27	27

3 Post-purchase: brand advocacy and reputation

Consumers are looking for deeper relationships with brands and younger people are spearheading this shift



Gen Z are the least likely to say they're loyal to the brands they like (44%); price and quality often aren't enough

Advocacy motivations: the main increases over time

% change between 2016-20 in the number who say the following would most motivate them to promote their favorite brand online

+32%	Personal relationship with a brand
+29%	Access to exclusive content/services
+28%	Improvements to their online reputation/status
+22%	Insider knowledge about the brand/its products

% in each age group who say the following would most drive them to buy a product online (sorted by over-index)

Gen Z	IDX	Millennials	IDX
Exclusive content/services	1.20	To improve their online reputation/status	1.12
Love for the brand	1.11	Exclusive content/services	1.09
Relevant to my friends' interests	1.10	Being part/involved	1.07

Gen X	IDX	Baby boomers	IDX
Great customer service	1.04	Great customer service	1.17
Rewards (e.g. discounts)	1.03	Rewards (e.g. discounts)	1.08
High-quality products	1.02	High-quality products	1.05

What consumers most want brands to do

% in each group who most want brands to do the following

	All generations	Gen Z
Be eco-friendly	45	48
Listen to customer feedback	43	45
Be socially responsible	43	43
Make you feel valued	35	39

Top over-index among each generation

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Baby boomers
	Run customer communities/forums	Run customer communities/forums	Help you organize/simplify your life	Transparency on how they collect/use data
IDX	1.14	1.09	1.02	1.18

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* Average favorability score is calculated with a weighted average formula, based on assigning scores of -1 to adjectives with a negative sentiment, and a score of +1 to adjectives with a positive sentiment

** This includes ads seen on social media, recommendations/comments on social media, or updates on brands' social media pages

Methodology: This infographic primarily uses our Q4 2020 Core data, with a sample of 180,852 respondents across 47 markets; of which there were 37,473 Gen Zs, 65,629 millennials, 60,882 Gen Xs, and 16,868 boomers. It also draws upon our February 2021 Zeitgeist data among 4,013 internet users in the U.S. and UK, aged 16-64