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The
Essential
Guide to

GENERATION Z

Table of Contents_

Goodbye Millennials, hello Gen Z	3
True digital natives	15
Recruiting Gen Z	22
Retaining Gen Z	26



GOODBYE MILLENNIALS, HELLO GEN Z

When Millennials entered the workforce, companies were forced to re-evaluate their practices in order to engage with this generation's way of thinking. We learned the disruptive impact of mobile technology, witnessed the importance of social media and liked a lot of pictures of avocado toast.

Discovering what motivates and irritates the largest generational cohort has been a lengthy and turbulent process for some employers. Now that process is over. There's a new generation coming of age so forget what you think you know about attracting the youth market and say hello to Gen Z.

GENERATION Z: YOUR FUTURE CUSTOMERS, COLLEAGUES AND EMPLOYERS

Who are they? Although there are many conflicting definitions of Gen Z, they are roughly categorised as those born after 1996. They are soon to become the fastest growing electoral and consumer group, with the first wave of Centennials already joining (and disrupting) the workforce.

Think you're ready? Well, to add a little context here - 1996 (the year the eldest Gen Zs were born) is also the year Toy Story hit our screens and Spice Girls released their debut single 'Wannabe'. A big year by all accounts.

Before we descend into too much nostalgia, let's discuss what we know about Generation Z thus far.



Studies show that they differ greatly from their Gen Y counterparts in a number of ways and so will require a whole new approach if we are to target them effectively.

Gen Zs are:

Tech trendsetters

Understanding how they experience and use technology is the only way to develop productive work practices. Don't make the mistake of assuming that advanced reach on social media will be adequate.

Entrepreneurial

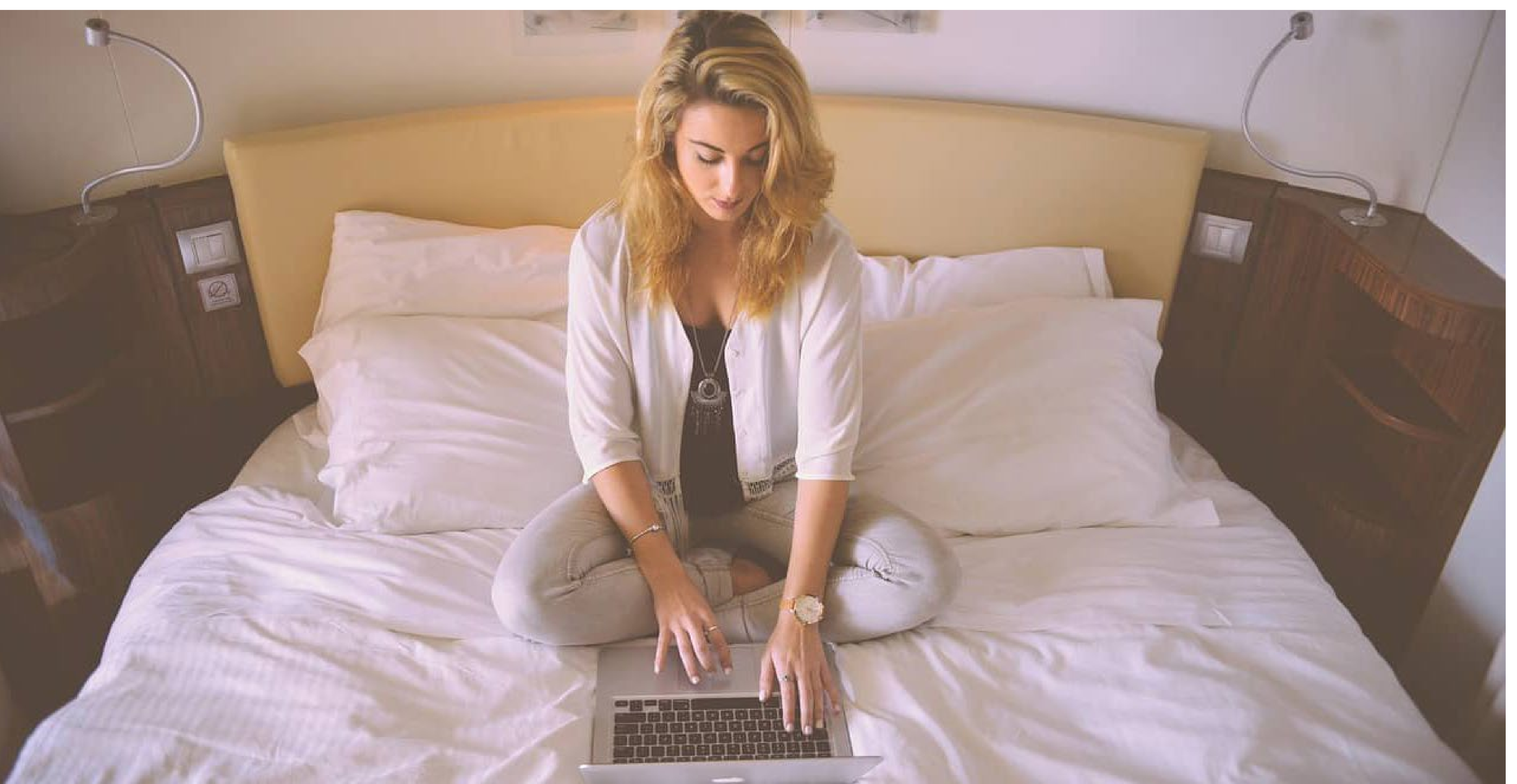
Like their appetite for the newest technologies, Gen Zs are always looking to evolve and develop to their full potential. They want to upskill, learn more and learn fast. How will you satisfy their need for growth?

Less traditional

Their determination of gender and sexuality is less definite than their older counterparts. Consider the effect this will have on your company literature or your incentive and benefit schemes.

Pragmatic

Gen Zs are more risk averse than their predecessors. This is true on a number of issues from financial planning to disabling geotags on their Instagram. What practical benefits can you offer them as an employer?



Short attention spans

Gen Zs have an average attention span of 8 seconds so if you don't have them at hello, you don't have them. Gen Z or iGeneration will be increasingly more difficult to engage long term. They demand instant gratification and are intolerant of disturbances such as pop-ups or loading times.

Feeling suitably ancient and out of touch? Fear not, the next chapters offer insight into the best ways to reach and engage Centennials.

They are the future but you should get to know them now.



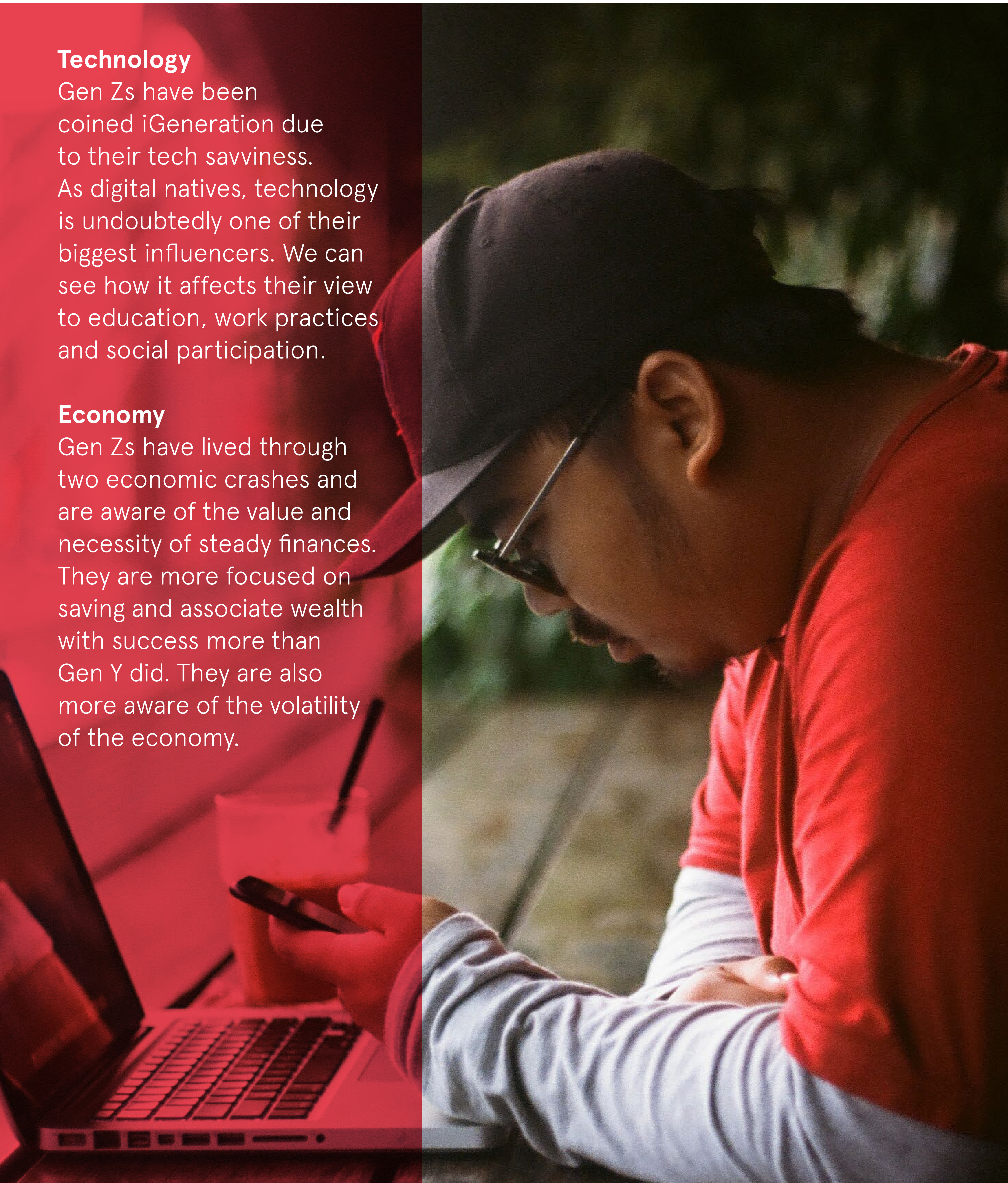
Understanding the influences behind their motivations helps us to add context. Who are their key influencers?

Technology

Gen Zs have been coined iGeneration due to their tech savviness. As digital natives, technology is undoubtedly one of their biggest influencers. We can see how it affects their view to education, work practices and social participation.

Economy

Gen Zs have lived through two economic crashes and are aware of the value and necessity of steady finances. They are more focused on saving and associate wealth with success more than Gen Y did. They are also more aware of the volatility of the economy.



Parents

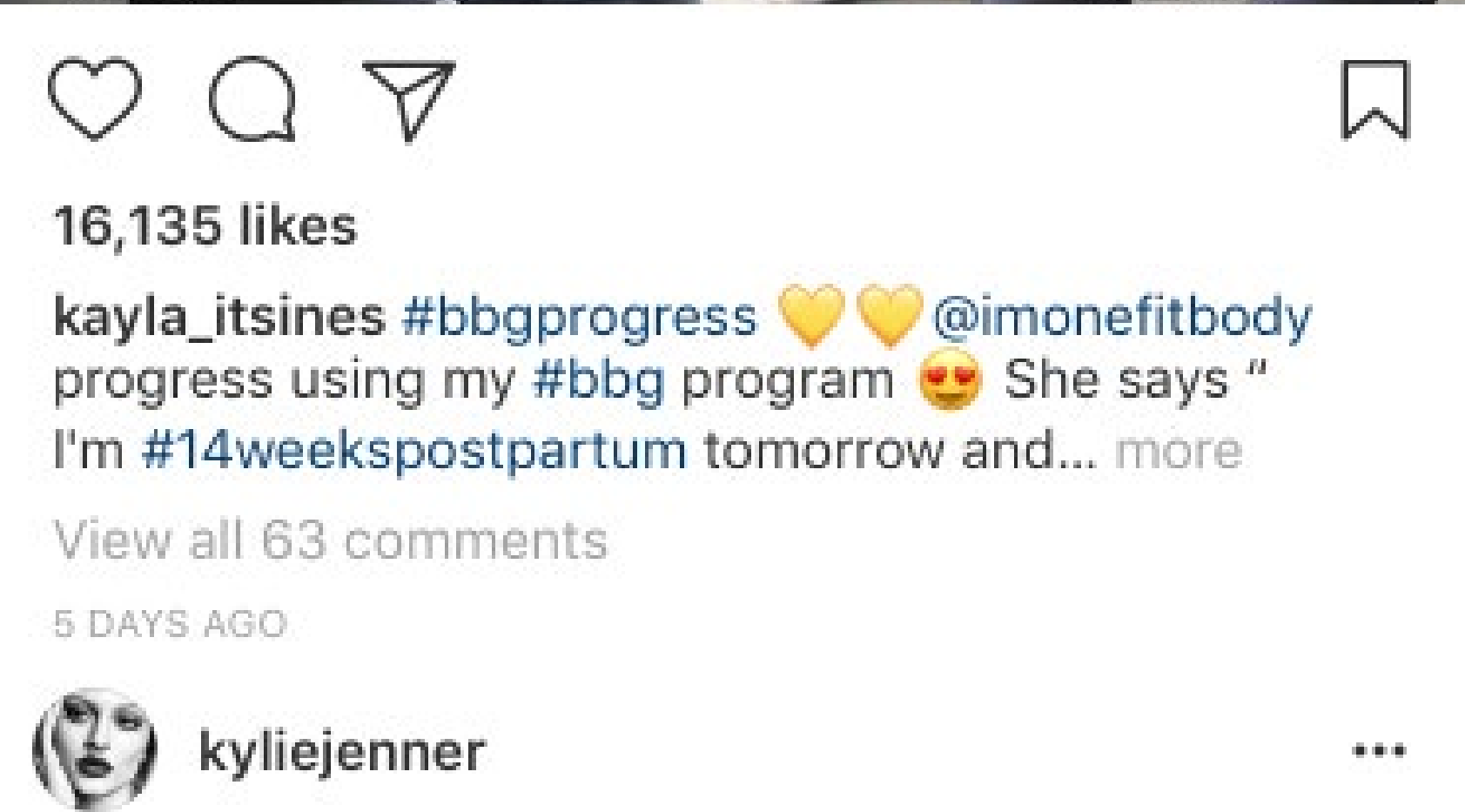
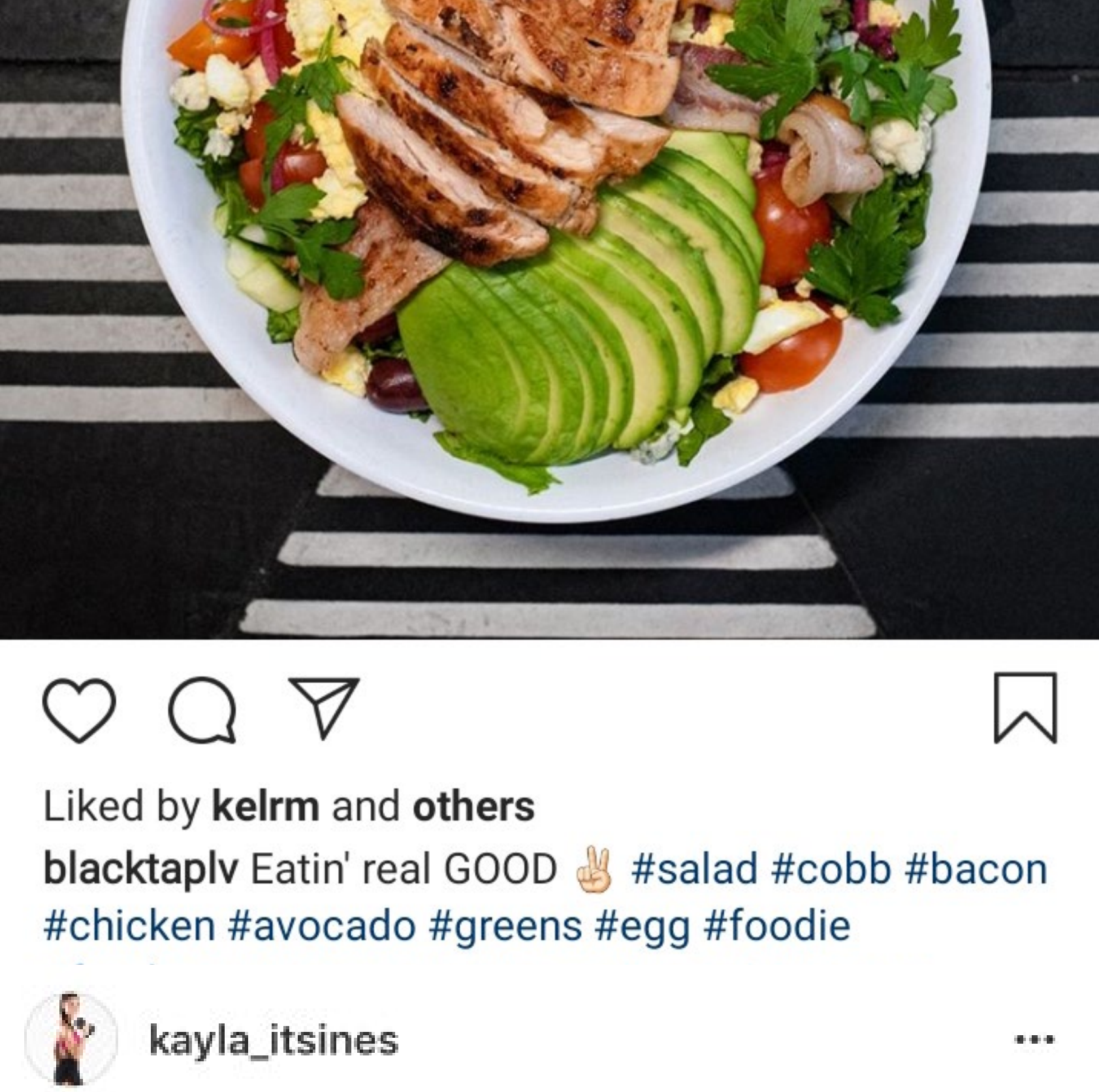
Gen Z have inherited their pragmatism from their largely Gen X parents. They recognise the importance of saving, they are cautious in their trust of political figures and are realistic concerning employment options.

However it's worth noting that iGen already heavily influence their parents in terms of personal and household spending. As they get older this influence will become more prevalent. Although this is a natural progression, it's predicted that iGen will be the most influential cohort at a young age due to their tech dominance and independence.

Siblings

Centennials have learned a great deal from their Gen Y brothers and sisters. Witnessing their struggle with unemployment, debt and "failure to launch" has shaped their outlook on a range of issues. They have less positive expectations regarding their future. The sky is not the limit! They are more conservative spenders, they are also more astute regarding privacy and social media.





Peers v celebs

Unlike Millennials, Gen Zs cite their peers as more influential in their buying behaviours than celebrities or older generations. They are more conscious of advertorial content and endorsements and less tolerant of them. They are more astute in identifying paid brand promotions and prefer the direct approach from advertisers.

Gen Zs have become jaded by the glossy celeb endorsement. They respond well to social influencers and this is often where they turn to for news on fashion, beauty, health and tech trends. Emily Skye and Kendall Jenner are prime examples.

Although Generation Z present an evolved set of personality traits and behavioural tendencies, they are a product of their parents in the same way previous generations were the product of theirs.

Their parents began the trend of travelling and relocating for work and as such, the average Gen Z child will be truly worldly – having explored an average of 11 countries before the age of 16.

This internationalisation will play a key role in how Gen Z build relationships, choose jobs and manage others – crossing cultural boundaries with ease and easily circumventing barriers of time and distance. The world is literally no larger than the smartphone in their pocket – which is an extension of their body.



EVALUATING RELATIONSHIPS HUMAN

Gender binaries

Gen Zs' outlook on sexuality and gender is less absolute than their older counterparts. Studies show an increase in the number of young people identifying as genderfluid or genderqueer. They are less aligned with traditional family structures and what it means to be male, female, maternal, paternal etc.

Consider this when writing your company mission or when communicating on behalf of your employees. Be aware of the preference of a portion of this cohort for gender neutral pronouns. This presents a number of practical concerns: gender neutral facilities in the workplace, annual parental leave, uniform guidelines, incentive schemes, etc.

Diversity

GEN ZS ARE THE MOST DIVERSE GENERATION TO COME OF AGE.

They are racially and ethnically diverse and as such don't recognise differences in the same way as their elders, they will notice diversity when it is absent.



RESTROOM

Communication

There is an assumption that due to their aptitude for tech that Gen Z will be poor face-to-face communicators. However, as they have grown up using more participatory forms of communication such as Skype, FaceTime and Whatsapp, they are actually more accustomed to personal interaction than Millennials, who typically favoured text messaging. Consider this when determining what platforms to use for interviewing, hosting meetings and messaging internally.



HOW TO ENGAGE GEN Z

Connect with Gen Zs by relating to their values

Gen Zs are practically minded but they are also socially conscious. To a much greater extent than their older counterparts, they express serious concern about the damage being done to the planet and its inhabitants and thus are engaged with more environmentally and socially responsible brands.

THEY CARE, THEY WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND THEY WANT TO WORK FOR COMPANIES WHO SHARE THOSE VALUES.

Get creative

Gen Z respond well to creativity and originality. How will you offer them a unique hiring or employment experience? How will you make your employer brand stand out?

HOW TO ENGAGE GEN Z

Sponsorship

Considering the previous point, advertisements need to be relevant to Gen Zs interests if they are to engage with them. Sponsorship can be a good alternative to the disruption of traditional advertising.

Be aware of their attention spans

Gen Z has an average attention span of 8 seconds. They need to be instantly engaged or they will swipe right past you.

Exceed the normal loyalty scheme

To engage Gen Z and earn their loyalty, you will need to create a personalised system which identifies and remembers their preferences while capturing their attention visually.

Keep the noise down

Gen Z are looking for the direct route and as tech whizzes, take it as certain that they've downloaded ad-blocker. That means no pop-ups and nothing that can be constituted as spam. Shouting louder doesn't always get your message heard. In this way brands will need to develop distinct experiences if they are to effectively target a fragmented generation.

TRUE DIGITAL NATIVES



Gen Zs have been described as the first generation of true digital natives. Why? Because they've been born into an age where smartphones, video calls and social networks are inherent, to the point where they don't even consider them technology anymore. How has that affected their behaviours and how does it help you engage them? We'll discuss this in two sections.

EDUCATION

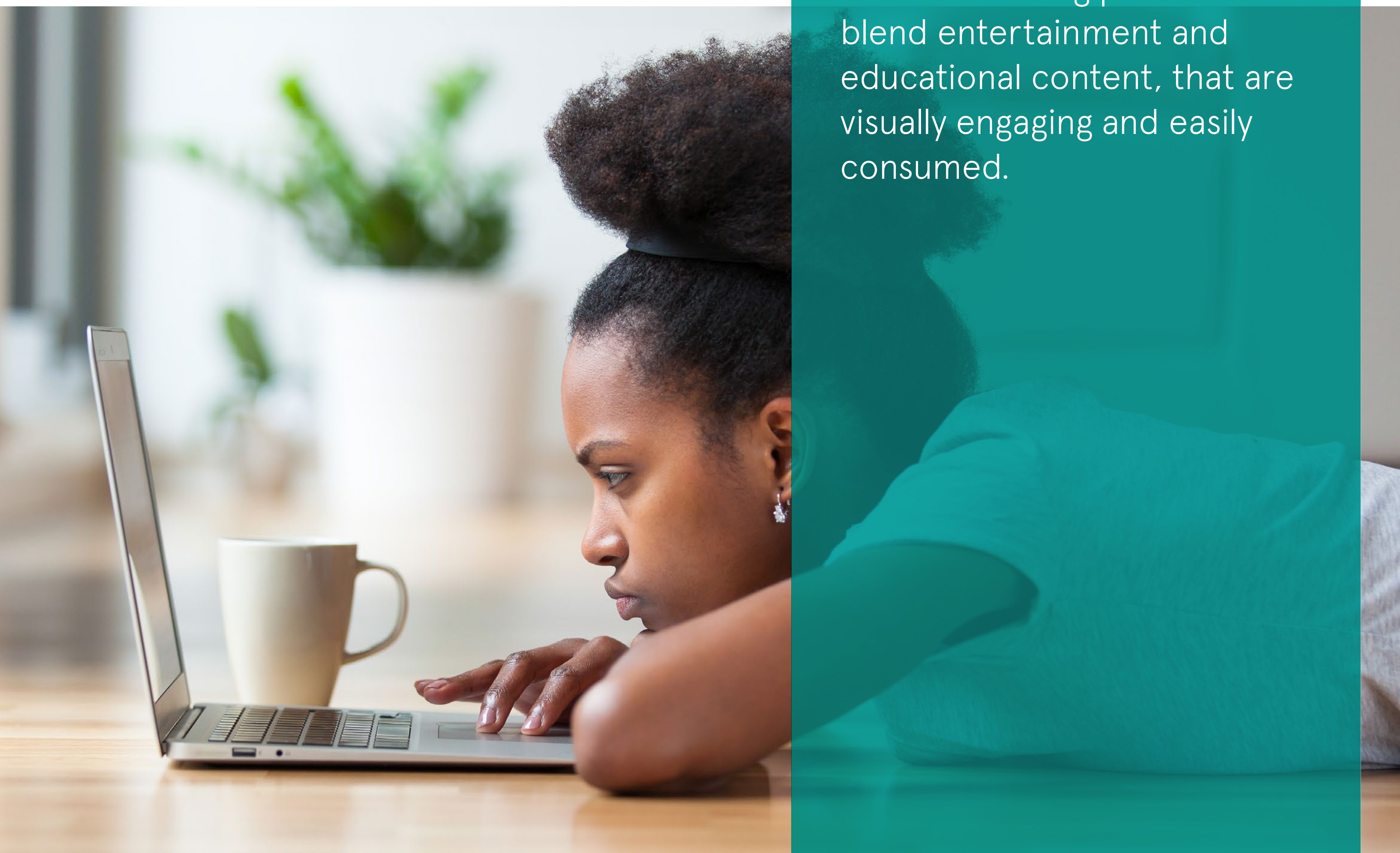
Autodidacticism

We've already discussed the independent nature of Gen Z. Is this simply down to their practical parenting? No, it's also down to their status as digital natives and that they have been using technology to self educate from a very young age.

Consider how this will affect their job search, onboarding and career growth. They are independent learners.

They consider online resources such as YouTube and Wikipedia invaluable learning aids.

In the future, expect more and more e-learning platforms that blend entertainment and educational content, that are visually engaging and easily consumed.

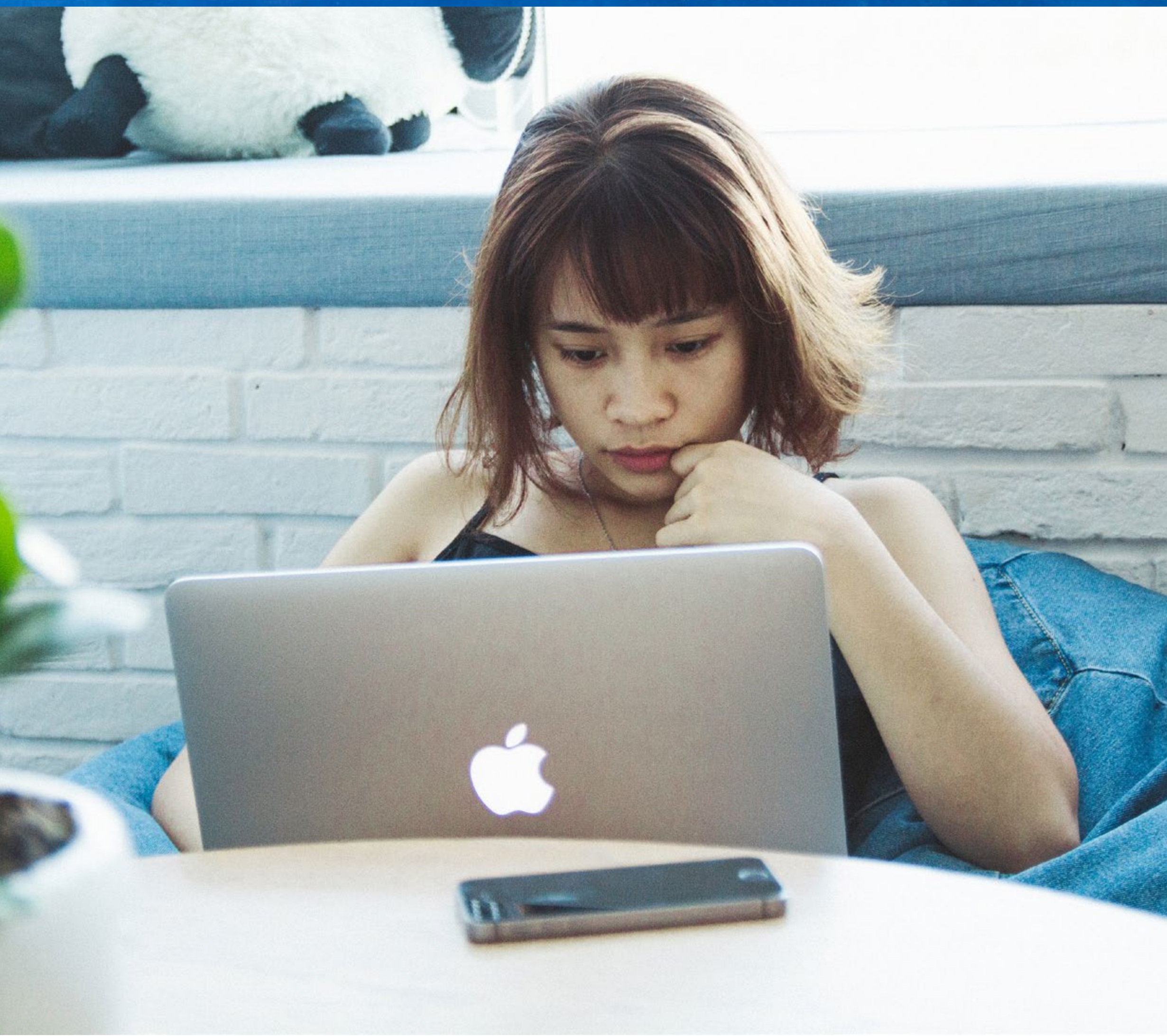


Alternative educational routes

As well as forgoing traditional teaching methods, Gen Zs are less aligned with the traditional educational path. They have seen the success stories of entrepreneurial Millennials such as Mark Zuckerberg and Evan Spiegel and realise that the more established path is not always the most fruitful. They also understand the opportunities outside conventional university studies. This generation will have the chance to exploit MOOCS (Massive Open Online Courses) and adopt more practical learning patterns.

Bear this in mind when you are writing job descriptions. The required skills and qualifications need to evolve and grow with the workforce. A university degree shouldn't always be the standard requirement.

Gen Zs require an interactive learning environment if they are to remain stimulated.

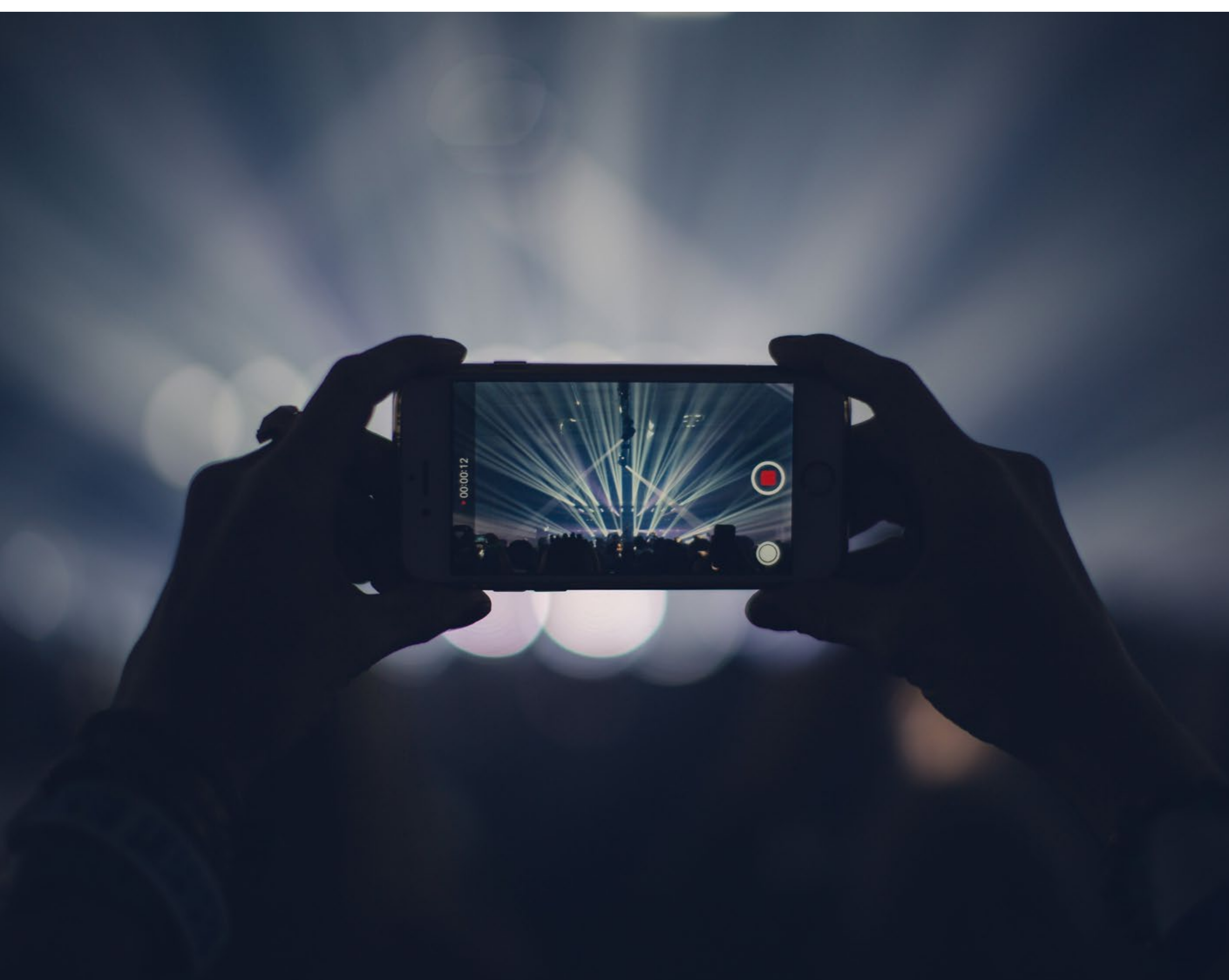


SOCIAL PLATFORM USE

Moving away from mainstream social channels, identifying with Gen Zs need for privacy and making meaningful connections

Why are they moving away from mainstream social channels?

Younger audiences are spending less time on Facebook and more on networks such as Instagram which allows for a more engaged and interactive audience through visuals. A UCLA study found that Instagram is more effective in exploiting diverse audiences as users are more likely to see every post from the accounts they follow, while FB filters posts which it considers less relevant to users. So do Gen Zs simply prefer social channels which incorporate more visual media? What else is a factor?



Being live

Centennials value the live element. They look for instant exchange of information where the payoff is immediate.

Being in fashion

As older generations adopt certain social media networks, it stands to reason that those networks start to lose their youth appeal. Facebook, for example, may no longer have a contemporary/exclusive edge.

Going incognito

Gen Zs are more astute than their predecessors regarding privacy online. They've grown up in the age of Wikileaks and Sony hacking scandals and thus, are more aware of surveillance, privacy breaches and keeping personal information safe. Gen Zs are particularly intolerant of being tracked and are inclined to disable their geotags online.

Their need for privacy is evident in their preference for less transparent ways of communicating online. We've seen the rise of messaging apps that allow for anonymity. Platforms that allow for more limited visibility have become more popular, like Instagram Stories or Path.



MAKING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Studies carried out by the Centre for Generational Kinetics reveal that although Gen Zs cautiously share their identity online, they are more open to sharing their payment information and are more likely to use finance apps which allow you to make payments from your card or account.

THERE IS A DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN GEN ZS' NEED FOR PRIVACY AND THEIR DESIRE TO USE THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES.

To exploit it you need to ensure the payoff outweighs the intrusion.

Be true to your brand

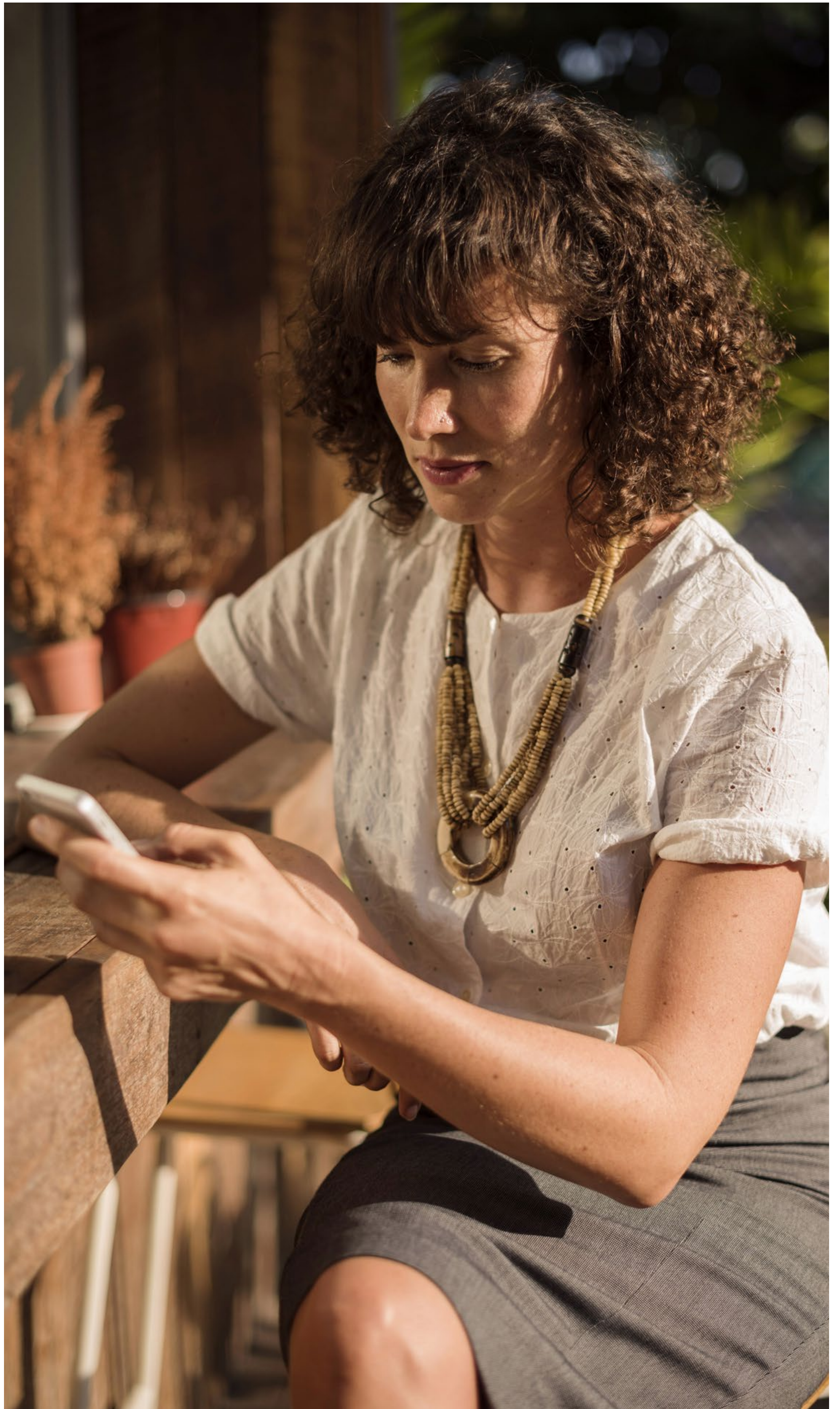
You may be tempted to push your employer brand on what you perceive to be the newest or most fashionable platform. Unless your employer brand lives in this space, you have no business there. Gen Zs value authenticity. Target platforms that best represent you. Be true to your brand and be true to the platform you're using.

Encourage feedback and listen

Gen Zs enjoy an interactive social experience. Encourage them to comment on ways to improve your content and when they give feedback, listen to it!

Communicate with images

Utilise as much multimedia as you can: images, video, audio, emojis.



**“In the age of technology,
it’s never been more
important to realise
that recruitment is
about people.”**

RECRUITING GEN Z

Q&A with Stephen Quinn
CEO
Jobbio

Q: How do you gain the trust of Gen Z?

A: Listening and reciprocal education are key. It sounds simple but this is a generation who know what they want and they're not afraid to tell you, so let them! Ensure you are giving them ample opportunity to share their feedback.

Gen Z is growing up a lot quicker than previous generations so it's even more important to involve them in the conversation from a young age. Making them feel like their opinion is valuable is a great way to build trust. They want to learn from you but they also want to know you're open to learning from them.





Q: What will draw them into a role?

A: What draws anyone into a role? The opportunity for success, growth and a cultural fit. The chance to make the most of their skills and talent! Appeal to Gen Z by making the recruitment

process simple and direct. Give it the personal touch and be open about what you want from them and what they can expect from you in return. Using the most up to date tech and channels helps too.

Q: So how do you personalise the recruitment process while appealing to the tech savviness of Gen Z?

A: Gen Zs are highly effective people. They are able to absorb huge amounts of information in just a

few minutes. They're not just digi natives but true multitaskers! Recruiting Gen Z -or anyone for that matter should be a customised process. It's about getting the right people in the right positions. And being authentic to your employer brand.

Q: What will make them commit to a role?

A: I think for Gen Zs, it's not about committing to a role as such, it's more about tasks and projects. What will be revolutionary about Gen Z will be how quickly they adapt to roles, flourish within them and look beyond them. They won't be boxed into a certain title or work pattern for too long and as an employer it's really important to pre-empt that. Rather than trying to keep them in a certain position, think of how you can help them grow organically. Their values will redefine what it means to be employed and I'm very excited to see what that looks like.



RETAINING GEN Z





PERKS

It's not all about the money, these benefits can be a big draw for iGen.

Food

Studies show that Gen Z are more interested in nutrition than any other generation. As a foodie contingent, they are more willing to pay for organic or artisan foods. Therefore, providing high quality meals would be a good incentive.

Freedom

Offering Gen Z the freedom to be part of a number of teams and projects at the same time could prove a big attraction. Flexibility around working hours and days is important too.

Education

Their need for growth and willingness to learn indicate that educational opportunities within their job would be an attractive perk for Gen Zs. This can cover anything from internal skill building in leadership and development, to formal qualifications such as an MA.

EVOLVING PRIORITIES

What changes would you like to see to working practices?



1	A move towards project by project work	31%
2	A move towards coworking spaces	23%
3	A move away from managerial structures	21%
4	More integrated technology such as AI	19%
5	Other	6%

WORK PRACTICES

The way in which Gen Z approach their work will be different to older generations. They have the ability to instantly process and understand large and diverse chunks of information. Due to the saturation of data in their environment, Gen Zs have shorter attention spans and are easily distracted. This doesn't necessarily mean they will be less productive but rather they will work in short concentrated spurts, frequently switching between tasks and devices.

The traditional office mindset of 9-5 shifts spent predominantly at a desk will not suit iGen's style of work nor will it engage them long term.

Incorporate the latest tech into workplace communications and practices, the more interactive the better. Utilise mobile and video tech in training too. This cohort are aware of the value of time and are always looking for ways to optimise productivity.





Meetings are the biggest waste of time at work for 18-24 year olds with 26% of this cohort rating it their top time drain.

“THE GIG ECONOMY”

We are already seeing an increase in freelance culture as employees demand more flexibility, independence and control over their work practices. A study by Upwork found that one third of American workers have freelanced in the past year. This trend is set to rise once Gen Z enter the workforce and seek further autonomy. In the past this gig economy was associated with more creative or tech roles but now it will be more prominent as priorities change. Companies will need to be less stringent regarding working hours and locations.

We know Gen Zs are entrepreneurial and seek fulfillment in their work. As such we should expect a lot more startups and innovation. What makes this even more likely is the increase in crowdfunding for equity. Sites such as Kickstarter or Indiegogo act as an important accelerant for new business and in this way Gen Z will have greater opportunities to realise their entrepreneurial goals.



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_Know somebody who could
use a crash course on Gen Z?

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