

The Power Of Gen Z

Trust & The Future Consumer | December 2021

Exploring the world of Gen Z

Methodology

Global Survey

9,600 Gen Z, ages 14-24
6 markets

China, France, Germany, Mexico, UK, US

Virtual Discussions

60 minute, 1-on-1 interviews
12 Gen Z, ages 14-24

China, UK, US

Built with Them

Ongoing consultation and
collaboration with Gen Z
advisory council

* Developed by Edelman in partnership with Smarty Pants, an independent youth research firm

Macro cultural forces shaping the world

Forces breaking the world:

- Climate Change
- Ongoing Global Pandemic
- Economic Recession & Jobs
- Racism & Discrimination
- Social & Political Unrest
- Mental Health
- Disinformation

Forces piecing it back together:

- Identity & Inclusivity
- Creator Economy
- Power of Employee/Employer
- Social Networking
- Innovation

What we think we know about Gen Z's world doesn't reflect reality

01

Accepted Belief

Gen Z all want to be influencers



New Reality

Only 12% aspire to be an influencer

02

Accepted Belief

Gen Z are bold, bullish activists



New Reality

66% believe that sharing is a form of activism (and it's not radical)

03

Accepted Belief

Gen Z mobilizes cancel culture



New Reality

It's about accountability. 1 in 3 want brands to take responsibility for wrongdoing

04

Accepted Belief

Gen Z believes tech solves everything



New Reality

45% say technology is not the solution to most problems

05

Accepted Belief

In TikTok they trust



New Reality

YouTube is the most trusted, while TikTok ranks #5

Who they actually are

Generation of Sensibility

as they want to solve humanity's most glaring issues, they desire safety, value realism and are making sensibility the new standard

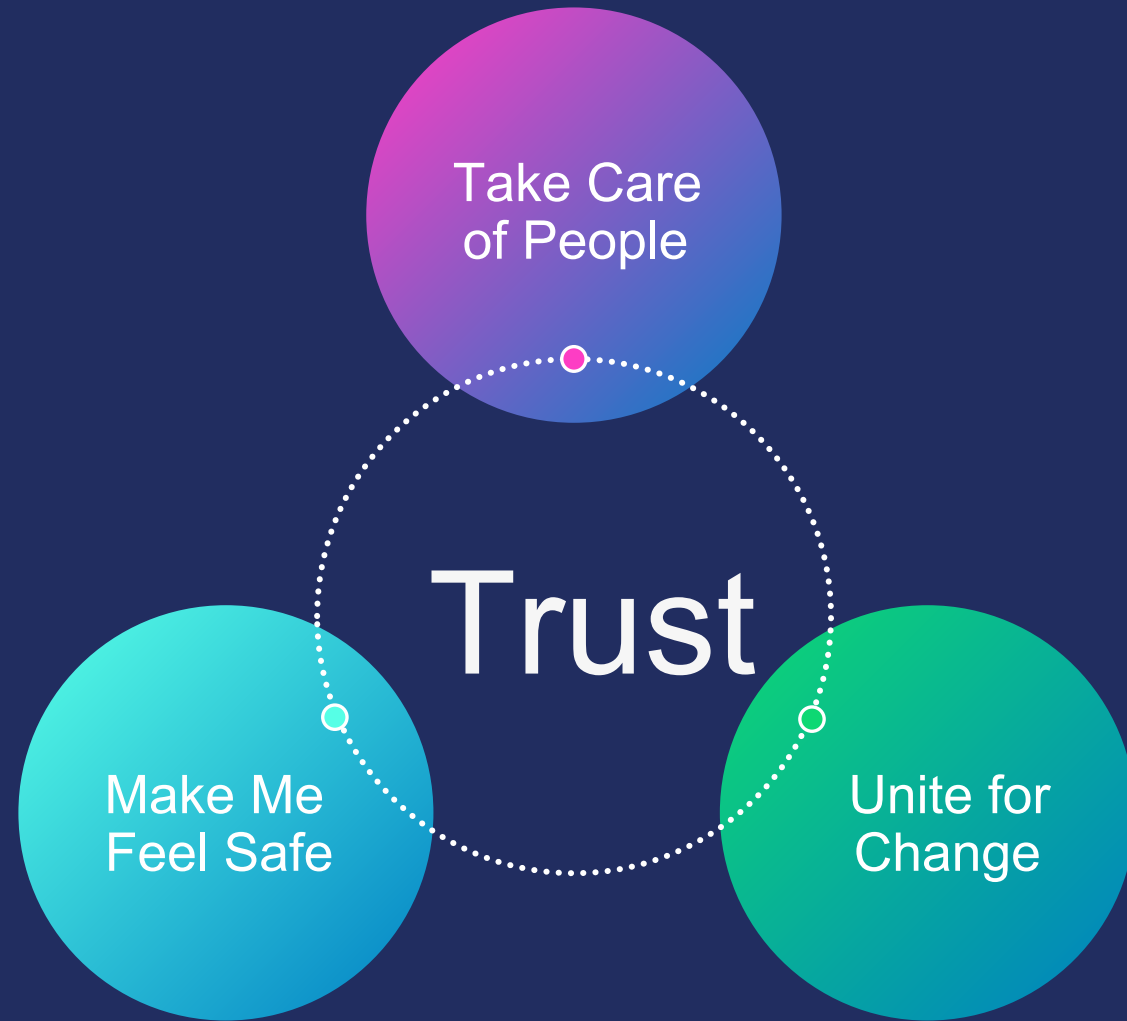
Globally Unified

set on course correcting & getting our world back to basics

Trust Differently

journey to trust-building looks different for this generation

Gen Z's journey to trust



MAKE ME FEEL SAFE



The visceral need for safety & security permeates every aspect of their lives

7 in 10 want safety & security in their lives

- ▶ **PHYSICAL**
Prioritize activities that have a lower risk of getting sick or injured (75%)
- ▶ **EMOTIONAL**
Prioritize “feeling safe” (81%) over building strong friendships (75%)
- ▶ **FINANCIAL**
Say “pays well/provides financial stability” is an important career goal (79%)
- ▶ **SOCIAL**
Have changed social circles to feel safer (69%)
- ▶ **EDUCATIONAL**
Say safety is critical or important when thinking about school (81%)

Q28. In what ways, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your attitudes and behaviors related to your health and wellness? NET Describes me now, but I believe only temporarily/until the pandemic ends & Describes me now, and I believe it will describe me in the future / Q21. Thinking about your school and education, please tell us how important the following are to you. Makes me feel safe, Allows me to build strong friendships. NET Critical/must have and Important to Have. Q22. Thinking about your future or potential employment and career, please tell us how important the following are to you when it comes to the place you choose to work or the career you want to pursue. Pays well/provides financial stability. NET Critical/must have and Important to have.

Safety in the form of health was exacerbated by COVID

Percent who say the COVID - 19 pandemic impacted their attitudes

Describes me now



78%

I have created more time in my life for self-care/mental health



68%

I have started or continued to save up for future healthcare expenses



66%

I have considered or started a career that will allow me to handle health and wellness expenses

Q28 In what ways, if any, has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted your attitudes and behaviors related to your health and wellness? I have created more time in my life for self-care/mental health, I have started or continued to save up for future healthcare expenses, I have considered or started a career that will allow me to handle health and wellness expenses. NET Describes me now, but I believe only temporarily/until the pandemic ends & Describes me now, and I believe it will describe me in the future

Gen Z finds their way to truth

Q36 Now think about your personal online social media network: how you use it, who you follow and your followers. How much do you agree or disagree with each of these statements? I always double check claims or news I see on social media — one source is not enough. NET Mostly Agree and Completely Agree. Q37 For each of the following types of media, how much of their content do you think is absolutely true and trustworthy? Search Engines: such as Google, Yahoo!, Bing (SHOW ONLY IF CN: or Baidu). Q35 When it comes to the information you see online, what are the most important things you look for to determine whether something is true and trustworthy? There are links to legitimate sources supporting it, It cites supporting data/proof points

70%

always fact check what you say and will unfollow you if you're not truthful

58%

say the content on search engines is trustworthy

Top 2 trustworthy criteria:

- 1 Links to legitimate sources
- 2 Citations of supporting data/proof points



TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE

People they trust most are those that take care of others

Percent who say they trust each the most

▲ Most trusted people

Doctors/therapists (77%)

Scientists (75%)

Teachers/professors (74%)



An expanded sphere of influence

▼ Less trusted people

Traditional celebrities (50%)

CEO's (50%)

Government leaders (47%)

Q33 Below is a list of types of people or groups. For each one, please indicate how much you trust that individual or group (i.e., is it trusted to be accurate, factual or truthful)? 9 scale. Trust NET top4 (79).

Inspiration is from real people

Percent who describe each as sources of inspiration in their life



People Who Are Close & Relatable

Family members (88%)

“Friends” (84%)

Ordinary people doing good (81%)



People Who Represent the Inaccessible & Distant

Journalist (47%)

Religious/faith leaders (44%)

Politicians, rank lowest (42%)

8 in 10

consider if a brand treats employees well as a critical or important purchase decision factor

7 in 10

evaluate a brand's work to support/give back to those in need when considering whether to work there

The real test of a brand is how it treats people

Q43 When it comes to brands in general that you will or will not buy or use, categorize each of the following attributes based on whether it is a critical deal breaker, important to have, or merely a nice to have. It treats its employees well. NET Critical deal breaker or Important to have. Q22 Thinking about your future or potential employment and career, please tell us how important the following are to you when it comes to the place you choose to work or the career you want to pursue. My work supports/gives back to others in need. NET Critical/must have and Important to Have.



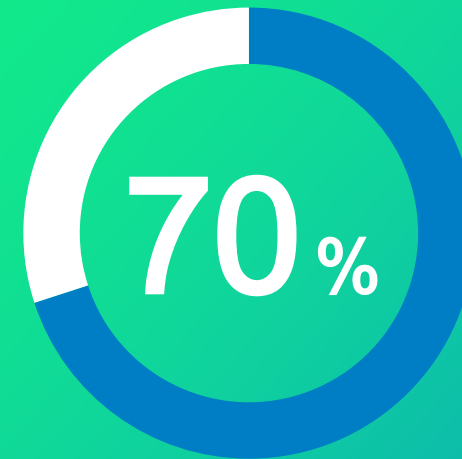
UNITE FOR CHANGE

Unity is Gen Z's superpower

Unity is the definition of activism for this generation

It's not radical, it's about coming together to create change for a common good

Causes Bring Them Together



70% of all Gen Zers globally are involved in a social or political cause

”

Activism is a social, political, environmental revolution to change society. I don't think you can do that alone."

— 23-year-old Female, China

Common causes they unite around

Globally

▶ **Climate Change** ▶ **COVID-19** ▶ **Social Justice**

By Country

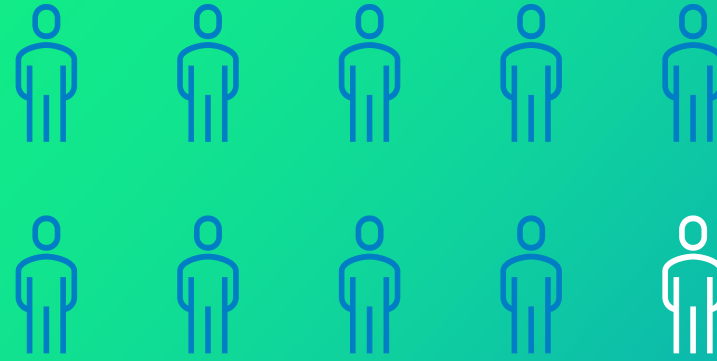
Ranked by cause with highest involvement rate in each country

	China	France	Germany	Mexico	UK	US
1	COVID-19 pandemic	Climate change	Climate change	COVID-19 pandemic	Climate change	Racial injustice
2	Education access	Gender equality	COVID-19 pandemic	Gender equality	Mental health	Mental health

They want brands to use their superpower

Brands are expected to use their reach, money, and scale to create the change

Q26 In which of the following ways, if any, do you want brands/ companies to get involved in advancing social or political causes? NET one or more causes.



9 in 10

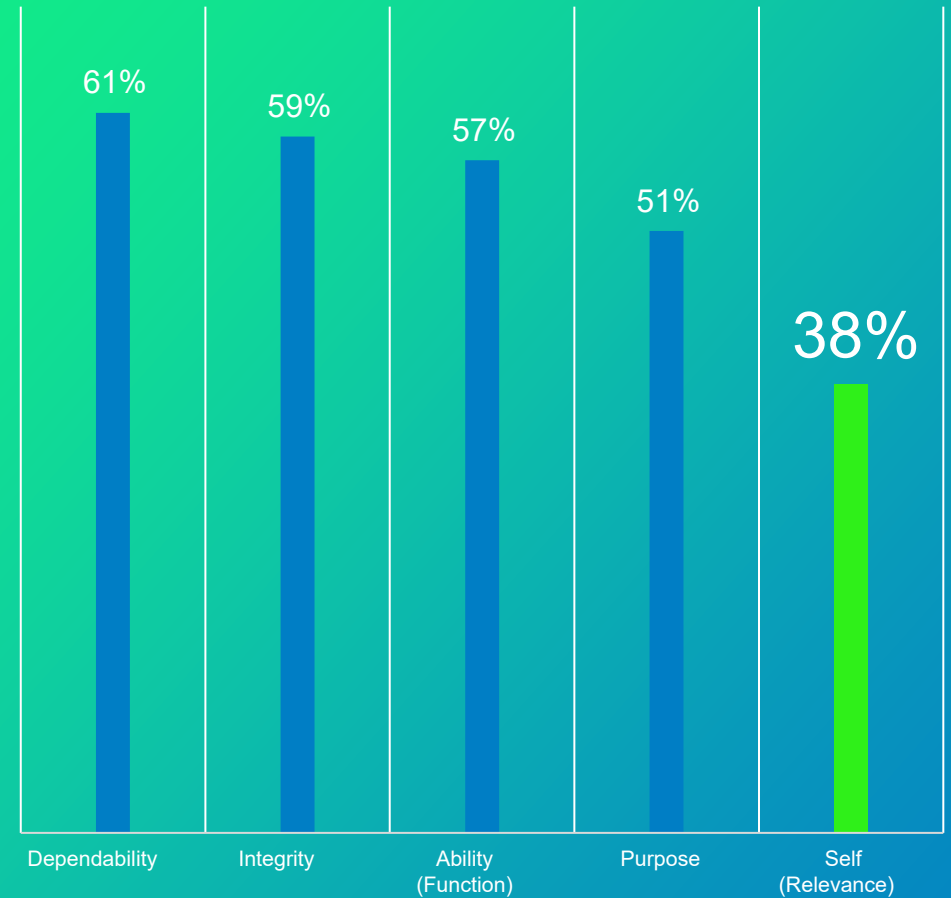
want the brands they buy
to get involved in causes
that better the world

Trust is now about “we” not “me”

Gen Z is more interested in brands generating trust that address the needs of the many vs. relevance to “me” alone

The Self (personal relevance) attribute is lowest for Gen Z, but also considerably lower than among adults 25+ (51%)

Important Characteristics of a Trustworthy Brand



Q42 Which of these do you think are the most important characteristics of a trustworthy brand? Statements netted into five dimensions Dependability, Integrity, Ability, Purpose, and Self. Edelman ETM Brand Tracker 2021 “To what extent do you agree with the following statements about [BRANDS]?” SELF dimension Net Agreement.

A generation that buys on beliefs & values

Gen Z



63%

buy/use brands who take a stance on social issues they care about



85% say trusting a brand is critical or important for purchase

Adults 25+



49%

buy brands that express opinions on societal and political issues they care about

vs.

Q40. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements: "I want the brands I buy/use to take a stance on social issues I care about" T2B Agree. Q43. When it comes to brands in general that you will or will not buy or use, categorize each of the following attributes based on whether it is a critical dealbreaker, important to have, or merely a nice to have. NET critical/important. 2021 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust the New Brand Equity. BDB_Q17. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. 9-point scale; top 4 box, agree. 6-mkt avg., among those aged 25+. "I have strong opinions about many societal and political issues. The brands I choose to buy and not buy are one important way I express those opinions."

WHAT THIS MEANS

A young woman with long dark hair and sunglasses is smiling. The image is overlaid with a blue gradient and large white text that reads "WHAT THIS MEANS".

There is a new journey to earning trust

Make Me Feel Safe

- Consider basic needs vs. aspirational experiences
- Deliver on safety through every aspect of their lives
- Transparency needs to be discoverable — Gen Z looks for truth

Take Care of People

- Focus on real people & creators vs. inaccessible personalities
- Substance is the new sizzle
- Take care of your people — Gen Z is watching

Unite for Change

- Trust is about “we” vs. “me”
- Emphasize global values vs. hyperlocal actions
- Harness Gen Z’s definition of activism by bringing them together



edelman.com/future-consumer

