

# UNVEILING

WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO KNOW  
IN THEIR OWN WORDS

# NESS

SPRING 2024

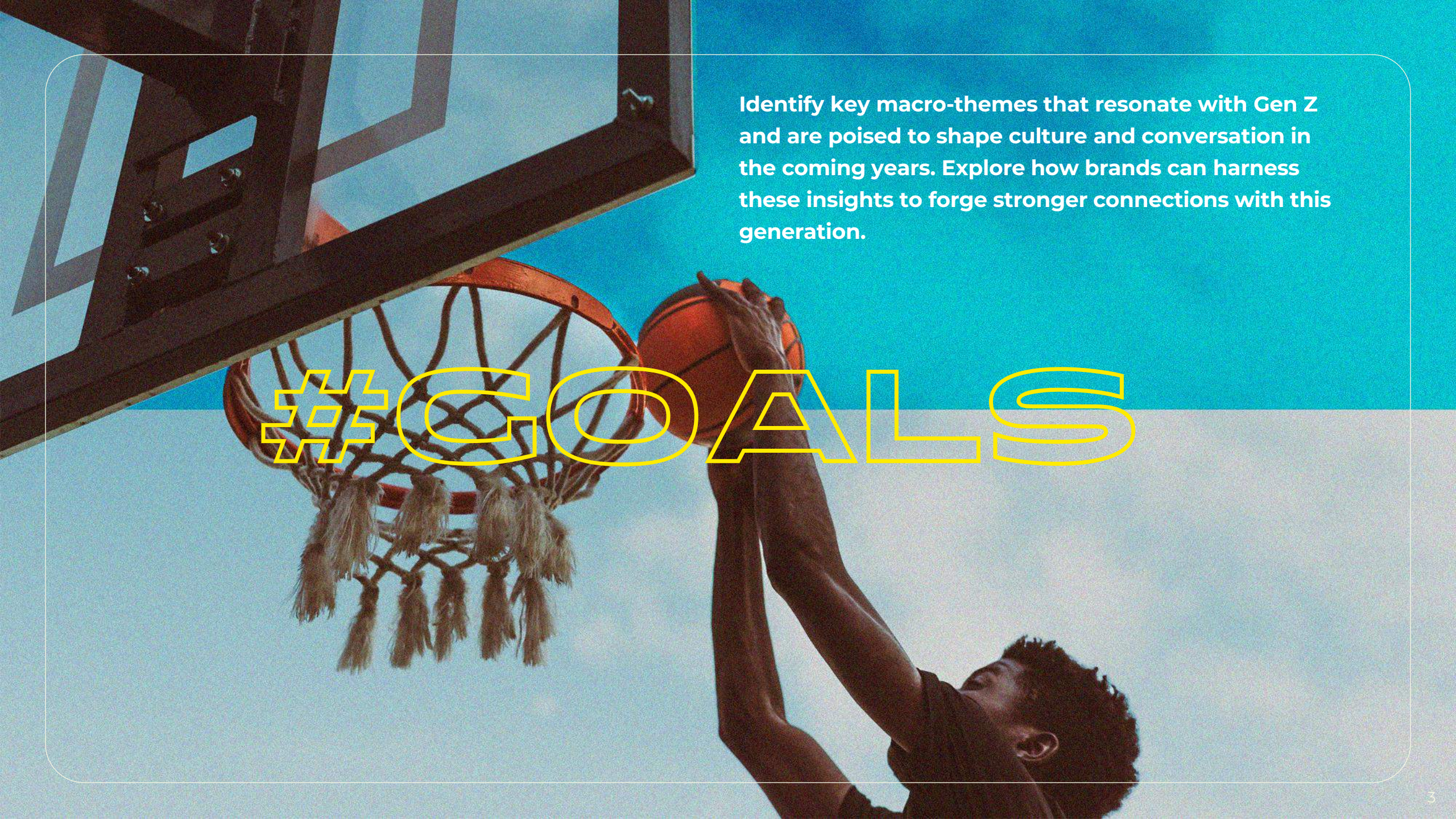
# USC Annenberg

School for Communication  
and Journalism

**The USC Annenberg x ACC Think Tank is a directed research program at the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism.**

It serves as a vibrant interdisciplinary hub fostering collaboration between industry experts from the Acceleration Community of Companies — a premier marketing, communications and media agency network — and the inquisitive student minds at USC Annenberg.

Together, they engage in thought-provoking interactive discussions, dynamic research methodologies, and forward-thinking trend forecasting, creating a fertile ground for valuable insights.



Identify key macro-themes that resonate with Gen Z and are poised to shape culture and conversation in the coming years. Explore how brands can harness these insights to forge stronger connections with this generation.

# #GOALS



# METHOD OLOGY

## A SEMESTER-LONG LONGITUDINAL STUDY

MADE UP OF 14 USC GRADUATE STUDENTS WHERE WE IDENTIFIED AND EXPLORED MEANINGFUL AREAS OF INFLUENCE IN THEIR DAILY LIVES AS WELL AS THE SOCIAL DYNAMICS THAT IMPACT BEHAVIOR AND BRAND ENGAGEMENT

A quantitative and qualitative community survey of 149 Gen Z adults (aged 18-27) from around the world.

Two additional focus groups made up of 15 USC undergraduate and graduate students that included in-depth discussions and interviews.

A nationally representative quantitative survey conducted in partnership with YouGov, a global online research data and analytics technology group.\*

\*Total sample size was 2,006 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 10th - 22nd April 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Gen Z US adults (aged 18-27).

JANUARY - APRIL 2024

# TIMING



WHY ANOTHER


# GEN Z STUDY?

DESPITE GEN Z CONSTITUTING  
40% OF GLOBAL CONSUMERS  
AND BEING EXTENSIVELY  
STUDIED

This gap between existing data and the lived experiences of Gen Z highlights the need for more targeted and in-depth exploration.

MANY STILL FEEL  
OVERLOOKED





The Think Tank addresses this disconnect by **collaborating directly** with USC students from the Gen Z demographic to explore critical domains relevant to them.

**LET'S ADDRESS THE**

# DISCONNECT

This focused and empathetic approach allows us to capture unique insights and perspectives by **pinpointing areas where Gen Z feels misrepresented**. Our goal was not merely to collect data but to refine how we understand and apply this information, enhancing its relevance and impact.

By doing so, we sought to develop authentic strategies that resonate with Gen Z, fostering a **deeper connection with this crucial yet complex generation**.



**GEN Z**

# HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

## A GENERATION OF SPECIALISTS

SO...  
COVID HAPPENED

THE ALGORITHM  
IS AGGRO

WE COMMUNE IN TIKTOK  
COMMUNITIES

WE GATHER IN  
FACEBOOK GROUPS


WE TAKE OUR  
PASSIONS TO THE  
NEXT LEVEL



Gen Z is a diverse cohort that relishes in the learnings of obscure knowledge.



Rafiq Taylor,  
Think Tank Participant

A large crowd of young people at a concert or festival, with a purple overlay and yellow text. The text is arranged in five lines, reading: "WHAT GEN Z WANTS YOU TO KNOW".

WHAT  
GEN Z  
WANTS  
YOU TO  
KNOW

MACRO-THEME 1

# GEN Z

HAS MULTIPLE IDENTITIES



## GEN Z EMBRACES VARIOUS ONLINE COMMUNITIES THAT CATER TO THEIR UNIQUE PASSIONS AND SPECIALIZED INTERESTS

**These platforms provide them with space to freely express themselves.**

As they participate in these communities, they tend to adopt layered identities and characteristics depending on the group. This tendency highlights the stark contrasts between general online presence, “real-life” behavior, and niche community participation.



INTRODUCING

# ZEGGOS



**WE CALL THIS IDENTITY  
FLUIDITY "ZEGOS"  
AND IT'S REDEFINING THE  
WAY GEN Z IDENTIFIES  
AND CONNECTS**

The Zegos represent the unique intersection between digital spaces and the lived experience. It enables Gen Z to find an immediate sense of belonging within various subcommunities.

**WHILE AN ALTER-EGO IS ABOUT SELF-  
EXPRESSION, ZEGOS ARE ABOUT**

**EXPRESSIVE  
ENGAGEMENT**

# "ZEGOS" IS A CONCEPT SPECIFIC TO GEN Z, REPRESENTING A MORE DYNAMIC AND FLUID FORM OF IDENTITY

It's not just about creating a separate persona; it's about how Gen Z adopts context-dependent identities and characteristics, enabling them to embrace and express the multifaceted nature of their many identities.

**ZEGOS LET GEN Z SEAMLESSLY SHIFT BETWEEN DIFFERENT BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF WHO THEY ARE**

Megan is a Grammy Award-winning music artist, college girl turned college grad, anime super fan, activist, and so much more. This cultural icon is beloved by Gen Z for her tenacity, creativity, and unapologetic embrace of her many, many diverse identities.



TINA SNOW



SUGA



HOT GIRL  
MEG



MEGAN THEE  
ANIME GIRL

**78% OF GEN Z BELONG TO ONE OR MORE COMMUNITIES SPECIFICALLY RELATED TO THEIR INTERESTS, HOBBIES, OR EXTRACURRICULARS\***

**41%**  
BELONG TO 2+

**18%**  
BELONG TO 3+

**10%**  
BELONG TO 5+

**Popular communities\*\***

- Swifties
- BTS Army
- K-Drama
- BookTok
- BeautyTok
- EVs
- ManifestingTok
- Influencer Snark
- Funko
- Disney
- Vogue Club
- LookBook
- Beyhive
- Skincare
- Study Abroad
- WallStreetBets
- Letterboxd
- Wattpad
- NBA Twitter
- FitTok
- Dogster
- CrossFit
- Tumblr
- TravelTok
- Patreons

**Most popular niche communities among those who are a member of 1+ community\***

Gaming (8%), Discord (8%), Facebook (8%), K-Drama (7%), Anime (7%)



## IT'S ALSO COMMON FOR GEN Z TO KEEP SOME OF THEIR ZEGOS TO THEMSELVES AND NOT SHARE WITH THEIR IRL FRIENDS OR FAMILY



Sometimes communities you might have an interest in don't align with the people you hold closest to your life.



Focus Group Participant



People I know won't understand my niche. It would need a lot of background information and cultural context to fill in.



Community Survey Participant



There is comfort in finding a space where you can express the truest form of you, either anonymously or not.



Arantxa Landa  
Think Tank Participant



Different fandoms pull out different aspects of your personality. People also tend to speak differently in these groups than they do in real life. There might be acronyms that only people in a community would understand.



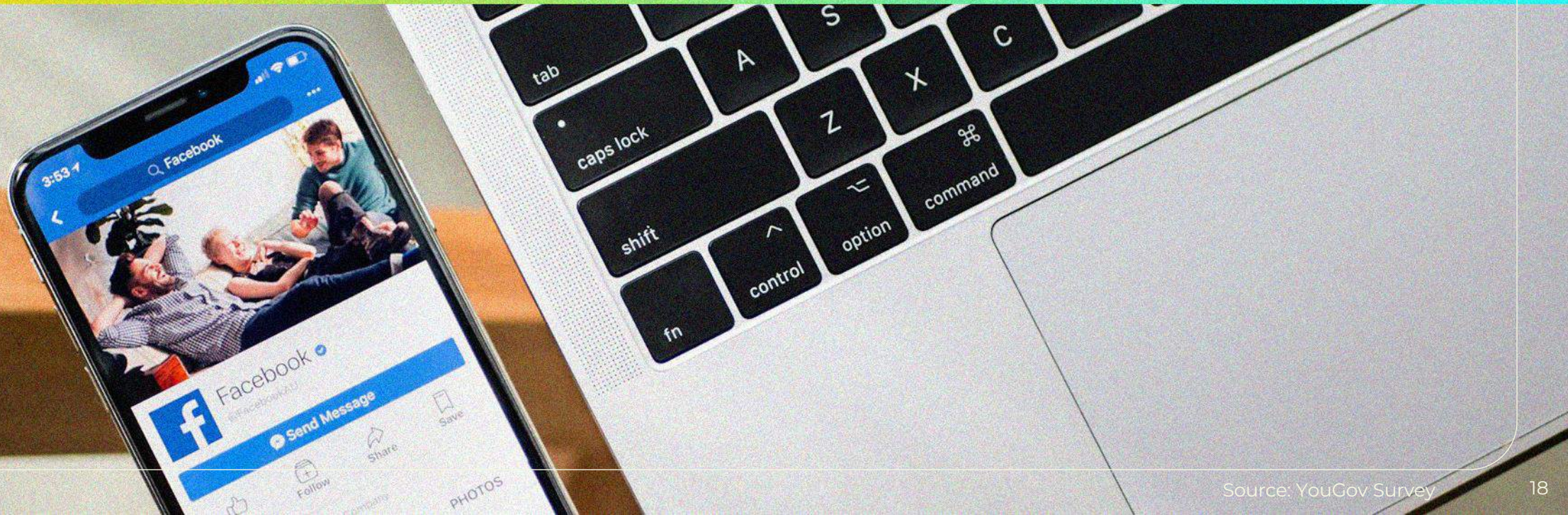
Focus Group Participant

**SURPRISINGLY, WHEN ASKED WHAT SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM THEY FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE BEING THEIR "TRUE SELF" ON, THE LARGEST SHARE OF GEN Z SAID:**

**11%**  
TIKTOK

**31%**  
FACEBOOK

**11%**  
TWITTER / X



# WAIT, WHAT?



## WHY FACEBOOK?

In 2020, The Governance Lab at NYU surveyed 15,000 Facebook users. 77% said the most important group they belong to operates online.

The report also found that these groups tend to be formed and inhabited by individuals who experience marginalization.

**Niche communities are thriving in Facebook groups.**

**IT'S IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT WHILE GEN Z SAYS THEY FEEL MOST COMFORTABLE BEING THEIR TRUE SELVES ON FACEBOOK, THIS DOESN'T MEAN THEY USE IT THE MOST OR EVEN LIKE IT THE BEST**



I feel like my most authentic self on Facebook since my feed is curated to my true interests.



Community  
Survey Participant



I am able to be myself most freely in Facebook Groups, specifically because there isn't a word count and I like using a lot of words.



Community  
Survey Participant



Facebook was my first social account, and I still use it for messaging with friends who live abroad or for browsing Marketplace for deals. It's not be the trendiest platform, but it's where I grew up. You never forget your first.



Madison Grubb,  
Think Tank Leadership



I'm still in the Facebook Group of my hometown reading about people's dogs escaping or issues they have with the mayor. Facebook is almost so old-fashioned that nothing is embarrassing, so I do feel like my true self.

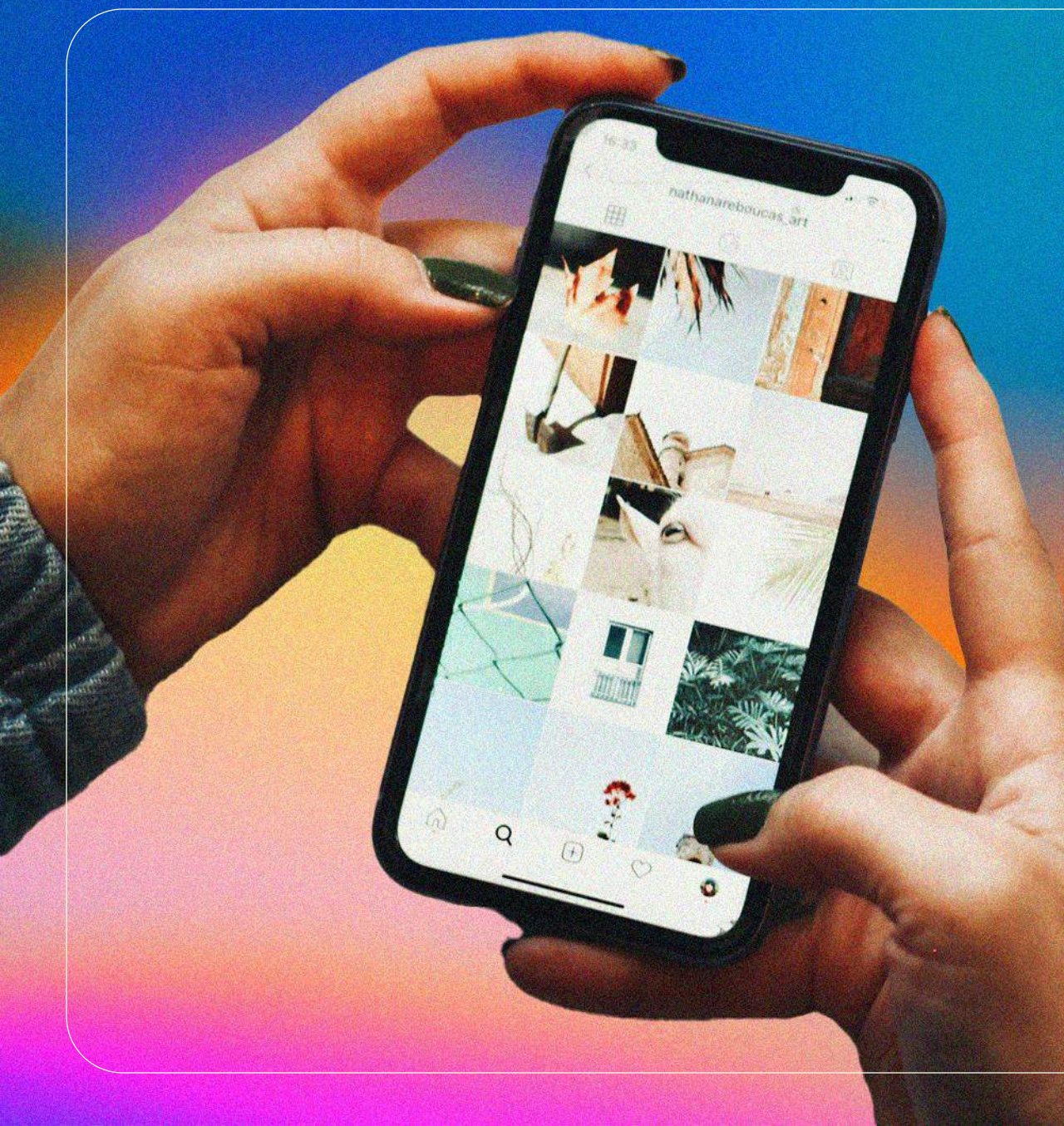


Antonia Abramowitz,  
Think Tank Leadership



WHILE THIS FRAGMENTATION  
OF CULTURE MAY IMPLY  
DIVISION, FOR GEN Z IT  
FOSTERS A SENSE OF

# COMMUNITY & CLOSENESS



## GEN Z LOOKS AT SOCIAL MEDIA A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY THAN THE GENERATIONS BEFORE

# 54%

believe social media is more about finding and engaging with communities and/or content tailored to their specific interests versus connecting with friends and sharing their lives online (46%).



These smaller communities thrive because they are owned by a collective of normal people instead of the power players in the industry.



Samantha Carpintero,  
Think Tank Participant



The metaverse hasn't taken off with Gen Z because it feels like a replacement for face-to-face connection, whereas TikTok feels like a supplement to human connection.



Fernando Cienfuegos,  
Think Tank Participant



Part of why Facebook's metaverse didn't work was because they were trying to own it rather than making it an experience where users felt they had a stake.



Grayson Wolff,  
Think Tank Participant

**WHILE THESE  
SUBCULTURES OFTEN  
SERVE AS A SAFE SPACE**

**GEN Z IS OPEN TO  
BRANDS INTERACTING  
WITH THEIR NICHE  
COMMUNITIES**

**SO LONG AS THE BRANDS PLAY BY  
THE UNIQUE RULES OF THEIR  
COMMUNITIES.**

**74%**

**of Zs agree that they want brands to cater to their many interests and identities in a way that isn't just somewhat personalized but truly makes them feel special.**



## EMBRACING NICHE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE

McDonald's flipped their golden arches for an anime-inspired global marketing campaign.

Playing off the fictional "WcDonald's" seen in dozens of iconic anime TV shows, this campaign tapped into the growing popularity of anime to connect with Gen Z fans around the world.

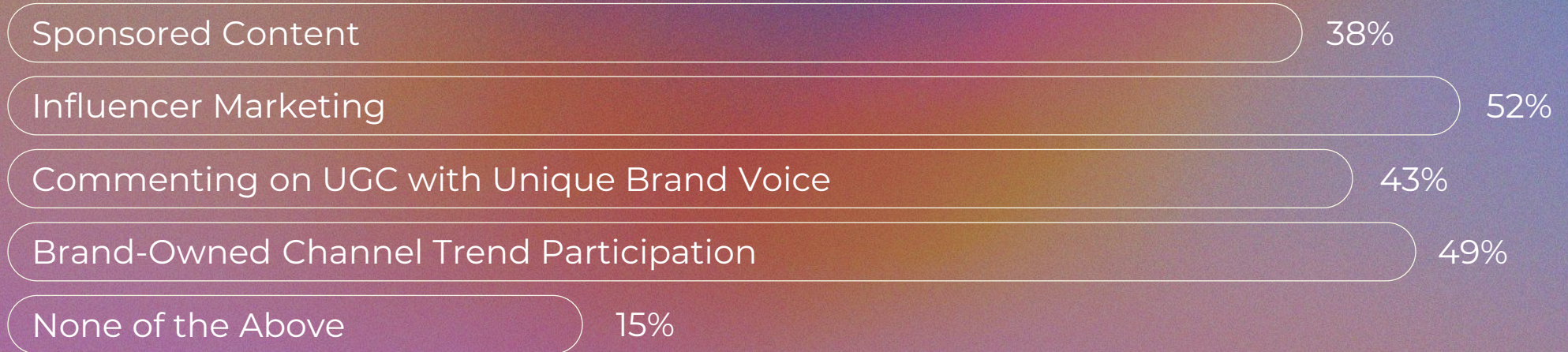


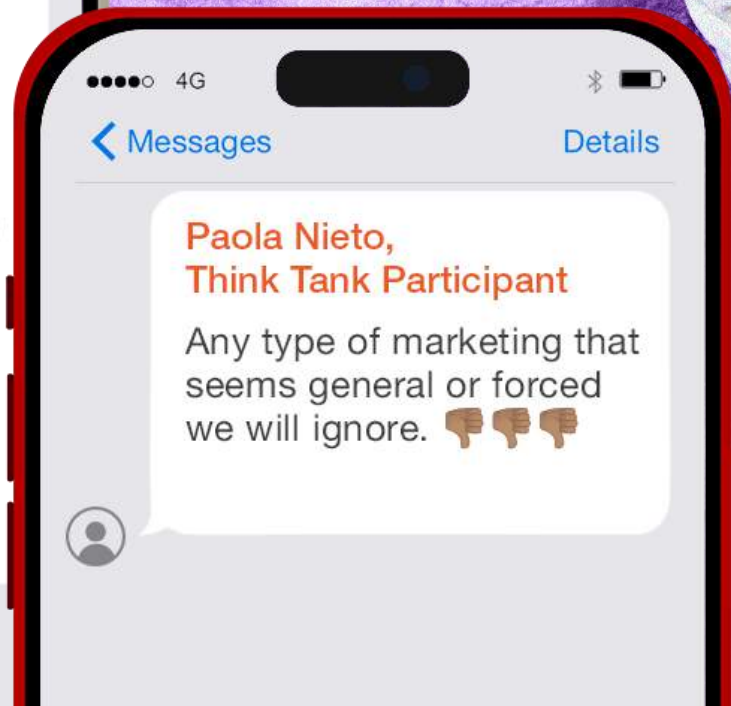
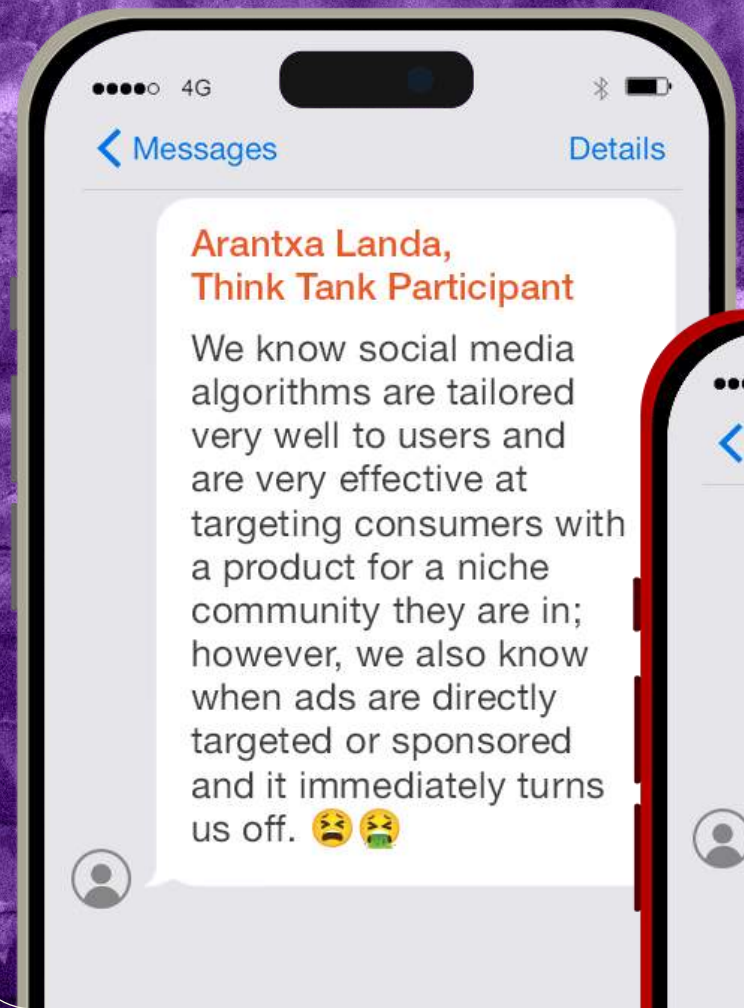
**Rafiq Taylor,  
Think Tank Participant**

I was into anime as a kid, and I only had like five other friends in my grade who were also into anime... Now you can buy Akatsuki headbands from street vendors and go catch the new Demon Slayer movie at an AMC Theatre.



## WHAT IS A COMFORTABLE LEVEL OF BRAND INVOLVEMENT IN YOUR ONLINE COMMUNITY/IES?





# KEY INSIGHTS

## FOR BRANDS

Brands need to recognize and respect the diversity of identities within Gen Z. Because there are so many different online groups, subgroups, and subgroups of subgroups, finding relevant crossover interests is crucial.

When Gen Z says they want to feel special, they mean it. It goes beyond personalization - they will resist being generalized, categorized, or marketed to in a one-size-fits-all way.

While Gen Z preferences indicate an aversion to direct advertising, they do exhibit an openness to personalized brand engagement designed to foster and celebrate their sense of uniqueness.

**Michael Kittilson,  
Think Tank Participant**

The phrase ‘🎯 audience’ is out of touch now because it implies brands are on the stage and we must listen to them. But it’s the opposite. Not only do we want to be heard, we also want to be actively engaged. 💎💎💎





MACRO-THEME 2

# HUMOR

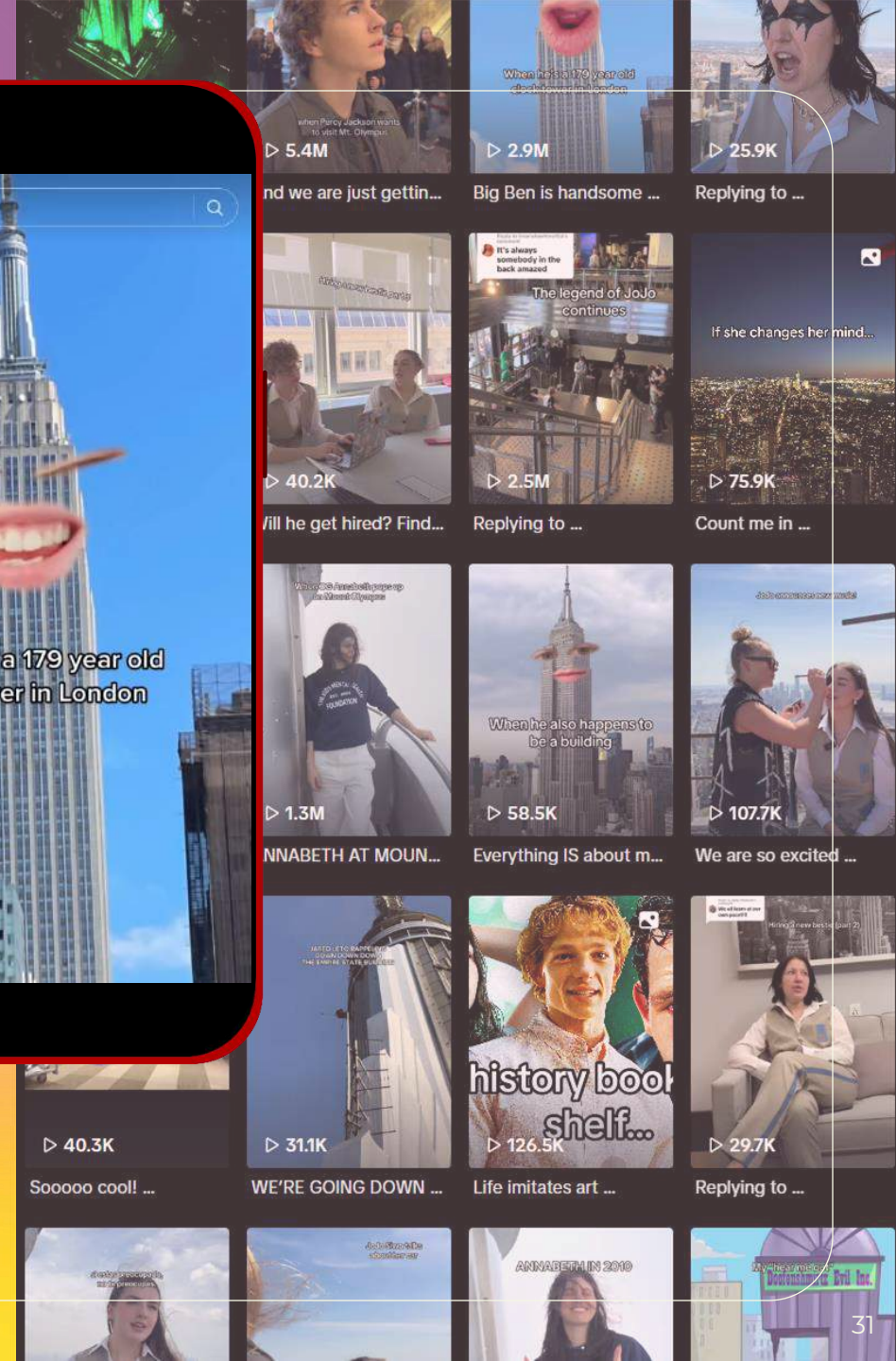
IS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

# YOUR BRAND IS A JOKE ...AND A MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Humor (specifically satire) plays a huge role in Gen Z's engagement with online content and advertising / marketing; however, the ways Gen Z interacts with your product may not be how you intended.

Even branding that was not meant to be humorous can be reinterpreted by fans who take the humor to new and ridiculously dramatic levels.

Looking to draw in crowds of younger tourists, the Empire State Building has taken to TikTok where they post "unhinged" content around topics like Taylor Swift, Pokémon, and their long-distance relationship with Big Ben.



# ABSURDITY IS KEY TO GEN Z CULTURE, SERVING AS BOTH A DEFINING ASPECT AND A COPING MECHANISM

This penchant for the absurd arises from navigating through shared traumatic experiences which have led this generation to develop a sometimes cynical and dark sense of humor.

Brands that don't take themselves too seriously and embrace the absurd often win.

After the Kansas State Wildcats' Pop-Tarts Bowl victory, the first-ever "edible mascot" descended into a gargantuan toaster... only to pop back up below as a sacrificial sensation for a pack of ravenous footballers, scoring its spot as the latest viral brand meme.





### Arantxa Landa, Think Tank Participant

Brands shouldn't be afraid to be the butt of a joke. It humanizes you, makes you relatable, and, more importantly, it's memorable.

### Focus Group Participant

I love seeing the Nicole Kidman ad at AMC. Even if I wasn't a big Nicole Kidman fan before, I am now. I go to AMC and I'll get a Coke because she's drinking a Coke in the ad. It's funny. It's dramatic. It's high camp. When would you ever talk about an AMC ad before?

From merch and memes to parodies and audience participation rituals, Gen Z fans can't get enough of the AMC Theatres commercial starring Nicole Kidman.

Jarett Wieselman  
@JarettSays

The audience at #ScreamMovie last night audibly quoted and cheered for Nicole Kidman's AMC commercial. I love being gay.



David Mack  
@davidmackau

if you were the guy who saluted the nicole kidman amc ad at the May 28 screening of top gun at the universal citywalk amc in los angeles, please please dm me i am begging you



12:19 PM · Sep 2, 2022

8,664 Retweets 636 Quotes 180.6K Likes 2,965 Bookmarks

Duchess Twigglyspat the Cinema Cat  
@loquaciousmuse

OMG where are my Nicole Kidman AMC ad stans look what @xoxoGG got omg I'm dying omg



4:55 PM · Dec 25, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

adam  
@adamjmoussa

the baffling Nicole Kidman AMC video has sent me into a tailspin



HEARTBREAK FEELS GOOD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS

We Make Movies Better.

Wes Ambrecht  
@iamwesley

I've been to 4 movies in the last 10 days and, at 3 of them, nearly sell-out crowds have recited the Nicole Kidman AMC commercial script like a sing-along.

John Rogers  
@jonrog1 · Feb 14

COVID may have damaged the movie business, but what will kill it is the 20 minute hard sell about how great it is to be back at the movies before every movie.

I'm IN THE THEATER. You do not need to convince me to come here, as I "am, NECESSARILY, here in order to see this".

Show this thread

2:15 PM · Feb 14, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone

new year same look same collin  
@collinsapera

when you die, Nicole Kidman watches your life in an empty AMC theater and determines your fate by pointing her thumb up or down

2:16 PM · Sep 8, 2021 · Twitter for iPad

Alex Wyse  
@alexwyse

if you're in an AMC and you don't give Nicole Kidman entrance applause when she steps in that puddle then you hate gays sorry folks I dont make the rules

11:37 AM · Feb 7, 2022 · Twitter Web App

# GEN Z IS DRAWN TO ANYTHING THAT IS OVER-THE-TOP, OUT-OF-POCKET, AND OFF-THE-WALL\*

41%

PAY MORE ATTENTION TO BRANDS THAT USE HUMOR IN MARKETING

35%

SAY HUMOROUS MARKETING MAKES THEM LIKE A BRAND MORE

14%

FIND HUMOROUS MARKETING ANNOYING

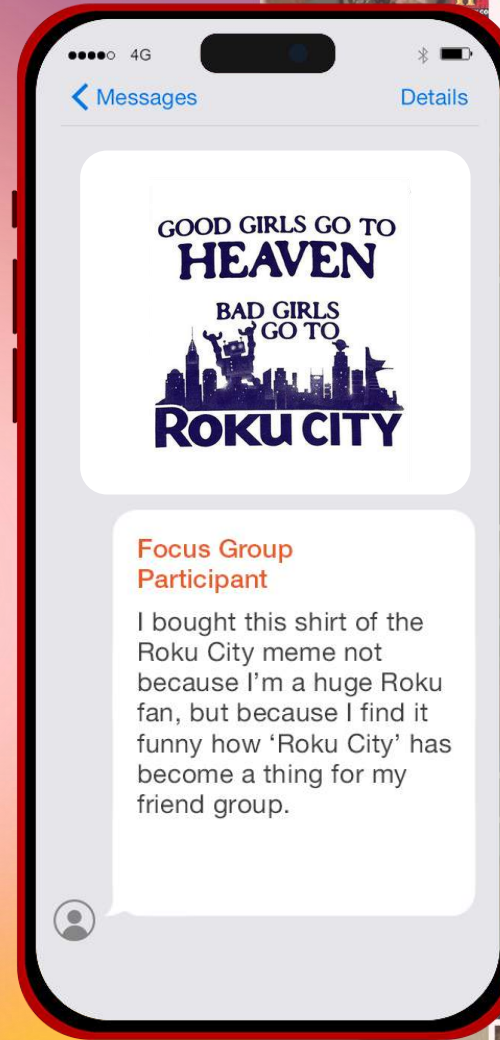


Rebel canned water company Liquid Death teamed up with drugstore mainstay e.l.f. for an unlikely makeup collab that sold out in just 45 minutes.\*\*

# GEN Z HAS REDEFINED MEME CULTURE

Gen Z has taken the concept of memes to new heights by infusing them with deeper layers of meaning, cultural references, and social commentary.

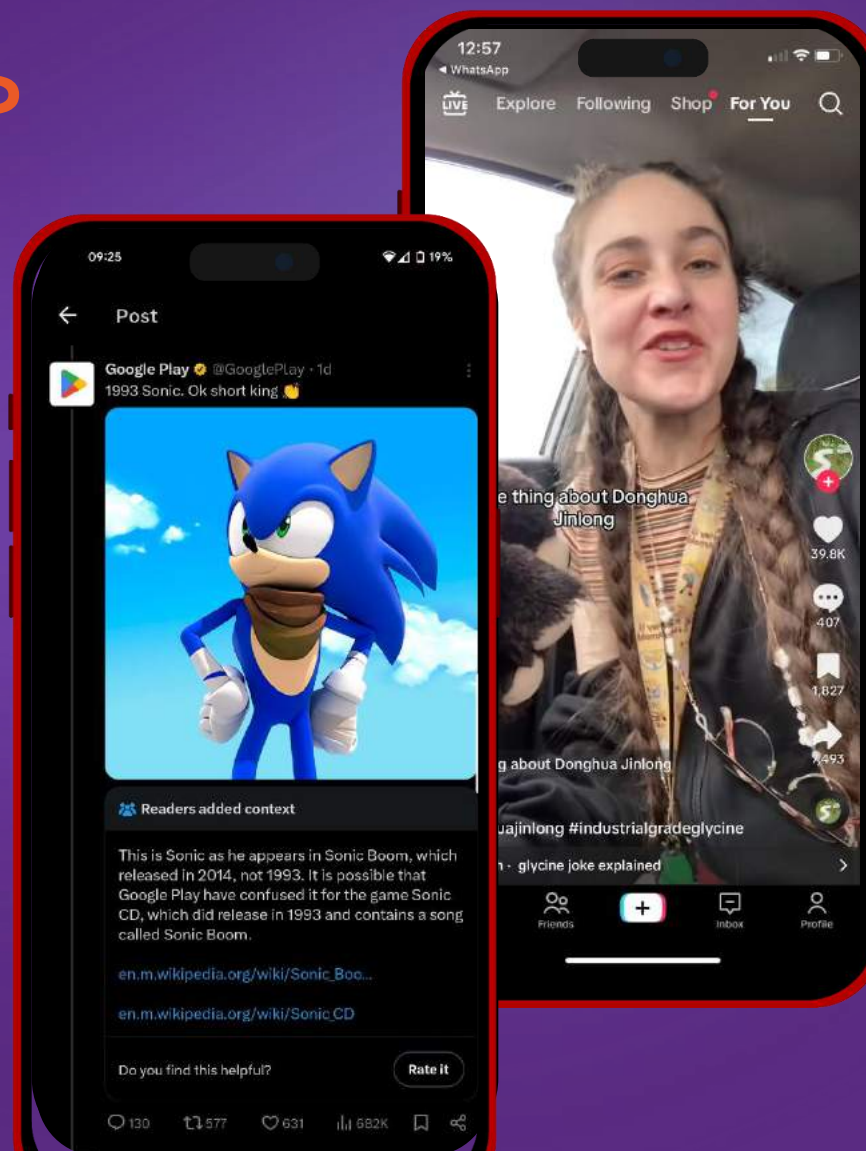
Memes have become a language of their own – and the brands that speak fluently often inspire brand loyalty or a product purchase.



## WHEN BRANDS BECOME MEMES: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

For some brands, getting in on the joke shows that they are attuned to Gen Z conversations. However, those who don't speak meme fluently may just as easily find themselves branded cringe.

Google Play attempted to get in on the “As You Scroll, He / She Gets Older” Twitter / X trend and went viral for all the wrong reasons. Sonic superfans took to reader context notes and other social media platforms to decry the mislabeled images, with one TikTok user questioning if the brand had “replaced their social media manager with an AI program.”



Chinese glycine supplier Donghua Jinlong became a surprise sensation after its advertising videos on TikTok spawned an army of Gen Z fans.

Despite calling the sudden popularity unexpected, the 45-year-old company quickly embraced this newfound fame, even creating official Donghua Jinlong merchandise available exclusively to fans who post about the company.

**CONTRARY TO THE BELIEF  
THAT COMMENT SECTIONS  
ARE DISMISSIVE SPACES**

**THEY ARE VIBRANT AND  
CRITICAL FORUMS FOR  
DIALOGUE, CONNECTION,  
AND ENGAGEMENT**

**- OFFERING A UNIQUE  
RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING  
OPPORTUNITY FOR BRANDS.**

Brands initiating conversation  
leads to significant  
engagement, challenging the  
notion that Gen Z  
predominantly starts debates.

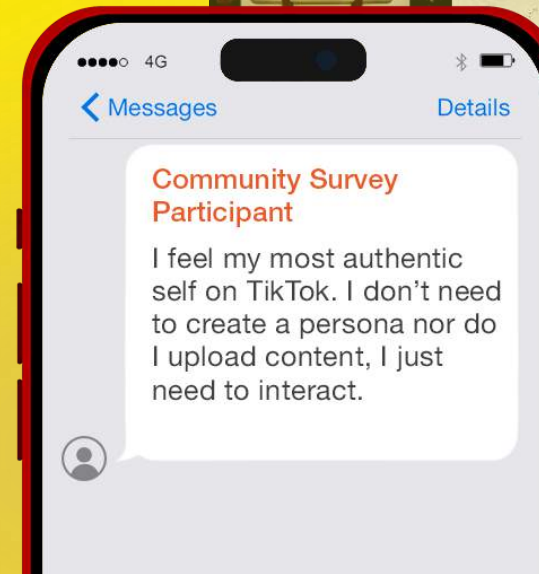
**43%**

of Gen Z is comfortable with brands  
commenting and reacting to Gen Z.

# ON TIKTOK, BRANDS SOMETIMES FIND HIGHER ENGAGEMENT THROUGH COMMENTING ON VIRAL VIDEOS VERSUS CREATING THEIR OWN CONTENT

TikTok's algorithm rewards discovery and encourages users to interact with the content they find most relatable, providing fertile ground for brands to be discovered by consumers in the comment section.

In one instance, fast-fashion retailer Urban Outfitters garnered more likes on a single comment beneath a user's viral video than its entire following on the platform.



# KEY INSIGHTS

## FOR BRANDS

Don't limit content to what feels "relevant" – unexpected engagement has seen high success and account growth.

Personification is a key pillar seen across successful social media accounts that Gen Z loves.

Stick to one main humor archetype and create content around it.



MACRO-THEME 3

THE MANY

# THIRD PLACES





THERE IS NO MORE SINGULAR "THIRD PLACE" FOR A GENERATION THAT IS EVERYWHERE ALL OF THE TIME.

## **INSTEAD, WE HAVE A ZEGOSYSTEM**

(ZEGOS + ECOSYSTEM)

AT THE INTERSECTION OF TRADITIONAL THIRD PLACES SUCH AS CAFES, GYMS, PARKS, AND BARS, AS WELL AS DIVERSE, NICHE COMMUNITIES FOUND BOTH "IRL" AND "URL."

# AT THE HEART OF THE ZEGOSYSTEM IS GEN Z'S PROPENSITY TO WORLD-BUILD AROUND THEIR PASSIONS

- bridging the gap between the psychological benefits of a virtual community and the positive impact that comes from in-person interaction.

DESPITE THE PERCEPTION THAT GEN Z IS ONLY HANGING OUT ONLINE, THEY SPEND NEARLY AS MUCH TIME HANGING OUT IN PERSON

52%

hang out with their friends online at least once a week.

50%

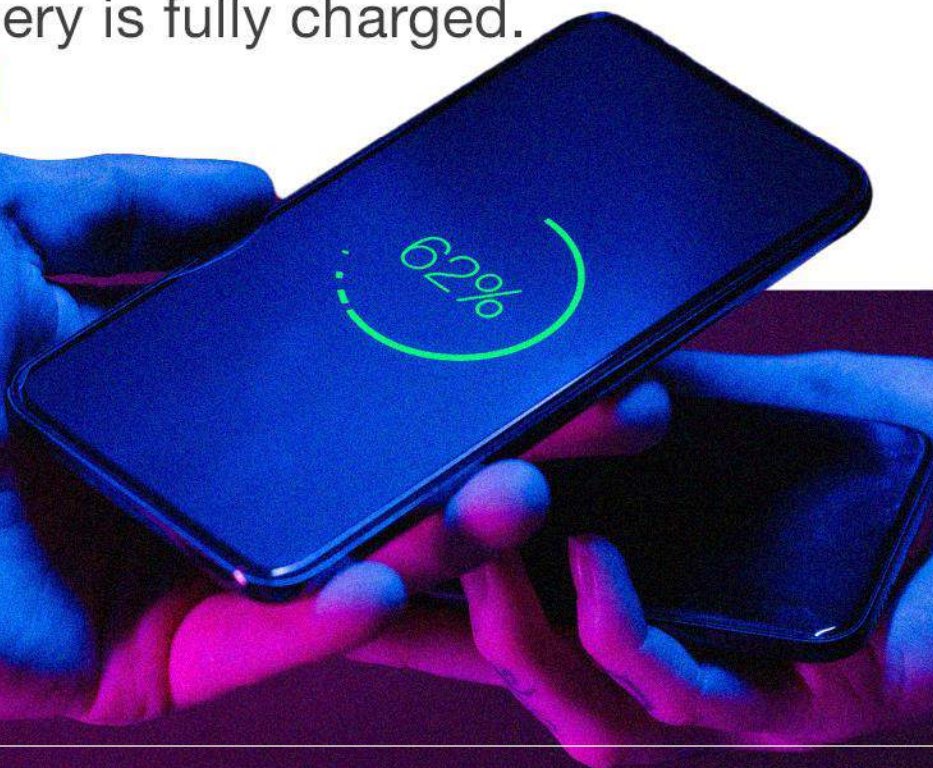
go out with their friends in person at least once a week.

59%

say they would go out even more often if money weren't an issue.

## Focus Group Participant

When I'm feeling social, I will go out alone.  
When I'm not feeling social, I will go out with friends. My friends are like my security blanket and I'd rather meet new people when my social battery is fully charged.



WHEN ASKED WHAT TYPE OF

# EXPERIENCES

GEN Z PREFERS THE MOST  
OUT OF THOSE LISTED BELOW

53%

say simple intimate experiences that enable me to easily connect and interact with friends around me

21%

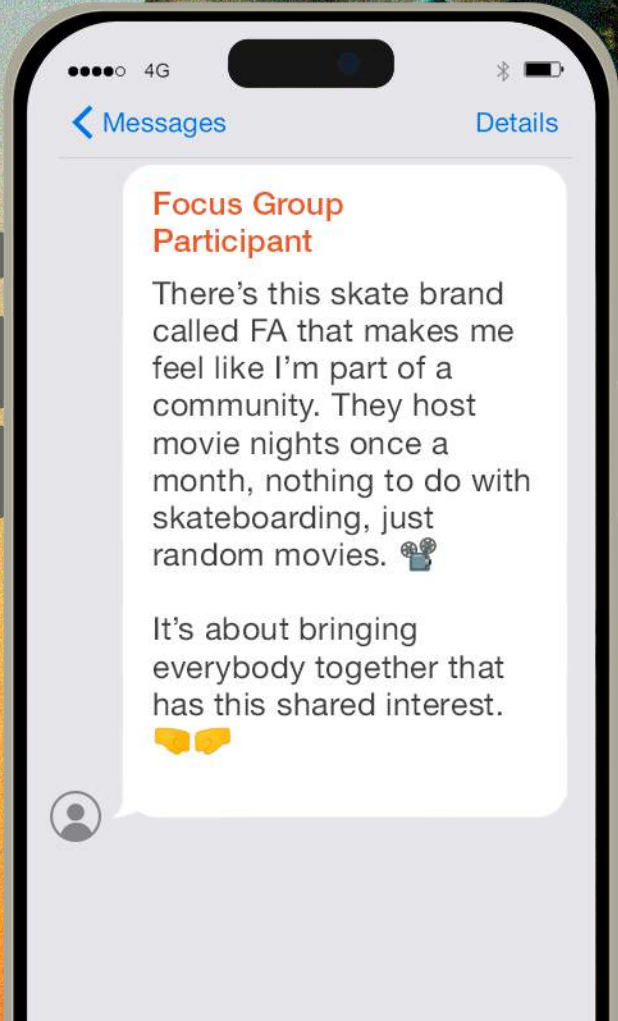
say traditional experiences like going to a bar, concert, etc.

15%

say visually appealing, “Instagram-worthy” experiences that I can share on social media

11%

say immersive experiences that leverage cool technology (i.e. The Sphere in Las Vegas)



## FOR GEN Z, SMALL EXPERIENCES CAN BECOME UPLIFTING MOMENTS (LITERALLY)

Seeking to showcase the Vertuo Pop machine to younger audiences with limited kitchen space, Nespresso and AD partnered for the Vertuo Pop Cafe series.

Kicking off at the Condé Nast offices in New York City, the experience unfolded within the confines of a mere 35 sq ft elevator. Here, guests were invited to experience Vertuo coffee two at a time, providing an unexpectedly intimate and immersive experience.



# KEY INSIGHTS

## FOR BRANDS

Gen Z loves a good experience, but unlike millennials, they place priority on experiences that enable intimacy, discovery, and collaboration.

Platforms like TikTok and Instagram reside at the center of the Zegosystem - but there is a unique opportunity for brands to serve as facilitators, creating spaces for like-minded people to connect and ultimately building greater brand affinity.



**IT'S NOT ABOUT CAPTURING  
THE EXPERIENCE, IT'S  
ABOUT LIVING IT**



**BRANDS THAT  
UNDERSTAND HOW TO  
ENRICH THE COMMUNITY  
EXPERIENCE STAND OUT**



**MACRO-THEME 4**

THE NEW PATH TO

# PURCHASE



**GEN Z MAKES PURCHASE  
DECISIONS BASED ON**

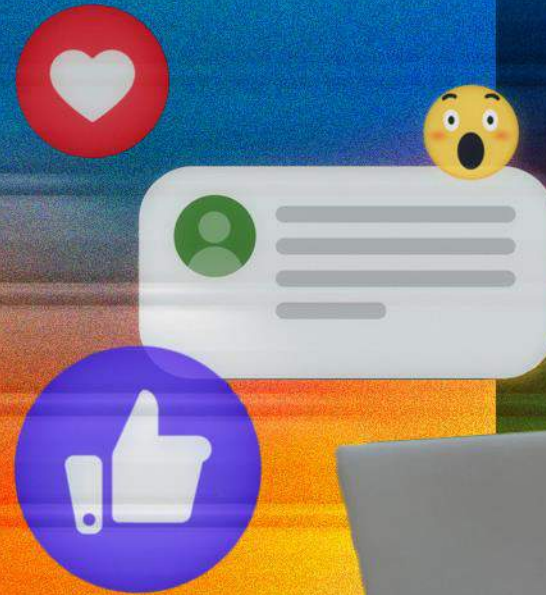
# SOCIAL CURRENCY

Trends and social validation significantly influence the decision-making process, with Gen Z often buying to share their experiences online.



**Much like their identity fluidity, the “why behind the buy” depends on which Zego they are at that moment.**

**These purchase decisions are often driven by the desire for status within their niche communities.**

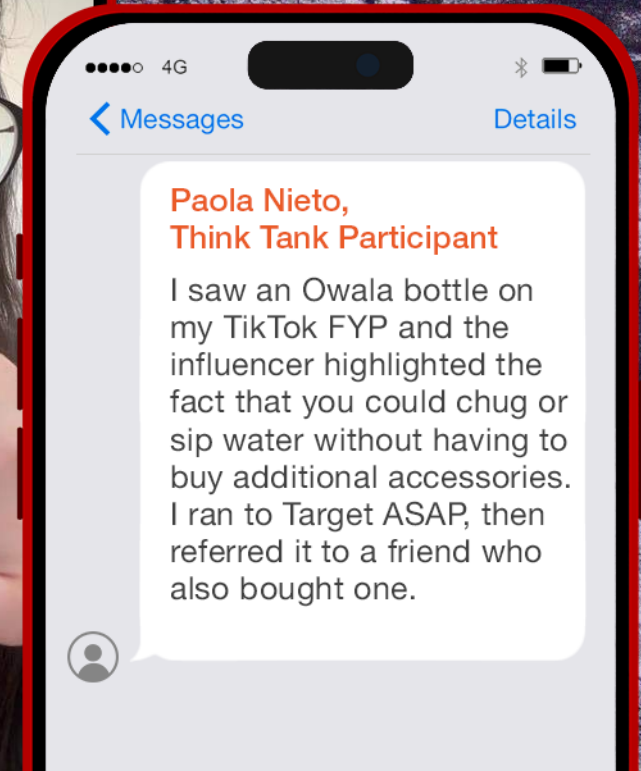


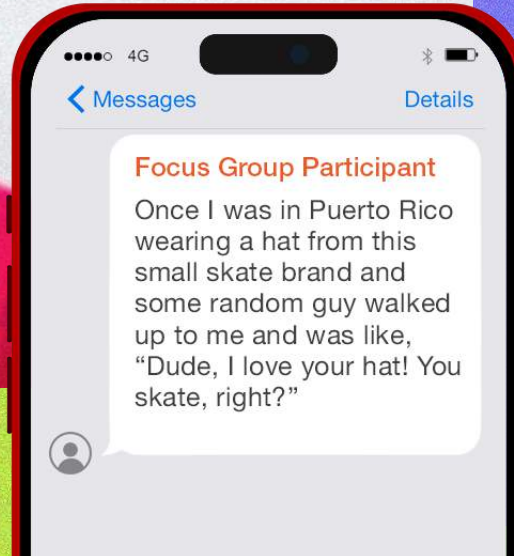
21%

of Gen Z, when asked to rank their motivations for their last few non-essential purchases ranked either validation / positive reviews by a peer, validation / positive reviews by influencers, or having seen it on a TikTok community or similar as their top motivation.

53%

of Gen Z say they were exposed to a product just 2-4 times before deciding to purchase it (e.g. saw a friend with the product, saw an online ad, saw in-store).





WHEN ASKED IF THEY WOULD RATHER GO ON A TRIP OR BUY AN ITEM THEY'VE HAD THEIR EYE ON, ASSUMING BOTH ARE OF EQUAL MONETARY VALUE,

**58% OF GEN Z WOULD CHOOSE THE ITEM.**

For Gen Z, product purchases can lead to unexpected moments of connection that they consider just as valuable or more valuable than an experience.

**FROM**

**RETAIL TAINMENT**

**TO META TAINMENT**

**It's their world, we're just living in it.**

**We know that Gen Z wants to feel catered to.**

They embody the concept of “main character energy” and expect brands to build relationships around them.



**GEN Z WANTS BRAND  
RELATIONSHIPS TO BE**

# RECIPROCAL

The “retailtainment” era saw a shift in retail that went from transaction to interaction.

Now it’s about co-creation and collaboration – which is the new personalization.



# COLLABORATION REQUIRES AN EQUAL VALUE EXCHANGE

THE GOOD, THE BAD, AND THE HUNGRY



## CHIPOTLE TIKTOK MENU HACKS (2023)

Viral TikTok food critics Keith Lee and Alexis Frost created two custom quesadilla hacks that flooded the feeds of their more than 14 million followers and resulted in Chipotle earning more than 30.6 million views, 3.7 million likes, and 47,200 comments. Subsequently, Chipotle quickly mobilized to create the official "Fajita Quesadilla Hack" and "Keithadilla" limited edition menu items to let fans easily order the delicious hacks for themselves.



## KEITH LEE CALLS OUT CHIPOTLE (2024)

Just a year after the "Keithadilla," Keith Lee reviewed Chipotle again—this time giving the fast-food chain a mediocre 2/10 rating and the Keithadilla itself a shocking 2.5/10. The review sparked a so-called "revolution" as TikTok users flooded the comments and created their own viral videos to vent frustration over a perceived portion-size problem. Some users have even called for customers to walk out if they notice portion shrinkage.



# CULTURE

**IS BECOMING A  
COLLECTION OF FADS**



**AND FOR BRANDS, ONE BLINK  
IS ENOUGH TO MISS OUT**



## THE LORE RUNS DEEP: TIKTOK RIZZ PARTY X MARC JACOBS

Shortly after a video showing a group of boys dancing to “Carnival” by Kanye West and Ty Dolla Sign was posted, TikTokers gave nicknames to group members and created in-depth videos examining the complex group dynamics depicted in the original video.

Capitalizing on this micro-moment fad, designer fashion brand Marc Jacobs collaborated with two of these teens on a low-budget, high-energy spoof that has become the brand’s most-viewed TikTok video ever and put Marc Jacobs on the map with a new generation of buyers.





**65%**

**AGREE STAYING ON TOP  
OF POPULAR TRENDS HAS  
BECOME MORE DIFFICULT  
IN RECENT YEARS**

**45%**

**AGREE MISSING OUT ON A  
POPULAR TREND HAS SOCIAL  
CONSEQUENCES**

# KEY INSIGHTS

## FOR BRANDS

Targeting Gen Z based on fleeting trends is less permanent than amplifying their already-existing, unique relationships with your products and services.

However, brands can successfully leverage cultural micro-moments if they react at the right time with the right message.

# MEET THE USC ANNENBERG X ACC THINK TANK TEAM



Matthew  
Calma



Samantha  
Carpintero



Fernando  
Cienfuegos



Hien  
Dong



Victoria  
Fetzer



Midori  
Jenkins



Andre  
Kar



Michael  
Kittilson



Arantxa  
Landa



Paola  
Nieto



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