

5 things you need to know about 'Zoomers'

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11 Jun 2021

In honour of [Youth Month](#) we're getting to know our Zoomers better. Zoomer is another word for Generation Z, people born between 1997 and 2015, with age 24 being the oldest.



Photo by Anna Shvets from [Pexels](#)

The word is a play on Boomer (from Baby Boomer generation) and the rapid, interconnected technology they've been born into. A description of a Zoomer is used in this sentence from The Urban Dictionary:

“ I can't stand those Zoomers, all they do is use their phones all day and watch TikTok videos!" A harsh but not uncommon generalisation about the young people who are about to run the world. My neighbours may or may not have heard me swearing about the PlayStation and how it sucks my son into the screen! ”

Here are five lesser understood things to know (and love) about Zoomers.

1. “Be the change” entrepreneurs

Growing up with role models such as billionaire tech entrepreneur, philanthropist and co-founder Twitter, Jack Dorsey and 4 Hour Work Week lifestyle guru Tim Ferris, many Zoomers are very ambitious in a way that envisions them monetising things which will change the world for the better. This means being driven to be their own leaders of their own business (or businesses) rather than joining a business, working their way up and taking over someone else's company.

2. Start anything, achieve anything

According to a recent Nielsen study, about 54% of Gen Z said that they wanted to start their own company rather than going on to study at tertiary education level. These Zoomers are keen to live a more debt-free and purposeful life, which includes finding ways to live more sustainably than previous generations.

Not going to university is less a priority than other generations, as many believe they can start anything and achieve anything. There are more opportunities for work in fields which have never existed before (virtual reality consultant, user experience manager etc) which is underpinned by the desire to not start out in life with massive and hard to pay off debt.

3. Flying with clipped wings - uncomfortable, vulnerable and strong

Not a lot of research has been done yet on the effect of the pandemic on our youth. But the “Growing, growing gone” generation, who had their hearts set on travelling, have had their wings clipped during the global shutdown because of the pandemic.

More than their elders, these youngsters have also had to find resources of inner strength and to dig deep in response to Covid-19. According to the Pew Research Center survey, half of the oldest Gen Zers in the US reported that they or someone in their home had lost a job or taken a cut in pay because of the outbreak, and this would be similar if not worse in South Africa.

Those of working age are also particularly vulnerable to job losses as many work in high-risk service sector industries (food, travel, entertainment etc). It's a time of discomfort and vulnerability for Zoomers and (generalisation ahead) they have shown their strength in looking for alternative ways to earn a living, including leveraging what they are good at – being disruptive digital leaders.

4. Tribe work not teamwork

Zoomers are drawn to finding tribes in which they resonate with, and the isolation of social distancing at a time when they should be at their most social makes this even more important. Being isolated is very real in their lives, which is why finding “screen tribes” online is so understandable.

The danger here is of Zoomers finding themselves in silos of similar thoughts and ideas, which is why we should try to create real life, engaging communal situations for them. Hint here: entice them rather than tell them, which brings me to my last point.

5. Don't candy coat it

With a love of freedom and clear ideas around choice and responsibility (they can choose, and they are responsible), communication with Zoomers is likely to be more successful if we are radically authentic. And they will be more likely to engage if we communicate with them from a place which shows them what they can do and not what they can't do.

There are about 4.7 billion individuals born after 1981, making up 64% of the world's population and Zoomers are projected to surpass Millennials as the biggest generation - so it's important we get this right.

Let's encourage and enable our youngsters to make great things, show them that they can change the world and don't try and candy coat reality – they probably know more about what's going on than we do.

ABOUT KELLY MCGILLIVRAY

Putting productions of every shape and size together for over 20 years. Now CEO of TheSquad Creative Events and on a mission! Creating brilliantly planned, well executed and bodacious event experiences. Teamwork, underpinned by strategic planning with passion and expertise. That's what it's all about.

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