

So Gen Z is moving into the workplace - What now?

 By [Fagan Abraham](#), issued by [Dentsu](#)

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The world's attention has been held captive by the omnipresent millennial generation with their 'quit my job and pursue my dreams' mentality. What we haven't noticed is the younger sibling at the table, wise from watching. Gen Z, otherwise known as iGen, have extremely different ideas of what they want their lives to look like. Having been born anywhere from 1996s/early 2000s to present the oldest Gen Zers are anywhere from 17 to 21 years old.

This next-gen society is eagerly waiting to make their mark on the work place and the landscape in general. Along with this radical wave of change comes a challenge of traditions. In an era where the youth has never had to ask anyone for directions, it is important that we make every effort to understand not only how this audience behaves and how they differ from previous generations but also how we as brands need to change going forward. Here are three snapshots to aid in understanding this futuristic market:

A change of inter-personal relations

From the crib these Gen Zers have been plugged into a connected era and it is due to this hyper connectivity that a global mindedness has been developed. With so much knowledge at their fingertips they've had the ability learn ahead of their time, affording them the opportunity to break into a corporate space earlier than their predecessors, the millennials. They have adopted a work during college, keep clear of personal debt mind-set.

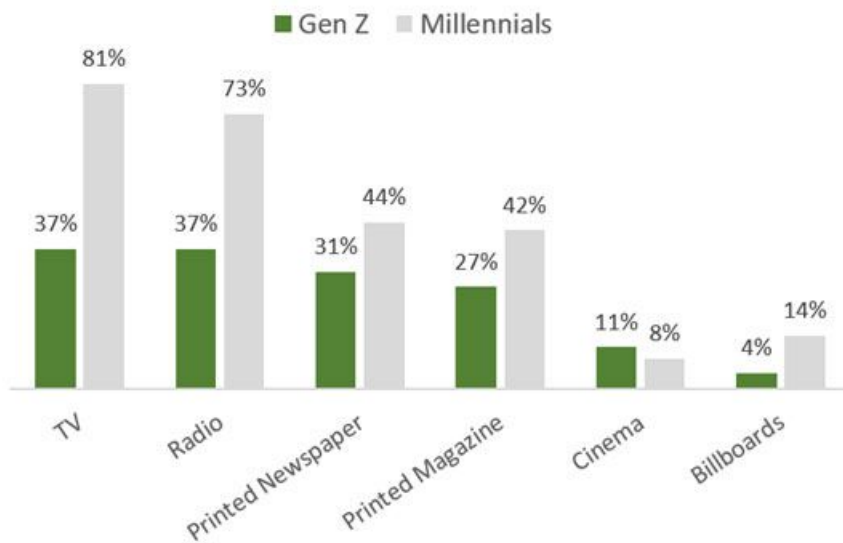
So what does this mean for the workplace? Culture, culture, culture and the redefining of entertainment, media consumption and marketing 'language'. These Gen Zers are empowered and connected and they value authenticity, creativity, uniqueness, shareability and recognition.

A benefit of this tech-forward generation, is their unperturbed aura when it comes to change. In an ever changing tech society this quality will prove to be of substantial benefit. This advantage works hand in hand with upcoming artificial intelligence and the unforeseeable future of tech. These young people have an unmatched level of comfort to adopt and utilise new technologies.

A change in media consumption

Setting aside the cost of data in South Africa, the growth of video on demand is hard to deny, so the question remains; what is to come for traditional media platforms? With Gen Z spending over 15 hours a week on their smartphones it is critical that we adopt strategies that engage the iGeneration in this mobile environment. With Gen Zers watching nearly 11 hours less TV than baby boomers and nearly 2 hours less than millennials it's crucial to be ever-present in online video environments.

MEDIA CONSUMPTION



Source: Limelight Consulting Bespoke Media Research
Jan-June 2017

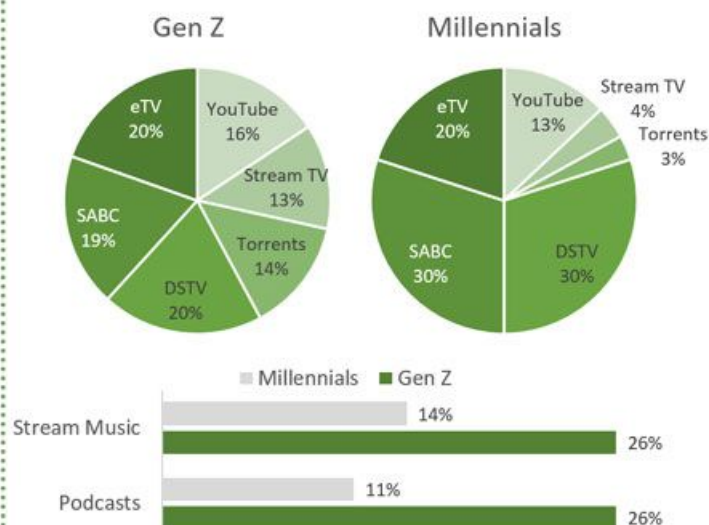


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It's come as a result of this connected upbringing that TV no longer captivates and resonates with this audience. While TV still remains the reach king of media, in this market's eyes it's considered a one-way street not allowing for any real dialogue or connection.

So how does this translate into tangible media insights? Real-time engagement. The idea of living in the moment is perfectly complimented and encouraged through the likes of Snapchat and Instagram stories; both of which disappear after 24 hours. For brands, it all boils down to hyper-relevance in timing, messaging, placement and call to action.

CONTENT CONSUMPTION



Source: Limelight Consulting Bespoke Media Research
Jan-June 2017



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A change in career goals

With many of the Gen Z market seeing 'influencer' as a career choice, on par with studying a degree it's plain to see how vastly different their thinking is. This dream has manifested everyday on their Instagram feeds, seeing their favourite influencers being paid to live their dream. Gone are the days when working 9 to 5 just to survive was the norm. The focus is now on this dream job and their greatest aspiration is to be in this position within 10 years. Goals are around job satisfaction and friendly work environments. Key considerations:

1. Enabling their entrepreneurial drive
2. Rewards and recognition
3. Honesty and transparency
4. Honouring performance not seniority
5. Aiding in the achievement of their dream job

So what captivates this market?

1. Method of communication
2. Relevance
3. Customisation

With time being of the essence, it is essential that communication is punchy and to the point – snackable content, if you will. Gen Z hates ads. It is easy for them to look the other direction so brands need to appear native to the environment that they're in, as it's no longer acceptable to have intrusive advertising. The emphasis should be placed on what brands can do to help them, rather than what you're selling.

The mentality is "I'm on a journey, you're either assisting me to reach my goal or you're not welcome." Interaction speaks volumes over a pre-roll ad which is why engagement through an ongoing, meaningful conversation should be the primary strategy for reaching Gen Z. Start listening and responding because this market needs to feel heard.



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ABOUT FAGAN ABRAHAM

Fagan is a Media Strategist at OMD, SA's largest media agency. She is a creative and driven young talent with a passion for innovative and unique media.

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