

How college recruiters can appeal to Generation Z

[Jessica Pantalleresco](#) | November 14, 2018

So you've spent years studying the ins-and-outs of Millennials. You can reference every Kylie and Kim meme, know exactly how to pronounce Acai, and some folks even call you the Millennial whisperer. However, just like radio vs. Spotify and lettuce vs. kale, Millennials are no longer the kings of college recruitment. There is a new generation of high school seniors with their sights set on college, Generation Z.

Generation Z are students born after 1995. [They make up 25.9% of the United States population, the largest percentage, and contribute \\$44 billion to the American economy.](#) Members of this generation are just now starting to enter colleges and universities. However, if you think Generation Z is just an extension of Millennials, you're wrong. We're going to take a look into this new species to reveal the hidden secrets of America's newest generation of high school students. We'll be uncovering the answers to your burning questions like who are they and where did they come from?

They Are True Digital Natives

The first thing most people note when they talk about Gen Z is the group's use of technology. Their techie persona is similar to Millennials, but there are a few differences between the two generations. While Millennials are tech-savvy, having grown up with emerging technology, Generation Z is tech-reliant.

Connecting with Gen Z also means perfecting eight-second messages and finding ways to differentiate content in a hyper-paced social media sphere [according to a Vision Critical study.](#) While their attention span is less than that of a goldfish, it doesn't mean they're not paying attention. Rather, they have a more evolved and efficient information filter compared to other generations. Gen Z process and sort through messages quickly until they find something that appeals to them.

Generation We, Not Generation Me

More so than Millennials, Gen Z wants to collaborate; they want to share and be a part of a community. This is something college admissions offices might need to consider when attempting to reach members of Generation Z. Furthermore, they are not passive content consumers—just telling students about a college or program isn't enough.

This could mean many things for higher ed institutions. For example, colleges and universities need to engage Gen Z with information about what communities and activities they might be involved in at their school. Particularly through the use of visual content.

They Trust Their Friends and Family

Overall, Generation Z has a different relationship with authority than Millennials. The heroes and people that members of Gen Z trust are those who are close to them. One of the biggest factors in Generation Z's buying decisions is word of mouth recommendations.

Admissions offices should take note of this. As a result, to attract prospective students it will take more than flashy content. They trust opinions of real people. Therefore, think about incorporating influencer campaigns into your recruitment stack.

Generation Z is Practical

Generation Z is more realistic and pragmatic than Millennials. They grew up in an incredibly complex time in American history. While Millennials came of age in a time of excess, Generation Z witnessed the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and the Great Recession.

Additionally, Millennials believed that they would graduate college, find a job, and prosper—Generation Z doesn't necessarily believe this. They consider the financial burden on themselves and their parents, the increasing alternatives to a four year school, and the idea of entrepreneurship over becoming an employee.

For colleges and universities, this means careful consideration of how they speak to members of Gen Z, and potentially discussing the pros and cons of attending a higher education institution.

Big Problems Require Big Solutions

One of the things that caught colleges off guard when Millennials started to matriculate was how much they liked, and pursued, community service. Generation Z also has a philanthropic streak, just not in the same way that Millennials do.

Because Generation Z was raised with social media and instant communication, they are more aware of global problems than Millennials. Hence, they still want to pursue social change, but not in the same way that Millennials did. Specifically, they want to, and believe they can, end world hunger but don't think working 8 hours at a food bank will do the job. In short, they believe in radical solutions to global issues.

To learn more about ways to capture the hearts and minds of Generation Z read our [eBook on recruiting to a younger generation](#).

<https://www.youvisit.com/learning-center/blog/how-college-recruiters-can-appeal-to-generation-z/?alid=eyJpIjoNTlaa2VKY2NCcFpzOWhHSylsInQiOilrd2grQmhEdE1vM0xLeWdSMTNFXC9Kdz09In0%253D>