

## **Consumers of Tomorrow: Insights and Observations about Generation Z**

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Being born in 1997 places me within Generation Z, a group that has been described as the first generation to grow up fully immersed in the digital world (Integreon, 2023). I remember the excitement of creating my first MySpace page in middle school. Choosing a “Top 8” friends list and customizing my page background and adding music and glitter graphics. Looking back, it was my first introduction to how technology could be personal and creative. I learned quickly about how online presence mattered, something that the Integreon report connects to Gen Z’s heightened attention to “design matters” and online identity (Integreon, 2023). That early exposure to social media taught me how digital platforms can impact relationships and identity.

Cell phones also played a major role in my teenage years. I remember texting under the desk in class, flipping my phone shut fast whenever a teacher walked by. I started to rely on my cell phone for everything like listening to music, taking pictures, using social media, and eventually, my schoolwork. I still remember when my school gave us an iPad to take notes for our classes. At first it felt strange, almost like cheating, because I was so used to filling up spiral notebooks. But quickly it became normal, and I appreciated how much easier it was to organize notes and highlight material.

When I got to college, technology became even more central to how I learned. When the pandemic hit and everything moved to Zoom, I actually loved being at home. It felt comfortable and less stressful than walking across campus or sitting in a crowded lecture hall. I could wake up, make a cup of coffee, and log right into class from my bedroom. I liked being able to rewatch recordings when I missed something and pause lectures so I could take better notes. In a way, it gave me more control over my learning than I ever had before. While some people felt

disconnected during that time, I found that the flexibility and independence worked really well for me.

My generational identity makes me adaptable to both older and newer technologies. Because I have experienced so many different types of technology throughout my life, I often find myself helping and explaining technology to others. For example, I have helped older coworkers learn to use digital collaboration tools, while I have also learned from younger people about trends like TikTok. Integreon (2023) highlights that each generation brings different strengths to technology use, whether it is attention to detail, preference for design, or value of social responsibility. Recognizing this helps me understand how I can support others.

While I am part of Generation Z, it is important to recognize that other generations approach technology differently. Understanding their strategies can help me learn new ways to use technology effectively and support others in bridging generational gaps. For Baby Boomers, a helpful strategy is patience and step by step guidance. I have noticed that older coworkers often prefer hands on demonstrations rather than written instructions, so walking them through a new program slowly and allowing them to ask questions builds confidence and understanding. For Generation X, the strategy I find effective is emphasizing efficiency and practicality. Many in this generation value tools that save time and simplify tasks, so when helping them navigate new technology, I focus on showing features that streamline work rather than overwhelming them with every option. Millennials, a useful strategy is highlighting tools that help manage attention and workflow. Many in this generation grew up with early smartphones, social media, and multitasking, which can sometimes lead to distraction. Showing them apps or techniques to organize tasks, limit notifications, or streamline work can help them use technology more

efficiently and stay productive. By recognizing these generational differences, I can adjust my approach to support others while continuing to learn new ways of using technology myself.

## **References**

Integreon. (2011, November). Consumers of Tomorrow: Insights and Observations about Generation Z.