

**sprout**social

# How To Reach Digital Natives on Social Media

Insights from the Sprout Social Index™ XVII: Accelerate





As Generation Z flies the coop and joins Millennials in the workforce, the two generations are poised to overtake Baby Boomers as the dominant U.S. consumers. Brand competition to win their business is heating up.

While both generations fall into the category of digital natives, there are important distinctions to recognize. Clear aesthetic lines are being drawn—Millennials can keep skinny jeans and side parts, Gen Zers wants a loose fit and middle parts—but the nuances go deeper than that.

Let's take a closer look at the data from the latest Sprout Social Index™ to identify what marketers need to know to win over digital natives on social.





# Visual social networks pull ahead in popularity

Millenials are loyal Facebook users and there are no signs of that changing. However, both sides of the digital native generation embrace visual-first social networks, (especially Instagram and YouTube) and they want brands to do the same.

Brands have yet to find the sweet spot on TikTok, but those that lay the groundwork now and start testing content on that platform could have an edge with Gen Z.

**Do:** Explore creative content and storytelling ideas for visually-driven social networks.

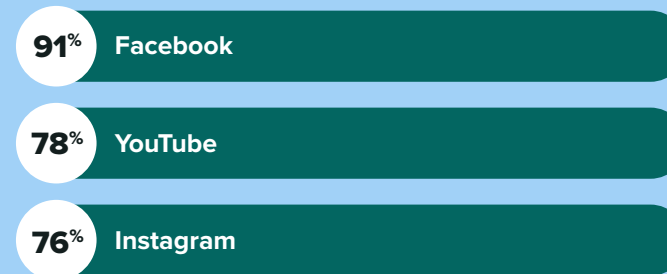
**Don't:** Forget about long-standing favorite platforms like Facebook.

## Top social networks among Gen Z & Millennials

18-23 years old (Gen Z)

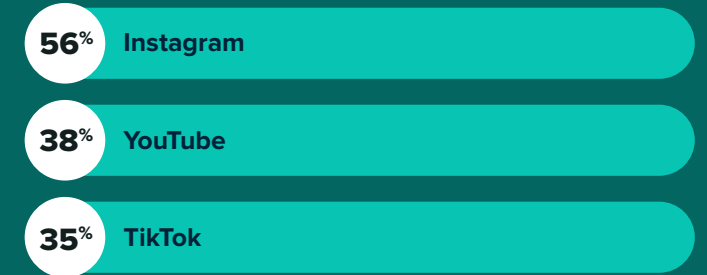


24-39 years old (Millennials)

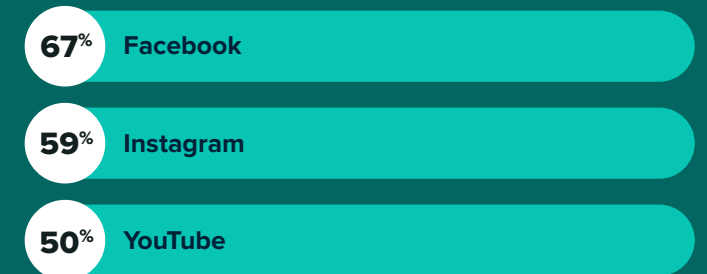


## Top social networks Gen Z & Millennials want to see brands use more

18-23 years old (Gen Z)



24-39 years old (Millennials)



## Gen Z wants to be understood

Prioritizing visual channels alone won't guarantee that Gen Z will engage with your brand. To earn their recognition as best in class on social, brands must create memorable content.

What makes content memorable is in the eye of the scroller, but one surefire way for a brand to stand out is by showing how well they know their audience. Half of Gen Z consumers (50%) say they're more likely to buy from a brand over a competitor when that brand demonstrates an understanding of what they want and need.

**Creating an outbound content tagging system** is an effective way to track which content themes, messages, formats and other factors resonate most with current and potential customers. Tagging inbound messages also helps your brand collect feedback, identify FAQs and pinpoint other insights that can shape a more targeted content strategy.

A large, light blue number '50' is displayed. Below it, the word 'Fifty' is written in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font.

**percent of Gen Z consumers say they're more likely to buy from a brand over a competitor when that brand demonstrates an understanding of what they want and need.**

**Do:** Use social data to get to know your customers and create more customer-centric content.

**Don't:** Make assumptions about your customers' needs, pain points and interests.

# Millennials want to buy from culturally relevant brands

As Millennials consider which businesses to support, 53% say brands that create culturally relevant content have the edge over competitors. But what exactly does cultural relevance mean to Millennials?

Businesses that keep a finger on the pulse of culture at large can spot trends before they crest and uncover new perspectives that inspire more relevant content.

**Do:** Listen to the voice of culture to share relevant messages and ensure your content is considerate of sensitive current events.

**Don't:** Abandon your brand identity in an attempt to be culturally relevant.

## Millennials consider brands culturally relevant on social when they

Ordered by rank

- 1 Create content that reflects current events
- 2 Post memes and other internet jokes
- 3 Are on top of timely trends
- 4 Are inclusive of everyone on social media
- 5 Embrace social issues

## Strong social customer service inspires loyalty

When digital natives need customer service from a business, social media is their first stop. Once they get there, their expectations are high.

The case for integrating social into your business's overall customer service strategy has never been stronger—41% of Gen Z and Millennials alike say they would buy from a brand that delivers timely, responsive customer service over a competitor. On the other hand, poor customer service is the number one reason digital natives will unfollow a brand on social.

41  
**Forty-one**

**percent of Gen Z and Millennials alike say they would buy from a brand that delivers timely, responsive customer service over a competitor.**

**Do:** Embrace collaboration between social and customer service teams to build a consistent, omnichannel support strategy.

**Don't:** Expect social teams to deliver customer support in a silo.

## Digital natives trust their peers and verified customers

Knowing how much time Millennials and Gen Z spend on Instagram and YouTube, one might assume they are captivated by influencers. In reality, 37% of Gen Z say they're unlikely to buy from a brand after seeing content from a brand ambassador or influencer, compared to 18% of Millennials.

Digital natives consult their peers and read online reviews to find honest, unbiased information before purchasing products or services.

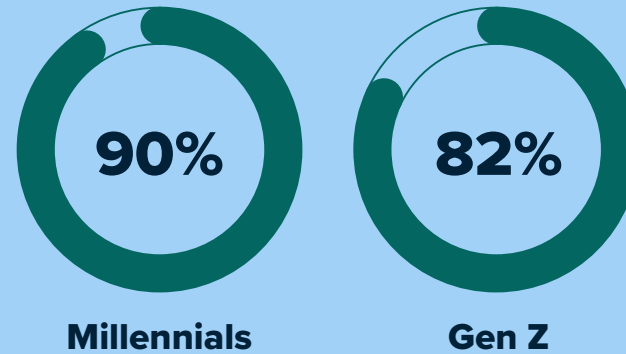
**Do:** Elevate and amplify positive customer reviews as part of your social content strategy.

**Don't:** Assume younger demographics need an influencer endorsement to engage.

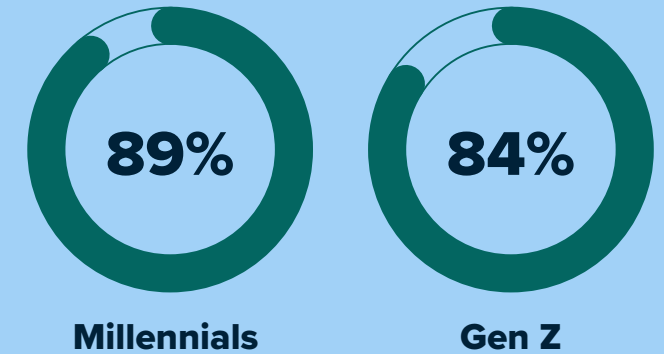
### The likelihood that consumers will purchase from a brand after the following scenarios:

\*Percentages reflect combined “very likely” and “likely” responses

I read reviews from other customers on social media



Someone I trust recommends a product or service



# As consumers' needs evolve, keep listening

As digital natives' preferences and interests evolve, there's one constant that brands can rely on to keep them in the know: social media. Social doesn't just give brands a megaphone: it's a bidirectional tool that empowers brands to empathize and connect with customers.

Social gives brands the power to confirm or reject assumptions about their customers. [\*\*Download this guide\*\*](#) to start harnessing the voice of the customer on social to more effectively reach target audiences on social.





## About the data

The Sprout Social Index™ is a report compiled and released by Sprout Social. To learn more about the data and methodology used, visit the [\*\*Sprout Social Index™, Edition XVII: Accelerate\*\*](#). Graphics are rounded to the nearest whole percentage and may not add up to exactly 100%.

For questions about the data, please contact [\*\*pr@sproutsocial.com\*\*](mailto:pr@sproutsocial.com).

## Sprout Social

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