

PN PURPOSE TRACKER:

Gen Z Joins The Social Justice Movement

WAVE IX

AUGUST 2020

PORTER
NOVELLI 

Every generation is defined by the events that took place during their formative years. World War II. The Cold War. The Civil Rights Movement. The Vietnam War. The Dot-Com Bubble. September 11th. The Great Recession. For Generation Z, that moment is now.

Amid a global health crisis that continues to grow and an economic downturn of massive proportions, the Black Lives Matter movement has reached new heights – drawing attention to hundreds of years of racial injustice deeply embedded into the fabric of society. There’s no doubt this moment of trauma will be the defining moment of their adolescence.

Yet, Generation Z is not running away from the hard conversations, the tough work. This generation is ready to act and activate in the ways they see most effective. But they’re not looking to go it alone – Gen Z knows companies must “do the work” too.

In Wave 9 of Porter Novelli’s Tracker series, we will be diving deeply into the motivations and mandates from this young group of leaders. This data will help business leaders understand this generation’s expectations when it comes to social justice, racial equality, climate change and more – and how to best engage them for action.

Meet Z in 2020.

Gen Z & social justice

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS COMPANIES TO ENGAGE

With the global pandemic as a backdrop, the enthusiasm of this young generation has not waned – even in the face of at-home lockdowns and major life disruptions. Gen Z remains hyper-focused on addressing the many societal ills they see as pressing – and they believe the time has come for companies to play a central role in progress against these issues.

Gen Z feels the urgency for companies to address social justice issues

Two-thirds (66%) of Gen Zers believe it is no longer acceptable for companies to be silent on social justice issues. Further, the sense of urgency to address issues is increasing – as nearly three-quarters (72%) believe companies have more responsibility than ever before to advance social justice.



believe it is no longer acceptable for companies to be silent on social justice issues



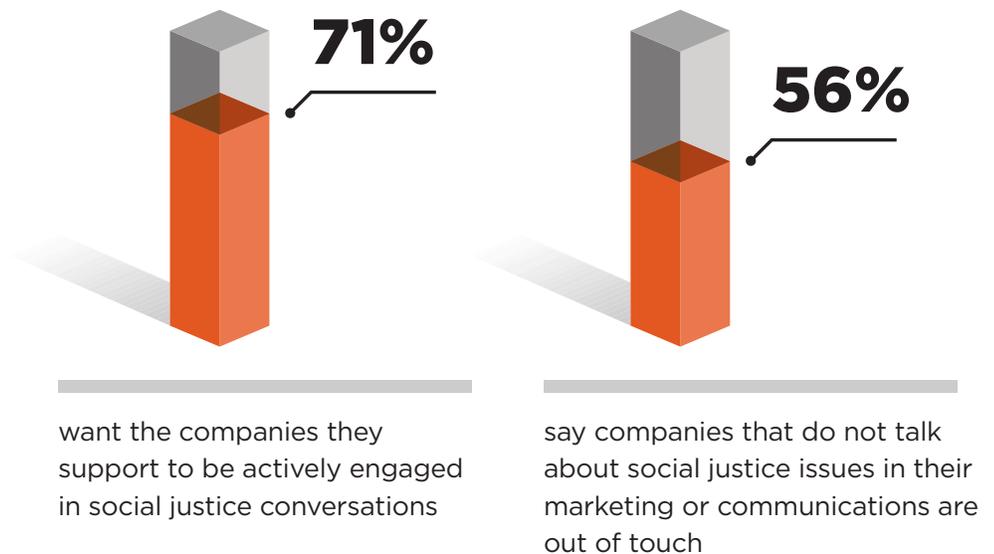
believe companies have more responsibility than ever before to address social justice issues

And brands that aren't ready to engage in the social justice conversation risk irrelevancy among this vocal cohort who sees activism and engagement as par for the course. Seven-in-10 (71%) want the companies they support to be actively engaged in conversations about social justice issues and a further 56 percent go so far as to say companies that do not talk about social justice issues in their marketing or communications are out of touch.

Gen Z & social justice

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS COMPANIES TO ENGAGE

Still, Gen Zers value frankness over flawlessness when it comes to talking about social justice topics, as above all, authenticity rules with this generation. To that end, eight-in-10 (81%) Gen Zers believe a company doesn't have to be perfect when talking about social justice issues, but it should be open and honest.



As we look to the specific issues Gen Zers look to companies to address the list is long and varied. In lock-step with the U.S. average, Gen Zers believe companies must prioritize employee health and safety (92%) as the pandemic rages on. Also, topping the list of priority issues among this generation are racial justice (89%) and sexual harassment (89%) as well as access to healthcare (86%) and women's rights (85%). While Gen Z remains consistent with the U.S. average on many issues, we see the biggest divergences when looking at LGBTQ+ rights and gun control - where this younger cohort is more likely to believe corporate support is needed to support or address these topics.

Gen Z & social justice

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS COMPANIES TO ENGAGE

Gen Z feels it is important for companies to address these issues that are active in the news today:

GEN Z



1. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY



2. RACIAL INEQUALITY / SEXUAL HARASSMENT



3. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



4. WOMEN'S RIGHTS

GEN POP WAVE VII



1. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY



2. ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



3. PRIVACY AND INTERNET SECURITY



4. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Gen Z & social justice

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS COMPANIES TO ENGAGE

Gen Z feels it is important for companies to address these issues that are active in the news today:

	GEN Z	GEN POP WAVE VII
EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND SAFETY	92%	94%
RACIAL EQUALITY	89%	84%
SEXUAL HARASSMENT	89%	88%
ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE	86%	90%
WOMEN'S RIGHTS	85%	83%
PRIVACY AND INTERNET SECURITY	83%	89%
DOMESTIC JOB GROWTH	81%	85%
COST OF HIGHER EDUCATION	79%	74%
CLIMATE CHANGE	77%	75%
IMMIGRATION	76%	75%
VOTING RIGHTS/ACCESS TO VOTING	75%	/
LGBTQ RIGHTS	74%	67%
GUN CONTROL	72%	65%
FAKE NEWS	60%	60%

Expectations around racial inequality

HOW GEN ZERS EXPECT BRANDS TO ACT TO DISRUPT SYSTEMIC RACISM

Gen Zers understand that statements of solidarity are only one small part of the equation

As a priority social justice issue among this generation, Gen Zers are steadfast in their belief that striving for racial equality must be foremost on the minds of our leaders today – especially in the business world. And for Gen Zers, part of this process involves acknowledgement – as seven-in-10 (71%) believe companies must recognize their role in systemic racism.

This generation also understands that statements of solidarity are only one small part of the equation – with three-quarters (74%) agreeing it's okay if a company makes a statement of support to communities of color, but they need to follow it up with action. And that action must be real and it must be sustained, as nearly two-thirds (67%) are concerned companies will move on to the next issue without making the changes they promised to address regarding racial inequalities.



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Expectations around racial inequality

HOW GEN ZERS EXPECT BRANDS TO ACT TO DISRUPT SYSTEMIC RACISM

Brands that are unprepared to use their business as a means to advance racial equity, will face both reputational and bottom-line backlash from this generation that's proven quick to react. In fact, 45 percent of Gen Zers report that they are ready to "cancel" or boycott brands that are not willing to address racial inequality.



will "cancel" brands that are not willing to address racial inequality

Envisioning the world they want to see

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS BRANDS TO PUSH DIVERSITY IN BRANDING

For Gen Z, they want the brands they support and the content they see to be as diverse and inclusive as the world they seek to create – and simply won't align themselves with brands that do not. In fact, more than half (56%) of Gen Zers say if they don't see themselves represented in a company's marketing and communications, they are less likely to support that company. A further three-quarters (73%) believe that a brand's marketing and communications are a reflection of their commitment to diversity and equality – and are keeping a keen eye on how brands bring that vision to market.

Gen Zers (65%) are also more likely than the average American (57%) to believe it is high time that more companies address racism in their branding – such as consumer goods products and sports teams' name and mascot changes.



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believe company's marketing and advertising should be more reflective of the diverse and inclusive business they aspire to be



more companies need to address racism in their branding

Envisioning the world they want to see

HOW GEN Z EXPECTS BRANDS TO PUSH DIVERSITY IN BRANDING

Interestingly, Generation Z is less likely to reward brands for reflecting diversity in marketing and advertising. While still high in propensity to have a more positive image, purchase and be proud to be associated with the brands, we see drops of up to 17 percentage points among the Gen Z cohort when compared to the U.S. average. This is most revealing when asked Gen Zers propensity to forgive a company, where just six-in-10 (59%) would be more likely to forgive, in comparison to 76 percent of the general population. This perhaps reveals that Gen Zers believe diversity should be table stakes for brands to address – and that companies shouldn't expect special recognition or reward for doing what is simply the right thing to do.

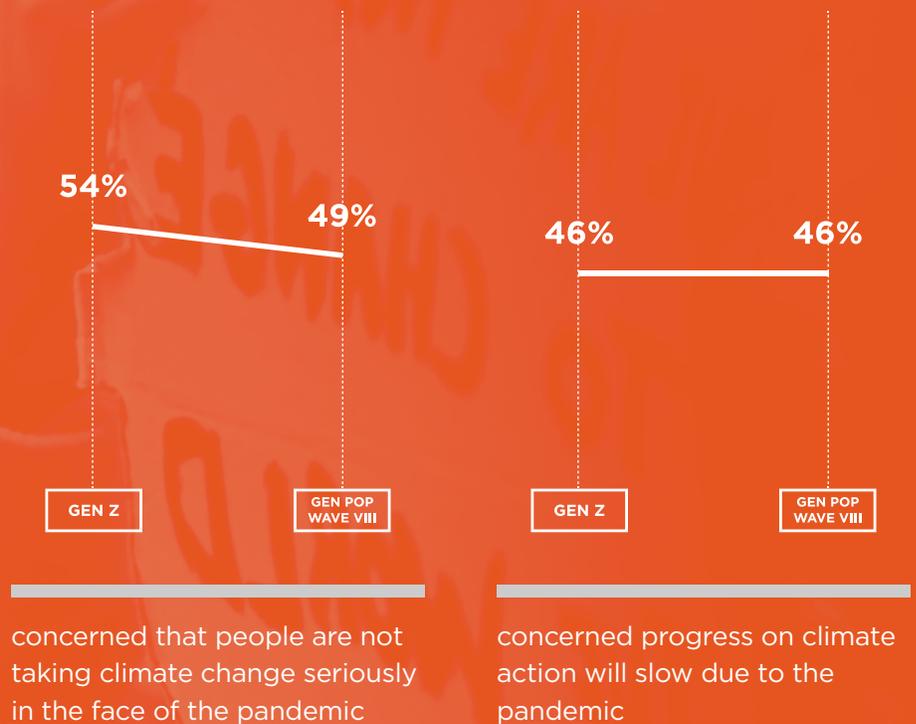
When a company reflects diversity in its marketing and advertising Gen Zers are more likely to:

	GEN Z	GEN POP WAVE VII
HAVE A MORE POSITIVE IMAGE OF THAT COMPANY	76%	84%
PURCHASE PRODUCTS OR SERVICES FROM THAT COMPANY	74%	81%
BE PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THAT COMPANY	71%	73%
BE MORE LIKELY TO TRUST THE COMPANY	69%	78%
BE MORE LOYAL TO THE COMPANY	69%	77%
WANT TO WORK FOR THAT COMPANY	65%	72%
DEFEND THAT COMPANY IF PEOPLE SPOKE BADLY OF IT	61%	72%
FORGIVE THAT COMPANY IF IT MAKES A MISSTEP	59%	76%
SHARE INFORMATION ABOUT THAT COMPANY ON THEIR SOCIAL NETWORKS	49%	57%

Climate in a COVID-19 reality

HOW GEN Z SEES CLIMATE URGENCY IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

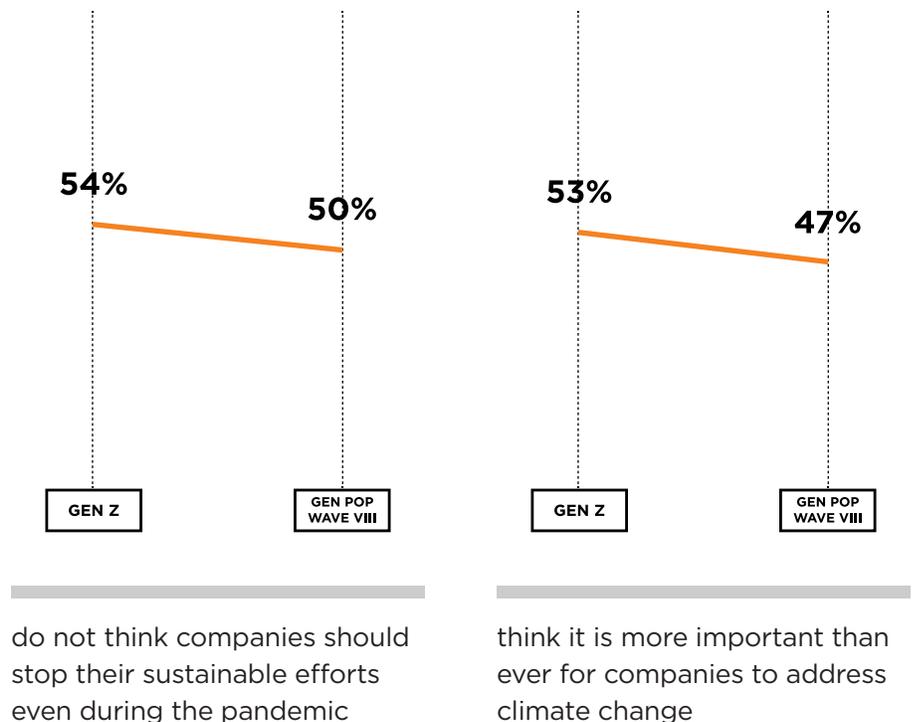
While many generations face only one crisis of a lifetime, Gen Z is faced with myriad - all happening in tandem. And as a generation that has made climate action a priority, there is fear that the current acute health crisis will draw attention away from momentum around climate change. In fact, nearly half (46%) are concerned progress on climate action will slow due to the pandemic - and 54 percent are concerned that people are not taking climate change seriously in the face of the pandemic.



Climate in a COVID-19 reality

HOW GEN Z SEES CLIMATE URGENCY IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

As we have seen in previous reports on this generation, Gen Zers are steadfast that companies are central to the climate change solution – now more than ever. More than half (53%) think it is more important today for companies to address climate change. And this progress must continue even as we continue to put money and mindshare against fighting COVID-19 – with 54 percent of Gen Zers agreeing companies should not stop their sustainable efforts even during the pandemic.



Creating movements through social media

HOW GEN Z LEVERAGES SOCIAL TO DRIVE CHANGE

A cohort brought up on smart phones and social platforms, Generation Z recognizes that these channels give the ability to not only amplify their individual voices far and wide – but also organize and activate at a larger scale (and at rapid speed). In fact, eight-in-10 (81%) Gen Zers think social media gives their generation more of a voice than previous generations. And they're using this online voice to make their opinion known – as nearly half (48%) say they would use their social media channels to call out brands they feel are not being authentic.



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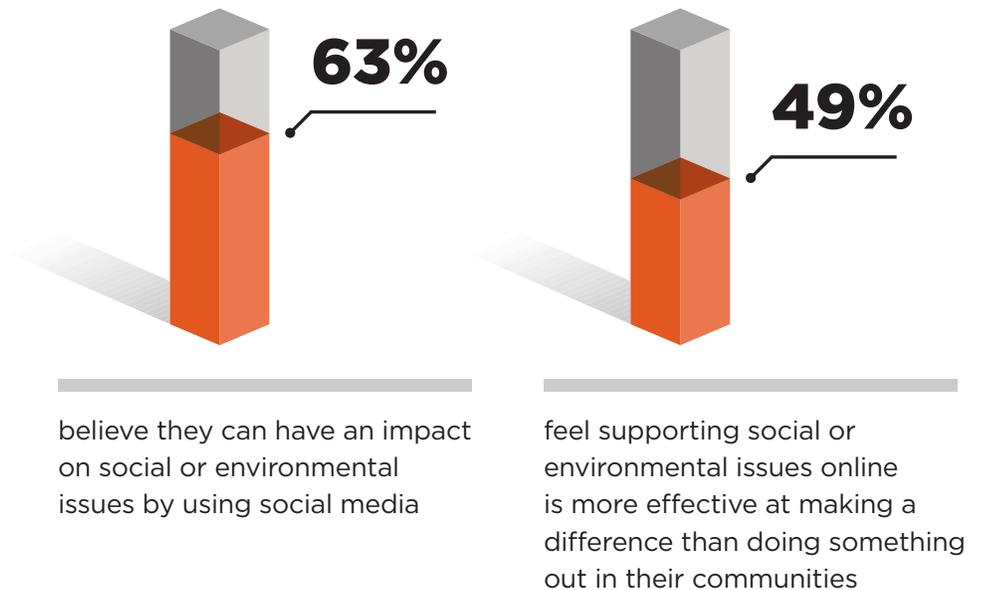


will use my social media channels to call out brands they feel are not being authentic

Creating movements through social media

HOW GEN Z LEVERAGES SOCIAL TO DRIVE CHANGE

Gen Zers believe that social media wields the power to make true and substantive impact – as 63 percent believe they make a difference on social or environmental issues by using social media. This feeling of online empowerment is so strong – half (49%) of Gen Zers feel that supporting social or environmental issues online is more effective at making a difference than doing something out in their communities. At a time when many young Americans are either sheltered in place or limited in their activities due to the coronavirus pandemic – social media has become a lifeline to the global engagement they so desperately seek.



Methodology

Porter Novelli fielded a series of surveys to gather insights into public sentiment regarding the coronavirus (COVID-19), Purpose-driven companies and social justice. This wave of our survey was fielded online using Engine's online CARAVAN® Omnibus survey between July 21-27, 2020 and a total sample of 1,000 respondents between 14 and 22 years of age was collected.

About Porter Novelli

Porter Novelli is a global purpose communications consultancy born from the idea that the art of communication can advance society. More than 45 years ago, we opened our doors – and people's eyes and minds – for brands driven to make a positive impact. Today, we believe that organizations must find, live and tell their purpose in order to thrive. Those companies will motivate action, secure loyalty and encourage advocacy — all in service to a healthier bottom line. Porter Novelli is a part of the Omnicom Public Relations Group.

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