



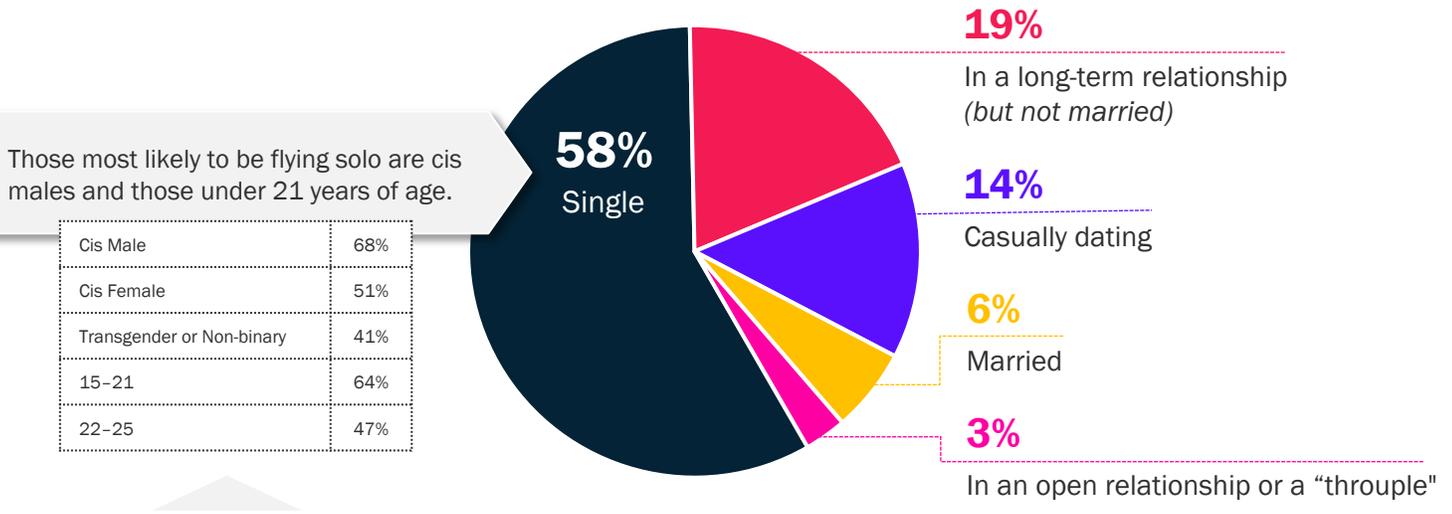
Gen Z Valentine's Edition | February 2023

New research conducted by Benenson Strategy Group reveals how Gen Z are feeling this Valentine's Day. This report was comprised from a survey of 800 online interviews with people ages 15-25 living in the United States.

Love Snapshot: Gen Z



This Valentine's Day, a majority of Gen Z are single – on purpose.

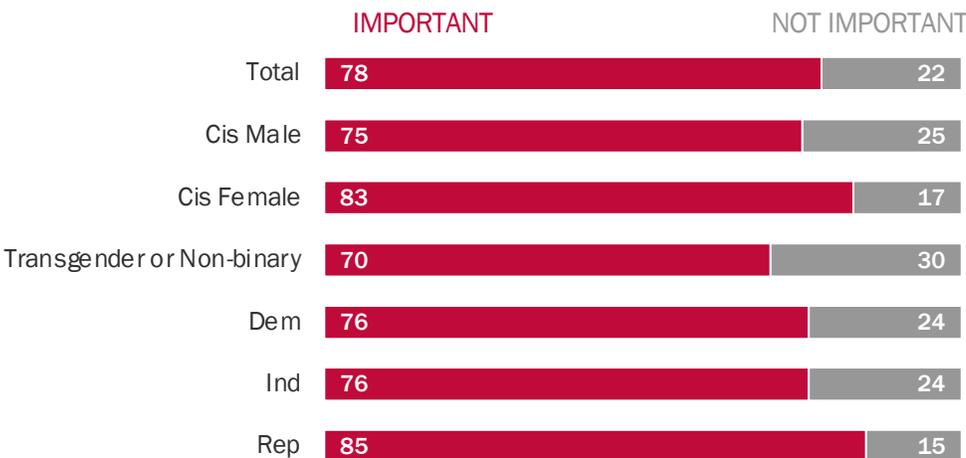


For some Gen Z, being single may, at least in part, be a function of current priorities. **More than 7 in 10 (72%) say that their professional life – be it a career or job – is a bigger priority for them right now** than their romantic life or finding love.



But this doesn't mean Gen Z are interested in eschewing traditional romantic institutions like marriage, or even "canceling" less consequential romantic traditions like Valentine's Day.

While few Gen Z have yet walked down the aisle (only 6% are married) at this point in their lives, nearly 8 in 10 (78%) say that it's important for them to get married one day. Marriage is especially important to cis females and those who identify as Republicans.



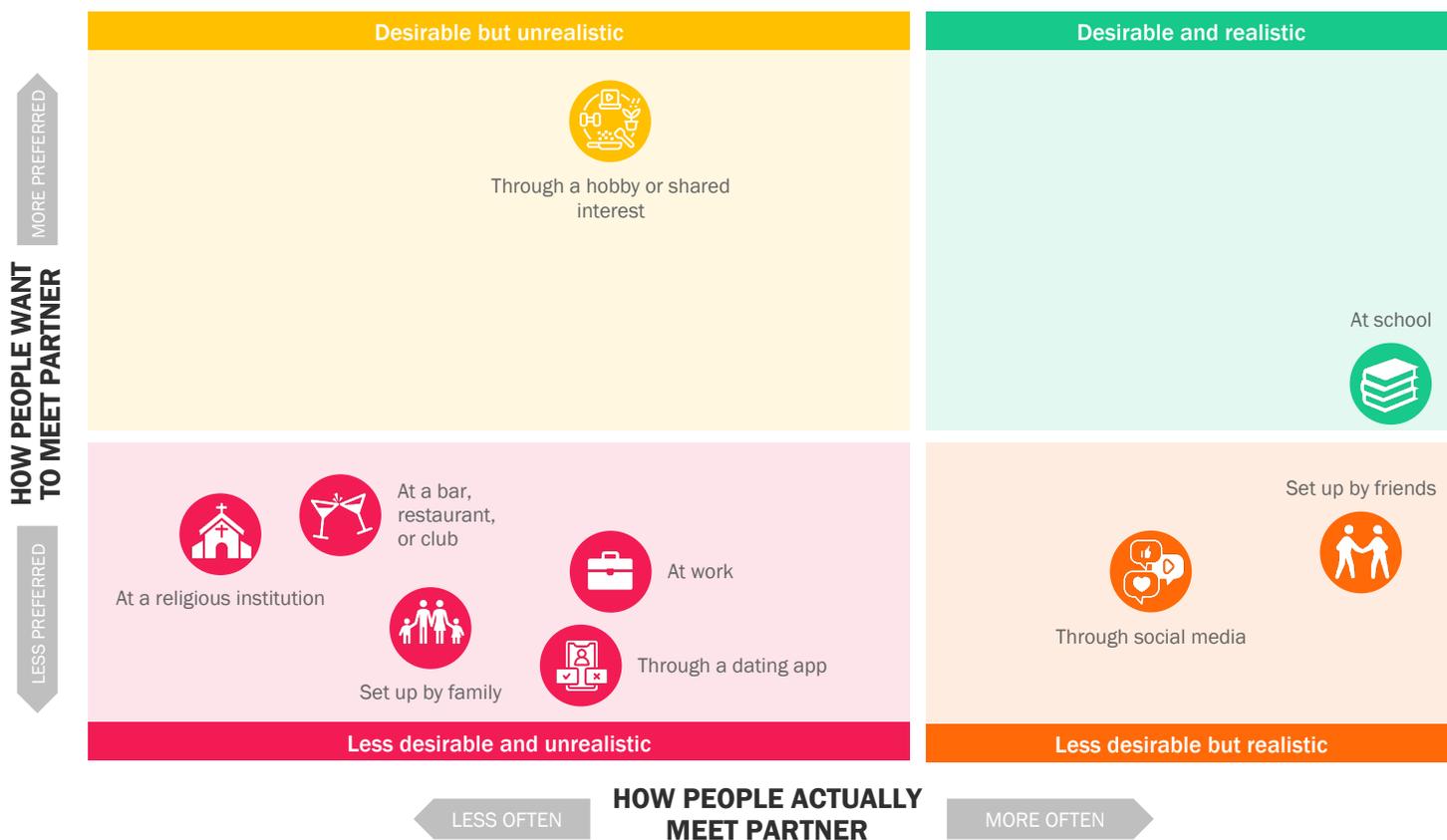
(Unfortunately for the cynics) fewer than 1 in 10 Gen Z want to "cancel" Valentine's Day



How Gen Z falls in love...with people and brands

Whether it's meeting in classrooms, on the job, being set up by friends or family, or first meeting in a public space like a bar or restaurant – Gen Z are falling in love IRL.

Gen Z is often called the first “online generation” – the first group to grow up not knowing a world before the internet, the smartphone, and social media. But when it comes to their love lives, old school “offline” means of meeting a romantic partner are still very much the norm as well as the aspiration.

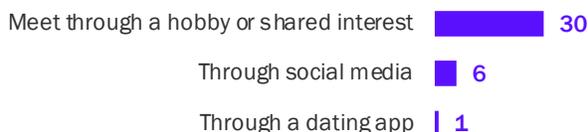


Gen Z’s online love stories are much more likely to have come through social media generally (40%) than dating apps specifically (21%). Just 1 in 5 (21%) have met a past romantic partner on a dating app. **Moreover, in the future, if they had their way, very few Gen Z have any interest in looking for love online.** Only 1% say their preferred way of meeting a future romantic partner would be through a dating app and just 6% would want to meet someone through social media.

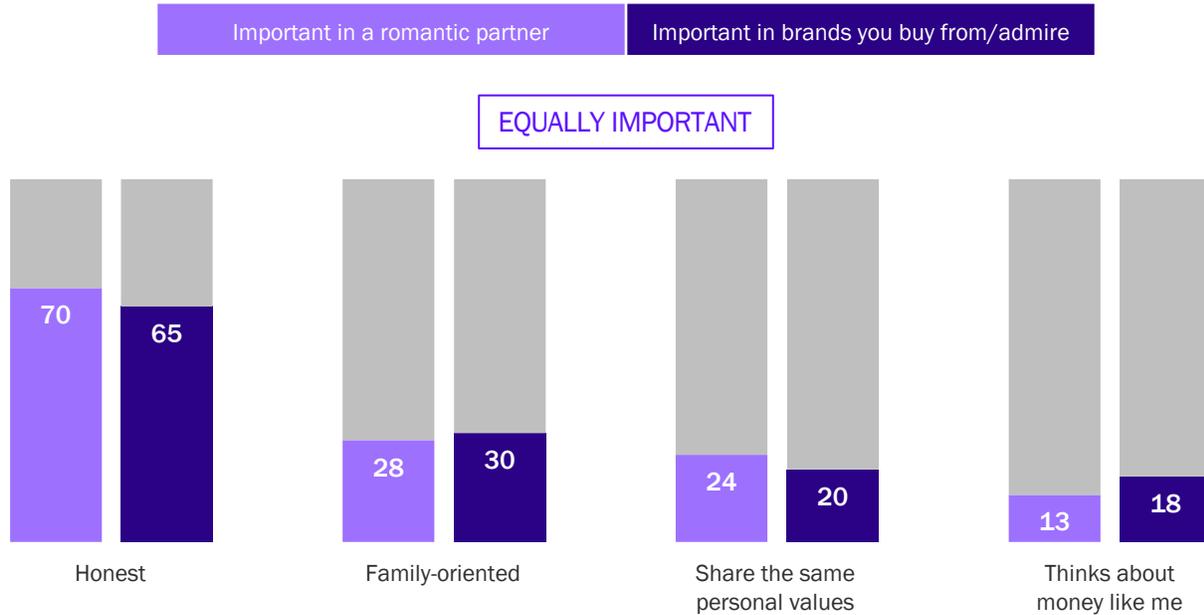
How people actually meet their partner



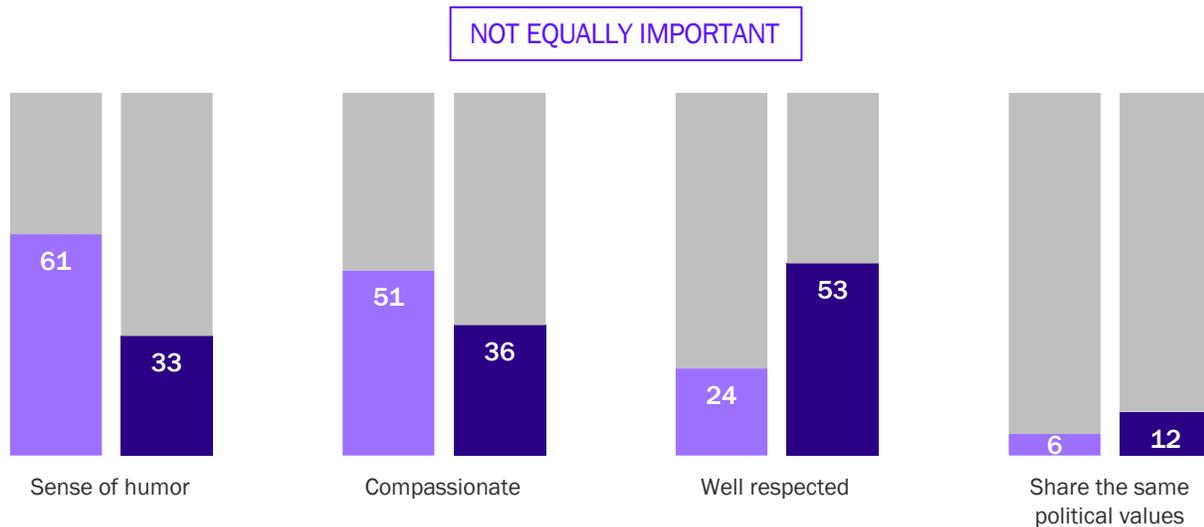
How people want to meet partner



Gen Z look for many of the same qualities in a romantic partner as they do in the brands from which they buy or admire.



Honesty, above all else, is the quality Gen Z view as non-negotiable both in their romantic relationships and their relationships with brands. Around 7 in 10 say this quality – honesty – is one of the top 3 traits they look for in partners and brands. Being family oriented, having shared personal values, and thinking about money in the same way as them are other qualities that Gen Z view as important to romantic and brand relationships alike.

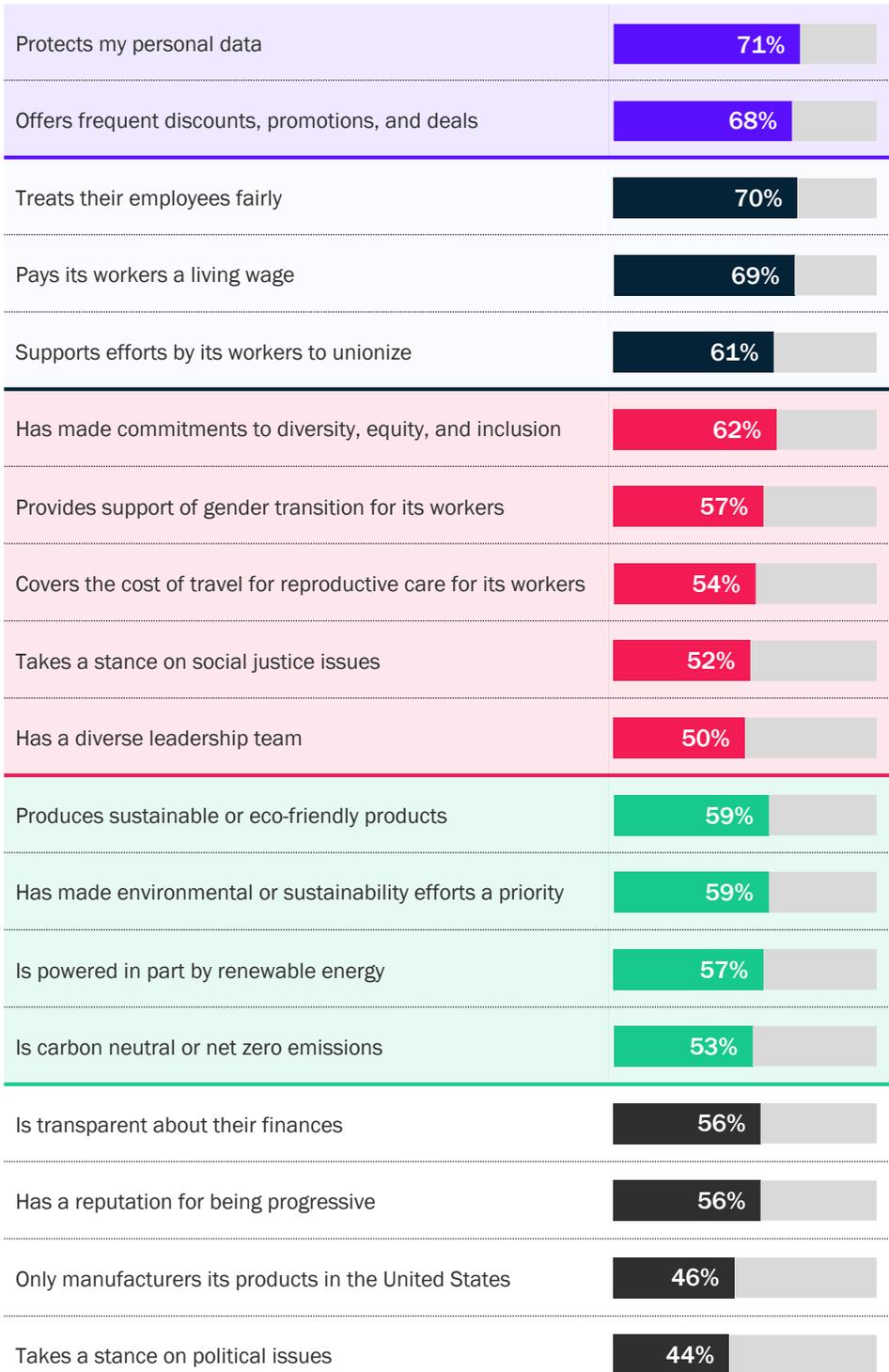


In other ways, there are qualities that matter to Gen Z when it comes to their romantic relationships but not their brand relationships – and vice versa. Gen Z want a partner to make them laugh, but brands don't need to be comedians to make sales. Gen Z are around twice as likely to say it's important for their romantic partner to have a sense of humor as it is for a brand. On the other hand, Gen Z are twice as likely to say that it's important for a brand to share their political values as it is for a romantic partner to share their political convictions.



To win Gen Z's hearts, brands must treat their customer (meaning Gen Z) and their workers with respect.

If you learned a brand was doing each of the following, would you consider it a 'green flag' meaning it would make you view the brand more positively or make you want to use it, or would it make no difference either way?



CUSTOMER

How brands handle customer data is paramount. And it helps of course when they are sensitive to their pocketbooks with deals and low prices.

WORKER'S RIGHTS

But Gen Z are not just focused on themselves – the well-being of workers in the companies from which they buy are of equal importance to their own interests.

DEI

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) efforts are important to 6 in 10 Gen Z, most of all those who are cis females, transgender, or non-binary. This includes efforts that start at the top. Cis females, transgender, or non-binary Gen Z want to see that a brand has a leadership team that includes people like them, including communities of color, LGBTQ+ folks, and women.

ENVIRONMENT

Green washing won't be enough to win-over Gen Z's affection. Brands have to deliver on their commitment to environmental sustainability by producing eco-friendly products and running their operations through clean or renewable energy sources. Courting by way of environmental integrity is most resonant among cis females, transgender, and non-binary Gen Z groups.



How Gen Z falls out of love...with brands



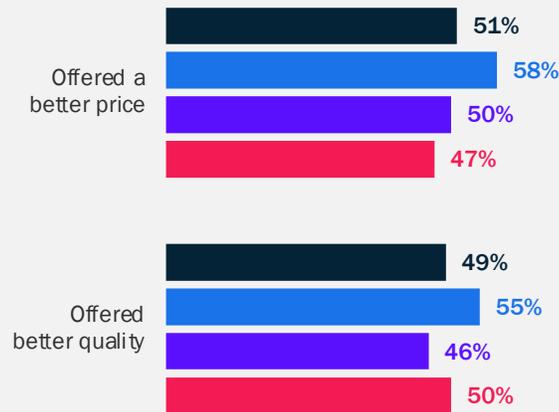
Gen Z are not wed to their favorite brands – in fact, 8 in 10 are ready to cheat on them.

To keep their affection, brands must continue to court them in more ways than one – or risk being “cheated on.”



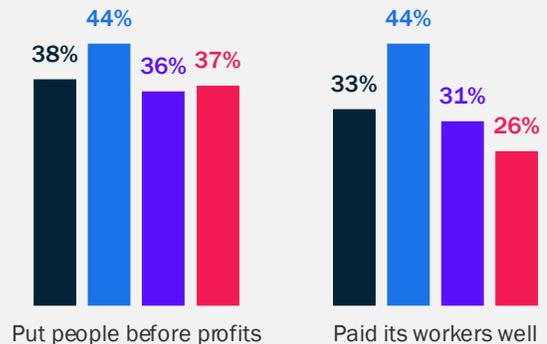
Price and quality are enough to persuade half of Gen Z to jump ship.

Would you 'cheat' on a brand you feel loyal to if a competitor...



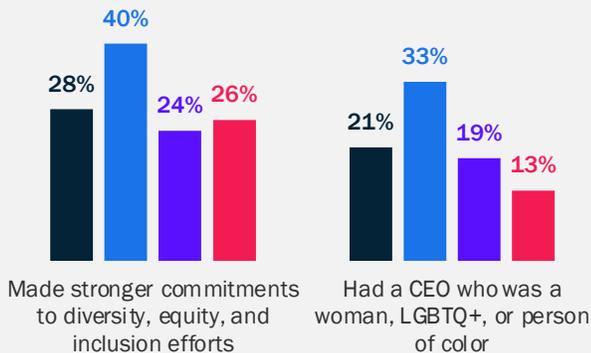
Failing to do better than the competition on treating workers respectfully could be enough for nearly 2 in 5 to fall for another brand that's doing more for its workers.

Would you 'cheat' on a brand you feel loyal to if a competitor...



On several issues, Gen Z who identify as Democrats are much more likely to fall out of love with a brand than those who identify as Independents or Republicans.

Would you 'cheat' on a brand you feel loyal to if a competitor...



Gen Z are not under the influence of influencers.



For all their posts and endorsements, Gen Z report that influencers have little sway in moving them away from their favorite products. **Only around 1 in 10 Gen Z say they'd cheat on a preferred brand if an influencer they follow endorsed a competitors' product.**

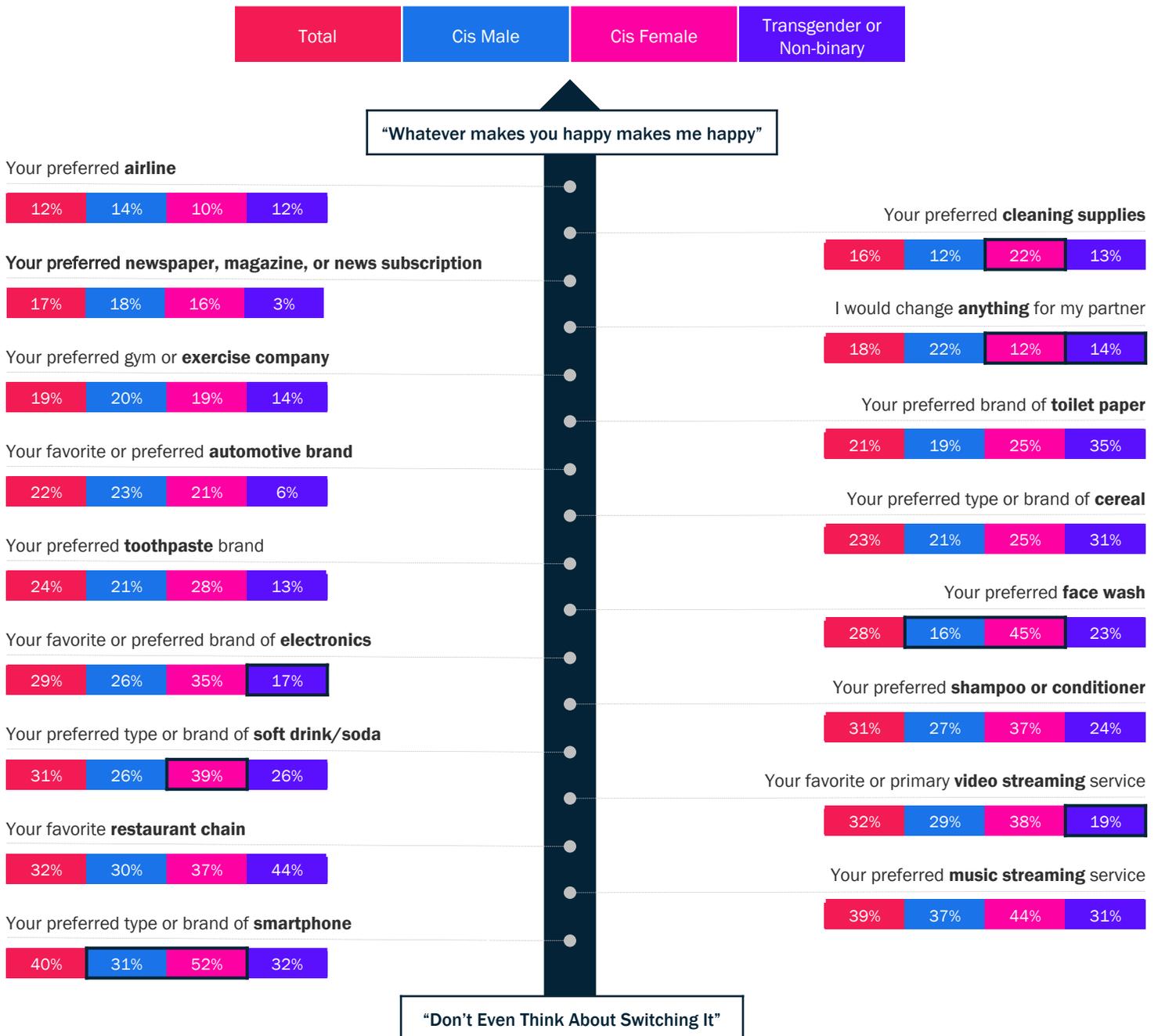


Something else that may come between a Gen Z and their favorite brand? A significant other.

Across many categories – from toothpaste to toilet paper, from cereal to cars – Gen Z are ready to drop a preferred brand and switch to their romantic partner’s choice. Isn’t that romantic?

Brands should note: cis male Gen Z are notably more “flexible” or willing to make a brand switch in the name of love than their cis female counterparts on a number of products or categories. If fighting for brand loyalty, cis females may be the ones to court.

In the future if/when you move in with a partner, which of the following categories would you NOT be willing to switch from your brand of choice to their preferred brand? *Asked among those who are currently single



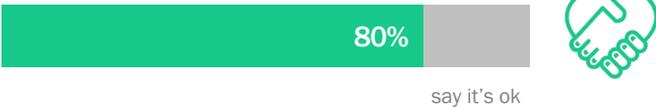
First Date Etiquette – The Do and Don'ts of Dating According to Gen Z



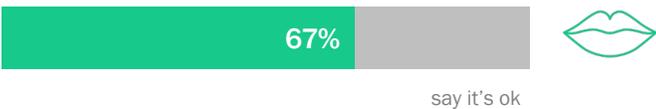
On a first date...



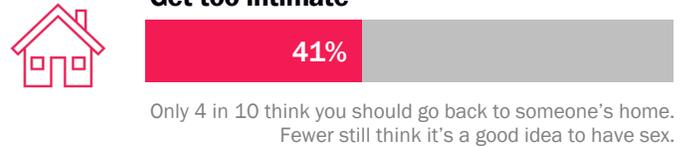
Hold hands



Kiss



Get too intimate



Get too loose



Split the check?

69% of cis females say it's ok

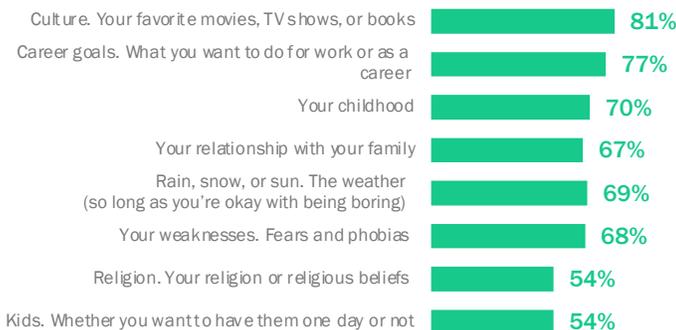
75% of transgender or non-binary say it's ok



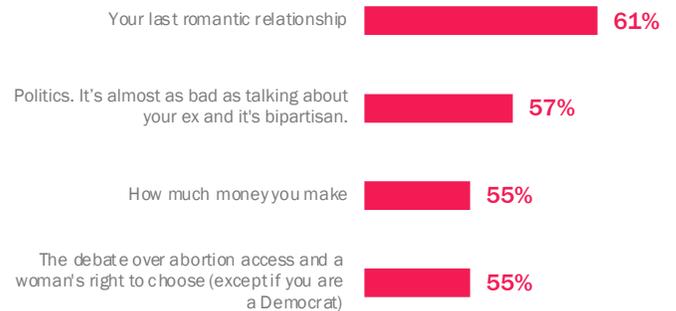
54% of cis males say it's ok

What are you supposed to (or allowed to) talk about on a first date? Some might see it as a minefield, but Gen Z have advice on which topics to cover, which to talk about at your own risk, and which to steer clear on a first date.

In your opinion, on a first date, which of the following topics are **okay to talk about**?



In your opinion, on a first date, which of the following topics are **not okay to talk about**?



If you want to roll the dice, talk about...

Marriage.
Whether or not you want to get married one day.
50% say it's ok



Work Stress
Frustrations with your current job.
50% say it's ok



Love in the Time of Inflation

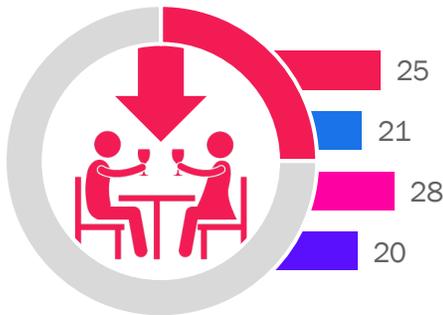


The last few years have been hard to forge new (in-person) connections.

First, pandemic lockdowns put many love lives on hold. Now, persistent rising costs are forcing many Gen Z to look to more frugal means to show they care.

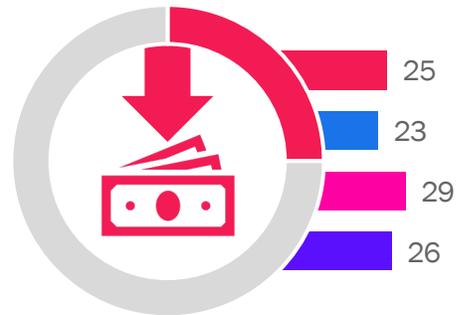


I go on less dates than I would normally

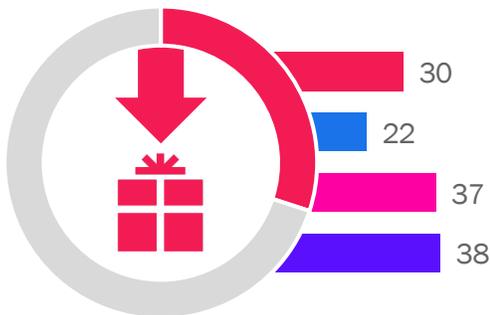


A quarter (25%) say inflation has caused them to go on fewer dates or to go on cheaper dates (25%) than they normally would.

I go on cheaper dates than I would normally

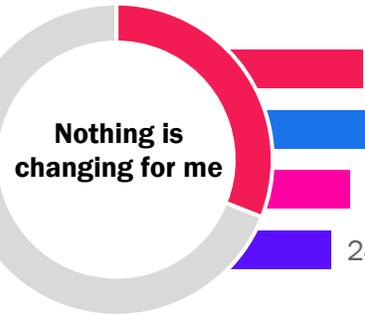
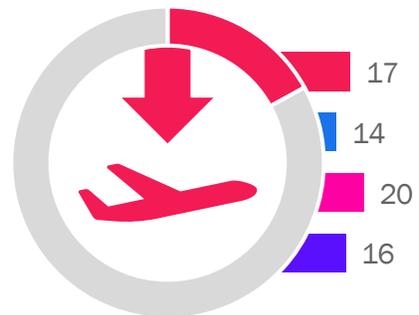


I buy fewer gifts than I would normally



A third (30%) say they are buying fewer presents for their partner, a trend that is even more pronounced among cis females (37%) and transgender or non-binary (38%) Gen Z.

I travel less with my partner



Gen Z's Outlook on Industries

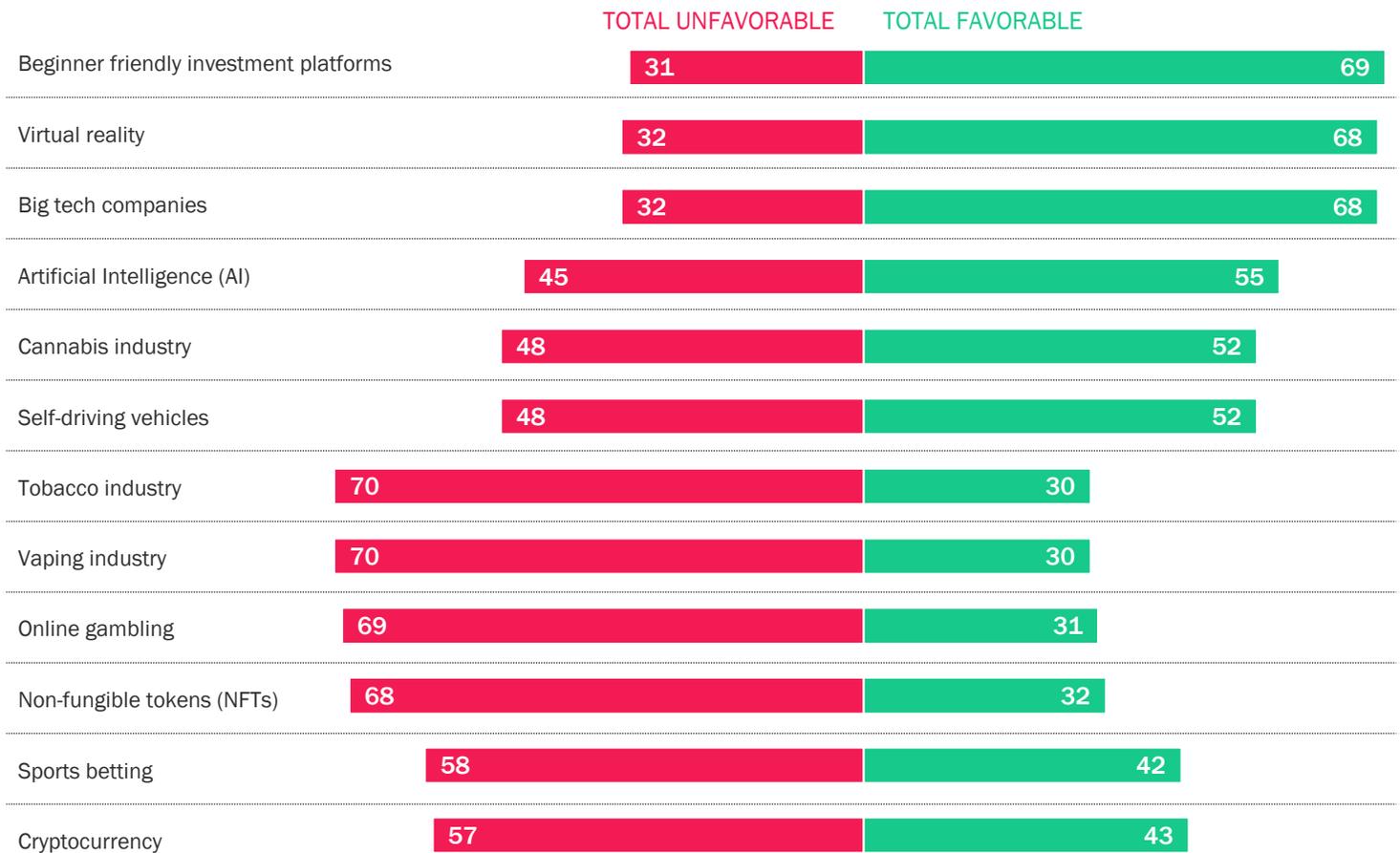


As the first true internet generation, it's perhaps unsurprising that Gen Z look favorably upon much – but not all – of what the digital landscape has to offer.

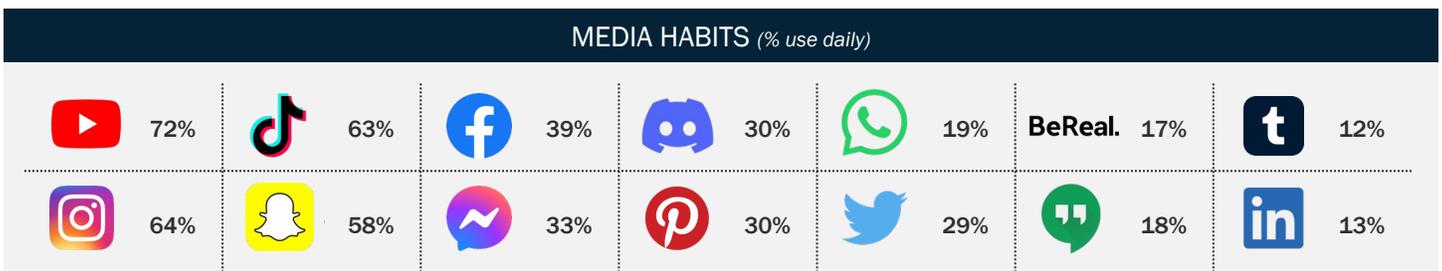
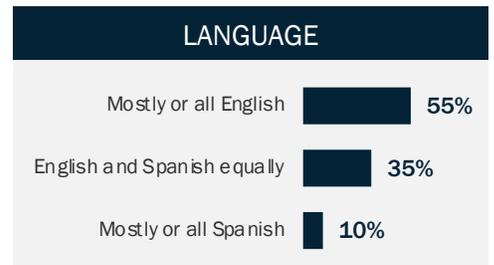
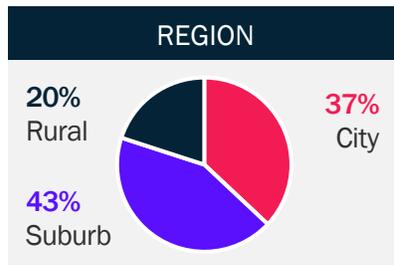
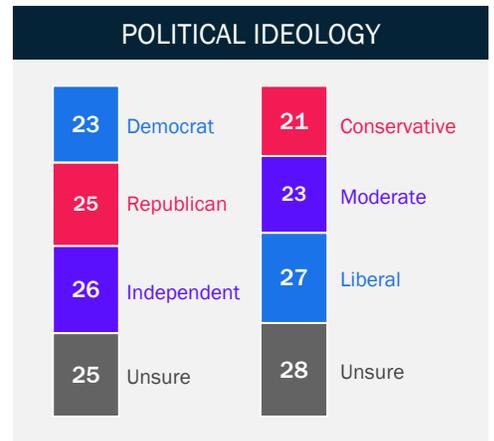
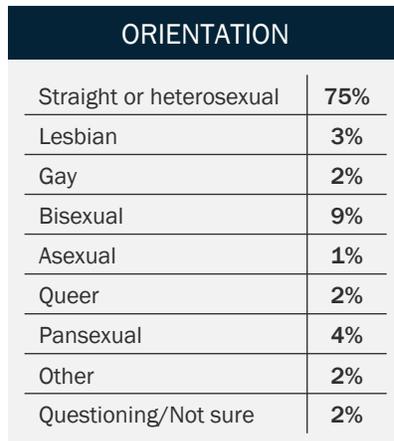
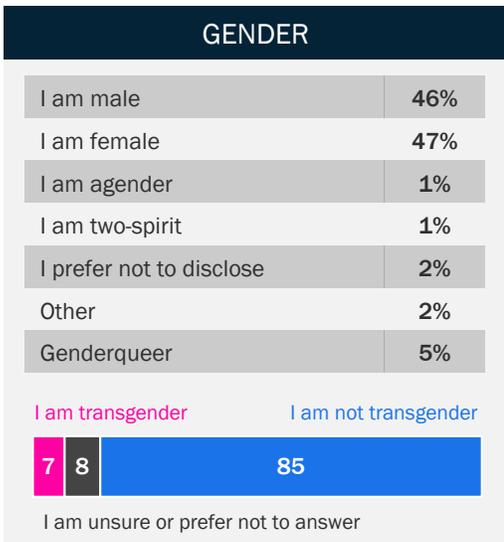
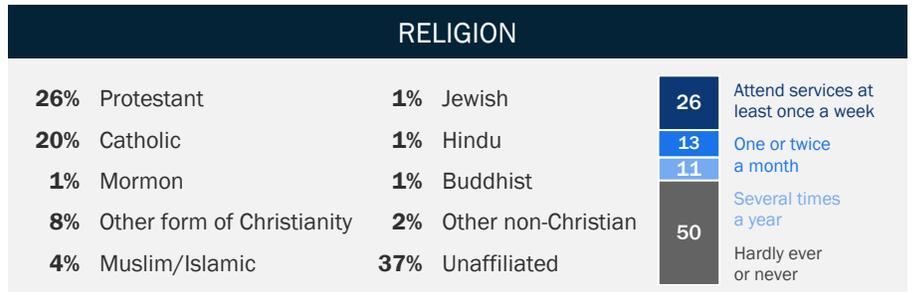
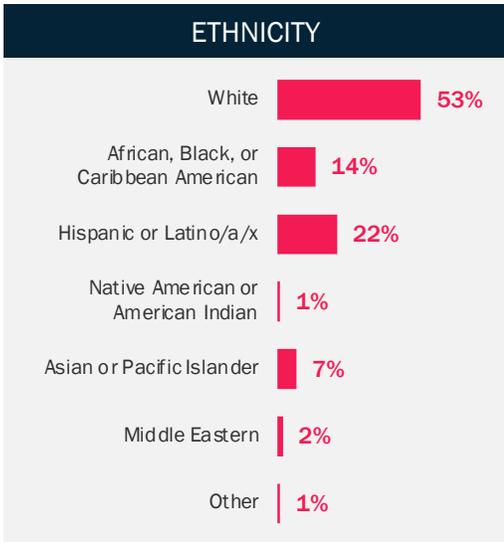
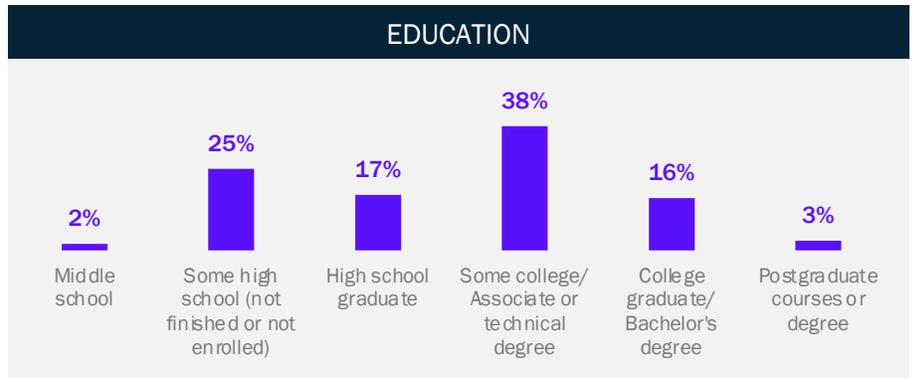
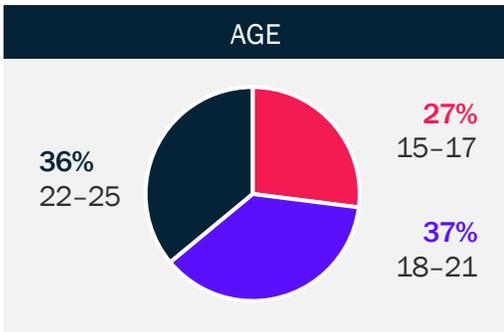
Between virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and even the big tech companies who've been catching the ire of older generations as of late.

But not all tech is equal. NFTs and crypto - not long ago the darlings of Gen Z-preferred platforms - are now black sheep, with a majority of Gen Z unfavorable to both. Also unpopular are tobacco and vaping, and gambling.

How do you feel about each of the following?



Appendix: Demographic Snapshot – Gen Z





Methodology

Benenson Strategy Group conducted 800 online interviews with people aged 15-25 years old in the United States. The survey was fielded from January 30 – February 6, 2023. The data was weighted to reflect U.S. Census data to ensure an accurate demographic representation.

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