
INFLUENCE OF THE SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITE SNAPCHAT ON THE GENERATION Z

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Abstract

The Generation Z can hardly be influenced by traditional media as it is fairly resistant to traditional forms of marketing both in offline or online environment. Brand communication has to attract their attention by creativity, personalised approach, credibility and regular communication. Social networking websites are a part of the communication strategy for the majority of worldwide brands as they are mostly visited by the Generations Z and Y. Every social networking site focuses on different target audience and operates in a different way. It is mainly Snapchat that focuses on the Generation Z while gaining more popularity across Europe. The Slovak brands or those marketed in Slovakia are only testing the effect of this site on their target audience through first communication campaigns.

Keywords: brand, communication, Snapchat, social media, websites

1. Introduction

William Straus and Neil Howe created a theory defining patterns of behaviour of the generation [1]. The generation can be seen as a group of people sharing space and time in the history, having common characteristics and patterns of consumer behaviour. We can find various time specifications of the Generation Z; some authors date it back to the years 1991 to 2004 or even after 2000. For most of them, however, the generation ranges from 1995 to 2005. Even though the timing varies, patterns of behaviour of the Generation Z are similar for most of the authors.

The Generation Z can be referred to as digital children because digital technologies and the Internet represent an everyday part of their lives and belong to their natural environment. The Generation uses various slang or English words which have become a part of their vocabulary, e.g. application, Android, iOS, selfie, tweet, multi-tasking, etc. They use various online tools, they communicate online, study online or even do their shopping online.

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2. Generation Z and its characteristics

According to Mark McCrindle, Generation Z can be defined as a global, digital and visual concept or the generation which grew up while great changes were happening. The Generation Z can be defined by the following seven trends [http://mccrindle.com.au/SocialAnalysis/2012/Generation-Z-Defined-Global-Visual-Digital_McCrindle-Research-2013.pdf]:

1. **Demographically-changed** – the world population is growing bigger and bigger. Thanks to migration, children and youngsters from the Generation Z can have classmates from foreign countries and thus become familiar with traditions from all over the world. Unlike former generations, households have considerably changed. As it was common in the past to share the house within three generations, nowadays a family consists of parents and kinds only.
2. **Generation-focused** – the Generation consists of people at the same age and of the same lifestyle. People from the Generation Z have become adult in the 21st century, the period of social media and new technologies.
3. **Digitally-integrated** – the Generation Z integrates new technologies easily, its members become users at very young age and the majority uses IT in various spheres of their lives. Their lifestyle and relationships are being influenced by digital era.
4. **Globally-oriented** – this Generation is really global as its members favour the same celebrities, trends, technologies, music, films, use the same websites and moreover even food or fashion are becoming global. Generations all over the world share the same Youtube videos or use the same emoticons and pictures.
5. **Visually-focused** – surfing on Google or Youtube is typical for the Generation Z as its members rather watch a short summarising video than read the whole article. They are particular about product visualisation.
6. **Education-friendly** – education is being transformed as it is starting to make use of new interactive education forms. There is a growing number of students who are getting ready for their future career. In contrast to their older counterparts, the Generation can benefit from a wider offer of interactive education forms.
7. **Socially-defined** – nowadays youngsters are still in touch with their counterparts, they are online 24/7, which brings about certain downsides, such as cyberbullying, though.

As any other generations, the Generation Z has positive and negative sides we are going to have a closer look at. Brands and businesses aiming their marketing communication at this Generation should take into account their exact characteristics as well as patterns of behaviour.

2.1. Positives of the Generation Z

- **computer-literate generation** – they are able to find information quickly and easily thanks to new technologies, they are brilliant at doing research and are able to process a great deal of new information while getting adapted to new trends and juggling different tasks;
- **contacts and relationships** – they do not have any difficulty making new friends, they are good at building up relationships, thanks to new technologies they all have a large social network of friends and acquaintances with no geographical boundaries;
- **team-workers** – the Generation Z is used to working in teams, they like communication, they are interested in other people's opinions, they do not like making decisions on their own as they are more satisfied if decisions are made within a group;
- **multitasking** – they are used to juggling different tasks, it is natural for them to study while listening to music from their iPod;
- **morale** – their perception of the world around is influenced by existence of human rights and antidiscrimination laws, they are more ecologically aware and they want to live in the world where these values are naturally incorporated [J. Koničková, *What is the Generation Z like*, <https://eduworld.sk/cd/jaroslava-konickova/325/aka-je-generacia-z>].

2.2. Negatives of the Generation Z

- **a lack of confidentiality** - this generation is not discreet enough as they publish and post statuses about their private life in blogs and on social sites, they publish their opinions and experiences in chats and forums. People with such an attitude will never understand those who want to keep their privacy.
- **dangerous addiction** – they desire for maximum independence and yet they still need guidance as they have never been taught how to face a challenge – they like to be advised from their parents, friends or the Internet.
- **a lack of knowledge** – they find natural to communicate through e-mails or phones and therefore they try to avoid face-to-face communication. Grammar is another emerging problem as they keep using autocorrect or various abbreviations, acronyms or americanisms even for the terms with an appropriate own equivalent [<https://eduworld.sk/cd/jaroslava-konickova/325/aka-je-generacia-z>].

One of the modern phenomena, which refers to generation Z, is cyber bullying. This modern type of phenomenon is constantly appearing not only in our region but also worldwide and is deeply rooted mainly between students and adolescents from the age of 14-18. Cyber bullying includes using of information and communication technologies such as emails, mobile phones and text messages, instant messages, trolling personal website pages (blogs or Facebook

pages). These all support intentional and repeating behaviour of individuals or groups which is meant to cause harm to others [2].

3. How to communicate with the Generation Z

In contrast to the strategies for the Generations X or Y, the marketing strategy aimed at the Generation Z has to differ considerably. The generations have completely different patterns of behaviour. Taking into consideration the fact that the Generation Z have been in touch with technologies and online environment since their early childhood, traditional marketing tools and techniques are not a suitable type of communication between a brand and a consumer. Even in case of online marketing, businesses have to be particularly careful of what type of strategy they are going to use to promote their brands. People from the Generation Z own more than one mobile device to communicate, do their shopping, study, watch videos and read news from all over the world. Therefore mobile marketing and social website marketing can be appropriate forms of marketing communication with the Generation Z.

Below is the set of marketing tools to be used in order to address effectively members of the Generation Z [*Five Tips For Marketing To Generation Z*, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2013/12/16/five-tips-for-marketing-to-generation-z/#6f625e3e3bc6>].

- **Generation Z is not trapped by Facebook**
More than 200 millions of Facebook users visit this webpage exclusively through their mobile devices, most of them aged 18 or less. Therefore businesses can use this platform to launch their interactive marketing campaigns and thus attract their target audience. Nevertheless, it is necessary to use Facebook advertising really carefully as the users can easily recognize unsolicited and impersonal brand promotion.
- **Facebook is good, but Instagram is much better**
The social networking site Instagram has become incredibly popular with the youngsters sharing photos and videos from their everyday lives. Numerous brands do not only have Instagram profiles, but in addition, they have started using various advertising tools the website is offering. Instagram can be used in many creative ways to appeal to the Generation Z. It is important to note that Instagram has become a perfect communication channel not only for fashion industry or photo enthusiasts, but it is usable for all product ranges or services.
- **Multiplatform campaign**
The most effective marketing campaigns are those which increase brand awareness through various media channels. It is recommended to appeal to the Generation Z from various platforms, i.e. combine marketing tools and platforms where the people are easily reachable.
- **Viral marketing**
Although a viral video requires a considerable amount of creativity, it is an effective way of promotion aimed at the Generation Z. The video should

not contain too much information on a product – if consumers wish to learn more about a particular product, they just visit the webpage (Figure 1).

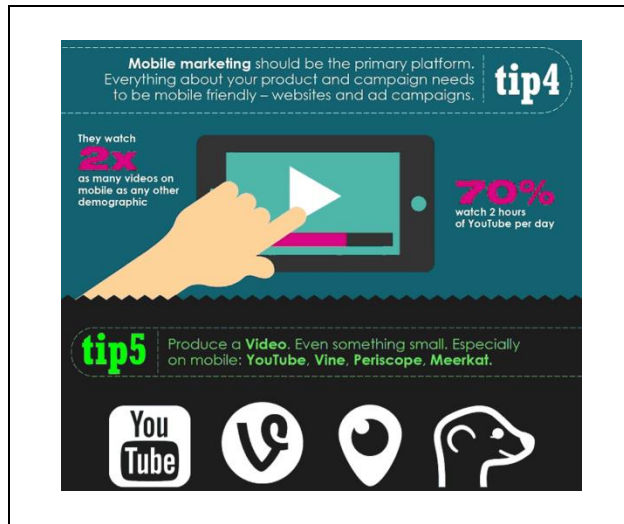


Figure 1. Marketing strategy for the Generation Z.

Digital technologies themselves entail a broader notion. We can define them as smart phones, mobile phones, desktop computers, tablets or even socialising web pages, mobile apps, blogs, portals, tailored applications of sellers or even the Internet connection enabling their full-value use. Another benefit digital technologies certainly bring is the fact that they integrate a large scale of tools and forms to be applied to a particular type of a consumer or a segment. Taking into account their use by young consumers and growing competitiveness in particular segments digital media and technologies represent a necessary part of a business, marketing and communication strategy of a company [3].

Different approaches towards innovation in marketing communication applied within various segments seem to be interesting as well. Social networks, mobile applications, games, etc. play an important role in contacting the customers. In this segment, innovation is important especially in the context of delivering new experiences. A ‘connected’ consumer gets information, shares content and discovers new ideas in ways that are completely different from traditional consumers. Companies entering the market must be able to adapt as their creative outputs or products must connect people and trigger a social effect [4].

4. Popular social networking websites

Online environment is an everyday part of life of the Generation Z as they are active on socialising websites, they read and write blogs, communicate through various mobile apps.

Boyd and Ellison define social networking sites as a service which enables its users to create a public or semi-public profile, a list of users he/she can connect with ('a friendlist') and also see and watch connections and relations which were created by another user within the same network [5].

The number of users of social networking sites is growing steadily every month regardless of their age. There are a lot of websites on the market, yet they differ by their usability or target audience. Facebook has been on the first place since its successful launch – it groups more than 1.55 billion of active users a month. In the Figure 2 you can see Top Ten The Most Successful Social Networking Sites, the results are published in millions and were recorded in January 2016. The more attractive the webpage, the more users it appeals to, e.g. Facebook is still launching new technologies to make people's or businesses' communication much simpler, which explains its market leadership.

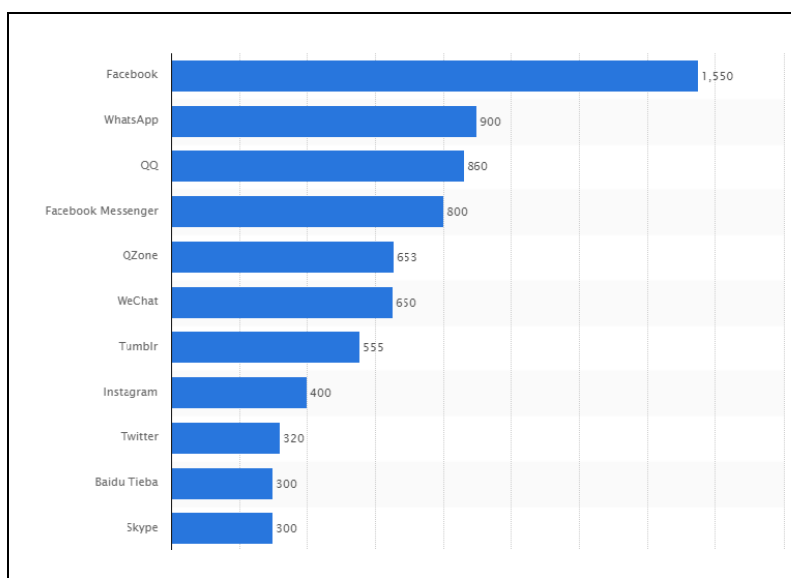


Figure 2. Number of active users of selected social networking websites.

Different generations prefer different ways of communication, they perceive and accept new technologies in a completely different way, they buy different brands and similarly they use different social networking sites. The young browse the Internet on their laptops or mobile phones. The research studying the Generation Z, specific social networking sites and new technologies has helped us clarify certain facts. The research focused on 1,060 people aged 13 to 17. Exactly 24% of the respondents are permanently online through their smartphones, more than a half – 56% are online several times a day. 12% claimed to be online once a day, 6% once a week and 2% claim to be online less than once a week [A. Lenhard, *Teens, Social Media & Technology Overview 2015*, 2015, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/04/09/teens-social-media-technology-2015/>].

The Generation Z is known for their online lifestyle and technologies which make online communication easier. Thanks to fast technological development, prices of IT gadgets such as laptops or smartphones have recently dropped to levels affordable for the majority of consumers. As a result, most of the young own more than just one mobile device enabling access to various apps or social networking sites. Figure 3 shows the percentage representation of the selected technologies, where up to 87% of respondents claim to have their own desktop or laptop computer, 81% own a gaming console and 73% own a smartphone. It can be assumed that an average youngster from the Generation Z uses various gadgets within a day, often simultaneously and he/she is open to using new technologies.

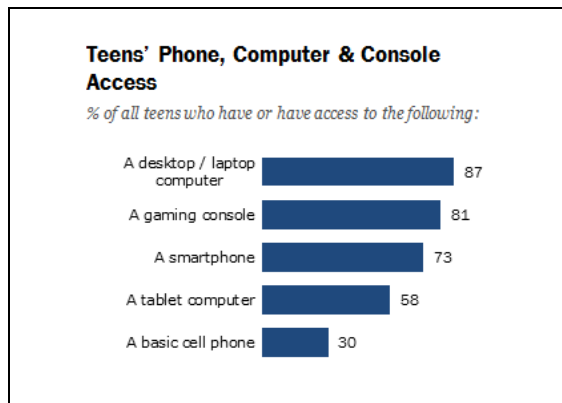


Figure 3. Mobile devices preferred by the Generation Z.

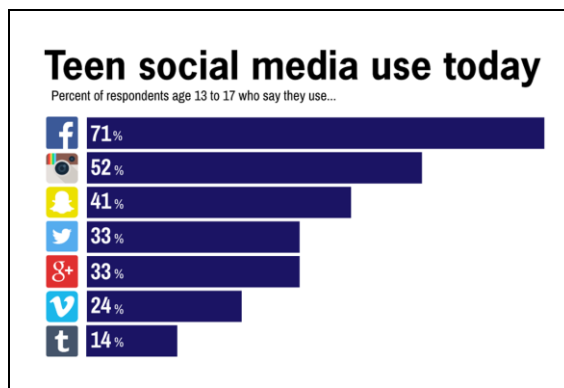


Figure 4. Social networking sites used by the Generation Z.

Similar research can help businesses and brands find out where their target audience is positioned, which communication channels can be targeted by and which social networking sites they have interaction with. The research points out that 71% of teenagers use more than one social networking site, which is a current trend among the young – simply to be online and to use modern social websites. Figure 4 shows the most popular social networking sites for the

Generation Z – traditionally dominated by Facebook. However, we can also see the websites which are not that popular with older generations. Instagram comes the second with 52% market coverage followed with Snapchat with 41% popularity – the social networking site we are going to have a closer look at. Other websites such as Twitter, Google+, Vine and Tumblr have fewer users while 11% of respondents claim not to use any social networking sites.

5. Social networking site Snapchat

This website has become extremely popular with the young within a short time period, mainly in the US and Canada while gaining more popularity across the whole world. It was created by Evan Spiegel who had invented it with Bobby Murphy and Reggie Brown as an university project in 2011. Snapchat focuses on pictures and videos being shared only for a short time period.

Its main function lies in sharing pictures and videos with your friends. However, it is a fairly revolutionary approach as Snapchat ‘recognizes’ only short-term pictures and videos you want to share. Your friends can see a photo or watch a video even longer than a few seconds by using printscreen. Otherwise the shared content is deleted. This new manner enables you to set a time period for sharing (the number of seconds – from 1 to 10 seconds) when other users can see an uploaded photo or watch a video [*Čo je Snapchat?*, 2015, <http://blog.triad.sk/marketingovy-slovník/co-je-snapchat/>].

5.1. Advantages of the social networking site Snapchat

- one-to-one communication with clients;
- time flexibility and fun;
- easy targeting at the young;
- a suitable medium for competitions;
- multiple functions, e.g. emoticons or a text with photos and videos;
- brands can appear ‘cool’ for target audience;
- easy way of creating stories and sharing experience.

Various foreign brands have launched successful advertising campaigns thanks to this social networking site. Targeting the Generation Z seems to be a complex procedure and therefore it is crucial to create an interactive and interesting form of communication. It is important to be aware of rules and principles applied to a particular social networking site as possible faults or negative communication cannot be accepted. The simpler, the funnier and the more interactive campaign, the more effective results it generates.

O2 Slovensko is the first Slovak brand to have used Snapchat for a communication campaign. The promotion itself was created by the advertising agency Triad Advertising. O2 aspired to communicate a smartphone Coolpad Porto with the target audience of the young aged 15 to 25 who are the people currently trying to use Snapchat on the Slovak market. The first important step was to announce that O2 was on that social networking site – they made use of

cross promo on social networking sites, created a Snapchat profile and communicated the message through Facebook or Instagram.

Admen brought about a competition with a simple and easily understandable message. The users were supposed to find a set of pictures in 'Stories' communicating the benefits of the smartphone and then to create a screenshot of this picture with cashew nuts. The back coverage of the smartphone is made of cashew. The company knew who met the competition criteria because Snapchat notifies you of anyone making a screenshot of your photo.

The results of the O2 Slovakia campaign on Snapchat promoting a new smartphone Coolpad Porto are as follows [Z. Tvarošková, *Velká októbrová socialistická Snapchat revolúcia*, 2015, <http://blog.triad.sk/zapisnik/velka-oktobrova-socialisticka-snapchat-revolucia/>]:

- 2,500 users added O2 Slovakia as a friend on Snapchat within two weeks;
- 70% out of 2,500 users took part in the competition and met the criteria;
- 7 pictures promoting a new smartphone were watched by 29,000 users.

The social networking site Snapchat provides a direct communication form with users who are young and computer literate. Brand communication with businesses through Snapchat is perceived as friendly and if admen select appropriate content, they are able to build up their image and create a love brand.

6. Conclusions

Methods of appealing to the Generation Z differ from other generations as its members are interested in different brands, different technologies and use different communication channels. Therefore admen are looking into how and where to communicate with the young while trying to find an equivalent to an open and interactive campaign creating a love brand. Snapchat represents one of the communication channels the Generation Z find attractive and popular. When comparing the number of users within a particular time period, it is the fastest growing social networking site from all. It is even challenging to other big market players such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram. Snapchat is becoming adapted to businesses in order to help them with the marketing strategy, e.g. advertising, reporting and many others. When it comes to advertising campaigns on Snapchat, the European market is lagging behind other Western markets e.g. US or Canada, which reflects where the website was created and gradually expanded. Interesting results of campaigns on this social website motivate other brands targeting the young aged between 13 and 25 years old.

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