

THE POWER OF GEN Z ON TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY



The travel and hospitality sectors often discuss how the younger generation, i.e., Generation Z, is and will continue to transform these sectors. People born between the second half of the 1990s and the 2010s are entering the job and consumer markets in large numbers. It is essential to understand the profile of these customers.

Unlike other past generations, most of Gen Z was born in the digital age and has unique preferences, especially regarding travel. They prioritize seeking out distinctive experiences and sustainability and plan everything online. These preferences already affect the travel and hospitality industries.

Many studies analyzing the values of Generation Z have identified an intense desire among them to experience unique and diverse moments. This trend is particularly evident in the tourism sector and was observed in the previous generation, the millennials.

Travel Behavior Shift

Today's travelers desire to experience real places with stories that reflect their culture. When they visit destinations, they seek hotels, inns, and hostels that provide closer and more relaxed service. They also look for live gastronomic and cultural experiences with the local people. According to a 2022 YouGov global survey, 45% of Gen Z members prefer trips that offer original opportunities, prioritizing contact and spending money with local people and businesses (40%).

This search for authentic experiences is closely related to another trend that has been observed for some time and is now intensifying: sustainable tourism.

This trend is leading to the growth of ecotourism, community tourism, adventure tourism, and trips for volunteer work. According to the same survey, 38% of travelers are looking for eco-friendly accommodations, 34% are searching for sustainable travel and hospitality deals, and 21% prioritize flights with lower CO2 emissions.

It is no secret that Gen Z prefers to use their cell phones for all travel planning and management. They mainly use OTA apps and websites to search for and purchase airline tickets and accommodations. However, older generations still rely on traditional travel agents for a more personalized experience.

To attract new consumers, it is essential to establish an online presence, including distribution channels of your own. Additionally, offering multiple ways of contact, such as WhatsApp and chatbots, can help answer customer inquiries.

The Potential of Generation Z

When it comes to the internet and digital connections, it is vital to pay attention to digital tourism influencers, specifically Generation Z. These influencers have profiles on social networks such as Instagram and TikTok, and they have been gaining a larger audience and becoming more influential

in the decision-making process for travel destinations, accommodations, and tours. Take notice of these profiles and consider possible partnerships with these professionals to promote your travel business.

Another critical point is that Gen Z tends to be less loyal to brands and more price-conscious and value-driven when searching for travel options. This can be an advantage for hotels with no large chains or established brands. However, to ensure that potential guests find and are interested in your hotel, it is essential to carry out effective digital marketing and dissemination campaigns that include high-quality photos, videos, and descriptions. Additionally, monitoring reviews and feedback on social media and taking action to address any customer concerns or issues is crucial.

Gen Z has realized that short-term rentals may only sometimes be the most cost-effective option. They understand that hotels and inns offer greater convenience and privacy for a slightly higher price. The impact of privacy violations in rental units has been significant, and tourist destinations like New York and Barcelona have taken steps to regulate and restrict rentals. Social media comments and influencer opinions indicate that younger people increasingly favor hotels. This provides an excellent opportunity for hotels to advertise their services.

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