

4 strategies Gen Z gamers can teach brands

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Sub-Saharan Africa is the fastest-growing gaming region globally, with South Africa leading the way with 24 million gamers, presenting significant opportunities for marketers, particularly regarding Gen Z and millennials who spend 12 to 14 hours per week playing video games.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) 4 strategies Gen Z gamers can teach brands

Gen Z (or 'zoomers'), in particular, enjoy gaming and consider gaming as their favourite entertainment activity as it provides social connections and self-expression.

A recent study by the University of Johannesburg highlighted that Gen Z gamers enjoy the competition element of gaming, they seek enjoyment, socialisation, self-expression, and an escape from reality.

They play games on average 10 times a month, with *Call of Duty*, eSport games, and *Fortnite* being their favourites. If given the chance, they would like to win real prizes and have better internet access for gaming. Gen Z gamers are more active on WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, with PlayStation being their preferred gaming platform, followed by mobile phones or laptops, and then Xbox or branded applications. When not gaming, they enjoy streaming TV series, listening to music, and socialising.

4 strategies to reach Gen Z gamers

To effectively reach Gen Z gamers, brands should consider four strategies:

1. Socialisation and self-expression

Gen Z grew up with the world at their fingertips. Brands need to engage with Gen Z gamers in their virtual spaces by understanding the games they play and the social media platforms they use.

The UJ study revealed *Call of Duty* as Gen Zs favourite game, followed by *Roblox* and *Fortnite*, as these games have enhanced user-generated content. Gamers want positive interactions with other players; and the personalisation of the character, game, or avatar is an important aspect while engaging and socialising with other players. Multiplayer

games that encourage personalisation and positive interaction provide opportunities for marketers to engage with Gen Z consumers.

2. Social media presence is key

Gen Z gamers prefer platforms like WhatsApp, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. What is important to marketers is to understand how Gen Z engages with your products on social media, and the importance of customer reviews, recommendations, and influencers in their purchasing decisions.

The availability of product information is the largest influencing factor when purchasing through social media. That is not to forget the influencers or 'micro-influencers' who help or nudge Gen Z consumers into a specific niche or service- about four in 10 consumers who use social media will follow an influencer.

3. Incorporate a competition element

Marketers know that sales promotion strategies such as prizes and competitions are short-term and can dilute the brand if not handled with care. However, Gen Z gamers in South Africa express a desire to win real prizes and improve gaming-related opportunities, such as subscription money for games and data or internet accessibility opportunities. Marketers can leverage this by incorporating competitive elements and prize strategies into their campaigns.

4. Create a space to 'escape'

Gen Z wants to 'escape' from real-life churn and is interested in authentic storytelling. They are crafty when it comes to weeding out the brands that do not have their interests at heart, and they want brands to be purposeful, entertaining and to resonate with them. Hand-in-hand with that, the more real but entertaining the storytelling is, the better will be the chance to grab the consumer's attention so that they can 'escape reality' and believe in something good that the brand stands for.

Gen Z, aged between eight and 26 in 2023, represents a valuable market with significant spending potential. They have yet not reached their full earning potential and the brand should continue learning from these consumers and adapt their strategies accordingly.

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