

METrix

Volume 02 (2025-26)

SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCE ON GEN Z Purchase Decisions



A MAGAZINE BY MET PGDM MARKETING CLUB

MET
Bhujbal Knowledge City

MET INSTITUTE OF
POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN MANAGEMENT

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MUMBAI EDUCATIONAL TRUST

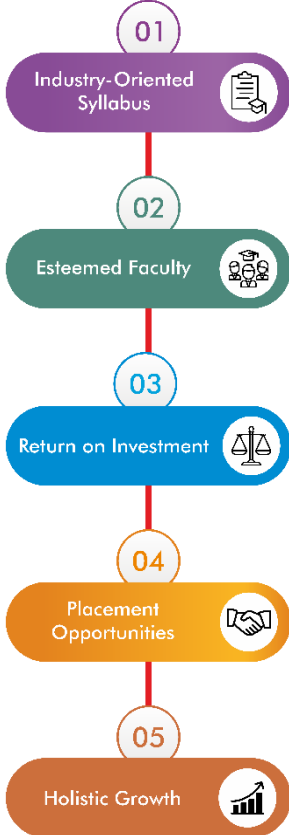
Mumbai Educational Trust (MET) is a conglomerate of premiere educational institutions, driven by a single-minded focus on imparting quality education, to make students sharp. Training is imparted round - the-clock, seven days a week. Projects and assignments are given utmost importance and students learn on the job. Application-oriented knowledge, garnered in the lecture halls, is applied to industry assignments. The faculty spares no effort to make the students razor sharp, so that they make their mark in the corporate world. No effort has been spared, to create an environment that encourages students, to push the limits of their minds. All this, to help young professionals face the challenges of life and make their mark in the corporate world.



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- Institute of Pharmacy
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- Institute of Technology (Polytechnic)
- Institute of Information Technology
- Institute of D. Pharmacy
- Bhujbal Academy of Science & Commerce (Jr College)
- Meena Bhujbal School of Excellence (CBSE Board)

ABOUT MET PGDM PROGRAMME

WHY PGDM COURSE



Mumbai Educational Trust (MET) had launched a multidimensional approach in providing professional education in the field of management and had set up both the MMS and autonomous Management Programmes way back in the 1990s. However, in order to offer the structured learning systems under the aegis of AICTE it set up the autonomous PGDM programme which was primarily styled on the lines of the prestigious IIMs and other best B-Schools in India and overseas. Recently the AICTE in its wisdom decided to promote higher educational institutions of eminence under the stand-alone programme in management, and thus, was born the MET Institute of Post Graduate Diploma in Management (MET Institute of PGDM) under the direct affiliation of AICTE.

PGDM program at MET, ranked as a top PGDM course in Mumbai was launched in the year 2007. Since then, desire to get into one of the best B-school in India has been driving Engineering, BBA, BMS, BCom, BMM & Pharma graduates alike from all over the country to MET. PGDM at MET is more than an MBA since its content and pedagogy empower budding managers with technological tools and understanding besides honing their managerial prowess. It is evident by the fact that a few thousand MET PGDM alumni are gainfully employed in senior positions in leading corporate Houses, making their presence felt, many being successful entrepreneurs too.

Since the world and Indian environment are continuously changing; business and society are changing along. The pandemic has changed the way of life and business practices. A new world order has emerged post pandemic. Hence PGDM at MET is being continuously updated to meet its original purpose of providing trained managers well versed with latest management techniques to the Corporate World.

Unique Specializations

Along with Conventional Specifications offered in Trimester III & IV in Marketing, Finance, HR, Operation and Systems PGDM at MET has also introduced following additional NEW AGE specializations in Trimester V.



Vision & Mission of MET Institute of PGDM

Vision:

To produce global management professionals & entrepreneurs embedded with strong value system & conscience who create wealth for the society at large.

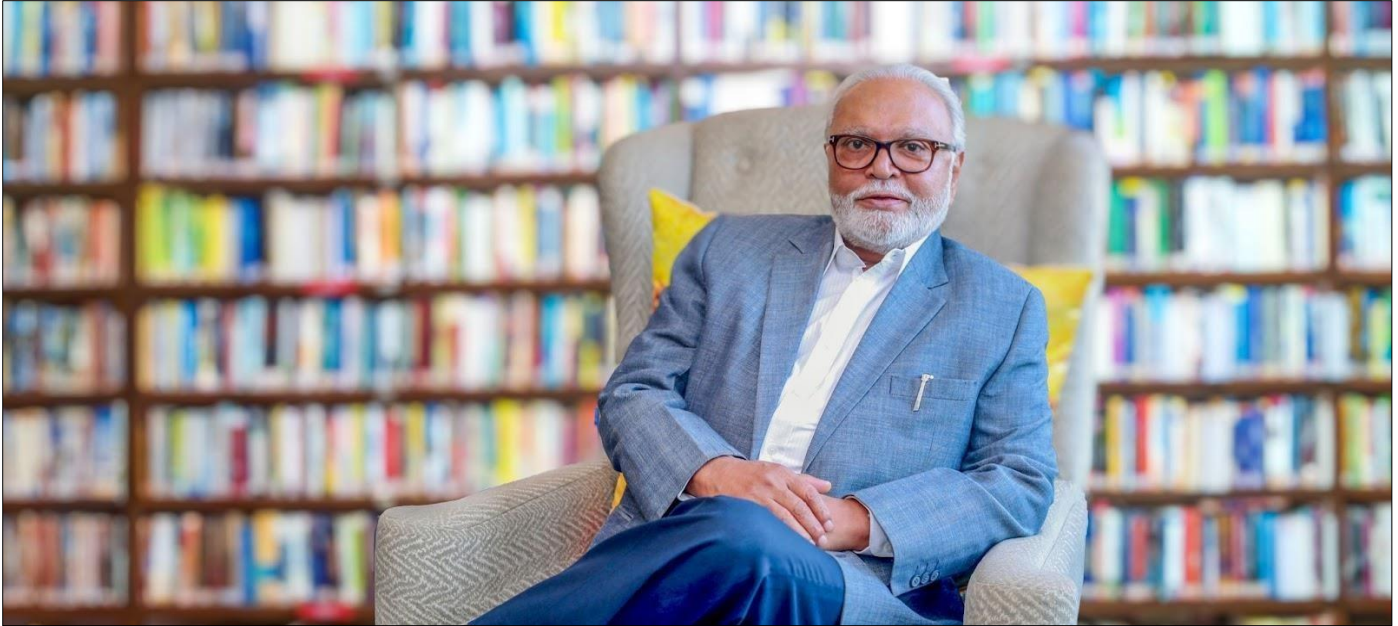
Mission:

To impart value-based quality management education that nurtures global competencies, entrepreneurial acumen, and a strong commitment to social responsibility.

Mission statements:

1. Empower aspiring management professionals with contemporary global management concepts, skills, and theories through experiential learning.
2. Develop leadership and entrepreneurial capabilities by fostering innovation, providing support systems to create sustainable and socially responsible businesses.
3. Nurture social responsibility and sustainability through value based, community-focused, and environmentally conscious management education.

CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to pen this address for the second edition of METrix, the Specialization Club Magazine of the Marketing Club at MET Institute of PGDM. This magazine stands as a testament to the vision, creativity, and marketing acumen of our student community. As we unveil this edition centred on **Social Media Influence and Gen Z Purchase Decisions**, we are not merely presenting a collection of articles but a vibrant, forward-looking narrative shaped by young minds who are passionate about understanding the modern consumer and the forces driving today's marketplace.

We live in an era defined by rapid digital transformation. Social media, influencer culture, and shifting consumer behaviour have moved from being peripheral trends to the core of how brands communicate and how people decide. In such times, the marketer who understands people deeply and thinks with both creativity and data is the one who makes a lasting impact.

This edition explores how Gen Z consumers discover products, build trust with brands, and

make purchase decisions in a world flooded with content. It examines the psychology behind FOMO marketing, the rise of nano influencers, and the power of authenticity in an age where audiences can sense dishonesty instantly. Our students have approached these topics with sharp thinking and genuine curiosity.

More than a platform for creative expression, this magazine reflects the future-ready and consumer-aware mindset we strive to nurture at our institution. I applaud every student, faculty mentor, and member of the editorial team who contributed to this exceptional effort. Your work is proof that great marketing starts with understanding people.

Let us continue to question, observe, and connect. The future of marketing belongs to those who listen before they speak.

With best wishes,

Shri Chhagan Bhujbal

Hon. Founder Chairman – MET Trust

TRUSTEE'S ADDRESS



Dear Readers,

It is with great pride that I welcome you to the second edition of **METrix**, the Specialization Club Magazine of the Marketing Club at MET Institute of PGDM. This publication reflects the passion, creativity, and curiosity of students eager to explore the ever-evolving world of marketing.

The theme of this edition, “**Social Media Influence on Gen Z Purchase Decisions,**” is highly relevant in today’s digital era. Social media platforms have transformed consumer behavior, while Gen Z continues to redefine how brands connect, communicate, and build trust with audiences.

The articles in this edition explore topics such as influencer marketing, FOMO-driven purchase behavior, authenticity in branding, and the growing impact of digital creators. Each contribution reflects thoughtful research, fresh perspectives, and a strong understanding of modern marketing trends.

I congratulate every contributor, editor, and team member whose dedication brought this magazine to life. **METrix** truly reflects the creativity and marketing spirit of our institution, and I look forward to its continued growth in the years ahead

With best wishes,

Shri Pankaj Bhujbal
Hon. Trustee – MET Trust



Dear Readers,

It gives me immense pleasure to address the readers of **METrix**, the Specialization Club Magazine of MET Institute of PGDM. The initiative taken by the Marketing Club to create this platform is truly commendable, bringing together creativity, analysis, and fresh marketing perspectives.

The world of marketing today is dynamic and constantly evolving. Social media has reshaped the relationship between brands and consumers, while Gen Z has emerged as a generation that values authenticity, engagement, and meaningful communication. For marketers, this presents both exciting opportunities and new challenges.

This edition of **METrix** explores these realities through discussions on influencer trust, viral content trends, FOMO-driven marketing, and the role of authenticity in brand communication. The students’ insights reflect sharp observation and a deep understanding of today’s marketplace.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the editorial committee and all contributors for their remarkable efforts. I am confident that **METrix** will continue to inspire, inform, and evolve with every new edition

With best wishes,

Shri Samir Bhujbal
Hon. Trustee – MET Trust

DIRECTOR'S ADDRESS



Dear Readers,

It is with great pride, hope, and confidence that I present this edition of METrix: The Specialization Club Magazine, a celebration of young minds that dare to think deeply, question thoughtfully, and envision boldly.

Within these pages lie ideas shaped by curiosity, observation, and purpose, ideas that extend far beyond classrooms, examinations, and career aspirations. Our students explore themes such as social media influence, consumer psychology, influencer marketing, and Gen Z buying behaviour not as academic subjects, but as real-world forces that are actively reshaping industries. This magazine stands as a powerful reminder that great marketing begins with understanding people and is strengthened through creativity, data, and bold thinking.

What makes this edition truly special is the clarity of thought and sincerity reflected in every contribution. The voices you will read belong to a generation that grew up online and understands, better than anyone, how platforms shape perceptions and purchasing decisions. They remind us that marketing is not defined by budget or reach alone, but by the ability to create genuine

connections, inspire trust, and communicate with real people in meaningful ways

At MET Institute of PGDM, we strive to nurture professionals who are not only skilled managers, but also sharp, consumer-aware marketers ready for a digital world. This magazine reflects that vision beautifully. It showcases our students' readiness to engage with the real dynamics of the marketplace and their passion for marketing that is bold, thoughtful, and human-centred.

I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the editorial team and all contributors for their dedication, discipline, and creativity in bringing this publication to life. May this edition inspire curiosity, spark meaningful conversations, and encourage bold thinking toward building brands and marketing strategies that are authentic, innovative, and deeply connected to the people they serve.

Warm regards,

CA Dr Das Shyamsundar,

Director

MET Institute of PGDM

DEAN'S ADDRESS



Dear Readers,

In today's rapidly evolving business landscape, success can no longer be measured by traditional metrics alone. Brands are increasingly judged by the relevance, authenticity, and resonance of their engagement with consumers, particularly with a generation as digitally fluent and discerning as Gen Z. Understanding this shift is no longer optional for future marketing professionals.

At its core, modern marketing reflects a commitment to genuine connection, creative storytelling, and consumer-first thinking. Brands have immense power to influence behaviour, shape culture, and define aspirations. With this power comes responsibility: the responsibility to engage honestly, respect consumer intelligence, and create value that goes beyond the transaction.

As a business school, our mission goes beyond imparting technical knowledge and managerial skills. We strive to nurture marketing-ready leaders who understand that long-term brand equity is built on trust, creativity, and a genuine understanding of consumer behaviour.

I am particularly proud of the work undertaken by the Marketing Club and the editorial team, who consistently demonstrate that passion and professionalism can go hand in hand. From live brand projects and consumer research to digital campaigns and content creation, these experiences reinforce the idea that meaningful marketing begins with curiosity and action.

This edition of METrix is a timely reminder that the future of marketing lies at the intersection of data, creativity, and authentic human connection. I commend the editorial team for choosing social media and Gen Z as the theme and for sparking conversations that challenge conventional notions of how brands communicate and how consumers decide.

As you read through these pages, I encourage each of you to reflect on the marketer you wish to become. May you think with curiosity, create with boldness, and build brands that leave a genuine and lasting impression on the people you serve.

I wish the Marketing Club and the entire editorial team every success with this edition, and I congratulate our students for their insightful and enthusiastic contributions.

With best wishes,

Dr. Vaishali Kulkarni
Dean
MET Institute of PGDM



ABOUT MET PGDM MARKETING CLUB

MET PGDM Marketing club is typically a student-run or professional organization dedicated to promoting knowledge, skills, and interest in marketing. These clubs serve as platforms for networking, learning, and professional development in the field of marketing. Here's a general overview of what a marketing club might focus

KEY ACTIVITIES OF MARKETING CLUB

- **Workshops and Webinars:** Topics like digital marketing, branding, market research, and consumer behavior.
- **Competitions:** Case study challenges, ad-making contests, or business simulations.
- **Guest Lectures:** Sessions by industry experts to share insights and experiences.
- **Live Projects:** Collaborations with companies to solve real-world marketing challenges.
- **Networking Events:** Career fairs, alumni meetups, and industry tours.
- **Content Creation:** Blogs, newsletters, or social media campaigns to share marketing knowledge.
- **Internal Events:** Icebreaker sessions, team-building activities, and brainstorming sessions.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- **Exposure to the Industry:** Gain firsthand knowledge of marketing practices.
- **Skill Building:** Learn tools and strategies that are directly applicable to the workplace.
- **Leadership Opportunities:** Take on roles in the club to develop management and organizational skills.
- **Portfolio Enhancement:** Build a strong resume through involvement in impactful projects and activities.
- **Community:** Be a part of a group that shares a passion for marketing and creativity.

Message from the Editorial Committee

Message from Editor

Dear Readers,

It is my great pleasure to present before you the latest issue of “*METrix*”, an initiative by the Marketing Club of MET Institute of PGDM. This magazine is a culmination of passion, creativity, and the collective efforts of our dedicated Editorial Committee.

It is our privilege to bring out this edition as we explore the theme “**Social Media Influence on Gen Z Purchase Decisions**” uncovering how digital platforms, content trends, and influencer culture are reshaping consumer behavior and redefining modern marketing strategies.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our Director, CA Dr. Das, Prof. Dr. Harshada Mulay and advisors for their constant guidance and encouragement. A special shoutout to my incredible team for their relentless efforts in perfecting the design and content—your creativity and attention to detail have truly brought this magazine to life.

We look forward to continuing this journey and delivering more editions filled with fresh ideas, insights, and marketing innovation. I sincerely hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed creating it, and that it sparks curiosity, inspiration, and value for all our readers.

Happy reading!

Warm regards,

Sahil Vithlani

Editor-in-Chief, METrix

Message from the Editorial Team

Dear Readers,

We are excited to bring you this edition of MET’s Marketing Magazine, themed “**Social Media Influence on Gen Z Purchase Decisions**”. This issue explores how digital engagement, influencer impact, and evolving content formats are shaping the buying behavior of Gen Z consumers.

A big thank you to all the contributors who shared their valuable insights and made this edition possible. We hope it inspires fresh perspectives and encourages meaningful discussions around the future of marketing.

Wishing you an insightful and enriching reading experience!

Warm regards,

The Editorial Committee, METrix

The Reddit Effect: How Unfiltered Conversations Shape Gen Z Purchase Decisions

BY ANUSHKA BHOSLE

The Rise of Community - Driven Purchase Decisions

For Gen Z, making a purchase is not an impulse action based on advertising. Rather, Gen Z consumers seek opinions, experiences, and suggestions of others while making a purchase. While researching, a significant factor is opinions and experiences on Reddit, which is playing a vital role in influencing Gen Z's purchase decisions. Unlike Instagram or TikTok, which are majorly driven by social media sites, Reddit is more of a discussion heavy social network where users share their experiences on various subreddits. Subreddits are a group of users on Reddit who discuss a particular topic or product based on their personal experiences. For Gen Z consumers, who believe in authenticity and transparency, Reddit offers a unique experience that traditional marketing practices fail to deliver.

Real People, Not Bots

One of the key reasons why Gen Z has more trust in Reddit is because they believe that the conversation is coming from actual human beings. It is a fact that today, in many digital environments, consumers are skeptical about artificial intelligence-based conversations or fake accounts. For example, reviews on shopping websites can majorly be positive or repetitive which makes it difficult for consumers to know what is genuine or fake. However, Reddit is altogether a different environment. If a person asks for a product review, he is likely to receive reviews from many different people and these reviews are based on personal experiences. The person giving the review is likely to explain how long they have been using a product, what they liked about it, and what they didn't like about it. It is a fact that Gen Z consumers believe in having a more transparent environment. Therefore, they are likely to believe more in a conversation between several people on a single product.

Raw, Unfiltered Product Reviews

Another reason for the influence of Reddit can be the unfiltered and raw reviews that can be found

on the platform. Unlike influencer content or advertisements that usually contain positive reviews about the product, reviews and discussions on Reddit contain both the positive and negative aspects of the product. A single thread can contain positive and negative reviews, comparisons, and suggestions from various users in the form of comments.

Some of the information that can be found in these discussions include:

- How the product performs in the long run
- Real-life experiences
- What the product lacks
- How the product compares to other brands

Since the reviews and discussions are unfiltered and raw, this helps the Gen Z generation analyze if the product suits their needs or not before purchasing the product.

The “Wisdom of the Crowd”

Also, the structure of Reddit allows many users to take part in the discussions concerning the product. When many people have their own views about the product, the consumers have access to the collective wisdom.

“Collective wisdom” This can be referred to as the ‘wisdom of the crowd.’ When many users suggest the same product, the product can be trusted more. When many users have the same problem with the product, this can act as a warning for the consumers. To the Gen Z consumers who need validation before making any decision, this can act as a source of comfort. Instead of believing the influencer or the ad, the consumers can analyze the patterns.

Niche Communities with Specialized Knowledge

Another reason why Reddit has an impact on consumer behavior is that it has specialized communities. It has ample subreddits for specific interests, industries, or product categories and these communities are normally composed of

users who are equipped with huge knowledge about a particular topic. For example, some communities might be about technology, skincare, personal finance, gaming, or fitness and so in this the users usually share detailed product recommendations based on their personal expertise or long-term product usage. As a consequence, product-related discussions on Reddit are extremely informative. Users might describe specific product features, compare several brands, or recommend alternatives that offer greater value.

Reddit as a Product Research Tool

Over time, the use of Reddit has become an informal yet effective product research tool. A large percentage of Gen Z consumers use the platform as a means of decision-making when considering a potential purchase. One of the most common trends observed among online shoppers is the use of the phrase “Reddit” after the name of the product. This is done to quickly access the experiences shared by other users who have already used the product. These platforms provide the consumer with valuable insights into the product, which may not be covered by traditional means of advertising, such as the reliability of the product over time, potential issues with the product, or better alternatives within the market.

Authenticity in an Influencer-Saturated Environment

It In the last ten years, influencer marketing has

turned out to be one of the most common forms of marketing strategies followed by brands to advertise their products on social media platforms. However, even though influencers are playing a vital role in helping Gen Z customers discover products, there has been a growing sense of awareness about the same. Partnerships involving paid promotions have given rise to the perception that the products are promoted based on financial considerations. In the case of Reddit, the overall discussions are user-driven, as opposed to brands. This has given rise to the perception that the recommendations are based on personal experiences. The overall authenticity of the discussions on Reddit has played a vital role in the generation of trust among Gen Z customers.

Why Reddit Matters for Modern Marketing

The growing significance of Reddit serves to showcase an important change in the way in which GenZ is behaving. The GenZ consumer is not simply a passive recipient of marketing messages, they are rather, an active seeker of opinions and perspectives from communities before making purchasing decisions. For marketers and brands, this serves to illustrate the importance of customer experiences. A good product experience tends to result in good word-of-mouth in communities like Reddit, which can in turn drive purchasing decisions. In many ways, Reddit serves to illustrate the extent to which purchasing decisions are being driven not merely by marketing messages, but by consumers themselves.

AUTHOR'S BIO: ANUSHKA BHOSLE

Anushka Bhosle is a marketing enthusiast with a quiet curiosity for what drives people's choices. She has a soft spot for unfiltered opinions and tends to trust collective conversations over polished narratives. Naturally observant, she often finds insights where others just see comments. Marketer by passion, researcher by instinct.



From Scroll to Cart: How Social Media is Redefining Gen Z Purchase Decisions

BY ARYA SALVI

When a Simple Scroll Becomes a Buying Decision

For many young people today, social media is much more than a place to pass time. It has quietly become a part of everyday decision making, including what to buy, which brands to trust, and what products feel worth trying. A person may open Instagram just to relax for a few minutes, watch a few short videos, and suddenly become curious about a product they had never planned to buy.

This shift has changed the way purchasing happens for Generation Z. Earlier, buying decisions were often influenced by television advertisements, store displays, or word of mouth. Today, a single reel, a creator recommendation, or even a trending comment section can create instant interest. For Gen Z, shopping often begins long before visiting a store or searching on an online marketplace.

Why Social Media Feels Natural to Gen Z

Generation Z has grown up in a world where smartphones, internet access, and digital platforms have always been present. Because of this, social media is naturally woven into daily life. It is where they communicate, stay informed, discover trends, and often form opinions.

Before buying something, many young consumers do not immediately visit a website. Instead, they look at reviews, watch short videos, check how others are using the product, and read comments. This process feels natural because social media provides both information and reassurance at the same time.

A product often becomes interesting not because a brand introduces it, but because it repeatedly appears in content that feels familiar.

The Influence of Creators Feels More Personal

One of the strongest reasons social media affects buying decisions is the presence of digital creators. Influencers often feel more relatable than

traditional celebrities because they share ordinary moments from daily life.

A skincare recommendation during a morning routine, a fashion suggestion in a casual video, or a gadget review shared during a normal day often feels genuine. It does not immediately feel like advertising. This creates trust, especially when followers have been watching the same creator for a long time. The power of such content lies in the fact that it feels like advice from someone familiar rather than a direct sales message.

Why Smaller Influencers Often Matter More

While major influencers attract attention, smaller creators often build stronger trust. Micro influencers usually have a more connected audience, and their followers often believe their opinions carry honesty.

Their content is usually simple, direct, and less polished. They respond to comments, share personal experiences, and create a sense of closeness that larger creators sometimes cannot maintain. Because of this, even one product mentioned from a smaller creator can influence buying behavior in a meaningful way.

Visual Content Creates Quick Interest

Social media works quickly because visual content captures attention within seconds. Gen Z often decides whether something is worth noticing almost immediately.

A short video showing how a product fits into daily life can often create more impact than a long-written description. A clothing reel, a food review, or a simple product demonstration allows viewers to imagine themselves using it. That visual connection often creates emotional interest before any detailed comparison begins.

Real Experiences Matter More Than Advertisements

Young consumers today often trust real users more than official advertisements.

When ordinary people share honest reviews, product experiences, or unboxing videos, it creates authenticity. This kind of content feels natural because it reflects how a product performs in everyday life.

Seeing someone use a product without heavy editing or brand messaging often builds stronger confidence than traditional marketing.

Viral Trends Create Immediate Attention

Sometimes products become popular simply because they appear everywhere. A trending sound, repeated product mentions, or a sudden rise in online discussions can quickly create demand. When people repeatedly see the same product across different accounts, curiosity naturally increases. For many Gen Z consumers, popularity itself becomes a reason to explore something further.

Social Commerce Has Made Buying Effortless

Another major reason social media influences purchases so strongly is convenience. Today, many platforms allow users to move from discovery to purchase without leaving the application. A product can be seen, understood, and purchased within minutes.

This smooth process matters because young consumers value speed and simplicity. If something looks useful and the buying process is easy, decisions happen faster.

The Challenge of Constant Digital Influence

At the same time, social media influence is not always positive.

Repeated exposure to products can encourage impulsive buying. Sometimes people purchase things simply because they have seen them often, not because they truly need them.

There is also growing awareness that not every recommendation is completely unbiased. Sponsored collaborations sometimes make audiences question whether the creator genuinely believes in the product.

What Brands Must Understand Today

Gen Z usually notices when content feels forced or overly promotional.

They respond better to communication that feels honest, creative, and connected to real experiences. Brands that understand this do not simply advertise. They create content that fits naturally into digital conversations.

The strongest connection happens when a brand feels present without appearing intrusive.

Conclusion

For Generation Z, buying decisions often begin during ordinary moments of scrolling. Social media has changed how products are discovered, how trust is built, and how quickly interest becomes action.

A reel, a review, or a creator recommendation can influence a decision within seconds. What once required planned shopping now often begins with unexpected curiosity during daily digital activity. The journey from scroll to cart reflects how deeply social media has become part of modern consumer behavior.

AUTHOR'S BIO: ARYA SALVI

Arya Salvi is currently pursuing a PGDM at the MET Institute of PGDM, driven by a strong interest in marketing and the mechanics of consumer decision-making. Fascinated by evolving trends, Arya enjoys exploring the impact of social media on everyday choices. Combining creativity with analytical thinking, Arya aims to build a meaningful and successful career in the marketing industry.



BY DEVANSH GANDHI

Saurabh, a 24-year-old student is browsing Instagram one evening during the IPL season as he unwinds after classes. An image of Virat Kohli catches his eye. In discussing how to stay fit during the tournament, Kohli has uploaded a photo of a training session wearing Puma athletic gear. Within minutes, the post garners thousands of likes and comments.

Curious, Saurabh clicks on the comment section and discovers fans inquiring about the shoes Kohli is wearing. He spends a couple of minutes later searching online for the same pair. What started as an informal scroll on social media gradually transforms into a product search.

This small moment shows a far greater change in traditional marketing. In the last decade, the concept of marketing has evolved into an ecosystem where *Influencers* are playing a major role in shaping consumer behavior. Social networks like Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter have given impetus to be influential figures who can impact the brand discovery and purchase decisions.

Gen Z is particularly persuaded by the content shared on social media. According to research, 90 % of Gen Z consumers rely on social media to learn about new brands and 63% trust influencer suggestions more than traditional advertisements (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024). Statistically, athletes are the frontrunners of the influencer space on the internet.

Athlete Influencers and the Evolution of Marketing

Further as Saurabh scrolls through his feed and sees a reel of Cristiano Ronaldo undergoing an intense workout session. Ronaldo is sporting new football boots by Nike as he goes through training drills.

To Saurabh and millions of fans, the product is identified not only by the brand but also by the athleticism and performance of Ronaldo. This shift demonstrates how the endorsements of athletes

have changed throughout the years. Sports marketing in the past used to depend on television advertisements or print advertisements. In the modern era of social media, athletes are able to endorse brands by using their own content like a workout regimen, training and lifestyle updates.

A study conducted by De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) provides an indication that brand awareness and purchase intention are highly enhanced by the influence endorsements on social media when viewers perceive influencer authenticity.

Sportsmen tend to incorporate products in their everyday lifestyle content. For example, Virat Kohli has been endorsing sportswear partnership with Puma clothes and his own brand One8. His contract with Puma costs more than ₹100 crore, and it is one of the biggest brand-athlete deals in India.

Likewise, Nike has a lifetime endorsement that has a reported value of over \$1 billion with Cristiano Ronaldo, pointing out at the enormous commercial potential of athletes to brands.

Nevertheless, their influence cannot be solely explained by exposure. The real power of athlete influencers lies in the trust they build with their audiences.

Why Gen Z Trusts Athlete Influencers

The following day Saurabh goes back to Instagram and finds another post of Kohli of him working out. The quote discusses discipline and consistency, and being in optimal physical condition. Saurabh saves the post as he believes that it may encourage him in his workouts.

It shows the reason why athlete influencers are such powerful agents among Gen Z. Athlete content is usually personal and of authenticity as opposed to traditional advertisements.

Athletes are a symbol of discipline, persistence and a successful character that younger

audiences aspire to. Fans start feeling familiar with their beloved athletes when they are able to see them on social media on a regular basis.

This is explained by the fact of parasocial relationships, faraway places of emotional attachment to public personalities, although the followers do not even get to know them directly.

Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) also discovered that close to 70 % of youths use the opinions of the influencers in their buying choices. In line with this, Lou and Yuan (2019) indicate that both perceived authenticity and credibility reinforce the power of the influencer to a great extent.

In the case of Saurabh, the more he is exposed to posts of the sportspeople that he is following, the more he is likely to believe in such products that they promote.

However, the power of athlete marketing is not limited solely to the domain of individual trust; it also exists on the plane of collective behavior.

Social Proof and Community Influence

Subsequently, Saurabh later on in the week sees that a few of his friends at college are talking about the same Puma shoes that were worn by Kohli. Others have already posted screenshots of the product on the internet with others arguing on whether to purchase them or not.

This exemplifies the social proof principle that illustrates that people seek referents, even highly respected figures, to give them indications on what to desire in products.

Millions of followers are used to watching their favorite athlete use a particular brand which signals good quality and popularity. Likes, comments and shares are some of the engagement measures that support this perception.

As an example, the posts made by Cristiano Ronaldo often get more than 10 million likes which significantly increases the exposure of the brands he is advertising (Erdogan, 1999).

The study also claims that the endorsements of athletes leave a positive impression on the brand

attitude and consumer loyalty (Arai, Ko, and Ross, 2014).

With the word spreading through fan groups and peer networks, product demand becomes even more interest aroused. What started as a one-Instagram-post act has a purchasing discourse making it through whole populations of consumers.

The awareness of this strong chain reaction prompts the brands to lean more and more on athlete influencers as a critical marketing tool.

Strategic Value for Brands

Several days after seeing the post of Kohli, Saurabh finally arrives at the idea of visiting a sportswear shop and trying out the Puma shoes that he saw in an online store. While standing in the store, he realizes that the product has moved from a social media post to a real purchase consideration.

This Instagram feed to retail store journey, shows the importance of athlete influencers to brands.

The range of reach, credibility, and emotional connection is a persuasive and reliable solution to brands that need to connect with Gen Z customers via athlete influencer marketing. The influencer marketing sector alone is expected to rise by at least over \$24 billion by 2026, and it is a sign of the increased significance of influencer-mediated campaigns (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2024).

Research also demonstrates that the perception of the brand and intentions to buy the product among consumers undergo a considerable enhancement through the use of face recognition, which in turn is a result of athlete promotion (Arai et al., 2014; Erdogan, 1999).

But authenticity is of critical importance. Gen Z audiences are quick to identify endorsements that appear forced or inconsistent with the athlete's identity. Effective partnerships thus must have a high correspondence between the personal brand of the athlete and the values of the firm.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the week, Saurabh ends up buying the Puma shoes that he started seeing in Kohli's Instagram post. This was initially just a

moment of curiosity when a person was scrolling through social media but with time, it became a buying decision.

This customer journey shows an expression of athletic influencers as the shapers of consumer behavior nowadays. Through authenticity, aspirational appeal, and massive social media

reach, athletes have become powerful bridges between brands and Gen Z consumers.

In today's digital marketing landscape, the journey from stadium to smartphone represents a new era where athletes, brands, and consumers interact more dynamically than ever before.

AUTHOR'S BIO: DEVANSH GANDHI

Devansh Gandhi is a PGDM (Marketing) student with 3+ years of experience in project management at Crimson Interactive. He specializes in leading teams, managing budgets, and delivering results efficiently. He is now transitioning into marketing to combine data-driven insights with creative strategy, aiming to grow into a strategic marketing role.



BY KARISHMA AGARWAL

The rise of social media has significantly transformed the way consumers discover, evaluate, and purchase products. Among all consumer groups, Generation Z (Gen Z)-individuals born between the late 1990s and early 2010s-are the most influenced by digital platforms. Unlike previous generations that relied heavily on traditional advertising such as television and print media, Gen Z spends a considerable amount of time on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

For this generation, social media is not only a source of entertainment but also a major tool for product discovery, brand evaluation, and purchase decisions. The influence of online personalities, relatable content, and peer recommendations has made social media one of the most powerful marketing channels today.

Instagram Influencers and Buying Behavior

Influencer marketing has become a dominant strategy for brands targeting Gen Z consumers. Influencers-individuals with a strong social media following-act as intermediaries between brands and consumers. Their recommendations often feel more authentic and trustworthy compared to traditional advertisements.

For example, fashion and beauty brands frequently collaborate with influencers to showcase products through reels, tutorials, and lifestyle content. When a trusted influencer demonstrates how a product fits into their daily routine, followers are more likely to develop interest in the brand. This strategy works because Gen Z values relatability and authenticity over scripted marketing messages.

Influencers are often categorized based on the size of their audience:

- **Nano Influencers:** 1,000–10,000 followers
- **Micro Influencers:** 10,000–100,000 followers
- **Macro Influencers:** 100,000–1 million followers
- **Mega Influencers:** Over 1 million followers

Interestingly, nano and micro influencers often generate higher engagement rates because their audiences perceive them as more genuine and approachable.

FOMO-Driven Marketing Strategies

Another powerful psychological factor influencing Gen Z purchasing behavior is FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). Social media platforms constantly expose users to curated lifestyles, limited-time offers, and trending products. When users see others enjoying a product or experience, they may feel compelled to purchase it to avoid feeling left out.

Brands strategically leverage this phenomenon through tactics such as:

- Limited-time discounts
- Flash sales promoted through stories
- Exclusive product launches
- “Trending” product campaigns

These strategies create urgency and encourage immediate purchase decisions. For Gen Z consumers who are constantly connected online, such marketing tactics can significantly influence their buying patterns.

Social Proof and Online Reviews

Gen Z consumers rarely make purchase decisions without researching a product online. Social media comments, reviews, and testimonials serve as social proof, validating the credibility of a product.

When consumers see positive feedback from multiple users, it reinforces trust and reduces the perceived risk associated with buying the product. On the other hand, negative reviews can quickly damage a brand’s reputation.

User-generated content such as unboxing videos, honest product reviews, and comparison videos plays a vital role in shaping perceptions. In many cases, consumers trust these reviews more than brand advertisements because they appear unbiased and authentic.

Brand Authenticity and Relatable Content

Gen Z consumers value brands that demonstrate authenticity, transparency, and social awareness. Brands that communicate openly and showcase their values often build stronger emotional connections with their audience.

For instance, brands that highlight sustainability, inclusivity, or ethical production practices tend to resonate strongly with Gen Z audiences. Rather than focusing solely on product promotion, companies now emphasize storytelling, community engagement, and behind-the-scenes content.

Case Example: Viral Product Trends

Social media trends often have the power to turn ordinary products into viral sensations. For example, a skincare product reviewed by several influencers may suddenly become extremely popular, leading to rapid increases in sales. These viral trends are amplified through hashtags, reels, and algorithm-driven recommendations.

When a product appears repeatedly across different accounts, users perceive it as popular and socially validated, which further encourages them to try it.

This demonstrates the immense power of social media in shaping consumer demand, sometimes even more effectively than traditional marketing campaigns.

Challenges and Ethical Concerns

Despite its effectiveness, social media marketing

also presents certain challenges. The increasing number of sponsored posts can sometimes blur the line between genuine recommendations and paid promotions. If influencers fail to disclose brand partnerships, it may mislead consumers.

Additionally, unrealistic beauty standards and exaggerated product claims can create false expectations among audiences. As a result, regulatory bodies and platforms are increasingly encouraging transparency in influencer marketing practices.

Brands must therefore maintain ethical standards and ensure that their marketing messages remain honest and responsible.

Conclusion

Social media has fundamentally transformed the way Gen Z interacts with brands and makes purchasing decisions. Influencers, online reviews, viral trends, and relatable content all play a significant role in shaping consumer preferences.

For marketers, understanding these dynamics is essential to effectively engage with Gen Z audiences. Brands that prioritize authenticity, build trust through social proof, and create meaningful digital experiences are more likely to succeed in this rapidly evolving landscape.

As social media continues to evolve, its influence on consumer behavior will only grow stronger, making it a crucial element of modern marketing strategies.

AUTHOR'S BIO: KARISHMA AGARWAL

Karishma Agarwal is an emerging marketing professional with a strong inclination towards social media, digital marketing, and brand strategy. She explores how evolving platforms and online trends shape the way audiences interact with brands. Her perspective combines creativity with strategic insights, reflecting a deep understanding of modern digital communication.



BY MAHEK SHASTRI

The Power of FOMO: How Social Media Marketing Captures the Digital Consumer

In today's digital age, social media is more than just a way to talk to people and have fun. It has become a powerful marketing tool that has a big effect on how people act, especially Generation Z. FOMO-driven marketing, which stands for "Fear of Missing Out," is one of the most effective marketing strategies used by brands today. This plan makes people feel like they need to act quickly and that they are special, which makes them buy things quickly so they don't feel left out.

FOMO is a mental state in which people worry about missing out on things that other people are enjoying, like experiences, chances, or trends. Social media makes this feeling stronger because users are always seeing updates about what other people are buying, doing, or enjoying. Brands use this knowledge to plan marketing campaigns that play on this fear and get people to act right away.

Limited-time offers are a common way for brands to make people feel like they have to buy something right away. Many social media sites use flash sales, countdown timers, and "only available for 24 hours" deals as common ways to get people to buy things. When people see that a product is only available for a short time, they feel like they have to buy it right away before the chance is gone. This feeling of urgency makes people think less about the purchase, which often leads to them buying things on impulse.

The idea of limited product drops is another good strategy. A lot of fashion and lifestyle brands make limited-edition products that only a few people can buy. This makes their fans excited and builds hype. When these things sell out quickly, it makes people want to own them even more. People are often proud to own something that not everyone can get, which makes them more loyal to and interested in the brand.

Influencer marketing is also a big part of strategies based on FOMO. Influencers on social media show off products in their daily lives by posting,

making reels, and telling stories. When influencers use certain products, go to exclusive events, or try new trends, their followers often want to do the same things. Influencers give people a sense of social proof, which makes them think that if other people are having fun, they should too, before they miss out.

Another important aspect of FOMO marketing is trending content. Viral challenges, trending products, and hashtag campaigns spread quickly across social media platforms. When a product becomes part of a viral trend, users feel the need to join in before it disappears. This behavior is especially strong among Gen Z, who are very active on social media and are constantly exposed to new trends and online discussions.

Stories and temporary content also play a large role in FOMO marketing. Platforms like Instagram have features where posts vanish after 24 hours. Brands take advantage of this to share exclusive discounts, sneak peeks, and behind-the-scenes content that followers can view for only a short time. This limited visibility encourages users to stay engaged with the platform so they don't miss any key updates.

While FOMO-driven marketing works well for brands, it also raises concerns about consumer awareness and responsible selling. When people frequently make impulsive purchases due to social pressure or fear of missing out, it can lead to unnecessary spending. Therefore, it is crucial for consumers to stay thoughtful and assess whether they really need a product before buying.

In conclusion, FOMO-driven marketing has become one of the most powerful strategies in social media. By combining psychological triggers, limited-time offers, influencer promotion, and viral trends, brands successfully capture the attention of digital audiences, especially Generation Z. As social media keeps changing, FOMO marketing will likely remain a strong tool that influences how consumers discover, desire, and buy products online.

AUTHOR'S BIO: MAHEK SHASTRI

Mahek Shastri is a PGDM student (2025–2027) at MET Mumbai. Mahek is a creative and enthusiastic individual with a strong interest in digital marketing. She has gained practical experience in areas like social media marketing, branding, and content creation, which helps her combine creativity with smart ideas. She enjoys working on new concepts and expressing her ideas through design and storytelling. In the future, she aims to build a successful career in digital marketing and continue growing by learning and exploring new creative opportunities.



BY MANA ROY

While cleaning my cupboard one afternoon, I found a bunch of clothes and accessories that I had bought but never worn. Some of them still had the tags on them. I thought to myself, why did I buy this stuff in the first place if I didn't really need it? Many of these items were bought during online sales or limited-time offers that seemed impossible to ignore at the time.

This small realization reflects a larger trend in modern consumer behavior. In today's digital marketplace, people are often influenced not just by need but also by the fear of missing out on an opportunity.

Marketers even have a name for this phenomenon: the 'FOMO' or the Fear of Missing Out. With media sites like Instagram and TikTok, companies can use this psychological trigger to encourage people to make faster purchasing decisions.

Understanding FOMO in Marketing

FOMO is when people want to stay connected with the current trends, fashion, and what's happening, and they do not want to miss out on what others are experiencing. Companies use this as a marketing tactic to push customers to buy products quickly.

Companies are always trying to come up with ways to get people excited about their products. One way they do this is by using psychological triggers and creating false urgency for driving quick decisions or impulse purchases.

FOMO marketing techniques

Companies use several strategies to create a sense of urgency and excitement among consumers.

- **Flash Sales**

They also have something called flash sales as a FOMO trigger, where they sell things cheaply for just a few hours. This makes people want to buy things away because they do not want to miss out on the sale or the discounted price only available during the sale.

- **Stories and Time-Bound Promotions**

Instagram has something called stories that disappear after a day. Companies use these temporary posts to promote their deals, discounts and new products. This makes people want to keep checking their media so they do not miss out on anything.

- **Exclusive Access**

Offering exclusive access makes your loyal customers feel special. This technique appeals to customers' desires to be ahead of the crowd as part of an exclusive group. It can also foster brand loyalty.

- **Influencers and Social Proof**

Influencers help companies spread the word about their products. When they talk about a product to their friends, followers feel encouraged to try those products or services.

Companies use FOMO to get people to buy things. They make people feel like they need to buy things away or they will miss out. This makes people buy things without thinking about it much.

Why should you use FOMO marketing?

- **Faster Decisions**

It makes people decide faster. When people see that something is only available for a time, they are more likely to buy it right away.

- **Boosts Engagement**

It gets people more involved in the media. When companies post about deals, people pay attention. They like, comment and share the posts.

- **Creates Excitement**

Limited-time promotions and exclusive deals often create curiosity and excitement among consumers, encouraging them to like, comment, share, or interact with the brand's content.

- **Higher Sales**

It helps companies sell things. When people feel like they need to buy something away, they are

more likely to actually buy it.

- Trend Participation

It makes people want to be part of the trend. When people see that others are buying something, they want to buy it

Measuring the Success of a FOMO Campaign

To understand whether a FOMO campaign is successful, companies usually evaluate several key indicators.

- Conversion Rate

How many people bought something after seeing the campaign? If the percentage is higher during the campaign, then the campaign was successful.

- Social engagement

How many people are talking about the campaign in the media? If people are liking, sharing, creating trends and commenting on the posts, then the campaign is having a good engagement on digital platforms.

- Website traffic

How many people are visiting the company's website? If there is a significant increase in traffic on the websites, then the campaign is able to create an impact.

- Average Bill Value

An increase in the average bill value during the promotional period can indicate that the FOMO campaign is effective in motivating customers to

purchase more or choose higher-value products.

Avoiding the Risks of FOMO Marketing

FOMO marketing can really work when it comes to getting people's attention and making them want to buy something away. If companies use it too much or try to trick people, it can backfire. People are smart. They know when they are being manipulated. If they feel like they are being pushed into buying something, they will not trust the company anymore.

To avoid this, companies need to be upfront and honest when they are promoting something. People should know how long a sale will last, what the rules are, and if there is really a limited amount of something. If something sells out, companies should let people know and try to offer them something. They should also tell them when the thing they want will be available again.

At the end of the day, FOMO marketing is about finding the right balance. Making people feel like they need to act can work, but being real and honest is what makes people like you in the long run. Companies that think about how people feel are more likely to run campaigns that get people excited without hurting their reputation. FOMO marketing is what works when people trust you and feel like you are being fair with them. FOMO marketing should be used in a way that makes people want to buy from you because they like your company, not because they feel like they have to.

AUTHOR'S BIO: MANA ROY

Mana Roy is an MBA student driven by curiosity for marketing and innovation. She has a deep interest in writing, using it as a medium to share ideas and perspectives. She enjoys analyzing brands and crafting creative narratives. Her goal is to combine strategic thinking with storytelling in the business world.



The Rise of Instagram Influencers

Instagram Influencers and their Influence on Gen Z Purchasing Habits In the current digital age, social media has become a significant factor that influences consumer behavior, particularly within Generation Z. Platforms such as Instagram have revolutionized how brands engage with prospective customers. For Gen Z, who have grown up immersed in technology, social media serves not only as entertainment but also as a crucial source of information and inspiration. Among the various marketing tactics employed on Instagram, influencer marketing has proven to be one of the most effective in driving purchasing decisions. Instagram influencers are individuals who have garnered a dedicated following by regularly sharing content focused on particular interests such as fashion, beauty, fitness, travel, technology, or lifestyle.

Relatability and Trust

These influencers interact with their followers, offer product recommendations, and share personal stories on their platforms. They eventually win the audience's trust and credibility, which enables them to sway their followers' beliefs and purchasing decisions. Influencers' relatability is one of the key factors contributing to their powerful influence on Generation Z. Influencers frequently portray themselves as regular people sharing everyday experiences, in contrast to traditional celebrities. They provide information about their everyday activities, personal challenges, successes, and lifestyle decisions. Their followers feel closer to them because of this authenticity. Influencers' product recommendations frequently feel more like recommendations from friends than like marketing campaigns.

For example, when a beauty influencer reveals their skincare routine via Instagram reels or stories, fans may see how the items are utilized in real life. This transparency helps to eliminate uncertainty and build trust in the advice. Instagram's visual nature also has a huge impact on purchasing habits. The platform is specifically built to display visually appealing material, making

it great for product advertising. Influencers frequently promote things using visually appealing photographs, interesting reels, and innovative narrative. These images attract attention and make items appear more appealing. For many Gen Z users, Instagram has evolved into a discovery tool where people stumble across new companies and goods while reading through their feed.

Influencers frequently introduce followers to popular things, fresh launches, and niche brands that may not be well-known. This exposure sparks curiosity and encourages people to investigate and acquire these products. Another important factor impacting Gen Z purchasing behavior is social proof. Social proof is the concept that people tend to trust and follow the acts or ideas of others. When Instagram users see hundreds of likes, nice comments, and shares on influencer posts, they form the impression that the product is popular and trustworthy. Influencers frequently bolster this social evidence by posting candid feedback, before-and-after photos, and testimonials.

For example, a fitness influencer advertising a supplement may discuss their personal experience and transformation. These findings can persuade followers that the product is effective and worth trying. In recent years, the rise of micro and nano influencers has changed influencer marketing. Micro influencers often have 10,000 to 100,000 followers, and nano influencers have fewer than 10,000 followers. Although their audiences are smaller than superstar influencers, they frequently have higher engagement rates and stronger ties with their followers. These influencers engage their audience more personally by responding to comments, addressing questions, and sharing personal stories. Because of this greater connection, their recommendations frequently appear more real and trustworthy. Many brands are now collaborating with micro and nano influencers since their audiences are more likely to trust and act on their recommendations.

Instagram reels have also played an important part in boosting influencer marketing. Short-form video

material is particularly popular among Gen Z consumers, who demand rapid and entertaining content. Influencers use reels to showcase products, give fast instructions, generate styling suggestions, and deliver product reviews in a concise and entertaining format. This form of material is very entertaining and easily shareable, hence increasing product visibility. When followers see the same product in numerous reels or influencer posts, it builds familiarity and curiosity. This exposure might lead to spontaneous purchases, especially if influencers provide direct shopping links or discount codes.

Influencer marketing has significant drawbacks despite its efficacy. The legitimacy of sponsored content is one of the main issues. Some influencers don't actually use the things they advocate; instead, they do so purely for financial gain. The reputation of the influencer may be harmed and confidence diminished when followers discover that suggestions are not sincere. Many influencers increasingly reveal sponsored collaborations and compensated relationships in

order to uphold openness. Long-term trust between influencers and their followers is facilitated by truthful evaluations and transparent disclosures. Customers in Generation Z are especially conscious of marketing strategies and favor influencers that maintain transparency and authenticity in their advertising. In conclusion, Generation Z's shopping habits are greatly influenced by Instagram influencers.

Influencers build a close relationship with their audience through relatable material, eye-catching posts, and genuine suggestions. They assist followers in finding new products, foster trust via social proof, and subtly but effectively sway purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing will continue to be a crucial tactic for companies looking to reach younger consumers as social media develops. However, sustaining genuineness, openness, and significant involvement is essential to this strategy's long-term effectiveness. Influencers, customers, and brands may all benefit from influencer marketing when done properly.

AUTHOR'S BIO: MANSI MEHTA

Mansi Mehta is a PGDM (Marketing) student with a strong inclination toward creativity and self-expression. She is deeply fascinated by marketing for its power to influence and connect with people. Her passion for dance has played a key role in developing her creativity, expression, and discipline.



BY MATHANA SRI PONNUCHAMY

In today's world, social media has changed how companies communicate with people who buy their products. One of the powerful tools they use is FOMO. The Fear of Missing Out. FOMO is the feeling people get when they think others are having a good time without them. This feeling is used a lot in marketing on social media, where news spreads fast and people always compare what they are doing with others.

Companies make ads that create a sense of urgency, make people feel special, and get them excited. They want people to act fast before they miss out on something. They use things like limited-time offers. Get famous people to promote their products. FOMO driven marketing is a part of modern advertising.

Understanding the Psychology Behind FOMO

At its core, FOMO marketing is about human feelings. People like things more when they are hard to get. When people think they might miss out on something, they make decisions so they do not feel left out.

Social media makes this feeling stronger because people see what others are doing all the time. When a product is popular or seems special, people fear they will miss out on something. Companies use this feeling to get people to act fast, like buying something or joining an event.

Why Social Media Amplifies FOMO?

Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are perfect for FOMO marketing. Companies can share pictures, updates, and fun things that get people involved.

For example, Instagram stories often have countdown timers for products or sales. These timers create a sense of urgency. Make people act fast. Social media also spreads news fast. When people see their friends or famous people talking about a product, it makes them want to join in.

Key FOMO Driven Marketing Strategies

- Limited Time Offers

One common FOMO strategy is time promotions. Flash sales, discounts and "24-hour deals" make people buy things fast. When people see messages like "Offer ends tonight" they feel like they have to act. These strategies are used a lot in shopping and they work well in getting people to buy things on impulse.

- Scarcity and Limited Editions

Another powerful tactic is making people think something is scarce. When products are limited people think they are more valuable. Companies often make limited edition products to create excitement. For example, fashion companies release collections that are only available for a short time. This makes people want to buy them before they sell out. It not only increases sales but also makes people loyal to the brand.

- Famous People and Celebrity Promotion

Famous people play a role in making FOMO on social media. When they promote a product, their fans want to buy it. A good example is when famous people get access to new products and share their experiences online. This creates excitement. It compels people to make a purchase when the product becomes available.

- Social Proof and Popularity Signals

A potent FOMO strategy involves demonstrating that others are already making purchases. Businesses often emphasize figures such as "10,000 people bought this" to create a sense of urgency. This method is known as proof. It makes people feel buying something because many others are doing the same. When people think others like something they want to join in.

- Exclusive Access and Membership

Companies often stoke FOMO by providing perks to select customers. For instance, membership programs give people access to new products or special discounts. This strategy makes people want to join the brand community so they do not

feel left out. By making some things only available to a people companies make their customers feel special.

Real-World Examples of FOMO Marketing

Numerous successful businesses leverage FOMO in their promotional strategies. The streetwear brand Supreme, for instance, has built its reputation on products that vanish quickly. This scarcity generates significant consumer interest. Makes people very loyal to the brand.

Companies also use flash sales to get a lot of people to buy things fast. For example, big online sales events make people act quickly before discounts disappear. These examples show how well FOMO works in getting people to buy things when combined with media.

The Ethical Considerations of FOMO Marketing

While FOMO marketing can be very effective it also raises some concerns. Some people think that using urgency and scarcity much can trick people into buying things they do not need.

Also seeing FOMO driven content all the time can make people feel stressed or anxious. They feel

pressure to keep up with trends. What their friends are doing. So, companies need to find a balance between marketing and being responsible.

Being honest and authentic is very important. When people trust a company, they are more likely to engage with its ads in a way rather than feeling tricked.

FOMO driven marketing is a part of social media. By using triggers like urgency, scarcity and social proof companies can create excitement and make people act fast. Social media platforms make these strategies stronger by spreading news and making people compare themselves to others.

However, while FOMO marketing can be very effective in getting people to engage and buy things companies must use it responsibly to keep peoples trust and be ethical. As digital marketing continues to change finding a balance between influencing people and being authentic will be key to building relationships with customers.

In a world where things change fast and people's attention spans are short the fear of missing out is one of the powerful forces, in modern marketing

AUTHOR'S BIO: MATHANA SRI PONNUCHAMY

Mathana Sri Ponnuchamy is a PGDM Marketing student from the 2025–27 batch at MET, driven by a curiosity for how brands connect with people. She is passionate about exploring consumer insights, digital trends, and creative storytelling. With a growing skill set in marketing analytics, branding, and strategy, she enjoys turning ideas into meaningful campaigns. She aspires to leverage her creativity and problem-solving mindset to navigate real-world marketing challenges and make a strong impact in a fast-evolving business landscape.



BY OMKAR ARUNTHATHIYAR

It was just another evening for Aanya, a 21-year-old college student. After finishing her assignments, she lay on her bed and opened Instagram. Like many members of Generation Z, social media had become a regular part of her daily routine. As she scrolled through reels and stories, she came across a beauty influencer reviewing a new skincare product.

The influencer explained how the product improved her skin and demonstrated how to apply it. She also talked about the ingredients, how it worked on different skin types, and the results she experienced after using it for a few weeks. At first, Aanya watched the video out of curiosity. However, as the influencer shared more details about her experience, Aanya's interest gradually increased.

When Aanya scrolled through the comment section, she noticed that many followers were sharing their own experiences with the same product. Some posted positive reviews, while others shared before-and-after photos showing improvements in their skin. Seeing these responses made the product appear more authentic and trustworthy.

Without realizing it, Aanya was experiencing the influence of social media on consumer purchase decisions.

Today, social media plays a major role in shaping the product discovery and buying behavior of Gen Z consumers. Unlike older generations who relied mainly on television advertisements, magazines, or newspapers, Gen Z has grown up with digital platforms such as Instagram. These platforms allow users to explore product reviews, tutorials, and recommendations before making purchasing decisions.

Influencer marketing, online reviews, and relatable content have become key factors influencing the purchasing choices of younger audiences. Influencers frequently share parts of their daily lives, including the clothes they wear, the skincare

products they use, and the technology they try. Because they present products in a personal and relatable way, they often appear more authentic than traditional advertisements.

For example, when a fashion influencer posts photos wearing a new clothing brand and talks about its comfort and style, followers may feel as if they are receiving advice from a friend rather than watching an advertisement. This personal connection makes influencer marketing particularly effective among younger consumers.

However, influencer promotion alone does not always convince consumers to buy a product. Brands often use additional psychological marketing techniques to encourage faster purchasing decisions. One of the most common strategies is called FOMO, or the Fear of Missing Out.

Later that evening, Aanya saw the same skincare product advertised again with a limited-time discount offer that would last only 24 hours. This immediately created a sense of urgency. Aanya felt that if she did not buy the product quickly, she might miss an opportunity that many others were already taking advantage of. This is exactly the reaction that FOMO based marketing strategies aim to create.

Another important factor influencing Gen Z consumers is social proof. Social proof is the psychological tendency of people to trust a product when they see others recommending or using it. Before making an online purchase, many Gen Z consumers carefully check ratings and reviews from other customers.

Aanya did the same. She visited the product page and read several reviews. Most of them were positive, with many users confirming that the product delivered the results promised. Reading these reviews reduced Aanya's hesitation and reassured her that she was making a good decision.

Gen Z consumers also pay close attention to brand authenticity. They tend to prefer brands that appear honest, transparent, and relatable. Influencers who share balanced opinions about products help build stronger trust with their audiences. Instead of only praising a product, they may also mention its disadvantages, which makes the review feel more genuine and reliable.

Influencers are often categorized based on their follower count. Nano influencers usually have fewer than 10,000 followers but maintain strong engagement with their audience. Micro influencers have between 10,000 and 100,000 followers and often focus on specific niches such as beauty, fitness, or technology. Macro and celebrity influencers have very large audiences and help brands reach millions of people.

Many companies combine these different types of influencers in their marketing strategies. While

macro influencers help increase brand visibility, nano and micro influencers are often more effective at building trust and deeper engagement.

By the end of the evening, Aanya finally decided to purchase the skincare product. After watching the influencer's review, reading positive comments, and noticing the limited-time discount offer, she placed her order.

This example clearly shows how social media influences the purchasing behavior of Gen Z consumers. Social media platforms are no longer just spaces for entertainment and communication. They have evolved into powerful digital marketplaces where brands connect with consumers and influence their buying decisions.

In today's digital world, sometimes a single social media post or reel is enough to turn a casual scroll into a real purchase decision.

AUTHOR'S BIO: OMKAR ARUNTHATHIYAR

A curious and driven individual, Omkar is passionate about learning, creativity, and self-growth. He enjoys exploring new ideas, understanding people, and expressing thoughts in a simple yet impactful way. Whether in academics or everyday experiences, Omkar believes in finding meaning and constantly improving himself. With a positive mindset and a willingness to learn, he strives to make the most of every opportunity that comes his way.



Nano Influencers Are Changing the Game and Most Brands Are Still Catching Up

BY ROHAN KULKARNI

Let's be honest with you, when I first heard "nano influencer," I thought it was just another buzzword created by marketers to justify a smaller budget. Turns out, I was wrong.

These are creators with anywhere from 1,000 to 10,000 followers. Not a lot, right? But that is the whole point.

No one trusts ads anymore. Here's why that matters.

When did you genuinely buy something just because of a celebrity endorsement? Not just notice it but actually want to buy it.

We've all become incredibly good at mentally filtering out anything that feels like it's been paid for, and celebrities, for all their reach, tend to set off that filter almost immediately.

Nano influencers don't trip that wire. Because they're not trying to be perfect. Because they're just regular people who happened to start posting recently.

The person who began documenting their skincare routine because they'd tried everything and nothing worked. The guy reviewing affordable running shoes because the expensive ones were never in his budget. The mum in a smaller city sharing her very imperfect attempts at sourdough, the ones that didn't rise, and the one that finally did.

Their videos aren't always well-lit. They trail off sometimes. They lose their train of thought mid-sentence.

And somehow, maybe because of all that, not in spite of it, people believe them.

The Money Side of It (Which Nobody Talks About Honestly)

Here's something the marketing world dances around: most small businesses simply cannot afford a macro influencer. Not even close.

A single sponsored post from a million-follower account can cost more than some small brands spend on marketing in an entire month.

That's not a dramatic claim. That's just the going rate.

And the painful part? Even when a brand does manage to pull that budget together, stretching things, making trade-offs, there's no promise on the other side of it. The post goes up. The story lasts around 24 hours. And you're left refreshing your analytics, hoping something moved.

Nano influencers are a completely different conversation. Some will work for free products. Others charge a few thousand rupees, maybe a little more depending on their niche. For a local café, a small skincare brand, or a startup that just launched, this is actually accessible. You can try it, see what happens, and adjust without losing sleep over the spend.

It's Not About Reach, It's About Who is Actually Listening.

There's this obsession in marketing with big numbers. Impressions. Reach. Total followers. But a follower count doesn't tell you whether anyone cares.

What nano influencers offer is something difficult to manufacture: a room full of people who are genuinely interested in what's being said. A fitness creator with 6,000 followers who posts consistently about home workouts has built an audience of people who specifically want that content. When they talk about a protein powder or a resistance band, their followers are not scrolling past. They're reading the caption. They're asking questions in the comments.

That's fundamentally different attention. And for a brand trying to reach exactly that type of person, it's worth far more than a fleeting impression on a celebrity's story that disappears after 24 hours.

The Comments Section is where it gets Interesting

One thing I've noticed about nano influencer content, and this took me a while to really appreciate, is what happens in the replies.

With big accounts, comments are mostly noise. Emojis, spam, the occasional argument. No one actually expects the creator to reply, so nobody tries to start a real conversation.

With nano influencers, the comments section functions more like a group chat. The creator actually replies because they can. Followers ask follow-up questions, share their own experiences, and tag friends. The whole thing starts to feel less like advertising and more like a genuine community recommendation.

For brands, that's valuable. It's essentially organic word-of-mouth happening publicly, documented, and attached to your product. You couldn't script it if you tried.

Let's Be Real About the Downsides

Managing one famous influencer whose views are in millions is hard enough. Managing thirty nano influencers simultaneously? That's a logistical challenge that a lot of brands underestimate before they do it.

Briefing each creator, approving content, tracking links, and following up when someone goes quiet, it adds up fast. Without a good system, campaigns can get messy. And unlike a macro deal where there's usually a manager and a contract and a clear timeline, nano collaborations can be informal in ways that create headaches later.

Evaluating also matters more than people realize. You can't just pick someone because their follower count looks good. You need to actually look at their content, understand their audience, and check whether their tone fits your brand. One awkward mismatch and you've wasted both your time and

theirs.

None of this is insurmountable, but it's real work, and brands should go in with their eyes open.

Why This Isn't Just a Phase

Every few years, someone writes the obituary for influencer marketing. And every time, it just refuses to die. It shifts. It finds a new shape.

But the nano influencer thing feels different from the usual churn. It's not just an algorithm change or a new platform shaking things up. Something more fundamental has shifted in how people actually experience content and what they're willing to tolerate.

Audiences got smarter. Quietly, without making a big announcement about it, they got very good at sensing when something isn't real. And once you can sense it, you can't unsense it. The patience for performative, polished, clearly-paid-for content has just... worn thin.

Nano influencers cut through that because they're not performing. They're not trying to appeal to everyone. They found a small group of people who genuinely want to hear what they think, and they just keep talking to them.

No fanfare. No big brand deals are lighting up their feed. Just consistency and trust, built quietly over time.

The old logic made sense on paper: larger audience, larger impact. But there are real cracks in that now. Reach without trust doesn't move people the way it used to.

The brands starting to figure that out, working with smaller voices, accepting that it's messier and harder to measure, they're the ones actually building something. Not just buying attention for a news cycle, but earning a place in someone's feed they actually want to be in.

AUTHOR'S BIO: ROHAN KULKARNI

Rohan is a dedicated PGDM Marketing professional with a strong academic foundation in Business Administration and a specialized focus on brand management, marketing analytics, influencer marketing, and business development within the FMCG and real estate sectors. Through his extensive academic research, Rohan has developed sharp analytical and strategic thinking skills, allowing him to navigate complex market dynamics effectively. He is deeply passionate about the synergy between data and creativity, and he is committed to leveraging evidence-based insights to drive impactful marketing decisions and accelerate sustainable business growth.



BY ROSHNI GUPTA

Imagine if A Gen Z student is scrolling through Instagram late at night between memes, reels, and aesthetic photos, a known influencer appears on the screen talking about a skincare product like pilgrim, mamaearth, etc. that gives glowing skin in just seven days without thinking for a minute, the student clicks the product link, checks the reviews, and adds the item to their cart. This simple process captures a powerful shift in modern consumer behavior. For today's Gen Z, social media is no longer just a space for entertainment it has become a digital marketplace where trends are discovered, opinions are formed, and purchases are influenced.

The Generation that Shops While Scrolling

Gen Z, born majority between 1995 and 2011, it is the first generation to grow up completely with the help of smartphones, internet connectivity AI advance tech and social media platforms. Not like previous generations who depend on television advertisements or store visits, Gen Z consumers often discover products through their social media feeds and ads rather than TVs.

Among all platforms, Instagram has become one of the most influential spaces for shaping purchasing behavior. With its visually driven content, reels, stories, and shopping features, Instagram seamlessly blends entertainment with advertising.

For Gen Z users, scrolling through Instagram is not just about keeping up with friends; it is also about discovering fashion trends, beauty products, gadgets, and lifestyle inspiration.

Influencers: The New Age Digital Salespeople

The rise of Instagram influencers has changed the traditional relationship between brands and product and consumers. Influencers are individuals who have built loyal communities online by sharing content related to fashion, beauty, travel, fitness, technology, or lifestyle.

What makes influencers powerful is their relatability. Unlike celebrities who often feel

distant, influencers appear more like everyday people sharing honest experiences and giving live testing of products. where followers watch influencers trying a new product, review a gadget, or style an outfit, it feels more like advice from a friend than a formal advertisement.

This relatability creates a powerful psychological connection with Gen Z. Followers trust influencers because they have been watching their content for months or even years regularly. As a result, influencer recommendations often carry more weight than traditional advertising.

The Psychology Behind "Influence"

The effectiveness of Instagram influencers can be explained through several psychological factors that influence Gen Z buying behavior.

First is social proof. Where thousands of people like, comment, and share a post about a product, it signals popularity. Gen Z consumers often interpret this engagement as proof that the product is worth trying.

Second is aspiration. Many influencers show an attractive lifestyle filled with travel, fashion, and wellness routines. Followers often associate promoted products with that lifestyle. Buying the same product can feel like a small step toward achieving that aspirational life.

Third is visual storytelling. Instagram is a highly visual platform where aesthetics matter. Influencers present products in beautifully organized photos or engaging reels. A skincare bottle placed next to glowing skin or a stylish outfit shown in a creative reel can instantly make the product appear desirable.

Micro-Influencers and Authenticity

On social media not all influencers have millions of followers and great number many brands now collaborate with small influencers, who typically have between 5000 and 200,000 followers. the influencer like Disha Acharya, Arsha, Saloni Barmecha, etc.

Small influencers often have strong relationships with their audiences or follower because their content feels more personal and less commercial like ads. The relation between the influencer and followers actively engage in conversations through comments and dm that is direct message where both talk and discuss about the product, creating a close relationship.

For Gen Z consumers, results matter more than popularity and fame. They prefer influencers who share genuine opinions, realistic experiences, and honest reviews about the product rather than overly polished promotional content by brand who pay them for fake promotions and sales.

Influencing the Gen Z by helping them to understand about the product and brand which make them sure about the product really works for their problems and satisfy their need. Gen Z are not price sensitive they simply want the result and want to be classy among their group.

From Inspiration to Purchase

Instagram has also made the journey simple and easy from product discovery to purchase. In the past if the consumers have to buy a product which they have seen through an advertisement, researched the product later, and bought it from a store.

Today, the process is almost instant and easy. Influencers often include product links, discount codes, or shopping tags directly in their posts available with just a few taps, followers can move from inspiration to real life purchase within few minutes without getting irritated.

This platform not only gives entertainment but influence people and shopping has transformed from Instagram into a powerful digital marketplace.

The Challenges of Influencer Marketing

Despite its advantages, influencer marketing also raises certain concerns about the product. Some influencers promote products primarily for sponsorship payments rather than genuine interest in the product. This can reduce credibility and create distrust among followers which make the consumer loose interest from the product.

Additionally, constant exposure of influencer

lifestyles may encourage unnecessary consumption among Gen Z users this make them feel pressurized to keep up with trends, buy new products regularly or follow the influencer lifestyles that may not be realistic in real life.

To look after these issues, social media platforms like YouTube Instagram now encourage transparency. Influencers are required to disclose sponsored posts and collaborations with the product which is helping audiences to understand that which content is promotional and paid.

The Future of Influencer-Driven Buying

As technology evolves, influencer marketing is expected to grow even stronger than before. New features such as live shopping on online platform rather than going to store which makes them pleasure and personalized recommendations from influencer will likely make the shopping experience even more interactive and engaging.

Brands will continue collaborating and paying with influencers to connect with younger audiences, while influencers themselves will play a crucial role in shaping trends and consumer preferences as new products arrives frequently to help them and give their opinion about the brand and product.

The future of influencer and GEN Z are depended on the social media as they are active on this platform frequently and check through new product constantly.

For Gen Z, the line between entertainment and marketing will continue being blur because they usually follow people and trend easily to look classy and up to date for social media, making social media platforms not only places for connection but also powerful engines to interact and get influenced by the influencer and surrounding rather than being real.

Conclusion

The rise of Instagram influencers has transformed the way of Gen Z consumers to discover and purchase products online. Through relatable content, visual storytelling, and authentic communication, influencers have become key drivers of modern buying behavior by get sponsored and paid through collaboration. GEN Z and influencer are more consistent on

social media which make them aware of small to large product and brand awareness.

The Ads from online platform and social media helps the GEN Z to take active part and have a clear knowledge about product and aware of brands and really check.

While influencer marketing offers exciting opportunities for brands and consumers alike, maintaining transparency and originality will remain essential. In a world where a simple double tap can lead to a purchase, understanding the power of social media influence has never been more important.

AUTHOR'S BIO: ROSHNI GUPTA

Roshni Gupta is an MBA student with a keen interest in business, marketing, and management. She is passionate about creating a positive and collaborative environment in every space she becomes part; she combines academic learning with practical exposure to develop effective and creative solutions. Through her work and writing, she aspires to make a meaningful and lasting impact in the professional world.



Looks Good Enough to Eat!

The Rise of Food Inspired Marketing Among Gen-Z

BY RUCHI JAMSANDEKAR

Scroll through Instagram or YouTube shorts and you might come across an unusual image: a perfume bottle surrounded by vanilla ice-cream; a claw clip placed around cherries or a skincare product resting beside a donut. At first, you might think it resembles food content. Look closer, however, and it reveals something else entirely.

In recent years, brands have begun blending food aesthetics with non-edible products to create visually indulgent campaigns that capture attention online. This strategy is part of a broader concept known as Sensory Marketing, where brands appeal to consumers senses to create emotional engagement and influence purchasing decisions.

What Is Sensory Marketing?

As online shopping increasingly moves to digital platforms, brands are faced with a difficult question: how do you make a product appealing when customers cannot physically experience it? In traditional retail environments, consumers rely on their senses - touching fabrics, smelling fragrances, or seeing textures up close – to buy products. While purchasing online, these sensory experiences are absent. To bridge this gap, many brands are turning to sensory marketing, a strategy used to appeal to five human senses - smell, touch, taste, sight and sound to capture attention of buyers.

Among these senses, sight plays the most significant role in consumer decision-making. Visual cues such as textures, colors, and product presentation can instantly trigger emotional responses that influence buying behavior. While in traditional retail setting, multiple sensory tools are used such as music, fragrances, images but digital brands face a unique challenge. The problem is that it really becomes difficult to make consumers believe that the product which the brand tends to sell is exactly what it is described on online platform. So associating food or color with

the product gives consumers an idea or reflection of how product is going to be.

As Forbes stated, “In marketing, tapping into consumer emotions isn't simply a feel-good practice - it drives sales. Emotional marketing forges a potent connection between a brand and its audience, translating into increased loyalty and purchases.” The strongest way to create sensory impact online is through associating products with emotions, moods, and aspirational lifestyles.

Food Is Leading the Way

One of the most successful tools of sensory marketing is food, which is universally accepted and has a significant emotional appeal. Consumers are likely to experience feelings of comfort and nostalgia when they are exposed to food images. In addition, when they are shown images of food, they will unconsciously associate it with the experience of food and its related smells and tastes.

In the case of online and direct-to-consumer brands, food images can help bridge the gap between the online and offline experience of products. For example, when a lip gloss is displayed with images of a cinnamon roll, it is more than just visually appealing; it is a tool for engaging the consumer's imagination and senses.

Moreover, food images can help a brand stand out in crowded social media feeds, as platforms like Instagram and YouTube shorts are designed to prioritize visually engaging content. Brands use social media platforms to create unique and memorable visual content for their products, such as beauty and lifestyle products with food images.

Gen Z is at the center of driving forward the popularity of food-inspired sensory marketing. They tend to look for products through social media channels like Instagram or YouTube

Shorts instead of traditional retail stores. Unlike previous generations of consumers, Gen Z consumers tend to prefer shopping through e-commerce websites instead of physically going to stores and facing crowded and chaotic environments. This is where brands face a challenge in marketing their products online. Thus, sensory marketing techniques like food-inspired marketing help create a virtual experience for consumers by stimulating their imagination. When Gen Z consumers see beauty and personal care products placed next to food items like desserts, fruits, and cakes, they tend to associate these products with sensory experiences.

For Gen-Z any brands are never just about the product. It's about what the product represents.

A good example of food-inspired sensory marketing can be found with the beauty brand, **Blur India**. Since the target group of the company, i.e., Gen Z, usually comes across the product or the brand through visually engaging content, instead of directly promoting the product, the company has been successful in creating the experience of its fragrances and cosmetics with its target audience. Recently they have posted an Instagram advertisement featuring their "Cookie Crumble" perfume from the Breakfast in Bed range, creatively placed among chocolate chip cookies to evoke a food inspired sensory

appeal. This makes the content more relatable and shareable, thereby perfectly matching the requirements and preferences of the target group.

Another instance is a beauty brand called **Rhode**, which is founded by Hailey Bieber. The brand often links their beauty and lip products with dessert-based visuals to emphasize texture and shine. The popular beauty concept of "glazed donut skin," which has become quite popular and iconic, links healthy and shiny skin which resembles as of a glazed donut. This is theme is extended to products such as the Cinnamon Roll Lip Treatment and Vanilla Cake Lip Treatment, which are often linked with rich and dessert-based visuals. The texture and richness of these products through the screen, makes it more engaging and interesting for digital users.

As shopping has shifted digital, it is no longer possible for marketers to just focus on the features and functionality of products but to grab the attention of consumers. Sensory marketing through food-inspired images is doing just that: creating experiences that are imaginative and evocative.

In a digital world where consumers shop with their eyes first, the winning brands will be those that understand how to make their products look and - feel good enough to eat.

AUTHOR'S BIO: RUCHI JAMSANDEKAR

Ruchi Jamsandekar is a marketing student who is interested in consumer behavior, branding, and modern marketing concepts. She enjoys studying emerging concepts in the marketing field, especially sensory marketing, and aims to gain useful insights that can be practically applied. She aims to establish a career in the corporate marketing field and make a meaningful contribution.



BY RUHI PARIKH

The blue light of a smartphone screen is the only illumination in 22-year-old Ishaan's room at 1:15 AM. He was seconds away from sleep, but a final, reflexive scroll through Instagram changed his night. He stops at a video of a popular streetwear creator unboxing a "mystery drop" of sneakers. The caption flashes: "Only 100 pairs made. Once they're gone, they're gone".

Inside Ishaan's brain, a tiny alarm goes off. It isn't his logical prefrontal cortex wondering if he needs new shoes; it is his emotional center reacting to a perceived threat of social exclusion. Before he can even calculate his bank balance, he has tapped "Shop Now". In under sixty seconds, ₹2,499 has left his account. Ishaan didn't just buy sneakers; he succumbed to the most calculated force in modern advertising: neuromarketing.

The Architecture of the "Feeling" Brain

To understand Ishaan's reflex, we have to look past traditional economic theories of "rational choice." Neuromarketing is the study of how our brains subconsciously react to ads and social media. While older generations might have shopped with their "thinking" brain and analyzing the utility and price; the Gen Z primarily shops with their "feeling" brain. This shift is driven by specific neural pathways that marketers have learned to trigger with surgical precision.

1. The Dopamine Loop and Reward Seeking

Every time Ishaan sees a "Sale" alert or a viral unboxing, his brain's reward system, specifically the nucleus accumbens, releases dopamine. Dopamine is often misunderstood as the chemical of pleasure; in reality, it is the chemical of anticipation. It creates a "craving" state that keeps users scrolling, making the eventual act of buying feel like a neurological relief or a "reward".

2. Mirror Neurons and Virtual Empathy

When Ishaan watches a creator looking ecstatic in a new outfit, his mirror neurons fire. These specialized cells allow us to understand the actions and intentions of others by "mirroring" them in our own minds. Ishaan's brain mimics that feeling of

happiness, tricking him into believing he will inhabit that same state of joy if he simply owns the same product.

3. The Amygdala Hijack

Perhaps the most potent tool in the neuromarketer's kit is the Amygdala Hijack. The amygdala is the brain's "smoke detector," responsible for processing fear and threats. When a brand uses "Limited Stock" stickers or countdown timers, it triggers an "emergency" response. The brain perceives the loss of a product as a loss of safety or status, causing the logical centers to shut down in favor of survival-based impulse buying.

From Neurons to Networks: The FOMO Factor

This internal neurological tension is amplified by the external digital environment. For Gen Z, social media isn't just entertainment; it's where their community lives. Consequently, FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) becomes a matter of "social currency".

- The Power of Social Proof

When Ishaan sees thousands of "Likes" or "Shares," his brain uses it as a heuristic; a mental shortcut. If 10,000 people validate a product, the brain assumes it is high quality and safe to consume.

- The Exclusivity Trophy

Brands like Puma or Starbucks use "limited edition" drops to turn products into "trophies". The brain values rarity because it signals higher status within a peer group.

This strategy is evident in campaigns like Puma's "One8" collection with Virat Kohli. When a national icon posts a drop, it creates a chain reaction where fans feel that failing to buy the shoes means being left out of a national conversation. Similarly, Zomato utilizes real-time triggers, sending notifications like "Everyone in your area is ordering Biryani right now!". This plays directly on our biological need for community validation; if "everyone" is doing it, our brain tells us it is a

necessary action for belonging.

The Evolution of Trust: Authenticity as a Bio-Hack

As we look toward 2026, the neuromarketing landscape is shifting further away from "polished" ads toward "authentic" influence. Gen Z possesses a highly evolved "fake detector" for scripted content. This is why 63% of Gen Z trust influencer suggestions over traditional advertisements.

When a creator integrates a product into their daily routine - be it a gym session or a morning coffee - it builds a parasocial relationship. The follower's brain begins to view the creator as a trusted friend. Therefore, a product recommendation isn't processed by the brain as a "sales pitch," but as sincere advice from a social peer. This "trust hack" is so effective that the influencer marketing sector is projected to grow by over \$24 billion by 2026.

Data Insight: The Power of the Scroll

The numbers back up why brands are shifting their budgets toward these strategies:

- **Social Reliance:** 90% of Gen Z consumers rely on social media to learn about new brands.
- **Trust Factor:** 63% of Gen Z trust influencer suggestions more than traditional advertisements.
- **The Influence Trap:** Close to 70% of youth use

the opinions of influencers in their actual buying choices.

- **Market Growth:** The influencer marketing sector is expected to rise by over \$24 billion (approx. ₹2 lakh crore) by 2026.

Closing the Loop: The Reflexive Purchase

The journey from a late-night Instagram check to a confirmed order is a masterclass in modern psychology. By mapping the architecture of the human mind, tapping into the nucleus accumbens for desire, the amygdala for urgency, and mirror neurons for connection; brands have transformed "scrolling" into a high-speed, frictionless sales floor.

Back in his darkened room, Ishaan finally puts his phone down. The sneakers are bought, his dopamine levels are stabilizing, and the "emergency" in his amygdala has subsided. For Ishaan and millions of his peers, the "Buy" button is no longer a conscious choice made after careful deliberation. It is a reflex, a biological response triggered by the powerful digital whispers of a world that knows his brain better than he does.

As marketing moves deeper into the mind, the brands that win won't be those with the loudest ads, but those that best understand the silent, neural symphony playing out behind the glow of a smartphone screen.

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Ruhi Parikh is a PGDM student passionate about branding, marketing, and data analytics, with hands-on experience as a Marketing Intern at the European Union Chambers of Commerce. A certified learner from IIM Bangalore and BCG, she has worked on diverse projects spanning startup pitches, Power BI dashboards, and research in consumer behavior. Beyond academics, she is an avid cricket enthusiast who brings the same strategic thinking from the game into her approach to business.



BY SAHIL VITHLANI

Rohan is a 22-year-old guy who lives in Mumbai and works on an internship while finishing his Master's Degree. Last month, he wanted to buy a pair of wireless earbuds, nothing too expensive, somewhere in the range of 800 to 1000. Before he placed the order, he watched nine YouTube videos. Not nine minutes of YouTube videos content but a whole of nine videos. including two comparison videos, one video on the durability test, and a dedicated video on whether the earbuds' mic performed well on calls and gaming. He already knew which pair he was going to buy after the third video, but he still watched the other six anyway.

Rohan is not different from any other Genz customer. He is, in fact, a representation of Indian Gen Z that marketers have quietly started building entire content strategies around. Before buying almost anything, a mobile phone, a skincare product, a wallet, a pair of shoes, a laptop, a significant portion of young Indian consumers will spend time on YouTube watching other people evaluate it first. This behavior has turned YouTube into something no one quite planned for: the most influential retail floor in India.

The Rupee Makes Everything Feel Like a Bigger Decision

To understand why Indian Gen Z does this, you have to start with money, specifically, with how differently a 500 or a 2000-rupee purchase feels in a middle-class Indian household compared to an equivalent spend elsewhere. For a large portion of Gen Z consumers in India, income is limited and hard-earned. Many are spending their own earnings for the first time, or stretching their pocket money, or sending money home while also trying to build a life. A wrong purchase is not a minor inconvenience; it is a huge setback.

That financial reality creates a risk aversion that has no real parallel in wealthier consumer markets. Indian Gen Z is not stingy. They will spend on things they care about. But they will absolutely not

spend carelessly. The YouTube review habit is, at its core, a rational response to the feeling that every purchase needs to count. If 20 minutes of watching someone test a product can prevent a bad decision, those 20 minutes are a reasonable investment of time.

Why YouTube long-form videos, specifically, and Not Just Influencer Posts

Instagram and YouTube shorts style short videos are enormously popular with Indian Gen Z, but they serve a different function in the purchase journey. Short-form content is where you get to know about the product. You see something, it looks interesting, and you want to know more. YouTube long videos are where the actual decision gets made. It offers something short-form cannot offer that is depth.

A 10-minute YouTube review can show a product from every angle, test it under real-life conditions, compare it to alternatives from other brands, and give an honest review with time to explain the reasoning. Indian Gen Z viewers have become genuinely skilled at reading these videos. They know which reviewers are sponsored and try to mentally discount accordingly. They scroll to the comments section to see if other buyers agree with the reviewer's conclusions or not. They cross-reference the review with a second or third reviewer before committing. The process is closer to investigative research than entertainment, and they are remarkably good at it.

The Vernacular Review Boom

One of the most important developments in this space is the explosion of YouTube review content in regional Indian languages. For a Gen Z consumer in Coimbatore or Bhopal or Ranchi, a review delivered in Tamil, Hindi, or a regional language carries more credibility than one delivered in the careful, slightly performative English of metropolitan creators. It feels closer. More trustworthy. Like someone from a similar background who understands the same problems and has similar expectations.

Hindi-language tech and product reviews have built audiences in the millions, and many operate out of smaller cities rather than the traditional content hubs of Mumbai or Bengaluru. These geographic spread matters because it means the reviewer's reference points often match the viewers. When a creator from Lucknow reviews a budget phone, they are implicitly answering questions that a viewer from a similar city actually has, questions about real-world performance, durability on a daily commute, how it holds up in heat, and whether the camera is good enough for the kinds of photos you actually want to take.

How Brands Are Responding, and Where It Goes Wrong

Brands have noticed this behavior, and many have moved aggressively to shape it in their favor. They started sending free products to product reviewers of that category, paying for sponsored segments, and even funding dedicated review channels that show that their products are the best. These practices are now standard across all the categories, from consumer electronics to personal care to food and beverage. In some cases, this works well, the content is genuinely useful, and the sponsorship is disclosed. But Indian Gen Z has developed a sharp instinct for identifying reviews that feel made up rather than honest.

A review that praises every single thing and aspect of the product triggers immediate doubt about the review being honest. Comment sections are merciless; viewers will call out any differences between a reviewer's verdict and their own experience, point out when a creator's opinion seems to shift suspiciously in favor of the brand around sponsorship timelines, and warn others

away from both the product and the reviewer. Brands that attempt to flood the review space with uniformly positive content sometimes find that the strategy backfires, generating backlash that reaches a larger audience than the original reviews did.

The brands that navigate this well tend to have products that can withstand honest scrutiny. They send review units without editorial conditions, accept that some reviewers will find genuine flaws, and treat those flaws as useful information rather than threats. The long game, being the brand that reviewers consistently recommend because the products are actually good, is more valuable than any single viral moment.

A New Kind of Consumer Power

What has emerged from all of this is a generation of Indian consumers who are, in aggregate, considerably harder to mislead than their predecessors. They have access to all the information required, the best tools for evaluating that information, and a community of fellow buyers who will quickly point out dishonest claims. This ecosystem has given them a kind of collective due diligence that was simply not available before.

For Indian Gen Z, the act of watching YouTube reviews before buying is not just a shopping habit. It is an expression of something deeper, a refusal to be a recipient of marketing, a determination to make the purchase decision on their own terms, with their own research, guided by people they have chosen to trust. In a market that has often treated young, budget-conscious consumers as easy targets, that power shift is significant. And it is not going away.

AUTHOR'S BIO: SAHIL VITHLANI

Currently pursuing a PGDM in Marketing, Sahil Vitlani is obsessed with understanding what makes consumers click. He leverages a blend of creativity and analytics to solve complex business problems and drive meaningful engagement. By focusing on the intersection of data and human behavior, he develops strategies that resonate in a competitive marketplace. He is deeply committed to exploring the psychological triggers behind brand loyalty to build more impactful connections.



BY SALONI PATIL

A Reel That Started It All

Last Sunday evening, I was doing what most Gen Z people usually do during their free time, scrolling through Instagram reels without any particular purpose. Suddenly, a reel caught my attention. A beauty influencer was applying a beautiful nude lipstick that looked elegant and perfect for everyday wear. She mentioned the product name: **Maybelline Super Stay Matte Ink in the shade “Lover”**.

The shade looked so good that I paused the reel immediately. Out of curiosity, I opened the comment section. The comments were filled with people asking about the shade name, while others were writing things like, “What lipstick is this? Just love it!” and “This is my third time buying it.” Seeing so many positive comments naturally made me interested in the product. For a moment, I felt tempted to order it immediately. But like most Gen Z shoppers today, I decided to check reviews first. I opened Nykaa and Amazon and searched for Maybelline SuperStay Matte Ink – Lover shade. The lipstick had thousands of reviews and a high rating. Many customers mentioned that it was long-lasting, smudge-proof, and perfect for daily use. Reading those reviews increased my confidence. At that moment, I realized something interesting. It was not only the Instagram reel that influenced me. The comments, ratings, and experiences shared by other customers played an equally important role in shaping my decision.

Understanding the Power of Social Proof

Experiences like this are extremely common today. When people see others recommending a product or sharing their positive experiences online, it naturally influences their own choices. As the idiom says, “where there’s smoke, there’s fire.” If thousands of people are praising a product, it creates curiosity and a sense of trust. Interestingly, the idea of social proof is not new. Even decades ago, advertisements often claimed “9 out of 10 dentists recommend this toothpaste.” This strategy worked because people trusted expert opinions. When consumers saw that most dentists recommended a product, they believed it must be reliable. Another classic example is McDonald’s

famous tagline “Billions and Billions Served.” This message created the impression that millions of people trusted the brand, encouraging others to do the same.

In today’s digital world, social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become powerful spaces for discovering new products. Instead of relying only on traditional advertisements, Gen Z consumers often depend on reviews, comments, and influencer recommendations before making a purchase.

Online reviews play a major role in this process. Before buying anything, whether it is skincare, clothes, gadgets, or even deciding where to eat, people usually check ratings and feedback online. Platforms like Amazon, Nykaa, Zomato, Swiggy, and Google Reviews have become the modern version of digital word-of-mouth recommendations. For example, before ordering food from a new restaurant on Zomato or Swiggy, many people first check ratings, customer reviews, and food photos shared by other users. A restaurant with thousands of positive reviews automatically feels more trustworthy than one with very few ratings. In fact, many people jokingly say that buying a product online sometimes feels like doing a mini research project. Watching reels, checking ratings, reading customer feedback, and comparing experiences have become a normal part of the buying journey.

Trust-Building in the Digital Marketplace

Celebrities and influencers often play a strong role in shaping consumer choices. Actress Janhvi Kapoor, known for her elegance and beauty, has a strong presence on social media. Many people admire her style and wish to look as beautiful as she does. Because of this admiration, they often pay attention to the brands she uses or promotes, which can influence their own purchasing decisions. In today’s digital world, people are no longer convinced by advertisements alone. Instead, they trust what other people are saying about a product. A positive review, a genuine recommendation, or even a simple comment can

influence how someone perceives a brand. However, this influence also has its negative side. Sometimes people buy products simply because they are trending on social media. A viral reel or thousands of likes can create FOMO (Fear of Missing Out). At times like this, the Marathi saying “दिसतं तसं नसतं” (**things are not always as they appear**) reminds us that a product may look perfect online but may not always match the real experience.

The Final Takeaway

Despite these challenges, social proof remains one of the most powerful tools in modern

marketing when used ethically. Genuine reviews and real customer experiences help brands build stronger relationships with consumers.

Today, purchasing decisions are shaped by shared experiences, community opinions, and digital conversations.

Sometimes, a simple comment, an honest review, or someone’s real experience is enough to influence another person’s decision!

Because in the end, people trust people before they trust brands!

AUTHOR’S BIO: SALONI PATIL

Saloni Patil is passionate about marketing and loves exploring new things. She believes people are at the heart of marketing, and understanding them leads to better ideas. She enjoys meeting new people and building genuine connections.



The Influence of Social Media on Investment Decisions Among Young Investors

BY SANGITA KALWA

During my Trimester 1 here at MET Institute of PGDM, I had the opportunity to work on a research project titled “A Study on the Factors Affecting the Investment Preferences of Adults in Today’s Economy, with a Focus on Financial Awareness, Risk Perception, and the Influence of Digital Trends.” The project aimed to understand how modern economic conditions, awareness about financial products, perceived risks, and emerging digital influences shape the way adults make investment decisions.

As part of this research, my specific area of focus was the role of social media and digital platforms in influencing investment behavior. With the rapid growth of platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and other online financial communities, social media has become an increasingly popular source of financial information, market trends, and investment advice.

My research explored how individuals use these platforms to learn about investing, whether social media affects their decision-making, and to what extent digital trends create urgency or influence financial choices. By analyzing survey responses and user behavior, the study aimed to understand the impact of social media on financial awareness, investment confidence, and decision-making patterns among adults.

This article highlights the key insights from that research and examines how social media is shaping the investment mindset of today’s generation.

In today’s digital world, the way people learn about money and investing has changed dramatically. Earlier, individuals relied mainly on financial advisors, newspapers, or television programs for financial guidance. Today, however, social media platforms have become an important space where people explore investment ideas, learn about markets, and discuss financial strategies. From short educational videos to influencer opinions and financial tutorials, digital platforms are

transforming how financial knowledge is shared and consumed.

The Rise of Digital Financial Learning

Social media has made financial information more accessible than ever before. Platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and other online communities allow users to learn about complex financial concepts through simplified and engaging content. Short videos, infographics, and explainers make topics such as stock markets, mutual funds, and personal finance easier to understand for beginners.

This shift has encouraged more people, especially young adults, to become curious about investing. Instead of feeling intimidated by financial jargon, many users now encounter financial education in a format that feels approachable and relatable. As a result, social media is increasingly acting as an entry point for financial awareness and investment learning.

In addition, the interactive nature of these platforms allows users to engage directly with content creators through comments, live sessions, and discussions. This two-way communication further enhances learning, as individuals can clarify doubts and gain insights in real time. Such engagement helps build confidence among new investors who may otherwise hesitate to enter financial markets.

The Role of Influencers and Online Communities

Another reason for the growing influence of social media in investing is the rise of financial influencers and online communities. Many content creators share their experiences, strategies, and insights about markets and investment opportunities. These discussions often create a sense of community where people exchange ideas, ask questions, and learn from each other’s perspectives.

While such content can inspire individuals to start

learning about investing, it also highlights the importance of critical thinking and responsible decision-making. Not every opinion or trending advice online is reliable, which makes it essential for users to verify information and consult credible sources.

Moreover, the credibility of influencers often depends on their transparency and expertise. Investors are increasingly becoming aware of the need to differentiate between educational content and promotional content. This awareness plays a crucial role in ensuring that individuals do not blindly follow advice but instead make informed decisions based on research and understanding.

Digital Trends and the Psychology of Investing

Social media is not only a source of information but also a space where trends spread quickly. When certain financial opportunities become popular online, they can create excitement and curiosity among viewers. Seeing others discuss or promote an investment idea can sometimes lead individuals to explore the opportunity themselves.

This phenomenon is often connected to FOMO (Fear of Missing Out), where people feel pressured to act quickly so they do not miss a potential opportunity. However, experienced investors often emphasize the importance of patience, research, and long-term thinking rather than making impulsive decisions based on trends.

Additionally, social media can influence emotions such as overconfidence and herd behavior. When individuals repeatedly see success stories or profit screenshots, they may develop unrealistic expectations about returns. This highlights the importance of maintaining a rational approach and understanding that investing involves both risks and rewards.

Balancing Convenience with Credibility

Although social media provides easy access to financial information, responsible investing requires a balanced approach. Many individuals combine insights from social media with traditional

and reliable sources such as financial news platforms, research tools, and expert opinions.

This approach allows people to benefit from the convenience and accessibility of digital platforms while still making informed decisions based on verified knowledge. It also encourages individuals to develop analytical skills and evaluate information critically rather than accepting it at face value.

Furthermore, regulatory awareness and basic financial literacy play an important role in this balance. Understanding fundamental concepts such as risk diversification, asset allocation, and long-term planning can help investors make better use of the information they encounter online.

The Future of Financial Awareness

As digital platforms continue to evolve, their influence on financial awareness and investment behavior will likely grow. Social media has the potential to play a positive role in spreading financial literacy and encouraging people to take interest in managing their money.

At the same time, the future may also see greater regulation and accountability for financial content shared online. As more individuals rely on digital platforms for financial guidance, ensuring the accuracy and reliability of information will become increasingly important.

Educational institutions and financial organizations may also collaborate with digital platforms to provide structured and reliable financial education. Such initiatives can further strengthen the role of social media as a tool for learning rather than just a source of trends.

However, the key to responsible investing lies in learning, questioning information, and making decisions based on careful research rather than trends alone. When used wisely, social media can become a valuable tool that supports financial education and empowers individuals to make smarter investment choices.

AUTHOR'S BIO: SANGITA KALWA

I'm a finance enthusiast of the PGDM 2025-27 batch, having a keen interest in numbers, financial planning, and the evolving role of sustainability in economic decision-making. In this article, I attempted to bring attention to green budgeting as a practical approach to integrating environmental responsibility into fiscal and corporate strategies. Going forward, I aim to deepen my understanding of climate finance and ESG-linked decision-making and contribute to building financial systems that balance economic progress with environmental accountability.



BY SHANTANU MEHTA

In the last ten years, the way people discover and buy things has changed a lot. For Generation Z, who were born between 1997 and 2012, social media is not just for having fun or chatting. It has become a big part of how they learn about products, trends, and even make purchases. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have changed how marketing works by mixing content, community, and shopping. As a result, Gen Z's buying choices are heavily influenced by trends, influencer culture, and online opinions.

The Rise of the Influencer Economy

One big reason Gen Z buys what they do is because of social media influencers. Unlike traditional celebrities, influencers often feel more like real people, which makes their followers trust them more. Influencers can be small, with just a few thousand followers, or big, with millions. Surprisingly, Gen Z often trusts the smaller ones more because their content feels genuine and less like an ad.

When influencers talk about a product in reviews, "haul" videos, or their daily life with certain brands, followers see it as a real experience rather than a commercial.

This sense of authenticity has a strong effect on people's minds. Followers feel like they are getting advice from a friend instead of being sold something.

Instagram and the Power of Visual Persuasion

Instagram has become a powerful platform that shapes how Gen Z makes buying decisions. The visual style of the app makes it great for showing lifestyle images, product designs, and content that makes people want things. Brands work with influencers to naturally include products in their posts, reels, and stories.

For example, when a fashion influencer shares an outfit post, they often tag the brand, making it easy for followers to check out or buy the item right away. This mix of content and shopping makes the buying process quicker for Gen Z. For them,

getting inspired and making a purchase often happens in the same app.

FOMO: The Psychology Behind Impulse Buying

Another key factor influencing Gen Z's purchases on social media is FOMO, or fear of missing out.

Limited-time offers, exclusive drops, flash sales, and popular products create a sense of urgency. When Gen Z sees their friends or influencers promoting a product that seems everyone is talking about, the fear of missing out can lead to quick buying decisions.

Brands take advantage of this behaviour by using countdown timers, influencer campaigns, and viral challenges.

For example, when a product goes viral on TikTok or Instagram, thousands may rush to buy it just because it's popular. This shows how social media can create a digital ripple effect, spreading trends quickly and influencing consumer choices.

Social Proof and the Trust Factor

In the online world, reviews and user-generated content are important for building trust. Gen Z doesn't just rely on ads from brands; they look for what others are saying. Comments, likes, shares, and product reviews act as signs that a product is good.

A product with a lot of positive reviews or viral user content instantly looks more trustworthy.

Similarly, seeing multiple influencers or friends suggest the same product makes it seem more reliable. This phenomenon, called social proof, greatly affects what Gen Z buys.

Authenticity Over Perfection

Unlike previous generations, Gen Z cares more about authenticity than perfect advertising. Highly polished and overly commercial content doesn't really connect with them. Instead, they prefer brands that are honest, relatable, and open.

Brands that share their values, sustainability, and social impact are more likely to connect with Gen Z. For example, brands that show real customer stories, behind-the-scenes work, or honest product demos often have better results on social media. True storytelling builds emotional connections and encourages brand loyalty over time.

The Blurring Line Between Content and Commerce

Social media platforms are adding more e-commerce features, like in-app shopping, affiliate links, and product tags. These make social platforms like digital market places where you can browse and buy all in one place.

For Gen Z, the shopping experience is no longer straightforward. A user might find a product through a meme, see a review on TikTok, check comments for opinions, then buy it through an Instagram shop-all in a few minutes. This seamless journey shows how social media has changed the way marketing works.

The Future of Social Media Marketing

As Gen Z continues to shape the digital world, brands need to change their marketing to stay

relevant. Real influencer partnerships, active community engagement, and open communication will become more important. Brands that focus on user-generated content and interactive campaigns are likely to see better results from their audience.

At the same time, Gen Z is getting more aware of sponsored content and influencer marketing tactics. This means brands need to focus more on honest and value-driven messaging instead of just promotional strategies.

Conclusion

Social media has completely changed how Gen Z discovers, thinks about, and buys products. Influencer recommendations, visually engaging content, social proof, and FOMO-driven marketing all play a role in what they choose. For marketers, understanding these trends is important for creating campaigns that connect with this tech-savvy generation.

Ultimately, for Gen Z, a simple scroll can lead to a purchase in seconds. In the world of social commerce, "double-tap" is no longer just a like-it's often the first step toward buying.

AUTHOR'S BIO: SHANTANU MEHTA

Shantanu Mehta is an ambitious and creative individual with a strong interest in business, branding, and innovative product ideas. Currently pursuing management studies, he actively explores market trends, consumer behavior, and entrepreneurial opportunities. He has a keen eye for identifying gaps in the market and developing unique concepts across industries such as food, retail, and lifestyle. Known for his curiosity and forward-thinking approach, he is passionate about building impactful brands with global potential.



BY SOHAM PITRE

Digital media has transformed the brand-consumer relationship. Businesses do not simply rely on common advertising; instead, they communicate to the audiences on social sites. To Generation Z, social media is not only a means of communication but the place where they get to find products and interact with brands. Instagram, Tik Tok and Youtube are social media that bombard users with new trends, products, and lifestyle content. Marketers have been employing a psychological stimulus known as Fear of Missing Out in this landscape more frequently. FOMO is the feeling that other individuals are having positive experiences, to opportunities or are enjoying products and you are the one being left out in the cold. Consumers, who view the products under the trends or limited offers in the news feeds of their social media feeds several times, might be in a hurry to make a purchase. Due to this, FOMO has developed to be an effective strategy utilized by brands that instigate the purchasing behaviour among the Gen Z consumers.

FOMO and Consumer Psychology

The concept of FOMO marketing is directly associated with the human social behaviour. There is a desire to follow trends that people have. And they definitely do not want to be left out of the trendy things. Social media provides merely a means to amplify this tendency by providing constant views of highly filtered exposures of lives of people, heavily biased toward the popular brands of the time or on the product that is in fashion now. Supposal you are not doing it right when you cannot go to this place and take a selfie when your hair stylist requests you to go where he is supposed to put that colorant (a massage chair). Passenger: See how I was treated in this plane. You are ready to consume anything hot and new, as long as you have never encountered the words blood sausage, pork leg, or whatever happens to be the hot thing so lustily being whipped to your e-mail inbox. This impact is even more pronounced in Gen Z, as they are spending all their daily lives in between social platforms. When viewers are observing their peers or influencers using a particular product, the product

gets social value and worth. The rate of spreading information on social media is also quite critical. The trends are transferred rapidly, and everything may become popular within several days. The rapid propagation of content adds to the urgency of purchasing the content before the trend goes away.

Marketing Techniques that Create FOMO:

Brands apply different strategies on social media to create a sense of urgency and exclusiveness.

- Limited-Time Promotions

Some approaches can be helpful: one of them is the provision of limited period offers like time-bound offers "limited Period" offers or last chance prices. In this situation when the unable consumers hesitate should be promptly reminded course! Flash sales, countdown timers and today only offers all to the effect that it should provoke consumers to action There are also instances when the need to own is triggered by a sense of time running out: As long as the people feel that the opportunity will soon pass by them then they will no longer wait any longer and will probably make a purchase. Since Gen Z and other young buyers spend most of their time on social media, these strategies are particularly effective. When they are browsing through news feeds, they could easily be able to have their heads down as they look in search of deals and then come back up on their feet as they identify goods at that magic alternative search path known as browsing through news feeds.

- Scarcity and Limited Editions

Another strategy that is efficient is the approach of producing limited edition products. When there are few products as them, it makes them that much more attractive to consumers. As an illustration, Nike brands such as this do release special sneaker collections. After the time limit has been overtaken there is nothing left but the memories of people of hot drops and how fast certain internet stores were to grab them Consumers are extremely enthusiastic over this type of release. The products are sold out rather frequently in a few minutes.

Impacts on the Gen Z Purchasing Behaviour

Gen Z shoppers have significant shifts in their purchasing patterns due to FOMO marketing. One of the consequences is impulse buying. Since there are so many campaigns that capitalize on a sense of urgency or scarcity, consumers could end up purchasing fast and without research. In addition to that, FOMO campaigns result in more interaction with brands (and products). The consumers tend to subscribe to brand accounts, switch notifications and wait alert so as to avoid missing any important piece of information.

Authenticity in FOMO Marketing

FOMO is brought on by urgency and scarcity, yet authenticity is the answer to sustainable brands. Gen Z generation consumers are very sensitive to advertising strategies, and they will probably not want to be attached to a brand that appears to be highly promotional and manipulative.

Consequently, brands should juggle between FOMO strategies and clear communications and sincere narratives. The more the marketing method penetrates the house and makes the consumer feel that the product can be displayed, the more they are likely to trust more and be brand loyal.

Conclusion:

In the age of social media, FOMO-triggered marketing has come to be a potent driver for Gen Z buying decisions. Brands can include things like time-limited sales, influencer partnerships, scarcity marketing and social proof.

But when attempting these strategies, it requires authenticity and real value to be given to the consumer. With this, marketers should learn to keep the balance of creating urgency and genuine connections with their shared audience as digital platforms develop over time.

AUTHOR'S BIO: SOHAM PITRE

Soham Pitre is a marketing student with a keen interest in consumer behavior and brand strategy. He enjoys analyzing real-world business scenarios and translating them into practical marketing insights. He aspires to create impactful marketing campaigns that connect meaningfully with audiences.



BY TANAYA PUJARE

In today's digital-first world, social media is more than just a way to communicate and be entertained. It has become a strong marketplace that affects what people buy, how they buy it, and even why they buy it. For Generation Z, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube are key parts of their daily lives. These sites shape trends, opinions, and most importantly, what people decide to purchase.

One of the strongest tools brands use to influence Gen Z consumers on these platforms is FOMO, or Fear of Missing Out. FOMO means the worry that others might be having fun or enjoying something trendy without you. Brands intentionally create this feeling to push consumers to buy quickly, often leading to impulse purchases. As Gen Z engages with online communities and trending content, they are especially affected by this tactic.

Understanding Gen Z as Digital Consumers

Generation Z is often seen as the most digitally connected generation ever. Having grown up with smartphones, fast internet, and social media, they naturally look to digital platforms for product discovery and recommendations. Unlike older generations that relied on TV ads or in-store promotions, Gen Z often learns about new products from influencers, viral trends, and content created by their peers.

Another key trait of Gen Z consumers is their need to stay updated with trends and what's happening in culture. Whether it's a new fashion item, beauty product, gadget, or lifestyle trend, they want to be part of what's popular online. This desire to remain relevant drives FOMO marketing strategies.

Limited Drops and Scarcity Marketing

One effective way brands create FOMO is through scarcity. When consumers think that a product is only available for a limited time or in small amounts, they feel pressured to buy it right away.

A clear example of this can be seen in sneaker culture. Brands like Nike often release limited-

edition sneakers through online drops that sell out in minutes. These releases are heavily promoted on social media, building excitement among young consumers. Many people hurry to buy these items simply because they fear missing out on something rare. Scarcity marketing not only boosts sales but also raises the perceived value of the product.

The Influence of Social Media Creators

Influencers and content creators are key in shaping Gen Z purchase decisions. Instead of relying on traditional celebrity endorsements, Gen Z often trusts influencers who seem relatable and genuine.

Beauty and lifestyle creators commonly share routines, reviews, and "Get Ready With Me" videos using different products. When followers frequently see influencers showcasing the same product, it gives the impression that the product is trending and accepted by many.

A notable example is the viral success of Dior Lip Oil, which became hugely popular after several beauty influencers featured it on TikTok. The product quickly became a must-have and sold out in many countries. Many consumers bought it simply because it was everywhere on their social media feeds. This type of marketing highlights the power of social proof, where people are influenced by others' actions.

Viral Trends and Internet Culture

Social media platforms thrive on trends. A single viral video can introduce a product to millions of viewers in hours. When products are linked to viral challenges or popular hashtags, demand can skyrocket.

For example, the sudden popularity of Stanley Quencher tumblers was mainly fueled by TikTok creators who showed off their colorful collections and daily routines with the product. What started as an ordinary tumbler became a highly sought-after lifestyle accessory among Gen Z users. Viral

trends create urgency. Consumers want to join in before the trend fades away, reinforcing their fear of missing out.

User-Generated Content and Community Influence

Another important element of FOMO marketing is User-Generated Content (UGC). Brands encourage consumers to share their experiences through posts, reviews, or hashtags. When people see peers enjoying a product, it appears more genuine than traditional ads.

Fashion brands like Zara benefit significantly from this trend. Thousands of users regularly share outfit ideas and styling videos featuring Zara products. As these posts circulate on Instagram and TikTok, they inspire others to buy similar items to recreate the look. This collective involvement fosters a community around the brand while also boosting product visibility.

Exclusive Access and Brand Communities

Many brands create FOMO by providing exclusive access to certain products or collections. Early access, member-only releases, and invite-only product drops make consumers feel special and included in an exclusive group.

Streetwear brand Supreme has perfected this approach. The brand releases new items in limited drops each week, generating intense anticipation on social media. Owning a Supreme product often signifies status among young consumers. By making products hard to get, brands enhance both desirability and brand loyalty.

Impact on Gen Z Purchase Behavior

FOMO marketing significantly affects how Gen Z decides to shop. Instead of taking time to compare options, consumers may make hasty choices driven by urgency, excitement, or social pressure.

This method benefits brands in several ways:

- It boosts impulse buying.
- It speeds up decision-making.
- It creates organic promotion through social sharing.
- It builds emotional connections between consumers and brands.

However, it also raises concerns about emotional manipulation in marketing, especially when young consumers feel pushed to buy products just to stay relevant.

Conclusion

FOMO-driven marketing has become a key feature of modern digital advertising. By combining scarcity, influencer marketing, viral trends, and social proof, brands successfully attract the attention of Gen Z consumers on social media platforms. As technology continues to change, the link between social media and consumer behavior will only grow stronger. For marketers, the challenge lies in using FOMO effectively to generate excitement and engagement while maintaining consumer trust. In the fast-paced world of social media, trends may come and go, but one thing remains clear: for Gen Z, the fear of missing out often turns a simple scroll into a buying decision.

AUTHOR'S BIO: TANAYA PUJARE

Tanaya Pujare is a PGDM student and aspiring marketer with a focused interest in content creation, brand management, and digital marketing. Driven by a passion for crafting clear & engaging narratives, she explores the intricate ways digital platforms influence consumer behavior and redefine modern purchase decisions. With a commitment to understanding the evolving marketplace, Tanaya seeks to contribute to impactful, consumer-centric strategies that bridge the gap between brand identity and authentic audience connection.



So, we can discuss why social media is, in fact, the supreme determinant of our purchases. At the time when any scroll can present to us the new stuff, such platforms as Insta, or YouTube condition the way young people think about purchasing. The great motivator in this case is FOMO Fear of Missing out. It is only a sense of somebody getting a new sick gadget or a cool outfit and I am the one who is left with my old hoodie. Influencers and brands have taken advantage of that, and with the help of it, they drive Gen Z students like us to buy something.

FOMO marketing simply means that you need to think that you have to do something. These networks allow brands and influencers to present products in smooth, catchy styles. Feeding through our feeds, we are constantly being bombarded with posts about the latest fashion, technology or lifestyle necessities. They include expressions such as limited edition, only 24 hours left, or selling out fast, and these phrases hit us hard and we start to believe that we will miss something in case we do not buy it immediately. The additional effect is provided by stories, reels, and short clips. Marketing content works on platforms that favor virality and when a product becomes viral, you see it on nearly every account that you visit. The fact that a large number of our peers or influencers post about using or hyping something makes us feel that we should do the same to avoid appearing out of the loop. Influencers play a significant role in this situation since they are relatable.

The majority of us follow influencers who seem like real people, and more often than not, they are our classmates or the representatives of our vibe. When these influencers post their experiences such as trying a new skincare item, trying a new phone, or doing a wardrobe haul, we believe them and believe, if they are buying it, I should buy it, as well. This credibility can even lead us to make a purchase to keep abreast. The entire concept of social proof comprises a considerable portion of

FOMO. When something receives a million likes, comments, and views, we believe that it is good. A product that is trending in social media will either be a necessity or you are literally standing behind the crowd. This desire to be part of the group can make us purchase something we do not really require.

The key success factor of FOMO marketing among university students is that it exploits our desire to be trendy, socially identified people, and, most importantly, to remain online as well. Social platforms are a means by which we express ourselves as well as communicate with friends in real time. Having a shiny pair of sneakers or the latest gadget is a status symbol, a fast way to remain topical and in the discussion.

Then when a new trend fades, we will find it in all the places and we will want to purchase it as we fit into our schoolmates. That said, FOMO isn't all good. On the positive side, social media exposes us to new brands and new things that we may never have realized. Influencer posts and dope viral content can capture a large audience even to small startups within a short period. The negative thing is that FOMO may lead us to the realm of impulsive spending. We can simply make purchases out of something because it looks cool, and we do not even need it. Likes and trending tags are only a false illusion that will disappear within several weeks. This causes unnecessary bills, something that is unsafe when our budgets are already tight. So, how can we push back? It is just a matter of being more aware. You should always question yourself before making a purchase; whether this item is needy or it is only a fashion. View authentic opinions and find deals. Take a break before making the purchase. By learning these habits, we will be able to prevent impulse buying, we will be able to be in control.

Finally, FOMO marketing is a significant competitor in the online market.

AUTHOR'S BIO: TEJAS PORE

Tejas is a passionate student with a keen interest in marketing and consumer behavior. He enjoys exploring real-world business strategies and analyzing how brands connect with their audiences. Aspiring to build a strong career in the field of business and marketing, Tejas believes in continuous growth, innovation, and practical learning.



The Role of Authenticity in Influencer Marketing: Why Gen Z Trusts Creators More Than Brands

BY TINA SAINI

Abstract

Generation Z spends a lot of time on social media sites where creators often post product reviews, recommendations, and lifestyle content. These creator-led messages often feel more real and relatable than traditional ads. Because of this, a lot of Gen Z shoppers depend on what influencers say when they buy things. This article talks about how authenticity, relatability, and social proof affect Gen Z's trust in brands. It also talks about the rising importance of influencer marketing and how creators are changing the way brands reach out to young people.

Introduction

Brands used to rely a lot on TV commercials, billboards, and magazine ads to get the word out about their products. The world of marketing is very different now. A single video from a creator that talks about their daily life or reviews a product can get thousands of people to buy that product.

Many people in Generation Z find new brands and products on social media sites like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. They don't just look at ads; they also look to creators they trust and follow. Research indicates that a significant segment of Gen Z consumers is more inclined to trust endorsements from influencers rather than conventional advertisements. This change shows how important being real has become in making modern buying decisions. Gen Z has grown up surrounded by digital media and constant advertising. Because of this, they are highly aware of when content is created purely to promote a product. Traditional advertisements often appear polished and carefully scripted, which can sometimes make them feel less genuine.

Creator content, on the other hand, usually feels more personal. When influencers talk about their daily lives, honest opinions, or product experiences, it feels more like a conversation than an ad. This difference is a big part of building trust. Many creators also openly mention when a post is

sponsored while still sharing their genuine opinions about a product. This level of transparency helps maintain credibility with their audience, which is something Gen Z values strongly.

The Growth of Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing has become one of the best ways for brands to reach younger people in the last few years. Influencers connect brands with customers by showing off products in a way that feels natural and relatable.

Influencers can be big celebrities or smaller nano or micro influencers who have smaller, more specific communities. It's interesting that smaller influencers often have more engaged followers because their audiences feel more connected to them.

For example, beauty creators frequently review and demonstrate products from brands like Rare Beauty and Nykaa. Through makeup tutorials, skincare routines, or honest product reviews, these creators allow viewers to see how the products actually perform. Watching someone use a product in real life often feels more trustworthy than seeing a highly produced advertisement.

Authenticity and Relatability

Relatability is one of the main reasons why creators have such a big impact on Gen Z. A lot of influencers share parts of their daily lives, problems, and experiences with their followers. This makes people feel like they know the creator personally. It doesn't feel forced when a creator suggests a product in their regular content. It seems like they are just sharing something that works for them instead. This natural way of including products in everyday content makes the recommendation more believable.

For instance, a fashion designer putting together an outfit in their bedroom or a beauty influencer trying out a new skincare product during their

nighttime routine feels more real than a regular ad. People are more likely to trust the recommendation because it is based on real life.

The Power of Social Proof

Social proof is another important thing that affects Gen Z's buying decisions. People often check out how other people react to a product on social media before deciding if they want to try it themselves. Likes, comments, shares, and reviews are all signs that a product is popular or worth buying. When thousands of people are discussing or recommending the same product, it naturally increases curiosity and trust among viewers. Content such as unboxing videos, "first impressions," and honest product reviews also plays a big role in shaping consumer opinions. These types of content provide a more transparent view of the product, helping consumers feel more confident about their purchase decisions.

FOMO and Viral Trends

Social media trends can spread extremely quickly, especially among younger audiences. A product that becomes popular on social media can suddenly appear everywhere - in reels, videos, and recommendation lists.

This often creates a feeling of FOMO, or fear of

missing out. When creators repeatedly feature a product or when a trend goes viral, many users feel encouraged to try it themselves. Short-form video content has made this even more powerful. Trending beauty products, fashion items, or lifestyle products can gain attention within a very short period of time simply because multiple creators start talking about them.

Conclusion

The People, especially Gen Z, interact with brands in very different ways now. Traditional advertising is still around, but it doesn't have the same power it used to. Instead, creators have become important people who shape how people think about things.

Creators have a lot of power because they are real, open, and easy to relate to. Authenticity, transparency, and relatability are the qualities that make creators so influential. When audiences feel that a recommendation is genuine, they are far more likely to trust it.

This shift highlights the importance of working with creators in a way that allows them to maintain their authentic voice. In the future, marketing strategies that focus on genuine connections and trustworthy content will be the most effective in influencing Gen Z purchase decisions.

AUTHOR'S BIO: TINA SAINI

Tina Saini is a marketing student with a strong interest in digital marketing, advertising, and consumer behavior. She is particularly passionate about understanding how social media and influencer culture shape Gen Z purchase decisions. With exposure to advertising and practical work experience, she enjoys blending creativity with strategic thinking. Her work focuses on real-world marketing trends, brand storytelling, and building meaningful audience connections.



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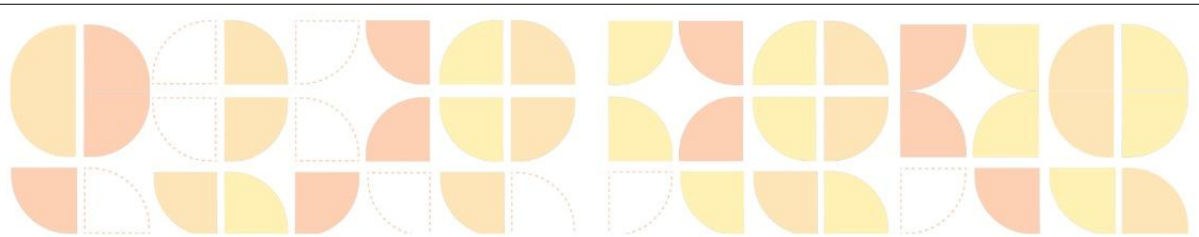
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