

# Gen Y to be Eclipsed by Gen Z

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Just when retailers were getting accustomed to millennials, here comes Gen Z.

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NEW YORK – Predicting how Gen Z will affect the retail market may be a little premature, but there are plenty of indicators that can give us a glimpse into how the next younger generation will shape culture and the food and beverage marketplace, writes [Forbes](#).

The Hartman Group notes that already at about a quarter of the U.S. population, Gen Z is projected to eclipse millennials in size. The research firm offers up five ways the youngest U.S. demographic “will make their own mark and blaze their own trail in contemporary lifestyles and food culture.”

## **Digital: Almost No Separation Between Online and Real Life**

“Gen Z are digital natives who have never known a time without the internet,” writes Forbes, noting that technology is central to every aspect of their lives, from socializing to schoolwork, entertainment to exercise, relaxation to reference. For this generation, turning to their peers and online communities for advice and information is how they operate.

## **Ethnic Diversity Will Shape Their Outlook**

Forbes writes that alongside being fully integrated in technology, Gen Z is the most ethnically diverse age group yet, and they will drive food culture trends in terms of how they eat (exposure to global/regional foods); how they communicate (multilingual with parents from different ethnicities); how they get along with others (acceptance) and see the world (fewer boundaries, moving away from an “us” vs “them”).

## **Influencing Grocery Shopping, but Not the In-Store Experience**

“Many teens avoid going shopping with their parents if they can, viewing it as a boring chore,” writes Forbes. For this generation, their influence on grocery shopping and purchasing decisions will have interesting implications for the future of food buying. Like millennials, their shopping patterns may mean few trips to the store, smaller basket sizes, using apps and online grocery/pick-up.

## **Health and Wellness: Fresh, Less Processed**

Gen Z shows high awareness and desire for healthy, minimally processed foods, notes Forbes. They know how to read nutrition labels and know the basics of a healthy diet.

## **Cooking is a Fun Hobby**

Being the first generational to grow up in the digital age, no question goes unanswered with Gen Z, notes Forbes, adding, “This has a major influence on the foods and beverages they

consume because they want to know where it's from, how it's grown/made and who made it. Thus, Gen Z approaches cooking differently than older generations." This generation may have more intuitive cooks because they won't rely on written recipe cards, but rather online posts with pictures.

For more on the rise of Gen Z and how these emerging shoppers will shape convenience retail, read "Feeding Gen Z" and "Courting Gen Z" in NACS Magazine.