

Baby Boomers, Gen X more likely to notice, watch brand purpose ads – GfK study

But purpose campaigns have deeper emotional, motivational effects on Gen Z, Millennials

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, October 19, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Brands and agencies have long assumed that younger generations are driving the brand purpose movement – insisting that brands need to show strong, real-world support for social causes. But a new study from [GfK](#) shows that, when it comes to advertising, older US consumers may pay more attention to purpose creatives than do their younger counterparts.

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The study compared 20 brand purpose ads from major brands on metrics relating to brand awareness and imprint, as well as a battery of emotional and intellectual reactions – from “is making my life better” to “inspires me to be part of the change.” The study utilized GfK’s Ad Fit Optimizer (AFO) creative testing system and leveraged the notion of “transformational” purpose ads developed by Thomas Kolster and [Goodvertising Agency](#).

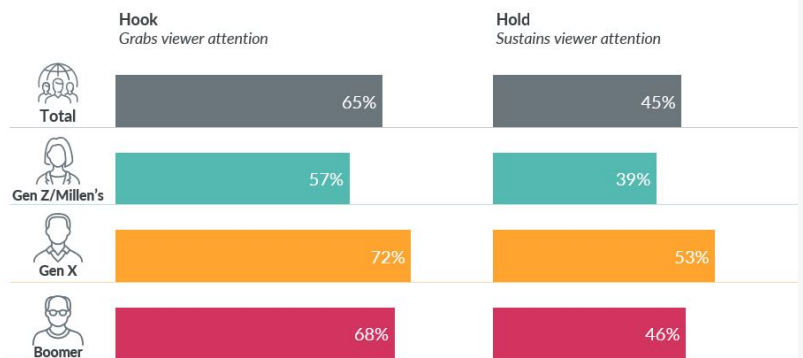
The study shows that, in the US, Generation X (ages 41 to 60) is most likely to notice and then continue watching a purpose ad – followed closely by Baby Boomers (ages 61+). (See Chart 1.) Generation Z (18 to 24) and Millennials (25 to 40) scored much lower on these basic metrics of attention to the ads.

Table 1. Brand impact: Traditional vs. Transformational purpose ads

	Gen Z/Millennials		Gen X		Boomer	
	Traditional	Transformational	Traditional	Transformational	Traditional	Transformational
Promotes positive changes in society	68%	71%	66%	71%	64%	65%
Makes me feel empowered	61%	64%	52%	58%	40%	46%
Ad message sets it apart from others in category	63%	69%	59%	66%	59%	66%
Inspires me to be part of the change	63%	67%	57%	60%	47%	52%
Is making my life better	55%	59%	49%	50%	42%	42%
Feels like it understand me	58%	62%	50%	52%	37%	40%

Transformational ads have an edge in impact

Chart 1. Hook and hold of purpose ads, by generation



Hook and hold of purpose ads are stronger with older generations

But when comparing only viewers who had noticed and stuck with the ads, GfK found that Gen Z and Millennials were more likely to say that the creatives made them want to “talk, learn or do something” about the subjects of the ads. (See Chart 2.)

The study also shows that purpose ads have a stronger emotional impact on Gen Z and Millennials in the US, as registered by statements such as “inspires me to be part of the change” and “is making my life better.” The

study also shows that “transformational” purpose ads – those that focus on consumer achievements and empowerment, rather than the brand’s own heroism – had a stronger emotional impact across a number of key questions. (See Table 1.) GfK found clearly significant differences on statements such as “makes me feel empowered by the message” and “message sets it apart from others in the same category.”

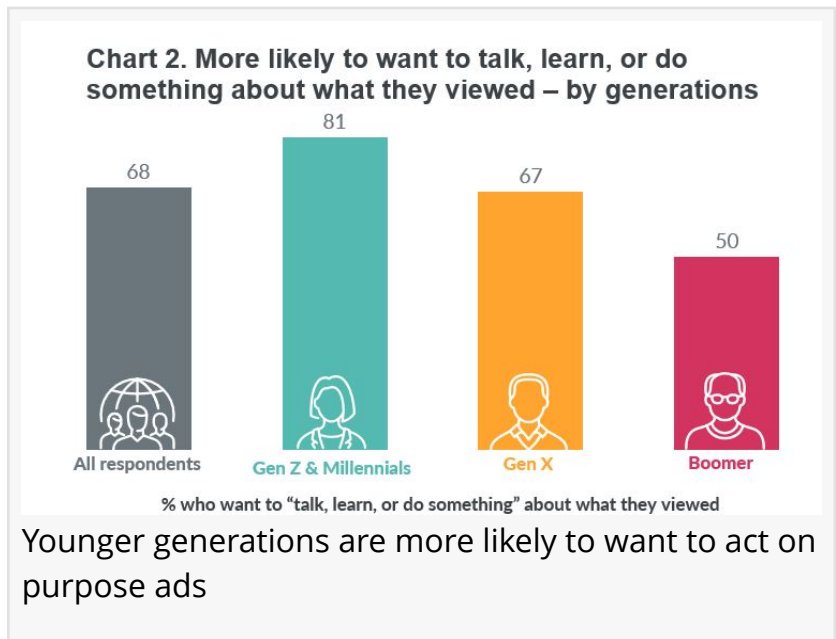
“Clearly, Gen Z and Millennials expect action and transformation from companies around brand purpose,” said Eric Villain, Client Solutions Director for Marketing Effectiveness at GfK. “Using a multi-media communication program – to break through the plethora of ad messages – is essential for involving this group. Adding shorter, more active communication and messages will enhance breakthrough and lead to better recall and engagement.”

"Purpose can still throw punches – especially among older generations," said Kolster, who is founder and director of Goodvertising Agency. "Yet, the message is clear: Younger generations want to play a part. This is an opportunity brands can't miss taking."

Using its proprietary Ad Fit Optimizer (AFO) ad testing solution, GfK surveyed 2,408 US respondents and measured 20 advertisements, divided equally between traditional purpose branding and transformational branding ads. Field dates were March 28th to 31st, 2022.

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