

A UNDERSTANDING GENERATION ALPHA

The most diverse generation yet



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Ignite possibility

Generation Alpha

The most diverse generation yet

Since we published our latest Generation Alpha report in December 2019, the world has changed. From a global pandemic that sent everyone home, to increasing attention on racial and gender equality, the world that Generation Alpha live in today is very different.

For a start, their world is both much smaller and yet much larger than ever before. For many months, schools were closed or limited in interaction. Extra-curricular activities stopped. Children were limited to seeing only those within their social bubble in real life. But online, it was a different story.

Generation Alpha were not only doing their schoolwork through Zoom, Google Classroom, and more, but they were also interacting with their peers online. Roblox – an online game platform targeted to younger audiences – saw a 40% rise in March 2020 alone, and by August 2021 had 48 million daily active users.



And while the COVID-19 pandemic looms over all, it's important to recognize many other factors that Generation Alpha has been exposed to over the last 18 months. From highly popular preteen influencer JoJo Siwa publicly announcing that she's LGBTQ through her Instagram channel, to young female sports stars like Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles prioritizing their mental health over winning, the role models of Generation Alpha are also very different, and vocal about standing up for themselves.

While we could not have predicted the major shifts in how we see the world today back in December 2019, our report did perhaps foreshadow the behavior of Generation Alpha, how they'd adapt and react to these monumental changes.

The latest U.S. census reveals that Generation Alpha is the most

diverse generation yet. Nearly half (47%) of under 18s living in the US don't identify as white. So, our report in 2019 looked to explore how such diversity – not only of race but also of experience – was impacting Generation Alpha, and what that could mean for brands in the future.

And our findings also preshadowed how opinionated Generation Alpha are, and how much they have a righteous sense of being fair, of everyone being accepted for who they are.

And brands are recognizing this. Where previous sports stars who didn't win medals were penalized by their sponsors, now these sponsors are in full support. Brands are creating more diversity in content and in product than ever before – see Mattel's recent line of Barbie's that honor six real-life female scientists who were integral

to surviving the pandemic, or Disney launching a range of adaptive Halloween costumes. And that's a good thing – it's needed to survive and thrive once Generation Alpha truly come of age.

But brands will need to do more than just show more diversity, and offer greater experiences, they'll need to believe it themselves. And be prepared to stick up for this experience even if a vocal group chooses to challenge it. Authenticity is an over-used word, but one that has never been more important in today's world, particularly with Generation Alpha.

Read on for our full report from December 2019 to better understand Generation Alpha and how marketers must rethink our approaches to reach this influential generation effectively.



Living in a diverse world

So where did we start? While our previous reports asked the experts and the parents of Generation Alpha, for this 2019 report we wanted to talk to the kids themselves to get a better understanding of the world they're living in... and how this is impacting their views now, and for the future. Generation Alpha may be the most racially and ethnically diverse generation but they're also growing

up in a world that is more diverse than ever before.

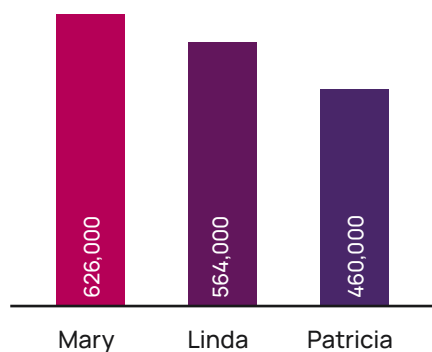
This diversity is being driven even before they are born. In fact, an analysis of most popular children's names in the U.S. shows that today's society offers much more variety than ever before. Where in the 1950s it took over 625,000 babies called Mary for that name to claim top spot, by 2010 Emma only needed just over 175,000 babies

being named that for it to be the most popular name.

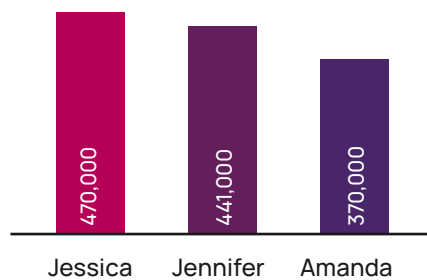
Perhaps the names themselves tell the story best. Some of the top 100 names from the Baby Boomer era are Phyllis, Dorothy, Frank and Walter. Some Millennial top names are Caitlin, Brooke, Nicholas and Nathan. Top-ranking Generation Alpha names are Genesis, Paisley, Peyton, Caleb and Grayson.

Most popular girls' names

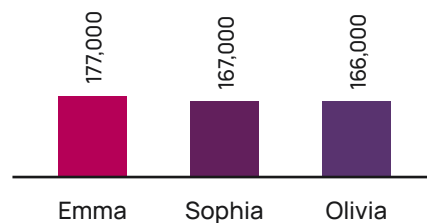
1950s



1980s

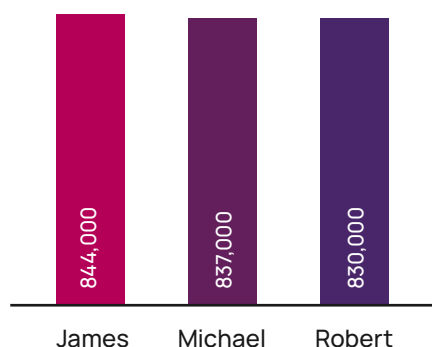


2010-2018

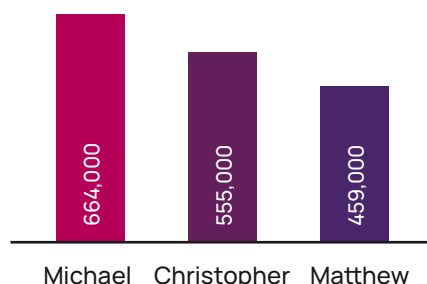


Most popular boys' names

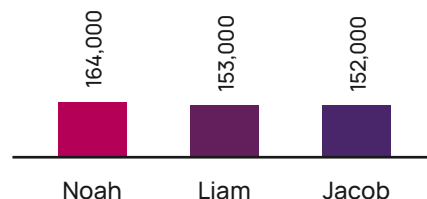
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1980s

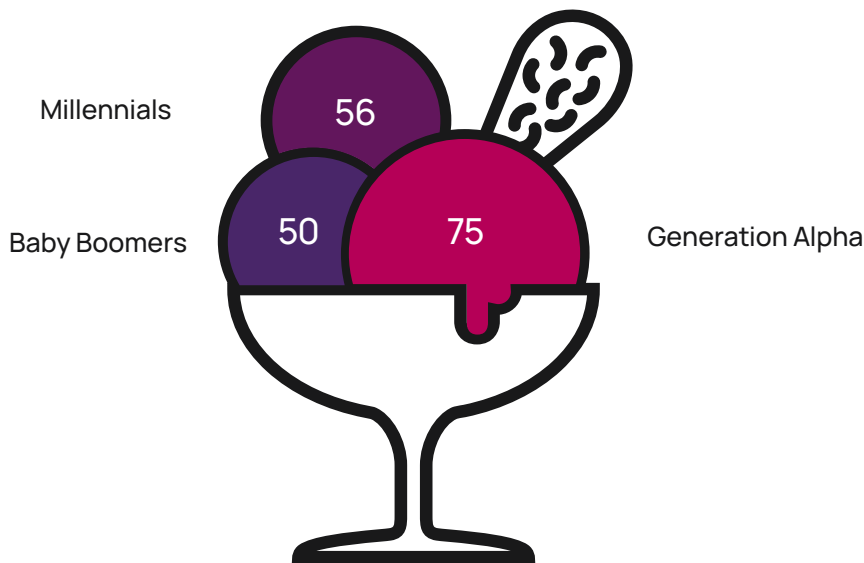


2010-2018



Diversity of views today

Ice-cream flavor options per generation



The variety and diversity of the world around them is having a significant impact on how they view the world. The simplest illustration of this is in their choice of favorite ice-cream.

While Generation Alpha chooses the same favorite ice-cream as their Millennial parents and Baby Boomer grandparents – chocolate, naturally – the number of flavor options is dramatically increased. Baby Boomers selected 50 options as favorite flavors including natural food flavors such as maple walnut, pistachio and banana. Millennials selected 56 options, with flavors starting to shift in complexity such as cookie dough and cookies and cream. Generation Alpha kids offered up 75 different flavors as the best ice-cream with among those brand new options like unicorn, jamocha, peppermint bon bon and green tea.



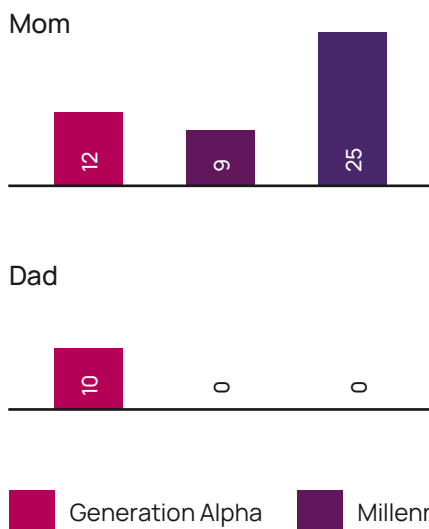
Despite all the choice available, every generation agrees that their favorite flavor is ...

Chocolate



Leading to increased diversity in the future

Popularity of being a Mom or Dad



The diverse world that Generation Alpha is growing up in will have an impact in later life, particularly as Generation Alpha look to enter the workforce. While some professions have remained universally popular over time such as teacher, doctor, police officer and singer, Generation Alpha is also looking forward to being a zookeeper, gamer, paleontologist, YouTuber, Ninja Warrior and even the President.

While the popularity of being a Mom when kids grow up has declined from Baby Boomers to Millennials to Generation Alpha, for girls in Generation Alpha we can now see a desire among young boys to be a Dad – a job that was not as recognized by Millennials and Baby Boomers. This increased role that Dads now play in children's lives is clearly having an impact on how this is now seen as a "proper" job, and could have major consequences in reducing the inequalities currently seen in how women take on the major burden of childcare.

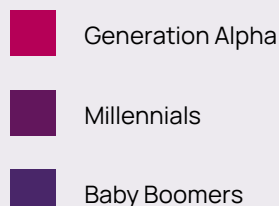
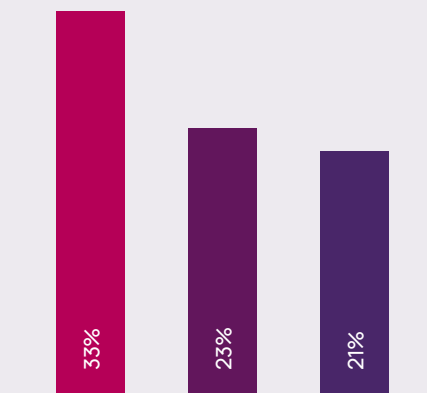
So, what impact does diversity play in how Generation Alpha views the world?

The short answer – according to our 2019 study, very little. While there are some differences – for example, Generation Alpha children who identify as Hispanic are most likely to want to open up a Mexican restaurant, compared to African American children who'd overwhelmingly choose to open up an American restaurant – what is most notable among Generation

Alpha is that their diverse backgrounds – whether ethnicity, religion or gender – do not appear to be having a large impact on their opinions.

For all Generation Alpha kids, the top thing they want to be famous for is helping others, the most popular color is blue and the top-rated super power is being able to fly.

Being able to fly



Millennials and Baby Boomers: The same world?

So, if Generation Alpha's opinions do not seem to vary across traditional ethnic, religion or gender lines, what about their Millennial parents and Baby Boomer grandparents?

Well, both Millennials and Baby Boomers grew up in very different worlds. While Baby Boomers grew up in a time where diversity issues were high-profile, many of them lived in worlds that were

segregated and gender roles were still very traditional. Millennials were also born before the real digital explosion had happened; although coming of age as our lives increasingly shifted online, and then to mobile.

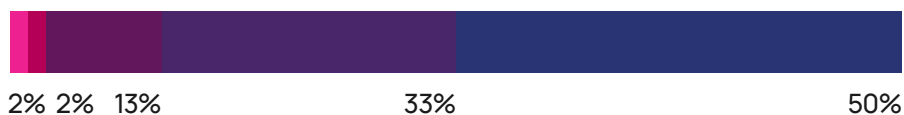
Both agree that the world they grew up in is far different to that of Generation Alpha. Over four in five Millennials and Baby Boomers believe that Generation Alpha will

have a more diverse set of opinions than their generation.

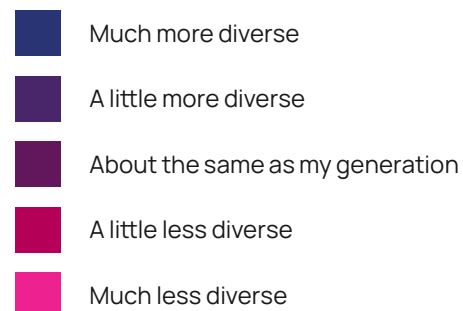
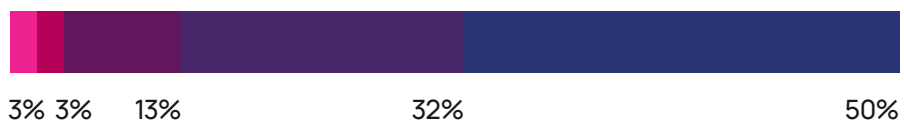
That said, Millennials also believe that they grew up in a diverse world, one where many of them got to travel and explore. Three in five Millennials (59%) had traveled to a foreign country as a child (before the age of 18), compared to just two in five Baby Boomers (40%).

Impact on the diversity of opinions for Generation Alpha

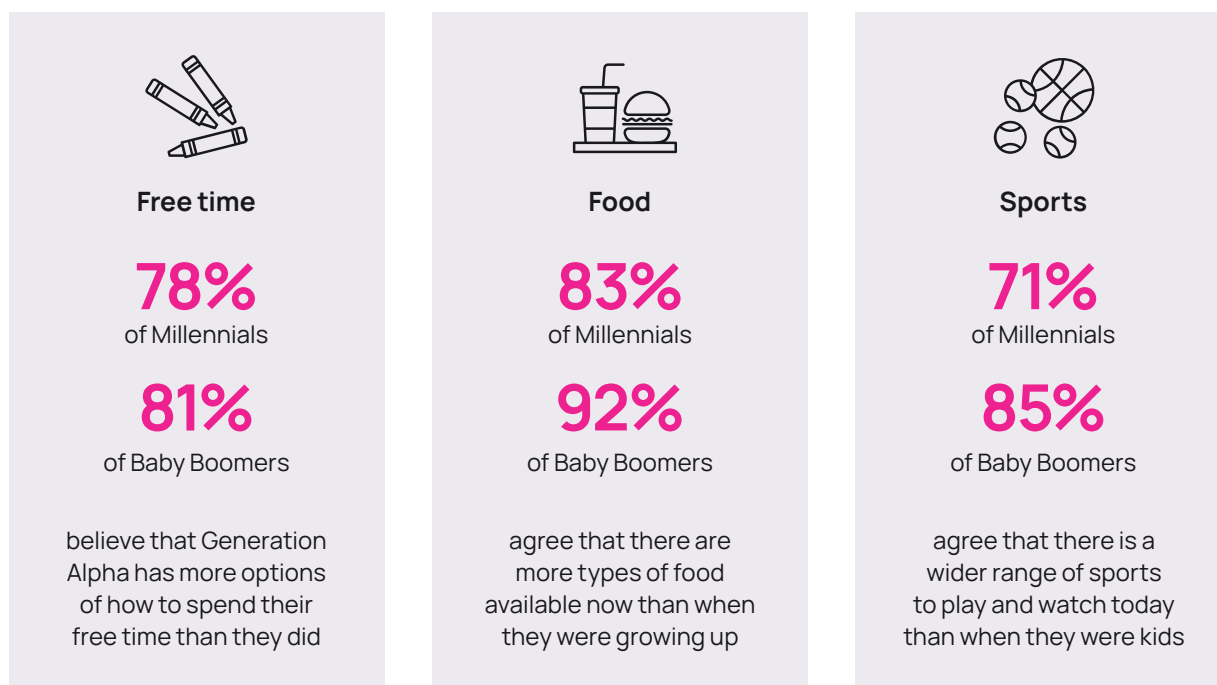
Millennials



Baby Boomers



It also relates to choice



The screen addicts? The older you are, the more you watch

Despite our concerns around children and technology, the research reveals Generation Alpha kids are spending less time in front of screens than Millennials and Baby Boomers.

Compared to Baby Boomers' six hours and Millennials' seven hours per week, Generation Alpha is only spending 3.6 hours a week in front of a smartphone or tablet.

Surprisingly, all three generations we surveyed claim to spend more hours per week watching TV than they do on a smart device. Baby Boomers topped this usage at 11 hours per week, closely followed by Millennials at nine hours per week and Generation Alpha at five hours per week.

Screen time habits throughout the week

Average hours spent watching TV weekly



Average hours spent on tablet/smartphone weekly



Average hours spent playing video games weekly



How do Generation Alpha's views differ from their Millennial parents and Baby Boomer grandparents?

While their views aren't all identical, we don't see clear splits across traditional gender or ethnicity lines. Whereas Millennials and Baby Boomers are far more likely than Generation Alpha to group into different viewpoints across gender particularly.

Baby Boomer and Millennial women are significantly more likely than their male counterparts to rate most issues as important to them now. Gender issues are particularly differentiated with only 65% of Millennial men and 69% of Baby Boomer men saying that it's very important for boys and girls to be treated fairly, compared to 82% and 84% of their female counterparts. Among Generation Alpha, the difference between genders is much smaller (79% for Generation Alpha boys to 86% for girls).

Across issues for Generation Alpha, we see the gender divide significantly decrease. This could be a factor of age, that gender biases have not yet been instilled.

But it could be that this younger generation have fewer gender biases impacting their perceptions.

As Generation Alpha is growing up in a diverse world, this has led them to be a much more diverse group – with kids' views not fitting into simple groups based on their gender, ethnicity or religion.



Generation Alpha already have strong opinions

Despite their age, Generation Alpha already hold strong opinions on some of the biggest issues facing the world today.

When asked what they attribute most importance to, the results show an extremely high importance placed on topics such as “keeping children safe at school” (97%), “making sure everyone has enough food to eat” (97%), that “all

people are treated fairly no matter what they look like” (96%) and “taking care of the environment” (95%).

Political issues such as who the President is and whether there should be a wall between America and Mexico ranked lower in importance amongst Generation Alpha.

Their parents and grandparents

also evaluated their importance on the same issues when they were children, and the results are remarkably lower.

For the same issues, only 37% of Baby Boomers and 57% of Millennials cared about the environment, and only 58% of Baby Boomers cared about all people being treated fairly no matter what they look like.

Importance of Issues

Keeping kids/children safe at school*



Making sure everyone has enough food to eat*



That all people are treated fairly no matter what they look like*



Making sure everyone has a place to live*



Taking care of the environment*



Being accepted for who you are*



* Results reflect Millennial and Boomer perceptions of importance of these issues when they were kids, top two box summary of very and somewhat important



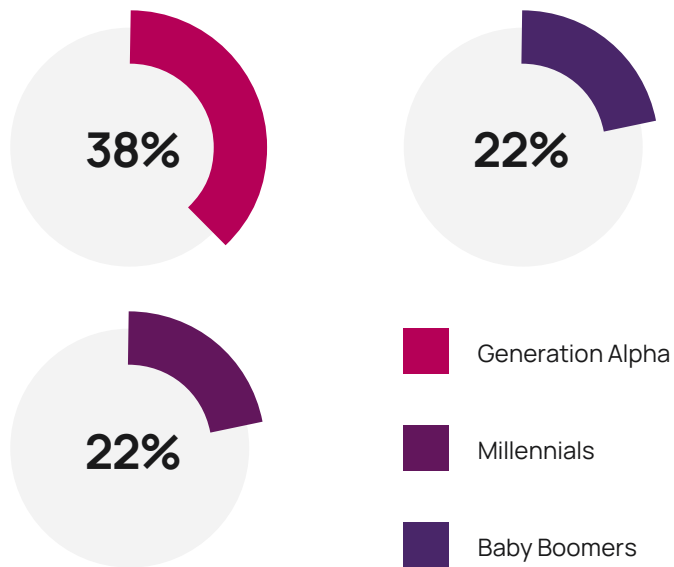
Climate Crusaders

With climate change having an increasing impact, and individuals like teenager Greta Thunberg inspiring children across the world, it's no surprise that taking care of

the environment ranks high among Generation Alpha. And they don't just care about it; they're already taking steps to help.

38% of Generation Alpha kids know that it is important to recycle, compared to just 22% of Millennials and Baby Boomers.

Percentage of those who feel recycling is important per generation





Stronger opinions formed later in life

However, as Millennials and Baby Boomers have aged, their opinions on these issues have become stronger and comparable to those of Generation Alpha.

When asked what issues were important to them now compared to when they were children, there is a significant shift in their response. 77% of Baby Boomers now place most importance on boys and

girls being treated fairly, and 86% of Millennials place utmost importance on keeping children safe at school.

By evaluating Millennial and Baby Boomer attitudes towards issues from when they were younger to now, we can see that throughout our lives we form stronger opinions which are shaped by the world around us.

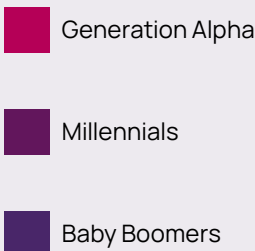
But, despite their youth, Generation Alpha's opinions are already as strongly formed as those of Millennials and Baby Boomers in later life.

It is possible that as Generation Alpha come of age, their opinions will be even more strongly formed than the generations that came before them. And we know what the impact of an opinionated generation can do!

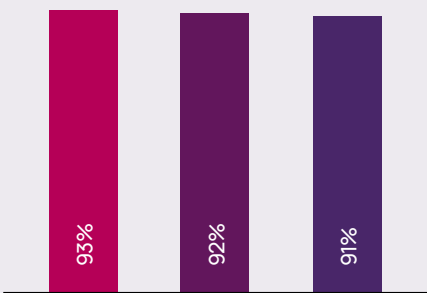
What are the issues Generation Alpha cares about?

Generation Alpha ultimately cares more about all issues than their Millennial parents and Baby Boomer grandparents did when they were kids, or sometimes even more than they do now. But what comes out overwhelmingly is Generation Alpha's sense of being fair – that everyone, no matter who they are, what they look like, or even who they love, should have the opportunity for a successful life.

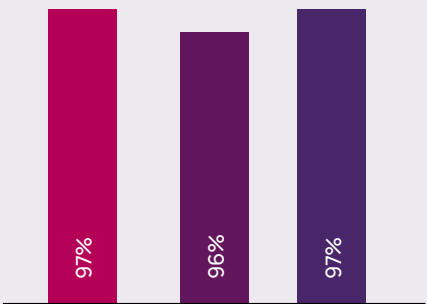
Boomer grandparents did when they were kids, or sometimes even more than they do now. But what comes out overwhelmingly is Generation Alpha's sense of being fair – that everyone, no matter who they are, what they look like, or even who they love, should have the opportunity for a successful life.



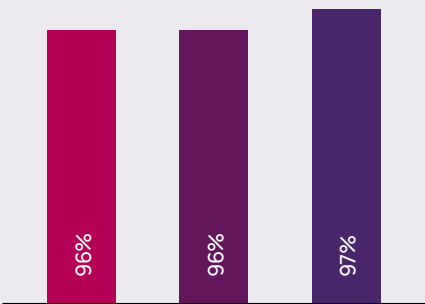
Being accepted for who you are*



That everyone has enough food to eat*



That all people are treated fairly no matter what they look like*



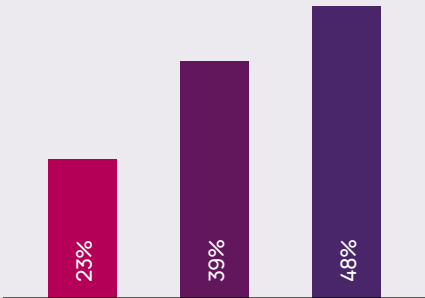
*Results reflect present day top two box rating of very important and somewhat important

What unites us all?

Responses indicate that no matter what type of world we grow up in our fundamental human desire to help others is prevalent and consistent throughout our life.

When asked what they would most like to be famous for today, “helping people” came out top across Generation Alpha (23%), Millennials (39%) and Baby Boomers (48%).

Helping People



How can brands adapt and future proof themselves for Generation Alpha?



Embrace diversity, not variety, to stay relevant: As Generation Alpha grows up in a diverse world, their expectations have become diverse. From ice-cream flavors and favorite sports, to career choices and how they find out information, Generation Alpha is increasingly choosing more diverse options than ever before. Brands need to be careful to not confuse diversity with variety – simply offering even more options for Generation Alpha to select from will not have the desired effect. In fact, there's a growing body of evidence that less is more. Brands that can work out who their audiences are, and what they like – and regularly examine this – will be the ones to succeed; not those who offer everything to everyone.



Stop siloing audiences, define your customers on opinion: So, how do you work out your audience when Generation Alpha cannot be as easily cut into demographics as previous generations? Well, this doesn't mean that every Generation Alpha child has the same opinion – in fact, the opposite! Generation Alpha children are growing up with their own individual diverse thoughts, less impacted by one universal center of truth (such as church, community or family) but open to many influences. For brands, you will no longer be able to rely on broad demographics to identify your target customers; instead you will need to get much more granular to really dig into potential customers based on those who most closely align to your own brand values. Doing so will have a powerful impact in the design of your programs and turn Generation Alpha customers into advocates.



Prepare for push back: While social good and everyone being equal shouldn't be controversial, sadly that isn't the world that we live in – currently. Generation Alpha is very different from the generations that have come before them. Brands that start to adapt to how Generation Alpha views the world run the risk of alienating older audiences who don't see the world in the same way. Brands will no longer be able to just know the opinions of their customers, but also the opinions of their non-customers who in today's hyper-connected world may still have an opinion. Preparing for that push back will be crucial to continuing to win the hearts and minds of their customers – particularly Generation Alpha who are so conscious about treating everyone equally.

For more information, and for details on how Hotwire can help brands prepare for Generation Alpha, please get in touch with genalpha@hotwireglobal.com.



Research Methodology

The research was carried out by C+R Research in September 17th – 25th 2019.

A representative sample of 3,021 kids and adults completed the survey:

- 1,001 Generation Alpha (Children 7-9 years old)
- 1,004 Millennials (Adults 24-42 years old)
- 1,016 Baby Boomers (Adults 55-73 years old)

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