

Generation Y

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We're in the midst of a new generation.

While I hate to admit it, I am still very proud to say that my daughter is a lot smarter than me when I was her age. Heck, she's even more intelligent than me now, especially when it comes to certain digital technologies that are available for playing games, reading books, and listening to music. They are second nature to her, and on occasion, she has had to show me how to use some of them (i.e. the miniature digital camcorder she received as a Christmas present last year).

Yes, we are in the midst of a new generation: [Generation Y](#) [1]; a group of individuals who are described as tech-savvy, family-centric, achievement- and team oriented, and attention-craving.

The opportunities that digital technologies provide for today's younger generation, is forcing business leaders and marketers to rethink their strategies for successful product development and manufacturing.

Digital technologies have made the world an even smaller place by connecting individuals on a global scale through Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and various other social networking outlets. They have also helped to switch the power from the distributor to the consumer, who no longer has to search for favorite brands or products because they can be directly delivered to the consumer.

Generation Y has the ability to seek "the input and affirmation of others [and they

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are] committed” to the groups and communities that they participate in through their social network. This ability helps Generation Y consumers find and discover what products and brands are popular, which ones are credible and high quality, and which ones could use some improvement.

They also have the ability to offer direct feedback and criticism to the companies producing the brand, demonstrating the shift of power from distributors and producers over to the consumers.

Social networking had created a new competition for product design professionals. Amateurs, rookies, the unskilled and untrained now have the opportunity to make a way for their inventions, innovations, and concepts through the communities and groups that they participate in or create on the various networking outlets. It’s word of mouth on steroids.

Joe Schmoe can now access knowledge and information that was once restricted due to money, geography, and convenience. The Internet has completely eliminated these boundaries and turned them into probabilities of success.

Generation Y is taking over the reigns of marketing decisions and product design. They have a major influence on how certain companies produce, design, distribute, and advertise their merchandise, and they aren’t afraid to say what they like and dislike. Companies are left with no choice but to join in on the discussions, become a part of the communities, and take into consideration the feedback that is offered through the forums.

Businesses that refuse to get connected and try to continue traditional ways of distribution and marketing will soon find themselves disconnected from Generation Y and falling off the grid of success.

What ways can companies attract the new generation? How can companies participate in the various networking outlets so they can continue to grow in the digital world? What disadvantages do digital technologies present not just for Generation Y, but business itself? Send me your two cents at meaghan.ziemba@advantagemedia.com [2] or post them below.

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[1] <http://legalcareers.about.com/od/practicetips/a/GenerationY.htm>

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