



GEN MIX: THE CONSUMER REPORT

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The **Gen Mix Consumer Report** is a qualitative and quantitative proprietary research study focused on the lives and spending habits of today's young adults. The report explores how Gen Mix approaches products and brands and their motivation and influence when making purchase decisions. The Gen Mix Consumer Report provides the resulting implications to help navigate this increasingly complex buyer's market.

Who is Gen Mix? **Gen Mix** straddles the line between Millennials and Gen Xers. They acquire their sense of optimism and self-confidence from Millennials, and their strong sense of self and security from Gen Xers. They are in a unique life stage and have a unique mindset. And they're defining adulthood in their own way - proud of their achievements and hopeful for where they're going.

Gen Mix is a growing population who has more money than they've had before. They're experiencing life events like marriage, kids, and buying homes, that come with significant price tags. As they search for the products that help them grow into adulthood, they experience key motivators and influencers that shape their purchase behavior, making them a unique and important consumer group.

Consumer Motivations:

At the core of Gen Mix's consumer motivations are three main drivers:

Value

- ▶ **Value Hunters:** Gen Mix utilizes technology to make the most of their money – comparison-shopping, researching coupon codes, searching eBay – you name it, they've done it.
- ▶ **Glory of a Good Sale:** Gen Mix revels in the excitement of a good deal, knowing that the only thing sweeter than saving money is telling everyone about it.
- ▶ **Shoptimism:** The recession has brought on new financial concerns, but Gen Mixers have always been smart shoppers and recognize it as a chance to score in this shopper's paradise of sales and bargains.

Identity

- ▶ **Identity is a Necessity:** Purchases are a way to express personal identity, and Gen Mix doesn't skimp on the products and brands that help them show the world who they are.
- ▶ **Brandify Me:** Gen Mix uses brands to reflect who they are, where they're going, and how they want others to see them.
- ▶ **Celebrate & Shop:** Shopping is a source of entertainment. No matter the economic climate, indulgences are a necessary part of life that helps Gen Mix celebrate their achievements and validate their hard work.

Emotion

- ▶ Shopping is emotionally motivated by five key drivers. Some emotions resonate more than others when making a purchase, and sometimes a product reaches all emotional touch points. It's about how strong that emotion is that makes the sale. And these emotional drivers form the key purchase motivations for category purchases.
 - **Experience/Togetherness:** I buy things that help me get closer to the people I care about (Movies, Fast Food, Family Restaurants)
 - **Affirmation:** I buy things that express who I am (Clothes, Shoes, Accessories, Video Games, Personal Care & Beauty).
 - **Aspiration:** I buy things that reflect the life I plan to lead in the future (Financial Services, Cars & Trucks).
 - **Empowerment:** I buy things that help me get things done and live the life I want now and into the future (Household Appliances).
 - **Connection:** I buy things to keep my finger on the pulse of what's going on (Computers, TVs, Cell Phones).

Discovery and Influence

Gen Mixers utilize several sources to find out about brands and products.

Connection is Key with Friends and Family

- ▶ Busy with kids and work, Gen Mixers have less time to devote to friendships, but they stay close with their inner circles at home with TV happy hours, movie nights, and group-oriented video games like Rock Band and Wii.

Social Media is the New Word of Mouth

- ▶ Social Media not only keeps Gen Mixers in touch with their extended circles of friends, they also rely on it for ideas and product recommendations.

TV is a Time Out

- ▶ TV is as important to Gen Mixers as ever before. It allows them to step back and take a time out in their day. It's one of the products they like spending money on, and many are so connected to their TVs that they'd rather have them than furniture in their homes!

Advertisements Resonate

- ▶ TV commercials resonate with Gen Mixers when the message is interesting, funny, and uses celebrities.

Celebrities Connect and Inspire

- ▶ Gen Mix looks to celebrities for inspiration. With greater access to them than ever before, Gen Mix feels like they know celebrities, like they're part of their inner circles. So product and brand recommendations from them are just as influential as recommendations from friends and family.
- ▶ Gen Mixers both celebrate celebrities, looking to them for inspiration for their own lives, and berate them, which validates their own life choices as the right ones.

Implications

- ▶ **Gen Mix wants to celebrate their lives and accomplishments → They connect to brand messages with positive stories**
- ▶ **Gen Mix are Value Hunters → Give them the opportunity to make a kill**
- ▶ **Identity is a Necessity → Value your core customers, but create new avenues to spark interest among the aspirational crowd**
- ▶ **Shopping is Emotional → Communication should focus on telling Gen Mix how products will make their lives easier, better, more fun, and better-looking**
- ▶ **Real Life Stories Resonate → And real life can be funny, so communicate to them with humor, and remember you're reaching them at a "time out"**

Brands that Speak to Gen Mix:

- ▶ Connect with them and connect them to others
- ▶ Are ones they can aspire to own at a price they can afford
- ▶ Hit all emotional touch points
- ▶ Validate their identities in their adult lives
- ▶ Empower them to be cool, no matter the category