

Beautiful Beast

ISSUE 001



FOR THE CULTURE

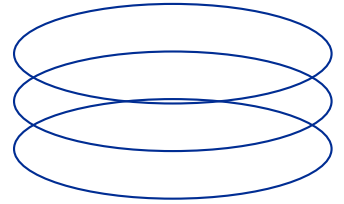
How Multicultural Gen Z Creators
Are Shaping Brand Narratives



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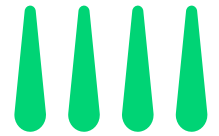
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INTRODUCTION:



If your brand isn't co-creating with Gen Z, it's falling behind. That's not a provocation—it's a survival strategy.

This new generation of creators, tastemakers, and trendsetters has flipped the traditional brand-consumer relationship on its head. Gen Z doesn't just want to buy into a story—it wants to be part of writing it. They seek collaboration, cultural authenticity, and transparency. And for multicultural Gen Z in particular, co-creation isn't a marketing strategy; it's a natural extension of how they live and express themselves every day.

At **BeautifulBeast**, we believe brands must evolve from storytelling to story-sharing. That belief is backed by data, cultural fluency, and most importantly, by the voices of Gen Z themselves. Through our **BeautifulBeast Youth Panel**—a proprietary, nationally representative quantitative panel—we continuously take the pulse of young generations across the country. The panel is curated not just demographically but also psychographically and by motivations, to reflect the real texture of Gen Z's diversity and point of view. We use this panel to explore emerging cultural themes, test early ideas, co-create with real users, and shape thought leadership.

In this paper, we zoom in on one critical theme: multicultural Gen Z creators driving brand relevance in the US today. Not passively. Not occasionally. But actively, every day, on every platform that matters. From TikTok dances that launch global hits to art direction born in the Bronx and reinterpreted in LA, these creators aren't part of the conversation—they are the conversation.

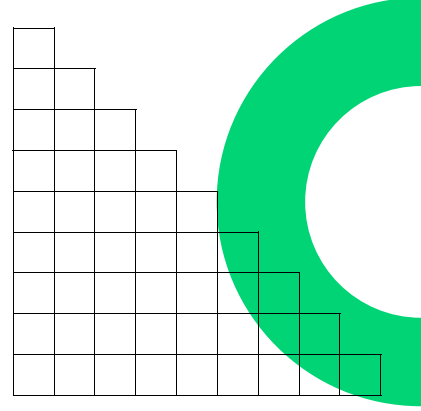
If brands want to remain culturally fluent, they must stop seeing creators as extensions of their media plan and start viewing them as essential creative partners. That means giving up a little control and gaining a lot of credibility.

THIS WHITE PAPER UNPACKS:

- * How multicultural Gen Z creators are **uniquely positioned** to shape brand narratives.
- * Why **co-creation is the new imperative** for brand relevance.
- * The values, habits, and expectations that define **Gen Z engagement**.
- * Key **real-world examples** of co-creation done right.
- * **Strategic takeaways** for marketers.

LET'S EXPLORE WHAT IT TRULY MEANS TO CO-CREATE FOR THE CULTURE.

2. THE RISE OF THE MULTICULTURAL GEN Z CREATOR



Gen Z is not a monolith—and that’s what makes it so powerful. They are the most diverse generation the US has ever seen: More than 48% of Gen Z identify as racial or ethnic minorities, according to Pew Research. But this diversity isn’t just a demographic bullet point—it’s a foundational part of how Gen Z see themselves and the world. It shapes their values, their aesthetics, and their expectations of brands.

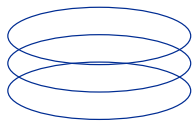
For Gen Z, identity is not a fixed label. It’s a mix, a remix, a flex. Our BeautifulBeast Youth Panel found that over 76% of multicultural Gen Z respondents identify with more than one cultural background—and nearly half said they feel a "strong connection" to both their ethnic heritage and broader American identity. Many also embrace other identity layers: LGBTQ+, neurodiverse, multilingual, activist, spiritual, gamer, fashionista—you name it. The boundaries are gone. What’s left is authenticity.

What does this mean for brands? It means the old segmentation rules are broken. Gen Z doesn’t want to be put in a box. They want to be represented in all their complexity—and they want that representation to come from the inside out, not just surface-level casting.

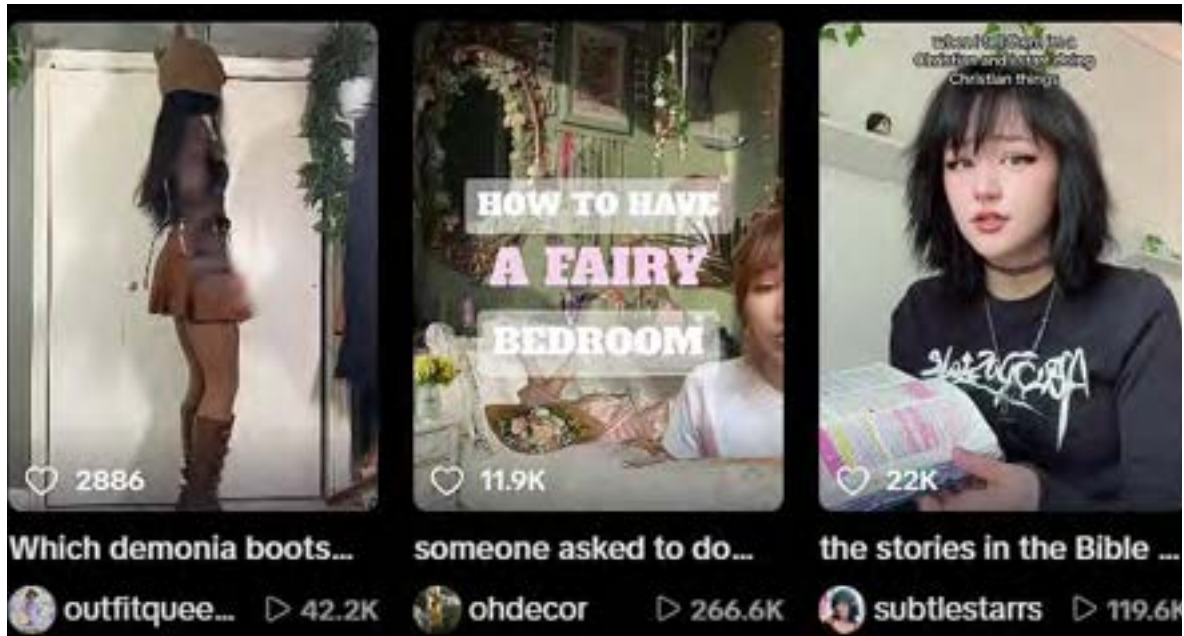
This generation doesn’t just passively consume culture—it produces it. Adobe’s 2024 Future of Creativity study revealed that nearly 30% of Gen Z consider themselves creators. And our own Youth Panel suggests that number may be even higher among multicultural youth. From micro-vlogging to music remixes, from DIY zines to AI-assisted storytelling, Gen Z is broadcasting its truth on its terms.

Take the TikTok-driven #blacksurf trend. It wasn’t started by a brand or a campaign. It emerged from Black Gen Z surfers and skaters who were tired of being excluded from coastal aesthetics. They reclaimed it—with durags, waves, and boards—and made it their own. The result? Millions of views, hundreds of duets, and a new visual vocabulary that brands are only now catching up with.

Multicultural Gen Z creators don’t need permission to shape trends. They do it naturally, because culture is where they live. They are the aesthetic curators behind everything from "brown girl grunge" to Indigenous futurism to Latinx cottagecore. They are redefining the algorithm by making content that reflects their community, their joy, their pain, and their perspective.

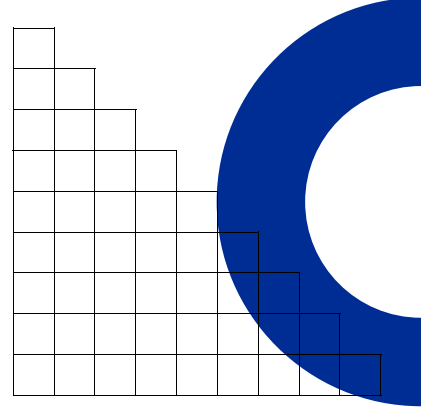


- What brands often miss is this: Gen Z's creative output is not just self-expression—it's cultural commentary. And when brands collaborate with these creators (not just hire them to post), they gain access to a level of cultural insight and emotional truth that no trend report or focus group can match.
- The brands that get this right are those willing to step back, listen, and lift up the creators already doing the work. They're not chasing clout—they're co-building relevance.



3.

CO-CREATION: THE NEW BRAND IMPERATIVE



Co-creation is more than a buzzword—it’s a fundamental shift in the power dynamic between brands and consumers. For Gen Z, especially multicultural Gen Z, the relationship with brands is no longer transactional; it’s participatory. And not only participatory—it’s expressive, identity affirming, and community building.

This generation doesn’t want to be marketed to; it wants to be seen, heard, and included. They grew up in an ecosystem of apps and platforms that gave them tools to remix culture, subvert tropes, and amplify movements. Their expectation is simple: If they can remix your campaign, they should have had a hand in shaping it to begin with.

Co-creation means inviting Gen Z creators to the table—not just for content partnerships but for early ideation, design thinking, and testing. This is especially important for multicultural Gen Z, whose cultural fluency gives them a sixth sense for what’s real and what’s performative. Our BeautifulBeast Youth Panel repeatedly tells us that they can sniff out inauthenticity instantly—and they don’t forgive it easily.

The brands that win with this generation embrace imperfection. They’re transparent about the process. They hand over the mic and let the creators lead. One Youth Panel member put it best: “It’s not about making content for us—it’s about creating content with us, where we feel our fingerprint on it.”

We’ve seen that when multicultural Gen Z creators are empowered, they elevate the entire brand narrative. They infuse campaigns with humor, tension, pride, and purpose. They challenge old tropes and suggest new visual languages. They don’t just bring reach—they bring relevance.

Consider how brands are adapting. Nike’s work with Aleali May isn’t just influencer marketing—it’s co-authorship. Their Jordan collabs reflect streetwear filtered through Black and Filipina femininity, through LA street style and hip-hop lineage. That’s not just branding—that’s storytelling through co-creation.



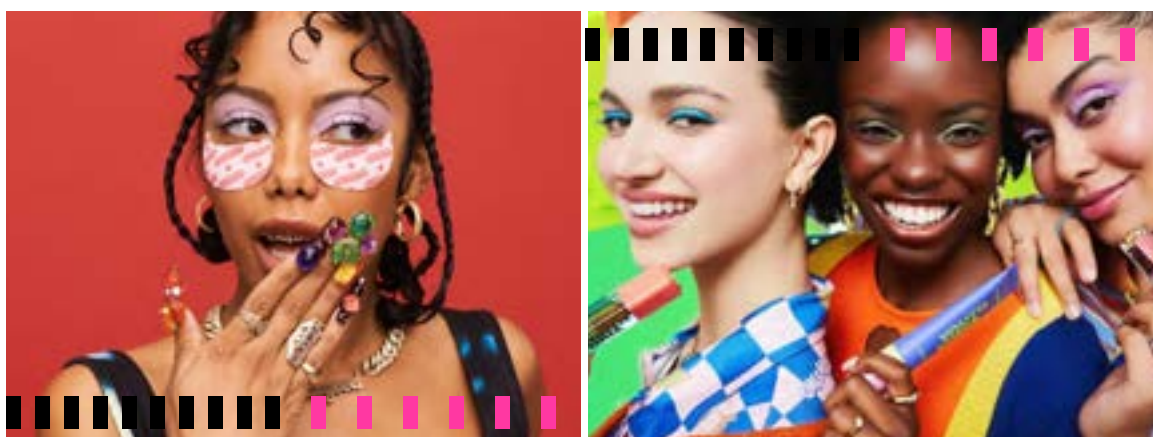
For the Culture

Or take Savage X Fenty, whose casting and creative direction consistently center Gen Z creators of color, queer models, and plus-size voices. These aren't one-off moments—they're systemic choices rooted in collaboration. That's what today's generation is asking for: not symbolic participation, but systemic inclusion.



Co-creation also transforms product development. In the tech space, Snapchat has built creator-led product features based on direct Gen Z input, like customizable Bitmojis and AR experiences. These aren't just fun—they're tools of self-expression that reflect the way Gen Z sees identity as performance.

And in the beauty world, Gen Z-led communities on Reddit, TikTok, and Discord are influencing formulations, shade ranges, and skincare claims. Brands like Topicals and Youthforia don't just market to Gen Z—they build with them, feature their feedback, and evolve in real time.

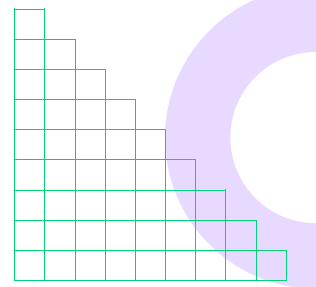


This is what we call the co-creation spectrum. It starts with inviting creators in, expands into listening deeply to their communities, and matures into a model where Gen Z creators help shape the brand's future. This model creates resonance—not just virality.

Ultimately, co-creation is not a campaign strategy. It's a cultural competency. And for brands looking to stay relevant with Gen Z, especially across diverse American audiences, it's no longer optional.

4.

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES: CO-CREATION IN ACTION



So what does great co-creation actually look like? It's not always splashy. Sometimes it's subtle—woven into the DNA of a brand's voice, values, and visual identity. But when done right, it's unforgettable. Here are five standout examples of how multicultural Gen Z creators are reshaping industries by collaborating—not just influencing.



A) FORMULA 1'S MULTICULTURAL CREATOR GRID

Formula 1's recent surge in the US owes much of its Gen Z fandom to creators like Lissie Mackintosh, Naomi Schiff, and Jakiya Brown. These women of color have helped reframe F1 from an elite European pastime to a global Gen Z phenomenon—mixing behind-the-scenes race commentary with fashion, humor, and social justice.

The brand didn't stop at endorsements. F1 brought these creators into broadcast commentary, digital strategy, and even event planning.

They didn't just tell stories—they helped reimagine the F1 experience for a younger, more diverse audience.



B) COACHTOPIA: FROM DESIGNER TO CREATOR-EDUCATOR

Coach's sustainability-focused offshoot Coachtopia is perhaps one of the boldest examples of Gen Z co-creation. The brand recruited Gen Z design students and activists to co-create not just products but values. These creators helped shape circular design practices, materials, and messaging.

What makes it powerful? The students weren't anonymized. Their names, faces, and processes were featured in launch content. They weren't "inspired by"—they were collaborators.

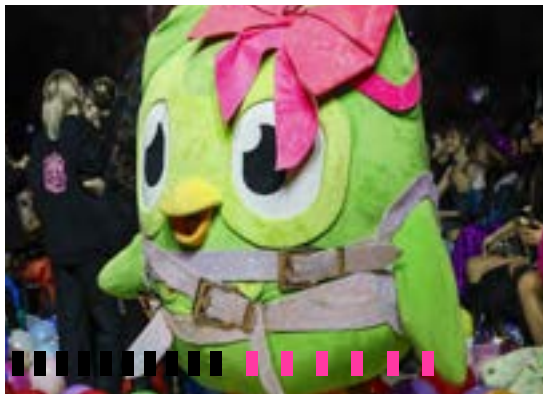
Their reward? Visibility, equity, and influence.



c) DUOLINGO: LETTING CREATORS SHAPE THE MASCOT'S VOICE

Duolingo's irreverent, bilingual owl isn't just a mascot. It's a co-creation engine fueled by queer and POC Gen Zers who work behind the scenes—and in front of the camera. The brand's TikTok strategy doesn't just allow for chaos; it celebrates it. And that chaos comes from diverse, young creators working with freedom.

The Duolingo team empowers their creators to improvise, make mistakes, and lean into internet culture. That's what made it one of the most followed brand accounts on the platform.



d) RARE BEAUTY'S MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

Selena Gomez's Rare Beauty wasn't just built for Gen Z—it was built with them. From launch, the brand integrated young mental health advocates, therapists, and creators of color into both product and purpose development. The Rare Impact Fund is co-led by these collaborators and actively funds mental health resources for marginalized youth.

The brand's mental health content on social—quotes, lived experiences, and reflections—often comes straight from its creator network. It's not just inclusive—it's emotionally intelligent.



e) AMERICAN EAGLE'S CREATOR COUNCILS

Before "creator economy" was a trend, American Eagle quietly pioneered the model with its #AExME Creator Council—composed of Gen Z artists, athletes, and changemakers from marginalized backgrounds. They're not just featured in content. They contribute to product development, give input on retail layout, and help vet brand partnerships.

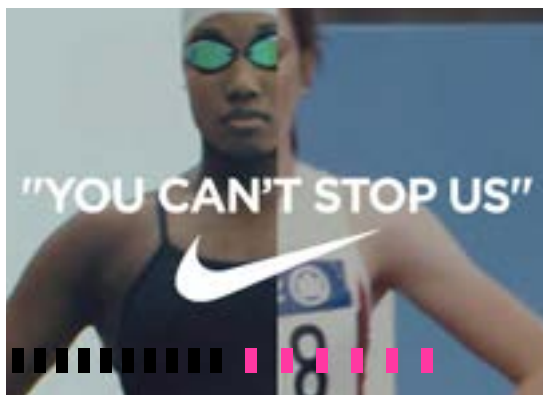
AE didn't just add creators to its marketing—they embedded them into the company's ethos. As a result, they've held Gen Z's attention far longer than flashier fashion brands.



F) NIKE: YOU CAN'T STOP US

Nike's multicultural Gen Z appeal lies in how it celebrates individual greatness within collective movement.

The "You Can't Stop Us" campaign blended athletes across race, gender, and ability with seamless storytelling and authentic activism (like backing Colin Kaepernick and investing in HBCUs).



G) E.L.F. COSMETICS: EYES. LIPS. FACE.

E.L.F. cracked the Gen Z code by turning its brand into a cultural moment. The original TikTok song "Eyes. Lips. Face." became a viral dance challenge, amplified by creators of all backgrounds.

The brand's commitment to inclusivity, affordability, and fun made it stick.



H) NETFLIX: STRONG BLACK LEAD & CON TODO

Netflix doesn't treat multicultural audiences as one-off campaigns. Platforms like "Strong Black Lead" and "Con Todo" have become trusted brands in their own right, curated by insiders and backed by data.

They celebrate stories with depth, not just tokenism.



Each of these examples proves a simple truth: When multicultural Gen Z creators are given real agency, they don't just add style—they add strategy. And that's what moves culture and business forward.

5. BEAUTIFULBEAST YOUTH PANEL: GEN Z INSIGHTS



One of BeautifulBeast's most valuable tools for understanding multicultural Gen Z is our proprietary **Youth Panel**. Unlike typical consumer panels, ours is built for cultural nuance, emotional resonance, and generational truth. It's a nationally representative, quantitative and qualitative panel of Gen Zers across the US, selected not only by demographic diversity but by psychographics, motivations, and identity expression. This panel is our window into Gen Z's mindset—and our bridge to co-creation.

What makes this panel unique is how often and how deeply we listen. We use it to explore new campaign ideas, test the tone of messages, co-develop creative briefs, and validate broader cultural hypotheses. And in the process, we've discovered powerful, recurring insights.

Here are five recurring truths about multicultural Gen Z that have surfaced repeatedly:

IDENTITY IS MULTI-LAYERED AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED

76% of panelists say they identify with more than one cultural heritage, and 42% say they are often navigating two or more "selves"—such as family identity vs. social identity. They don't want simplified labels. They want freedom. And they want brands to acknowledge the tension, not erase it.

PANEL QUOTE:

"I'm not just Latina—I'm Afro-Latina, queer, and a gamer. When a brand gets that, it hits different."

WELLNESS ISN'T JUST TRENDY—IT'S URGENT

Mental health is a dominant concern, especially among LGBTQ+ and BIPOC youth. But Gen Z doesn't see wellness as individualistic. They see it as community-powered. Therapy, mutual aid, journaling, prayer, memes—they're all in the same wellness toolkit.


Brands that step in here must tread carefully. Gen Z values humor, honesty, and resources over empty affirmations. Content around healing must be co-created with care.

PANEL INSIGHT:

Visuals of crystals, therapy apps, prayer hands, protest signs, and weighted blankets all appeared in their responses to "What keeps you grounded?"



FAITH, SPIRITUALITY, AND RITUAL ARE REEMERGING




44% of panelists told us they are exploring spirituality in non-traditional ways—often as a counterweight to stress, trauma, and disconnection. Tarot, ancestor altars, astrology, and cultural rituals have seen a major revival among Black, Indigenous, and Asian Gen Z.

It's not religion—it's personal ritual. And when brands treat it as such, the impact can be profound.



HUMOR IS ARMOR (AND CONNECTION)




Gen Z copes through comedy. 83% of respondents said they follow meme pages or creators who use humor to process heavy topics—from student debt to racism to heartbreak.

They trust creators who can walk the line between serious and silly. Brands that can't do both feel robotic.

PANELIST COMMENT:

“If your post can't make me laugh AND think, I'll scroll.”



BEING SEEN IS NO LONGER ENOUGH—THEY WANT TO BE CONSULTED

When asked what brands get wrong most often, the top answer wasn't representation—it was tokenization.

Gen Z is tired of one-off campaigns or calendar-based activations. They want collaboration. They want to see brands share power—not just visibility.

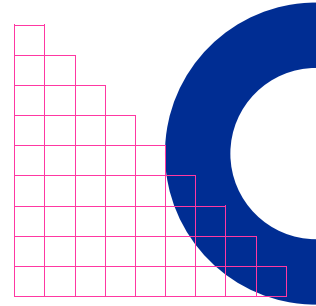
FROM OUR PANEL:

“We don't need another commercial with a hijabi girl and reggaeton music. We want to make the ad—not be props in it.”



6.

STRATEGIES FOR BRANDS: A CO-CREATION PLAYBOOK



So how can brands move from token gestures to true co-creation with multicultural Gen Z? The answer lies in shifting mindsets, reworking processes, and investing in genuine partnerships. Below is a practical playbook for embedding co-creation into your brand's ecosystem.

1. Co-Create from Day One

True co-creation starts early. Gen Z creators don't want to tweak your campaign—they want to shape it. Bring them into the ideation phase. Run collaborative workshops. Let them help define the brief.

TIP:

Frame co-creation as creative leadership, not consumer feedback. Let creators pitch ideas, develop storylines, and prototype assets.



2. Build Long-Term Creator Councils

Instead of one-off collabs, invest in creator councils—a curated group of diverse Gen Z creators who meet regularly to consult on brand positioning, visuals, tone, product, and equity. Compensate them like strategic partners, not influencers.



EXAMPLE:

American Eagle's #AExME council provides feedback across departments, not just on social content.

3. Redefine KPIs for Impact and Intimacy

The most meaningful co-creation work won't always break the internet—but it will build loyalty. Track new metrics: Save rates. Story replies. Duet volume. Cultural resonance. Real testimonials.



FROM OUR YOUTH PANEL:

"We don't care how big it is—we care how real it feels."

4. Share Creative Credit

Co-creation isn't just about participation—it's about ownership. Include creator names in the credits. Tag them publicly. Let them host your livestream. Invite them to the premiere. Equity equals engagement.

WHY IT MATTERS:

Young creators are building brands of their own. Your platform can boost theirs—and that reciprocity builds loyalty.

5. Normalize Inclusive Rituals

Don't just post for cultural moments—live them. Invite young creators to shape your Pride campaign, your Lunar New Year visuals, your Black History Month initiative. Then go further: Let them help shape your internal inclusion roadmap.

TIP:

Include rituals of inclusion inside your org, not just in your marketing.

6. Make the Process Visible

Behind-the-scenes is the new front-and-center. Gen Z loves transparency. Show your moodboards. Post your creative call. Film the meeting. Co-creation is messy—and they love that.

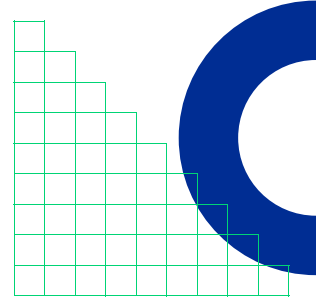
BRANDS TO WATCH:

Glossier, Rare Beauty, and Parade all lean into open collaboration, inviting followers into the build.

This isn't about Gen Z fitting into your workflow. It's about your brand fitting into theirs. Meet them where they create. Listen to how they talk. Let them shape what you make.

7.

A CALL TO ACTION



Multicultural Gen Z creators are not waiting for permission to shape culture—they're already doing it. They're redefining identity, bending genres, remixing heritage, and building communities that didn't exist a decade ago. They're setting the tone for where brands need to go next: more collaborative, more transparent, more emotionally intelligent, and more culturally fluent.

Here's the bottom line: If your brand isn't co-creating with Gen Z, it's falling behind. This generation is not just a target audience. They are strategic collaborators. They are the influencers of influence. The sooner brands embrace that truth, the better.

This is not a generation that wants more content. They want connection. They don't want you to decode them. They want you to build with them. When you get it right, the reward is loyalty, creativity, and cultural resonance that no media buy can manufacture.

At **BeautifulBeast**, we help brands become fluent in the future. We work directly with Gen Z creators, tap into the insights from our Youth Panel, and build strategies that aren't just trend aware—they're community rooted. We don't just study culture. We work inside it.



So if your brand is ready to shift from storytelling to story-sharing—from content for Gen Z to content with Gen Z—let's talk. Let's build what's next. Together.



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