DECEMBER 2025

YOUNG IN AGE, MIGHTY IN IMPACT: GEN ALPHA IS REWRITING THE RULES FOR BRANDS

MG2

AN AFFILIATE OF
COLLIERS ENGINEERING & DESIGN

Gen Alpha is ready to be taken seriously.

With the oldest among them just 14, they are already shaping how brands and stores show up, even without their own credit cards. They have more choice than any generation before them, and with fluency across smartphones, tablets, computers, digital worlds, virtual reality, and AI tools, they are quickly surpassing Gen Z and Millennials in their adaptability and expectations for ease and efficiency. They move naturally between digital and physical spaces, and their cultural and commercial influence is accelerating, making it essential to understand not only what they respond to today, but what they will expect from brands and retailers in the years ahead. This research explores how Gen Alpha first discovers brands, how they want to engage beyond a transaction, and why their ability to inspire and influence cross generational purchase decisions cannot be overlooked.

Based on our findings, Gen Alpha consumers shared the following key insights on what matters most to them through in-store design and programming. Overall, they want to engage with brands meaningfully, take an active role in the shopping journey, and make their influence on household purchase decisions clear.

Co-Creation Collaboration

97% of Gen Alpha **want to help brands make design decisions**, from testing new products and informing product development to shaping the look and feel of store environments, showing a strong desire to be active members of the brand community.

Tactile Experiences

73% of Gen Alpha **prefer shopping in-store to fully immerse themselves** in a brand's environment. They value hands-on test-and-try experiences that let them explore products, validate purchases, and connect with the brand on a deeper level.

Snack & Shop Offerings

3 IN 4 Gen Alpha **say in-store food and beverage offerings** drive them to spend more time in the store. These experiences make shopping more enjoyable, encourage exploration, and provide social moments that strengthen their connection to the brand.

Exploration & Navigation

66% of Gen Alpha **rely on clear in-store signage** to guide their shopping journey, balancing predictability and discovery and reflecting the simplicity they have come to expect from their online engagement.

Cross-Generational Influence

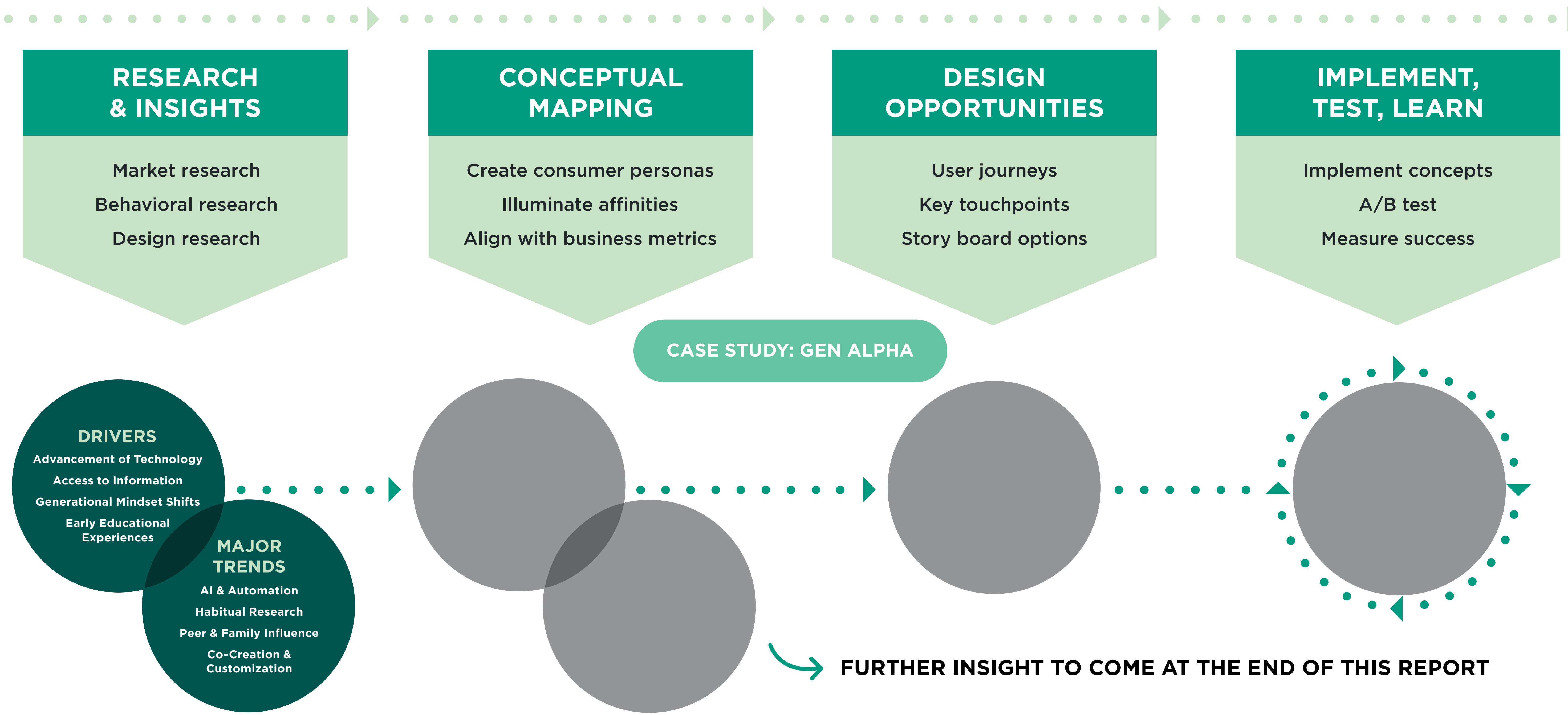
70% of Gen Alpha report that adults in their lives **often purchase items they suggest**, supporting that they not only influence household buying decisions but are also shaping trends and brand loyalty across generations.

This report draws from multiple sources, including a year over year quantitative analysis that reviewed and assessed findings from our Gen Z and Kids Stores insight reports. The audit revealed recurring themes, along with behavioral consistencies and shifts reflected in the 2023 consumer data.

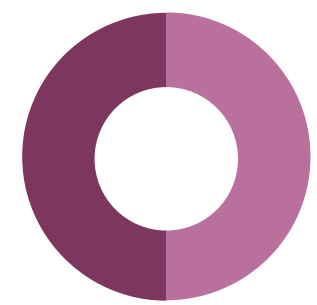
Before beginning the broader trend and data analysis, we conducted an internal charrette with designers who have worked on Gen Alpha projects, along with parents, caregivers, and other adults who interact with Gen Alpha on a regular basis. We then hosted focus group interviews with Gen Alpha participants to hear directly from them about how they see and interpret the brand and retail landscape around them. These qualitative insights were cross-referenced with our existing data to validate known themes and identify emerging priorities, which were then applied to a cross-national general population survey of more than 500 Gen Alphas between the ages of 8 and 14.

The following insights reflect the outcome of this comprehensive approach and highlight opportunities to better understand and intentionally inspire engagement with this rising consumer group. This work is especially important as their collective spending power is projected to reach more than $5.46 trillion by 2029*, rivaling Millennials and Gen Z. Now is the time to understand your youngest customer, whose omnichannel fluency and pursuit of awareness position them to shape the future of brand engagement.

**Marketing Dive 2025*

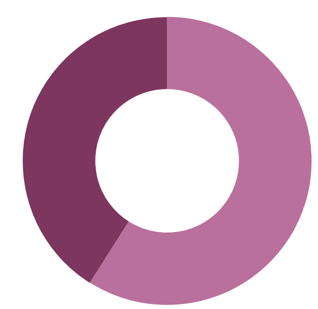


Key Demographic Insights



Age breakdown of survey participants include:

- **50%,** Younger Gen Alpha (8-11)
- **50%,** Older Gen Alpha (12-14)

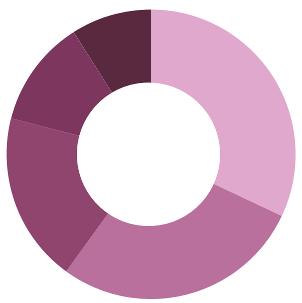


Gender breakdown of participants applicable to this survey include:

- **59%,** Female
- **41%,** Male

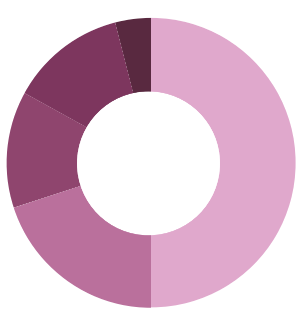
Questions That Inform Key Behavioral Insights

Who do you trust most when deciding if something's actually good? *Select One*



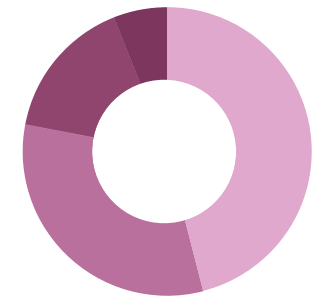
- **32%, I trust my own opinion the most**
  Gen Alpha in urban and suburban areas trust their own opinions nearly 2X as much as their peers in rural areas, who place greater trust and dependence on their parents
- **28%,** Parents or family
- **19%,** Friends or classmates
- **12%,** People I see using it in real life
- **9%,** Creators or YouTubers I trust

When you think about what's important to you or what makes you like a brand or person more, which of these matters most? *Select One*



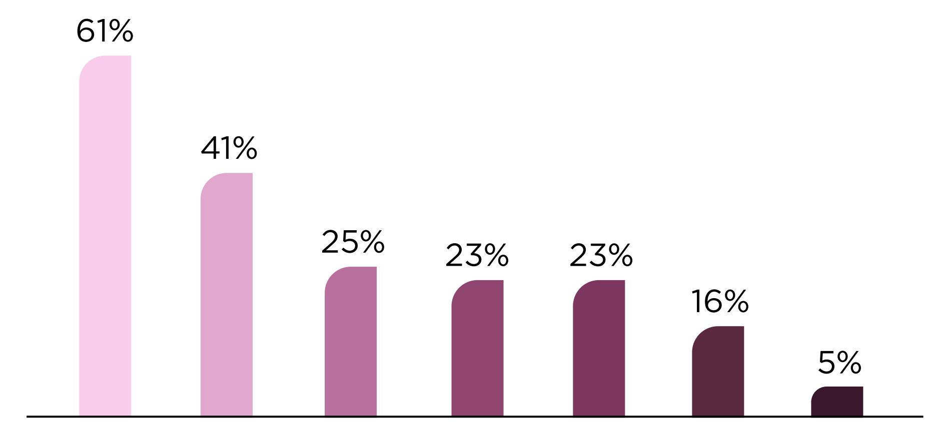
- **50%, Treats people fairly**
- **20%,** Makes people feel calm or confident (wellness)
- **13%,** Helps the planet (recycling, less waste)
- **13%,** Helps animals
- **4%,** Gives back to schools

When you shop, where do you usually do it most? *Select One*



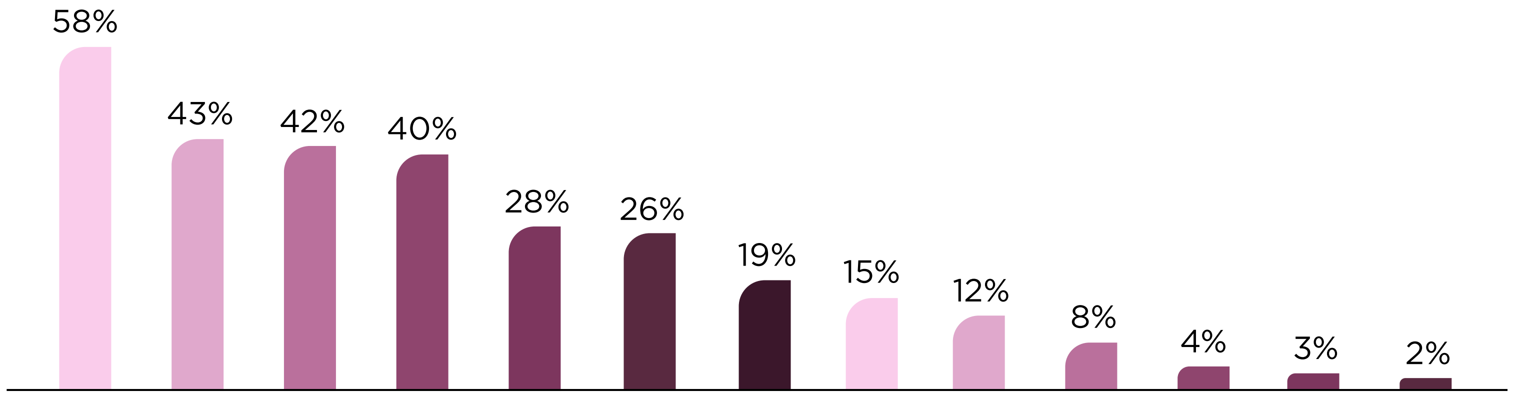
- **46%, Both about the same**
- **32%,** In-store
- **16%,** Online
- **7%,** I mostly look, not buy

What feels better about shopping in stores versus online? *Select Two*



- **61%, Stores let me try or see things for myself**
  The biggest driver of in-store shopping is the first-hand, tactile experience, with 3 in 5 shoppers emphasizing the importance of a physical retail environment
- **41%, Stores feel more fun or social**
- **25%,** I trust what I'm buying more in stores
- **23%,** Online is easier and faster
- **23%,** Online has more options or variety
- **16%,** Online helps me compare and see reviews
- **5%,** Shopping online and in stores feels pretty much the same to me

Which brands or stores feel like they are made for people your age?
Select Three



- **58%, LEGO**
  Younger Gen Alpha tends to resonate with experiential environments like LEGO and Build-A-Bear, whereas older Gen Alpha is more drawn to brands like Nike and Apple
- **43%,** Target
- **42%,** Five Below
- **40%,** Nike or Adidas
- **28%,** Build A Bear
- **26%,** Apple or Tech Brands
- **19%,** Crocs
- **15%,** Sephora
  Girls tend to resonate most with beauty and wellness brands, whereas boys are more drawn to technology and sportswear brands
- **12%,** Bath & Body Works
- **8%,** Abercrombie & Fitch
- **4%,** Stanley
- **3%,** Another brand
  Gen Alpha was given the opportunity to provide alternate brands that resonate with them. Frequently mentioned brands include Walmart, GameStop, Hot Topic, Toys "R" Us, and Disney
- **2%,** Glossier

"Stores that are playful like Lush. It's bright and interactive, and you can test stuff."

Siena, 10

"Target is fun because there's clothes, snacks, and random stuff to look at."

Gianna, 11

"Nike is my favorite because of the clothes, shoes, and how clean everything looks. It feels fresh and put together."

Arsal, 12

"The Lego Store because it's colorful, has good music, and I can play with things and build stuff."

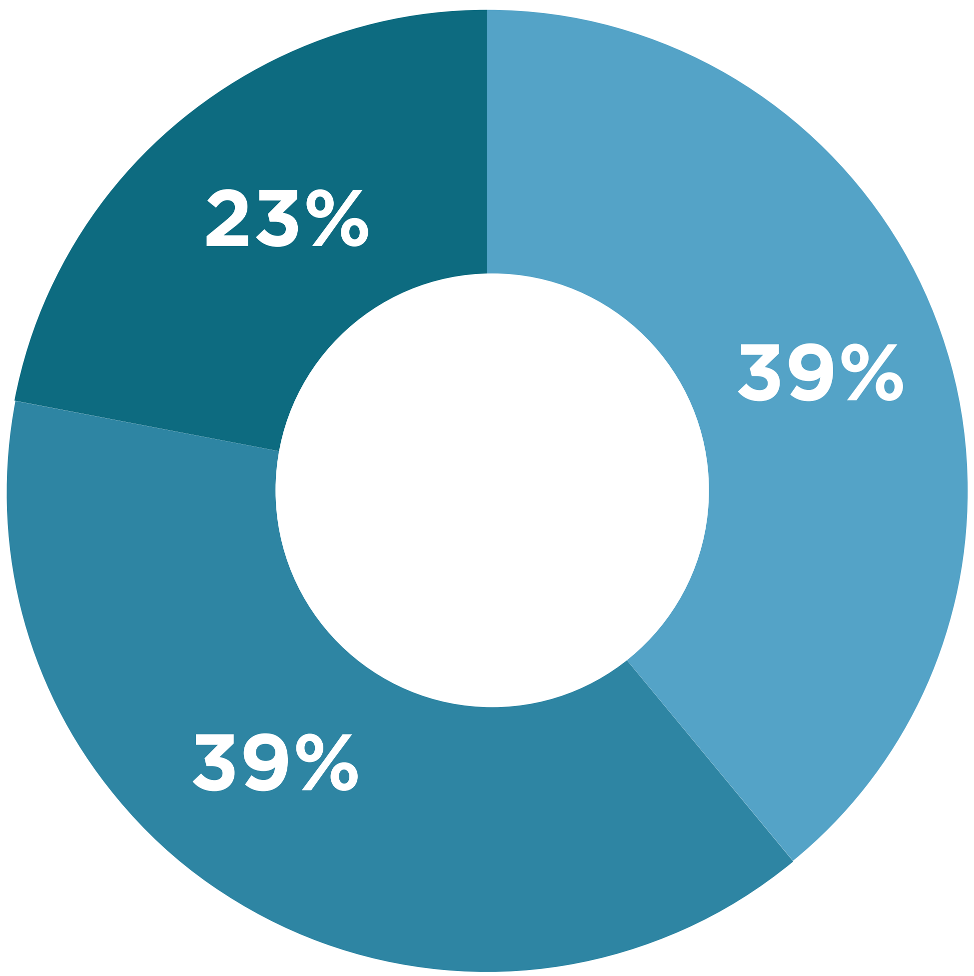
Kate, 14

Contents

SECTION 1: GEN ALPHA TODAY - PERSONAS, MINDSETS & MOTIVATIONS

What defines the generation now & the early tendencies shaping their choices

Three Personas Defined

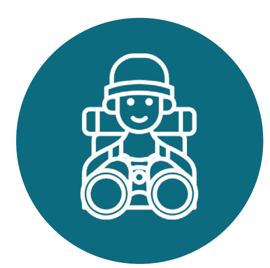


- **39%, The Confidence Chooser**

Defined as individuals who want to make their own decisions and prefer stores that help them stay focused. They shop with a clear sense of purpose and confidence.

- **39%, The Transition Tween**

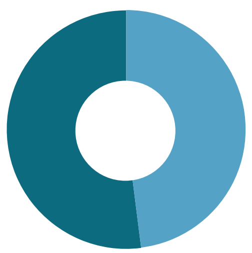
Defined as individuals who notice style and pay attention to whether a store treats them like real shoppers. They want to feel seen, valued, and not just viewed as an extension of their parents.



- **23%, The Expressive Explorer**

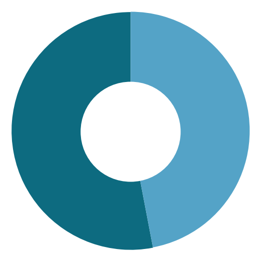
Defined as individuals who want brands to recognize their interests and who they are becoming. They look for stores that reflect their personality and avoid labels that limit them.

The Confidence Chooser



Persona Representation:

- **48%,** Female
- **52%,** Male



Persona Age Range:

- **47%,** 8-11
- **53%,** 12-14

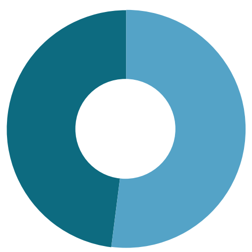
They are motivated by...

- Their right to choose and a sense of autonomy
- An easy-to-navigate, frictionless shopping experience supported by clear wayfinding and consistent store layouts

Additionally, they...

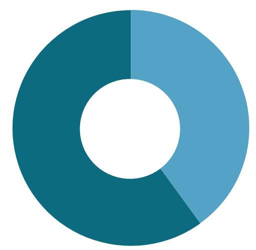
- Value a tactile, independent testing experience to validate product quality before purchasing
- Desire real-time product demonstrations that go beyond the hype, with staff playing a supportive yet nonintrusive role in their shopping experience

The Transition Tween



Persona Representation:

- **52%,** Female
- **48%,** Male



Persona Age Range:

- **40%,** 8-11
- **60%,** 12-14

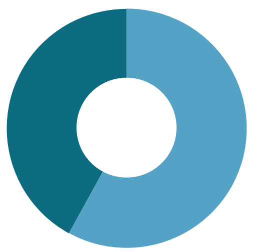
They are motivated by...

- Being taken seriously as shoppers and feeling respected in their choices
- A stylized shopping experience with signage and design cues that resonate with them

Additionally, they...

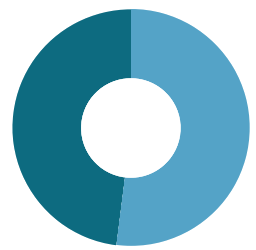
- Value environments designed with them in mind, going beyond childlike details to reflect their taste and awareness of current cultural trends
- Desire a store that also serves as a social hub, giving them space to explore products while connecting with others

The Expressive Explorer



Persona Representation:

- **58%,** Female
- **42%,** Male



Persona Age Range:

- **52%,** 8-11
- **48%,** 12-14

They are motivated by...

- Environments that allow their individuality and creativity to shine
- Spaces that treat them as more than kids, celebrating who they are rather than pushing conformity

Additionally, they...

- Value personalization and customization so products can reflect their unique identity
- Desire purposeful merchandising and strong displays that help them visually put together a look or product regimen

SECTION 2: DISCOVERY - HOW GEN ALPHA FINDS, LEARNS & ENTERS A BRAND'S WORLD

The channels, the curiosity and the exploration that inform first impressions

"Friends, definitely. I trust them more than influencers because I know they actually like it. TikTok is probably second, but friends come first."

Bella, 14

"Friends and YouTube. If I see a lot of people using it and it looks good, I'll believe it's worth trying."

Adison, 11

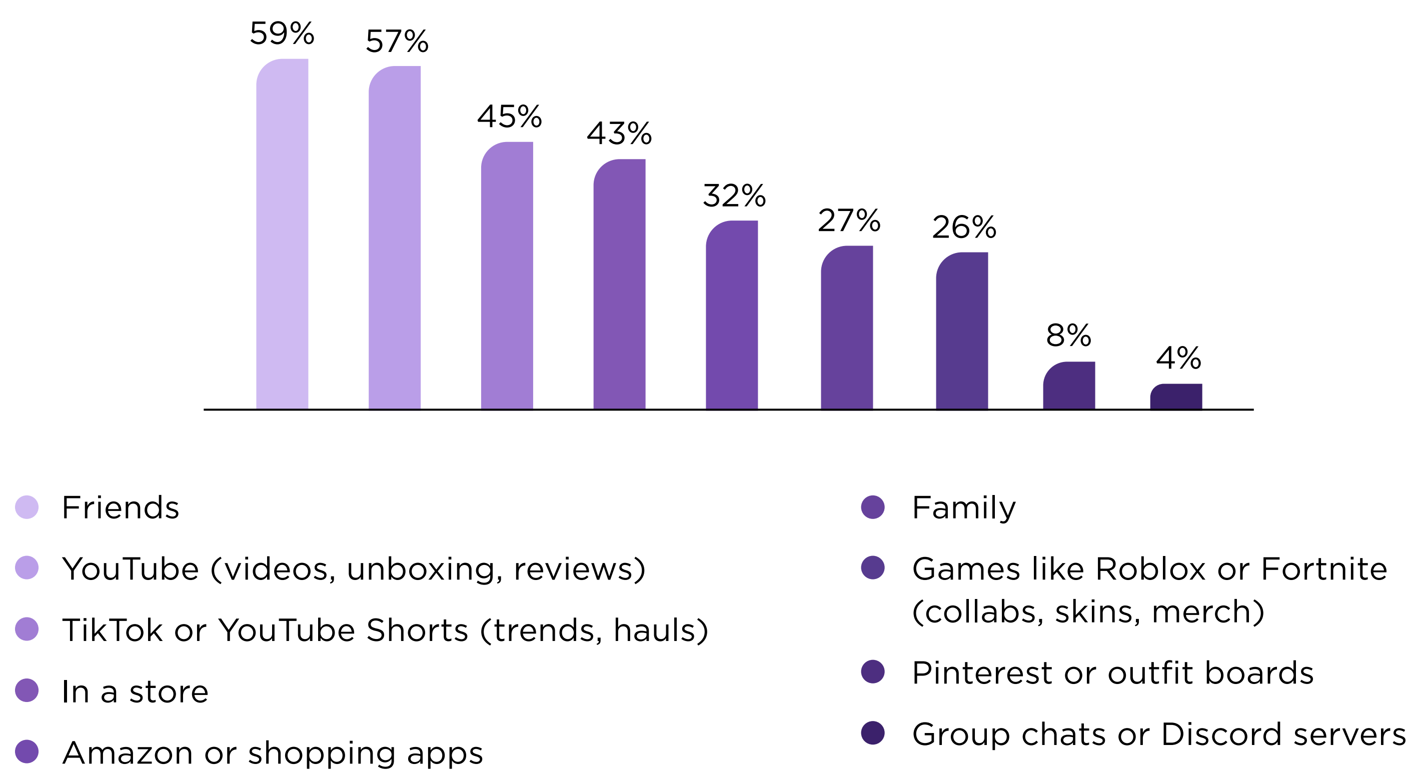
"My family. YouTube can be fake, and my friends aren't always serious."

Eli, 12

"I go straight to Pinterest. It has ideas for everything, clothes, drawings, houses, even how to decorate your Roblox builds."

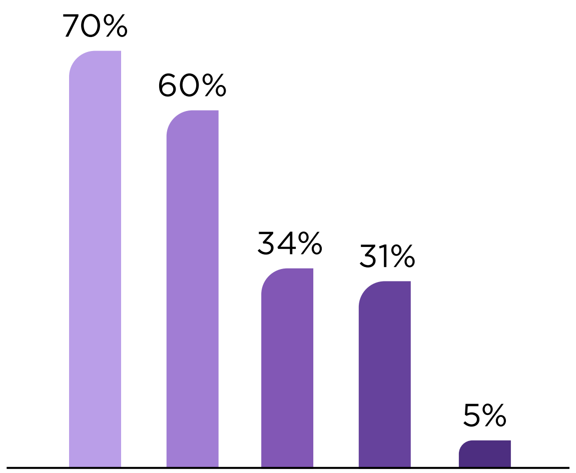
Siena, 10

Where do you first find new things (products, brands, etc.) you like?
Select Top Three



Gen Alpha's path to brand discovery is shaped by the voices they trust and the platforms they explore, often at the same time.

Gen Alpha discovers brands through a blend of real world influence and constant digital input. Friends remain their most trusted source, proving that word of mouth still carries the most significant power, yet their ease with digital platforms explains why YouTube and TikTok are closely behind. **Their consumer personas show this fluidity, illustrating how they learn and validate from every direction.** *The Confident Chooser leans into YouTube, The Transition Tween relies on friends and other social media platforms, and The Expressive Explorer gravitates toward creative inputs like Pinterest and Roblox.* A mention from a friend often sends them online to confirm a brand's quality and values, and the pattern works the other way as well. YouTube may spark early interest, but a friend can still be the final push toward a purchase. Brands can support this back and forth through short form content that feels fun and informative, which about 2 in 3 Gen Alpha prefer, then extend that connection in-store through experiences that encourage exploration with peers. While creators and friends may drive early awareness, in-store visual cues also matter, especially for younger Gen Alpha who may not be on social media yet. Discovery for this generation is ever changing, and brands that treat physical and digital pathways as one ecosystem will be better positioned to meet them where they are.



When you find something new you really like, how does it make you feel? *Select Top Two*

- Excited - like I found something first
- Happy - it fits my style or personality
- Curious - I want to learn more about it
- Proud - I want to show people
- Unsure - I'm not sure if it's really worth it

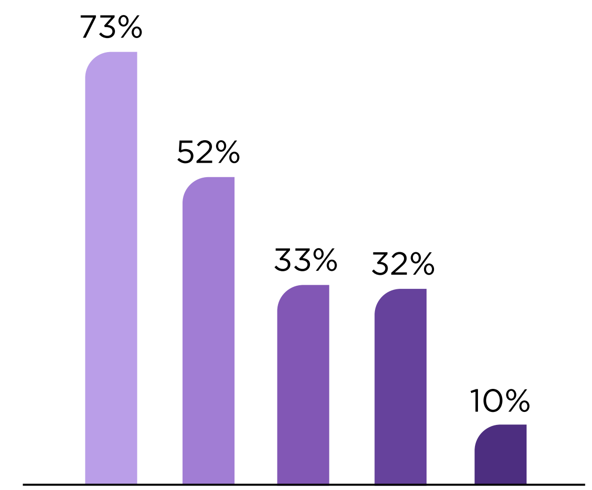
For Gen Alpha, encountering something new sparks a surge of excitement and joy that drives them to investigate and engage.

Gen Alpha is a naturally inquisitive generation that stays tuned in, whether their world is shaped by streaming platforms and Roblox or by online community forums and active social accounts. **They move through a constant stream of brand exposure, yet something new still stands out.** 7 in 10 feel genuine excitement and 3 in 5 feel joy when they encounter a brand for the first time. Their curiosity guides this reaction, pushing them to explore, learn, and understand what makes that brand worth their attention. When something resonates, the moment opens the door for a deeper emotional connection and a desire to keep that brand close. This is why understanding their discovery journey is so important, because once that feeling sets in, Gen Alpha shares it freely with friends and communities both in person and online. Brands that design experiences that surprise and delight Gen Alpha have the ability to create memorable first impressions and invite engagement that turns discovery into advocacy.

"I like being able to see things in person. It's better than shopping online because you can actually touch and try stuff."

Gianna, 11

When a brand has a store, what are the main reasons you'd go to the store in person instead of shopping online?
Select Top Two



Interactive environments give Gen Alpha the freedom to explore, experiment, and play.

Gen Alpha's affinity for exploring and experimenting in digital worlds like Minecraft, Roblox, and Fortnite directly mirrors their desire for tactile experiences in real life. **Stores become their physical playgrounds, offering the chance to see, touch, and try products beyond the screen.** Hands-on experiences first drove engagement with Gen Z, with 64% noting their importance in our 2025 year-over-year report. With Gen Alpha, that desire is even stronger, as they balance moments of intention with curiosity driven exploration. *Their consumer personas reinforce this, with The Confident Chooser treating stores as a place to test and validate, The Transition Tween seeing stores as a space to hang out and discover, and The Expressive Explorer preferring to browse for inspiration rather than a transaction.* Environments that remove barriers to participation or encourage play, such as Lego stores or Sephora, provide strong examples, with Lego ranking highest overall at nearly 60% as the brand that connects most with this age group. Brand experiences that invite exploration through demonstrations, personalization, and customization allow Gen Alpha to determine what works for them. This matters because interactive, participatory experiences can transform stores from points of purchase into destinations they want to return to.

**Gen Z YoY Report 2025*

SECTION 3: ENGAGE - DESIGNING EXPERIENCES THAT CAPTURE ATTENTION & ESTABLISH AFFINITY

In-store experiential elements that create meaningful connections

"I like AR more. You could try on makeup or clothes with your phone and see what works before buying it."

Maheen, 9

"Having a section for tweens. Somewhere that feels made for us, cute setups, fun music, maybe some places to sit or test things."

Adison, 11

"I like when stores have food sections or snacks."

Madison, 10

"I like stores where you can customize things or make your own designs. It's more fun when there's something to do."

Siena, 10

How do you most like to shop once you're inside a store? *Select One*

- **53%,** I like wandering and finding stuff on my own
- **35%,** I usually do both, I start with a plan then explore
- **12%,** I like having a plan so I know what I need

In store, Gen Alpha moves at their own pace, examining and making choices that reflect their growing role as consumers.

Gen Alpha's proficiency and comfort with platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and digital gamification translates into a strong desire for exploration in store. Even at a young age, they seek autonomy, a feeling that is shared across consumer personas and highlights their need to take control of their experience. This aligns with Gen Z*, as both generations respond positively to a self guided shopping journey, however Gen Alpha's personas reinforce these patterns in different ways. *The Confident Chooser moves with intent and appreciates when a store layout supports a clear plan, while The Expressive Explorer is most comfortable wandering and discovering as they go.* Clear navigational and visual cues give Gen Alpha confidence to move independently, while engaging displays introduce moments of surprise. Together, they balance direction with discovery, shaping how curiosity unfolds in store. For brands and retailers, the opportunity is to create experiences that let Gen Alpha explore on their own terms, allowing them to be seen first and foremost as customers rather than just by age. While their purchasing power is guided by their parents, their awareness of brands and trends and their ability to connect online discovery to in-store exploration should not be underestimated.

**Gen Z YoY Report 2025*

"I like when stores change things up. It's more exciting when you don't know what to expect."

Quincy, 11

"I like knowing where things are. It makes shopping faster and easier."

Eli, 12

"I don't want to feel like I'm shopping in a four-year-old's store."

Emma, 13

When you walk into a store for the first time, what helps you decide if you like it? *Rank Top Three*

How it's set up or organized: **#1**

What I can do there (try, test, play): **#2**

Friendly people or staff: **#3**

The look and colors: **#4**

Activities for people my age: **#5**

Music or smell: **#6**

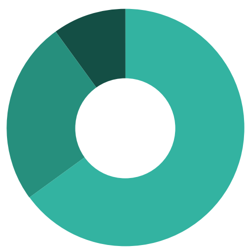
For Gen Alpha, connection comes from clarity, hands-on experiences, and genuine engagement.

With endless information at their fingertips, it is intuitive that Gen Alpha values experiences that are clear and actionable. **Accustomed to speed, access, and simplicity online, they expect physical environments to meet those same standards.** Store layout, opportunities to test and try, and overall look and feel emerge as meaningful value drivers, amplified by the presence of friendly, supportive staff. Together, these elements determine whether Gen Alpha feels confident, curious, and motivated to stay and explore. Nearly half say they are likely to leave a store when items are hard to find or when there is nothing to try or engage with. This marks a shift from our 2023 kids report*, where themed displays held greater appeal. Today, Gen Alpha is less motivated by visual spectacle and more by hands-on interaction that helps them assess products for themselves. Stores that resonate are easy to navigate, merchandised to support quick understanding, and designed to invite participation rather than overwhelm. *Across personas, the expectation is consistent: loyalty is earned when stores move beyond shelves and bring Gen Alpha into the brand experience through meaningful interaction and storytelling.*

**Kids Retail Stores Report 2023*

**Each selection was rated based on how strongly it influenced first impressions, then converted into an overall score and ranked.*

Which of these makes it easiest for you to find what you want in stores?
Select One



- **66%,** The store has easy to understand signs
- **25%,** The products and items are placed at my height
- **10%,** The store has a map that I can look at on my phone

Gen Alpha responds to environments that balance predictability with opportunities for hands-on discovery.

Gen Alpha has few store environments that truly speak to their interests or needs. They are not looking for spaces designed for children; rather, they look to the brands the adults in their lives regularly shop for, to feature an in-store experience that also feels relevant to them. In both our general population survey and focus groups, Target consistently stood out, often praised for its multicategory offerings and clear, consistent shopping journey. **While they enjoy discovery and exploration, Gen Alpha values the familiarity of entering a store like Target, knowing the in-store journey is predictable even if product assortments vary.** *Nearly 70% say clear signage and navigation are essential to shopping efficiently, particularly with The Confident Chooser, as it reduces confusion and supports a sense of control.* This year-over-year trend mirrors findings from our 2023 report*, further emphasizing the importance of navigational cues and clear visual aids for this maturing consumer base. As brands and retailers consider new programming and innovation in-store, it is crucial not to overlook these fundamentals that create a frictionless, intuitive shopping journey rooted in clarity and accessibility.

**Kids Retail Stores Report 2023*

"I like knowing where things are, even in a different city."

Walker, 12

"Definitely snacks and a place to chill with your friends. Somewhere you can sit and hang out."

Ava, 13

What would make you stay in a store longer?

Food or drinks (boba, snacks): **#1**

Digital games (Fortnite, Roblox): **#2**

Arcade style games: **#3**

Tech try ons, AR mirrors, screens: **#4**

Chill areas with seating: **#5**

Physical activity: **#6**

Photo or video spots: **#7**

Weekly drops or updated themes: **#8**

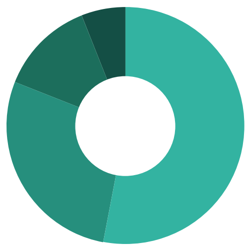
Gen Alpha responds to stores that offer both something to do and something to enjoy.

Retail stores often pair with food and beverage offerings, from Target and Starbucks to Walmart and Dunkin' to H Mart and TeaValley Boba Tea, showing that consumers enjoy sipping while shopping, and Gen Alpha is no different. **Much like their digital environments encourage shared play and interaction, these hybrid retail moments add a feeling of fun and nostalgia, along with a sense of connection in physical spaces.** While motivations do not differ meaningfully between older and younger Gen Alpha, household income shapes how this shows up in store. Lower income households tend to respond more to food and beverage options, while higher income households gravitate toward hangout zones with seating, *an approach that resonates strongly with The Confident Chooser. The Transition Tween, by contrast, is most motivated to stay longer by weekly drops or evolving in store themes.* Gen Alpha is open to spending more time in store environments that offer both something to enjoy and something to do, particularly when technology or gamified elements are involved. This reinforces their preference for experiences that extend beyond transactions and support shared time with friends and family.

**Kids Retail Stores Report 2023*

**Each selection was rated based on how strongly it influenced first impressions, then converted into an overall score and ranked.*

When a store has technology, what do you mostly do? *Select One*



- **53%,** Try it right away to see what it does
- **28%,** Watch other people first to see if it looks cool
- **13%,** Use it only if it helps me get what I want
- **6%,** Skip it unless someone shows me how

Gen Alpha approaches technology with confidence, and expects reliability and relevance.

Gen Alpha's comfort with technology is undeniable. **More than half view it as a way to stay connected with peers or to pursue their interests, furthering connectivity, product education and brand storytelling.** For brands and retailers, this makes identifying the right in-store technology critical, not just to drive engagement, but to resonate in ways that influence learning and purchase decisions. Half of Gen Alpha want to test technology immediately when they encounter it, demonstrating their confidence with and interest in gamification and curiosity in trying something new. At the same time, they seek validation from peers and value information or insight in exchange for participation. As highlighted in our Gen Z report*, technology must be reliable, convenient, and efficient, enhancing rather than distracting from a brand's storytelling and product education. When integrated well, technology enables Gen Alpha to explore independently, compare options, and learn in the moment, much like they do through AI tools, automation, and digital platforms. In-store experiences that respond to their actions, unlock information, and gamify discovery feel valuable because they reinforce confidence, curiosity, and control.

**Gen Z YoY Report 2025*

"AR makes more sense because you can use your phone to scan a QR code and see what a product looks like out of the box. VR needs headsets and is harder to use."

Walker, 12

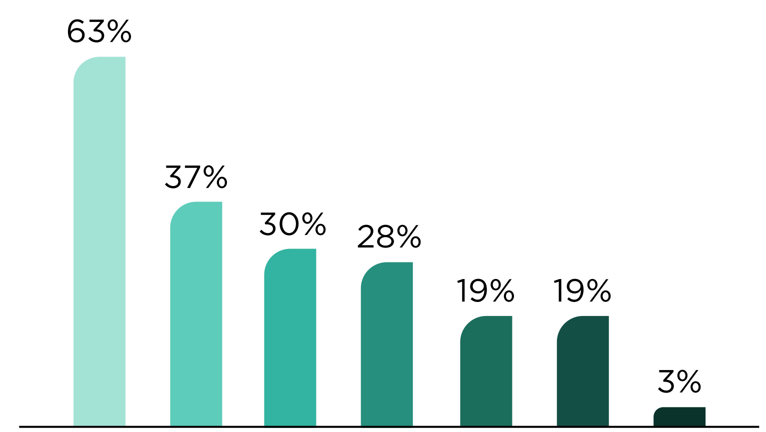
"Probably if they teamed up with MrBeast. He'd do something crazy, like give away limited-edition avatars or drop a Robux challenge. If you finished a level and scanned a QR code, maybe you'd win 10k Robux. That would be awesome."

Mason, 11

"Voting would be cool. Brands would actually know what people like before they make it."

Maheen, 9

Let's say a brand asks you to help design, inform, make or pick things, what sounds most exciting?
Select Top Two

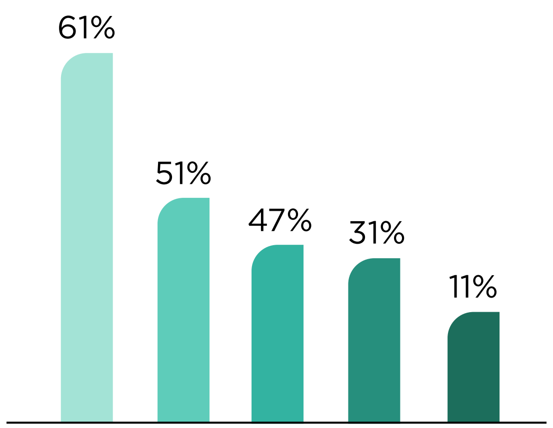


- Testing new stuff before others
- Designing products or colors (shoes, bottles, shirts)
- Creating digital + real collabs (Roblox skin + real merch)
- Helping decide what the store looks and feels like
- Voting on what the store sells next
- Picking music for the store
- None of these sound exciting to me

This generation is ready to play an active role in how products, stores, and experiences come to life.

Gen Alpha spends so much time creating and building digitally that it is intuitive that they want that same level of involvement with brands offline. **They are a naturally curious and inventive generation with big ideas and a desire to express them.** 97% of Gen Alpha is interested in co-creating with brands, whether through testing products before they launch, helping design products and stores, or contributing to phygital experiences that bring online and offline communities together. This year over year trend continues to rise. Roughly 1 in 3 expressed interest in 2023*, including 57% of Gen Z, and today it has become a leading driver of brand interaction. *The personas reinforce this, with each highlighting the value of customization and personalization in store.* Brands and retailers can benefit from opening the door to this type of dialogue and feedback, as it strengthens trust and credibility with Gen Alpha, who want their voices acknowledged and taken seriously. They want to see themselves reflected in a brand's world, and one of the most effective ways to do that is by allowing them to help shape the environments and offerings alongside you, supporting the next generation of creators and builders.

*Kids Retail Stores Report 2023
*Gen Z YoY Report 2025



When a brand says it's "doing good," how can you tell it's real? *Select Top Two*

- I see them doing real actions (events, recycling bins, etc.)
- It feels natural, not forced or fake
- I see proof or results online
- People my age are part of it
- Staff talk about it in a real way

For Gen Alpha, trust is built through actions they can see, not promises they are told.

Gen Alpha are truth seekers. They use online channels and social media to check information, confirm what is real, and share what they learn with their peers. **Authenticity carries significant weight, and they want to see brands back up their claims with real actions.** When a brand shows honesty and quality, they will pay attention. When a brand's behavior does not match its message, trust breaks quickly. 3 in 5 expect brands to represent their mission and values through actions rather than words, and they are too observant to be persuaded by surface level tactics. From moments that feel exclusionary to claims that resemble greenwashing, Gen Alpha is watching closely to see whether brands reflect what they promote. More than half also want a brand to remain true to itself and avoid pushing narratives that do not align with who they say they are. With access to endless information and an early understanding of tools like AI, Gen Alpha has the ability to quickly separate what is real from what is performative, deciding for themselves whether a brand is worthy of attention or trust.

SECTION 4: INFLUENCE - THE FORCES SHAPING THEIR CHOICES & FAMILY DECISION-MAKING

How peers, parents, and creators guide demand and how brands show up

"I usually go to my parents and show them videos about it. If they think it's fine, they let me get it."

Max, 10

"I pick my own stuff now. My mom doesn't always know what's trending."

Arsal, 12

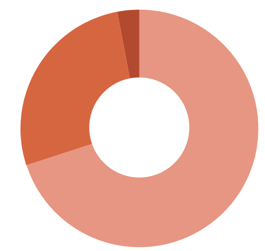
"My mom asks my opinion on clothes sometimes, like dresses for events. She trusts my judgment."

Kate, 14

"My grandma doesn't really have money concerns so she is willing to get it and she would not understand any of it probably. So she'd be like, "How do I do this?."

Adison, 11

How often do adults buy things because you suggested them? *Select One*

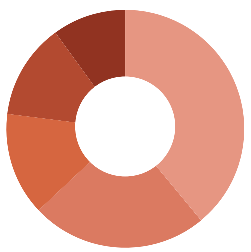


- **70%,** Sometimes- depends on what it is
- **27%,** A lot of the time- they trust my opinion
- **2%,** Rarely- they don't listen much
- **0%,** Never- they make their own choices

Even without spending power, Gen Alpha helps decide what gets bought and why.

With constant discovery streams coming from both online and offline worlds, from YouTube to conversations with friends at school, Gen Alpha has their finger on the pulse. From their love of Drunk Elephant and Owala to Labubus, Lululemon and beyond, they know which brands are trending and decide which products are worth the attention. **And just as older generations guide and educate them, Gen Alpha is shaping and inspiring purchases made by the adults in their lives.** While adults ultimately hold the buying power, 9 in 10 Gen Alpha provide input on household items and more. They are active participants in deciding what to buy and what to skip, sharing what they have learned and which products they believe deliver quality and value. This is why store environments cannot afford to overlook the range of age groups moving through their spaces, because even without a credit card, Gen Alpha knows how to move an idea into action, often resulting in more items being added to the cart.

When you shop, what do you want adults or brands to get about you?
Select One



- **39%,** I know what I like and want the opportunity to make my own choices
- **25%,** I don't want to be treated like a little kid (talked down to, ignored, or left out)
- **14%,** I can handle things myself without help
- **13%,** I care about more than just video games or tech
- **10%,** I think it feels cringe when brands try too hard to copy trends

They are more than children playing games; they are young people shaping the world around them.

While Gen Alpha are still children, they are expressing a real desire to be seen as intelligent consumers and meaningful contributors. Like Gen Z*, they want to be recognized for who they truly are, multifaceted and confident in what matters most to them. Constant exposure to information has accelerated their maturity in how they learn and engage, something previous generations cannot fully understand. Being so comfortable online has removed an element of innocence and naivety, in part because they are growing up with Gen Zers, Millennials, and Gen Xers who manage multiple responsibilities and provide greater transparency than previous generations experienced. As a result, Gen Alpha has little patience for diluted communication or superficial behaviors from brands and retailers, and they expect to be treated as informed customers from the moment they enter. To engage Gen Alpha today, brands must create opportunities for self discovery, treat them with respect, and recognize that they are more than children playing Roblox. They are young people eager to establish deeper connections with brands that are willing to listen.

**Gen Z YoY Report 2025*

SECTION 5: LOOKING AHEAD - CONCLUSION & KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR BRANDS & RETAILERS

Future strategic opportunities informing store design and programming

SHAPING THE FUTURE: HOW GEN ALPHA'S CURIOSITY, CREATIVITY, AND INFLUENCE REDEFINE BRAND ENGAGEMENT

Gen Alpha may be the youngest consumers today, but their influence is already reshaping how brands and retailers think about engagement. This generation values autonomy, curiosity, and play, moving seamlessly between digital and physical worlds while expecting experiences that are clear, interactive, and meaningful. They seek hands-on exploration, personalization, and opportunities to contribute, driving deeper connections and shaping household purchase decisions across generations. Trust is earned through authenticity and visible action, not promises, and technology must enhance rather than distract from the brand experience. Stores that empower Gen Alpha to explore, test, and participate will win their attention and loyalty. By designing experiences that balance predictability with discovery, brands can cultivate lasting relevance with a generation whose impact is already being felt.

5 Key Go-Forward Brand Strategies

Empower Exploration & Choice

- Design in-store and digital experiences that allow Gen Alpha to navigate independently, test products hands-on, and make decisions with confidence. Clear wayfinding, interactive displays, and hands-on trial moments help them feel capable and engaged.

Invite Co-Creation & Personalization

- Open opportunities for Gen Alpha to actively contribute, from product feedback and customization to helping shape store experiences. Participation fosters a sense of ownership, strengthens trust, and aligns the brand with their curiosity and creativity.

Blend Play, Learning, & Social Connection

- Incorporate elements that make shopping fun and interactive, like gamified experiences, product experimentation, and social spaces with food and beverage options, so the store becomes a destination where discovery, learning, and peer connection intersect.

Seamlessly Integrate Relevant Technology

- Interactive tech tools, such as AR and VR, enhance exploration, learning, and product engagement. Technology should simplify, clarify, and enrich the experience, supporting their omnichannel fluency rather than overwhelming it.

Build Trust Through Action & Transparency

- Ensure brand behaviors, messaging, and visuals are consistent and clear. Gen Alpha notices when actions match words and responds to straightforward, authentic communication that reflects what the brand actually does.

"A tweens-only section. It could have different areas for different hobbies, like a drawing spot, a clothes section, or something chill. Not too big, but not tiny either."

Siena, 10

"I like walking around and seeing what's new. It feels freeing."

Amberlyn, 12

"Playful and interactive, for sure. That's my vibe."

Quincy, 11

"I like when brands feel trendy but also have their own look and definitely snacks. And Wi-Fi."

Gianna, 11

MEET OUR TEAM

NICOLE POKORNY FORSTER
SENIOR STRATEGIST

MELISSA GONZALEZ
PRINCIPAL,
FOUNDER MG2 ADVISORY

UMER CHAUDHRY
ANALYST

MEET TOUCHSTONE

TOUCHSTONE RESEARCH
INNOVATION & EXCELLENCE

Touchstone Research is a leading market research firm specializing in youth and family research studies, including a special expertise collecting representative, rich insights from Gen Alpha audiences.

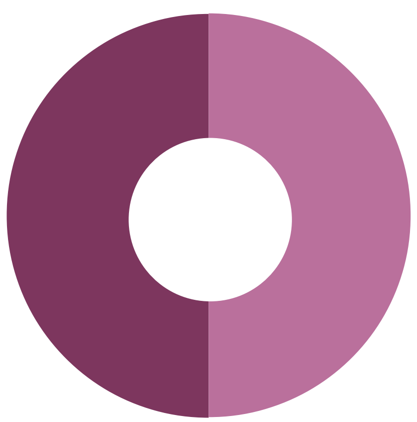
Focus Group Participant Numbers

16 Participants
November 2025

- Maheen / Female / 9
- Max / Male / 10
- Siena / Female / 10
- Madison / Female / 10
- Mason / Male / 11
- Adison / Female / 11
- Quincy / Male / 11
- Gianna / Female / 11
- Amberlyn / Female / 12
- Walker / Male / 12
- Elijah / Male / 12
- Arsal / Male / 12
- Emma / Female / 13
- Ava / Female / 13
- Bella / Female / 14
- Kate / Female / 14

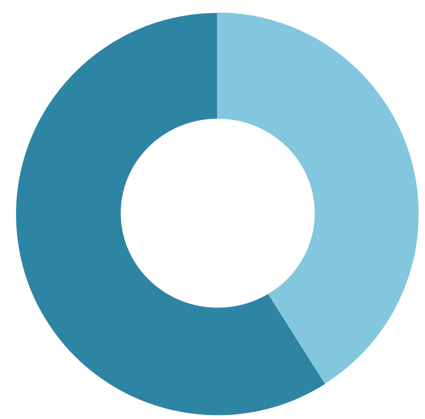
Respondent demographics

505 U.S. Respondents
November 2025



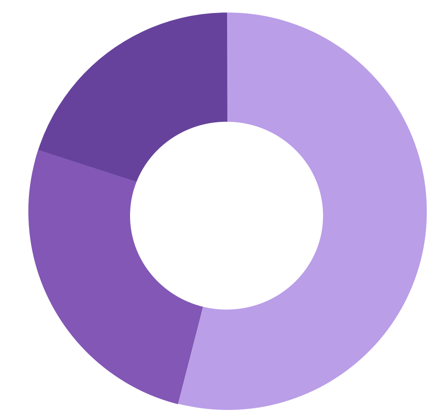
AGE GROUP

- **50%,** 8-11
- **50%,** 12-14



GENDER

- **41%,** Male
- **59%,** Female



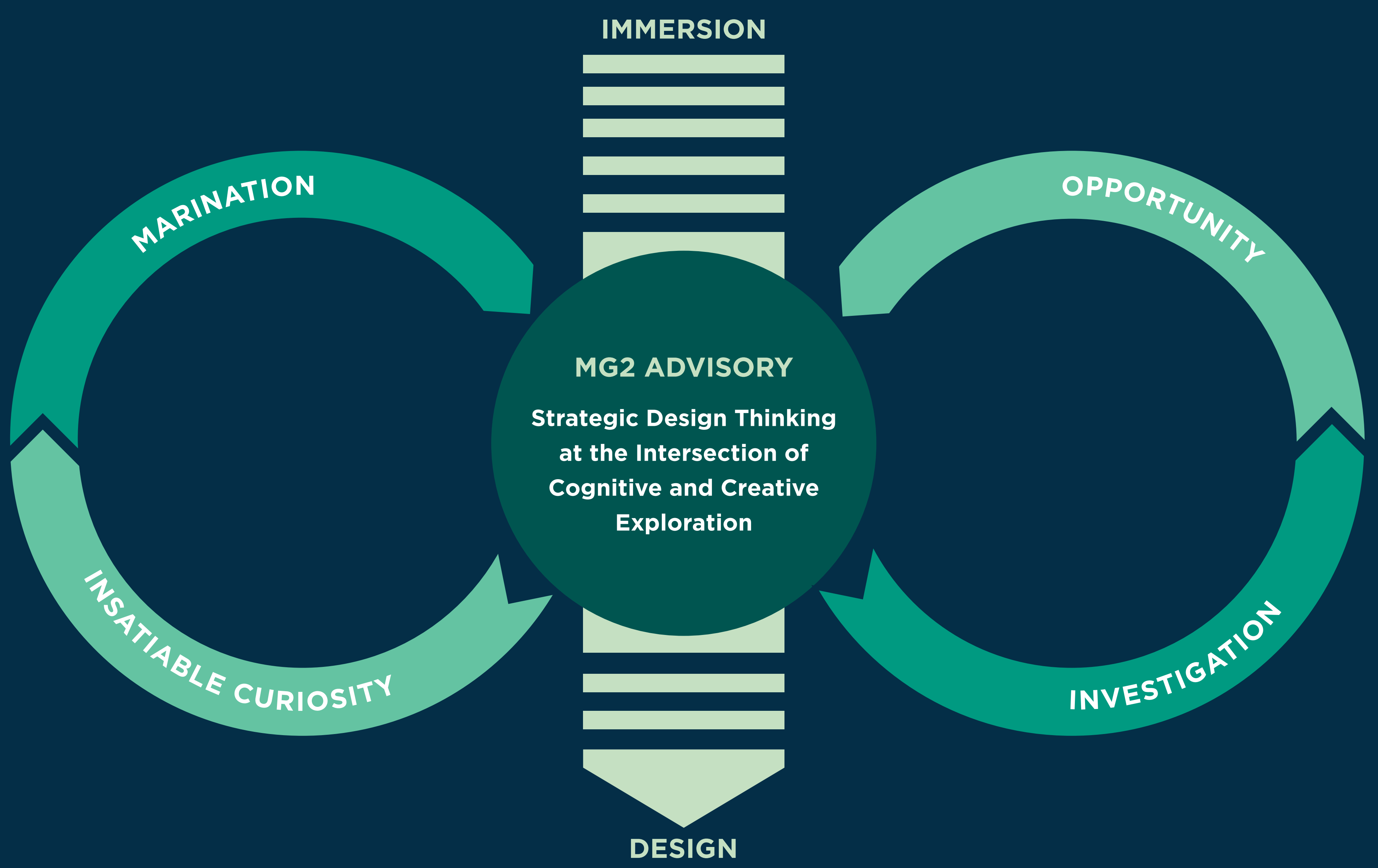
COMMUNITY

- **54%,** Suburban
- **27%,** Urban
- **20%,** Rural

OUR FRAMEWORK

The ***I.M.I.O. Model*** is the foundation of our work, and it is a proven process for unlocking new strategic opportunities and competitive whitespace. The Model spans four phases and the following services:

- Macro trend analysis
- Behavioral insights
- Brand and operational analysis
- Qualitative studies
- Field studies
- SME interviews
- Competitive benchmarking
- Cultural and sociological research
- Targeted focus groups



INSIDE THE I.M.I.O. MODEL

Phase 1: *INSATIABLE CURIOSITY*

Align on a foundational strategy by leveraging our constant investigation and analysis of human behaviors, cultural contexts and influences. We extract these insights and meld them with organizational data and insights to develop a vision for the project and set tactical goals.

Phase 2: *MARINATION*

We analyze all available data to identify gaps and further areas of exploration and supplemental investigation. We then develop key questions to help us answer these questions and identify future opportunities for creative ideation.

Phase 3: *INVESTIGATION*

We pursue various investigative pathways to decipher our holistic findings to support brand positioning and customer experiences. Through a combination of expert interviews, targeted focus groups, qualitative surveys, quantitative research and field studies, we create a more detailed picture of what consumers want and the current whitespace that exists.

Phase 4: *OPPORTUNITY*

We create a comprehensive package including our findings and tailored recommendations for a go-forward strategy that addresses clients' decided objectives and measures for success. We also uncover additional opportunities for brand positioning and differentiation, and future iteration and optimization.

DISCOVERY PROCESS

RESEARCH & INSIGHTS

Market research

Behavioral research

Design research

CONCEPTUAL MAPPING

Create consumer personas

Illuminate affinities

Align with business metrics

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

User journeys

Key touchpoints

Story board options

IMPLEMENT, TEST, LEARN

Implement concepts

A/B test

Measure success

CASE STUDY: GEN ALPHA

DRIVERS

Advancement of Technology

Access to Information

Generational Mindset Shifts

Early Educational Experiences

MAJOR TRENDS

AI & Automation

Habitual Research

Peer & Family Influence

Co-Creation & Customization

NEEDS/WANTS

Seamless Online/Offline

Need to Validate

Spaces That Bring Them Together

Want to Be Seen & Heard

PAIN POINTS

Lack of Connected Experiences

No Test/Try Capabilities

No Social Hubs

No Personalization

EXPERIENCE BLUEPRINT

Hybrid Service - Human & Digital

In-Store Experimentation

Interactive Experiences

Co-Design & Product Voting

ITERATE

Reassess:

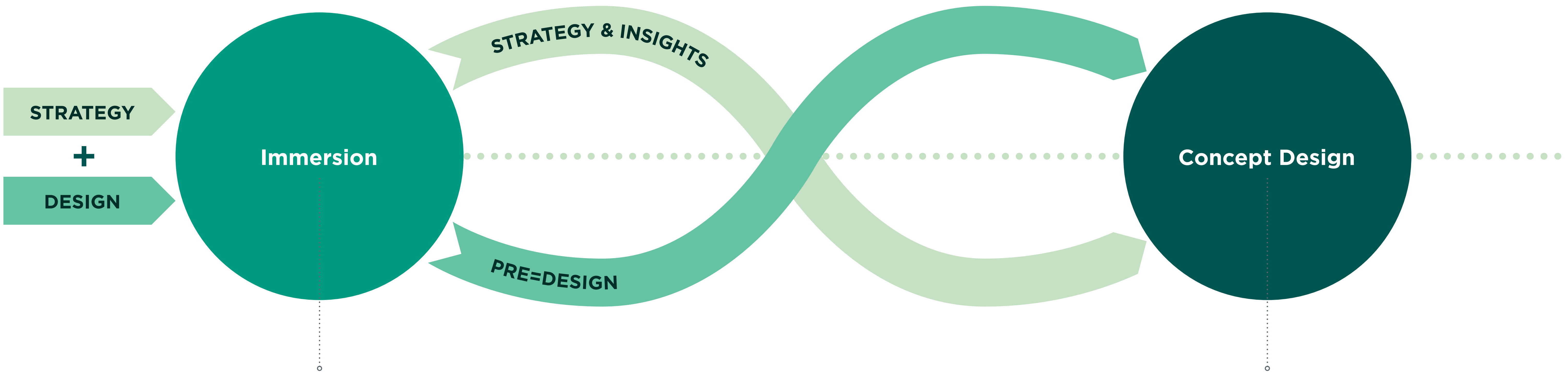
Integrated Technology Touchpoints

Demos/Testing Hubs

Social Zones/F&B Offerings

In-Store Programming

INTEGRATION WITH DESIGN TEAMS



MG2 Advisory's Role

Working in partnership with clients to understand their needs, goals, and challenges, we conduct audience research into behaviors and preferences, including targeted deep dive analysis to demystify and uncover opportunities for the go-forward user experience, as well as testing approaches to study the success of programming methodologies.

Design Team's Role

Informed by the data and insights revealed during the strategy phase, design works collaboratively with Advisory to manifest these findings through conceptual ideation, further realizing key experience elements and consumer touch points, to create a cohesive story through various visualization approaches, such as sketches and renderings.

LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

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