![The Pull Agency logo]

PULL
THE PULL AGENCY

ENGAGING THE INVISIBLE GENERATION

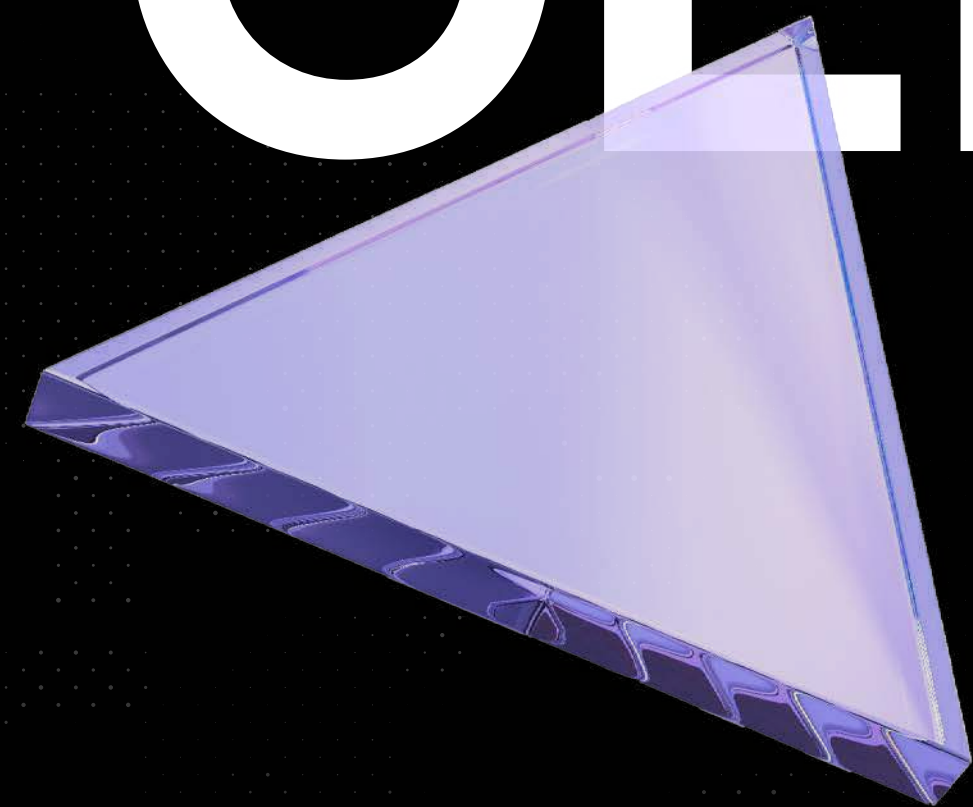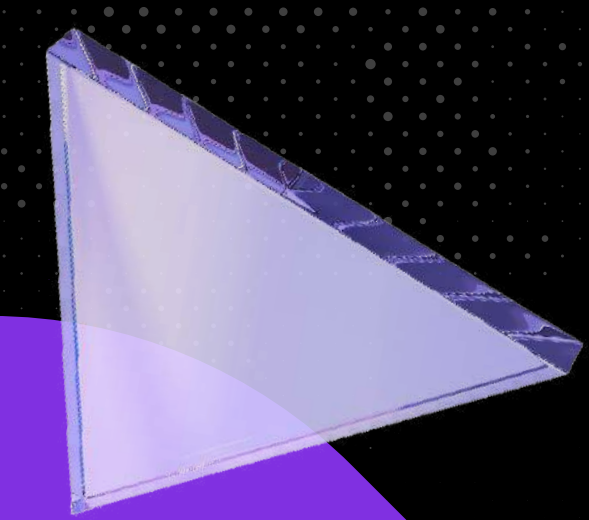## YOUR GUIDE TO WINNING WITH **GEN X ONLINE**

GEN/X

CONTENTS

WHY GEN X?

GEN/X

FUTURE OF
BEAUTY

GEN/X

THE
INVISIBLE
GENERATION

CAN YOUR BRAND AFFORD TO IGNORE THEM?

PULL
THE PULL AGENCY

EARLIER THIS YEAR, THE PULL AGENCY RELEASED THEIR LATEST FUTURE OF BEAUTY REPORT, THIS TIME LOOKING AT GEN X.

Why Gen X? Well, there's already been plenty written about Millennials, Gen Z and even Boomers but comparatively little about Gen X. Who, as you'll see over the next few pages, present a unique – and highly lucrative – opportunity for brands.

MO' MONEY ~~MO'~~
LESS PROBLEMS?

Our 4Os and 5Os are when our disposable income is at its peak – **94% of Gen Xers still have money left once their bills are paid**. And what are they spending that cash on?

GEN/X

94%
of **Gen X**
have disposable income after bills

GEN/X

MO' MONEY ~~MO'~~
LESS PROBLEMS?

Well, **Gen X spend more on hair and skin care than both Millennials and Gen Z**, dropping an estimated **£8BN annually on health and beauty products**
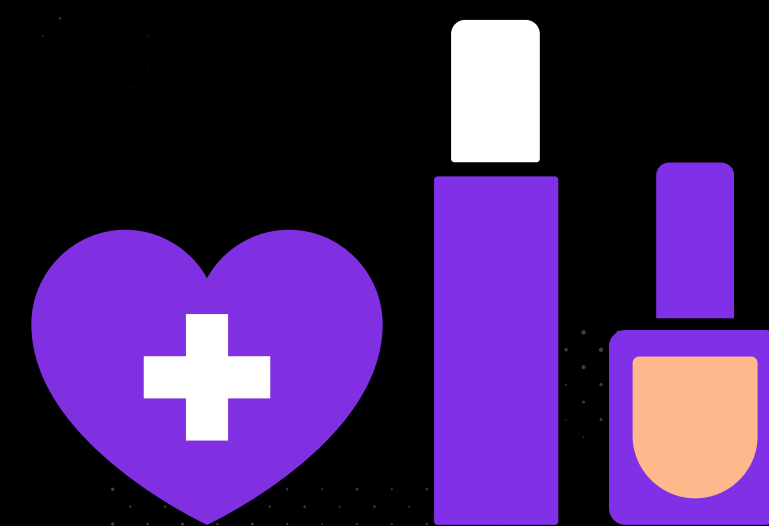
Gen X spend an estimated

# £8BN

per year on Health & Beauty

THE INVISIBLE GENERATION?

So, with more money and a greater propensity to spend it, you'd think advertisers and marketers would be falling over themselves to reach, engage and convert our Gen Xers, right? Wrong! In fact **less than 5% of marketing strategies in the US target women over 50.**

Often described as the 'middle child' between Boomers and Millennials, it is this overlooking and complacency toward Gen X that has led to them being described as the forgotten or invisible generation.

More money, a greater inclination to spend it on Health & Beauty, and less advertisers competing to reach them. **To answer our earlier question, 'why Gen X?'. Because, put simply, the opportunity for brands is huge!**
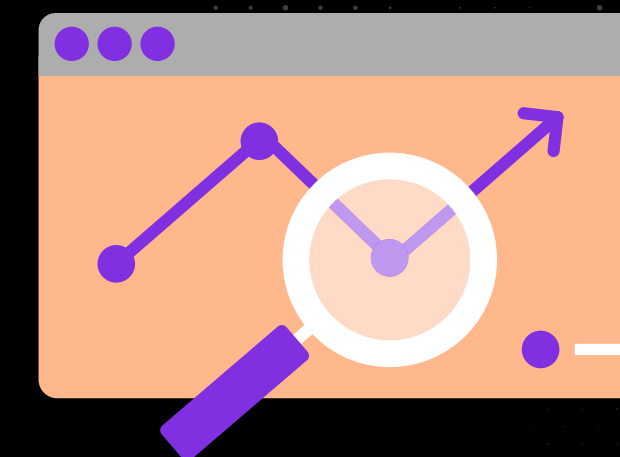
<5%

LESS THAN 5% OF MARKETING STRATEGIES IN THE US TARGET WOMEN OVER 50.
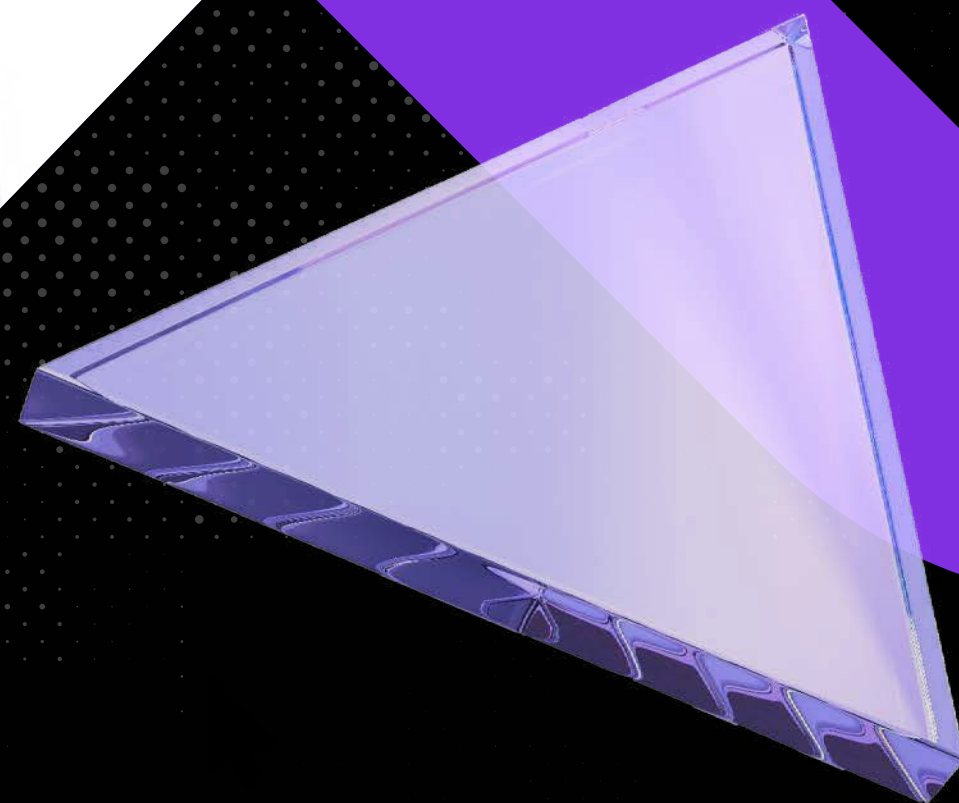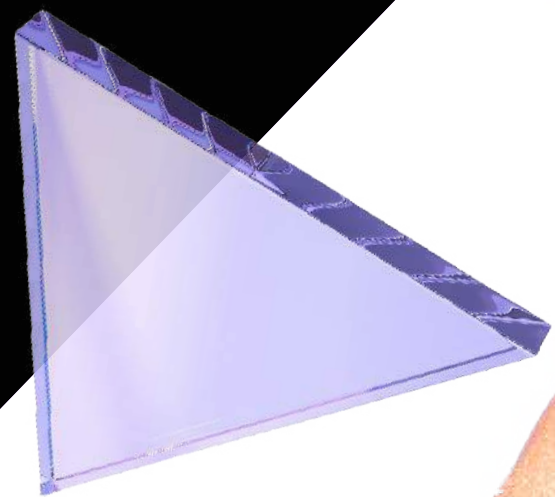
GEN/X

SO, HOW CAN YOUR BRAND MAKE SURE IT IS READY TO ENGAGE, WIN AND RETAIN THE LOYALTY OF GEN X ONLINE?

TO ANSWER THAT, LET'S DIVE INTO SOME OF THEIR BEHAVIOURS AND HABITS, STARTING WITH A QUICK REMINDER OF WHO THEY ARE.

Currently, Gen Xers are aged between 44-59. In the UK, they make up around 14M consumers – that's roughly 20% of the population.

When it comes to females in particular, a trend towards later motherhood is keeping them 'younger' for longer – **the age of a first-time mum has shifted dramatically, with the average age now 31yrs, compared to 22yrs for their parents.**

And speaking of parents, our Future of Beauty report found that Gen X women also perceive themselves as acting younger than their parents when they were in their 40s & 50s. This trend of starting families later has also let to greater age diversity among friend groups, shaping different influences and trends, while for many mid-life is now a busy balance of juggling career, families and older relatives all at the same time.

14M

UK consumers were **Generation X** a massive 20% of the overall population

AGED BETWEEN
44 – 59
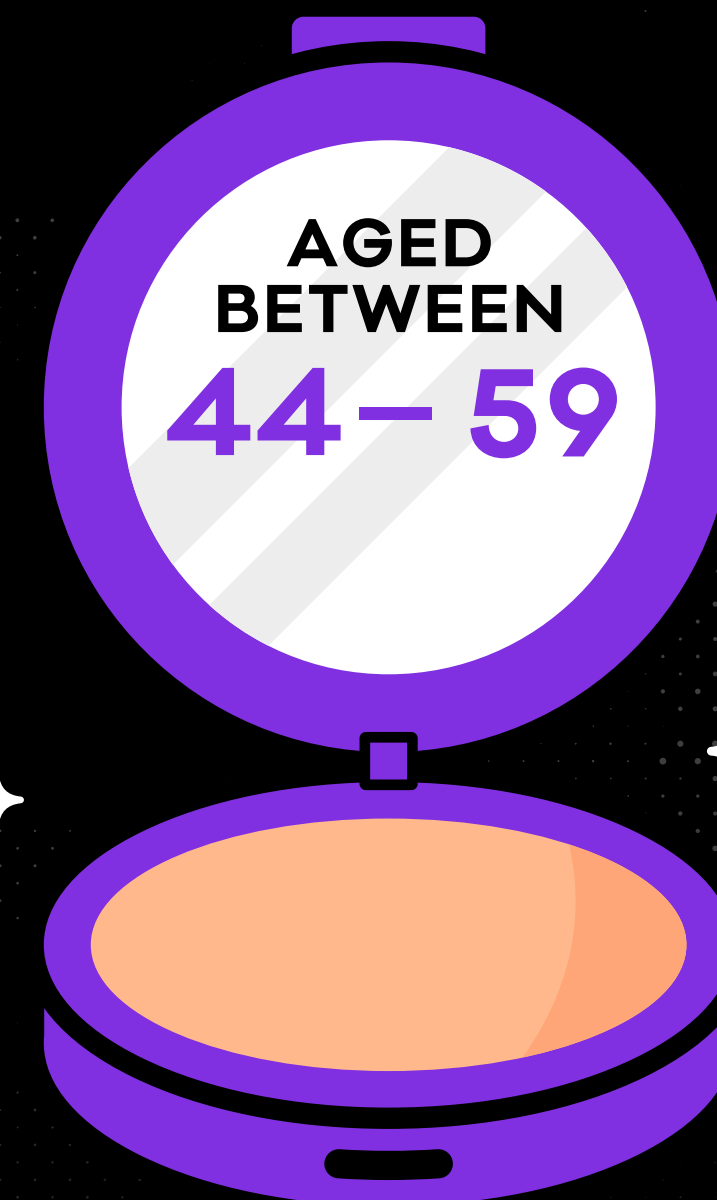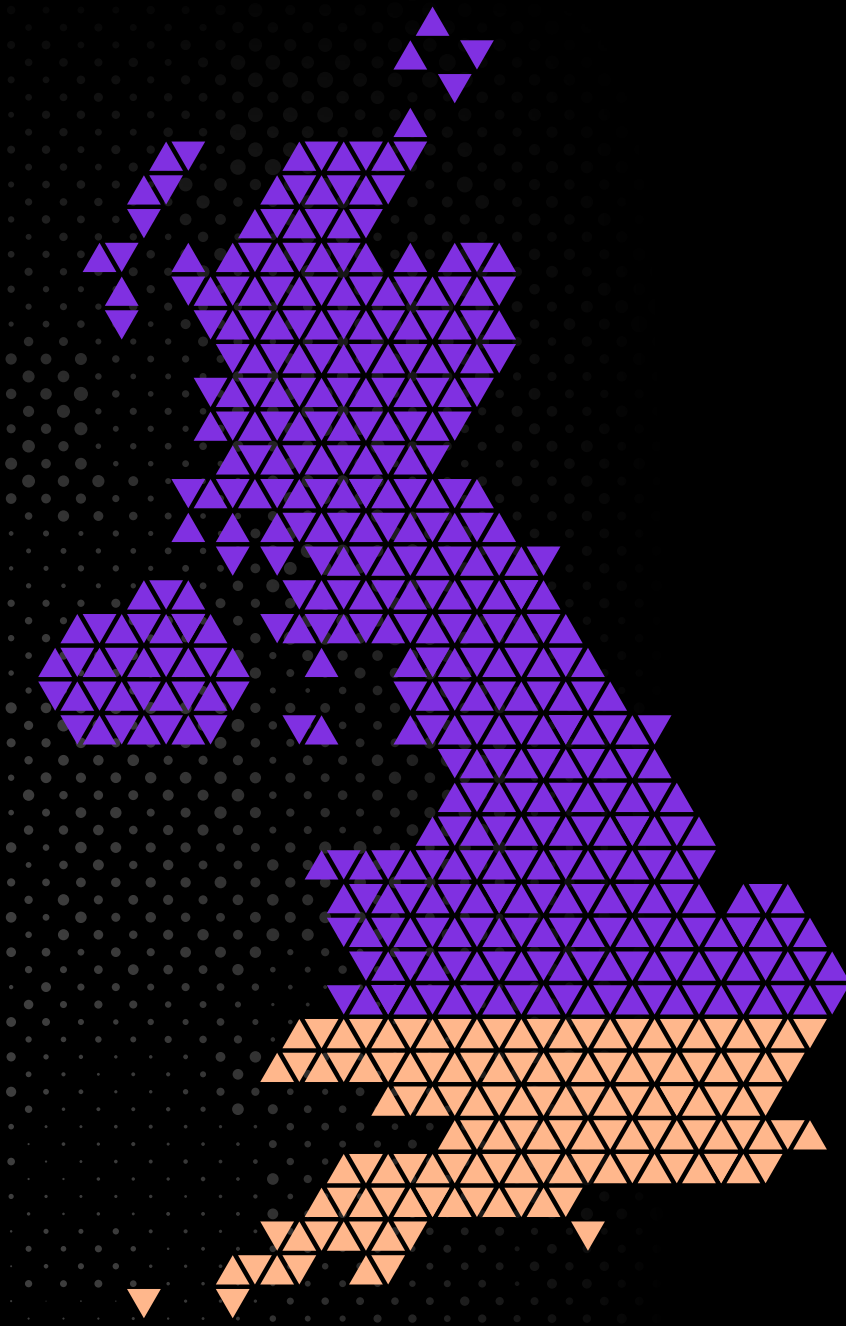
TIME POOR

That's an important point – while we see that many Gen X have money to spend, the one thing they are short on is time, whether it's higher-level jobs and careers, playing taxi for children and teenagers or other commitments, they're time poor.

This is reflected not only in the products they want to use – with lots of multi-product, multi-step routines abandoned in favour of hybrid or fewer products – but also in how they want brands to communicate with them: straight to the point, with no BS or pseudo-scientific claptrap. And in a way that's relatable and makes them feel good about themselves and their life stage.

100 STEP GUIDE

Abandoning multi-product, multi-step regimes for fewer, simpler or more hybrid products

GEN/X

Want simple, straightforward and to-the-point comms.

ATTITUDES TO AGING

And the words brands use are important. They matter to Gen X. When it comes to aging, labels such as anti-aging, age defying or aging gracefully and generally received with reservation or even rejection by Gen X. **They just want to age on their own accord!**

However, while our own research showed that women agree aging should be normalised, according to Mintel, more than half of female UK consumers are 'stressed' about aging skin & greying hair, despite the growing momentum for the concept of body positivity.

So it can become a bit of a minefield for brands – don't use labels, embrace body positivity, but do be mindful that your customers may be feeling stressed about aging.

GEN/X

ATTITUDES TO AGING

With a preference for straight-talking communication, one tactic could be to steer clear of age messaging altogether and focus on symptoms or conditions that products are designed to improve, from toning and creating a glow, to reducing lines and wrinkles.

And some of those conditions lead us to our final point on Gen X before diving into their digital behaviour, and that's their changing product needs & usage.

This is something that evolves over time and different life stages – childbirth, menopause and general aging force a change in habits and take a toll on our skin & bodies.

So, while for Gen Z and millennials, beauty is a playground of discovery and self-expressions. **As we grow older, focus shifts toward prevention or addressing specific needs and understanding the importance of good regimes.**

WRINKLES

GEN/X

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

## HOW TO ENGAGE, WIN AND RETAIN THE LOYALTY OF GEN X ONLINE

GEN/X

GEN/X

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

It can be easy to think of Gen X as 'digital dinosaurs' but let's remember, this generation came up with technology. So how do they behave online?

According to Wavemaker, **92% of Gen X are on social media every day.** Their platforms of choice? Well, **81% are using Facebook**, followed by **65% on YouTube**. While Gen X is the fastest growing user group on both Instagram and TikTok.
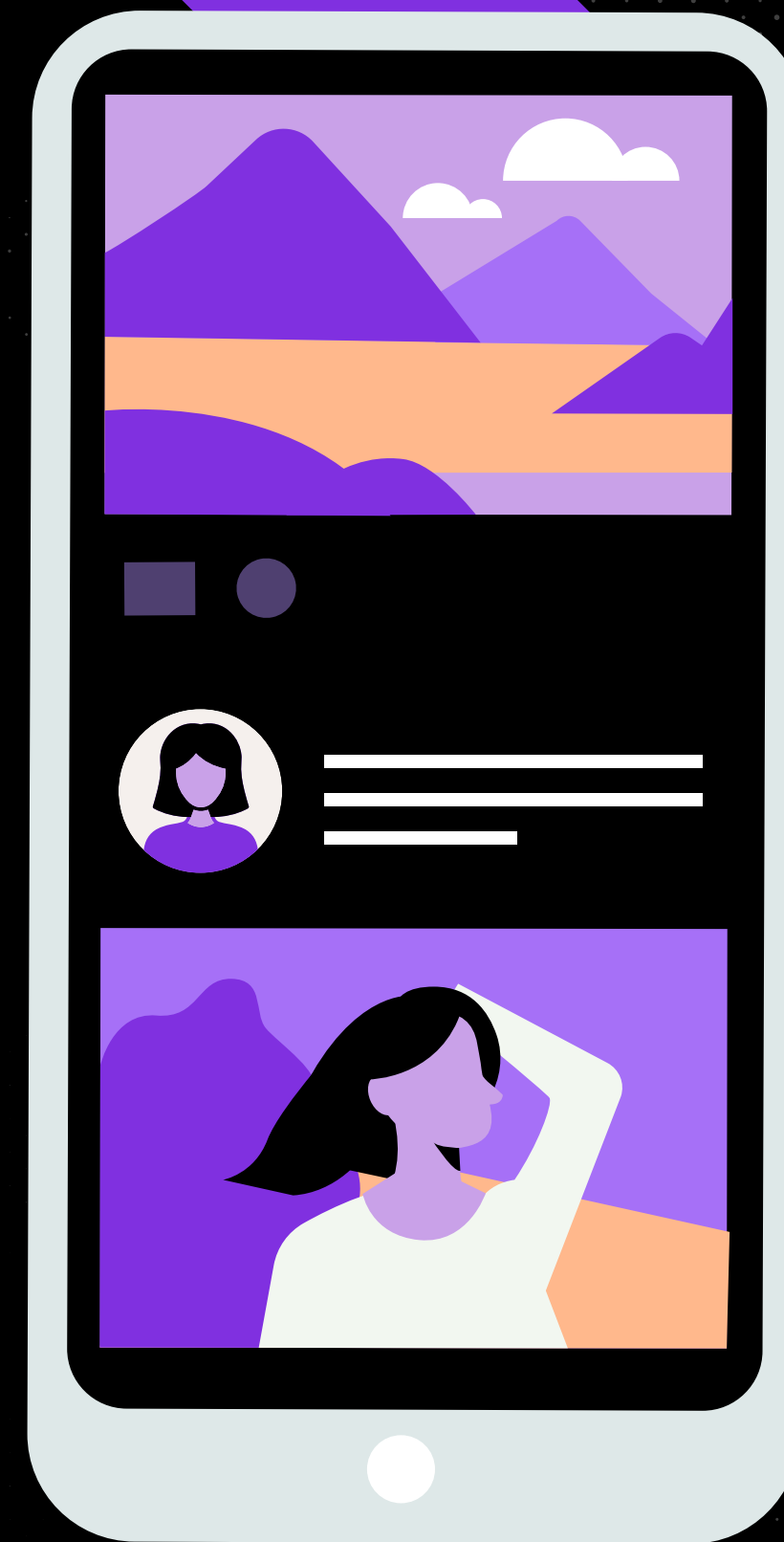
Notifications

Message   Now
92% of Gen X
Are on social media everyday*

81% of Gen X
Are using **Facebook**

65% of Gen X
Are using **YouTube**

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

The main drivers for their social media usage are **a desire for connections and nostalgia**. Gen X have moved real-life relationships online, whether it's family, parents, colleagues or, increasingly with the likes of WhatsApp and Facebook Groups, local communities or interest groups. Social is where they come together to connect, be entertained, to buy and to sell.

As for nostalgia? We know it's a powerful drug for all generations, but social media plays an important role for Gen X as a way for them to outsource their memories.
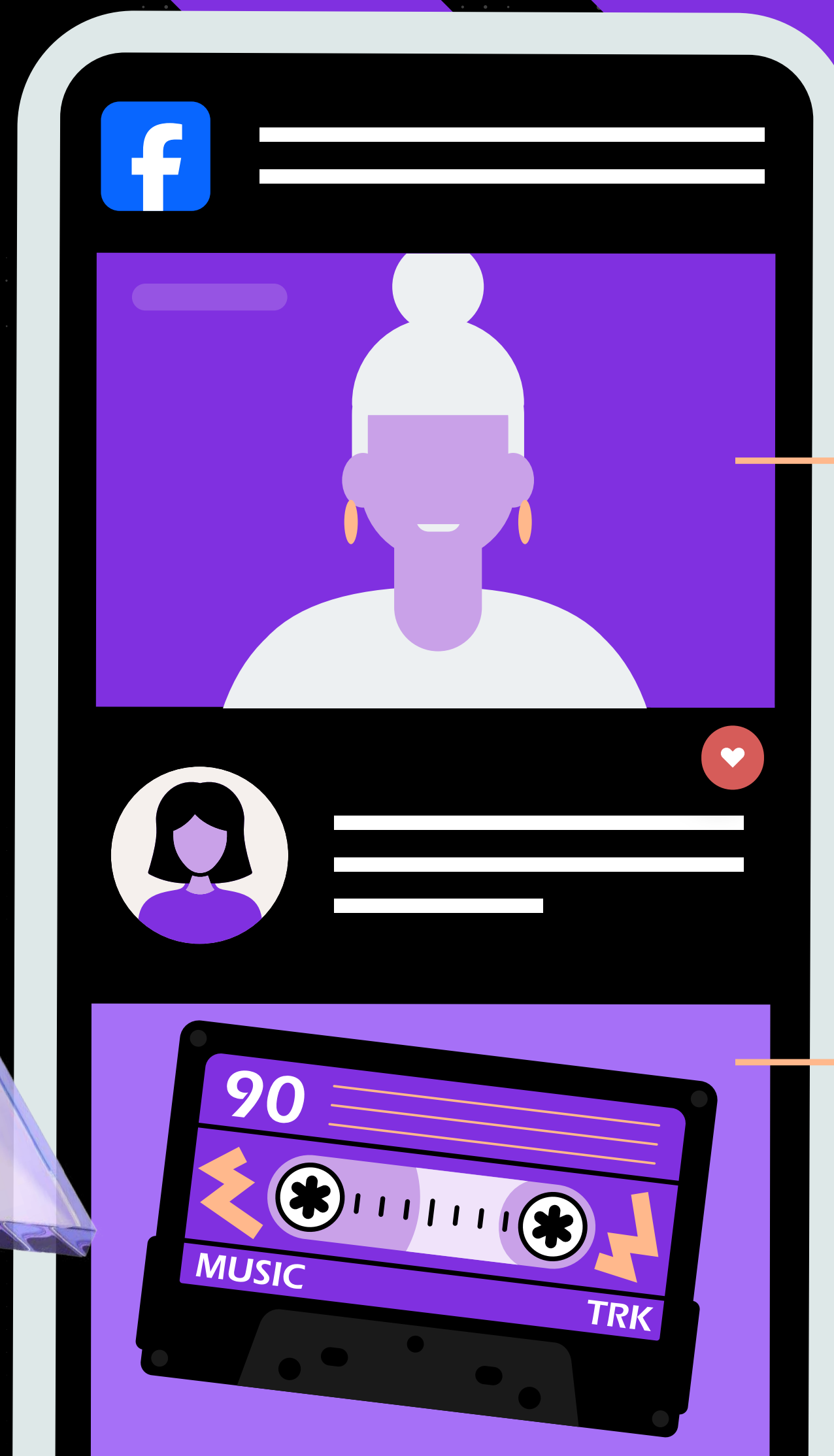
CONNECTIONS

Real-life relationships online. A place they come together to connect

NOSTALGIA

Somewhere to collect or outsource their memories

GEN/X

A Guide

ONLINE BEHAVIOUR

And here's the really good news – unlike other generations, **Gen X are more likely to follow a brand (75%) than say, a celebrity (72%) on social media.** In fact, Gen X understand social platforms are a really useful tool when it comes to discovering brands or products.

GENERATION X ARE MORE LIKELY TO FOLLOW A BRAND

75%

FOLLOW

THAN A CELEBRITY

72%

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

FOLLOW
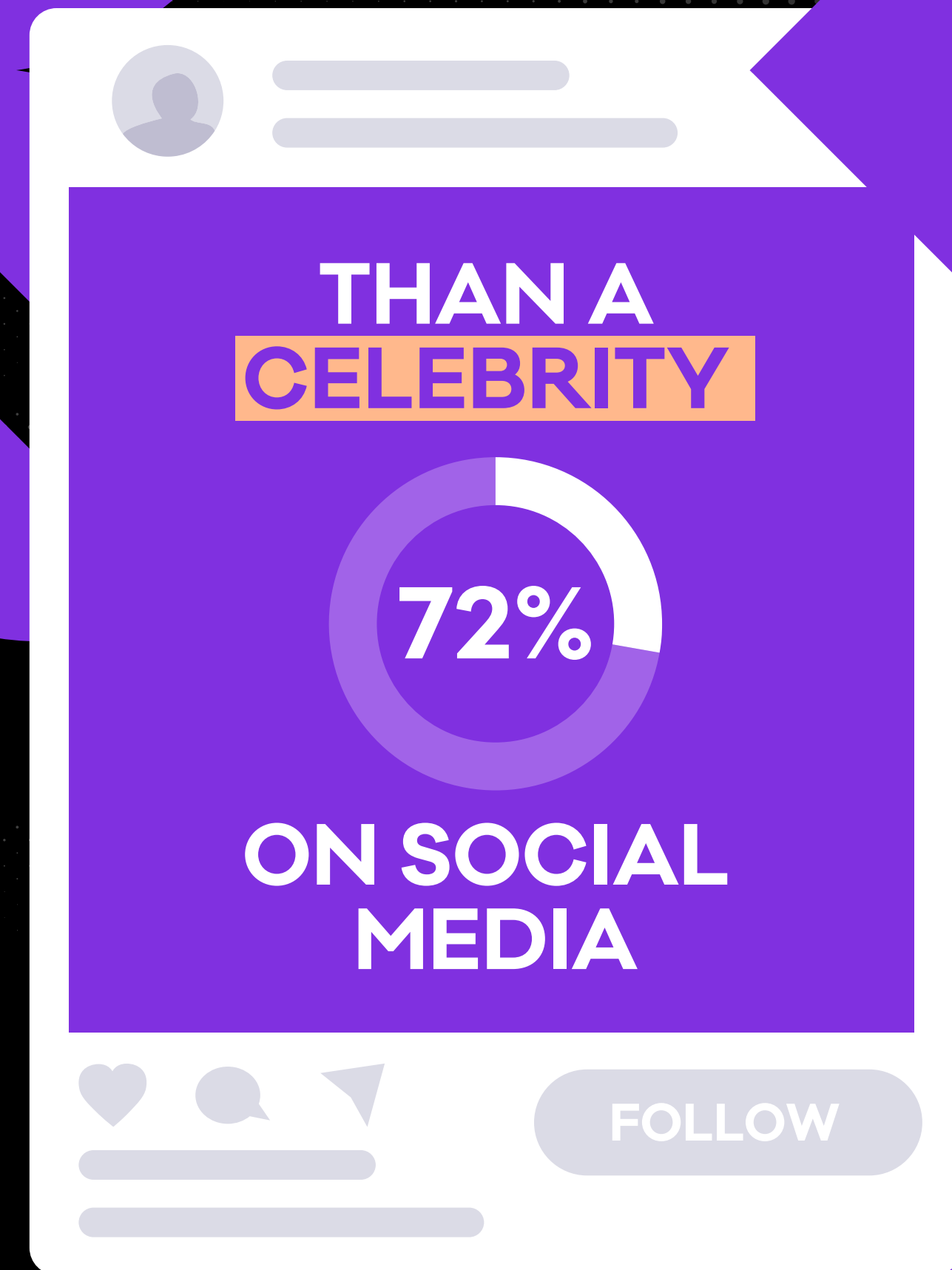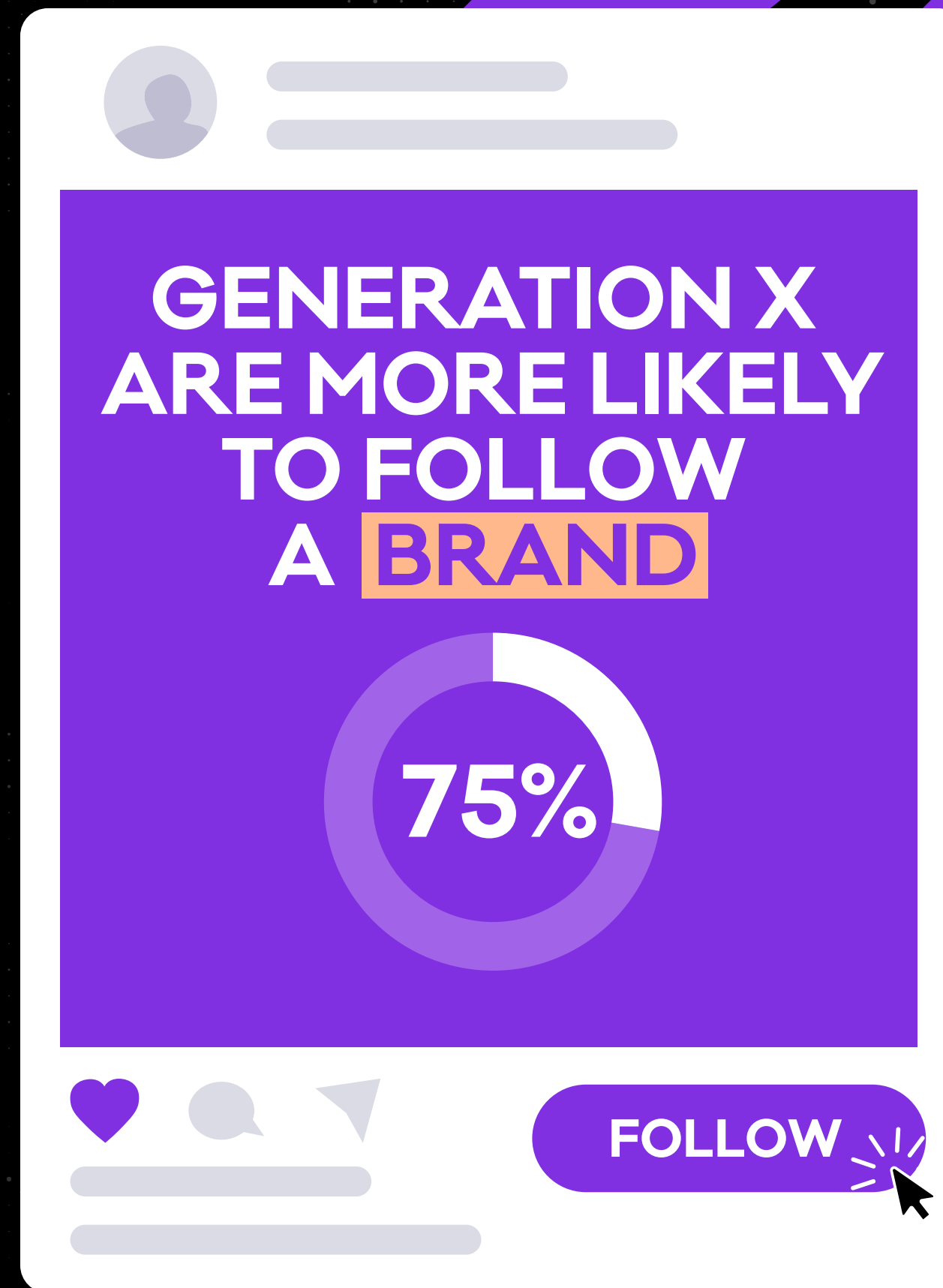
GEN/X

ONLINE PRODUCT DISCOVERY

You might assume Gen X would feel more comfortable going in store to shop. But that's a major misconception. No, for this time-starved cohort, the ease and convenience to discover, research and order products online at the touch of a button is super-appealing, even more so than for younger consumers.

GEN/X

HOW DO YOU RESEARCH NEW HEALTH AND BEAUTY PRODUCTS BEFORE YOU PURCHASE?

- I RESEARCH AND BUY PRODUCTS ONLINE
- I RESEARCH ONLINE BUT THEN GO INTO STORE TO TRY AND BUY
- I RESEARCH AND BUY IN-STORE
- I DON'T REALLY RESEARCH PRODUCTS
- I RESEARCH IN STORE AND TEST OUT PRODUCTS BUT THEN BUY ONLINE
- I BUY NEW PRODUCTS ON IMPULSE IN STORE OR ONLINE

8%
31%
13%
15%
19%
14%
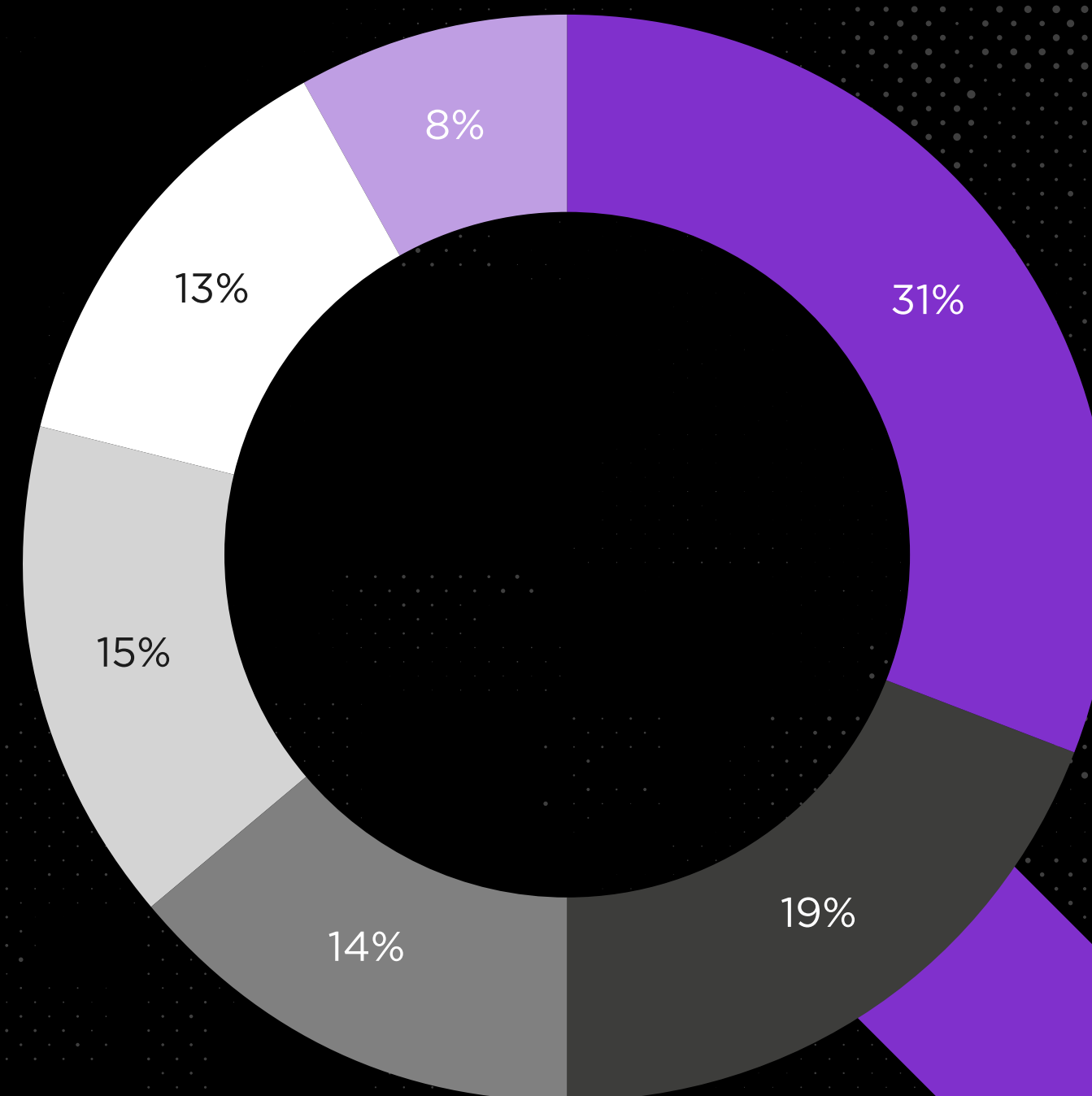
EXCLUSIVELY BUYING AND RESEARCHING IN STORE:

14%
GEN X

15%
MILLENNIALS

28%
GEN Z

WHAT'S DRIVING THIS?

Mobile, bite-size friendly online discover is key, with over half of all Gen Xers saying they look online for health and beauty inspiration, compared to 9% saying TV and 7% magazines.

Gen X recognises the power of social platforms to discover brands. It's changed the way they shop and many of them applauded the fact that it's allowed them to discover brands they would never have found otherwise.

PERCENTAGE (y-axis): 0, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25

Bar chart values:
- Instagram: 24%
- Word Of Mouth: 14%
- Other Social Media: 13%
- Youtube: 9%
- TV: 9%
- In-Store: 8%
- Magazines: 7%
- Influences: 6%
- Tiktok: 6%
- Linkedin: 3%
- Forum: 1%

SOURCE (x-axis)
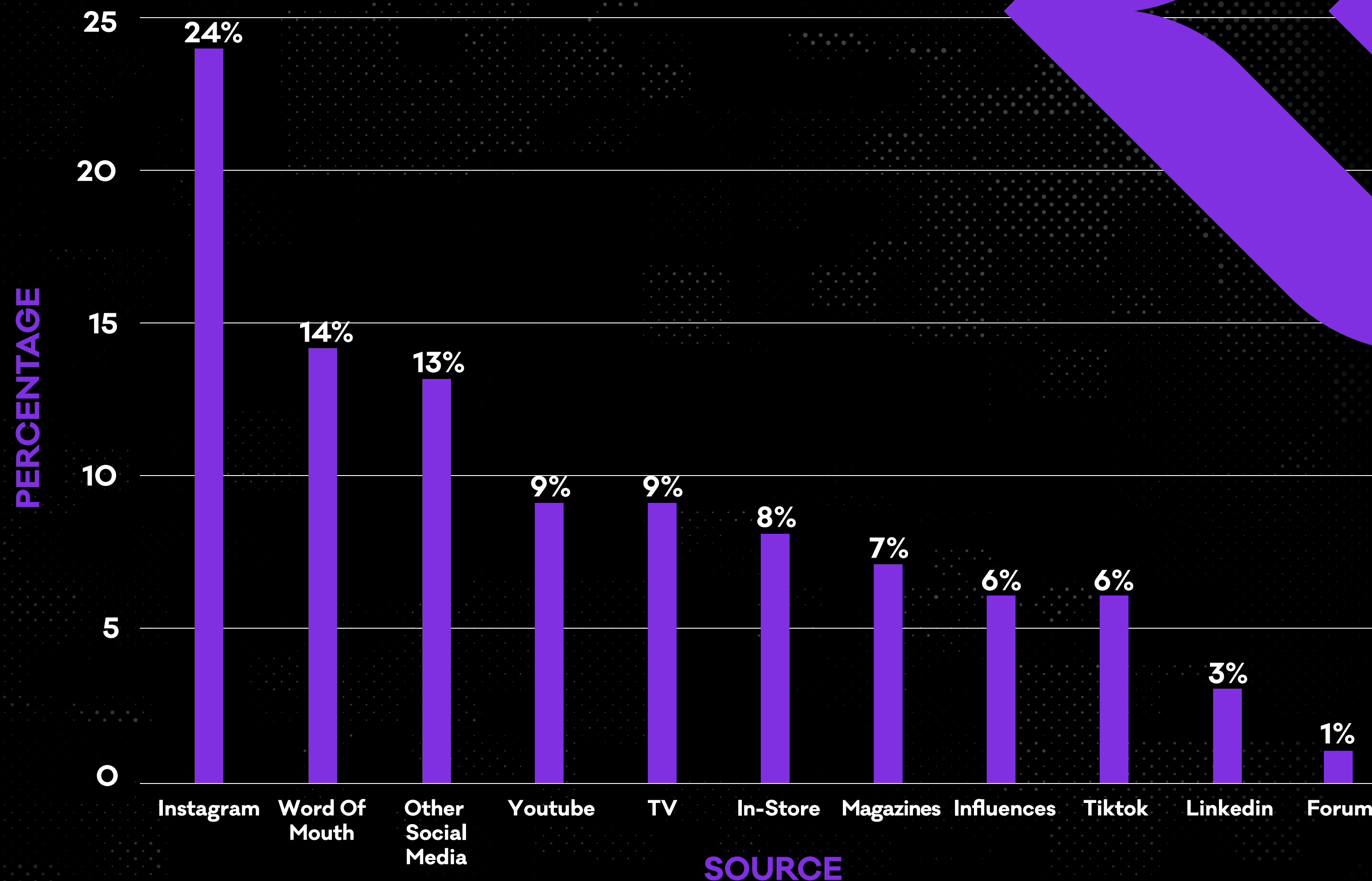
WHAT'S DRIVING THIS?

That said, **they're less promiscuous than younger consumers when it comes to what they buy**, considering 27% fewer brands than younger audiences and their purchases tend to be more driven by need.

Because they're less likely to buy on a whim, social media alone is unlikely to drive purchase. It's one of several steps in their buying journey: **when exposed to a brand on social, many of them go to other places to validate -** this includes reviews, checking with their network, seeking out the brand in more trusted offline touchpoints like TV or other retail touchpoints. So, brands must think omnichannel.
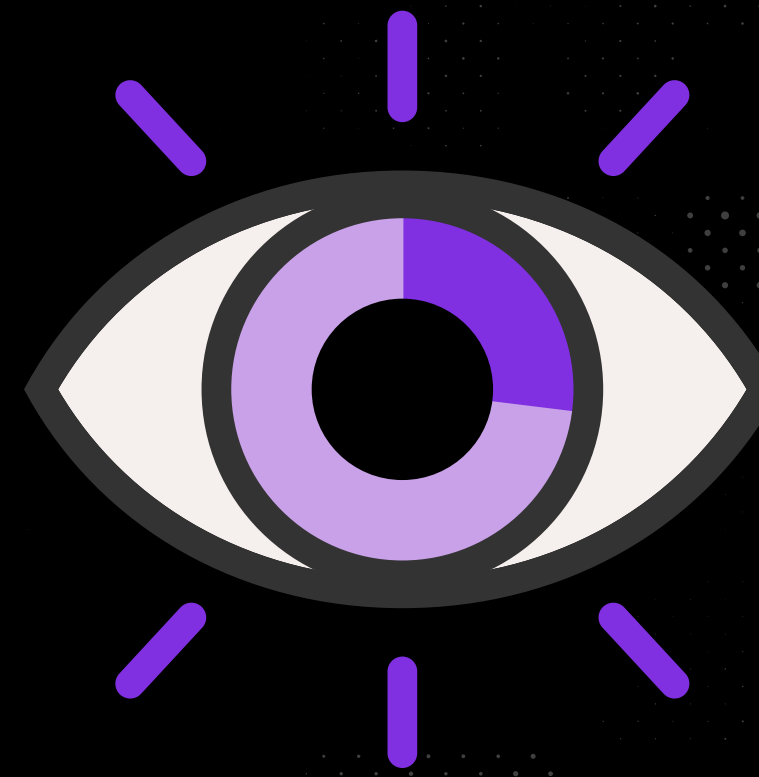
GEN/X

GEN X CONSIDER 27% FEWER BRANDS THAN YOUNGER AUDIENCES
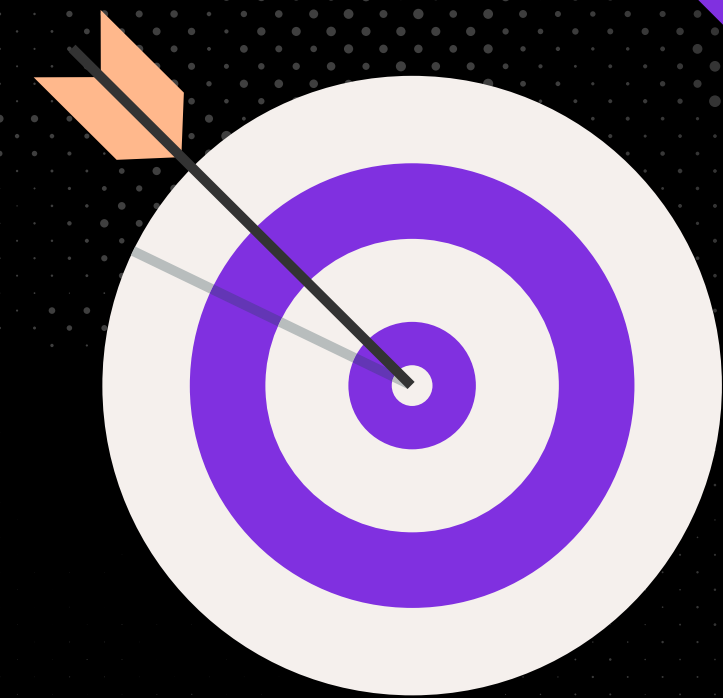
PURCHASES ARE DRIVEN BY NEED

HOW TO ENGAGE, WIN AND RETAIN THE LOYALTY OF GEN X ONLINE

We know they want to discover, research and, armed with the right knowledge and level of trust, purchase online. How can we make sure we help that happen, from reaching them on the platforms they're most active, to serving them the kind of content they want to see, while engaging and talking to them in ways they'll be most responsive to?

WHAT DO THEY WANT TO SEE?

Like most generations today, **Gen X favour video**. This doesn't mean there isn't a role for imagery to play, of course, but the rise of TikTok, Reels and YouTube Shorts has seen social algorithms give these and other video formats even greater prominence which, when combined with Gen X's preference for video content, means **video must be at the centre of your digital output.**

Put simply, you'll need to be pushing out A LOT of video content. But, as we'll see later, this needn't mean it's all created by you and your brand.

But first, let's look at what should be in those videos.

IMAGE VS. VIDEO
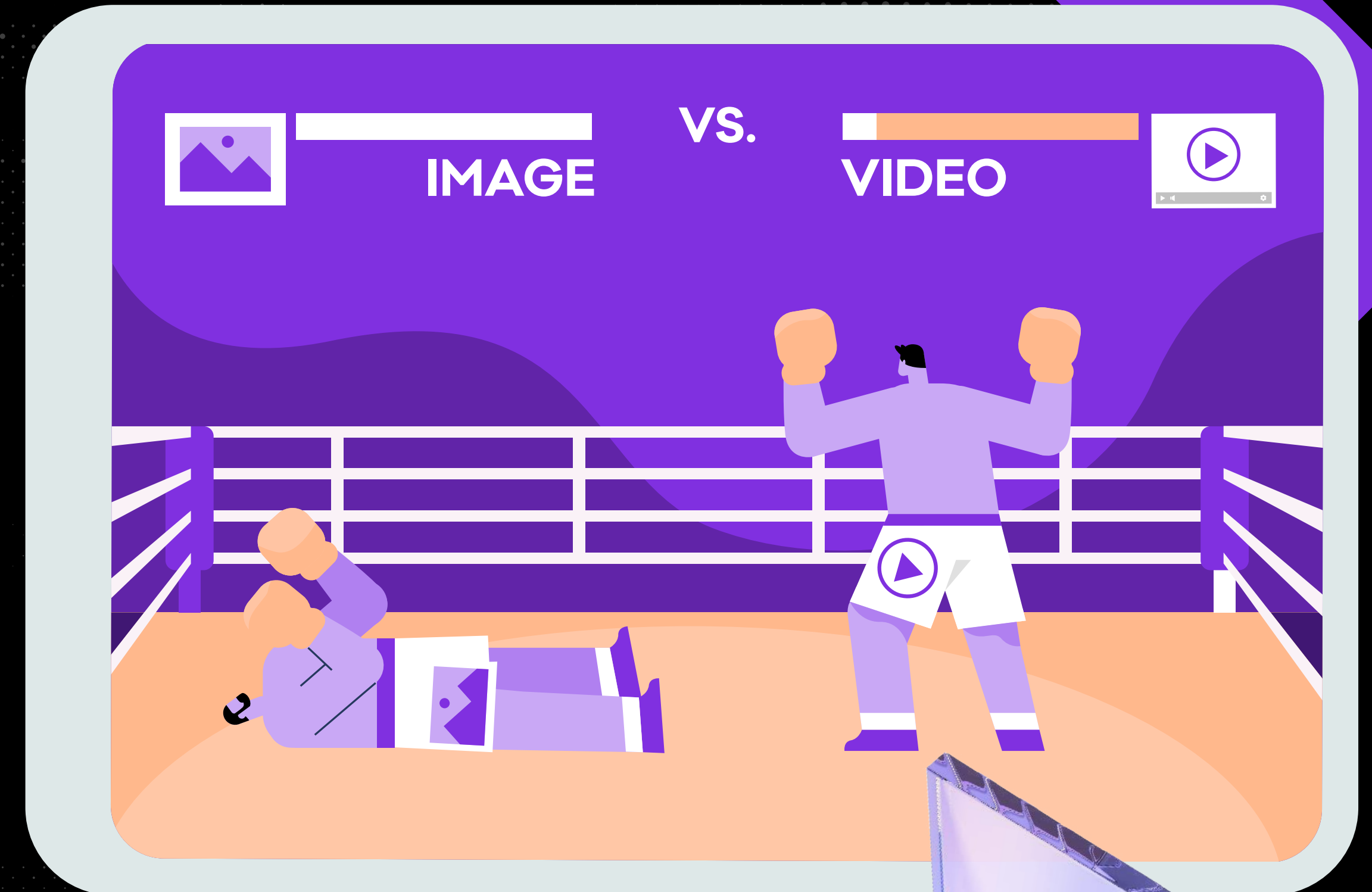
GEN/X

VIDEO CONTENT

Starting with **YouTube, 43% of Gen X women say this platform is where they go to be educated or inspired.** With 25% stating they look to videos for Health & beauty inspiration, while 20% say they look for videos that provide education & tutorials around specific products or brands. So, **educational content is one area to focus your efforts**, producing video content that informs and educates, be it product ingredients, regime tips or application/usage instructions.

25%
of these say they look to videos for Health & beauty inspiration
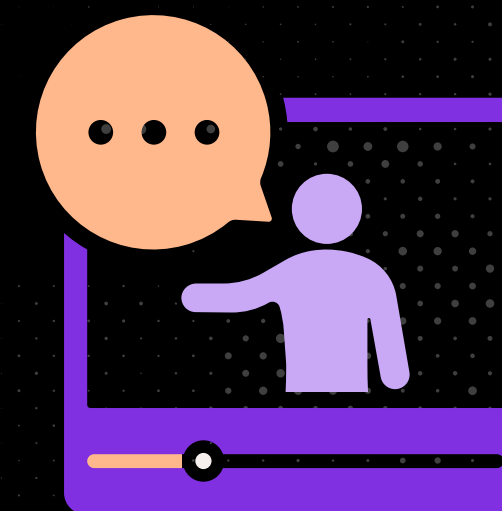
20%
say they look for videos that provide for education & tutorials

x2
as likely to browse YouTube when on a 'learning mission'

GEN/X

VIDEO CONTENT

85%

say authenticity is important when deciding which brands to support

42%

of Gen X want to see people of their age or life stage in advertising

And what else? Well, as far as your Gen X audience is concerned, **keep it real** – they want authenticity, relatability and representation above all

85% say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support. And, when asked what would influence them to buy a new health & beauty product, 42% of Gen X women told us they wanted to see people of their age/life stage in advertising and other communications. We already know that Gen X and older are under-represented in advertising (just 24% of TV ads feature people over 50), and 79% of users aged 55+ told us they don't see themselves reflected in ads.

VIDEO CONTENT

The message is clear, when it comes to content, **users want to see themselves reflected back.** It's crucial your brand and content doesn't go chasing or showcasing an overly idealistic view of who they think their customers are.

So, if you're targeting Gen X, ensure you're using women of similar ages and life-stages within your content, from social media posts and photoshoots, through to the influencers and ambassadors you choose to work with.

STAY POSITIVE!

And keep it positive! We've heard how brands targeting women in their 40s and 50s can inadvertently make them feel older than they are, e.g. grey hair or focussing on the negative aspects of aging. These women want to be reminded that life didn't stop when they hit 40, and **there are plenty of active, inspiring women in this age group.**

SHINE LIKE SUN

POSITIVE ENERGY

WOW

OMG

DO GOOD

ONLY GOOD MOOD

GOOD VIBES

A Guide

GEN/X

STAY POSITIVE!

Which leads us on to messaging. Remember – Gen X want to feel seen and they want to feel heard. So again, in the name of authenticity, don't feel you need to shy away from talking about the big issues. Menopause, elderly parents, health issues, kids leaving home – this life stage can be challenging, and by talking about these issues head on, you're letting Gen X know they're not alone, fostering a sense of community. It's a theme we'll come back to, but make them 'feel seen', with an acceptance, discussion and ideally, a solution, to their problems.

To that end, root any content in highly relatable, real-world scenarios that Gen Xers can relate too. And of course, **avoid lumping the entire age bracket together!**

It can be convenient for marketers to think in terms of generations, but actually, people are more connected by ideals rather than age. For example, two people of different ages but with the same career or job may share more in common than with two Gen Xers from completely different walks of life. So, don't generalise!

NO BULLSH*T

Another big tip when it comes to messaging targeted at Gen X? No BS! While (perhaps surprisingly) Gen X are less cynical about new products and innovations than Gen Z and Millennials (two thirds are happy to believe that innovation can lead to better products), they're also information led.

Don't think you can just dazzle them with a new ingredient – there's little appetite for made up, pseudo-scientific terms or ingredients. Gen X want to know, in the simplest terms, what's in it for them? So, if you have great a new product innovation or technology, showcasing proper data and explaining how the products or ingredients work and will deliver results can go a long way in creating credibility and product interest.

And this more cynical stance also means Gen X have less tolerance for overly salesy or hyperbolic content, especially from influencers.

GEN/X

PROMO CODE

20% OFF

PROMOPRO

APPLY CODE

NO BULLSH*T

LASTLY, WHEN IT COMES TO MESSAGING, REMEMBER THIS:

Gen X are savvy shoppers who value financial security: this is a generation who may be preparing to send kids to college or dealing with aging parents who need care, so despite their disposable income, discounts and added value will resonate strongly. Gen X are looking for deals as well as long-term financial health.

YOUR CONTENT SHOULD:

GEN/X

- ✓ **MAKE THEM FEEL GOOD**
- ✓ **GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT**
- ✓ **BE RELATABLE**
- ✓ **AVOID USING MADE-UP WORDS OR FADDY INGREDIENTS**
- ✓ **NOT PATRONISE OR STEREOTYPE**
- ✓ **OFFER VALUE**

GEN/X

X

UNDER THE INFLUENCE: INFLUENCERS, UGC, AMBASSADORS & REVIEWS

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Friends, family and professionals are still Gen X's most trusted sources for Health & Beauty product recommendations, but they're **increasingly turning to influencers**. Now, while Gen X still have reservations around both influencers and celebs - lack of expertise, perceived impartiality or fake authenticity all undermine their credibility in the eyes of Gen X - according to our research, 1 in 5 Gen X women can still be persuaded by an influencer (up from just 7% in 2020). In short, they're still an integral part of any Gen X-focussed digital strategy.

With that said, how can you address the concerns mentioned and still run an effective influencer campaign?

LIVE

1 IN 5 GEN X WOMEN CAN BE PERSUADED BY AN INFLUENCER

GEN/X

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

Well, again, **authenticity, relatability and perceived 'realness' are all key.** Gen X are more likely to engage and respond significantly more positively to content which features creators of their own age and who are representative of them, with content that features relatable scenarios or similar challenges to those faced by Gen X.

GEN/X

Make sure you're working with creators who reflect this audience's everyday life, rather than turning them off by using creators living lavish lifestyles in unattainable settings.

To that end, there's a sceptism and distrust of some celebrities and large influencers. Their size can bring eyeballs to a brand, but with that reach comes a perceived lack of authenticity once again. So consider the follower size of your would-be influencers carefully.

SLEEP THEN

A Guide

THE NEED TO TAKE
A LONGER-TERM
APPROACH

So, you know you need to work with smaller influencers ideally, and they need to be of a similar age to your Gen X audience, while being mindful to create content that is grounded, relatable and attainable. Great. But, it's not enough to do that once!

Rather than jumping from creator to creator, campaign to campaign, take a longer term approach and build lasting relationships with your brand ambassadors. Unlike short, one-off, buzz-building pieces of content which can be effective among younger audiences, creators need to earn the trust of Gen X and establish credibility through ongoing activity.

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11		13	14
					20	21
22	23		25		27	28

THE IMPORTANCE OF UGC

THE ISSUE OF TRUST LEADS AS ONTO USER GENERATED CONTENT (UGC) AND THE IMPORTANCE OF REAL STORIES FROM REAL USERS.

When it comes to buying online, people are still wary. Especially our Gen X audience who's financial savviness we've already established. People rely on information from other shoppers to help them feel confident enough to purchase. The more detailed and reliable that information is, the better.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UGC

That's where UGC comes in:

92%
OF CONSUMERS TRUST RECOMMENDATIONS FROM REAL PEOPLE OVER TRADITIONAL ADVERTISING.

86%
OF CONSUMERS PRIORITIZE AUTHENTICITY WHEN CHOOSING BEAUTY PRODUCTS.

61%
OF BEAUTY CONSUMERS PREFER ENGAGING WITH UGC OVER TRADITIONAL BRAND CONTENT,

UGC EMPOWERS CUSTOMERS TO BECOME ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS IN A LIKE-MINDED COMMUNITY
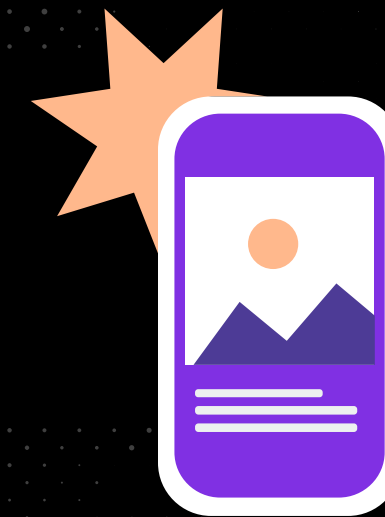
UNDER THE INFLUENCE

But, most important of all? UGC improves conversion rates! In fact, according to sampling company Bazaarvoice, customers are more likely to buy a product if the page has:

81%

WRITTEN REVIEWS

66%

CUSTOMER PHOTOS

62%

CUSTOMER VIDEOS

GEN/X

UNDER THE INFLUENCE

GEN/X

And, while **50% of shoppers say they'd like to see a mix of UGC and professional photography when buying, if they had to make a choice, they state they'd pick UGC.**

WHY? IT'S MORE AUTHENTIC, MORE RELIABLE, MORE TRUSTWORTHY.

And this tallies with what we're seeing across social media. As we mentioned when speaking about representation and relatability earlier, people want to see themselves reflected back, and UGC does this in a way that branded content and creator-made content can't.

UGC: HOW TO GET IT AND HOW TO USE IT!

So it's important to revisit your UGC strategy, and consider: how are you going to generate and use UGC? **There are some simple pointers to get you started:**

CREATE A UGC HASHTAG & USE IT EVERYWHERE:
Promote the hashtag on as many touchpoints as possible: social bios, website, packaging, retail stores, shopping bags, delivery notes and confirmation emails, etc. Everyone likes to think they could be featured!
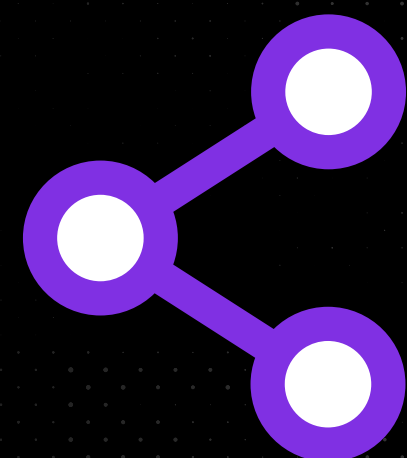
SHARE IT EVERYWHERE, OFTEN:
Post UGC as regularly as possible. Not only does this feed the algorithm with what users want, it will also prompt other customers to share their own content. Make sure you're creating a highlight on Instagram Stories where you can pin the best.

INCENTIVISE & REWARD:
Create challenges for users to participate in by sharing their content, reward the best with prizes. Run regular competitions and giveaways, with users encouraged to share their content as the means of entry, a great way to generate a lot of UGC, quickly.

MONITOR YOUR TAGS AND SOCIAL MENTIONS:
Responding and engaging with tagged content as often as possible will encourage users to share even more

GEN/X

GEN/X

THE REVIEWS ARE IN!

While UGC will live primarily on your socials, when it comes to showcasing real users and their experience with your brand, we also need to talk about reviews.

Reviews are a powerful tool when it comes to validating Gen X's interest in a brand or product. 75% of of Gen X women are influenced by product ratings or reviews when purchasing health & beauty products

Why? Validation! We know Gen X want to get straight to the point – which products work, why and how should they use them. Reviews cut through the noise and get to those facts: does the product work? What problem has it solved? And because it comes from a real user rather than the brand or an influencer, there is no ulterior motive present. Even better if the reviews include images or videos from users.

75% OF GEN X WOMEN ARE INFLUENCED BY PRODUCT RATINGS & REVIEWS WHEN SHOPPING HEALTH & BEAUTY PRODUCTS

THE REVIEWS ARE IN!

So, now's the time to revisit your review strategy:

Are you actively soliciting these? How often? And how long after purchase? If you're not seeing volume, consider adjusting the timing of when you ask for a review, or incentivising with an offer or discount

GEN/X

Also, make sure you have a sampling programme in place, ensuring you're getting product into the hands of real people to review on a regular basis. Not only does this drive genuine reviews in bulk, but it can also yield a good haul of useable UGC too.

Reviews are a great way to temper Gen X's natural scepticism, allowing them to view your brand as more trustworthy. And trust is a key point for this audience when we think of how they engage online.

GEN/X
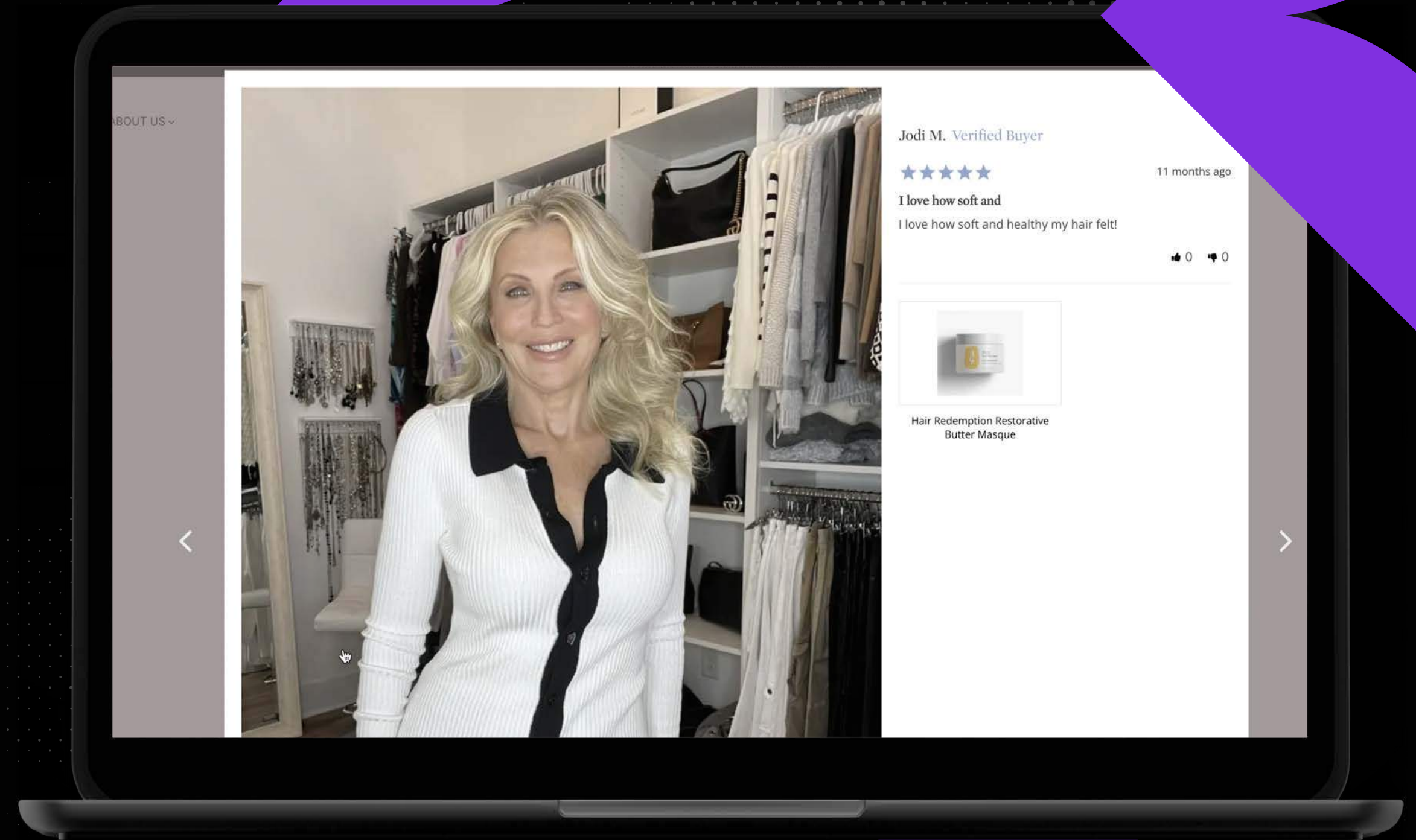
TRUST ME

'TRUST' IS 30% MORE IMPORTANT TO GEN X'S BUYING DECISIONS THAT IT IS FOR YOUNGER GENERATIONS

According to Wavemaker, 'trust' is 30% more important to Gen X's buying decisions than it is for younger generations. And while established brands can leverage social and use this to their advantage, it can be a lot harder for newer brands to build trust among consumers, with brands on social seen as untrustworthy until proven otherwise.

With the rise of things like TikTok shop, buyers can make a purchase at the tap of a button, but Gen X need reassurance before they take this leap.

Reviews, UGC and less aspirational, more 'real' content are all useful weapons on this quest for trustworthiness, while little bits of housekeeping on social such as ensuring your returns policy is clearly signposted (or even pinned as a Story highlight) can all help to establish trust and reassure your audience.

SUMMARY

All of this should have left you with a good understanding of who Gen X are and how you can best engage them online, whether that's the things they want to see, the words they want to read, or the different ways in which your content can help move them along their purchase journey.

Ultimately, the way to win over Gen X is with honest, genuine content that reflects their lived experiences. The reward for authentically connecting with this overlooked generation is a potential lifetime of brand loyalty.

KEY TAKEAWAYS
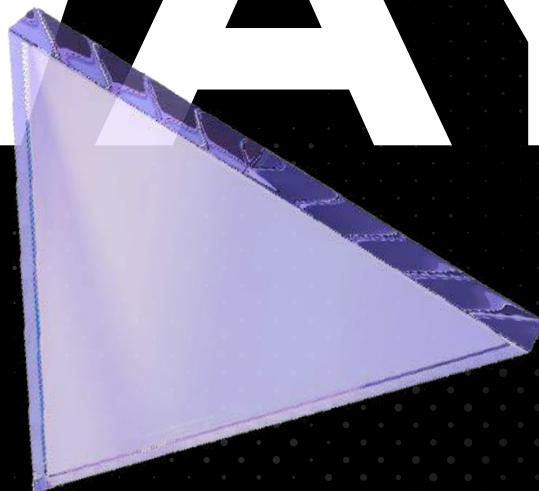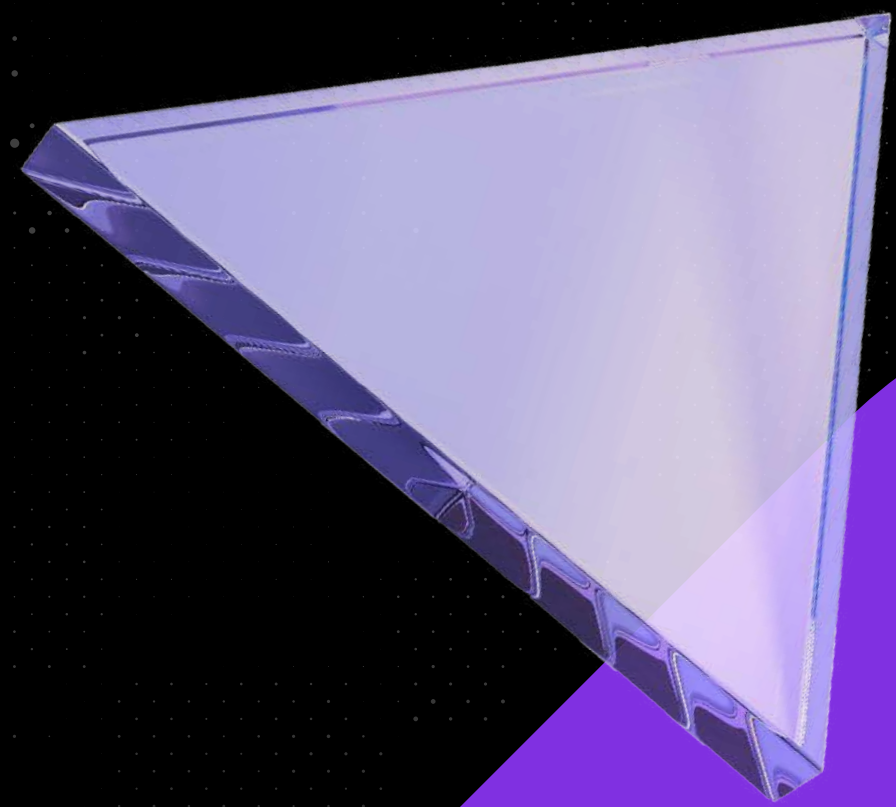
GEN/X

> Be Authentic And Keep It Real:

But that doesn't mean be boring! Gen X want content, products and brands they can relate to. So keep this in mind when producing content. Make it relatable not just to their life-stage and needs, but their day-to-day as well, whether it's making light of the numerous menopause symptoms, jumping on relevant trends or ensuring a good flow of UGC, make sure you're being as authentic and true to your Gen X consumers as possible.

> Straight Talking:

Gen X take won't stand for bs. They're sceptical, they're time poor and they've been there, done that. So give them the facts, communicate clearly and get to the point.

> Establish Trust:

We've said they don't want any nonsense. By the same token, they want to see products that work. So product reviews, UGC and real stories from real customers are all vital at building trust and loyalty among this audience. Make sure you've got product reviews enabled on your product pages, encourage and incentivise that flow of user generated content and think carefully about the creators you chose to work with – their size and their credibility are key.

THE PULL AGENCY

NEED HELP ACTIVATING & AMPLIFYING YOUR BRAND STORY?
GET IN TOUCH

info@thepullagency.com

THEPULLAGENCY.COM