

TEENAGERS FOREVER

Move aside Millennials. Today's teenagers are the new, hot age group that marketers are getting excited about.



MINTEL

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CHAPTER 1 CONSERVATIVE REBELS

There are a host of opportunities posed by this new generation which is more informed and more progressive than any before.

The current crop of teenagers will live and shop longer than any generation that came before them; so, it's understandable that they are taking their time to embrace the previously prized, independent and 'adult' freedoms of home, cars, sex and indulgence. Like all generations before them, they are facing the usual criticisms from elders, who are confounded and outraged by their levels of conservatism and connectivity. Yet there are a host of opportunities posed by this new generation which is more informed and more progressive than any before. In the pages that follow, we ask the question: What kind of world will Generation Z create?

Whilst today's teenagers might not quite attain immortality, those growing up in rich countries, like those in The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), can expect to better an already much-improved average life expectancy of 80 years and those in the longevity business, such as Aubrey De Grey of Strategies for Engineered Negligible Senescence (SENS), claim that the first teen who will live to the age of 1,000 already walks among us.

For this reason alone, marketers, manufacturers, advertisers and governments must wake up to the fact that this generation will set the agenda for decades to come and, even if they are not the chief spender in their household, they will likely be a chief influencer.

Living at home, in the midst of an ageing society, has made teens averse to their parents' vices, but these same guardians have also sheltered teens from work and experiences. The result is a generation rebelling against the cliches of rebellion itself in all its hoary old forms of alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and underage, unprotected sex. According to Mintel research, one in five UK 16-24s say they drink no alcohol and four in five Italian 18-20s agree it's not cool to get drunk. Only 28% of European 15-16s are smokers (down from 35% in 1999) and 18% are taking illicit drugs (down from 20% in the same period), according to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. US studies reported in The Economist show that just 41% of US 14-18s were sexually experienced in 2015, compared with 54% in 1991.

More attentive parenting, greater self-respect and a wider range of sources of information are all likely influences in changing these mindsets, but so are practicalities. After all, if you're going to live to 120, why hurry things?

Today's teens are unlikely to escape the extended home-life established by Gen Y: 48% of 18-to-34-year-olds in the EU were living with their parents in 2014, according to Eurostat, and there are concerns that cosseted lifestyles are softening further. The young are growing up in a convenience culture of Uber Eats and TaskRabbit, where we do not do, but we arrange for things to be done for us. The task-and opportunity-for many consumer-facing brands may be to reconnect people with the art of making, doing and learning.

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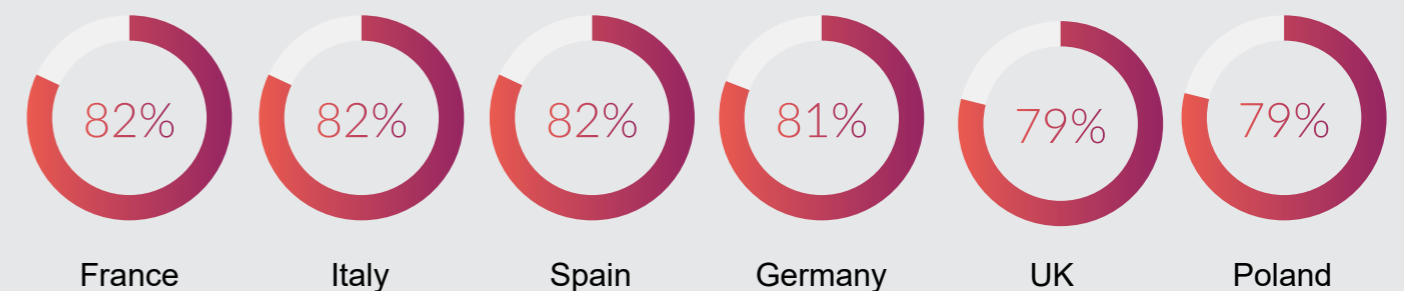


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Too cool for booze

“It's not cool to get drunk”; European consumers aged 18-20



Base: 183 UK internet users aged 18-20; 196 French internet users aged 18-20; 161 German internet users aged 18-20; 194 Italian internet users aged 18-20; 175 Spanish internet users aged 18-20; 221 Polish internet users aged 18-20
Source: Mintel European Consumer Research 2018

CHAPTER 2 PHONE HOME

Today's teens are more connected, more solitary and more sedentary than ever before. The old freedoms afforded by driving licences and part-time work are fading away in favour of a more digital, or virtual, form of escapism and the ante is constantly being upped. In 2018, Pew Research Center reported that 45% of US 13-17s said they were connected "almost constantly", up from just a quarter in 2015. Across OECD countries, 15-year-olds were clocking up 146 minutes online each weeknight in 2015, up from 105 minutes in 2012.

Parallel to this, Monitoring the Future—an ongoing study of the behaviours and values

of American youth—has reported a 40% decline in US teens who get together with their friends 'nearly every day' between 2000 and 2015; whilst Mintel data shows that 63% of UK 16-20s declare "I'd feel lonely if I didn't own a smartphone", underlining how the dynamics of social interaction have changed. This leaves some commentators agonising over a dystopian future of social isolation, foretold by the extreme example of Vinclu's Gatebox Communication Robot in Japan—a cylindrical projector containing digital assistant Azuma Hikari in living, anime 3D, who caters to the practical and emotional needs of Japan's lonely young males.

“The old freedoms afforded by driving licences and part-time work are fading away in favour of a more digital, or virtual, form of escapism.”

Lost without their smartphones

"I'd feel lonely if I didn't own a smartphone"; European consumers aged 16-20



Base: 265 UK internet users aged 16-20; 270 French internet users aged 16-20; 238 German internet users aged 16-20; 252 Italian internet users aged 16-20; 244 Spanish internet users aged 16-20; 284 Polish internet users aged 16-20
Source: Mintel European Consumer Research 2018



CHAPTER 3 HEALTH ISSUES

Statistically, today's teens are less happy and less healthy than previous generations, but is technology all to blame?

Mintel research shows that 33% of UK 16-20s "feel anxious or stressed" every day—more than twice the average; whilst youth depression, self-harm and suicide have escalated across all developed countries in the past decade. Economic pressures must be factored in, but it's difficult to escape the sense that such high levels of connectivity have added unique pressures for today's young. In the US, 25% of US consumers aged 18-22 say seeing others' posts on social media makes them feel bad about themselves, while 52% admit they find social media addictive, according to Mintel. Similarly, Mintel data shows that 54% of UK teenagers aged 12-18 find it hard to take a break from

being online, and as many as four in 10 say they have experienced negative personal comments online.

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Added to these mental pressures is the fact that today's teens are physically bigger and less active than their predecessors, something that threatens the extended

longevity potentially granted them by medical advances and their rejection of many rebellious vices.

The World Health Organization reported that the number of obese 5-19-year-olds rose more than tenfold globally, from 11 million in 1975 to 124 million in 2016, with an additional 213 million also being overweight in 2016. Besides diet, sedentary, digital lifestyles and decreased activity levels are key issues. A US National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey study employing fitness trackers found no discernible difference between the relative activity levels of 19-year-olds and 60-year-olds. In EU countries, regular physical activity among adolescents is low, at only 10% for 15-year-old girls and 20% for boys the same age from 2013-14.

4 CHAPTER SOLUTIONS

The challenges are there, certainly, but so are the solutions, and providing connection, inspiration, control and stimulation can pay commercial dividends for brands.

In response to growing numbers of depression cases, UK physicians are prescribing patients sketching and sculpting workshops. Meanwhile, in Italy, the government's Culture Bonus grants €500 as an 18th birthday present

“
Sensorial and social experiences can make people happier.”



for artistic courses and exhibitions; suggesting ways in which brands might engage and stimulate young consumers. In Brazil, Red Bull's new platform Find Your Band is a case in point, as it strives to help connect bands and potential musical members.

Another area where brands can help the next generation of customers is by offering ways to control and maximise time, and also

to raise activity and concentration levels. Incentives may prove key here, as exemplified by the Hold app which tracks students' smartphone usage and rewards them with points redeemable at Caffè Nero, Vue cinemas and Amazon for every 20 minutes they do not use their mobile phone between 7am and 11pm. In France, Urban'r is an app with a similar approach, with real-world sports missions earning reward points with partnering brands.

Sensorial and social experiences can make people happier. According to Mintel, four in five UK 16-20s say eating food makes them happy; whilst in the US, 93% of young consumers aged 18-22 say they are passionate about their hobbies and interests.

We've seen numerous laudable examples of brands striving to be 'social enablers' in this regard, from Nescafé's Hello Bench shortening in length when two people sit on it, to an Apple store in Chicago that hosts photography and coding classes; Nike supporting an inner city basketball court in Paris' Pigalle district; and Gap and Waitrose hosting in-store exercise and yoga classes in the UK.



5 CHAPTER ETHICS

“
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Despite their challenges, today's teens are a more informed generation and will question and demand more from companies. Access to information means it has never been easier to find and support ethical causes, as embodied by Patagonia Action Works, a digital platform that connects people to petitions and local environmental initiatives. For all the talk of sedentary lifestyles, it should also be acknowledged that this generation can rapidly mobilise behind causes in the streets—witness the 1.2 million young Americans who joined March for Our Lives events in the wake of recent gun tragedies—or online—in the case of the British 18-year-old Amika George's change.org campaign to make sanitary products a human right.

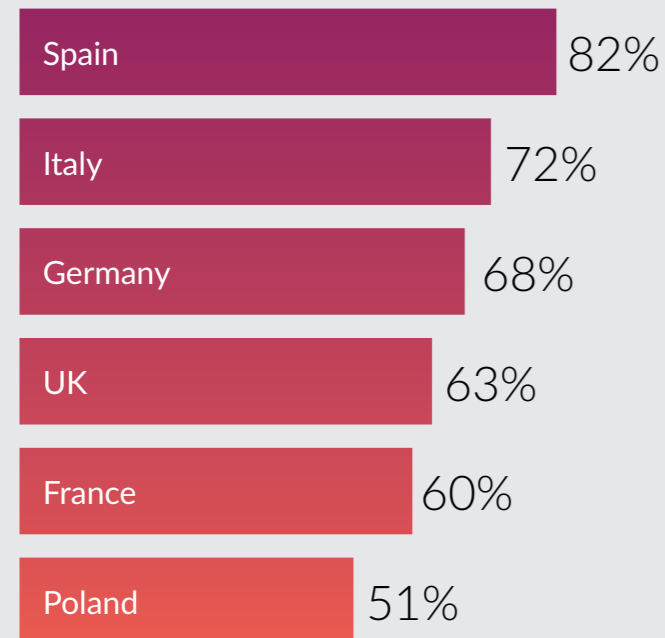
This is a generation optimistic about its power to make a change, embodied by the 47% of US 18-22-year-olds who believe they can make the world a better

place, according to Mintel research. Similarly, 85% of Italian 12-14-year-old boys believe that everyone can do something useful for the environment with their own behaviour, according to Laboratorio Adolescenza. These attitudes are most likely nurtured by growing up in an era where mainstream brands like British frozen food supermarket Iceland are removing palm oil and plastic packaging from their products, Rimmel London is recruiting 17-year-old male beauty bloggers like Lewys Ball and Italian energy company Sorgenia's spokesperson is Paralympic champion Beatrice Maria "Bebe" Vio.



For the love of animals

“I’m concerned about how food and drink companies treat animals”; European consumers aged 16-20:



Base: 265 UK internet users aged 16-20; 270 French internet users aged 16-20; 238 German internet users aged 16-20; 252 Italian internet users aged 16-20; 244 Spanish internet users aged 16-20; 284 Polish internet users aged 16-20
Source: Mintel European Consumer Research 2018

Going forward, animal welfare and gender equality are two major issues brands will need to heed. According to Mintel, some 63% of UK 16-20s say they are concerned about how food companies treat animals, whilst the #MeToo movement is quickly moving from politics and entertainment to consumerism. Today’s young are growing up in a cultural era where Disney’s Star Wars films, produced by Kathleen Kennedy, feature prominent new female characters and companies are being compelled to publish an annual statement on their gender pay practices. These young consumers will soon evaluate who they buy from—not just who they work for—on the grounds of equality.



CHAPTER 6 FUTURE FORWARD

Today’s teenagers will react to and shape the world they grow into in numerous ways.

Firstly, they are growing up as the most eco-aware generation the world has seen. In the UK, Oxford University Press declared ‘plastic’ the word of the year for 2018 after it appeared 3,359 times in the titles of children’s stories across schools, influenced by Sir David Attenborough’s Blue Planet II programme.

Thanks to ‘gig economies’ and automation, the way people work will change and the threats posed to taxation and social services are already sufficient enough for governments to have begun trialling Universal Basic Income schemes. For mainstream brands this may prove to be a boon, yielding them more customers with money to spend.

In conclusion, it’s crucial not to misconceive teenage as a phase—their values will persist and influence their family for years to come. It’s clear that abstinence in



vices, alongside ‘sin taxes’, will grow, furthered by the influence of an ageing, increasingly religious society and growing government health bills. Meanwhile, today’s young will pioneer their own ways to curb connectivity’s grip on time, whilst seeking out active, therapeutic social enablers in food, retail and leisure. The good news for all is that their awareness to embrace ethical and ecological issues will make this the most informed and demanding of consumer groups in the years to come.

“It’s crucial not to misconceive teenage as a phase—their values will persist and influence their family for years to come.”

Richard Cope

Richard is a Senior Trends Consultant at Mintel, bringing the latest consumer trends to Mintel clients through bespoke presentations and on-site visits. He also runs co-creation facilitation workshops for custom clients and represents Mintel at conferences and in the media.

Working at Mintel, I relish learning about the new innovations happening on a daily basis. As a result, I discover the long-term trends that will shape society, interpret the opportunities they present and bring these to life in person in front of an audience to help clients with their future strategies. Every day is different and I'm lucky to travel, see trends playing out across the world and meet our clients in person.



PAST EXPERIENCE

With over a decade of experience in market research, Richard brings Trends alive for Mintel's clients on a daily basis. His 2016 UK Predictions project was presented and discussed face to face with an audience of over 1,000 clients, while another pan-European project on how to re-define luxury and help consumers maximise their time has already reached numerous clients across Italy, France, Poland, Spain and Germany.

Richard's other recent projects have included exploring the emergence of Africa as a new consumer market, the rise of virtual and augmented reality and the opportunities presented by an ageing population. As a globally recognised leading trends commentator, he is regularly called on by media worldwide to provide insight and analysis into consumer trends. A selection of recent highlights include defining the modern day family at a special event for broadcaster ITV, analysing the feminist fightback against sexist pricing for The Times, discussing the resurgence of print books in The Guardian and providing commentary on seniors and romance for BBC's Love Later in Life project.

Richard is also a key speaker at Mintel's 'Big Conversation' client events across Europe, presenting on everything from technology and beauty, to the future of retail and modern relationships. He also delivers bespoke presentations at trade shows across the globe, including World Travel Market, Brand Republic, packaging forum Trendtag Glas and at conferences as far afield as Philadelphia, Aruba and Whistler.

Before becoming more focused on client and media-facing work, Richard managed Mintel's travel report series and led the editorial team of the Mintel Trends site. Prior to Mintel, Richard worked in travel research for Corporate Intelligence group, part of the Economist's Intelligence Unit (EIU). He also worked in charities involved in mentoring and cultural preservation work in Bosnia. Richard holds a degree in Modern History from Oxford University.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Consumer Insights; Trend Predictions; Market Analysis; Strategy Development; Media Interviews; Co-creation and Facilitation Workshops

RECENTLY PUBLISHED CONTENT

Trends Presentations: Sustaining Sustainability; Africa The Light Continent; Packaging Futures

LATEST EVENTS/ CONFERENCES SPOKEN AT

World Travel Market; Deutsches Verpackungsinstitut; Mintel Big Conversations – London, Manchester, Milan, Frankfurt, Warsaw, Paris, Barcelona

MEDIA PUBLICATIONS FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IN

The Guardian; The Times; ITV; BBC; The Financial Times

If you are interested in Richard speaking at your strategy event or running a workshop to help you create a new product or campaign, please get in touch.

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