



Gen Z: The Future of Fundraising

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INTRODUCTION

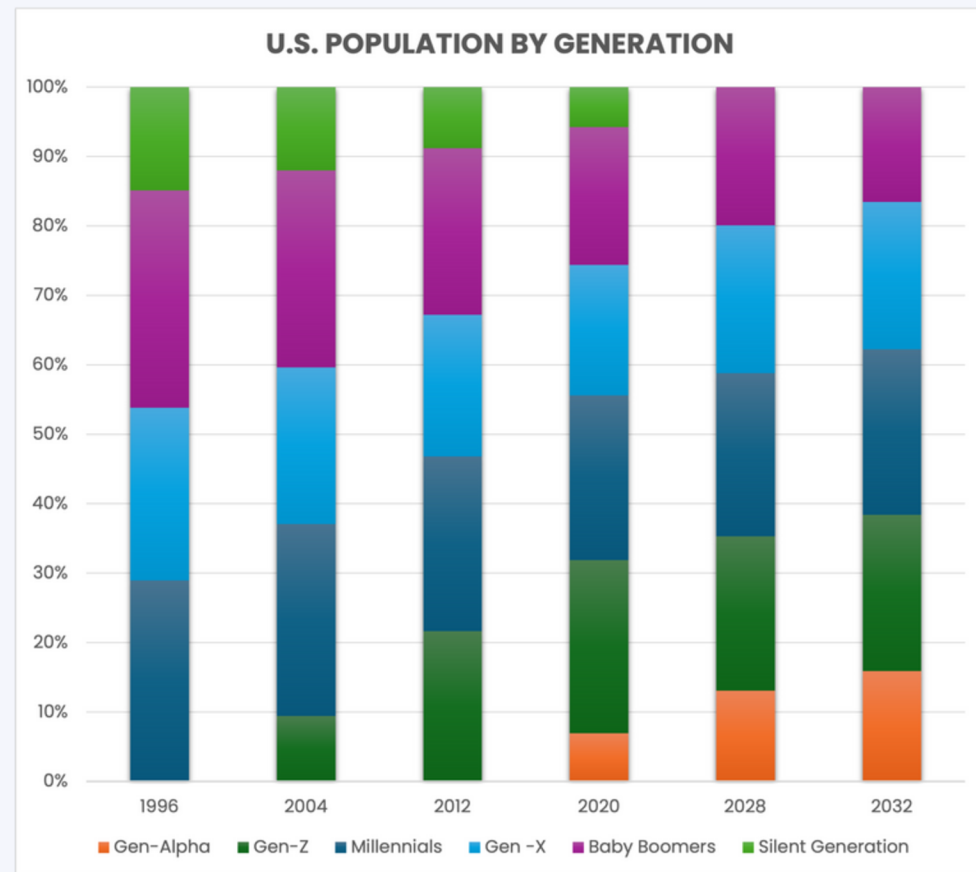
In today's increasingly digital landscape, fundraising strategies must evolve to align with the preferences and behaviors of emerging generations. Generation Z (Gen Z) stands out as a critical demographic among these generations. **Born between the late 1990s and early 2010s, Gen Z represents the first generation to grow up fully immersed in digital and mobile technology.**

Their unique communication and technology preferences make mobile fundraising more vital than ever, particularly when it comes to peer-to-peer (P2P) fundraising. This whitepaper explores the significance of Gen Z, their mobile-first behaviors, and why these trends underscore the future of fundraising.

THE IMPORTANCE OF **ENGAGING GEN Z**

Gen Z accounts for approximately **32% of the global population**¹, making them a powerful force in shaping cultural and economic trends. As digital natives, they wield significant influence over technological adoption and are actively involved in social causes.

According to research, nearly **75% of Gen Z believe it's important to support causes they care about**², and they are more likely than previous generations to use their platforms to promote and participate in social good.



Engaging Gen Z is not optional for nonprofit organizations—it's essential. This cohort brings a sense of urgency to social causes, values transparency, and prioritizes authenticity in their interactions. To connect effectively with Gen Z, fundraising strategies must align with their habits, particularly their reliance on mobile technology.

The importance of Generation Z is amplified by the demographic shifts occurring globally. Older generations such as the Silent Generation and Baby Boomers are gradually declining in both numbers and influence. While these groups have contributed significantly to philanthropy in the past, their capacity to engage with modern, mobile-driven fundraising campaigns is often limited by their technological adoption rates. In contrast, **Gen Z represents the future—both as donors and as fundraisers.**

Several key factors highlight why Gen Z matters most when it comes to fundraising:

Sheer Size and Economic Impact. Gen Z is the largest generational cohort worldwide. As they enter the workforce and attain greater purchasing power, their economic influence will continue to grow exponentially.

Digital Prowess. Gen Z's familiarity with technology ensures they are highly adaptable to new platforms and tools. Their comfort with mobile apps, QR codes, and SMS messaging makes them the ideal audience for modern fundraising efforts.

Cultural Relevance. This generation is shaping trends and setting the tone for how businesses, nonprofits, and society at large operate. Their preferences drive innovation, making them a critical audience for organizations looking to remain relevant.

Long-Term Engagement Potential. Engaging Gen Z now establishes a foundation for lifelong support. Organizations that build relationships with this generation early can cultivate enduring loyalty and advocacy.

By focusing on Gen Z, organizations can **future-proof their fundraising strategies** and ensure sustained success in an evolving world. This is not to discount the contributions of older generations but rather to recognize the shifting dynamics of influence and engagement.

GEN Z'S MOBILE TENDENCIES AND USAGE PATTERNS

Gen Z lives and breathes mobile technology. Recent studies show that 98% of this generation owns a smartphone³, and they spend an average of six hours daily on their devices. Their mobile tendencies include a preference for:

1. Mobile Apps: Gen Z frequently interacts with apps that streamline daily tasks, provide entertainment, and facilitate social interactions.

2. Social Media: Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat dominate their online activities, with 70% of Gen Z using social media to learn about and engage with causes.⁴

3. Messaging: SMS and other messaging apps are critical communication tools, preferred for their immediacy and ease of use.

4. QR Codes: Gen Z has embraced QR codes as a quick, frictionless way to access information, make payments, and engage with campaigns.

5. Digital Wallets: Gen Z has fully embraced digital payments, such as Apple Pay and Google Pay, and expects a frictionless transaction or giving experience.

These behaviors demonstrate Gen Z's demand for seamless, intuitive, and mobile-optimized experiences. They expect instant gratification and prioritize convenience, which translates directly to their engagement with fundraising initiatives.

THE ROLE OF MOBILE IN FUNDRAISING

As we shift to a mobile-first world, fundraising strategies must adapt to meet participants and donors where they are—on their smartphones. Mobile fundraising has become an indispensable tool for engaging audiences, and it is particularly effective in peer-to-peer fundraising events. Key reasons mobile is the future of fundraising include:

1. Ease of Use: Mobile platforms offer simplified processes for donating, sharing, and interacting with campaigns. This reduces barriers to entry and increases participation rates.

2. Real-Time Engagement: Mobile tools allow for instant updates, push notifications, and direct communication with donors, keeping them informed and motivated.

3. Wider Reach: Mobile technology enables fundraisers to amplify their campaigns through social sharing, SMS messaging, and QR code distribution, reaching a broader audience.

THE SUCCESS OF **QR CODES** AND **SMS MESSAGING**

Two standout channels in mobile fundraising are QR codes and SMS messaging. These tools align perfectly with Gen Z's preferences and have proven to drive significant results.

QR CODES

The **resurgence of QR codes**, particularly during the pandemic, has made them a staple in fundraising. By placing QR codes on posters, event materials, and social media, organizations can offer instant access to donation pages. This frictionless process resonates with Gen Z's desire for efficiency and convenience.

TEXT MESSAGING

Text-based campaigns boast some of the highest engagement rates in mobile fundraising. With **open rates at 98%**, SMS⁵ ensures that fundraising messages are seen and acted upon. SMS is particularly effective in peer-to-peer fundraising, where participants can share their mission connection with a link to donate to their fundraising campaign.

PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING IN A **MOBILE-FIRST** WORLD

P2P fundraising thrives in a mobile-first environment.

These campaigns leverage personal networks to spread awareness and solicit donations, making them ideal for engaging Gen Z.

THROUGH MOBILE PLATFORMS, FUNDRAISERS CAN:

- Share their fundraising campaign on social media.
- Send donation requests via SMS.
- Use QR codes to drive traffic to their campaigns.
- Monitor progress and celebrate fundraising milestones in real-time.

The success of P2P fundraising lies in its ability to **make fundraising a shared, interactive experience**. For Gen Z, this aligns with their collaborative, community-focused mindset.





CONCLUSION

Gen Z's mobile tendencies are reshaping the future of fundraising. Their reliance on smartphones, preference for instant communication, and demand for seamless digital experiences make mobile-first strategies a necessity. Organizations that prioritize mobile-friendly approaches — leveraging QR codes, SMS messaging, and social media — are better positioned to engage this influential generation.

In a world where mobile is not just the future but the present, fundraising efforts must evolve to meet the expectations of Gen Z. By embracing mobile-first strategies, organizations can unlock new levels of participation, amplify their impact, and **secure long-term support from the most digitally connected generation yet.**

Footnote

¹ United Nations World Population Prospects

² Pew Research Center

³ Deloitte Global Mobile Consumer Survey

⁴ Hootsuite and We Are Social's Annual Digital Report

⁵ Mobile Marketing Association