



retail
TouchPoints[®]
CONSUMER ANALYTICS

INSIDE THE MIND OF GEN ALPHA

*WHAT DO THEY EXPECT FROM BRAND, COMMUNITY
AND COMMERCE EXPERIENCES?*



CONSUMERS FLOCKED TO TARGET STORES TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE STANLEY VALENTINE'S DAY COLLECTION.

WHO IS GEN ALPHA, REALLY?

They're overtaking **Sephora** stores to get their hands on the hottest luxury skincare. They're barreling through their local **Targets** to snatch up the latest **Stanley cup release**.

They're **Gen Alpha**, a cohort that is being closely scrutinized for their savvy and surprisingly mature buying behaviors. From the mainstream news media to industry executives, it seems like everyone has a hot take on this demographic and what makes them tick.

But who is Gen Alpha, really?

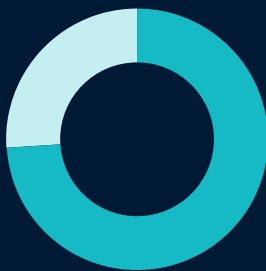
"Gen Alpha are forecasted to become the largest generation in history, reaching over **2 billion** by 2025," said Matt Smith, Trends Manager at global consumer research company **GW** in an interview with *Retail TouchPoints*. "And **these consumers are growing up faster than the generation that came before them**. By taking the time to understand their thoughts and behaviors at an earlier stage, and talking to them with authenticity and respect, brands have the chance to resonate sooner and **build a connection to last a lifetime**."

Born between 2010 and 2024, Gen Alpha is far more than “digitally savvy.” In fact, experts indicate that because they are growing up with technology — so much so that they’re often called “**iPad kids**” — they are more likely to willingly back away from screen time in exchange for time outdoors. Additionally, experts indicate that Gen Alpha consumers are emotionally intuitive and extremely focused on their fundamental values, including “continuous learning, advocating for others, embracing diversity, and expressing their opinions,” according to Dani Mariano, President at **Razorfish**.

“Motivated by a profound sense of purpose, most Alphas aspire to make a positive impact, assist others, and contribute to environmental well-being,” Mariano said in an interview with *Retail TouchPoints*. “A noteworthy **74%** of them opt for outdoor activities, exercise or reduced tech usage as methods to manage their mental health and disconnect from the digital realm.”

As Gen Alpha’s presence and purchasing power continue to grow within their households, brands and retailers need to better understand their consumers — especially the intricacies of **when, where, why** and **how** they buy. This deep-dive report will explore:

- Why the need to express themselves influences Alphas’ attraction and loyalty to certain brands;
- How community connections forged via technology influence their participation in commerce activities; and
- How close-knit relationships with parents influence their buying behaviors and brand affinities.



“A noteworthy **74%** of [Gen Alpha] opt for outdoor activities, exercise or reduced tech usage as methods to manage their mental health and disconnect from the digital realm.”

-Dani Mariano, Razorfish

GEN ALPHA, BY THE NUMBERS

THIS COHORT IS GROWING.

More than **2.8 million** Gen Alpha individuals are born every week. (McCrindle)

THEY HAVE STRONG VALUES.

92% of Gen Alphas say it is important to be true to themselves. (Razorfish)

THEY'RE TECHNOLOGY-ENABLED, NOT TECHNOLOGY-DEPENDENT.

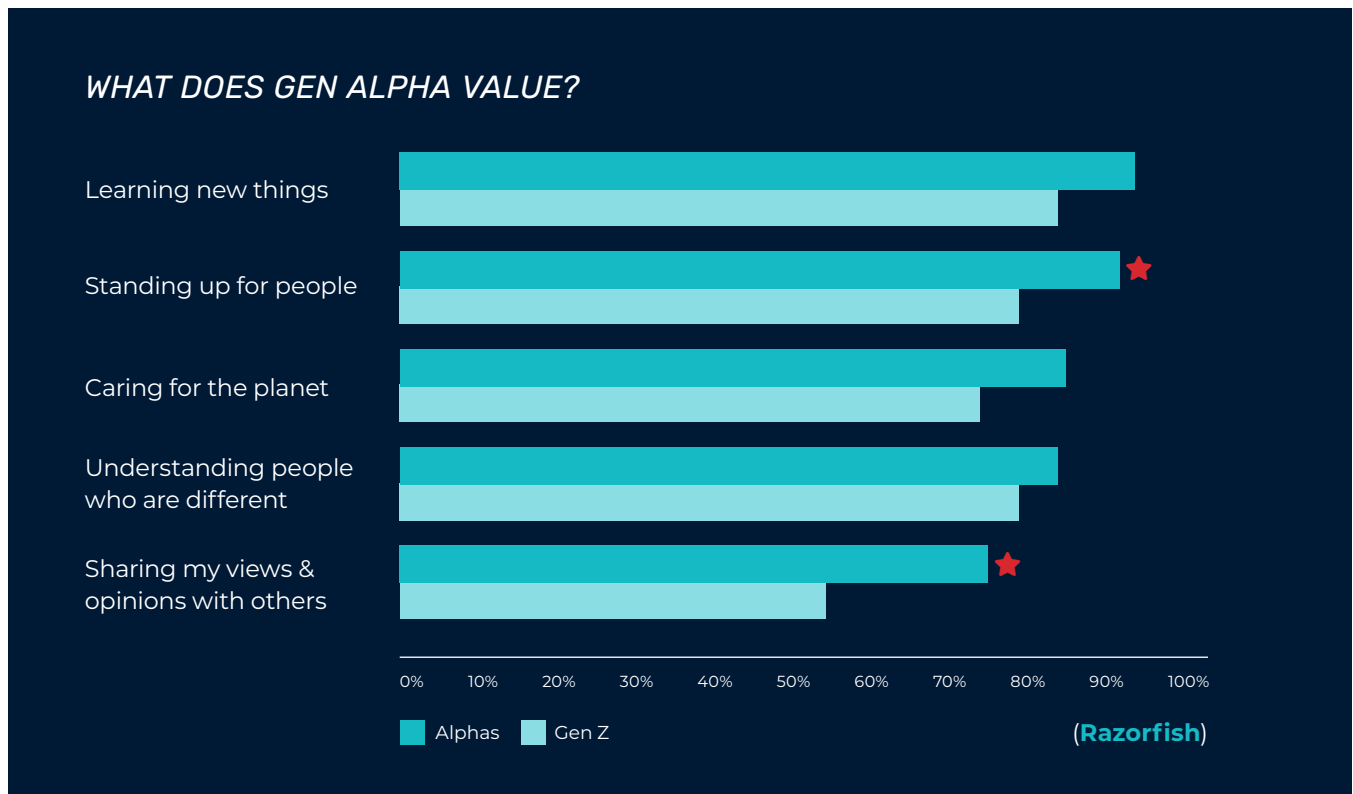
The number of **12- to 15-year-olds** purchasing items online has increased by 20% since 2021. (GWI)

But only **20%** of Gen Alphas said they would like to spend more time online. (Razorfish)

THEY'RE CONTENT-OBSESSED.

More than **51%** of Gen Alpha consumers learn about brands through **YouTube** videos. (Razorfish)

Gen Alphas are **2X** as likely to see gaming as a form of self-expression than Gen Zs, who cited relaxation as their top reason for gaming. (Razorfish)





THE MOST 'TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED' GENERATION TO DATE

A study from [Harvard Business Review](#) (HBR) explored how Gen Alpha's incredibly advanced knowledge of technology will impact the way they live, work, socialize and shop. Will growing up interacting with artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) be an advantage or a detriment?

HBR found that because this cohort has not only grown up surrounded by technology but has had to use it daily (especially during COVID-19 lockdowns), they will learn how to use conversational AI, AR and other technologies in thoughtful and helpful ways. These consumers also have millennial parents who grew up straddling the analog and internet eras. Their parents are "internet-informed" and heavy social media users, so they are "teaching their children to embrace technology, use it safely and make it an effective use of their time."

"In Gen Alpha's mind, there are no boundaries in terms of how they're able to access information," added Melissa Gonzalez, Principal at [MC2](#) in an interview with *Retail TouchPoints*. "And the information and resources they have access to are more far-reaching than what we've ever had access to. **In their mind, they can figure out anything.**"

In many cases, the continuous, inescapable presence of technology means that it has lost its novelty, giving this group the mental and emotional freedom to walk away from it. "A notable characteristic of Gen Alpha lies in their empowerment by technology rather than dependence on it," Mariano said. "Many Alphas have owned digital devices from a very young age, and the prolonged use has diminished the novelty associated with screens. Unlike Gen Z, Alphas, out of necessity due to online learning during the pandemic, acquired personal devices at an even earlier stage in their lives. By the age of **six**, a majority of them already possess a tablet, and by the age of **10** most have their own smartphone."



58% of Alphas receive their first smartphone by the age of **10**, and **47%** already own their own laptop when they are **eight** years old.

-Razorfish



TECHNOLOGY AS AN EXTENSION OF IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Although Gen Alpha isn't technology dependent, they consider digital platforms to be meaningful extensions of their identities. They turn to YouTube, **TikTok** and even gaming platforms like **Roblox** to consume content that resonates, learn about new brands that they relate to and, most of all, to **interact with their peers and find new ways to express themselves.**

"[Gen Alphas] are also natural co-creators," GWI's Smith said. "Platforms that enable them to add to conversations and put their own spin on things are likely to click." He noted that TikTok has grown in popularity among **13- to 15-year-olds** by **24%** since 2021, "largely due to its integrated creative tools and snackable, entertaining video format."

However, Smith pointed to Roblox as an especially resonant (and impactful) vehicle for Gen Alphas, because it provides tools for kids to create their own games. Not only has the gaming platform grown in popularity by **32%** with **8- to 11-year-olds** since 2021, but older kids are getting involved too, with usage increasing by **45%** since 2021.

These gaming platforms resonate because they provide a tangible vehicle for young users to express themselves, but they also tap into the innate desires of Gen Alpha consumers who simply want to play.

"Keep in mind, [these consumers] are largely children and young teens, so **play is key,**" noted Mark McCrindle, social analyst, demographer and founder of **McCrindle** in an interview with *Retail TouchPoints*. He provided **five** tips for feeding that desire to play: "First, understand that it's all about adventure and experience. Second, connect the social aspect of engagement. Third, challenge; any sport, competition, achievement or skill is key. Fourth, creating is an important part of play, whether it be art, design or building something. Finally, collecting is a key part of play, whether it be collecting items or swapping."



GEN ALPHA HAS DISCOVERED LUXURY SKINCARE BRAND DRUNK ELEPHANT THANKS TO INFLUENCER CONTENT ON TIKTOK.

A TASTE FOR 'ADULT BRAND' EXPERIENCES

In its qualitative and quantitative research, Razorfish found that Gen Alpha's favorite brands are largely "adult brands" versus "kiddie brands." Seamless access to the internet, and especially influencer-driven content, has "accelerated their brand maturity at a higher rate than previous generations," according to the report. Gen Alpha's recent obsession with luxury skincare brands like **Drunk Elephant** are a testament to this reality.

"Alphas are already forming initial impressions of some of the world's most prominent businesses," Mariano said. "Traditional marketing ploys and generic campaigns won't deceive them; **authenticity is paramount for Alphas, who demand a level of personalization that many are not yet prepared to provide.**"

This resonates with Gonzalez, who has seen her Gen Alpha daughter and nieces gravitate toward social media content that prominently features emerging and established "adult" brands. "Beauty and skincare in particular are big categories because YouTube and TikTok are big points of influence," she said. "Higher-end brands have an opportunity to reach these younger kids because of the virality of social media."

Gonzalez added: "When we were young, our influencers were our mom. Gen Alpha has access to this much larger stage of people [on social media] they can learn from and be influenced by. And while [my daughter] learns from me, I learn from her too. **They are educators. When we think about cross-generational influence, their influence on parents is going to be even more significant.** They know trends before we do. The Stanley phenomenon is a great example of that."



BRAND SPOTLIGHT

HOW BUBBLE IS RESPONDING TO A NEW GENERATION OF SKINCARE FANATICS

Q&A with Shai Eisenman, Founder and CEO, Bubble

Shai Eisenman started Bubble to serve the distinct needs of Gen Z consumers. In fact, all aspects of the business were developed and refined using insights from the brand's community of early fans and advocates. Now, Eisenman and her team are adapting and evolving as Gen Alpha comes to the forefront.

Retail TouchPoints (RTP): What are the most significant behavioral nuances of Gen Alpha consumers?

Eisenman: Gen Alpha has grown up with prolific access to the internet and uses social media platforms to express themselves, create content and engage with others. It is common for this generation to seek out product recommendations from content creators, meaning brand community is incredibly important.

User-generated content (UGC), consumer reviews and test videos are this generation's commercials and marketing ads. We also know how important word-of-mouth marketing is with Gen Alpha — they are sharing recommendations with friends in causal ways that older generations just don't do. They're going on sleepovers, watching TikToks with friends, sharing their routines; it opens up a whole new world.

RTP: How will these insights shape Bubble's product and go-to market strategy in the short- and long-term?

Eisenman: At Bubble, we pride ourselves on our community and ambassador program. Our ambassador program is open to those 13 years of age or older, and we require parental consent if under the age of 18. We know that younger consumers are using our products and want to unlock the world of Bubble, but we want to ensure that we're educating these consumers in a safe and effective way on how to best use skincare. We prioritize skincare education and make sure to carefully communicate the products young consumers should and shouldn't use (i.e. we don't encourage young teens to exfoliate their skin).

We're proud to embrace Gen Alpha and really want to teach them the importance of skin-safe practices, like daily SPF, and help build a foundational routine to protect their skin, such as with a gentle cleanser and moisturizer. We stand by our cruelty-free, skin-safe ingredients, which are ideal for young skin and speak to Gen Alpha's values about caring for the planet and its people.

BUBBLE

RTP: What would you say to an executive that believed Gen Alpha wasn't a priority because they "aren't their target customer"?

Eisenman: Gen Alpha is the future, so brands cannot afford to ignore these young shoppers. They drove a significant portion of beauty sales this holiday season by putting skincare products on their wish lists. While we don't proactively market to Gen Alpha and aren't a "tween" specific brand, we want to ensure that we're meeting our consumer where they are — at any age — and educating them on the importance of skincare and providing them with high-quality products at an accessible price point.

RTP: Can you provide any tactical advice to help your peers better understand and engage with Gen Alpha consumers?

Eisenman: Gen Alpha consumers appreciate authenticity, and they are more likely to turn to influencers and content creators to receive product recommendations. Building products that you believe in and fostering a solid brand community that stands behind your brand in the same way you do will speak volumes with these consumers.

Also, having an important cause you believe in will align with their values so that they trust your brand vision. At Bubble, we care deeply about mental health, donating a portion of our proceeds to organizations that support mental health and offering consumers **50%** off online therapy platform BetterHealth, which I think especially resonates with this audience.





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3 WAYS TO ENGAGE GEN ALPHA

1

“Avoid considering Alphas as simply younger counterparts to Gen Z; they embody more Gen Z characteristics at an earlier age, but they have heightened expectations in a lot of ways. Consider and anticipate these heightened expectations in whatever innovations you are introducing.”

- **Dani Mariano, Razorfish**

2

“Dig deeper into what's driving their beliefs and behaviors, and strategize plans around this knowledge. Are they reactive to social media trends and base their interests and spending behaviors as a result of that? Or is it the collaboration and creation element that's a constant thread for them? Adhere to their values to build loyalty.”

- **Matt Smith, GWI**

3

“Keep in mind that the number-one influences in their lives are still their parents. These are children in their formative years, being shaped and guided by their millennial parents. Therefore, an understanding of millennials, their expectations as they move through the family years, and their approach as parents will help [brands] understand their children.”

- **Mark McCrindle, McCrindle**

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Alicia is an editor-turned-content marketer, with a passion for all things focused on digital-powered experiential retail.