Ein Bild, das Kunst, Entwurf, Bild, Malkunst enthält.

KI-generierte Inhalte können fehlerhaft sein.

Gen Z Brand Whisperers: Embracing the 'Weird Old Ass' in Modern Marketing

With references to an article published in: [The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2023/apr/22/meet-the-gen-z-brand-whisperers-weird-old-ass-campaign)

***Article Text & Vocabulary***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Traditional marketing is over, at least according to Gen Z. Long gone are the days of slick campaigns, aspirational imagery and high production value. In their place is a new kind of content: low-fi, off-the-cuff, chaotic and often deeply self-deprecating. Think Ryan Gosling and his iconic “Hey Girl” memes, but with a brand acting as the lovelorn fan, desperate for attention. Enter the brand whisperers – a new generation of marketers and creative directors who are harnessing the unique demands of Gen Z to craft campaigns that resonate. | slick  aspirational  off-the-cuff |
| One example that has set the internet ablaze is Duolingo’s TikTok account. Eschewing traditional ads, the language-learning app pivoted to creating a flurry of bizarre, sometimes unhinged skits featuring Duo, its owl mascot, in various states of existential angst or inappropriate behaviour – like lurking outside a pop star’s house, or attempting to get Dua Lipa to learn Italian. “It’s weird, it’s old, it’s ass,” one user commented on a video, unknowingly coining the campaign’s unofficial slogan. “Weird old ass” quickly became a cultural touchstone. The account has garnered more than 6.8m followers and 130m likes. | eschewing  pivoted  unhinged |
| It’s the brainchild of Zaria Parvez, Duolingo’s then 24-year-old social media manager, and the agency Movers + Shakers, who are at the forefront of this new marketing landscape. They believe that authenticity and relatability are paramount for Gen Z. This generation, born between 1997 and 2012, has grown up online, developing an innate bullshit detector for anything that smells like corporate-speak or overt selling. | brainchild  paramount  corporate-speak |
| “Gen Z consumes media in a completely different way,” says Geoffrey Goldberg, co-founder of Movers + Shakers. “They’re looking for community, for people who they can relate to. They don’t want to be talked at; they want to be talked with.” This shift means brands need to act less like polished corporations and more like quirky, slightly unhinged individuals on social media. | polished  quirky |
| The “weird old ass” campaign exemplifies this. It's not about selling Duolingo directly; it's about building a connection, making the brand feel human, relatable, and part of the cultural conversation. Duo the owl acts less as a mascot and more as a character navigating the absurdities of internet culture, creating content that is genuinely entertaining rather than overtly promotional. | exemplifies  absurdities  promotional |
| This approach extends beyond TikTok. Brands are experimenting with memes, viral challenges, and leveraging micro-influencers whose followers genuinely trust their recommendations. The key is to create content that feels organic, native to the platform, and doesn’t disrupt the user experience with obvious advertisements. | leveraging  micro-influencers  organic |
| But is it all just a cleverly disguised marketing tactic, or a genuine reflection of changing consumer preferences? Critics argue that even "authentic" campaigns are still meticulously planned and designed to manipulate. Parvez and Goldberg maintain that their goal is to genuinely engage, foster community, and create content that provides value beyond a sales pitch. They see it as an evolution, not a trick. | disguised  meticulously  manipulate |
| Ultimately, Gen Z’s influence is undeniable. Companies that fail to adapt to these new demands risk becoming irrelevant. The future of marketing, it seems, lies not in chasing perfection, but in embracing the imperfect, the chaotic, and, yes, the weird old ass. | undeniable  irrelevant  embracing |

Ein Bild, das Grafiken, Schrift, Grafikdesign, Logo enthält.

KI-generierte Inhalte können fehlerhaft sein.Exercises

B1

Grammar: Past Tenses [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/08-the-past-simple-24.pdf) [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/12-the-present-perfect-simple-34.pdf)

Complete the sentences using the correct past tense (Simple Past or Present Perfect) of the verb in brackets.

1. Marketers                           (always try) to reach younger audiences, but Gen Z has unique demands.
2. The author                           (interview) several "brand whisperers" for this article last week.
3. Young consumers                           (become) more resistant to traditional advertising methods in recent years.
4. One agency                           (launch) a campaign for Duolingo last month that went viral.

Vocabulary: Collocations and Phrases

Choose the best word to complete each sentence. Each word can only be used once.

authentic   |   target   |   viral   |   social

1. Gen Z marketers help companies find their                           voice.
2. It's crucial for companies to understand their                           audience.
3. The campaign quickly went                           across platforms.
4. Many young people spend hours on                           media.

Grammar: Modal Verbs (Functions) [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/57-modal-verbs-152.pdf)

Complete the sentences with the correct modal verb based on the function provided in brackets.

1. Brands                           (obligation) adapt to new marketing trends to stay relevant.
2. They                           (possibility (negative)) be successful if they ignore Gen Z's preferences.
3. Young consumers                           (ability) easily detect inauthenticity in ads.
4. Companies                           (advice) listen to their younger employees for fresh ideas.

Linking Words and Connectors [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/121-linking-words-overview-312.pdf)

Choose the most suitable connector from the word box to complete each sentence. Use each connector only once.

and   |   but   |   because   |   so   |   however

1. The campaign was unusual,                           it captured Gen Z's attention.
2. Many brands want to connect with Gen Z                           they represent a large consumer group.
3. They used humor                           sarcasm to engage the audience.
4. The ad went viral,                           it reached millions of young people.

Ein Bild, das Grafiken, Schrift, Grafikdesign, Logo enthält.

KI-generierte Inhalte können fehlerhaft sein.B2

Advanced Linking Words and Connectors [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/121-linking-words-overview-312.pdf)

Choose the most suitable connector from the word box to complete each sentence. Use each connector only once.

although   |   whereas   |   in order to   |   despite   |   consequently   |   moreover

1. Traditional advertising focuses on aspiration,                           Gen Z prefers authenticity.
2. its unconventional approach, the campaign was highly effective.
3. The article highlights new marketing trends;                           , it offers examples of successful campaigns.
4. Brands employ "brand whisperers"                           adapt their message to Gen Z.

Vocabulary: Phrasal Verbs

Choose the correct phrasal verb from the word box to complete each sentence. Use each phrasal verb only once.

figure out   |   come up with   |   turn off   |   get across

1. Marketers need to                           what truly resonates with Gen Z.
2. The agency helped the brand                           a fresh, new campaign idea.
3. Inauthentic ads quickly                           young consumers.
4. The main challenge is how to                           the message of authenticity effectively.

Grammar: Passive Voice Transformation [[Help]](https://lmg-grammar-and-methods.netlify.app/grammar/25-the-passive-66.pdf)

Rewrite the following sentences so that they have the same meaning as the original sentence.

1. The agencies are redefining advertising.

1. Gen Z has shaped new marketing strategies.

1. They will launch the new campaign next month.

1. The article discussed several successful campaigns.

Ein Bild, das Grafiken, Schrift, Grafikdesign, Logo enthält.

KI-generierte Inhalte können fehlerhaft sein.Idioms

Idioms in Context

Choose the correct idiom from the box to complete each sentence.

hit the nail on the head   |   speak volumes   |   break the mold   |   jump on the bandwagon   |   spill the beans

1. With their "weird old ass" campaign, the agency really                           about Gen Z's marketing preferences.
2. The success of Duolingo's TikTok strategy made other brands                           .
3. Their unfiltered approach to advertising                           about their understanding of youthful audiences.

Idiom Definitions

Choose the best definition for each idiom.

1. "think outside the box"
   * A) To think creatively and unconventionally.
   * B) To limit your ideas to traditional methods.
   * C) To focus only on the main issue.
   * D) To organize thoughts systematically.
2. "get a taste of your own medicine"
   * A) To receive a reward for your actions.
   * B) To learn a new skill.
   * C) To experience the same unpleasant treatment that you have given to others.
   * D) To get a taste of your own medicine.
3. "pull strings"
   * A) To create a puppet show.
   * B) To manipulate a situation secretly.
   * C) To use one's influence with powerful people to get something done.
   * D) To play a musical instrument.

Idioms in Context

Complete the sentences with the most suitable idiom from the box.

on the same page   |   ring a bell   |   cut corners   |   call the shots   |   bite the bullet

1. It's important for marketing teams to be                           regarding brand strategy.
2. The name of that micro-influencer doesn't                           with me.
3. Brands that try to                           by avoiding authentic content often fail with Gen Z.

Idiom Definitions

Select the best meaning for the given idioms.

1. "take something with a grain of salt"
   * A) To season food carefully.
   * B) To accept something without question.
   * C) To regard something with skepticism or not to believe it entirely.
   * D) To add a small detail to a story.
2. "the elephant in the room"
   * A) A very large animal in the house.
   * B) An obvious problem or difficult situation that people avoid discussing.
   * C) A decoration for a party.
   * D) A hidden secret that no one knows.
3. "miss the boat"
   * A) To arrive too late for transport.
   * B) To fail to understand a complex issue.
   * C) To lose an opportunity by being too slow to act.
   * D) To miss the boat.

Active & Cooperative Learning

Pyramid Discussion

A method for students to individually consider an issue, then discuss and refine their ideas in progressively larger groups.

Students will discuss the following statement: "Gen Z marketing, despite its claims of authenticity, is just another form of manipulation."

1. **Individual Reflection (5 min):** Individually, students consider the statement and jot down their initial thoughts, arguments for and against.
2. **Pair Discussion (10 min):** Students form pairs, share their individual thoughts, and try to reach a common stance or identify key points of disagreement. They should be prepared to justify their positions.
3. **Small Group (4-6 students) Discussion (15 min):** Pairs join to form small groups. They present their findings, further discuss the statement, and attempt to achieve a group consensus or articulate the group's varied perspectives. They should select a spokesperson.
4. **Whole Class Discussion (15-20 min):** Each group's spokesperson presents their main arguments or conclusions to the class. The entire class then engages in a final discussion, aiming to identify the strongest arguments and the most nuanced understanding of the topic. The goal is not necessarily universal agreement, but a deeper comprehension of the complexities involved.

Gallery Walk

A cooperative learning strategy where students move around the room to view and respond to different displays or prompts.

Students will explore different facets of Gen Z marketing based on the article.

1. **Preparation (Teacher):** Prepare 4-5 large sheets of paper (or digital boards) around the classroom. Each sheet should have a different prompt related to the article, e.g.:
   * "What defines 'authenticity' for Gen Z in marketing?"
   * "How do 'brand whisperers' differ from traditional advertisers?"
   * "Provide examples from the article of successful Gen Z marketing tactics."
   * "What are potential downsides or criticisms of Gen Z marketing?"
   * "How does the concept of 'weird old ass' challenge traditional advertising?"
2. **Group Rotation (20-25 min):** Divide students into 4-5 small groups. Assign each group a starting point. Groups spend 4-5 minutes at each station, reading the prompt and writing their ideas, insights, and questions on the sheet. Encourage them to build on previous groups' contributions.
3. **Gallery Viewing & Synthesis (10-15 min):** After rotating through all stations, students walk around individually to read all the collected ideas. They can use sticky notes to add final comments or highlight particularly interesting points.
4. **Class Debrief (10 min):** Facilitate a whole-class discussion, drawing out key themes, surprising insights, and areas of agreement or disagreement that emerged from the gallery walk. Discuss which aspects of Gen Z marketing are most impactful and why.



Abitur-Exercises

Analysis of Gen Z Marketing Strategies

Analyze the marketing strategies employed by Gen Z "brand whisperers" as described in the article, focusing on their unique characteristics, underlying principles, and the platforms they utilize.

Discussion on Authenticity in Advertising

Discuss the concept of "authenticity" in modern advertising, particularly in the context of Gen Z, exploring whether it is a genuine shift or a new marketing gimmick.

Comment on the "Weird Old Ass" Campaign

Comment on the effectiveness and implications of the "weird old ass" campaign mentioned in the article, considering its reception by different generations and its potential to redefine brand image.

Evaluation of Gen Z Marketing Impact

Evaluate the extent to which Gen Z marketing truly subverts traditional advertising or if it merely repackages existing strategies, providing evidence from the article to support your argument.

