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Consumers Demand Brands Get Personal as They Reject Age-Based Labels and Stereotypes, Adobe Research Reveals

- Fewer than a third of UK consumers believe age-based labels and stereotypes such as “Millennial” and “Gen Z” are still relevant
- More than three-quarters of consumers view themselves as individuals with unique interests and preferences
- Brands face major challenges in meeting consumer expectations for consistent, personalised, real-time experiences that reflect evolving individual interests, with 7 in 10 brands falling short

London — October 6, 2022 — Today, Adobe announced new research revealing the growing importance of brands understanding customers on a personal level – and interacting with them as individuals, in real-time – as fewer than one-third of consumers (31%) believe labels such as “Millennial” and “Gen-Z” are still helpful and relevant. Rejecting age-based stereotypes, 76% of respondents say they are unique individuals with diverse mixes of tastes and preferences that continue to evolve, rather than feeling defined by the generational labels they were born into.

Adobe’s data points to the emergence of a new consumer who is not defined by age, refuses to be stereotyped, and expects to be understood as the unique person they are today. Brands seeking to meet this consumer’s expectations must ensure they are equipped with the latest [customer data platform technologies](#), creating a complete single view of every customer capable of delivering personalised experiences in real-time.

“The entire socio-cultural landscape is changing, and people will not accept being stereotyped or pigeonholed any more – especially by brands,” said Suzanne Steele, Adobe’s vice president & managing director for the UK & Ireland. “Having the right data platform is critical to ensure brands really understand their customers, and Adobe Real-Time CDP empowers brands to ensure every customer interaction is personalised, relevant and timely.”

Time to get personal

The survey of 2,000 UK consumers also reveals nearly a quarter of people (24%) say they either don’t fit many or any of the stereotypes associated with people in their age group, while over three-quarters (76%) want to be treated as individuals. Consumers indicated they were much more likely to reject generational labels, instead feeling closer to people who shared their passions and interests, regardless of their ages.

“This study shows that generational labels are next to useless as a basis for delivering the targeted services or products that today’s consumer expects,” said Professor Bobby Duffy, Professor of Public Policy at Kings College London and a leading authority on demographic analysis. “We may enjoy similar cultural references to people who grew up at the same time as us, but fundamentally people increasingly expect everyone – whether it’s their peers, policymakers or brands they interact with – to recognise, understand, and respond to their individual behaviour and preferences in-the-moment.”



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Change is constant

Adobe's research also found that consumer preferences and tastes are constantly evolving, reinforcing the need for brands to move away from simple groupings based on age or other fixed demographic factors. The average person takes on a new interest or hobby six times a year, rising to ten times a year for people under the age of 25. Over three-quarters of consumers (76%) modify their tastes every few months and are unimpressed when brands and people cannot keep up with their preferences. Moreover, more than half of respondents (51%) say they are different people now to who they were pre-pandemic.

Individuality is key

Today's consumers have high expectations for the brands they engage with – they expect brands to see them as unique people, keep up with their changing habits and interests, and respect their privacy preferences. Half of people (50%) now expect businesses to have a clear understanding of who they are as individuals, and only contact them with information relevant to what they are interested in at any given moment.

Over two-thirds of consumers (68%) say brands are not doing this well or are inconsistent in their efforts to keep up with their personal preferences; just one in ten (11%) say brands are doing well in this regard. Regular efforts to engage consumers with bespoke offers related to their current interests is of the highest importance – twice as many people want frequent, thoughtful gestures (44%) over bigger one-off moments (21%).

Meeting consumers where they are

[Adobe Real-Time CDP](#) empowers brands to continually meet today's consumers where they are. This customer data platform allows organisations to view and manage customer profiles, make updates in real-time, and activate customer insights through [Adobe Experience Cloud applications](#) across the entire customer journey – ideal for the sort of frequent, relevant and personalised connections today's consumers now expect from brands.

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