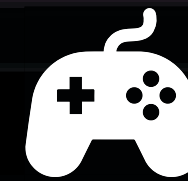


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THE GEN ALPHA PLAYBOOK: HOW BRANDS CAN WIN IN A GAMIFIED WORLD

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GEN ALPHA'S INFLUENCE & SPENDING POWER

- Children influence household purchasing from age 5 as millennial parents trust their research. (The Robin Report)
- 8 out of 10 Gen Alpha kids prefer the same brands as their parents. (The Robin Report)
- Gen Alpha spending expected to reach \$5.46 trillion by 2029. (Participation People)
- They influence 27% of household monthly spending, with a third on digital products/services.
- Their spending power will surpass Gen Z and Millennials, though currently limited by parental income. (Participation People)

KEY INSIGHTS AND DATA ON GENERATION ALPHA

Digital Natives with Early Tech Adoption

- 65% of Gen Alpha (ages 8-10) spend up to four hours daily on social media.

Influence on Household Spending:

- Gen Alpha influences 27% of their household's non-essential monthly spending.
- 49% of parents share shopping lists with Gen Alpha children, enabling collaborative purchasing decisions.

Social Media and Influencer Impact:

- Gen Alpha highly trusts social media influencers, with nearly half valuing their product recommendations as much as family endorsements.
- Gen Alpha's media consumption revolves around YouTube and TikTok, with YouTube leading at an average of 84 minutes daily.

KEY INSIGHTS AND DATA ON GENERATION ALPHA



Evolving Consumer Preferences:

- Social trends and digital marketing influence purchasing decisions. Popular brands include Samyang's Buldak ramen and Owala's insulated water bottles. Recommendations from friends, TV
- ads, and social media influencers shape preferences

Parental Mediation in Online Shopping:

Despite their digital proficiency, 78% of U.S. parents rarely or never allow their Gen Alpha children to shop online independently, highlighting ongoing parental oversight in e-commerce activities.

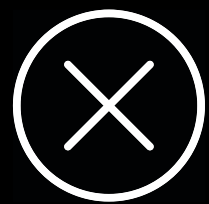


INTRODUCTION: GEN Z ON GEN ALPHA - THE NEW REALITY LOOP



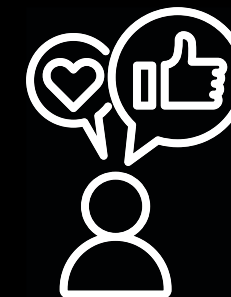
Shift from passive engagement to gamified ecosystems to stay relevant.

Gen Alpha does not follow a set path—they explore, interact, and engage in real-time.



Traditional marketing and education no longer resonate.

For Gen Alpha, engagement is currency, and experience is loyalty.



Shopping, learning, and entertainment function like an open-world game with seamless movement between experiences.

KEY TERMS

- **Gamification** – Integrating game-like elements (rewards, challenges, levels) into non-gaming spaces to drive engagement.
- **Discovery Loop** – A non-linear consumer journey where engagement and purchases happen through continuous exploration, not a set path.
- **Non-Linear Thinking** – A mindset where decisions are made through exploration and real-time feedback rather than a step-by-step process.
- **Social Commerce** – Shopping integrated with social platforms (TikTok, Instagram Live) where purchases feel interactive and impulsive.
- **Digital Immersion** – The expectation that all experiences (learning, entertainment, shopping) should be interactive, real-time, and highly engaging.

GAMIFICATION DEFINITION

Adding game/game-like elements
to encourage active participation
increasing brand loyalty with
either rewards or achievements

GEN ALPHA = OPEN WORLD GAME

NEW PURCHASE CIRCLE

Ignite

Explore

Co-Creation

Validation

Purchase

**Advocacy +
Expansion**

**Ongoing
Enrichment**

Similar to the
“Heroes Journey”
Gen Alpha moves on a fluid
path, bouncing from
section to section, but
always stays within the
circle

THE 5 STRUGGLING INDUSTRIES

Traditional Retail Failing to Gamify Shopping

- Brands Struggling: Macy's, JCPenney, Kroger
- Why? No AR try-ons, interactive challenges, or digital rewards.
- Who's Winning? Nike SNKRS, Shein (gamified shopping).

Cable TV & Print Media – Losing Attention

- Brands Struggling: CNN, Nickelodeon, Newspapers
- Why? Gen Alpha prefers short-form, algorithm-driven content.
- Who's Winning? TikTok, YouTube Shorts, AI-generated media.

THE 5 STRUGGLING INDUSTRIES

Movie Theaters – Losing to Interactive Entertainment

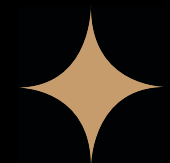
- Brands Struggling: AMC, Regal
- Why? Passive viewing loses to gaming, TikTok, and interactive content.
- Who's Winning? Netflix's interactive films, Fortnite concerts.

Traditional Education – Outdated Learning Models

- Brands Struggling: Public school curriculums, College Board
- Why? Static, lecture-based learning doesn't engage.
- Who's Winning? Duolingo, Roblox Education, Quizlet.

Banking & Finance – Not Digital-First

- Brands Struggling: Wells Fargo, Chase
- Why? No gamified savings tools or interactive finance education.
- Who's Winning? Greenlight, Step Banking.



Questionable due to the rest and relaxation benefits , but still important to note.

STRUGGLING BRAND EXAMPLES

ESTÉE LAUDER

ASOS
discover fashion online


Abercrombie
& Fitch

Bath
& Body
Works


Old Spice


Wendy's


BURGER
KING

Neutrogena®
Dermatologist tested



Cetaphil®


CLINIQUE

 PELOTON


Coca-Cola


pepsi



Little Debbie


Nestlé


Pepper's

LaCroix


COMCAST



THE GEN ALPHA MINDSET - HOW THEY THINK & SHOP

Shopping as Entertainment

- Purchases must be fun, interactive, and social.
- Gamified experiences (challenges, rewards, AR) capture attention.
- Short-form, real-time content (TikTok Shop, YouTube Shorts) drives impulse buys.

How They Decide What to Buy

- Social media & gaming influence purchases more than traditional ads.
- Trending over research – They buy what's viral, not what's well-reviewed.
- AI-driven recommendations – They expect brands to anticipate their needs.

Where They Shop & Engage

- TikTok Shop & Instagram Reels – Seamless content-commerce integration.
- Roblox & Fortnite – Virtual shopping, brand activations, digital product trials.
- Livestream Shopping & AI Assistants – Real-time, interactive buying experiences.

PARENTING GEN ALPHA: WHY THEIR PREFERENCES LOOK DIFFERENT

Brand & Product Shifts: The Tween Leap

Justice Lululemon

Dove Drunk Elephant

FIFA Fortnite

Playing with Barbies Dressing up to watch Barbie

Key Insights from Parents:

- Tweens reject kid-friendly branding – It feels too “babyish,” but teen/adult products still feel slightly out of reach.
- They leap from youth-focused to adult brands – There’s a market gap for in-between products.
- They discover brands differently – 51% of Alphas learn about products through YouTube instead of traditional ads.
- Cool branding & peer recommendations matter – Drunk Elephant’s colorful, poppy aesthetic appeals more than traditional skincare brands.
- Parental Influence is Changing – Unlike older siblings, Gen Alpha kids are choosing premium brands earlier due to social influence and digital exposure.

Key Takeaway:

Gen Alpha is growing up faster, skipping traditional “kid” brands, and aligning with premium, trendy products earlier. Brands that cater to this “in-between” phase have a huge opportunity.

HOW GEN ALPHA SHOPS VS. GEN Z

Gen Z: Shopping as an Experience

- Prioritizes aesthetic, functionality, and social validation before purchasing.
- Prefers immersive brand experiences like pop-ups, influencer collaborations, and behind-the-scenes content.
- Researches products through reviews, long-form content, and influencer recommendations.
- Shops through a mix of Instagram, YouTube, and direct-to-consumer brands.

Gen Alpha: Shopping as Play & Engagement

- Gamified, social-first shopping—influenced by TikTok trends, Roblox, and in-game purchases.
- Buys impulsively based on real-time engagement, viral challenges, and AI-driven recommendations.
- Prefers interactive, fast transactions over long research cycles.
- Shopping is entertainment—products must have a collectible, customizable, or interactive element.

Key Takeaway:

Gen Z wants to experience brands through curated content and storytelling, while Gen Alpha treats shopping as an interactive, gamified journey driven by digital engagement.

REINVENTING STRUGGLING INDUSTRIES FOR GEN ALPHA

Traditional Retail – Turning Shopping into an Interactive Experience

Tactics & Strategies:

- Gamified In-Store Experiences – Augmented reality (AR) treasure hunts, interactive product demos, and digital try-ons (e.g., Nike's SNKRS scavenger hunt).
- Live Shopping & Creator Pop-Ups – In-store TikTok Live events with influencers driving product hype.
- AI-Personalized Shopping – Smart mirrors and mobile apps that curate recommendations based on user preferences.

Cable TV & Print Media – Evolving into Social, On-Demand Content

Tactics & Strategies:

- Short-Form, Interactive Content – News and entertainment in TikTok, YouTube Shorts, and AI-generated formats.
- Gamified Engagement – Viewers unlock exclusive content by interacting with live polls and quizzes (e.g., ESPN Fantasy Football).
- Creator-Driven Storytelling – Partnering with Gen Alpha influencers to create digestible, socially shareable content.

Movie Theaters – Making Cinema an Immersive Event

Tactics & Strategies:

- Live Interactive Screenings – Audience-voted endings, AR experiences, and gamified trivia before the movie.
- Subscription & Membership Perks – Digital rewards for repeat visits, including NFT-based collectibles.
- In-Theater Social Experiences – Special TikTok creator nights and real-world activations tied to movie releases.

REINVENTING STRUGGLING INDUSTRIES FOR GEN ALPHA

CONT.

Traditional Education – Gamified Learning for a Digital Generation

Tactics & Strategies:

- AI-Powered Personalized Learning – Adaptive curriculums that tailor lessons to individual students.
- VR & AR Learning Labs – Hands-on, immersive educational experiences (e.g., Meta's VR science labs).
- Collaborative Learning Challenges – Students unlock achievements through project-based, gamified coursework.

Banking & Finance – Making Financial Literacy Fun & Interactive

Tactics & Strategies:

- Gamified Savings & Spending – Apps like Greenlight that reward smart money habits with digital badges.
- Social & Creator-Backed Financial Education – Short-form financial advice from influencers via TikTok & YouTube.
- Crypto & Digital Wallet Integration – Gen Alpha-friendly digital payment experiences, including NFT-based brand rewards.

Key Takeaway:

Industries must gamify, personalize, and merge digital with real-world experiences to stay relevant for Gen Alpha. Engaging content, immersive activations, and social-driven experiences are key to brand survival.

UNDERSTANDING GEN ALPHA'S CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Objective:

- Explore how 12-14 year old Gen Alpha interacts with gamification in brand experiences
- Identify what makes a brand experience engaging vs. what feels forced
- Understand how Gen Alpha discovers brands and their relationship with brand loyalty
- Assess the impact of virtual influencers vs. real-life role models

Methodology:

- Qualitative Research: Interactive focus group discussions, structured activities, and real-time feedback collection
- Data Collection: Real-time responses through voting activities, journey mapping, and discussion analysis
- Analysis: Identifying recurring trends, sentiment analysis, and comparing engagement patterns across different brand strategies

Key Insights to Uncover:

- What types of brands drive real engagement versus gimmicky ones
- How does Gen Alpha define brand loyalty, do they stick with brands or move to where the best experience is?
- What are the primary ways Gen Alpha discovers new brands?
- How do virtual influencers compare to real-world figures in terms of credibility/influence
- Do they follow certain brands because they truly love them, or because it's trending?

KEY FOCUS GROUP TOPICS & DISCUSSION AREAS

1. Gamified Brand Experiences: What Works vs What Feels Like a Gimmick?

- Which gamified experiences do you enjoy the most?
- What features make a gamified experience fun and engaging
- Have you ever stopped using a brand's game or app because it felt boring or repetitive?

2. Brand Loyalty vs. Real-Time Engagement

- Do you stick with brands, or do you switch based on the best experience?
- Would you stay with a brand even if a competitor offered a better in-game reward?
- What makes a game worth coming back to over and over?
- Have you stopped engaging with a brand once it was no longer trendy?

3. How Gen Alpha Discovers Brands

- Do you find brands through gaming, social media, or friends?
- Have you ever bought something because you saw it in a game (Nike x Roblox)?
- What type of brand experiences do you share with your friends?

4. Virtual Influencers vs Real-Life Role Models

- Do social influencers or older friends/family influence your style or buying choices?
- Do you care if an influencer is AI-generated or a real person?

INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES & DATA COLLECTION

Hot or Not (Objective: Identify preferred brand strategies)

- Show participants examples of gamified brand experiences (Nike x Roblox, McDonald's Monopoly)
- Have them vote: 🔥 "Love It" vs ❌ "Boring"
- Discussion: What makes one experience feel fun and rewarding vs. forced and gimmicky?

Brand Battle Royale (Objective: Understand brand loyalty vs real-time engagement)

- Create a bracket-style competition where brands face off in head-to-head matchups
- Each round, participants must choose which brand provides the best experience (Nike x Roblox vs. Adidas x Fortnite or Starbucks Odyssey vs. Chipotle Rewards)
- Debate and discuss: Why did the winning brand advance? What made its experience more engaging?

Digital Treasure Hunt (Objective: Determine how Gen Alpha finds new brands)

- Create a treasure-hunt style game where participants must match brands with the way they discovered them (gaming, social media, influencers, etc.)
- Example challenge: "Find a brand you learned about through an in-game experience."
- Discussion: Do influencers, games, or friends/family matter more? What channels are the most fun for discovering brands?
- Follow-up Question: Do you continue engaging with these brands, or do you move on when the hype fades?

CONCLUSION

Gen Alpha is redefining how brands engage with consumers. Their gamified, digital-first mindset demands interactive, immersive, and socially-driven brand experiences. Traditional marketing funnels no longer apply—engagement, not loyalty, drives their purchasing decisions.

Our upcoming focus groups with 12-14-year-olds will provide real-world insights into how Gen Alpha interacts with brands, what experiences feel authentic, and how they discover new products. These findings will offer actionable data points to refine strategies that truly resonate with this generation.

Why This Research Matters for Brands:

- Helps brands future-proof their marketing by adapting to non-linear consumer behaviors.
- Provides insight into digital discovery trends, gaming influence, and content preferences.
- Identifies what engagement tactics actually work vs. what feels like a gimmick.

By leveraging these insights, brands can create authentic, interactive, and innovative experiences that connect with Gen Alpha—ensuring long-term relevance in a rapidly evolving digital landscape.