

YOUR

GUIDE TO GEN Z IN 2026


REIMAGINING TV ADVERTISING
TO BUILD CONNECTION

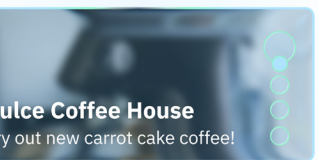
For Gen Z, watching TV is not an escape from the rest of their life – it runs alongside it.

They press play while they text friends, scroll creators, shop for outfits, or plan their next move. TV is the soundtrack to all of that, a familiar glow that makes new ideas and brands feel a little more real.

Even in a world of infinite feeds, TV still has weight. It's the moment when a brand steps out of the scroll and into the room, asking for attention in a way that feels intentional, not accidental.

Gen Z leans into that feeling of connection. They discover brands on their phones, but they decide how much to trust them when those brands show up on the biggest screen in the room.

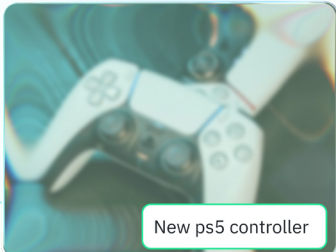
 **Ages 18-27**
Cross-channel curators



Sulce Coffee House
y out new carrot cake coffeel

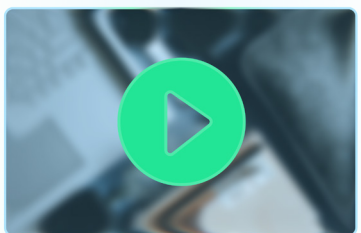
Carrot cake coffee near me

Based on your recent search results....

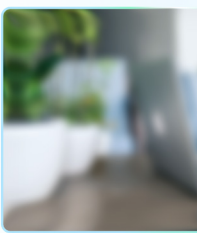


New ps5 controller

Hi, Susan
What would you like to watch today?



Added to cart!
Keep browsing more



When Gen Z says “TV,” they mean **streaming**

When Gen Z says they are watching TV, they almost always mean streaming. According to **tvScientific by Pinterest’s 2026 Consumer Trends Report**, 92% of Gen Z watch TV through streaming apps, while 79% subscribe to three or more streaming services, the highest of any generation.¹

They are building a flexible stack of streaming services that fits their mood, favorite show, budget, and the stories they care about at any given moment.

That streaming-first behavior also changes what TV looks like in practice. For Gen Z, it is not tied to one screen, with 62% watching TV on their phones.¹

For brands, this means TV cannot be planned as a single device or a single destination. It has to match the way Gen Z already experiences it: fluid, app-driven, and always close to the device where action happens.



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In noisy feeds, TV still feels **more real**

Gen Z lives inside endless feeds. They know how fast a post can appear, vanish, and be replaced by something new. That is exactly why TV still feels different.

49% of Gen Z say seeing a brand on TV makes them trust it more.¹ In other words, for about half of this generation, seeing a brand on TV is a signal that it is worth taking seriously.

And when TV and social show up together, the effect deepens.

44% of Gen Z say seeing a brand on TV makes them trust it more when they see it again on social media, while 57% say seeing a brand on TV makes it feel more legitimate after seeing it on social media.¹

The sequence matters to them. First, they spot a brand in a feed. It feels interesting but unproven. Later, that same brand appears in the middle of a show they chose to watch. That second moment does not just repeat the impression. It upgrades it from “I noticed you” to “I believe you.”

However, discovery still starts where Gen Z spends most of their time: social media. 43% of Gen Z discover new products on social, 15% on search, and 13% on TV.¹



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Social sparks curiosity. Search answers questions. TV makes a brand feel real. Gen Z is not choosing one of these paths. They are threading all three together into a story they can trust.



The dual-screen rhythm of Gen Z

If you watch Gen Z watching TV, it rarely looks like they are just watching. 91% of Gen Z scroll social while watching TV, 73% game, and 93% text.¹

This is not distraction for distraction's sake. This is their rhythm of connection. The show on the big screen, the chat on the small one, the creator live stream, the friend sending a link in real time – all of it blends into one shared experience.

TV sits inside that rhythm rather than above it. When an ad lands well, it does not have to work alone. It has an instant partner in the phone they are already holding.

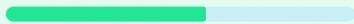
60%

made a purchase after seeing a TV ad



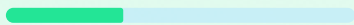
58%

searched for the brand



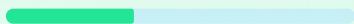
34%

visited the brand's website



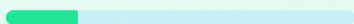
37%

looked up reviews



21%

go straight to social media



What Gen Z actually does after a TV ad

For Gen Z, a TV ad that lands is the beginning of a journey, not the end of one.

60% of Gen Z have made a purchase after seeing a TV ad, 58% have searched for the brand, 34% visited the brand's website, 37% looked up reviews, and 21% go straight to social media.¹

The pattern is familiar. They see the ad, then go looking for proof. For Gen Z, that social validation matters. It helps confirm whether a brand feels credible, relevant, and worth trusting.

And the groundwork laid by other channels is key.

51% of Gen Z say they are more likely to buy if they have seen the brand on social before seeing it on TV, while 47% say they are more likely to buy if they have seen the brand in search before seeing it on TV.¹

By the time they encounter your TV ad, there may already be faint memories of your logo, your product, or your message scattered across their feeds and searches. TV becomes the moment that pulls those fragments together into a coherent picture.

And it doesn't just change what they do. It changes how they feel. 44% of Gen Z say TV ads help them feel more confident before buying.¹ For a generation that leans heavily on social proof and second opinions, that extra confidence is often what turns hesitation into action.

The TV experience Gen Z is looking for

Gen Z wants to participate, explore, and even be creative in how they shop.

In fact, they are the generation most likely to say they want to be creative in their shopping process.² That creativity shows up in the formats they prefer, the way they move across screens, and the environments where they feel most open to new ideas. In fact, nearly 3 in 4 of Gen Z consumers agree that when they see a brand in a positive space, they are more likely to purchase that brand.²

And on TV, they want the experience to feel like it was made for them. 53% of Gen Z want personalized ads on TV.¹ They are used to recommendations that mirror their tastes, searches, and recent behavior. That is part of what makes tvScientific by Pinterest so powerful here.

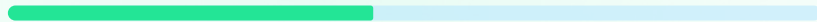
By bringing Pinterest’s high-intent signal into Performance TV, advertisers can reach Gen Z earlier, while preferences are still forming, and make TV creative feel more relevant to what they are already exploring. Especially considering 88% of Gen Z weekly Pinterest users say they discover products that fit their taste and style while shopping on Pinterest.⁴



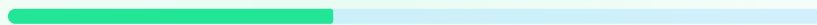
53% of Gen Z want personalized ads on TV



45% of Gen Z want shoppable pause ads on TV



40% of Gen Z rank creator-led TV ads as their top advertising format



They also want TV to collapse the distance between interest and action. 45% of Gen Z want shoppable pause ads on TV.¹ For them, the ideal experience is not “remember this for later.” It is “pause, explore, decide” while the feeling is still fresh.

And they want TV creative that sounds like the people they already trust. 40% of Gen Z rank creator-led TV ads as their top advertising format.¹ They have grown up with creators who feel like peers, not distant spokespeople. When those creator voices show up on TV, it bridges the intimacy of their phone with the scale of the biggest screen in the room.

Pinterest is where Gen Z goes to plan, save, and shape what they want next. When that intent signal extends to TV through tvScientific by Pinterest, brands can connect discovery on Pinterest with more relevant TV experiences and a clearer path to action.

A more human role for TV with Gen Z

When you add all of this up, it's not a story about fragmented attention. It is a story about connected behavior. Gen Z moves across TV, social, search, and shopping fluidly, and that gives marketers a clearer view of how TV drives trust, consideration, and action.

They watch through streaming apps and on multiple devices. They move constantly between TV, social, search, and shopping. They scrutinize brands, read reviews, and check what other people think. They want ads that speak their language, show up in positive spaces, and give them room to be creative in how they discover and buy.

Inside all of that is a simple desire: to feel connected. Connected to friends, to communities, to ideas that reflect who they are and who they might become. Brands that understand this do not use TV as a blunt instrument. They use it as a moment of presence in a life full of motion.

For marketers, that means designing TV for the relationships Gen Z is already building. Let social spark discovery. Let search answer questions. Let Pinterest offer a canvas for taste, style, and self-expression. Let TV bring those pieces together into a story that feels real, trustworthy, and worth acting on right now.

The brands that will matter most to Gen Z are not the ones that shout the loudest on any single screen. They are the ones that feel consistently human across all of them.

When TV plays that role – as a trusted, emotionally resonant touchpoint in a connected journey – it stops being just another channel. It becomes part of how a new generation imagines, chooses, and creates the lives they want.

Sources:

1. tvScientific by Pinterest, 2026 Consumer Trends Report, United States, April 2026, Gen Z = 18-28.

2. The Decision Lab and Morning Consult, Empowered Decisions Power Performance (commissioned by Pinterest), Global, August 2025

3. Morning Consult, Core Narratives (commissioned by Pinterest), US, UK, CA, DE, FR, n=7000, January 2026; Gen Z defined as 18-29

4. Talk Shoppe, US, Core shopping survey commissioned by Pinterest, July 2024

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CONSUMER TRENDS REPORT



to explore the full findings across generations and turn these Gen Z insights into your next media plan.

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