

Generation question everything

U N S E E N ,
B U T
P O W E R F U L .

**Everything will be different:
insights and guidelines for
personnel, communication
and everyone.**

We are in the middle of a profound change of times, explicitly triggered by the first generation of digital natives, who are bringing a mindset into society that differs substantially from the culture that has prevailed up to now.

Through them, the climate crisis, sustainability, digitalization, feminism, self-care and LGBTQ are becoming the great narratives of our time. This development is the starting signal for major changes in the political, social and economic world shaped by older generations.



OLIVER HEYDEN,
CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER,
MEMBER OF STRATEGY BOARD
PRESSRELATIONS

How the young generation uses its crisis of meaning to establish a new paradigm for the future

Question everything. Why?



ANDREAS STEINLE,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
ZUKUNFTSINSTITUT WORKSHOP GMBH

Crisis is a constant

What is still lasting today? What will still endure in the future? The crisis is creeping into everyday life and people's minds as a constant companion. First the Corona pandemic, now the Ukraine war. And

tomorrow, a global economic crisis that will sweep away all nations? Not to mention the climate crisis. There's that, too. It's possible that waves of catastrophes will combine to form a tsunami of crises that will sweep everything away and usher in a new age. The 2020s have the potential to catapult the world out of its old order. In other words, there is chaos, a crazy mess – in society, in the markets, in the deepest parts of people. What does that do to us? What does it do to the younger generations? How does it shape those who will shape the future? Many attributions have already been found: Generation Greta: Aren't all under 30 now vegans? Generation Snowflake: Don't they melt away like snowflakes at the slightest criticism? Generation Z: Something has to come after Generation Y. In other words, all those born between 1995

and 2010. They are also commonly known as digital natives.

All of these descriptions do not provide a holistic picture. They shorten the view to singular phenomena. They tempt us to find a cool, new term for a youth generation in order to stick a dazzling label on it. Let's free ourselves from this desire. Instead, let us direct our perspective to what is happening out there in the world in order to understand what the inner effects are in the thinking and feeling of young people. Only then can we guess what answers the younger ones will use to shape tomorrow. So how does the world present itself to them right now? What has shaped their childhood and youth?

How the young generation uses its crisis of meaning to establish a new paradigm for the future

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The Age of Peak

From a sober perspective, the world was already pretty broken before Corona and the current crises. Bank of America has coined the apt term "Age of Peak" for this. We have reached the peak. From there on, it doesn't go any higher. This sounds abstract, but it quickly becomes concrete. For example, the global textile industry produces 100 billion items of clothing every year – with 8 billion people on this planet, mind you. Who the hell is supposed to wear this stuff? Three-quarters of the goods produced end up in landfills or are incinerated. Given these numbers, does it make sense to tell people to buy more clothes? No matter which industry you look at: Everywhere, the logic of "more and more" has led to bizarre absurdities: Worldwide, 17 percent of food production is thrown

away. In Germany, the figure is almost a third. Cars are getting bigger and faster, but are increasingly stuck in traffic jams. We have also reached a peak in the exploitation of fossil resources. Even more coal, oil and gas is not only geopolitically dangerous, but also destroys the basis of life on this planet. Are we really surprised when the younger generation increasingly asks the question of meaning? Is it really surprising when they vehemently demand the compatibility of career and purpose?

Whether it's called Purpose or Sinn or whatever, there's an understandable desire behind it to pick up the pieces. In most industries, this requires a radical change of course: from "more" to "better". From "growth" to "development." This is not a luxury debate, but

necessary – and necessary for survival. Companies that do not adapt to this change will no longer exist tomorrow. Their business model will crumble. And no one will want to work for them anymore. Companies that only offer money but no identification are the big losers.

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Satisfaction through a sense of purpose

What can be observed right now is a "clash of systems". The old operating systems are still kept running as long as they can. Sometimes they are wrapped in new packaging. This is called green washing – or purpose washing. However, it is immediately noticeable – at least to the younger ones. Because they are fully informed. They can smell the masquerade a mile away – and distance themselves. Never before have so many people thought about changing jobs as these days. Not because they can't stand the stress, but because the futility is wearing them down. In the U.S., this dynamic is described by the term "The Great Resignation." The threat of major waves of resignations are real in Germany, too. The young generation is often accused of disorientation. Not knowing what direction they want to take. Not knowing who they are and what they stand for. Well, that used to be much easier: A BMW 7 series meant success. Today, a big car can generate pity. Yes, the young generation is

in an identity crisis. They know very clearly what they don't want. It is becoming more difficult for them to name what they want instead. Where the old offers of identification are losing their meaning and the new ones are not yet there, a search process first begins. That's why all the issues that have something to do with identity are so significant for the young generation – whether it's transgender or the right form of gendering. Searching for and finding identity is the dominant theme of our time. In the process, a concept from antiquity emerges that becomes a guiding star for the younger generation: Eudaimonia. It goes back to the ancient philosophers and stands for long-term satisfaction through the holistic creation of meaning. Eudaimonia sees itself as the antithesis of hedonism. One does not obtain this state through external circumstances, but finds it within oneself. Eudaimonia means something like "unfolding one's potential", living

in harmony with oneself and realizing one's own strengths. We are possibly experiencing the beginning of a eudaimonic decade. The breeding ground for this is Generation Z's search and striving for a new balance – for themselves, for their communities and for this planet. Therein lies a great opportunity: For companies to renew themselves. For society to develop a positive vision of the future. For individuals to find more happiness and satisfaction in life.

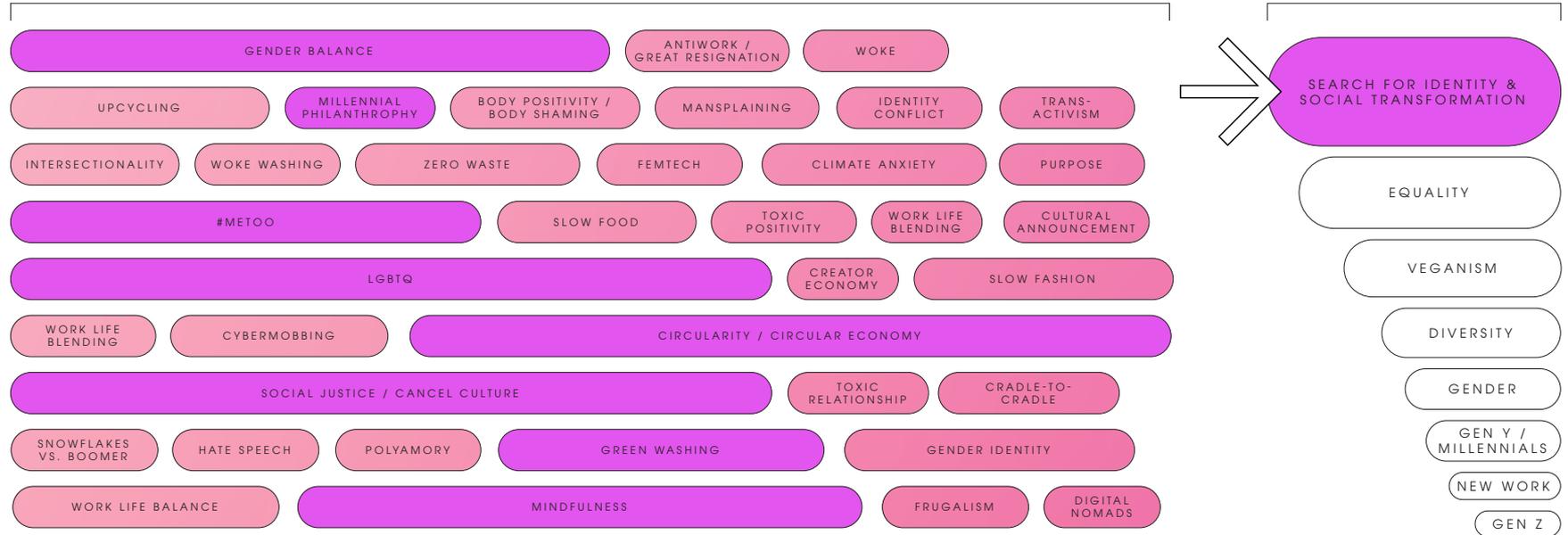
Experience can also mean 20 years of doing the wrong thing.

People are fundamentally questioning their relationships with work, technology, brands, society, places, the planet, and people they care about right now.

"According to the trends, these changing behaviors will pose major challenges for companies. They will have to rethink their design, innovation and growth concepts."

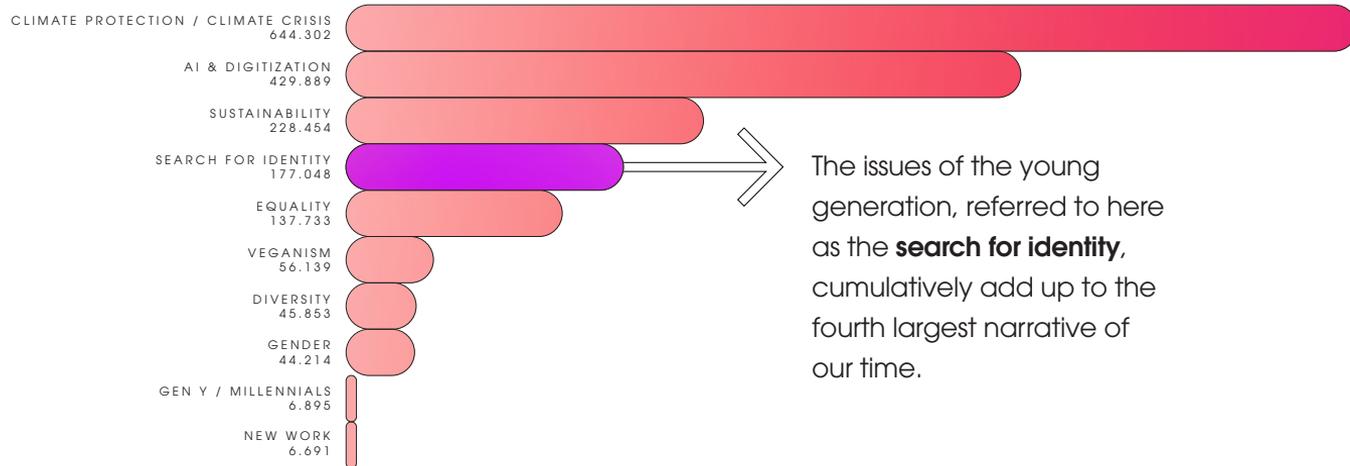
The unseen future topic is between the lines.

MEDIA AWARENESS OF THE ISSUES THAT SHAPE IDENTITY FOR GEN Z/Y



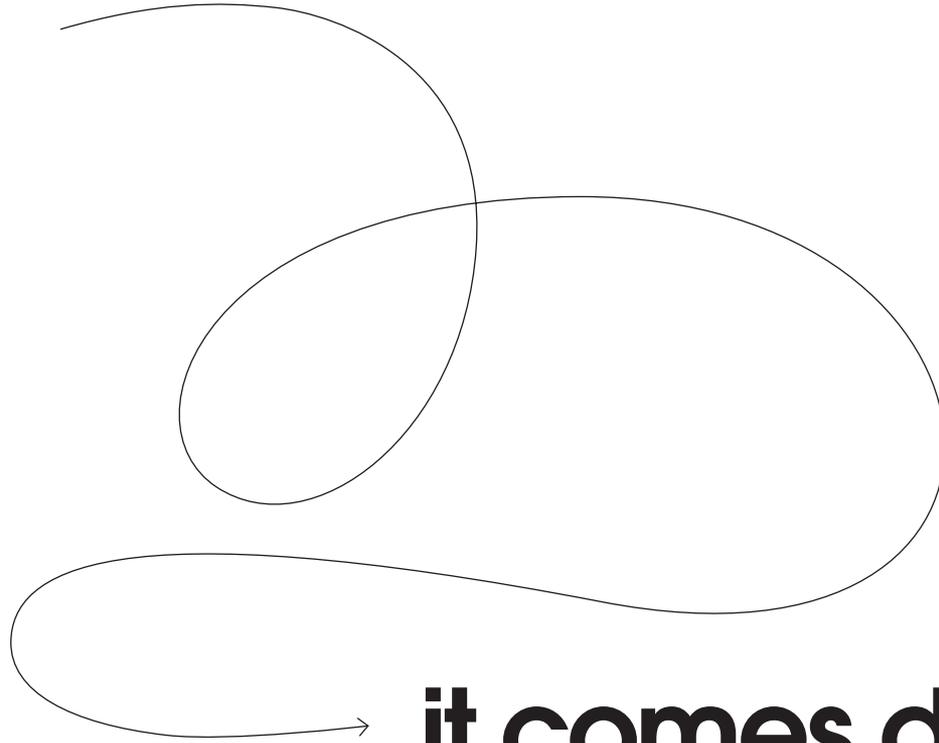
The generation "question everything" turns everything upside down: society, beliefs and mechanisms of action.

TOP SOCIAL ISSUES 2021



The issues of the young generation, referred to here as the **search for identity**, cumulatively add up to the fourth largest narrative of our time.

**Whatever
comes,**



it comes differently.

Networked and disoriented as never before.

"The majority of respondents have friends they see more often online than off-line."

JOHANNES EHRENWERT
Agentur_Boomer study Internet Culture with
1,000 participants from 18 to 44 years of age

"The under-30s got the lowest likability scores across all age groups, even among the under-30s themselves."

MICHAEL NORTH
Organizational psychologist - in DER SPIEGEL

"We see that experiences have become more important to people than buying things, for example (...)
Encounters would now be valued even more."

MARITA CARBALLO
Sociologist

"Younger people have problems perceiving the emotions of others. Social media and digital communication determine everyday life and overwhelm us."

JULIA BRILLOVSKAIA
Psychologist - in the ZEITUNG

**Because they don't know
what they are saying.
And mean.**

Picture on the front page of
the Economist, early 2020,
prompted by a poll showing
that 51% of all young U.S.
Americans thought socia-
lism was a good idea.

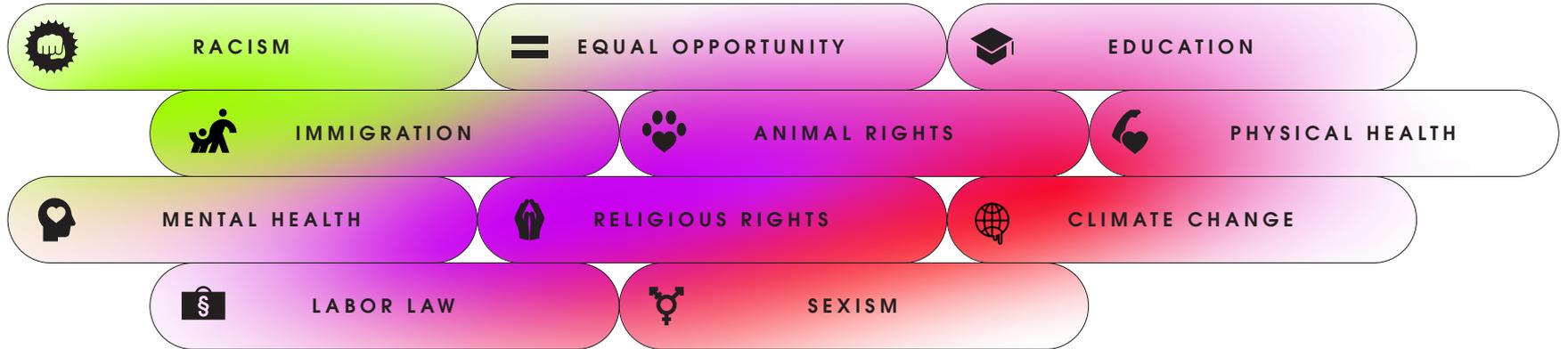


**There is no
~~elsewhere~~
anymore.**

**In today's crises –
climate change or
pandemic – there is no
anywhere else. The sense
of security has eroded.**

SIMON SCHNETZER
Youth Researcher

There are many topics, that occupy and move them.

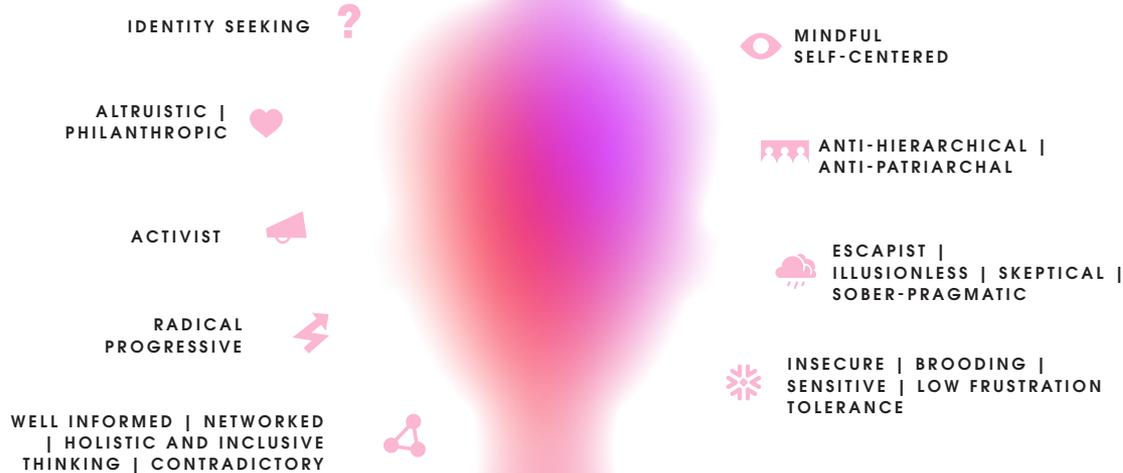


The principle Noah

"Look after number one" no longer applies.

As digital natives, Generation Z has grown up from the very beginning with an unprecedented level of information and networking with the world compared to previous generations. **Holistic thinking is therefore deeply anchored in them.** Tunnel vision, e.g., focusing only on returns, status and (monetary) success, as was still the case with previous generations, is hardly possible for them or is unfamiliar to them.

How do you change the world when you don't even know where to start with yourself?



A generation that is struggling with itself and the world, that feels homeless, that wants to do everything differently than their predecessors, but does not (yet) know exactly how.

ANDREAS STEINLE
Founder ZukunftsInstitut Workshop GmbH

Know what's **not** important.

PAST

Offers of identification through grand social narratives to which one could attach and which created orientation.

TODAY

Hyper-feedback, microtrends, and filter bubbles that isolate and unsettle, narrow or complicate identity formation, and create disorientation.

Big common narratives are fear of climate change, knowing the importance of digitization and sustainability. And knowing what you don't want.

Aristotle
was right.

Eudaimonia*
forever.

THIS RESULTS IN A CULTURAL PARADIGM SHIFT COMPARABLE TO
THAT OF THE 68S, FROM HEDONISM TO EUDAIMONIA - LONG-TERM
SATISFACTION THROUGH HOLISTIC SENSE-MAKING.



What is eudaimonia?

The term goes back to the ancient philosophers and was harshly criticized by Kant as a moral concept, but also specified as the pursuit of happiness and a good life. It is often explicitly understood as the opposite of hedonism. In this context, one does not achieve this state through external circumstances, but finds it within oneself. Eudaimonia means something like "unfolding one's potential," living in harmony with oneself, and realizing one's strengths.

In contrast to the short-term happiness boost of hedonism,

long-term achievable and more sustainable, because deeper happiness is sought, which grows out of a holistically managed and self-effective life. This is characterized by a feeling of optimism and a sense of belonging to a community. Which is why happiness is the wrong word. It is about **satisfaction through meaningfulness.**

The lesson for companies is:

Development INSTEAD
OF ~~**Growth**~~

Better INSTEAD
OF ~~**More**~~

Companies that only
offer money but no
identification are
the big losers

22%

Outdated role models, patriarchal conditions, the notorious glass ceiling, gender pay gap and poor work-life balance – these are the main reasons, especially for women and the younger generation, why only 22% of all employees still feel very closely connected to their employer – a record low.

Young executives in particular see political power games as a waste of time and turn down a higher position (...). The era of those who primarily stroke their egos with the boss role bestowed upon them and lead with carrots and sticks is coming to an end. Many employers will have to rethink their corporate culture if they want to attract top talent in the future.

MANAGER BAROMETER,
ODGERS BERNDTSON
in Handelsblatt

Generation Z wants to work for a company that is sustainable and stands for certain values. This also earns them recognition from their friends. Internal appreciation is just as important; the need for this is particularly pronounced among this generation.

YAËL MEIER
Founder of a Gen Z consultancy
in DER SPIEGEL

87 % of millennials want to work for a company that engages in corporate responsibility. 65 % only buy from responsible companies and 43 % engage in impact investing.

FINANCIAL TIMES

The great resignation. Everywhere.

40%

"According to Microsoft's latest Work Trend Index, circa 40% of **workers** are considering quitting their jobs."

cio.de*

72%

"TalentLMS and Workable recently reported that 72% of employees in the **U.S. technology industry** are thinking about quitting their jobs in the next 12 months."

cio.de*

- 5 M

„Depopulation Pressure – Germany's **workforce could shrink** by up to 5m by 2030.“

The Economist, Berlin

QUOTATIONS HAVE BEEN TRANSLATED FROM GERMAN.

* cio.de/a/darum-werfen-ihre-mitarbeiter-hin,3552306

The lesson of childhood:

Life is what happens,
while you run in the hamster wheel.

The young respond to their parents' major life mistake of constantly running on the hamster wheel and always pushing the limits of performance. They experienced their constant exhaustion, they are shaped by the experience of fragile families, which is often due to this overwork.

Without **Sense** everything has no purpose.

„Leveraging technology and social media to engage with the philanthropic world is second nature for these generations (...). Many millennials choose careers that are cause-focused, rather than employer-specific, leading to a cultural corporate shift that pushes companies to give back.“

FORBES



EXAMPLE CHINA: THE TANGPING MOVEMENT

Tangping is the perfect rebellion against the relentless study and work schedule of competitive mainstream Chinese life. Tangping is a stance that young people take to oppose their capitalist exploitation. Urban, well-off tangping youth rebel by stepping off the hamster wheel.

ZAK DYCHT WALD

Author of the book "Young China", in NZZ

An individual, passive protest against the homogeneous society, (...) an expression of the desire to be able to be creative in different ways in a society that knows only one recipe for success: hard work.

XIANG BIAO

Social Anthropologist, in NZZ

When everything changes, what do you do?

A small instruction manual.

✔ **Analyze the extent to which your current organization reproduces old patriarchal patterns.**

Because that's where everything needs to change.

✔ **Not just market research. Learn, for example, about a personal retreat with activists.**

Just as Churchill once got on the subway before his famous speech to get the opinion of the street.

✔ **Change your organization to resemble an NGO.**

Turn your employees into activists.

✔ **Leave the flashy, clean, flawless look behind.**

Try more DIY.

✔ **Hedonism vs. Eudaimonia: What identity propositions does your organization make, what purpose does your products and marketing support?**

Develop a corporate identity.

✘ **Clumsy appropriation through green-washing and woke washing, on the other hand, do not work.**

Negative example: Joe Kaeser offered Luisa Neubauer a position on the supervisory board position.

Why this generation has great power to change and is turning the future upside down.

There is a cultural fit, products become much more accessible.

SEBASTIAN GALLA

Agency Boomer, to the Internet Culture shaped by Gen Z and Gen Y.

agentur_boomer

Customer: Isn't there maybe 1 solution to all my marketing problems?



Generation Z dominates the algorithms. Because Gen Z shares, comments, likes, and saves: If you reach Gen Z, you reach everyone. But Gen Z expects engagement.

JASON MODEMANN

Consultant, in T3N

Young people are early adopters. That means they adopt changes earlier and more readily. Be it in their ideologies or in their behavior. That's why, if we ask them, we as a society can understand much better what the future might bring.

SIMON SCHNETZER

Youth Researcher, in DIE ZEIT

Influencers are supposed to promote ideas and a certain lifestyle instead of products; they are called genuinfluencers. This term stands for the positive impact they have on Internet culture.

AGENTUR_BOOMER
Internet Culture Study

Perfection and high gloss are apparently not in demand in social media, instead "curated imperfection" – cultivated imperfection.

GW I - U M F R A G E

WHICH OF THESE STATEMENTS DO YOU AGREE WITH?

● GEN Z ● OTHER AGE GROUPS



Do something. With us.
Two questions. Two offers.

Challenge your Company

FUTURE WORKSHOP

You are curious? You are pondering? You are looking for answers?

Wondering what this means for your corporate identity? Then let's look at the future together, ponder and reflect together. Join forces to look for answers and develop initial solutions. In our one-day intensive workshop, we combine the knowledge of the major megatrends from Zukunftsinstitut Workshop with the trend analyses of FirstSignals® early topic identification from pressrelations and your experiences.

WORKSHOP

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