

The realities of catering for Generation Z in the MICE space

By [Chantal Kliche](#)

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Born between the mid-1990s and 2010, the iGeneration or Generation Z is a generation poised to be 'world-changers', with high expectations. You can try to ignore them, but they won't let you, as they are an entirely new force with which to be reckoned.



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To cater for the next generation in the meetings and incentives space, there are four realities you need to consider:

High-Octane engagement

You will have no more than eight seconds to grab the attention of Generation Z. Keep in mind that this is not at all an attention issue. Rather, this is what experts are calling “eight-second filters”.

To put this in perspective, for this generation options are endless, however, their time is not. Ultimately when planning meetings and incentives for this generation it will mean that we will have to provide them with engaging and immediately beneficial experiences.

Forget meetings and events that offer only one-way messaging and focus on getting and keeping them engaged. Allow them to interact, share and be involved in discussions and decision making by listening to their opinion. Let them vote, offer them rewards, provide them with contests and competitions.

With incentive trips, it won't be enough to ship them off to some exotic location just for bragging rights, they will want to be part of the planning, fine-tuning of itineraries and ultimately, they will want to have a say on how to improve their next experience.

Sharing visual creators

A recent Wikia study has revealed the YouTube is the Google of Generation Z, with 54% of this generation visiting YouTube multiple times a day, thrown in with the use of Instagram and also Snapchat.

Forget Facebook with this generation, because Gen Z spends most of their time looking for, but more importantly creating content, instead of social networking. This generation is also very in-tune with their peers around the globe and loves to share their knowledge and experiences. Don't expect them to tell mom or dad or their friends about it, they will and want to tell the world.

So what does this all mean for meetings and incentives? Connectivity to create will be key for the iGeneration. If they are attending an event they are going to want to share their opinion about it visually and have instant feedback on it. When they travel on an incentive trip they will tell it like it is to the world and it is vital that meeting and incentive planners provide them with the connectivity to do so visually. Marriott Hotels, for instance, is one of the first hospitality brands with a presence on Snapchat. W Hotels, from Starwood, also became the first hotel brand to launch Snapchat sponsored Geofilters. For Generation Z this means that they can now use these to share and promote activities, perks and experiences.

Sensibility

Forget large hotels and flights – give them train rides and boutique accommodation.

The iGeneration is very aware of the negative perceptions surrounding their predecessors, the millennials. So instead of “demanding”, they will apply ‘sensibility’ researching all of meetings and incentives and ensuring that the greater humankind benefits from their decisions.

An incentive trip to this generation will thus have to mean that not only will they get a benefit out of it, but so too the destination, and the communities in the destinations they visit.

Sensibility will again shine through in their spending habits. There is a strong sense that Generation Z will be wavier with money as they reach adulthood. A Forbes study cited 57% of Zs saying they would rather save money than spend it immediately and it is likely that they will suss out the best deals and will expect to test out products physically or virtually before they buy and they are likely to apply this thinking in the workplace as well.

This reality will again have a noticeable impact on meetings and incentive travel. If it is not worth the money, it will not be worth the effort for the Zs. This does not mean they are stingy, this generation will just look for value before price. You will have to make your meetings worth it or offer alternatives such as live streaming of events. When it comes to incentive travel you will have to ask yourself what the benefits will be to your Gen Z travellers and how will they be able to create more value out of their trip, because they will want to.

AI and bot friendly

From improved efficiencies and costs to making the process of events communication and feedback more aligned, chatbots are quite possibly, the now and the future of the most important technological development you need to engage with.

From Amazon Echo to Apple's Siri and Google Home, the iGeneration will expect to have elements of Artificial Intelligence and ChatBots incorporated in their meetings and events.

For this generation, this technology will be vital in generating leads, promoting speakers and topics, communicating venue information and selling tickets. At an event itself, such technology will continue for attendees as they ask: "What's on next?" "How do I get to room X?" "How do I access the Wi-Fi?." Thereafter, being able to draw insights from a large group (importantly at a time that suits them) via surveys and then share easily accessible content from the event, and follow-up material, will bring the entire process full circle.

Mobile devices have for some time now been the norm, so it's now just a case of how we give our event goers new experiences.

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