

CONTENT MARKETING BLOG

Cultural Intelligence and Growth Audiences: The Future of Marketing Strategy

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Updated: October 2, 2025



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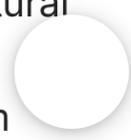
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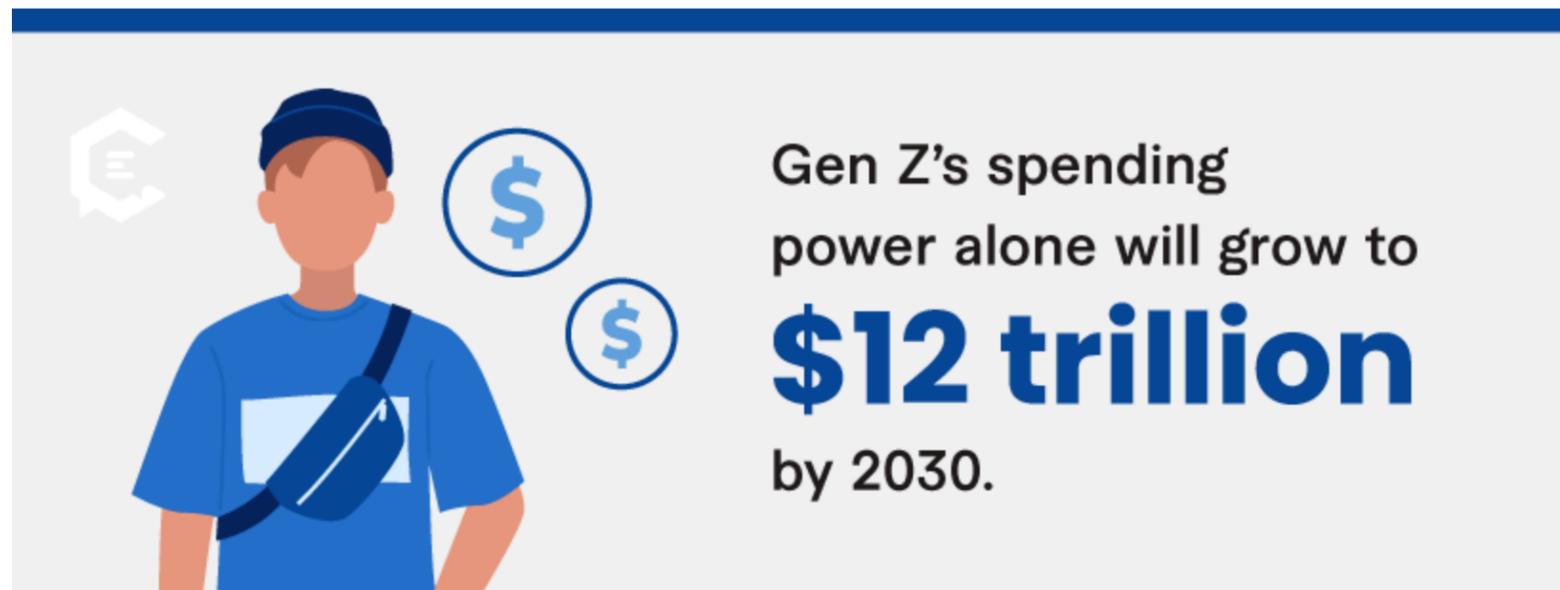
Consumer demographics are shifting in the U.S., giving rise to new growth audiences, or potential consumers who may be interested in your brand but have not yet become committed customers. As households grow more multicultural and younger generations like Gen Z gain greater purchasing power, businesses need to know how to engage with these growth audiences.

[Jessica Germain](#), VP of Marketing at My Code, encourages companies to develop their cultural intelligence (CQ), or ability to understand different cultures and build better relations. At My Code, Germain helped launch the Intelligence Center, a data hub that tracks everything from streaming behaviors to mental health perspectives to better serve multicultural communities.



Understanding the lived experiences and values of these communities informs how you create campaigns that authentically represent diverse consumers. Better CQ also helps you build brand loyalty and avoid cultural misunderstandings.

Let's explore the multiple reasons why growth audiences are gaining more consumer power and what it means to engage in cultural intelligence marketing. We'll cover how to avoid common pitfalls when trying to attract diverse audiences and the long-term return on investment (ROI) of creating an inclusive marketing strategy.



Why Growth Audiences Matter Now

Growth audiences include populations that are rising in number and cultural influence yet are still underserved by mainstream media and advertising. These include Hispanic, Black, LGBTQ+, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI), and [Gen Z consumers](#) — many of which, Germain notes, fall in one or more multicultural groups.

Younger generations are gaining greater purchasing power, with one NielsenIQ and GfK study projecting that Gen Z's spending power alone will [grow to \\$12 trillion by 2030](#). Multicultural populations are also growing in the U.S., with the Hispanic/Latino population expected to [more than double by 2050](#) to 128 million.

These shifting dynamics demand that companies make [multicultural content](#) marketing part of their core strategy. The burgeoning purchasing power of younger and multiculturally diverse audiences represents a major growth opportunity for businesses that can successfully engage with these consumers. Brands that align with their cultural values earn long-term consumer loyalty, allowing companies to remain competitive and profitable.

What Cultural Intelligence Really Means

Consumers crave authenticity from brands. Companies may promote eco-friendly practices or support social issues on Facebook posts, but if their policies damage the environment or exclude certain groups, this "performative representation" rings hollow. Customers recognize that these companies are interested only in *appearing* progressive, not making meaningful cultural changes. This creates distrust, hurting business relations.

Companies must develop true *cultural fluency*, or the ability to act with greater empathy and awareness to foster connections with diverse cultures. One way to do this is by combining data, truth, and authentic brand storytelling.

To do this, organizations use measurable data about customers to learn the truth about consumer preferences and pain points. They use these insights to produce human-focused

stories that show they understand and can fulfill specific customer needs.

For example, a clothing manufacturer may discover through data on Gen Z consumer trends that a large percentage of Gen Zers will pay more for sustainable products and boycott brands over environmental concerns. This reveals the truth about that generation's commitment to sustainability.

In response, the business can openly share how their products are made from recycled and ethically sourced materials. This authentic brand storytelling shows how the company's values match up with Gen Z, building trust between the brand and its target audience.

Because cultural intelligence requires companies to seek diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and adjust behavior to new situations, it should be seen as a long-term strategy, not a trend. Companies that integrate CQ into their marketing and leadership practices create a culture that adapts to cultural shifts and emerging market needs. By contrast, companies that view CQ as a trend offer only performative actions that make them look inauthentic to growth audiences.



Where Brands Get It Wrong (and How to Avoid It)

Businesses that see cultural intelligence marketing as a reactive tactic run the risk of creating superficial messaging. This might take the form of “token representation,” where a brand spotlights only a couple people from a marginalized community in their campaigns to create the appearance of inclusivity. It might also mean the brand only supports causes important to a growth audience during a specific heritage month.

Treating inclusivity as a seasonal tactic makes a company look insincere and shallow. At worst, it can lead to stereotypical portrayals of cultural groups and be seen as culturally insensitive.

To avoid this, recruit people from multiple ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds during your ideation stage. Germain's company My Code invests in publisher networks and owned media brands that detect cultural changes and what matters to the people they serve. This gives the company valuable insights into their growth audiences that inform their campaigns.

Building a Culturally Intelligent Strategy

To build a more [inclusive marketing strategy](#), first identify unconscious biases in your own cultural experience. Acknowledge that everyone has certain preconceptions, and be willing to challenge your own assumptions. Conduct in-depth interviews and focus groups from the growth audiences you want to reach to gain the cultural insights you need to shape your messaging.

Embed inclusivity in every aspect of your campaigns and content. Showcase a variety of body types, ages, and abilities in your campaigns. Give consumers a voice, highlighting their real-life stories on your [landing page](#). Prioritize accessibility, making your content available for people with disabilities, and distribute your content through channels your audiences use.

For example, [Fenty Beauty](#), the makeup brand founded by music star Rihanna, identified an underserved market for beauty products made for darker and pale complexions. It offers a diverse range of foundation shades for overlooked skin tones and uses a wide range of models in its campaigns to showcase different body types, genders, and cultures. This makes its brand philosophy “Beauty for All” resonate with audiences who feel represented by the brand’s inclusive message and product offerings.



The Long-Term ROI of Cultural Fluency

When consumers see their needs and values represented in a brand, they gravitate toward it and become interested customers. If a company can regularly show that they understand and support the interests of their audience, that inclusivity not only fuels customer loyalty but also brand advocacy, leading to company growth.

What’s more, consumers have gotten used to a marketplace where businesses offer the same generic messaging and “one-size-fits-all” mentality. Creating campaigns tailored to the unique needs of your growth audiences helps you stand out in your industry. Consumers will respect that you’ve taken the time to research their pain points and find solutions.

For these reasons, cultural intelligence marketing and growth audiences marketing are inseparable for future-proof marketing. As consumers gain influence through their purchasing power and platforms, companies need to study their beliefs, values, and needs to better connect with them. Doing so helps direct [business policies](#) and marketing in ways that support long-term customer relationships and company growth.

Benefitting from Cultural Intelligence Marketing

As younger generations and multicultural audiences become influential consumers, companies must learn how to effectively connect and engage with them. Forming partnerships with community leaders and cultural ambassadors helps expand your CQ and understand the needs and values of communities that need more from businesses than standard products and solutions.

Creating campaigns based on cultural fluency helps attract these new growth audiences and build a brand of inclusivity. Over time, this leads to healthy customer relationships and sustainable success.

If you're ready to create more culturally intelligent campaigns, ClearVoice can help. [Connect with our content specialists](#) to learn how growth audiences marketing can take your brand to the next level.

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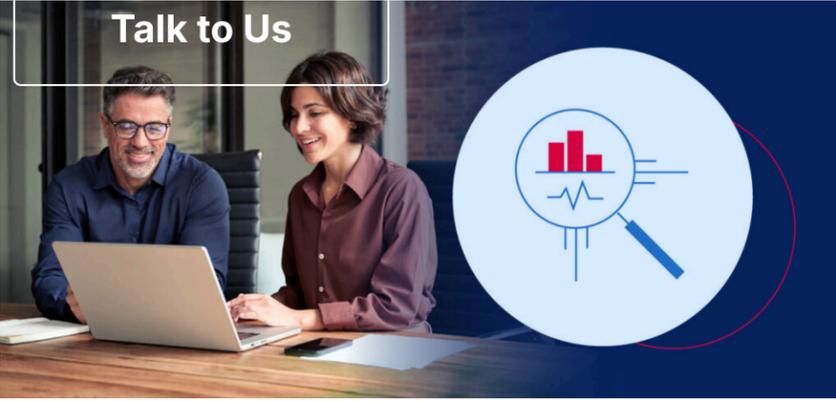


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