

Gen Z consumers increasingly identify as LGBTQ+

Article

The news: As Pride Month kicks off, recent studies reveal a **steady increase in global LGBTQ+ identification** and visibility, with a noticeable generational divide.

Identification: A new Ipsos study shows stronger LGBTQ+ identification in younger generations.

- The study, which encompassed 30 countries and involved more than 22,500 participants 75 and under, found that on average, 9% of adults worldwide and 10% in the US identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Globally, 3% of adults identify as gay or lesbian, 4% as bisexual, 1% as pansexual or omnisexual, and 1% as asexual. In the US, these figures stand at 3% gay or lesbian, 5% bisexual, 1% pansexual or omnisexual, and less than 1% asexual.
- 2% of UK respondents identify as transgender, non-binary, or otherwise non-gender conforming; in the US and globally, the transgender, non-binary, and other identities each were about 1%.
- The Ipsos data can be contrasted with a recent Gallup (US) study, which found that 7.2% identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or non-heterosexual—double the rate from a decade ago. Within this segment, over half identify as bisexual, while roughly one in five identify as gay, one in seven as lesbian, and one in 10 as transgender. Other identities, such as queer, pansexual, or asexual, represented 1% to 2% of the surveyed adults.

Generational differences: 18% of Generation Z and 4% of baby boomers identified as LGBTQ+ (Ipsos); in the US, 16% of Gen Zers and 15% of millennials identify as LGBTQ+, compared with 8% of Gen Xers and 2% of boomers.

- The Gallup study found that almost 20% of Generation Z, 11.2% of millennials, and less than 3.3% among older generations identified as LGBTQ+. Generation Z stands out in particular, with higher identification rates for each of the LGBTQ categories. Bisexual identification is predominant in younger generations, while older LGBTQ+ adults lean more toward gay identification.

US LGBT+ Adults, by Generation, 2022

% of respondents in each group



Note: figures represent the percentage of people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or something other than heterosexual; Gen Z are born 1997-2004, millennials 1981-1996, Gen X 1965-1980, baby boomers 1946-1964, and seniors 1945 and earlier. Source: Gallup as cited in company blog, Feb 23, 2023

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Why it matters: These trends signify evolving societal norms that directly affect consumer behavior and market strategies: As LGBTQ+ self-identification within grows, it strengthens a potent consumer demographic bloc that values representation and authenticity—the latter being an area where many brands fall short.

- The controversial pullback of **Bud Light**'s LGBTQ+-inclusive marketing following an anti-trans uproar led to a significant sales crash, while **Target** faced backlash over its Pride collection, underscoring the complexity brands face navigating social issues while trying to uphold their core values.
- With Gen Z leading the way, the trend toward broader acceptance and diversity seems to be set for the long term.
- Given these changes, inclusive marketing practices are not just ethically appropriate but also commercially sensible.

Our take: The marketing and advertising industry must understand and cater to these evolving consumer identities; with up to 9% of adults globally and 10% in the US identifying as LGBTQ+, inclusive and diverse representation becomes a business imperative.

- Genuine representation builds brand loyalty and affinity, especially among Gen Z consumers, 18% of whom identify as LGBTQ+.
- With increased visibility comes increased responsibility: Brands must navigate these demographics sensitively, recognizing the spectrum of identities and experiences within the LGBTQ+ community.