

Gen Z Guide for Events

How to plan for
emerging audiences.



Gen Z is reshaping the industry

Digitally native, socially conscious, and driven by authentic connection, Gen Z and emerging audiences are infusing new values throughout in-person events.

They want to contribute, connect, and walk away with purposeful connections and insights.

Here's what we've learned from our [trends report](#) and from the Gen Z attendees who attended our immersive learning event, Inside Live at ATD25.





Connecting ahead of time matters

Gen Z wants to know all the details before they walk through the door.

Provide tools to help them feel confident and prepared.

Send a Know Before You Go (KBYG) email with **logistics that are specifically for Gen Z** — where Gen Z activations are, who to contact, and how to navigate the space.

Plan **intentional networking** with an activation that groups attendees **by industry or common interests**.

Share helpful resources or best practices for networking.

Meaningful interactions are essential

Prioritize designing experiences that form lasting connections for attendees and your brand over attendance numbers.

Plan fresh, creative ways for emerging audiences to engage with people and share ideas.

Mentor meetups in a roundtable format help foster real conversations across generations.

Hands-on, unexpected elements, and experiential activations make your event feel alive and memorable.

A sit-down with the CMO provides access to senior leaders and honest insights from industry pros.





Missteps get noticed

Even the most inspiring content can be overshadowed by rushed transitions and confusion. Emerging audiences appreciate it when the event journey feels thoughtful and clearly communicated.

Build a seamless experience and avoid unnecessary event friction.

Be proactive with pre-event communication. Spell out exactly what to expect, where to go, and who to contact. The more detailed and transparent, the better.

Build in buffer time between sessions to allow for natural transitions and informal connection. Give space for attendees to build their community.

Clearly explain how breakouts or activations will work. Avoid last-minute surprises or overly complex flows that make it hard for attendees to navigate the experience.

Gen Z wants more involvement

Include your emerging audiences in content ideas, experience design, or even speaker selection to show trust, and that you're invested in their needs.

Use insights from Gen Z and emerging audiences to create experiences that meet expectations.

Stay ahead of trends — what's next in booth design, brand activations, and social culture.

Give opportunities to connect with industry pros, ideally at the first networking session. [Learn more about giving your networking experiences purpose.](#)

Keep the momentum going post-event with a dedicated LinkedIn or Slack group.



Pro Tip: Want to collaborate with Gen Z on your next event? Start by reaching out to those already on your team or tap into communities like ours that are eager to engage, shape, and elevate the future of our industry.





Authentic experiences resonate

Gen Z attendees connect with relaxed, low-pressure environments that allow for honest storytelling, genuine interactions, and question and answer sessions.

Host leadership conversations in intimate settings to encourage dialogue, not just monologues.

Share speaker bios ahead of time allowing Gen Z attendees to think of or submit questions in advance.

Highlight **vulnerability** and **real-world experiences** over polished soundbites.



Three activations to get Gen Z engaged

[Emerging audiences loved these experiences that our Events team incorporated into the attendee journey.](#)

DIY Phone Chain Experience

Turning the popular charm bar concept into a hands-on experience, making phone chains tapped into Gen Z's love for customization and functionality — while providing a fun way to keep their phones within easy reach.

Matcha Cart

Replacing the typical convention center coffee with a trendy, healthier, and visually appealing caffeine alternative demonstrated attention to detail and understanding of Gen Z's preferences.

PACE Pallet (Communicating with Color)

Aligning to Gen Z's desire for meaningful workplace relationships, this activity grouped participants into a fun, color-coded system that encouraged collaboration, self-awareness, and empathy.



Connections hit different

The Gen Z crowd wants meaningful relationships that go beyond a networking event.

Help emerging audiences continue the relationships they've made at your event.

Organize post-event check-ins or informal digital meetups

Create groups on social platforms such as LinkedIn

Launch a Gen Z ambassador program or volunteer opportunities.

Invite emerging attendees to co-design future activations or content.



Help emerging audiences shine

Give Gen Z the mic, invite their ideas, and make room for them to show up fully. You'll get energy, honesty, and a much more exciting event in return.

Want to be part of our Gen Z community or know someone who should be?

If you know Gen Z planners who want to plug into a growing community, make their voice heard, and help shape the future of events, we want to include them.

Contact: brandevents@freeman.com