

Gen Z's anticipated media consumption during Tokyo Summer Olympics

Mark Beal, author of *Decoding Gen Z and Engaging Gen Z* has been part of teams that led public relations campaigns for past Olympic sponsors including Bristol Myers, Adidas, General Motors, Kleenex, and the USA Track & Field and USA Triathlon teams throughout his career. He shares some insight to how organisations can reach Gen Z during the 2020 Olympic Games, which takes place from 23 July-8 August 2021 in Tokyo, Japan.



Source: www.pexels.com

What opportunities do companies have to reach audiences and Gen Zers during the Olympics?

The Olympic Games continue to be a globally unifying two-week event that captures the attention of media and consumers worldwide. There is a tremendous opportunity before, during and after the Games for global sponsors of the International Olympic Committee or sponsors of national teams to engage their target audiences.

Most individuals, especially Gen Z, will consume Olympic Games content via their preferred social media channels despite NBC producing an unprecedented 7,000 hours of content and distributing it throughout the U.S. In my recent survey, Gen Zers said they will first turn to TikTok (53%), YouTube (52%) and Instagram (51%) before they tune in to NBC.

What strategies work best in reaching Gen Z?

The one strategy still proven to be effective even in the current digital marketplace is compelling storytelling. There may be no better event in the world for engaging storytelling than the Olympic Games, which is the type of content that inspires this demographic.

In June, I interviewed 203 people age 13-24 across the country to gauge their interest in the Summer Games, 20% said they are most interested in viewing content that features behind-the-scenes access to the athletes as they train and prepare for competition. An equal amount of Gen Z'ers are most interested in the human-interest stories of the athletes and their families. It's one of the reasons why the Procter & Gamble Thank You Mom campaign sharing compelling stories from Olympic athletes has been so effective since it premiered in 2010.

How can an event as historic as the Olympic Games resonate more with younger consumers?

The challenge and opportunity for all sports properties, leagues and teams worldwide is converting casual, curious and interested Gen Z fans into avid ones by effectively engaging this cohort. One way to do that is by introducing new elements that are timely, relevant and popular with Gen Z.

At the Games in Tokyo, skateboarding, surfing and BMX freestyle cycling will make their Olympic debut. In the survey, these new sports resonated among this demographic. A significant number of Gen Z'ers are interested in watching skateboarding (21%), surfing (20%) and BMX freestyle (11%).

The Olympic Games will need to continue to add new sports and elements as they approach the Summer Games in Paris in 2024 and Los Angeles in 2028 if they want to convert Gen Z'ers into avid fans.

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