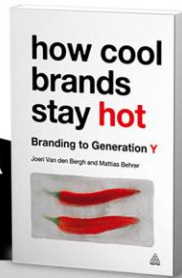


# how cool brands stay hot



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PRESS RELEASE

9 February 2011 – New York | Brussels | Stockholm

## Generation Y wants more than cool brands

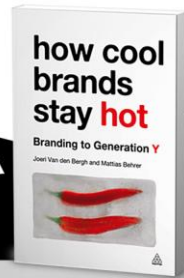
Gen Y, a.k.a. the millennial generation, boys and girls between 14-30, is increasingly entering the job market. Since they are a bigger cohort than their predecessors (Gen X), their influence on society, politics and business the next decades will be higher and comparable to the Babyboomer generation. But this new active generation feels that they are not taken serious at this point. Not only by politicians and the government but also by corporates and brands. After involving more than 25,000 Gen Yers in their daily research practice to stay in touch with the new consumer, MTV Networks (part of the Viacom holding) and InSites Consulting joined forces to write a business book on what Millennials really care for. “We hope to be able to give something back for youth in that way”, says Mattias Behrer, co-author and SVP of MTV North Europe. “That’s why twenty-five per cent of the book royalties will be donated to the Staying Alive Foundation, a global HIV/AIDS charity empowering young people.” The release of the book on 3 February is supported by a new global 16 country study delving into the emotions and needs of the young and future generation.

## Influential generation calls for more attention

Most (8 out of 10) ‘Millennials’ across the globe feel they do receive enough attention from their parents, family and friends. But politicians, government and companies should become more aware of the needs and wants of this upcoming generation. 61 per cent of Gen Yers thinks politicians aren’t paying any attention to them and for 55% the government should concentrate more on youth’s demands. For 1 out of 3, the private sector and specifically employers should follow their generation more carefully. But it’s not only the job market that lacks interest. Contrary to a popular belief that youngsters are heavily targeted as consumers, **one out of four Gen Yers around the world think they deserve more attention from brands** as well. Not only because they are spending money themselves but also because they have a strong influence on their parents’ expenditures. “They are the most empowered generation of consumers ever”, says Joeri Van den Bergh, co-author and Gen Y expert of InSites Consulting. “For many parents of Gen Yers, getting their teen’s and twenty-something’s approval is the most important thing in their lives. They treat their children as friends rather than subordinates. The reason behind this is that the average number of children per female has drastically dropped, while the divorce rate has gone up”, explains Joeri Van den Bergh. “Their parents have shifted away from the traditional disciplinarian role as a reaction to their own relationship with their parents”, says Mattias Behrer. “Most of them ask the opinion of their children before making purchase decisions. This openness is the glue that keeps the family together.”

The biggest influence that global Millennials report, is found in the technologies that their parents are adapting (52%) and the products that they are buying (44%). But they also affect the programs that Babyboomers watch (36%) and even the holiday destinations (36%) and shops (34%) they visit. The 15- to 25-year-olds did report they only have a limited impact on their parents’ music choice (42% no influence at all) and political preferences (47% no influence). Although the latter was different in Brasil, India and China where at least 30% of Gen Yers reported they did have influence on political choices of their parents.

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## TOP 10 “I strongly influence my parents’ decisions on...”

1. Technologies they adapt	52%
2. Products they buy	44%
3. TV programs they watch	36%
4. Holiday destinations they visit	36%
5. Shops they visit	34%
6. Environmental behavior	34%
7. Bars and restaurants they visit	32%
8. Cities they visit	32%
9. Clothes they wear	30%
10. Brands they prefer	29%

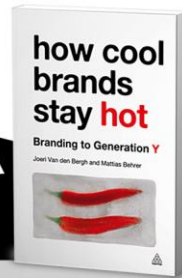
“Everyone had expected the strong opinion leadership of this digital natives in technology categories of course”, says Joeri Van den Bergh. “But the influence of this generation on consumer markets is much bigger than just the known impact on mobile devices or social media. Parents and adults want to stay young forever and so they are turning their heads towards youth to decide which clothes to wear, brands to use or places to visit.”

## **Brand characteristics youth is looking for**

According to both authors of *How Cool Brands Stay Hot* corporates and brands should therefore attach more importance to the values and characteristics that are ranked high on youth’s wishlist. “To stay relevant for this forthcoming generation of consumers, brands should understand how to re-connect with Gen Yers”, says Mattias Behrer. “The second you tell a Millennial you are cool, you can be very sure that, well, you are not. They decide themselves what’s cool. It’s not a characteristic you can deliberately plan or chase. You have to earn this critical and marketing savvy generation’s respect.”

Indeed from the long list of 33 different characteristics that could be attributed to products and brands, the 15- to 25-year-olds haven’t just picked ‘coolness’ for their top 10. “It’s not that coolness is not important to them”, explains Joeri Van den Bergh. “A brand’s coolness is a result from a complex mixture of attributes rather than something they buy from the counter. But although favourite youth brands differ regionally, for example in clothing retail it would be Top Shop in the UK, Zara in Spain or G-Star Raw in the Netherlands, when Gen Yers talk about their beloved brands, they universally share the same attributes.” To be embraced by the new generation of consumers, **brands should have their own style** (35%) and **deliver positive emotional experiences** (31%) **while staying up-to-date** (28%).

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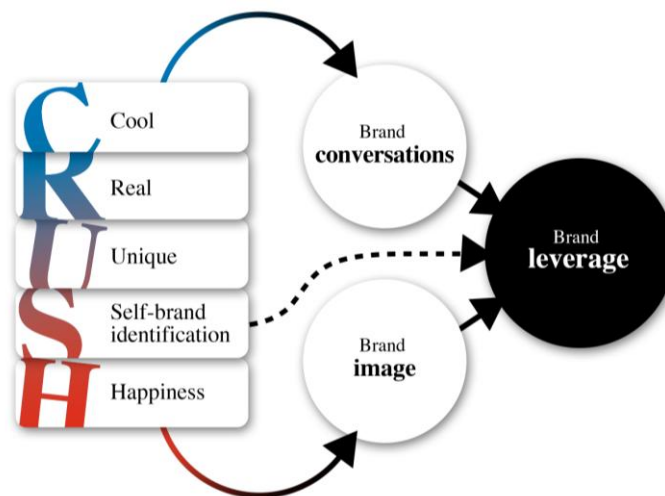
## Top 5 most important brand characteristics for Generation Y:

- |                                  |     |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Has its own style             | 35% |
| 2. Makes me feel happy           | 31% |
| 3. Is up-to-date                 | 28% |
| 4. Has a clean reputation        | 27% |
| Is real/authentic                | 27% |
| Is unique                        | 27% |
| Is something I can identify with | 27% |
| 5. Is clear and simple           | 24% |

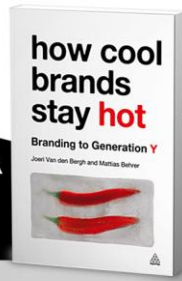
Some characteristics are more important in certain parts of the world but the top ranked items remain the same. Being up-to-date is of greater importance in the USA and Russia. A clean reputation scored higher in Russia and more Chinese youngsters were highly involved with authentic and spiritual brands. In Brasil and India brands should also provide a safe feeling and in the first country ecological engagement is strongly approved.

## A brand new brand model for Gen Y

The authors summarized their findings on the key universal brand attributes for Millennials in a new model, coining the 'CRUSH' acronym. These basic building blocks of successful Gen Y brands are each extensively explained and documented in their book. The model was scientifically tested by means of path analysis. If Gen Yers highly rate a brand on each of the CRUSH elements, a brand's image will improve and they will talk about the brand. Both brand image and brand conversations will have a substantial positive effect on the brand strength (brand leverage), ensuring that cool brands will stay hot even with this fickle consumer generation.



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## The 'How Cool Brands Stay Hot' study

The facts and figures in this press release are based on new global research conducted by InSites Consulting during the period: 24 December 2010 - 8 January 2011. We have interviewed 4,065 respondents aged 15 to 25 (Gen Y generation) in 16 countries: USA, Brazil, Russia, India, China, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Romania, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium. Percentages stated in this press release are overall average results for the 16 involved countries. The sample is representative for each country's Gen Y population.

## The book

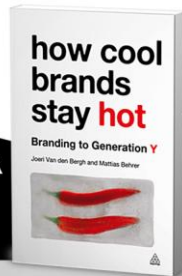
*How Cool Brands Stay Hot* is about connecting with a new generation who will determine how society and consumer markets evolve in the next three decades. Based on five years of intensive new market research, and fuelled with insights and case studies from MTV teams across the globe, it provides insights into the consumer psychology and behaviour of "the Millennials". The book outlines the five key attributes of successful youth brands and it will help companies to connect with this new generation of consumers by understanding their likes and dislikes. Full of cases studies and interviews with global marketing executives of global brands such as H&M, Coca-Cola, Levi's, Nike, Nokia and Jack & Jones, it provides readers with creative ideas on how to position, develop and promote brands and make them relevant to the Generation Y.

"This book explains brilliantly how you can gain the love of the Generation Y. A must read for all generation Y marketers and for all brand marketers together, since Generation Y leads to all the other target groups as well."

- *Kevin Roberts, CEO Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide*

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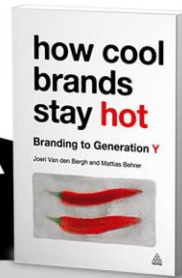
## The authors

**Joeri Van den Bergh** is the co-founder of InSites Consulting, a global 'new generation' research agency with offices in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Belgium. He has been involved with research and marketing to kids, teens and young adults for his entire career. His clients include global brands such as Lego, Nokia, Sony, MTV Networks, Danone, Unilever and Coca-Cola, for whom he has provided research and advice on how to target the youth market. As author and contributor to numerous journals and books, he also lectures throughout the world on marketing topics.



**Mattias Behrer** is the Senior Vice President, General Manager of MTV North Europe & MTV International Property Marketing. Mattias joined MTV Networks in 2005 and prior to this he spent seven years with retail giant H&M, where he had various leading roles in global marketing and brand management. Mattias has also worked as Global Brand Manager for Delaval and is the co-author of a Swedish book about event marketing and the experience economy.

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## More information

Contact person for interviews or review copies



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**InSites Consulting** is a fast-growing, global, online marketing research agency, delivering comprehensive solutions and advice to world leading brands in nearly all industries. Our mission is to challenge conventional marketing & research wisdom by putting conversations and storytelling at the heart of our thinking and acting. We stay ahead of the game via our ForwaR&D lab, co-creating state-of-the-art research solutions together with clients, suppliers, academics, consumers, and professional organizations. Over the last 3 years, we received no less than 11 awards from different internationally well-respected bodies such as AMA, ARF, ESOMAR, MRS, Media Marketing, MOA, SPSS, AMMA, and eConsultancy. We do not believe in 'one-size-fits-all' solutions, emphasizing the need for customization and consulting in formulating answers to marketing challenges. Being fully independent, we stand for flexibility and long-term focus. We are headquartered in Belgium, having offices in the UK and the Netherlands. [www.insites.eu](http://www.insites.eu) - <http://blog.insites.eu>.



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