

GEN Z: *Beyond the Stereotypes*

A look at how Genzers are slowly redefining the FMCG industry in Canada

CHFA VANCOUVER
February 2026

NielsenIQ



Co-Host:

Cédric Bélanger,

Small & Medium Businesses

NielsenIQ – 8 years

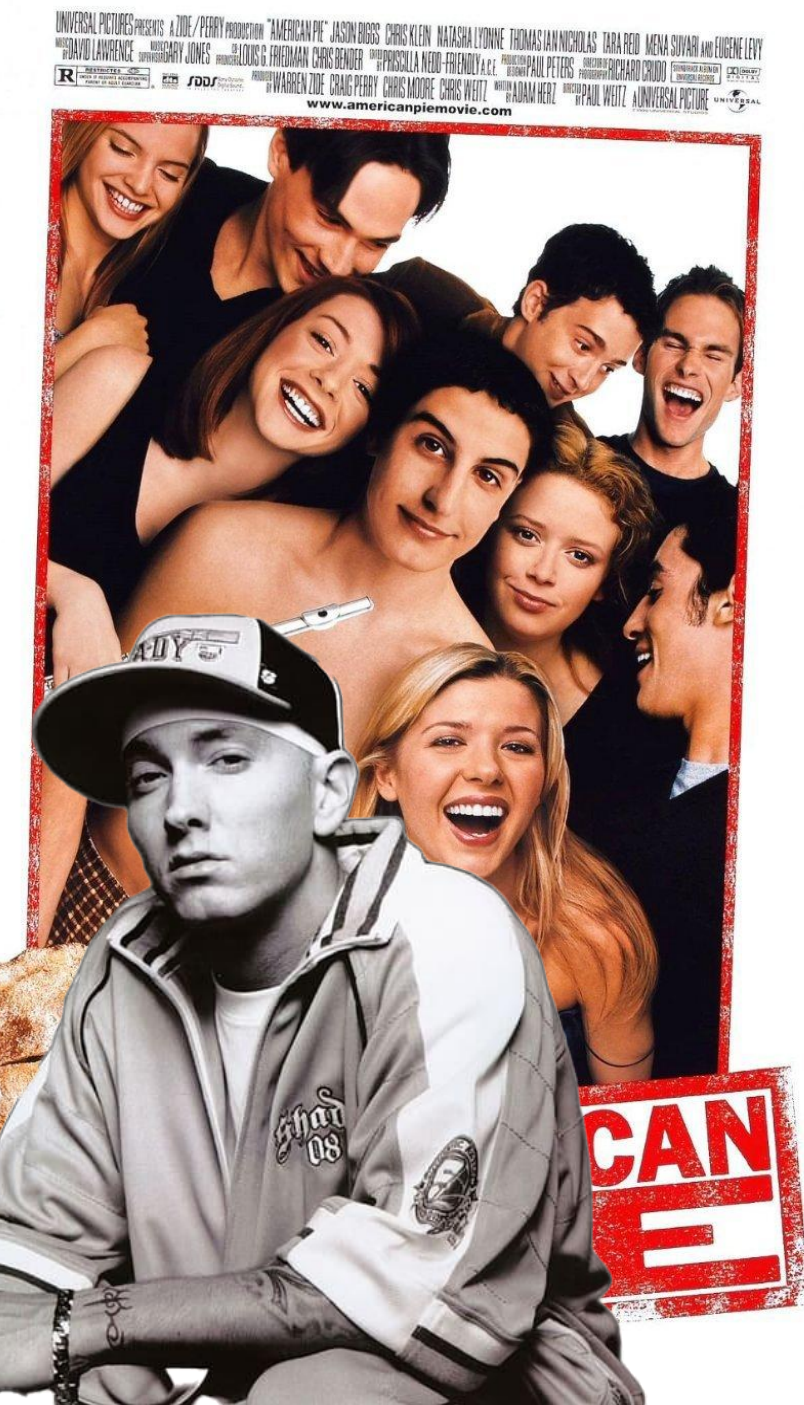
Co-founder of a real estate business – 4 years

Connexe experiences:

- **Couche-Tard – project manager**
- **Sleeman – sales representative**
- **Sampler – Kroger partnership**
- **Freelance consultant**

NIQ





Co-host:

PM Denault,

Nielsen Product Insights Lead

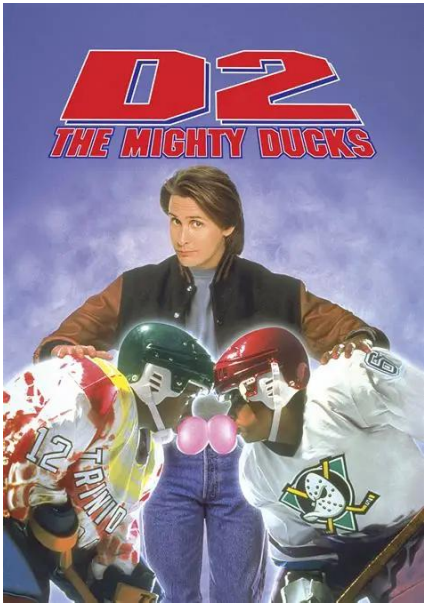
NielsenIQ – 8 years

Experience in the industry

- **Senior Manager – Category Management at Molson Coors**
- **Labatt – Sales**
- **Costco Wholesales – Marketing & Sales**

NIQ





NielsenIQ

The Full View



➔ Retail Measurement

➔ Consumer Panel

➔ Innovation Testing

➔ Advanced Analytics

Who are Genzers?





GEN Z

Born between
1997
&
2012

Accounts for
25%
*of the world's
population*



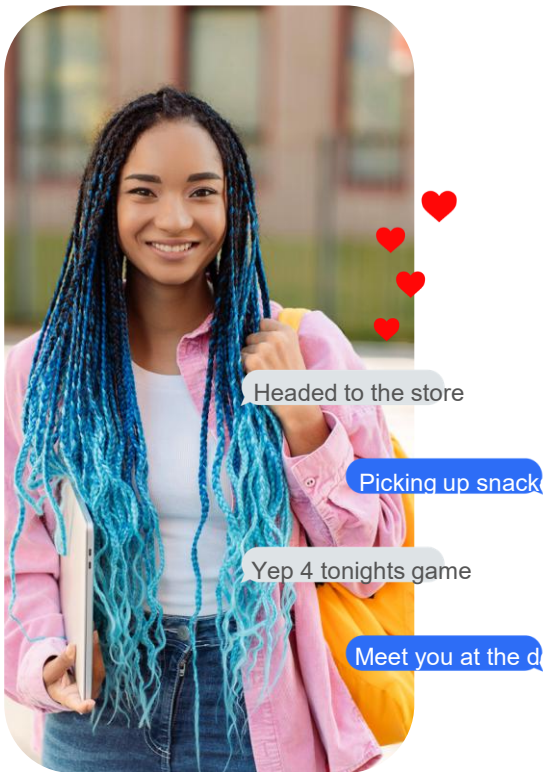
Far from a monolith: **Gen Z** is in **many life stages**

Fitting in between Millennials and Gen Alpha

Born between 1997 & 2012



12 Yrs Old



18 Yrs Old

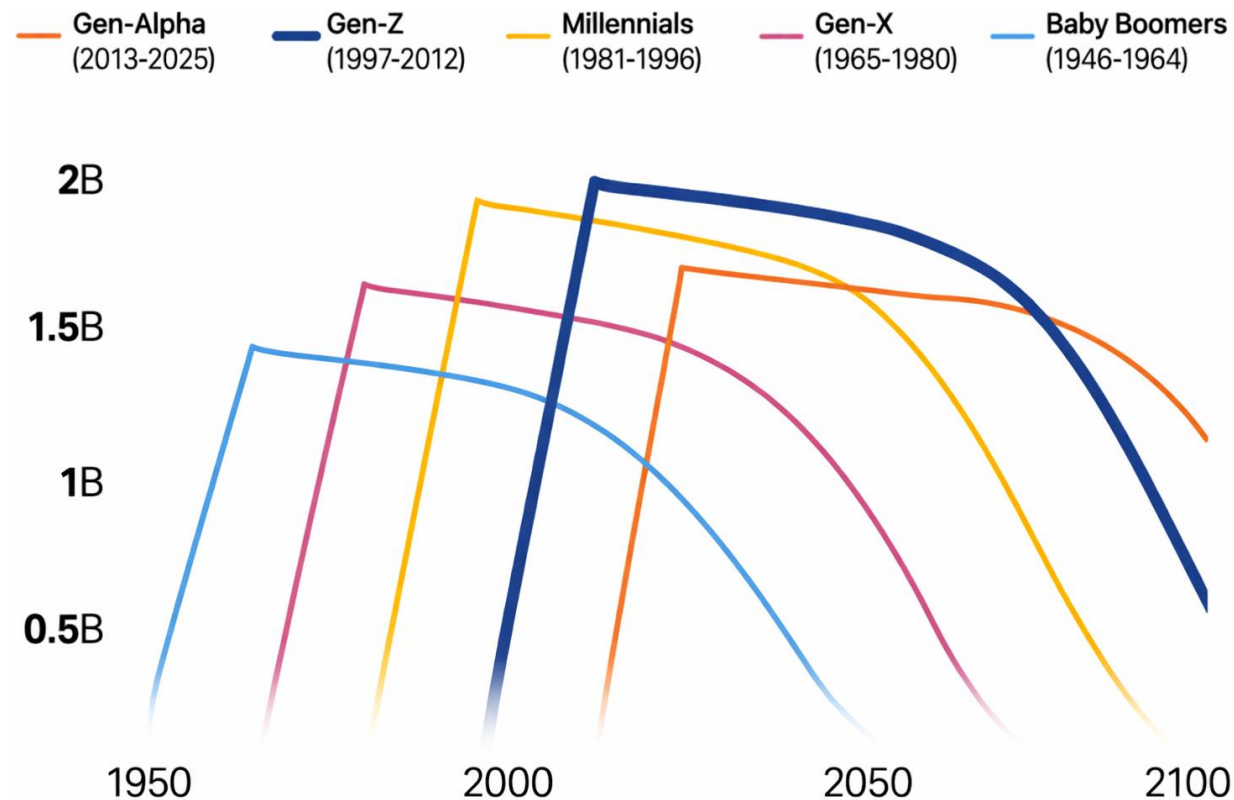


27 Yrs Old



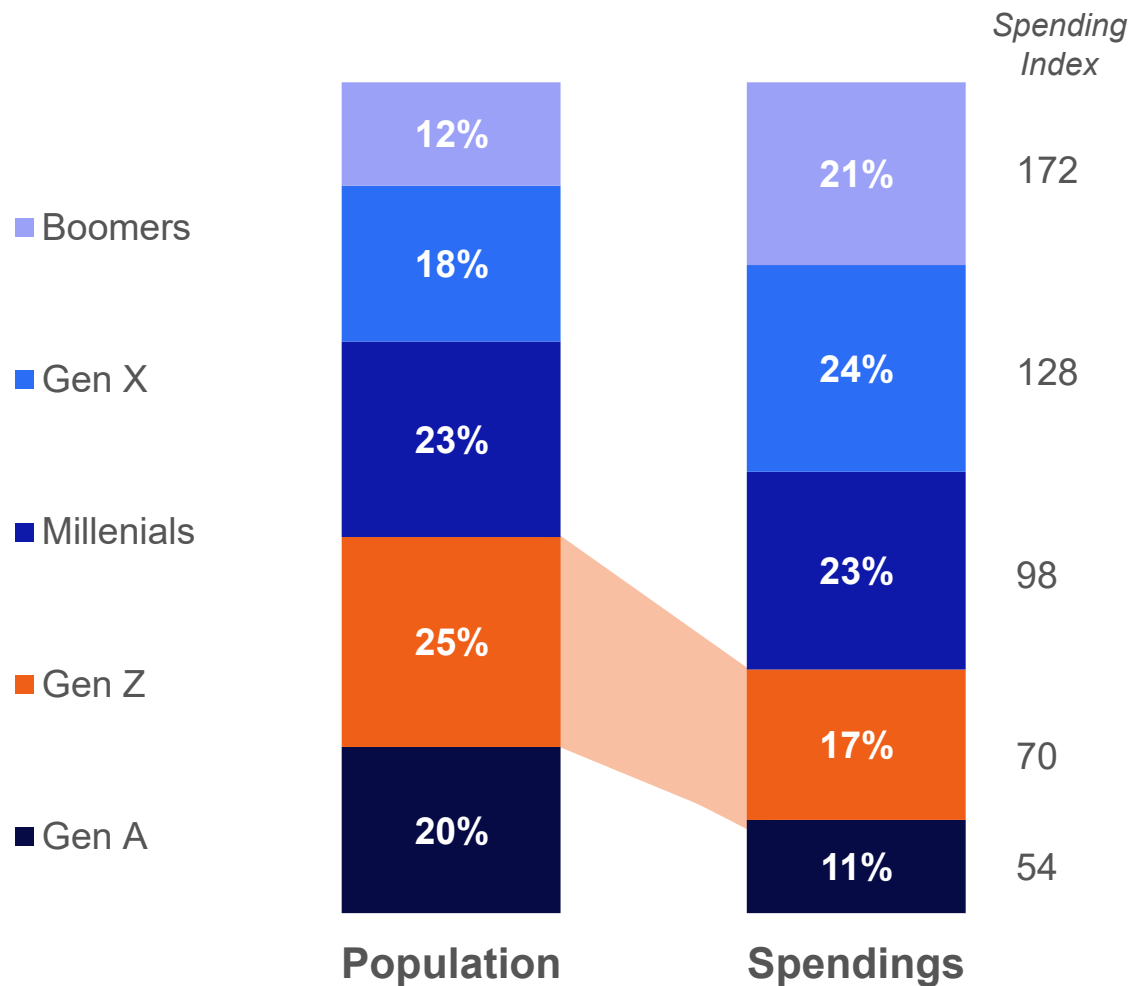
Largest generation
the world has ever
seen

Population



...but far from having
the *largest spending*
capacities

Weight in population & spendings - GLOBAL

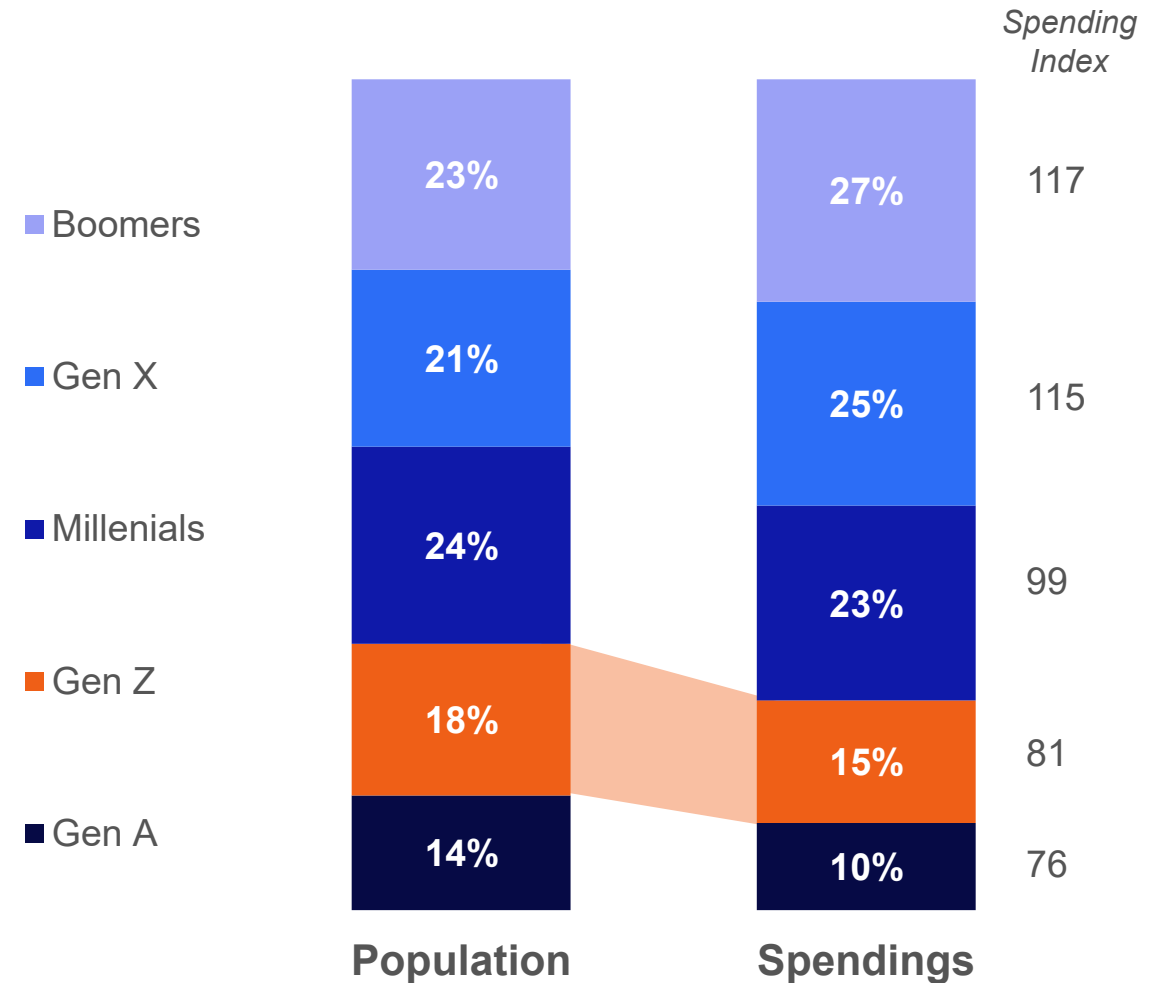


NielsenIQ GfK

WORLD DATA LAB

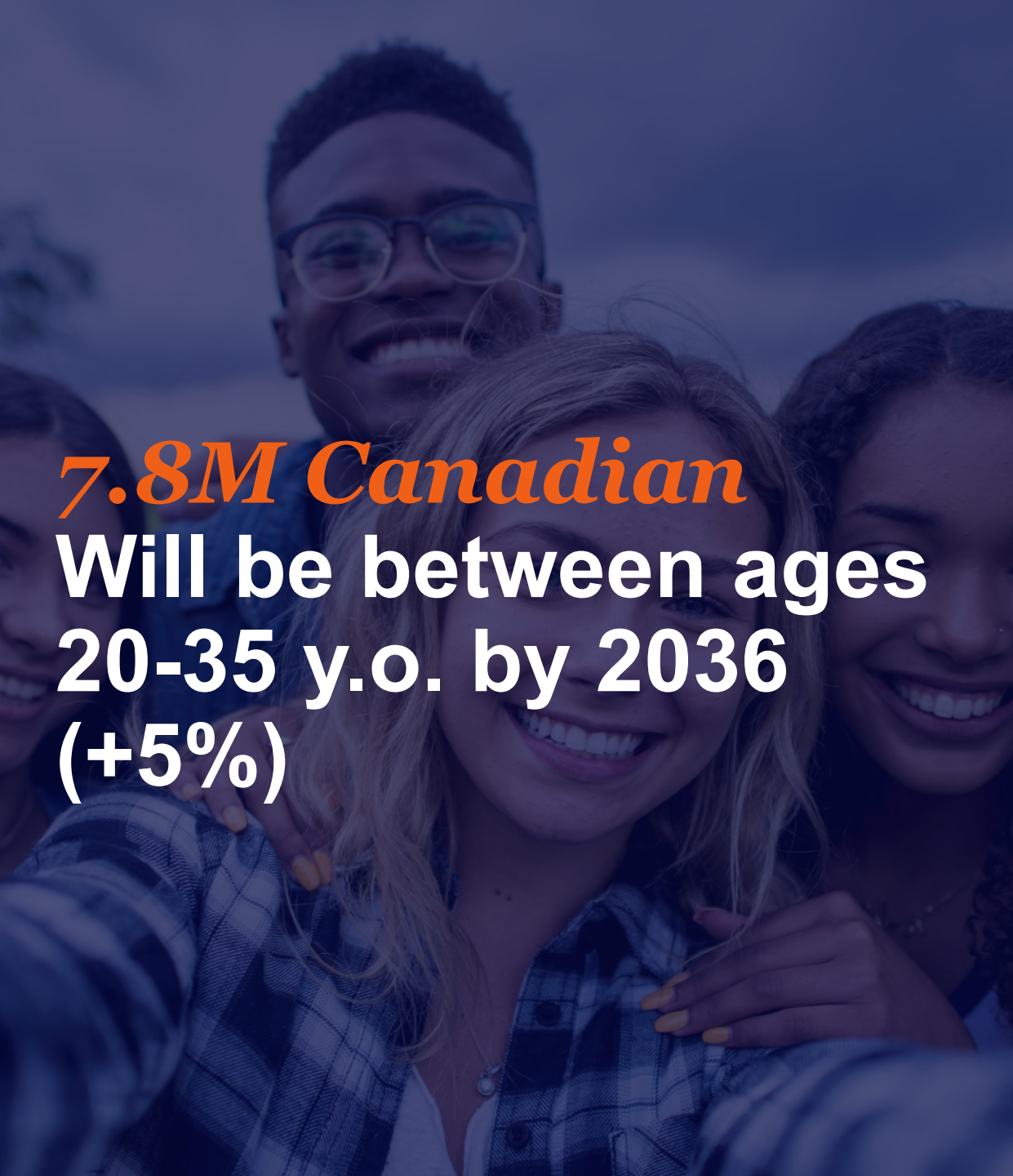
Canadian Genzers
population /
spending ratio is
closer to par

Weight in population & spendings - CANADA



NielsenIQ GfK

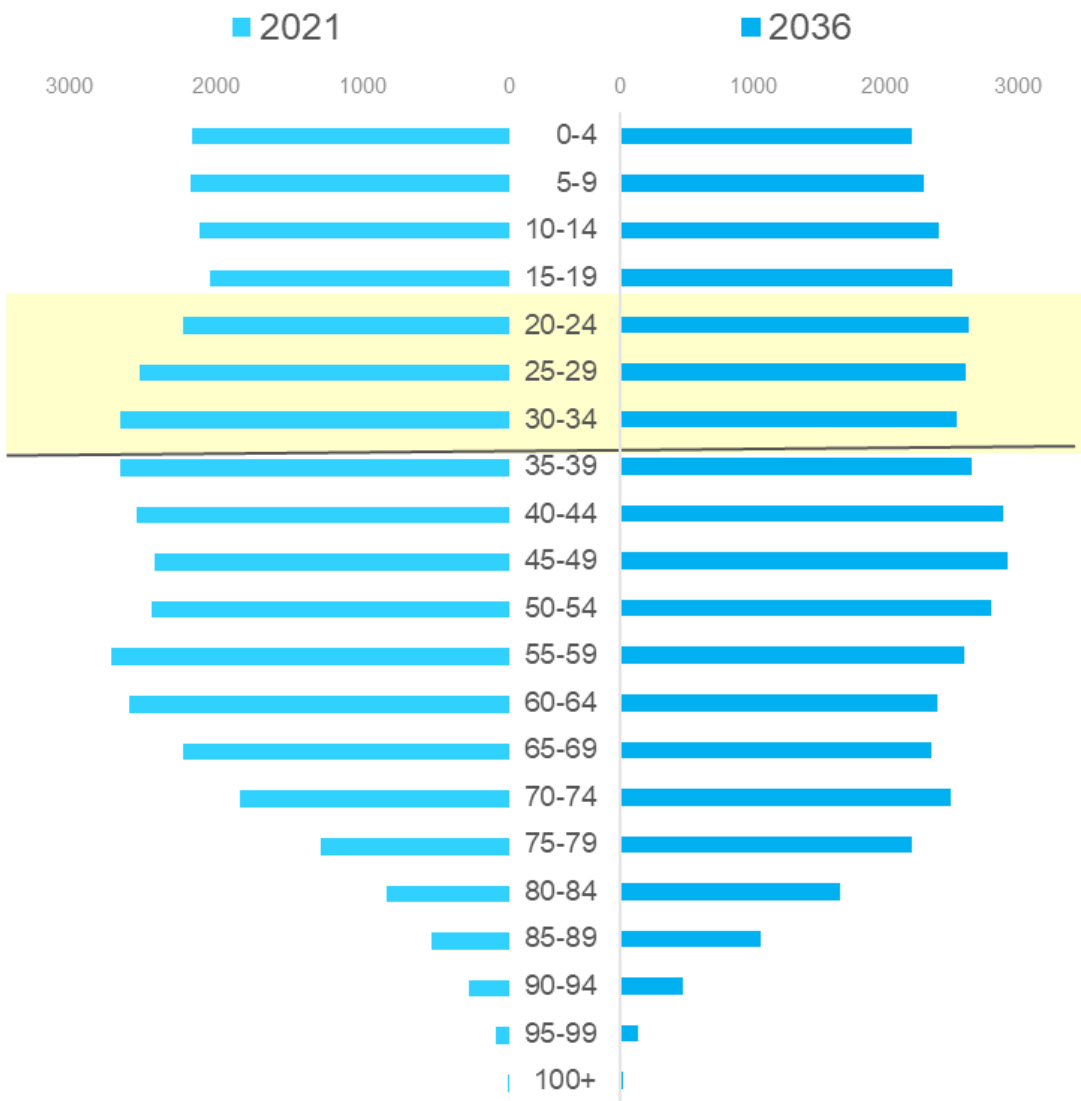
WORLD DATA LAB



7.8M Canadian
Will be between ages
20-35 y.o. by 2036
(+5%)



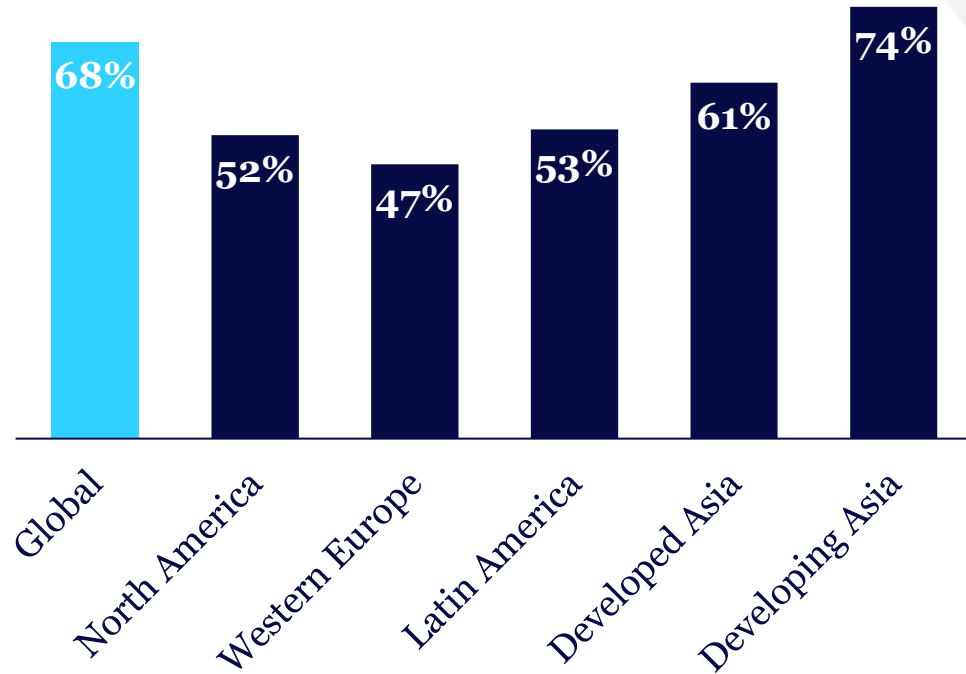
Canadian population projections



Source: Statistics Canada, * "Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories".

Most of Gen Z members still live with their parents and are therefore not completely responsible yet for their purchases

% of Gen Z who live with parents



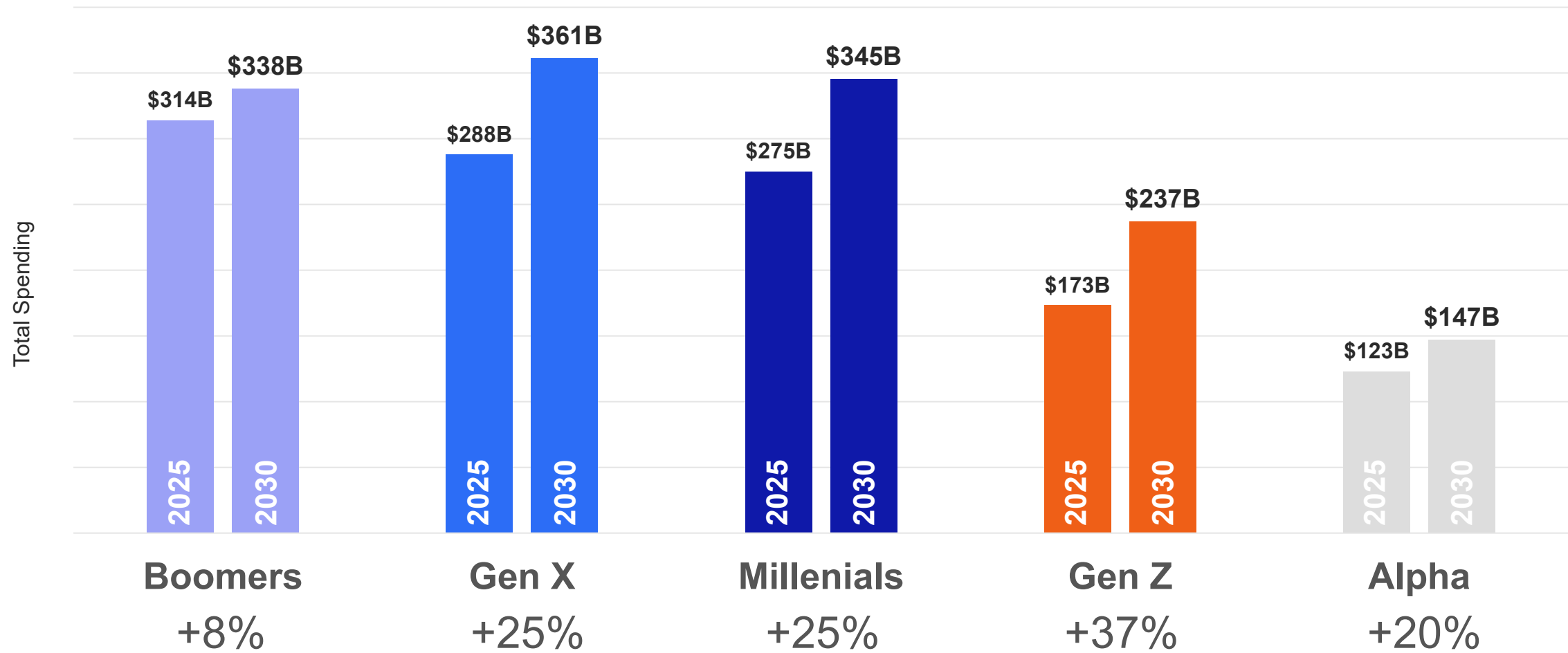
% of Gen Z who are employed



23% of global Gen Z work full time

NIQ Consumer Life Global 2025, demos (global = 18 countries); *salaried (regular schedule and pay); wage job (paid only for hours worked); freelance/independent contractor (paid on a contract basis by a business you don't own such as Uber); own business (may be full- or part-time, formal or casual, providing goods or services)

Gen Z will have the greatest spending growth over the next 5 years



Source: World Data Lab, Canada

Nominal USD

Who are Genzers?

State of the industry



Which of the following food/beverage categories is the top category in terms on spent by Gen Z in Canada?

A

Fruits

B

Cheese

C

Yogurt

*Gen Z spent \$905M
on Cheese in 2025
(\$300M+ than yogurt)*

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Which of the following self-care categories is the top category in terms on spent by Gen Z in Canada?

A

**Vitamins &
Supplements**

*Gen Z spent **\$322M**
on Vitamins &
Supplements in
2025*

*(\$100M+ than shampoo &
conditioners)*

B

**Face Care
Products**

C

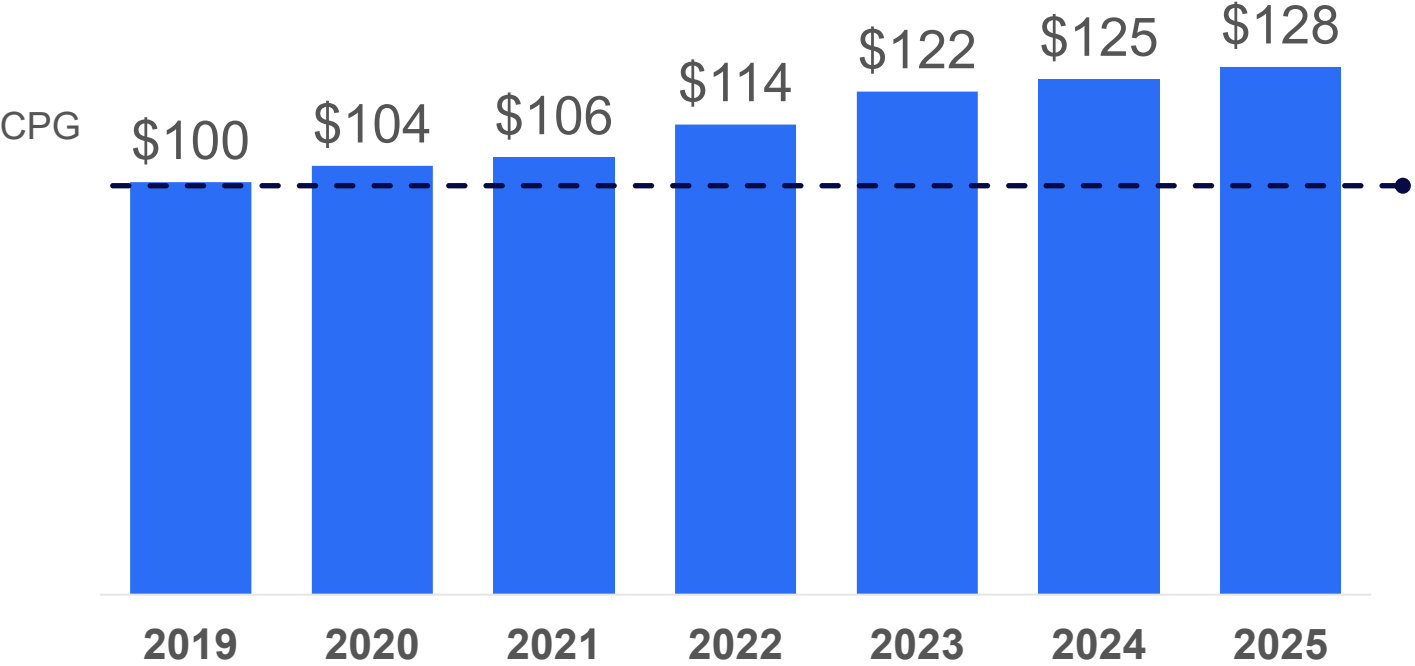
**Shampoo &
Conditioners**

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Compounded CPG inflation is putting significant strain on Canadians

Canada: \$100 in 2019...

Annual price increase in % - Canada



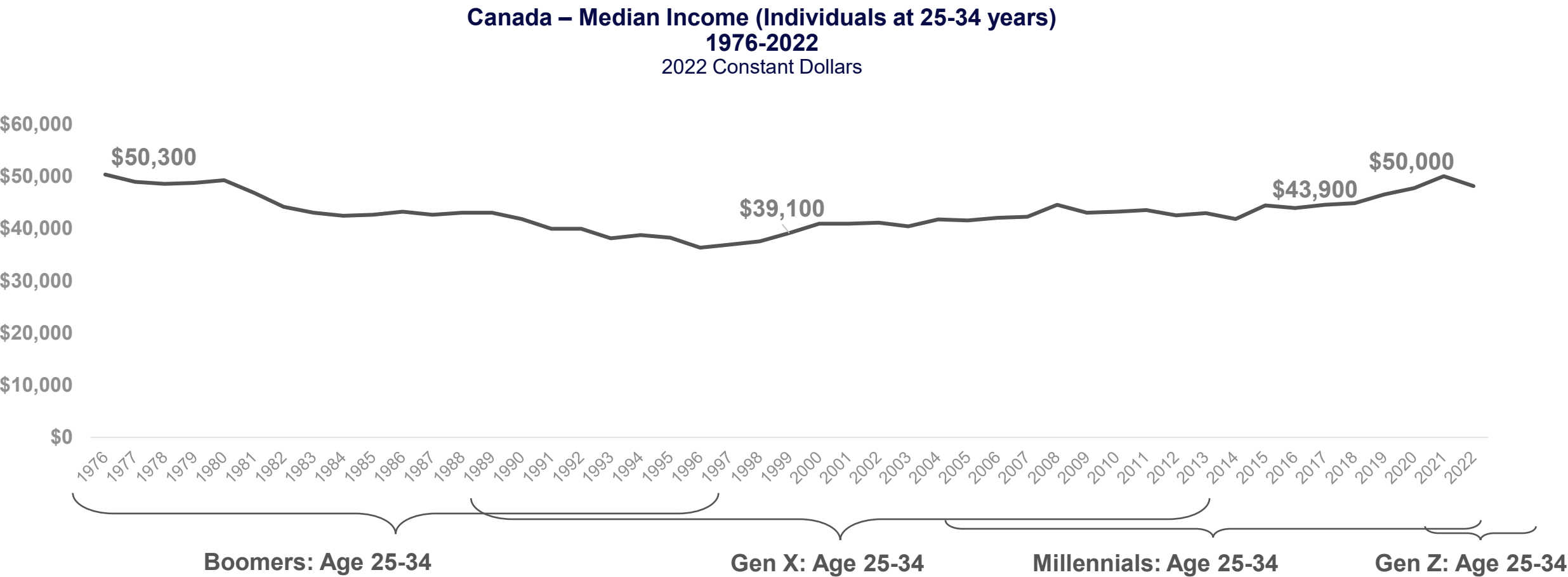
Consumers need to spend 28% more for CPG products vs pre-covid

Source: NielsenIQ, MarketTrack Canada All Channels Combined, Annual Periods YTD 34 weeks to August 24, 2024

Gen Z today have higher incomes than Gen X and Millennials had at the same age...



The median income of individuals at 25-34 years from 2018 increased compared to periods from 1999 and 2016, when Gen X and Millennials were at the same age as Gen Z today



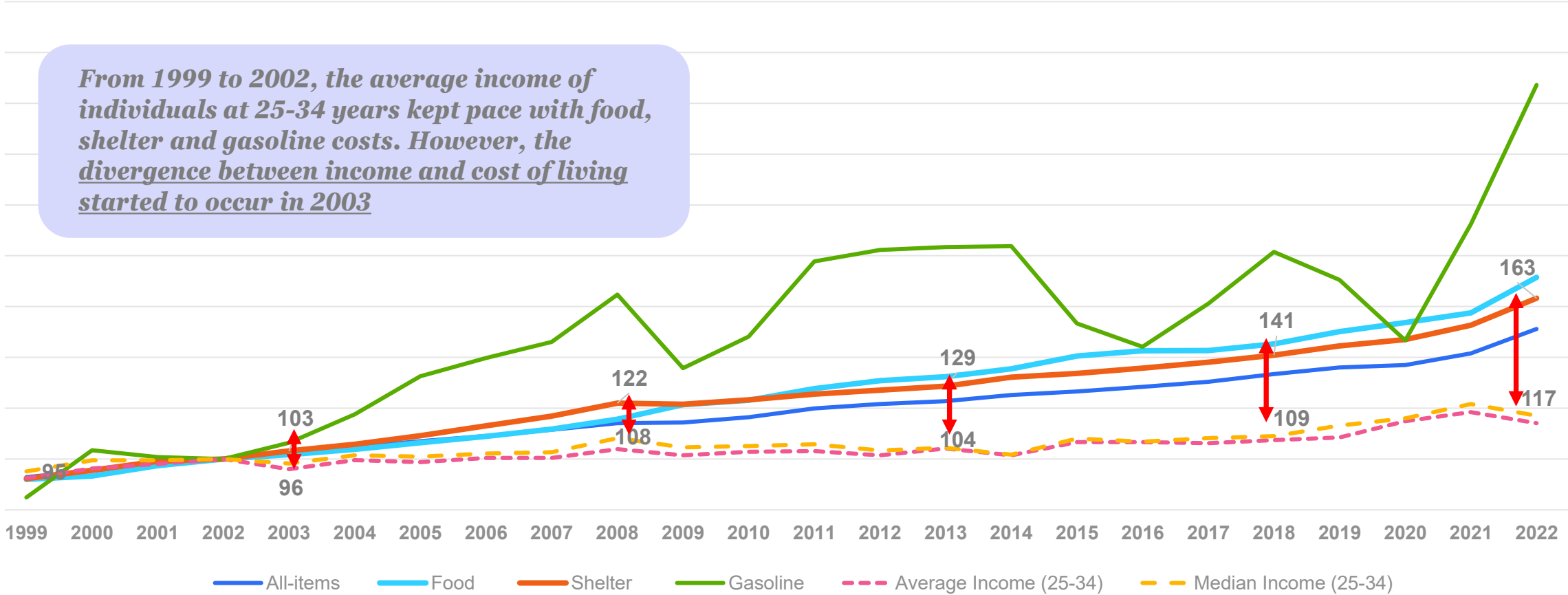
But income growth isn't catching up to the rising cost of living

From 2002 to 2022, food and shelter costs increased over **60%**, while median income for individuals at 25-34 years increased only by **17%** in the last 20 years



Consumer Price and Income Index
Indexed to 2022 Constant Dollars

From 1999 to 2002, the average income of individuals at 25-34 years kept pace with food, shelter and gasoline costs. However, the divergence between income and cost of living started to occur in 2003





40%

*Feel **worse off**
financially
now than a
year ago*

Total Canada

36%

42%

*Are worried
about **job**
insecurity*

Total Canada

28%

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.



33%

say *rising food prices* is their top concern

Total Canada

46%

32%

say they *skip more meals*

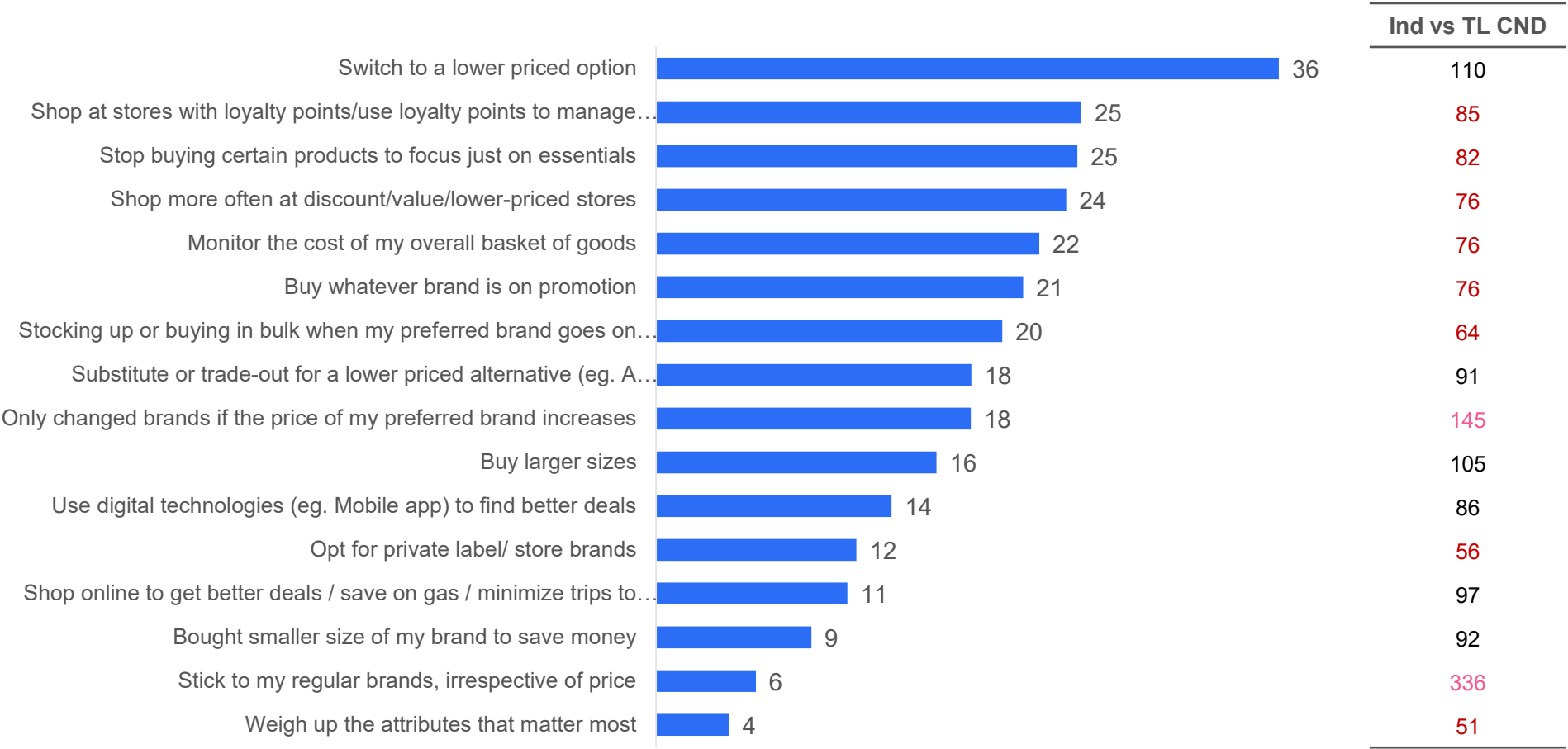
Total Canada

19%

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

Gen Z are less likely to use strategies to save money to manage their expenses vs TL Canada

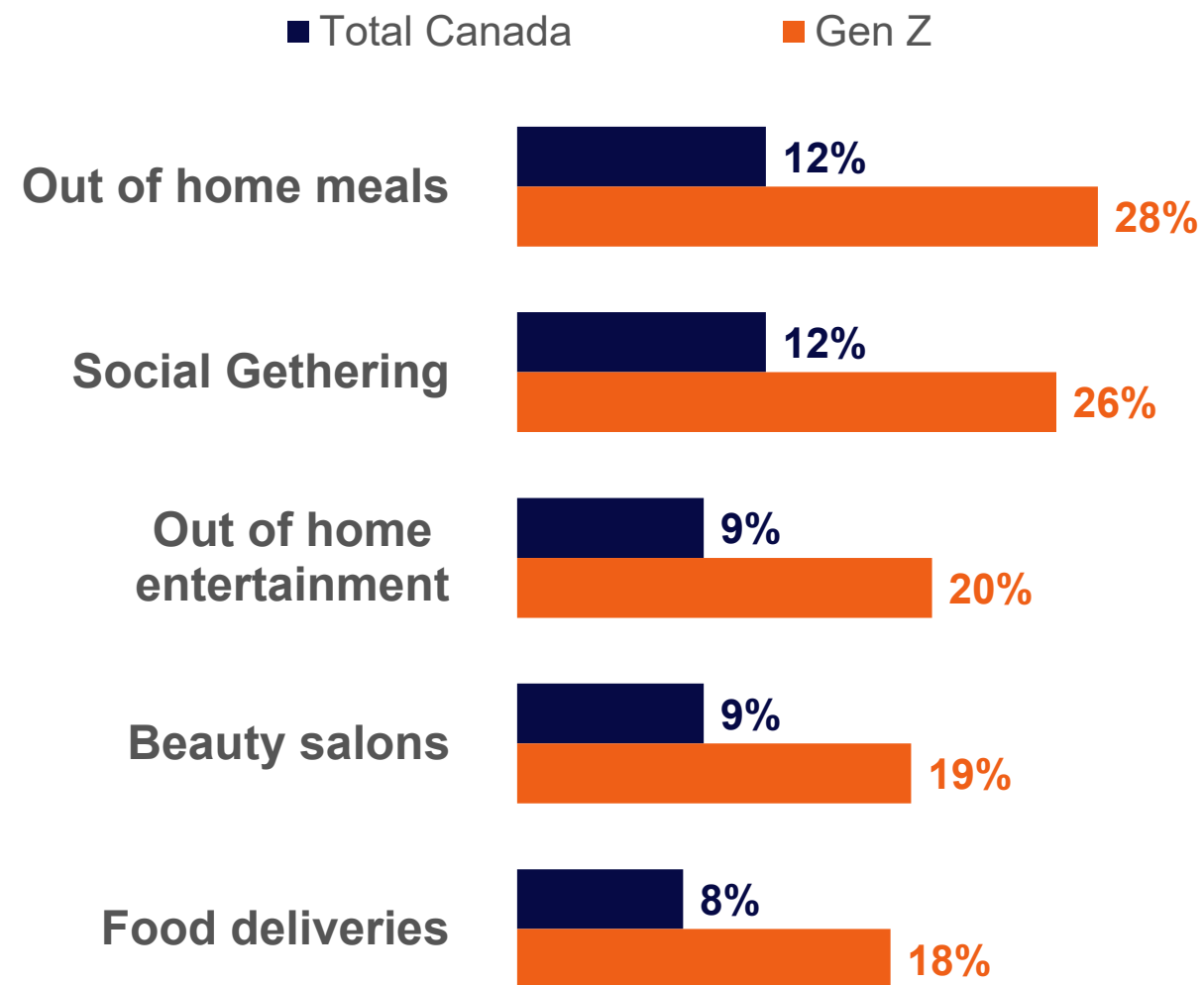
They will switch to lower priced option or focus on essentials & prioritize stores where loyalty points can be cumulated and used



Source: NIQ Consumer Outlook Gen Z 2024, Canada | Q:Thinking about your behavior in the last 3 months, please indicate HOW OFTEN you typically do any of the following actions to manage expenses

Regardless of financial struggles Genzers are planning to *spend more on non-essentials*

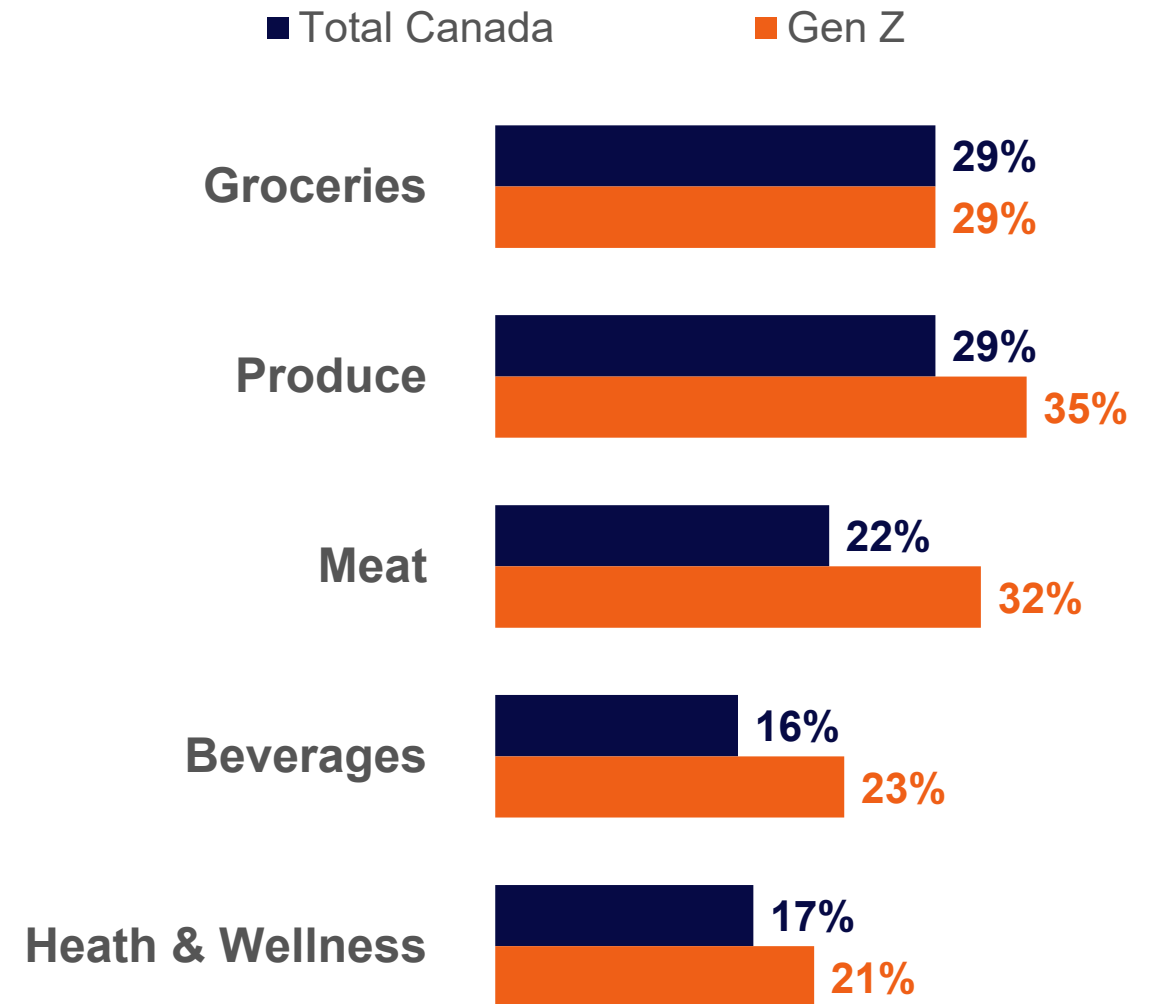
% who say they will **SPEND MORE** in the next 12 months on...



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

Genzers are also
planning to spend
more on *H&W*

% who say they will *SPEND MORE* in the next 12 months on...



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

Which of the following self-care categories is the top growing category in dollars by Gen Z in Canada?

A

**Sleeping aid
products**

**+74%
vs 2024**

B

Electrolytes

**+87%
vs 2024**

C

**Anti-smoking
Products**

**+183%
vs 2024**

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Which of the following food/beverage categories is the top growing category in dollars by Gen Z in Canada?

A

Figs

+76%
vs 2024

B

Ginger Root

+64%
vs 2024

C

Coconut Water

+66%
vs 2024

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Who are Genzers?

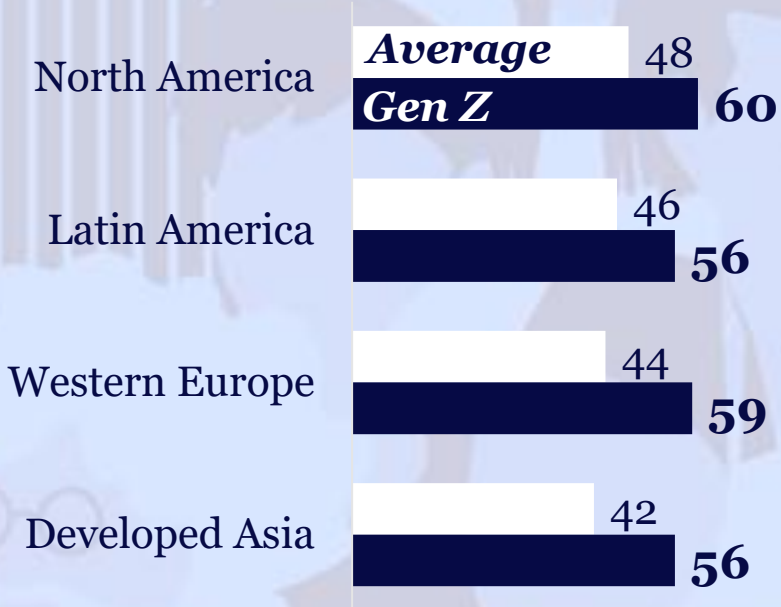
State of the industry

What do they value?



Self-care and impressing others are top Gen Z motivators

% Who think about their appearance all or most the time



Why try to look their best?

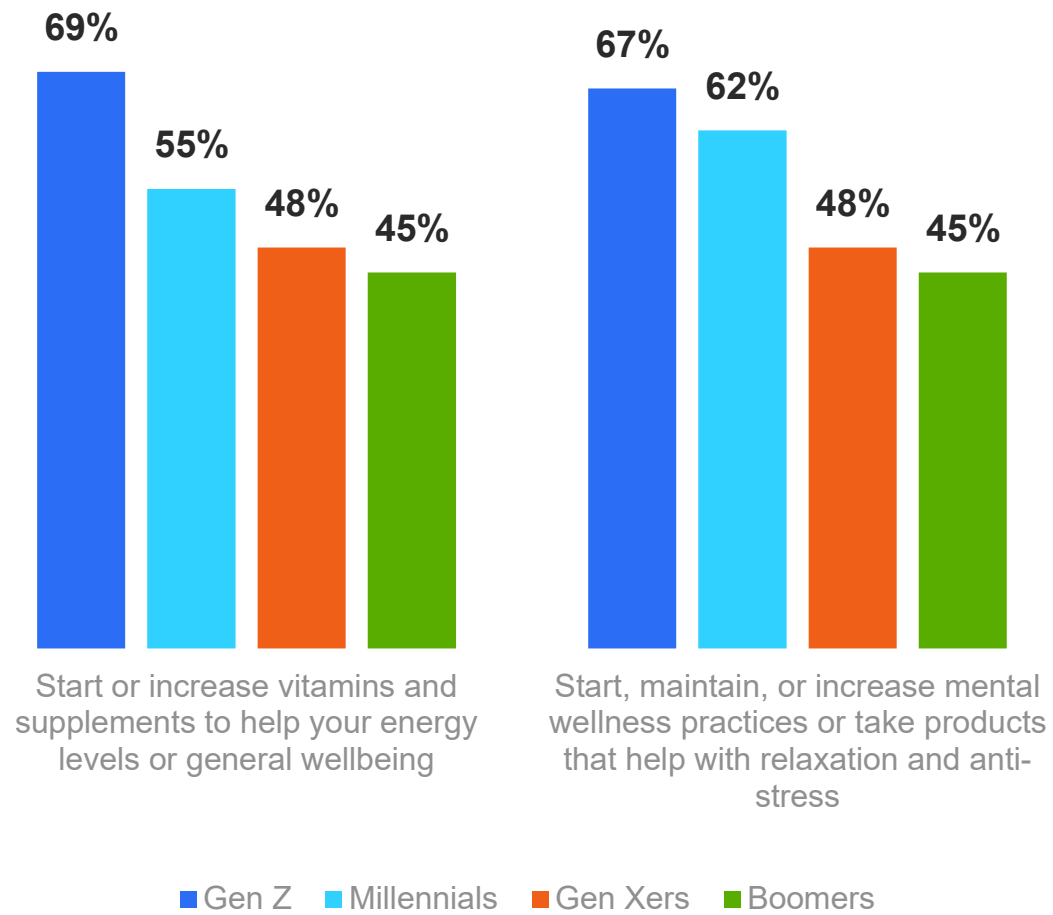
"To be admired and respected by other people"

4th Gen Z Reason

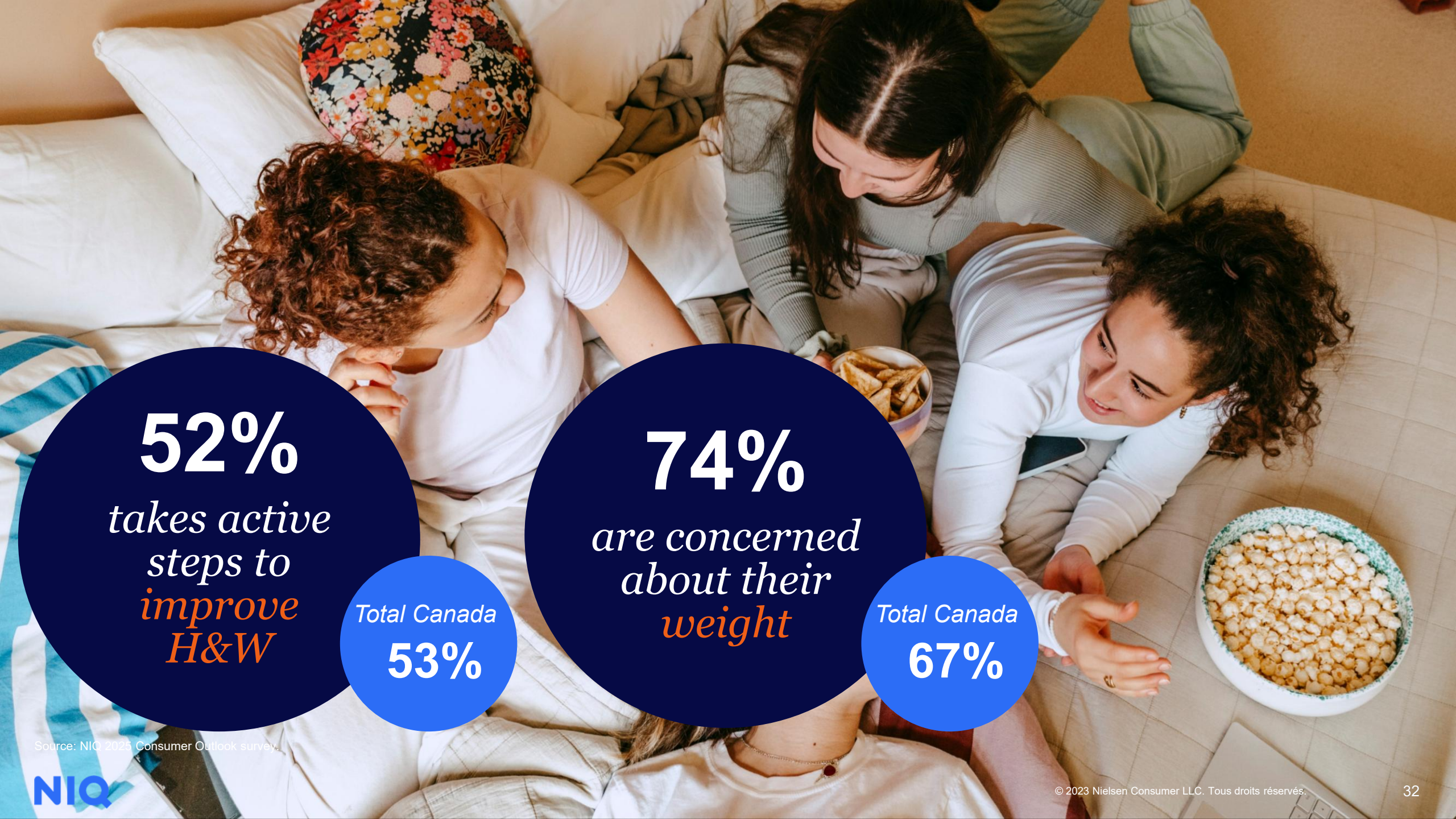
+2 rank vs the average



Health and wellness-related attributes show to be especially important in appealing to Gen Z consumers



Source: NIQ Consumer Outlook Gen Z 2024, Canada | Q: How likely or unlikely are you to do the following



52%

takes active
steps to
improve
H&W

Total Canada

53%

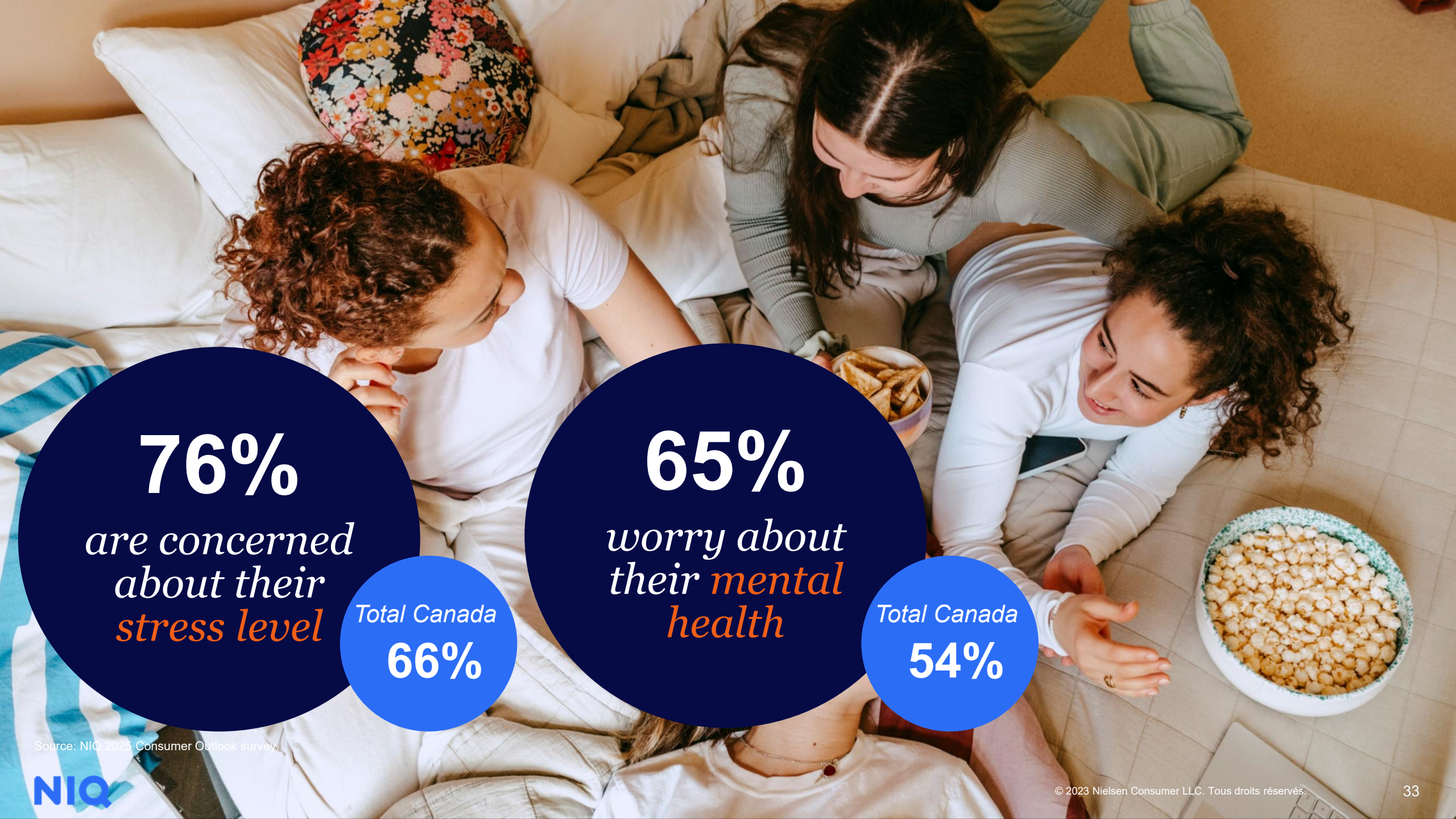
74%

are concerned
about their
weight

Total Canada

67%

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.



76%
are concerned
about their
stress level

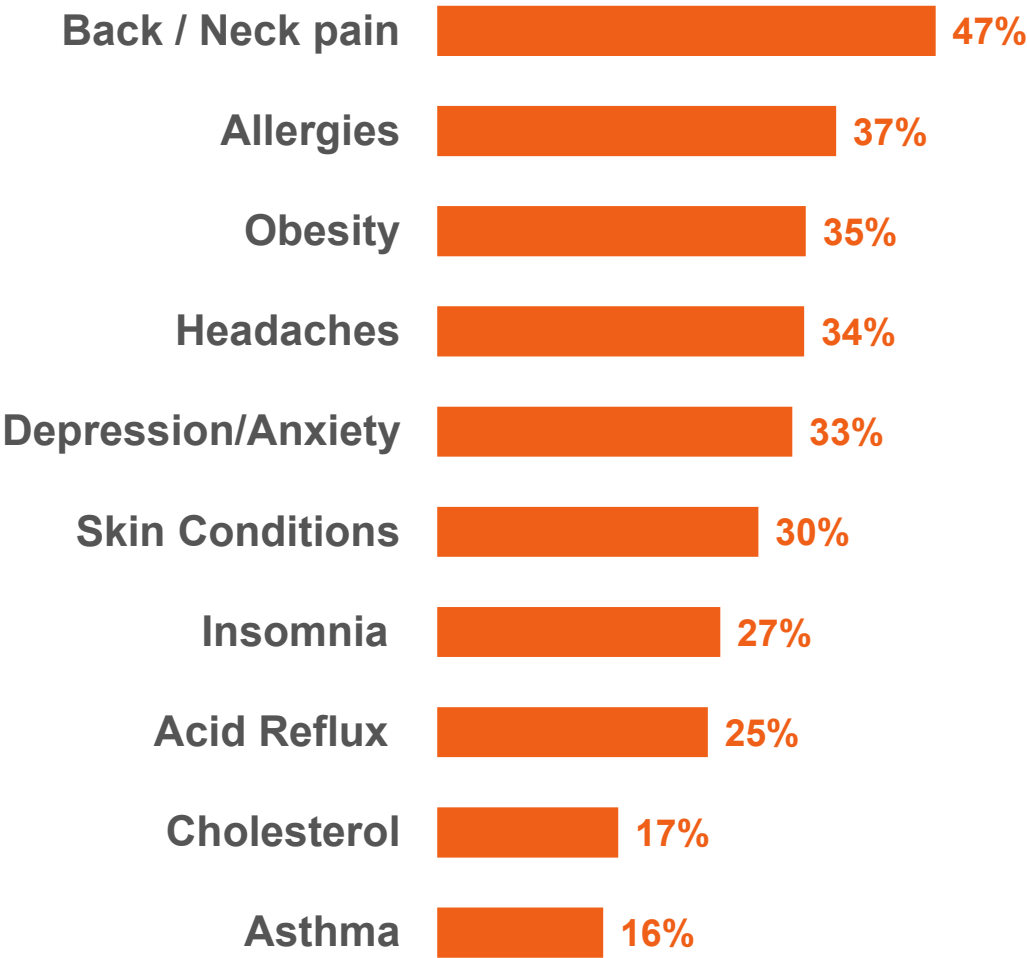
Total Canada
66%

65%
worry about
their *mental*
health

Total Canada
54%

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

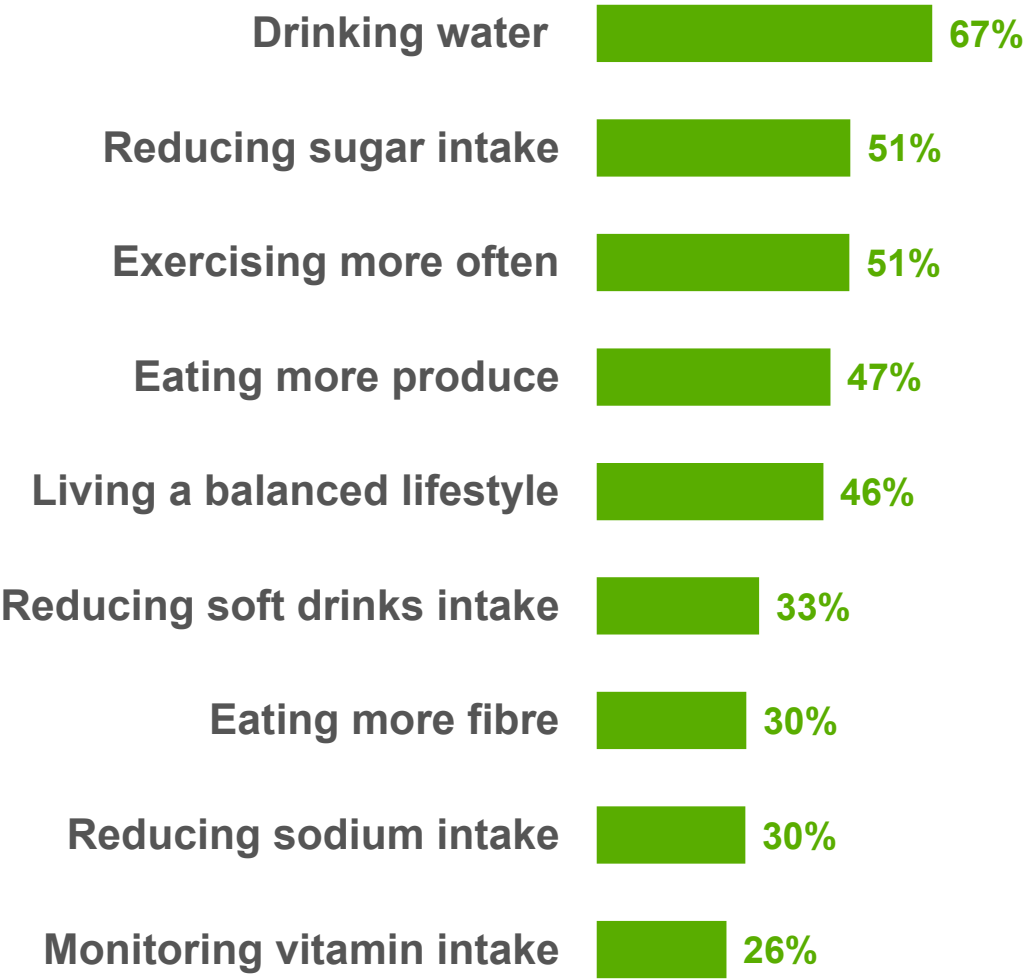
% Genzers who agree



*“Did a member of your household experienced this **health condition** during the past 6 months?”*

Source: NIQ Canada, Health & Wellness Study 2025

% Genzers who agree



“What measures are you currently taking to minimize potential future health problems?”

Source: NIQ Canada, Health & Wellness Study 2025



27%

*find it hard to
eat healthy*

Total Canada

19%

20%

*struggle to
find brands to
which they
can relate*

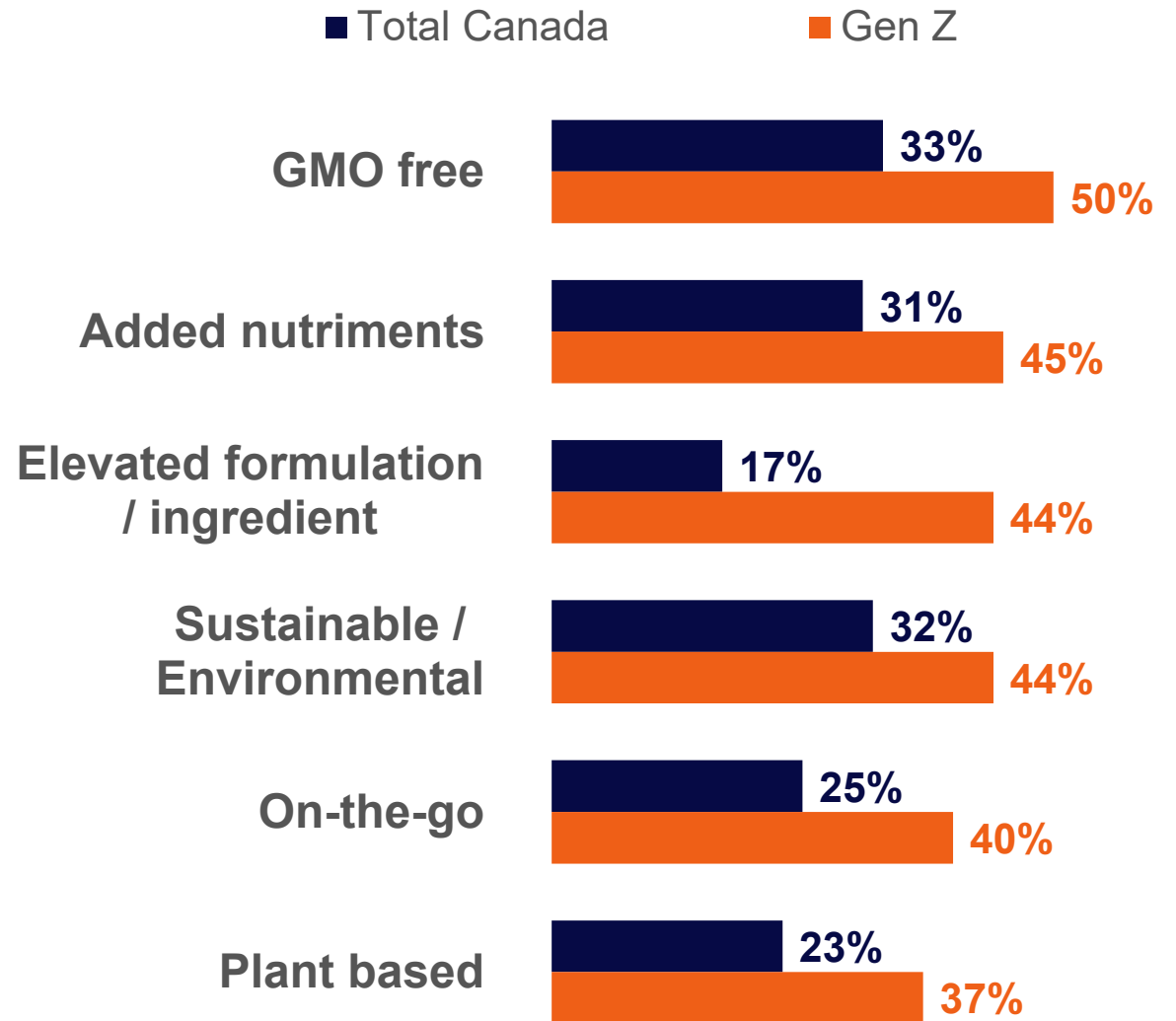
Total Canada

11%

Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

Genzers are willing to pay more for *"better"* options

% who say they are willing to **PAY MORE** for products with...



Source: NIQ 2025 Consumer Outlook survey.

Which of the following food/beverage attributes is the top growing one in dollars for Gen Z in Canada?

A

Contains Superfood

+40%
vs 2024

B

**More than 35G of
protein per serving**

+28%
vs 2024

C

**Contains
Electrolytes**

+22%
vs 2024

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Clean and cruelty free top among younger and older generations

What characteristics do you look for when purchasing beauty products?

	Gen Z	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers/ Traditionalists
Clean	43.6	39.5	30.6	32.3
Cruelty free	35.6	37.2	37.7	27.4
Natural fragrances	33.7	24.1	17.7	26.6
Paraben free	29.4	30.0	21.9	18.0
Sulfate free	28.2	26.1	20.8	18.6
Phthalate free	19.0	20.6	12.8	9.6
Biodegradable packaging	15.3	13.4	10.6	6.9
Fair Trade	13.5	13.4	7.9	9.1
Vegan	11.0	11.5	7.2	3.5
None of the above	25.8	30.4	41.1	40.3

Source: NIQ Gen Z Survey,
Q: Which of the following characteristics do you look for when purchasing beauty products?; Boxes indicate top 2/bottom 2; Green/Red #'s index over and under index vs avg respondents

Which of the following self-care attributes is the top growing one in dollars for Gen Z in Canada?

A

Vegan

+20%
vs 2024

B

**Contains
Adaptogens**

+27%
vs 2024

C

Contains Peptides

+20%
vs 2024

Source: NIQ, Omnishopper Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Who are Genzers?

State of the industry

What do they value?

How to reach them?



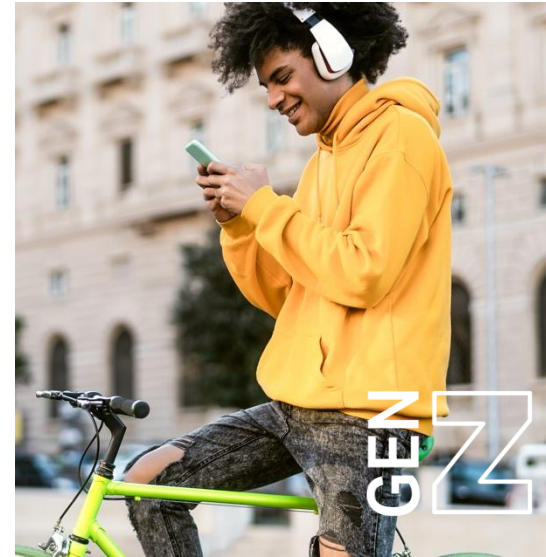
The four distinct Pillars of the **Gen Z's Value System**



Individuality



Morality



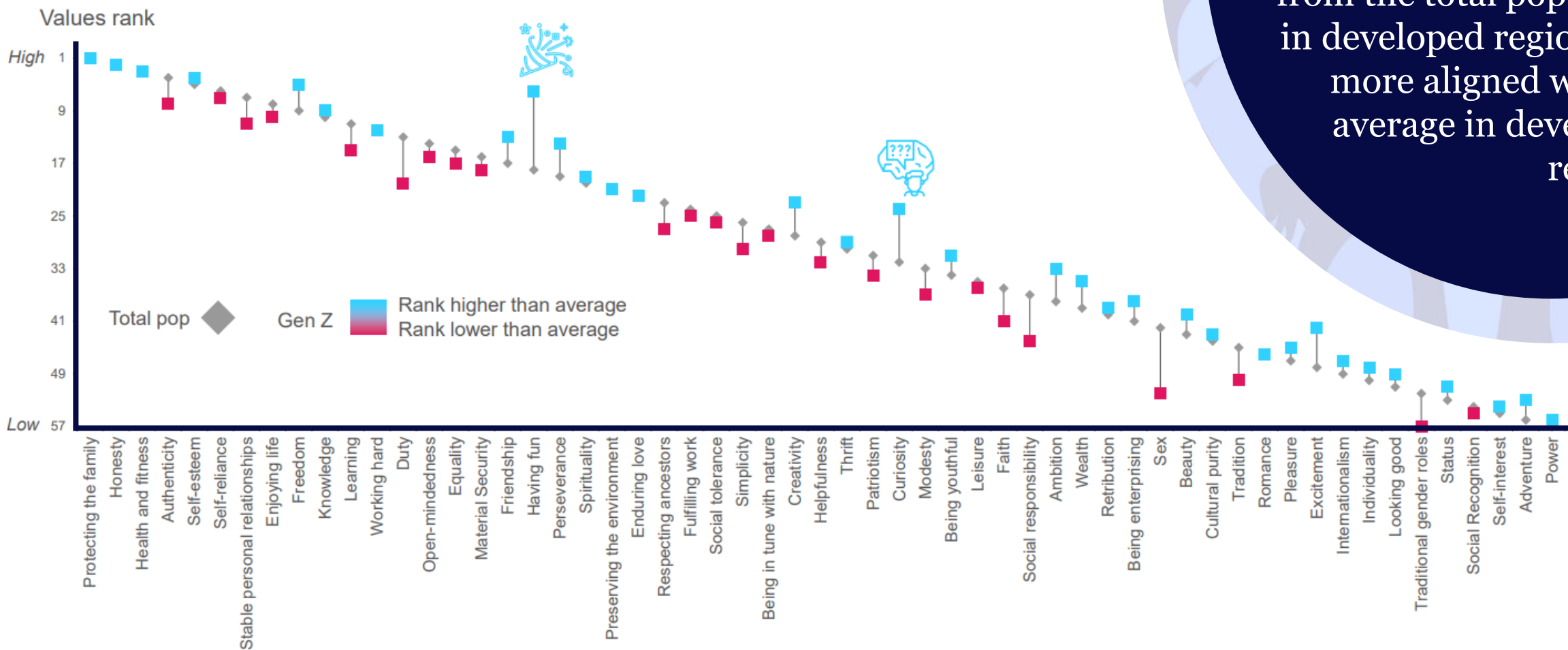
Flexibility



Wellness

Gen Z place higher-than-average value on Having fun and Curiosity, less on Duty, Traditions and Sex

“On the whole, **Gen Z’s values diverge** more from the total population in developed regions and more aligned with the average in developing regions”



Source : NIQ Consumer Life Global 2024, C1 (global = 18 countries)

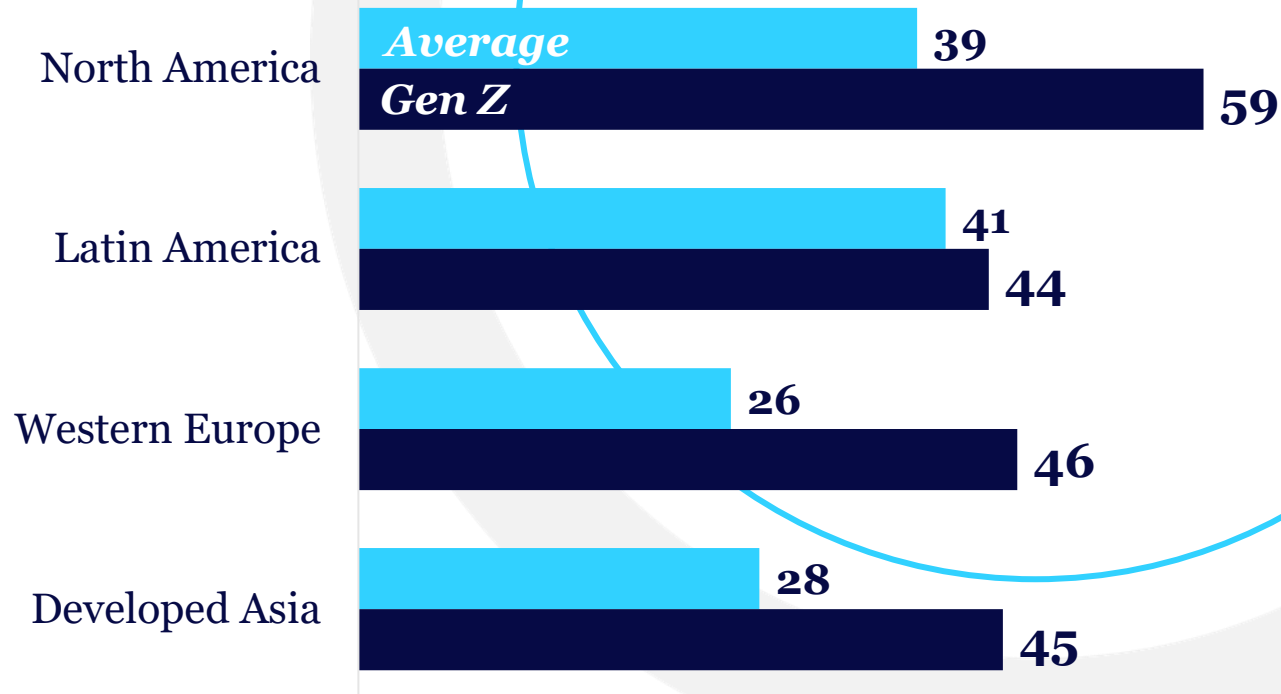


76%

3 in 4 Gen Z visit social media daily

Connected : social media as the new shop and a great source of inspiration

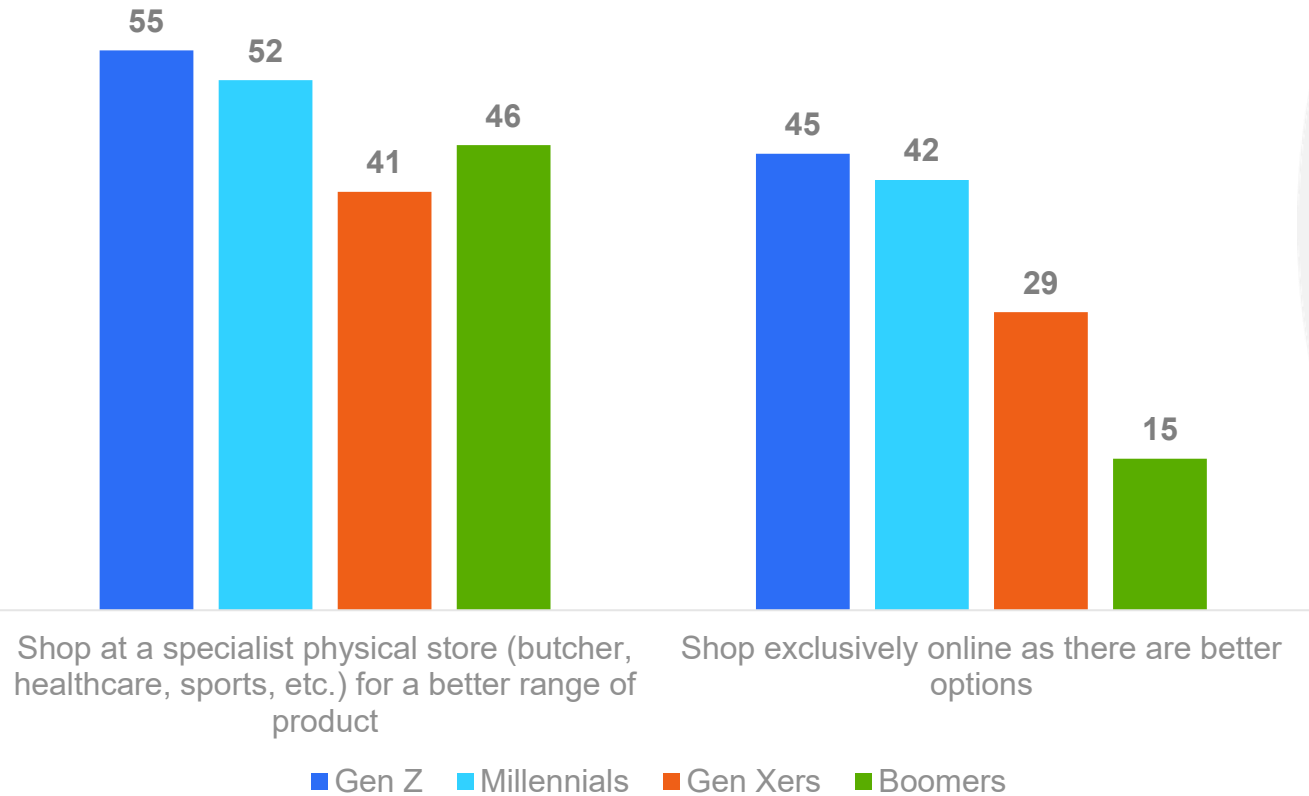
% Who have shopped using buttons on social media or clicking on shoppable posts or stories



NIQ Consumer Life Global 2024, FBS1 (global = 16 countries; TD54 (global = 14 countries)

Gen Z prefer a wider variety of options when shopping

To meet Gen Z’s shopping preferences, retailers should integrate a larger selection of products in their omni-channel strategies



Source: NIQ Consumer Outlook Gen Z 2024, Canada | Q: How likely or unlikely are you to do the following

Gen Z relies on social proof for trying new products

Family, friends, fellow consumers, experts, and celebrities are highly influential in shaping Gen Z's buying decisions

75%

of Gen Z are willing to try new products that are recommended by family and friends
vs 60% TL Canada

73%

of Gen Z are likely to look for reviews from peers and fellow consumers about products before making a purchase decision
vs 57% TL Canada



Source: NIQ Consumer Outlook Gen Z 2024, Canada | Q: How likely or unlikely are you to do the following

Retailers and manufacturers must think about sustainability to resonate with Gen Z

Over half of Gen Z consumers are likely to rank sustainability highly when making purchase decisions



59%

of Gen Z will stop buying a product if it has been found guilty of greenwashing.

vs 49% TL Canada

53%

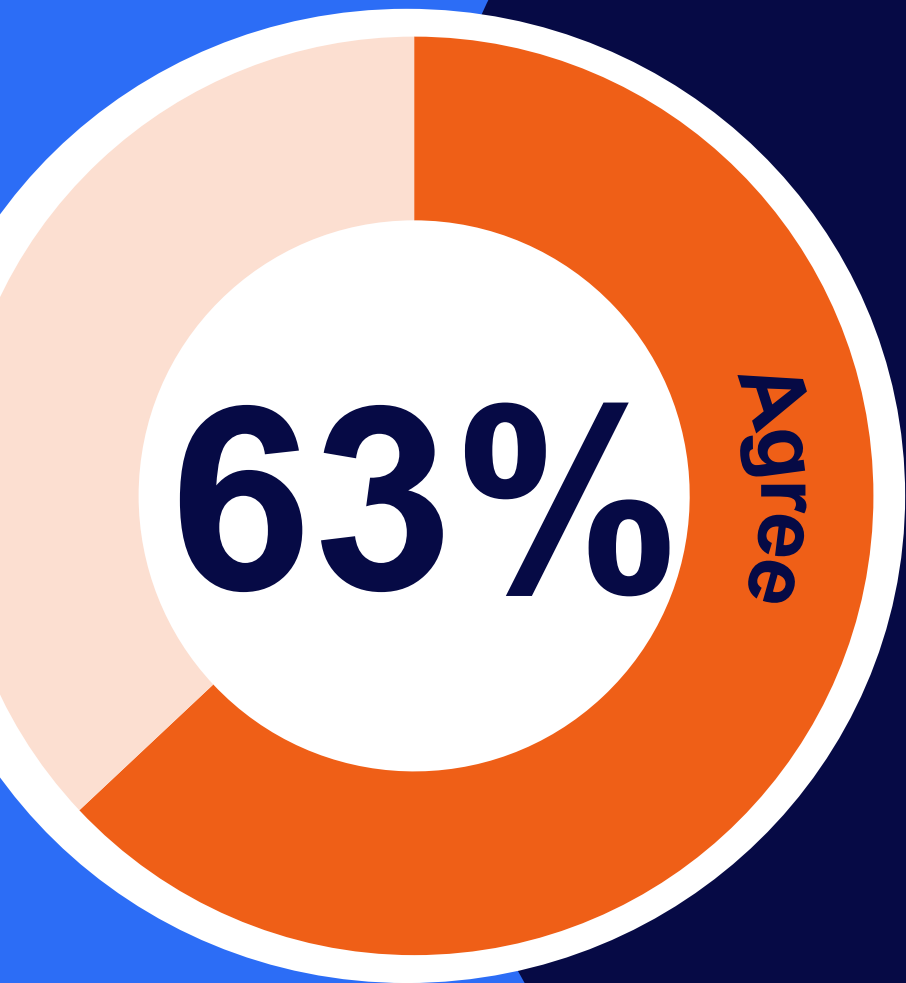
of Gen Z will prioritize a product or brand because the company is committed to sustainability

vs 40% TL Canada

50%

of Gen Z will choose a product or service because it has sustainable credentials

vs 41% TL Canada



Most Canadians agree that *Store Brands* are usually just as good as known brands

Is your brand at risk of losing market shares to Private Label?

NIQ



In 2025, *half* of CPG sales are now generated at a ***DISCOUNT RETAILER***

Is your distribution strategy allowing you to meet consumers where they shop?

NIQ

Which are the top items on which Gen Z spend in Canada?

Food & Beverage

1. DAIRYLAND 2% PLASTIC JUG 4LT
2. SEALTEST 2% MILK 4LT (NATREL)
3. NO NAME GRADE A LARGE 12S
4. NO NAME GRADE A LARGE WHITE
5. KIRKLAND SIGNATURE MARBLE CHEDDAR 1.15KG

Self-Care

1. ORGANIKA ENHANCED CLGN PRTN HAIR SKIN NAIL ORG PWD 2KG
2. KIRKLAND SIGNATURE OMEGA 3 1300MG SOFTGELS 330S
3. KIRKLAND SIGNATURE BABY WPS FRGRNC FR FLP TP 900S
4. HERO MIGHTY PATCH ORIGINL INVSBL HYDRCLLD ACN PTCH 84S
5. HEAD & SHOULDERS CLASSIC CLEAN LIQUID 2X950ML

Source: NIQ, Homescan Panel –Total Outlets, PE December 27th, 2025

Gen Z Is Redefining FMCG Through Values-Driven, Selective Spending

Gen Z is entering their prime consumption years with limited budgets but outsized influence—forcing brands to rethink how value, wellness, and identity show up on shelf and online.

Wellness is non-negotiable: Gen Z consistently over-indexes on health, stress management, functional ingredients, and self-care products.

Identity matters: Clean, cruelty-free, sustainable, and “elevated” formulations are now table stakes.

Value ≠ cheap: Despite financial pressure, they will pay more for products that feel better-for-you, more responsible, or more aligned to their lifestyle.

Discovery happens on social: Social proof, reviews, and creator influence are essential in closing the gap between interest and purchase.

Private Label is a real threat: With half of sales happening through discount channels and strong trust in store brands, brand equity must be earned—not assumed.

Coming *into view*



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- **THANK YOU!**

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