

Young and Beautiful

How the Next Generation is Shaping the Beauty Economy

A flood of consumers gush onto Oxford Street following their buzzing, phone-alarm-triggered, wake ups at 10AM on a Saturday morning; waiting for the London sun that will never shine. Locals, tourists, young, old; they all have a mission for the day. Whether simply browsing or looking to buy, they are pulled towards the stores that resonate with their personalities. In the past, that may have meant pink wallpaper, or the smell of fresh flowers bursting through the storefront doors. However today, the modern customer has a lot more to worry about.

A crowd of young adolescents suddenly gather in front of their preferred retailer. Girls and boys alike admiring the Christmas window displays, ecstatic about their upcoming wish list. Suddenly a shriek is heard from across the street. A young girl, who I will come to find is aged eighteen, runs across the street to the younger crowd.

The newly-made adult Lizzie gathers by her younger brother and all of his friends. Aided by her expressive hand gestures and enraptured gaze, she spends time explaining to them why they should never shop at this store. The young group begin to nod in unison as they seem to see the logic behind Lizzie's argument. Some proceed into the store, whilst a vast majority of the group move direction in search of an alternative.

Following the scene, my excessive curiosity could not hold me back from asking Lizzie what she had said that so drastically changed the look on all of their faces. She explained to me (using the same gestures as she had with the children) that this retailer sold products that had been tested on animals. Not only this, but that the packaging was not biodegradable or even recycled.

Coming into this situation from the looking glass of the generation preceding Lizzie's, I felt obliged to embark on a path in search of the Emerald Palace of retail. I had heard that millennials and generation Z hold their values to heart (Linkage Research and Consulting, 2019), however had never fully visualised it before. What marked my attention was not only how Lizzie was able to influence a vast majority of the youngsters, but also how she was unable to influence the rest. Lizzie, was a prototype of her generation; strongly opinionated, yet trained to be accepting (Ibid, 2019). The question in my mind very quickly changed focus. In an upcoming world where everyone is opinionated *and* educated to be respectfully inclusive; what would be the yellow brick road leading to success within the beauty industry?

From a generation of parents swearing by The Body Shop, to elder siblings hailing Lush as the Mecca of bathroom products, the next generation has grown into its own. It is no longer only about touch, smell, and ideology, but trends and hard facts. The young beauty audience, begin shopping for cosmetic products around the age of twelve (Coresight Research, 2019). When I was twelve, I was sitting at home and playing board games . In order to amass a greater understanding, I decided to speak to my niece who had recently turned thirteen. She not only told me that she had finished the first season of Euphoria, a television show based upon conveying imagery of sexuality, drug misuse, and youth drama- but that she had been spending a majority of her free time replicating the extravagant makeup looks from the show...