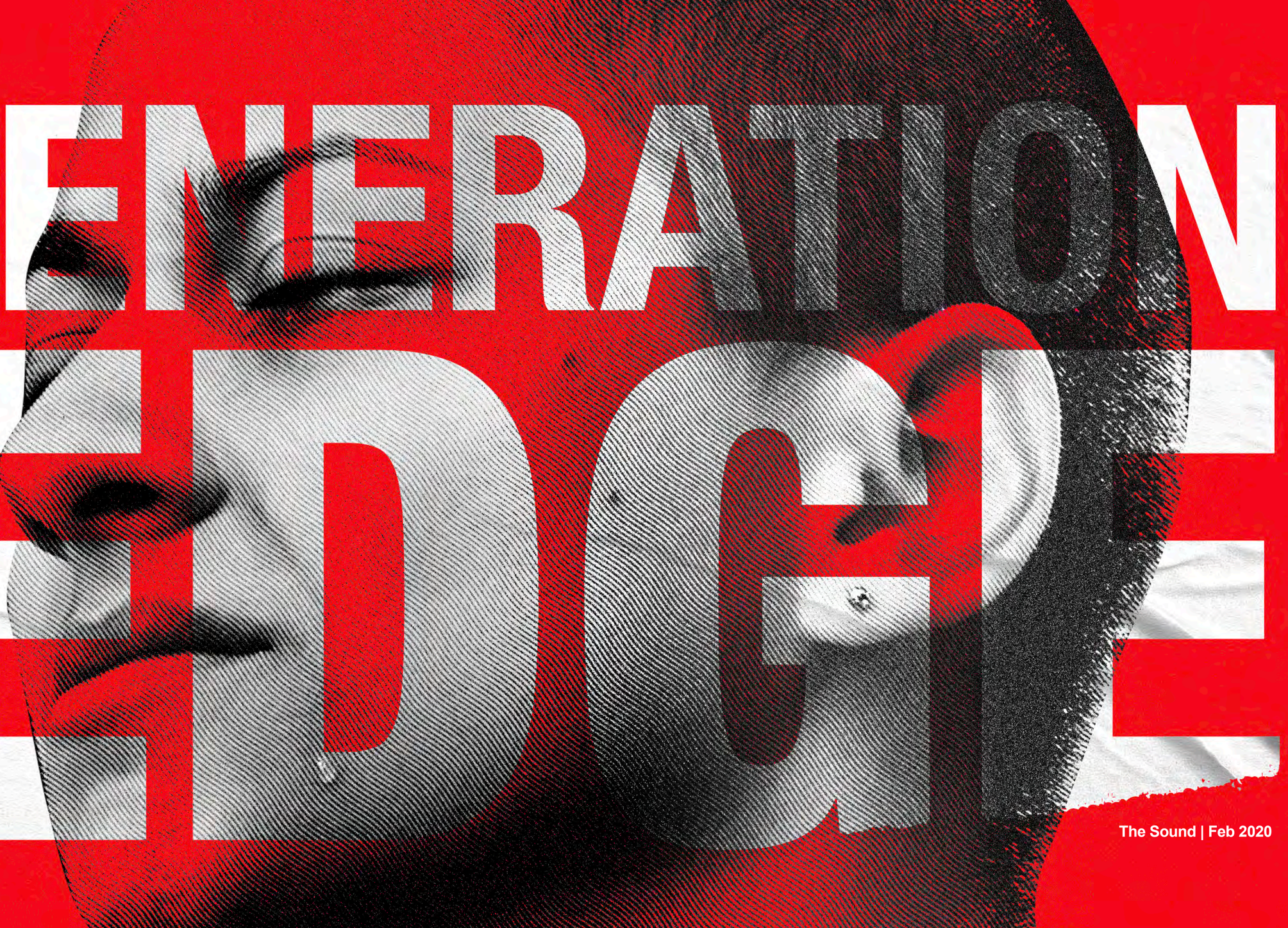
GENERATION



EDGE

The Sound | Feb 2020



We are a global team dedicated to engaging brands with people

We don’t just tell you what is happening... we tell you why it matters to your business and what you should do about it

Understanding people is at the heart of everything we do



Brand Strategy

We guide brands towards the truth of what they genuinely stand for… and how it can be reflected in everything they do

Consumer Exploration

We fearlessly dig deep to uncover what people *really* do and how they *really* feel

Product Innovation

We imagine and design impactful ideas rooted in deep understanding of opportunities and what it takes to *improve* human experiences

A Generational Cohorts are molded by their formative years



Baby Boomers

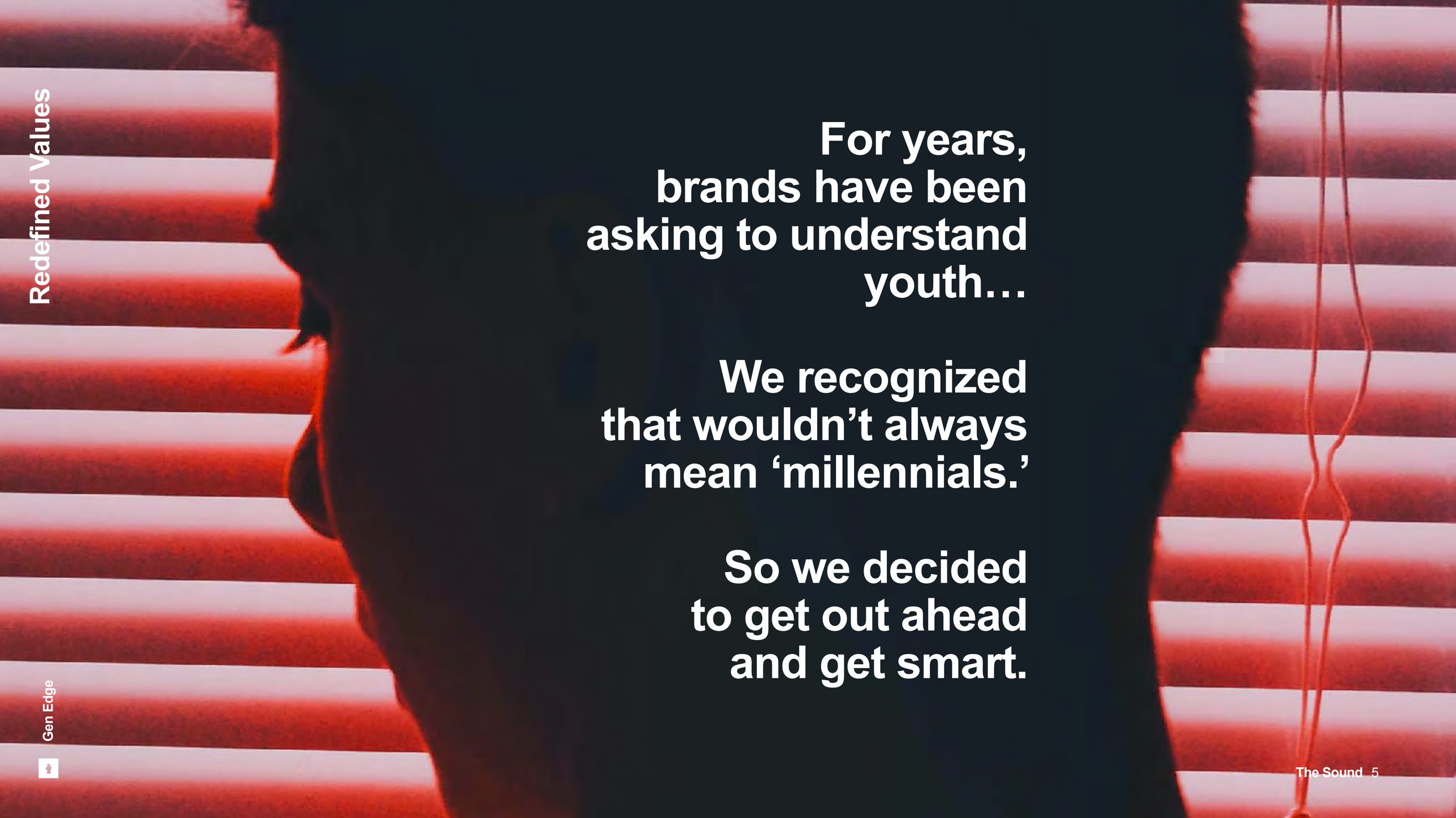
1945-1965
55-75

Gen X

1966 -1979
41-54

Millennials

1980-1995
25-40



For years,
brands have been
asking to understand
youth…

We recognized
that wouldn’t always
mean ‘millennials.’

So we decided
to get out ahead
and get smart.



But generational generalizations have become generic and judgmental.

With the massive focus on Millennials for the last decade, generational understanding has gotten a bad name in some circles.

Lazy and repetitive ‘insights’
Criticism of traits, without critical thinking about the cause
And misuse of ‘millennials’ to define anyone under 35…
until the end of time!

We've gotten close to this generation. And made it our mission to understand their

core values.

From their perspective. And with empathy over judgement.



And we've continued to dig and dig and dig

Exploring everything from rebellion to tech to politics to education, alcohol, food and even malls!









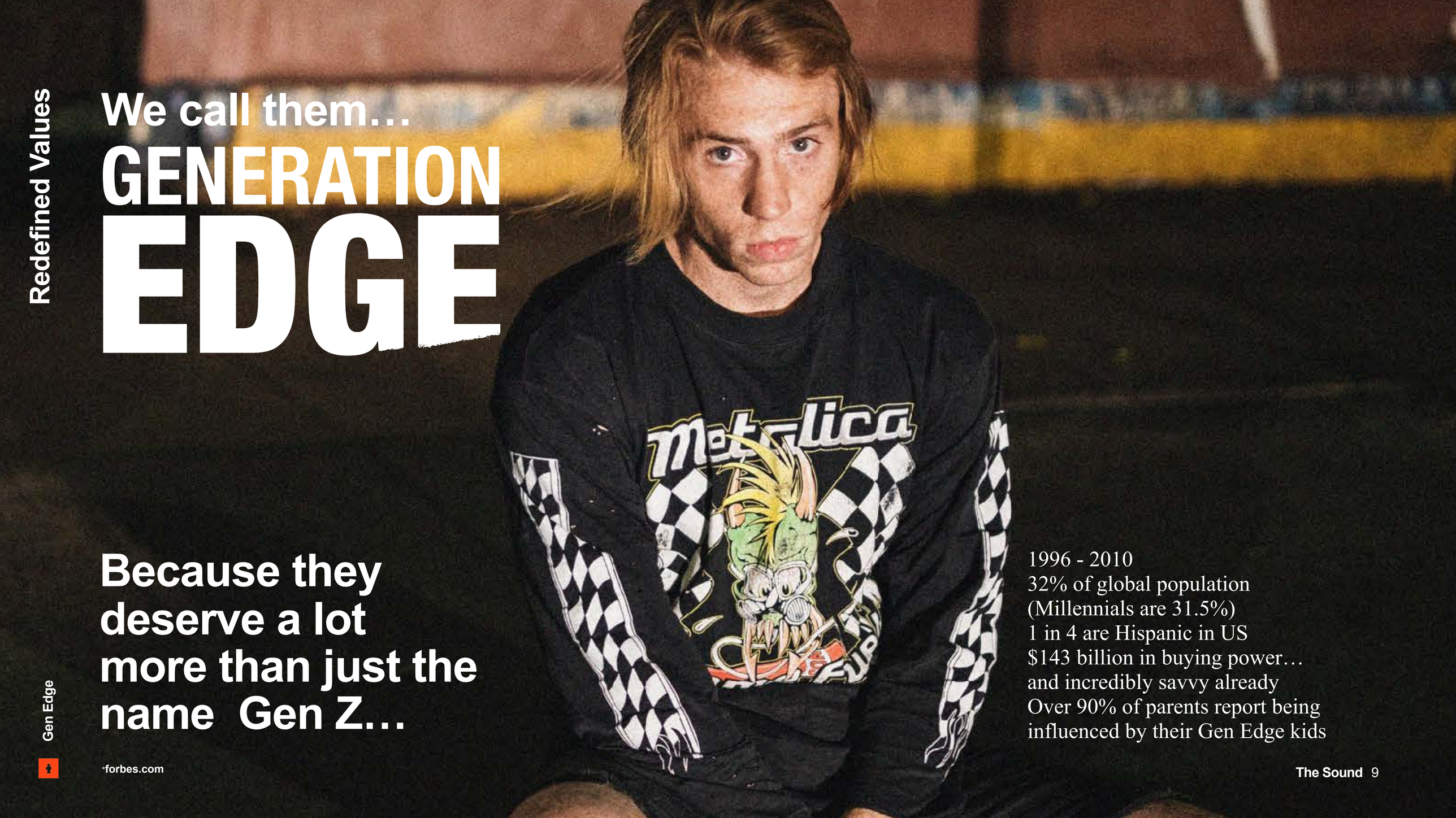




Redefined Values

We call them…

GENERATION EDGE



Because they deserve a lot more than just the name Gen Z…

1996 - 2010
32% of global population
(Millennials are 31.5%)
1 in 4 are Hispanic in US
$143 billion in buying power…
and incredibly savvy already
Over 90% of parents report being
influenced by their Gen Edge kids

Gen Edge

forbes.com



They have Edge

Because that’s what it takes to survive

Global context that makes the world feel it's on the edge of collapse…

Economic Turmoil



Collapse of Institutional Trust



Smaller World, Bigger Problems



Dubious Environmental Future



Tech Is Air



Gen X Parenting Style



This context has shaped a set of values that looks very different than the Millennials we've come to know so well

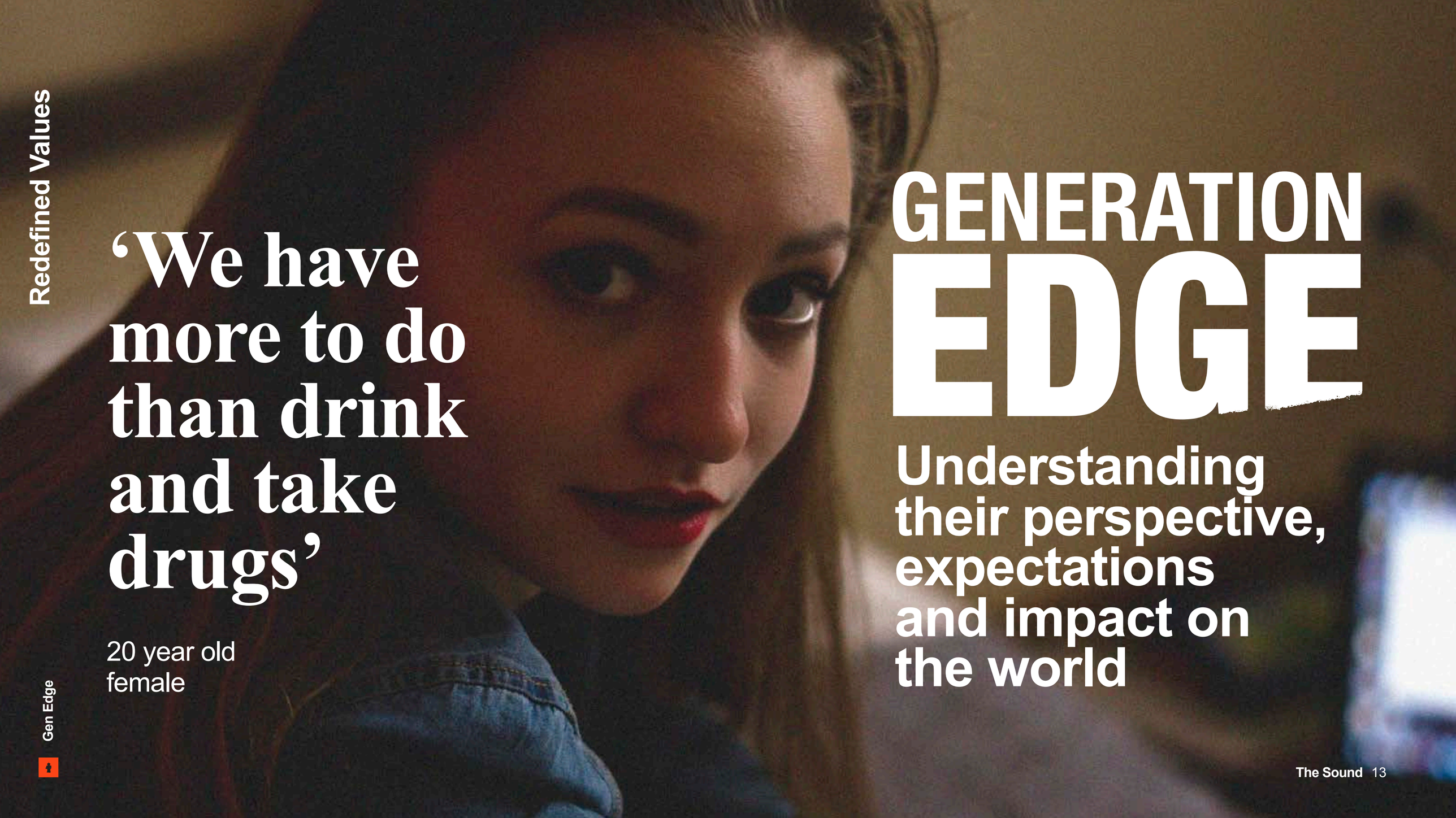
Millennial

Extended Adolescence
Self-Certain
Seeking Validation
#Twinning
Global Access
Congenial Conformity



Generation Edge

Accelerated Adulthood
Self-Sufficient
Seeking Stability
Different Is Good
Global Empathy
Reformist Rebellion



‘We have more to do than drink and take drugs’

20 year old female

GENERATION EDGE

Understanding their perspective, expectations and impact on the world



Accelerated Adulthood

Gen Edge are old heads on young shoulders… and they feel the pressure as they eye the future

Fintech

Gen Edgers are focused on financial security and are managing their money with this in mind.

According to the 2016 Gen Z, Lincoln Financial M.O.O.D study, 64% of those surveyed are already researching or talking to others about financial planning.

Apps like Acorn for ‘micro-investing’ and Mint for managing a budget are already hugely popular.





coursera

Additionally community colleges and two year programs are becoming strategic tools for managing the financial burden of higher education.

Some sidestepping higher education altogether to secure on the job training and apprenticeships to accelerate their practical skills.

And many taking advantage of the growing number of MOOCs… Massive Open Online Courses. With Coursera being the biggest and most successful to date, bringing in 150 international university partners, 36 million registered learners, $210 million in investment capital, an $800 million valuation as of 2018.

Self Sufficient

Gen Edge are hard workers and on the look out for their next side hustle



Benjamin Kickz

The barely legal sneaker broker to the stars who got his start 5 years ago at 16 years old when he waited in line with Hanukkah money to buy pricey kicks he had to have. Benjamin quickly realized buying 2 pairs and selling one at profit could cover the cost for his coveted pair. And with that realization a boomin business was born.

‘This is smart, I can buy two or three sneakers and keep one for free and sell the other ones. I wasn’t into it for the profit, I was into it for the shoe itself. I didn’t have a job and I had to get money somehow.’



depop

Depop is the Gen Edge preferred resale app turning thrifting into side hustles.

Suddenly a cheap thrift store find has a global audience and usually a healthy margin.

According to the company, 90 percent of its over 15 million active users are under 26.*

Seeking Stability

The world is a screwed up place; friendships are for depth and squads do not need to roll deep

#finsta

‘Finsta’ accounts are secondary Instagram accounts where Gen Edgers are sharing, with smaller circles of their closest friends, their real, unpolished life, inside jokes and the kinds of things they fear could be misinterpreted or judged by those who don’t know them.

‘For me, the finsta account is just a safe space online where I can breathe.’

Maya Lothian McQueen





Jiggy Puzzles

Surprise… Gen Edgers may be the most technologically advanced generation ever, but they prefer socializing offline, in small groups and often at home.

So it may come as no surprise that jigsaw puzzles, a perfect night in activity, have come back into fashion in recent years, with new brands like ‘Jiggy’ making puzzles worthy of a frame and retailers like Shopbop and Anthropologie getting in on the action.



Coors Light recently found an honest new way to lean into an old truth…

Chill may have been synonymous with Rocky Mountain cold for years, but the ‘Made To Chill’ campaign found a clever double entrendre to give a nod to the occasions when being ‘on’ just won’t do and a Coors Light is the perfect antidote.

From the delightful bra unhook, to the shower beer moment, to the Saturday morning Coors Light and brunch at home, the brand has precisely honed in on a Gen Edge friendly insight that nails their desire to step away from the calamity and commotion of everyday life and enjoy being turned down.







Different is Good

Normal doesn’t exist and perfection is not a priority

aerie®



The Aerie Real campaign has garnered accolades for it's depiction of diverse role models as well as a commitment to ditch the airbrush and embrace body positivity and acceptance… all critically important to the desire of today's teens and youth for more truth in advertising.

Billie Eilish

Billie Eilish is a multi-Grammy winning, contemporary 'pop' star bending expectations of musical genres, gender, fashion and creating a rabid legion of fans who regard her as a generational role model rooted in honesty, vulnerability and creativity.

"What the hell would the point be if I was just creating something that somebody else wanted me to create that I had no say in?"

2018 Vanity Fair article



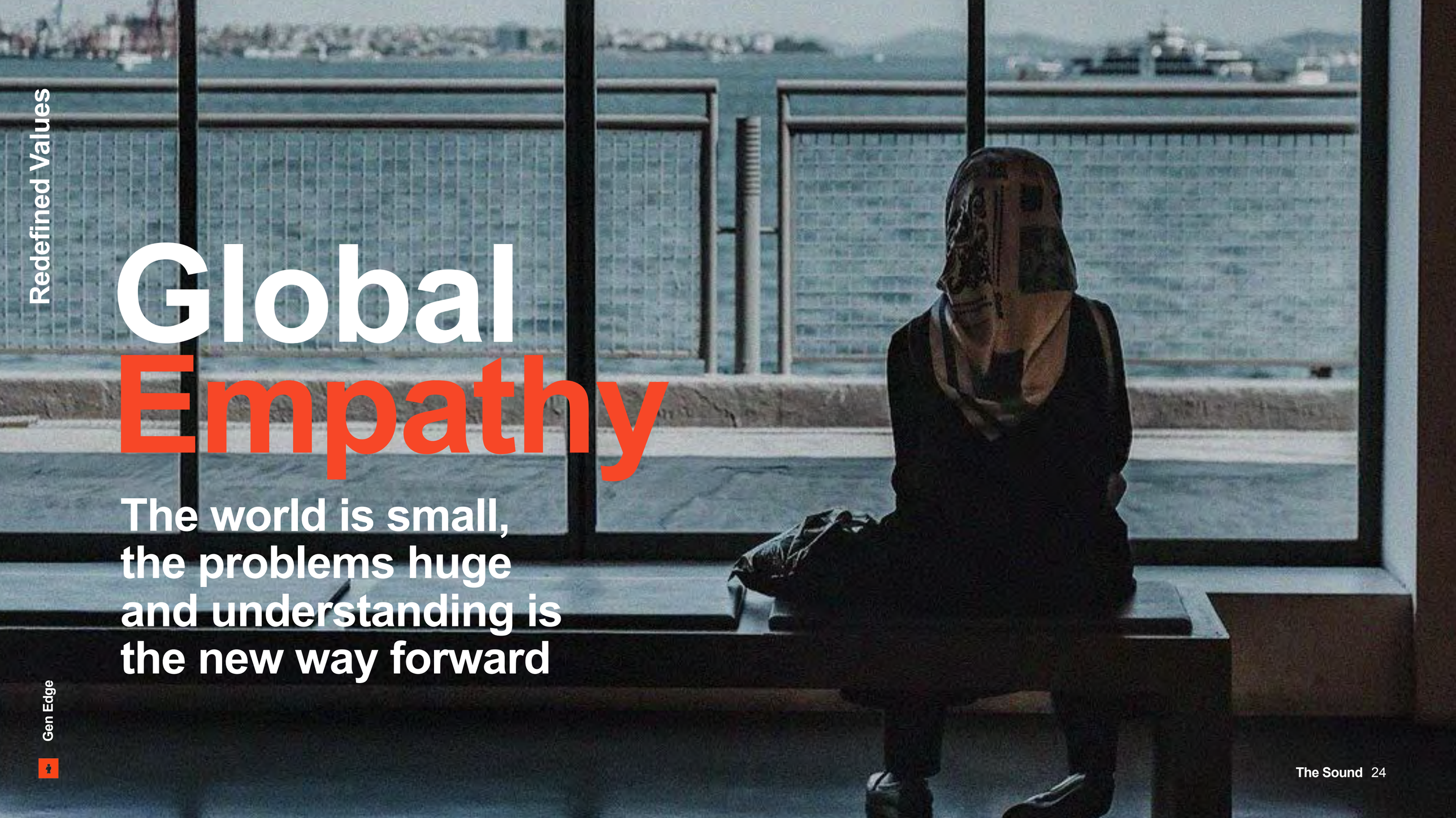


“I have seen a swift change in industry heads as they scramble to match the diverse message Fenty Beauty has launched”

James Kaliardos, Fenty Beauty Resident Artist

Global Empathy

The world is small, the problems huge and understanding is the new way forward



Danté Colley is the breath of fresh air you may have caught wind of on Ellen or thanks to Leslie Jones or heard referred to as the ‘motivational dancing guy.’

A 20-something from Toronto, Colley has put smiles on the faces of millions thanks to his positive affirmations delivered through dance.

He has a simple motivation for what he’s doing…

“We tend to question what we’re doing, where we see ourselves, what our purpose is. You need to recognize that you are your own person, and you have your own road to ride on. So stop comparing yourself to other people and be true to who you are.”



Donté Colley

Tik Tok may befuddle the ‘grown-ups’ but youth around the world have adopted the app to the tune of over a billion installs since its launch in 2016.

Why so popular with teens around the world?

1. Inclusivity
2. Positivity
3. Creativity

Teens see Tik Tok as a global tapestry of people, largely being their real awkward selves, where they can applaud others for being their real awkward selves. Mostly without the heavy influencer and brand polish that has crept into other platforms.

And in that realness exposed in short video clips, Gen Edge feels a little more connected to other delightful weirdos thousands of miles away.



REFORMIST

Rebellion

When the grown-ups don’t act like it, Gen Edge is pissed off enough to step in and take action









A yearbook packed with activists

“We call b.s.”

Emma Gonzalez

When it comes to driving change, a consistent narrative has emerged from Gen Edgers, and the grown-ups don’t have a starring role. From Emma to David to Greta and Malala, this Generation is not short on inspiring activists fighting for change.

If Millennials were known for raising awareness for causes through the ‘slacktivism’ made possible by social media, Gen Edge is taking it a step further and fighting for the change they seek in the world themselves.

Edgers feel a significant responsibility to turn the negative tides before it’s too late.

CALL THEM GENERATION Z



OR CALL THEM GENERATION EDGE

They are here and they are a force to be reckoned with.

We offer 4 principles to keep in mind when thinking about engaging with this next youth generation…



Gen Edgers are critical thinkers...

which means they're going to think critically about your brand



Spark a Rebellion

Take on a challenger mindset to match theirs.

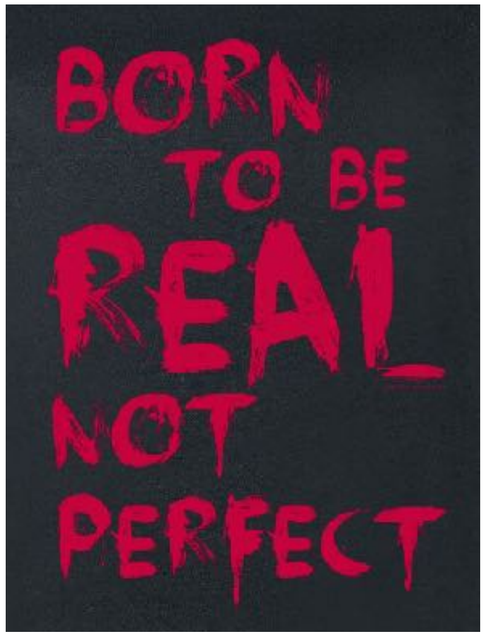
Even big brands need to be prepared to challenge status quo when it stops making sense. Taking a stand and having a point of view is going to capture their attention.

Reward Loyalty

Brand names matter much less to Gen Edge.

And quality trumps everything. They are savvy enough to shop around to get the most bang for their buck. Recognize their loyalty through points and rewards programs that give them a reason to stick around and a benefit beyond the product.





Be Real

Fakery will be found out, and called out.

Imperfect grids, real spokespeople, transparency about every part of your system… it all matters.

How you operate as a business is as important as how you market it.

Offer a Respite

Saving the world is hard.

And even a superhero needs a break every now and then. Don't forget how important small moments of escape and a good laugh can be… Tik Tok has shown us all that the world still has room for nonsense!



THE

SOUND

Exploration. Strategy. Innovation.