

GROWING UP GAMING:

Meet the Millennial Gamers



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GROWING UP GAMING

Introduction

Millennial gamers are the most powerful gamer audience today. They are the first generation to grow up with gaming in its proliferation, creating a lasting emotional connection that has seen them dedicate more time and money to gaming today than any other generation. While both Generation Z and Millennials lead the pack when it comes to their engagement, enjoyment, and

consumption of gaming, Millennials find themselves being pulled back to the games they grew up with, investing more into the games that speak to their deeper motivations. It is this unique combination of passion, dedication, and investment in gaming that sets Millennials apart from not only Gen Z but all other gaming generations.

Key Takeaways

1. Millennials are **the first generation to grow up gaming**, driving a strong emotional connection to gaming to become some of the most engaged gamers today
2. Millennial gamers have **high disposable income**, allowing them to meaningfully invest in their love of gaming
3. Millennials are **influenced by the games they grew up with**, and they **connect with long-standing franchises** that have been reimaged

GROWING UP GAMING

Meet the Millennial Gamers



Millennials are the first generation of gamers to grow up with gaming, discovering a new way to connect and discover immersive stories through their gaming console. They grew up playing games that taught them new ways to have fun, to connect with their friends, and to compete.

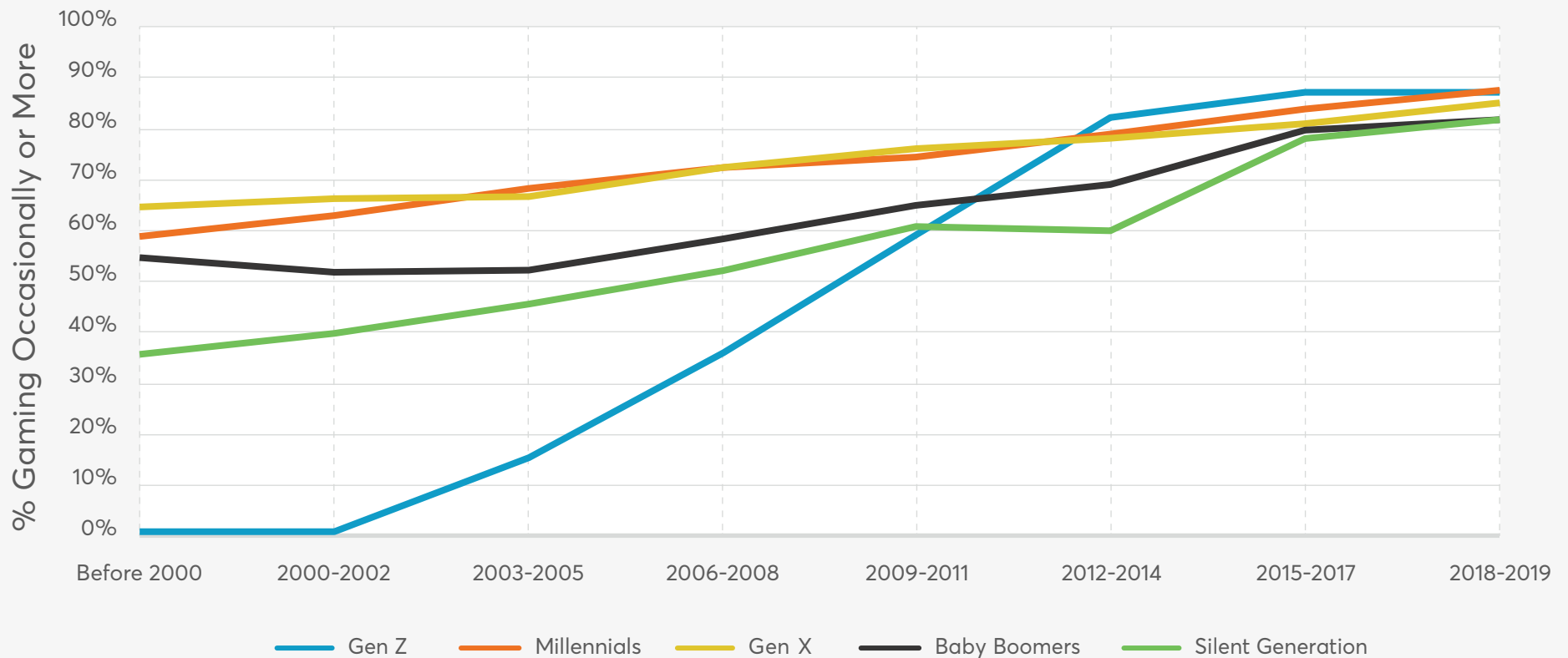
62.8% of Millennials started gaming at or before the age of 18. This is almost 32% more than the previous generation, Generation X. As a result, Millennial gamers have a connection to gaming unlike any other.

Today, younger generations live and breathe gaming. It is embedded deeply in their day-to-day lives, reflected both in how much they play and also their attachment to gaming as part of their identity.

Across all generations, the reported percentage of individuals gaming at least occasionally or more has risen every decade. However, over the past two decades Millennials, in particular, have consistently had one of the highest rates of play, with more than 60% of Millennials gaming occasionally or more every year. This high level of engagement can be traced back to the age that Millennials first began playing.

Simply put, the earlier you start gaming, the more you game today. Gamers who began playing at or before the age of 18, are likely to game 30% more a week than someone who started gaming after the age of 18.

Percentage of Generation Gaming by Year



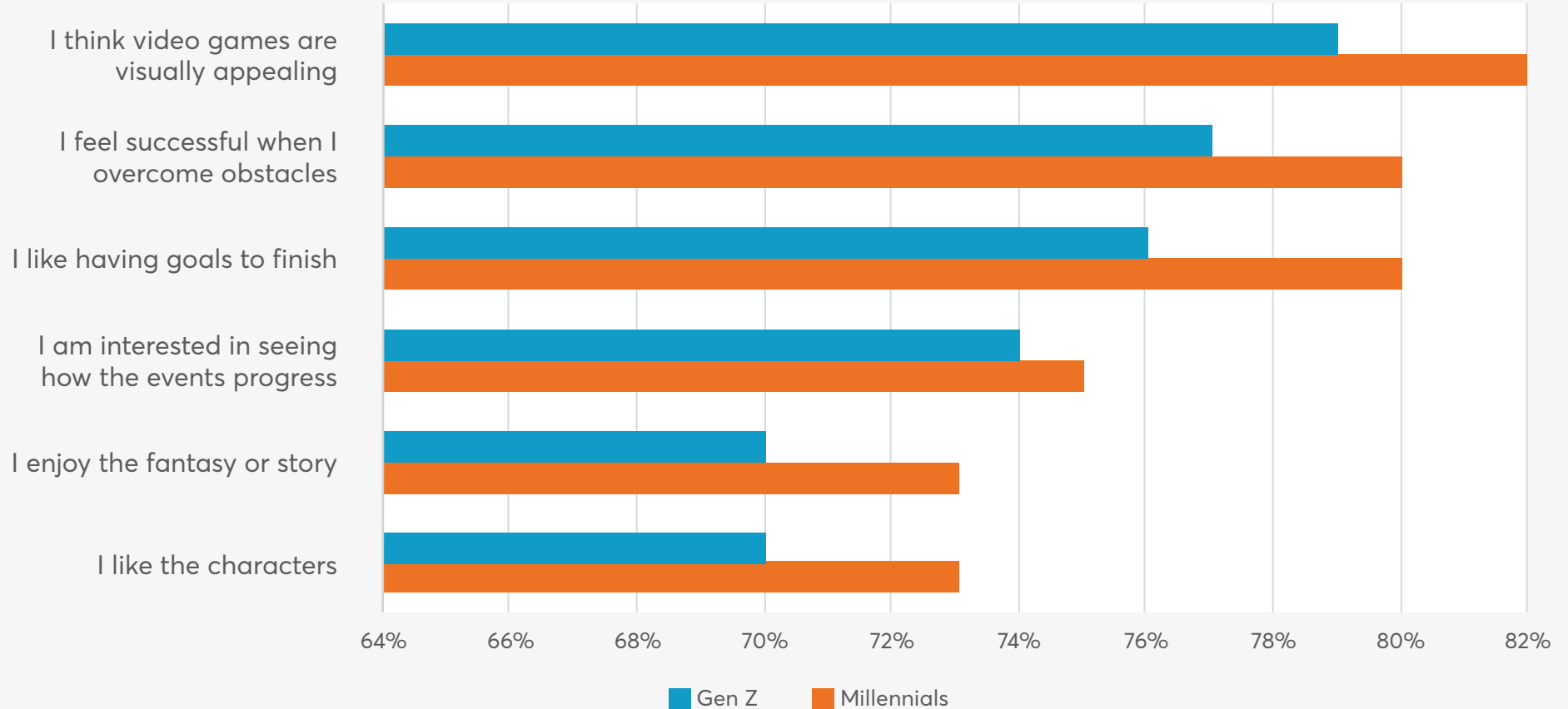
This connection to gaming extends beyond just how Millennials play - it also manifests in how they engage with gaming when they are not playing. Millennials are more likely than almost every generation of gamers to find themselves keeping up with the latest gaming news, spectating other players online, and watching esports.

They're also more likely to be found playing games across all devices (mobile, PC, console) and playing a variety of games across almost every genre when compared to older generations. When it comes to their favorites, Millennials enjoy game genres like Action-Adventure, Shooter, Battle Royale, Role Playing, Fighting, MMORPG, Action RPG, and Sandbox.

Since Millennials have spent more of their lives playing video games than any other generation to date, they have higher expectations of the games they play. While every generation is motivated to play games because they teach new skills, provide a challenge, and are generally enjoyable, Millennials are more likely than older generations to appreciate

games because they are social, emotional, and tell great stories. Distinctly, Millennials are the most motivated of the generations to play games because of their emotional ties to characters and narrative. This leads them to seek out games that have experience building amazing stories.

Gaming Motivations for Millennials



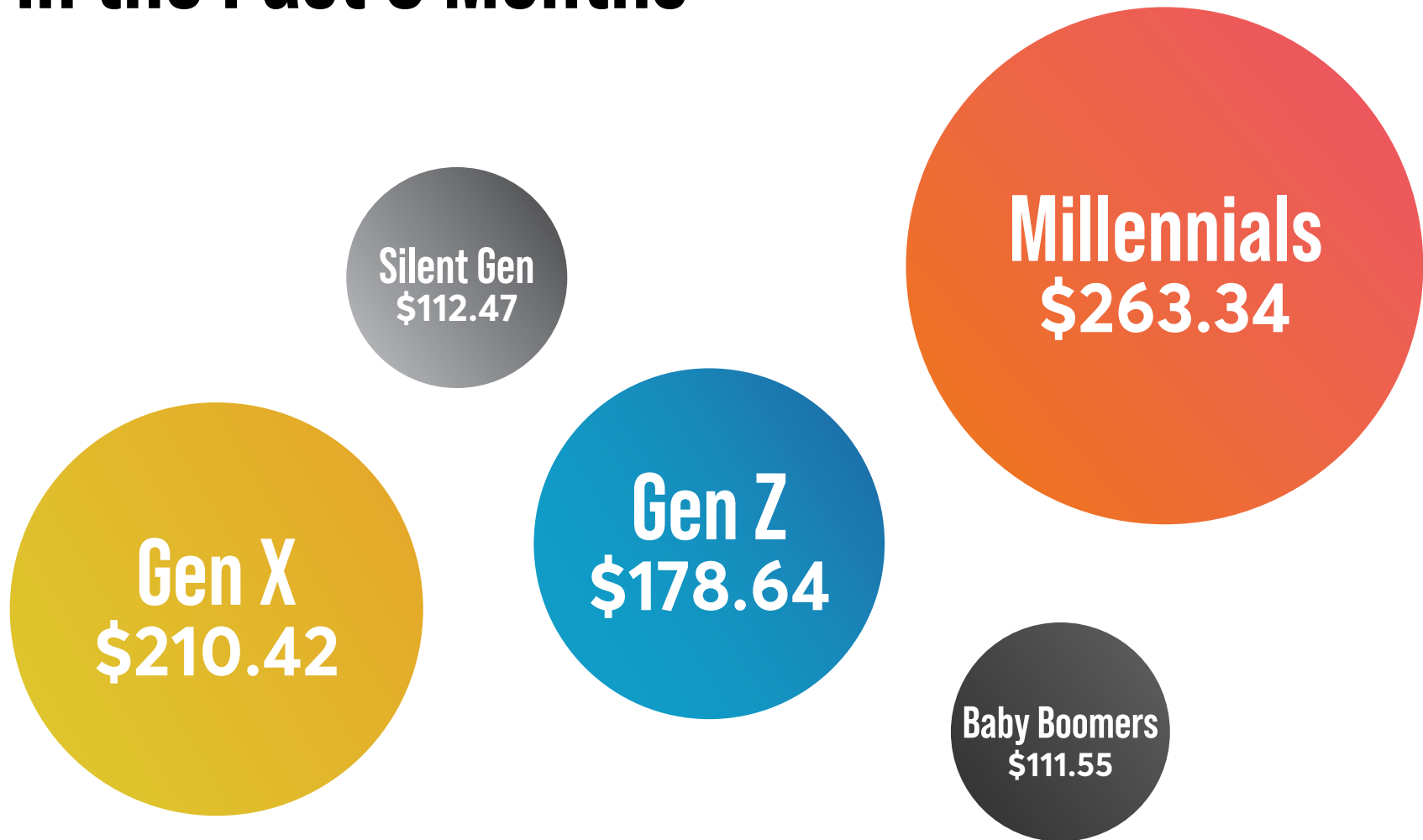
Some of the games that do this best are the ones who have been doing it the longest. Millennials, along with Gen Z, are more likely to flock to long-standing franchises than older generations. These are the franchises that have stood the test of time, with legacies that span over 10 years and are constantly being reimagined and reinvented with new ways to play.

Millennials, along with Gen Z, are more likely to flock to long-standing franchises...

These games have developed characters over time that can grow with the very people playing them, creating emotional connections through their storytelling. In fact younger generations are so loyal to franchises that have brought them great narratives and connection in the past that they're more likely to invest in the same games in the future, even if those games may have had less than favorable reviews.



Average Spend on Gaming in the Past 6 Months



There's more to be said about the effect specific games have on gamers in the long run. Specifically, Millennials are more likely to prefer strategy and RPG games than Gen Z. Gen Z are more likely to prefer shooter and exploration games.

If you take a look at the games that were popular for Millennials growing up (Final Fantasy, World of Warcraft, Pokemon) compared to Gen Z (Fortnite, Overwatch, and Minecraft), you see a possible correlation between childhood games and long-term preferences. This may also speak to why long-standing franchises yield so much loyalty from younger generations.

This deep connection Millennials have to gaming is further reflected in how they incorporate gaming into their lives and how much they invest in gaming. Millennials are tied with Generation X in having the highest incomes of all generations, making them a highly valuable audience for brands and marketers. But with less financial commitments than their older counterparts and a strong passion for gaming, it follows that Millennials are the biggest spenders on gaming content and the most likely of all the generations to have the latest console and gaming hardware.

Top Preferred Game Genres:

Millennials



Action Adventure
60%



Action RPG
41%



Shooter
36%

Gen Z



Action Adventure
58%



Shooter
43%



Battle Royale
40%

In Conclusion

For Millennials, gaming has been a constant throughout their lives, and it's just as much a part of their entertainment wheelhouse as TV shows or music. This is because as Millennials grew older, so too did their connection with gaming which has led to more engagement, deeper emotional ties, and a bigger investment in gaming as soon as their lives and income allowed for it.

Millennials are now smart, sophisticated consumers who are breaking the stereotype that gaming is 'just for kids.' The games they turn to have been around for years, bring them a sense of nostalgia, or challenge them to play strategically. With a strong passion for gaming and the disposable income to allow them to meaningfully engage with their favorite pastime, today Millennial gamers represent an audience group unlike any other. Tomorrow, Generation Z is likely to follow in their footsteps.

Methodology

To better understand the gaming audience, Activision Blizzard Media conducted a quantitative study among adults over the age of 18 who played, watched, or engaged with video games at least once in the past month. The online-based study surveyed 21,168 gamers across the United States, the United Kingdom, France, and Germany.

Generations in this document refer to people born between the following years¹:

Gen Z
(≤ 20) 2000-Present

Gen X
(40-54) 1966-1981

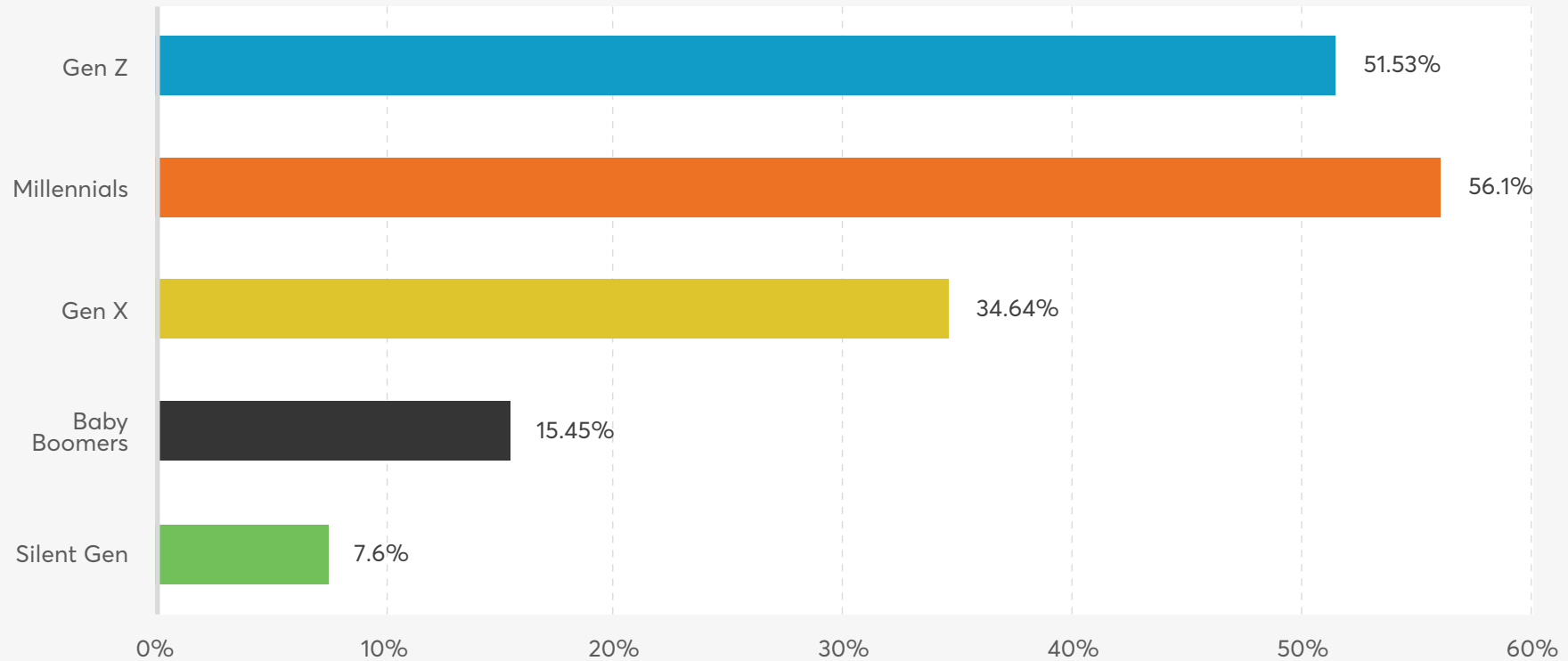
Silent Gen
(≥ 70) Before 1950

Millennials
(21-39) 1982-2000

Baby Boomers
(55-69) 1951-1965

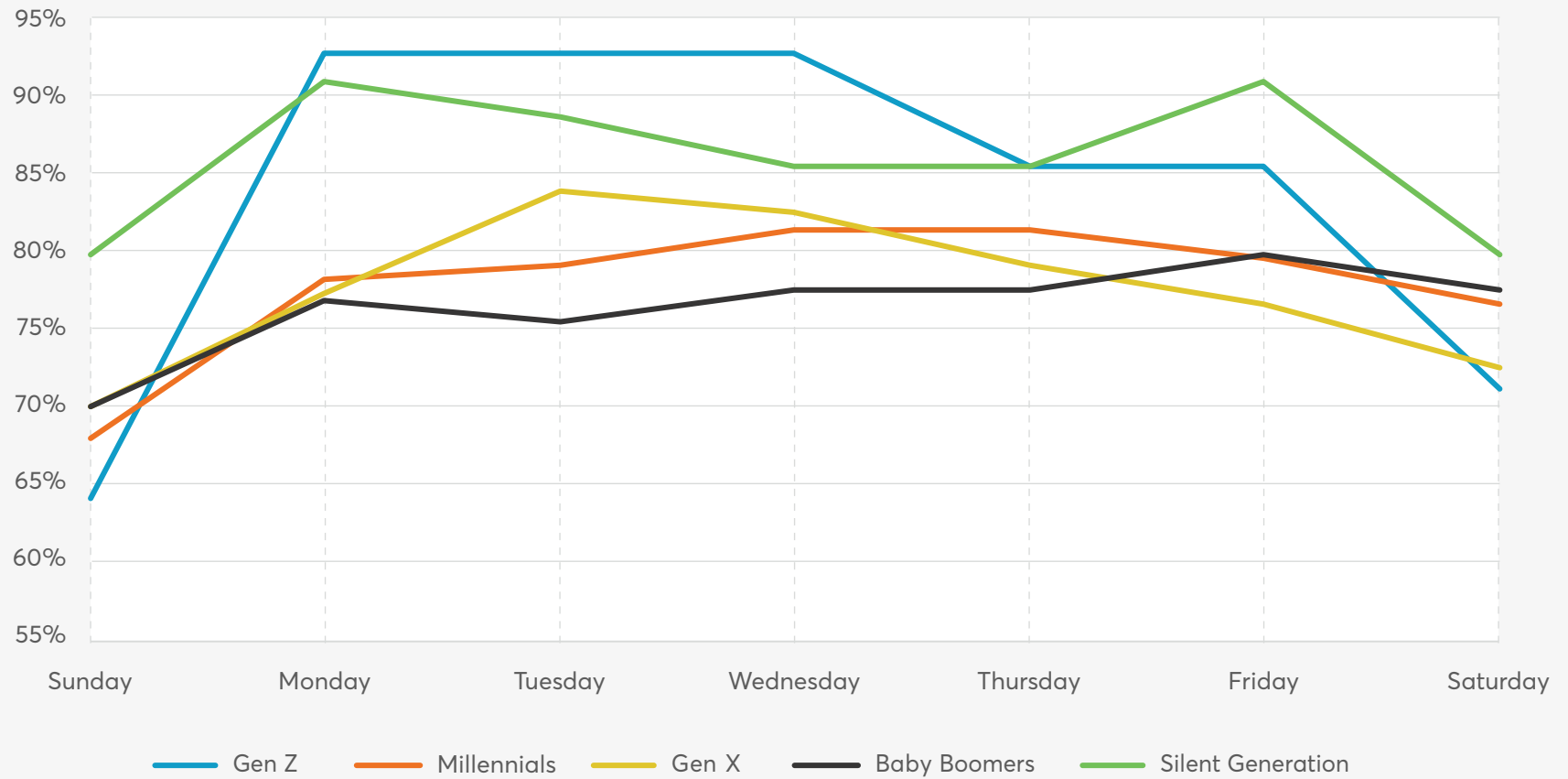
Appendix

Percentage Who Self-Identify as a Gamer



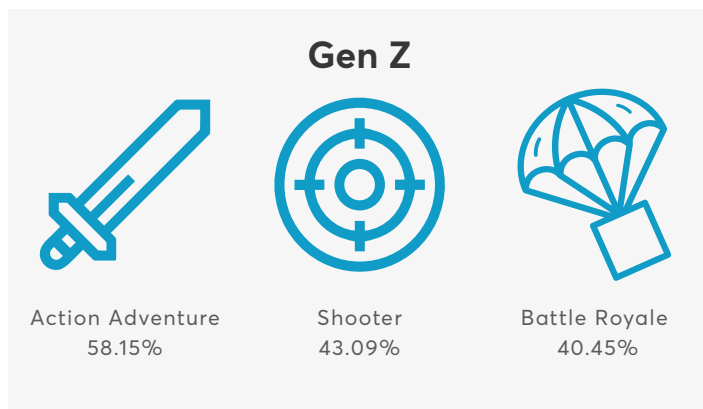
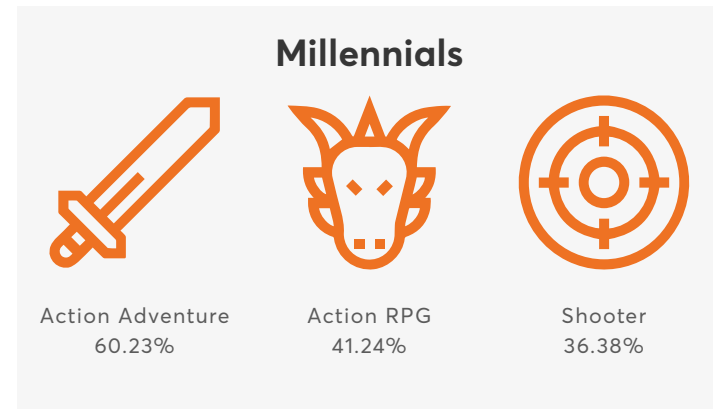
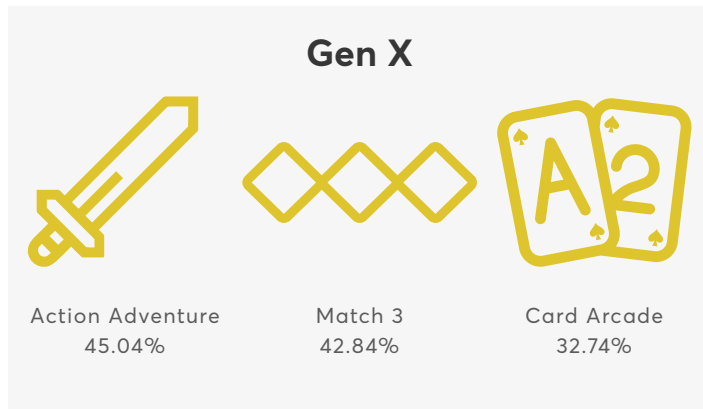
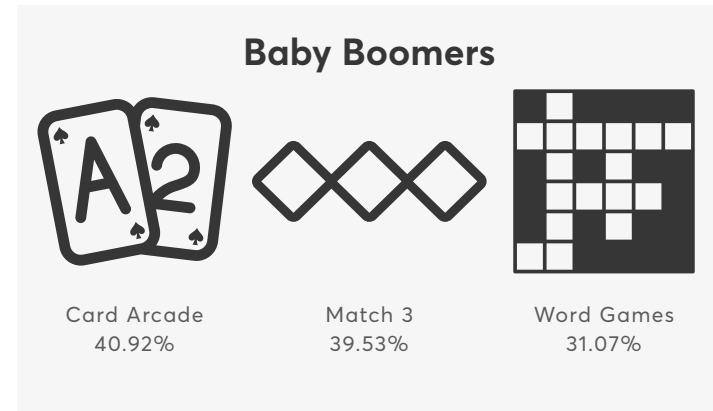
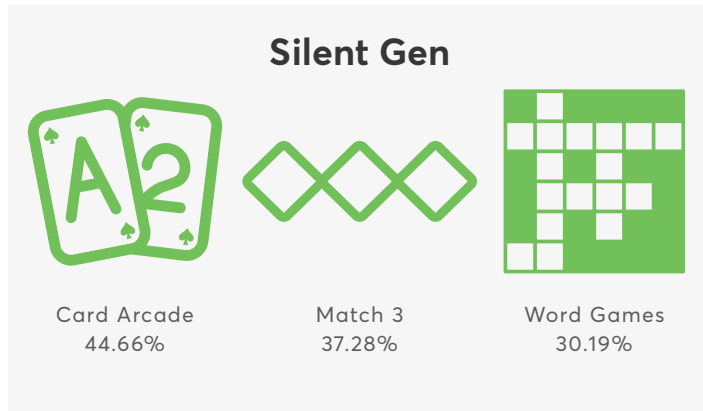
Millennials are the generation most likely to call themselves a gamer. Younger generations are more than twice as likely to identify as a gamer than older generations.

Daily Gaming Activity



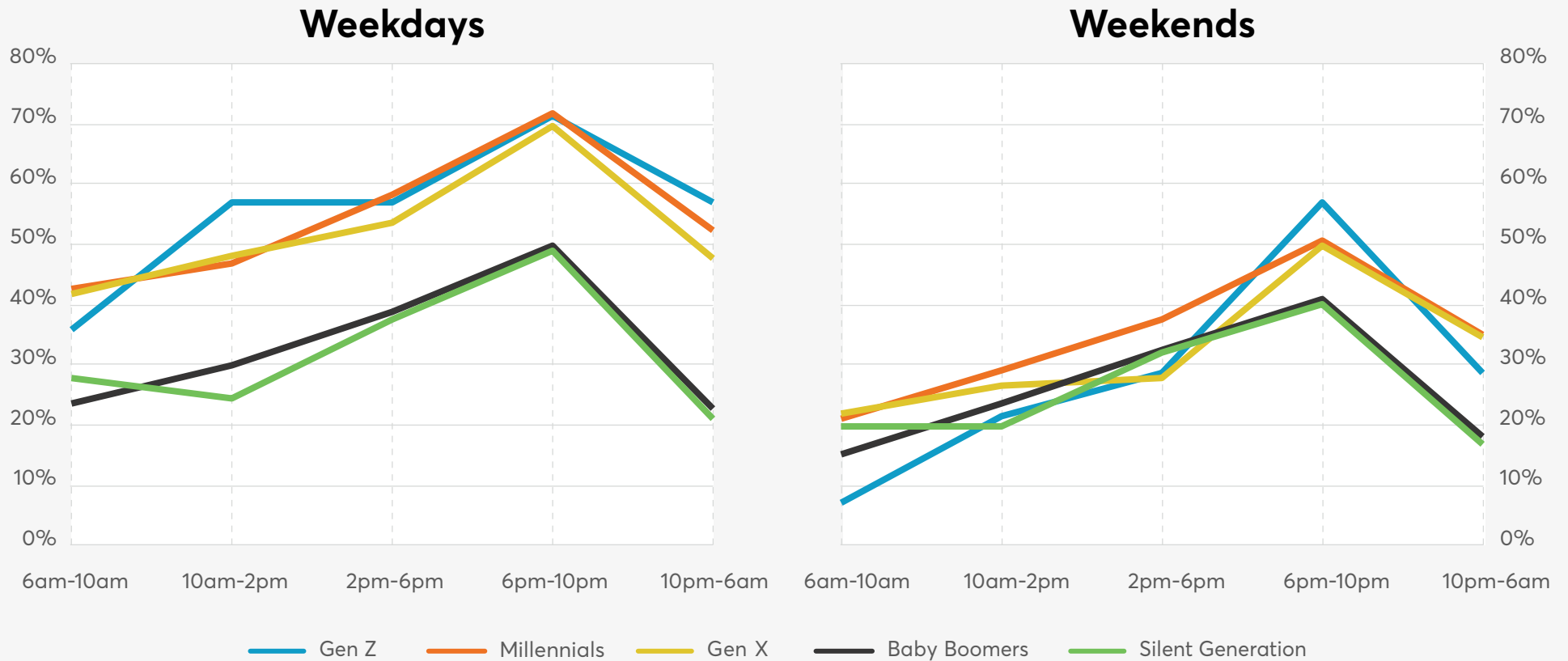
While gamers from all generations find time to game throughout the week, Millennials are more likely than Gen Z to be found gaming on the weekend.

Game Genre Preferences by Generation



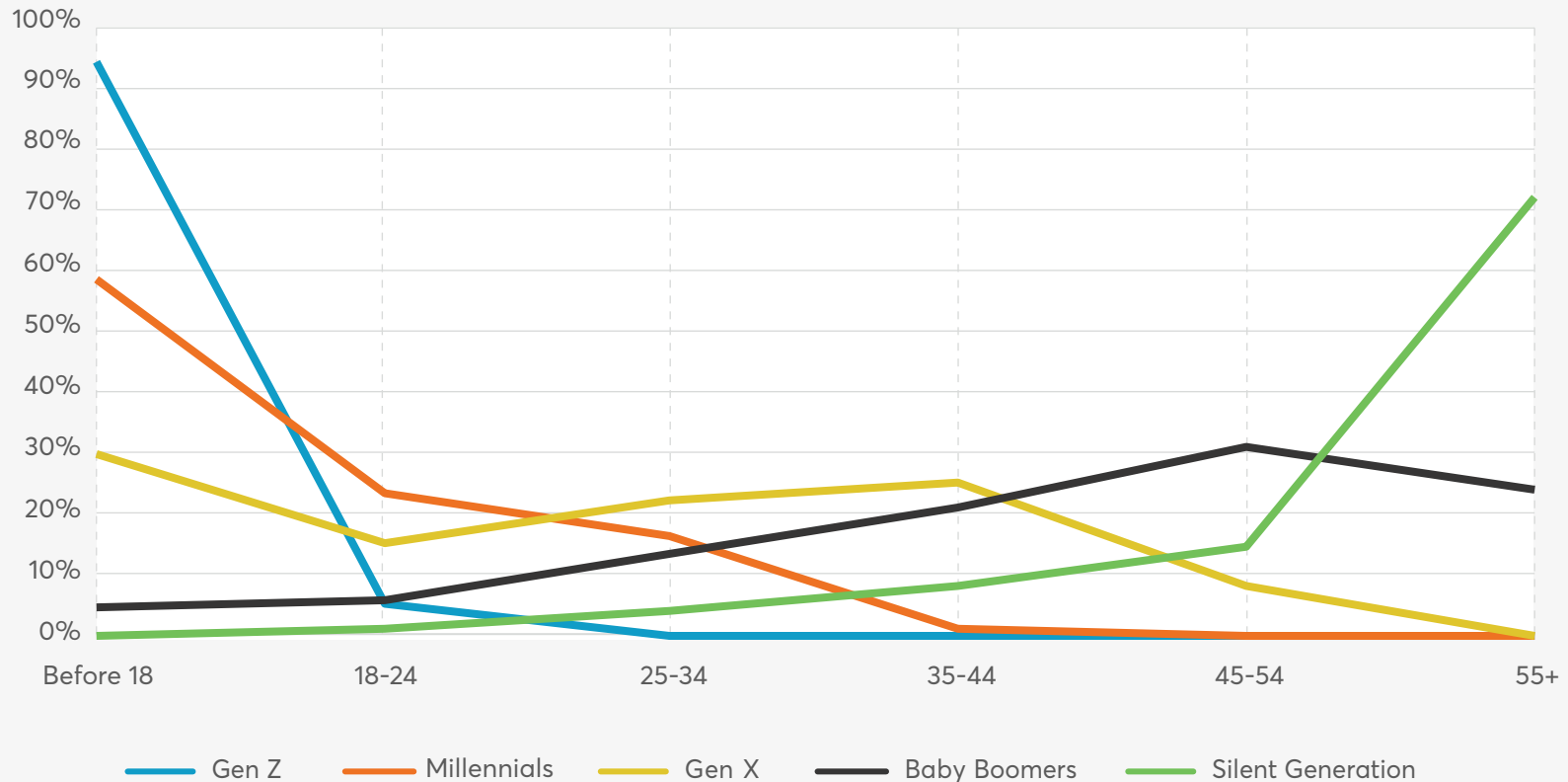
Gen Z and Millennials are similar to one another in the genres they choose to play. Younger generations have an affinity for strategy and shooter games, while older generations tend to prefer puzzle and arcade games.

Gaming Engagement on Weekday vs Weekend



Gen Z, Millennials, and Gen X tend to play games more frequently throughout the week than Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation. However, Millennials are more likely than Gen Z to have gaming as part of their morning routine.

When Did Each Generation Start Gaming?



A pattern is emerging that finds with every new generation more and more gamers start gaming at a younger age. This is significant because our research finds the age you start gaming affects your emotional connection to gaming and your engagement with gaming later in life.

ABOUT US

Activision Blizzard Media

Activision Blizzard Media Ltd. is the gateway for brands to the leading interactive entertainment company with hundreds of millions of monthly active users around the world. Our legendary portfolio includes iconic mobile game franchises such as Candy Crush™, esports like the Call of Duty League™, the Overwatch League™ and some of the top PC and console gaming franchises such as Call of Duty®, World of Warcraft®, and StarCraft®. The idea is simple: great game experiences offer great marketing experiences.



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