

FORESIGHT-DRIVEN BRAND STRATEGY: LINKING GENERATION Z SEGMENTATION TO DYNAMIC MARKETING CAPABILITIES

Marcin MOLIN¹, Olgierd WITCZAK²

¹ Philips, Vice President, Head of Central Eastern Europe, CCA & Kazakhstan Region;
marcin.molin@philips.com

² University of Economics in Katowice, Department of Organizational Relationship Management;
olgierd.witczak@ue.katowice.pl, ORCID: 0000-0001-6371-0833

Purpose: To examine corporate foresight (CF) as an antecedent of dynamic marketing capabilities (DMCs) and demonstrate how a foresight-to-segmentation pipeline informs brand strategy for Generation Z in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The paper aims to localise brand positioning for Philips' personal care portfolio by linking psychographic clusters to country-specific strategic options.

Design/methodology/approach: A mixed analytical approach combines secondary horizon scanning with a primary survey of Gen Z respondents across Poland, Romania, and Czechia. A two-stage cluster procedure identifies five segments: Aspirers, Mindfuls, Indulgents, Elementals, and Discoverers. Segment-country profiles are translated into foresight-guided brand implications for Sonicare, Series, OneBlade, and Lumea, within a CF-DMC framework.

Findings: Gen Z psychographics are heterogeneous across CEE. Poland tends to favour messages emphasising authenticity, value, and a balanced life. A preference for prestige/status frames dominates Romania. Czechia Gen Z supports playful, exploratory positioning. Brand-level implications encompass prevention/value (Sonicare toothbrush), Series (grooming and shaving), versatile self-styling (OneBlade trimmer), at-home efficacy and savings (Lumea epilator), tailored to each country's mix.

Research limitations/implications: Cross-sectional, self-reported data constrain causal inference; cluster stability over time and cross-country measurement invariance are not formally tested. The scope is limited to three CEE markets and one corporate context. Future research should employ longitudinal/panel designs, multi-method triangulation with behavioural and digital traces, randomised field experiments for causal identification, and capability-performance models linking CF/DMC maturity to brand and financial outcomes.

Practical implications: Provides a replicable scanning → clustering → foresight → positioning template for multinational brand portfolios, enabling resource allocation, message framing, and innovation road-mapping that reflect national psychographic structures.

Social implications: By aligning offerings with evolving generational values, corporates can foster responsible, inclusive, and health-oriented consumer choices, informing policy dialogues on digital well-being and consumer protection.

Originality/value: Integrates CF and DMC theory with an empirical, country-differentiated Gen Z segmentation to produce actionable, brand-specific foresight in a transitional region, offering both theoretical synthesis and a practical toolkit for managers.

Keywords: corporate foresight, dynamic marketing capabilities, Generation Z, brand strategy.

Category of the paper: Case study.

1. Introduction

Across volatile technological, sociocultural, and geopolitical landscapes, companies are increasingly required to possess capabilities that transcend retrospective forecasting and enable proactive engagement with discontinuous futures. Corporate foresight (CF) has emerged as such a capability: an organisational, routinised capacity to sense weak signals, interpret structural shifts, and translate alternative futures into strategic choices and innovation pipelines (Rohrbeck, Kum, 2018; Hines et al., 2017; Iden et al., 2017). Conceptually, CF extends beyond analytic extrapolation to futures thinking, scenario development, backcasting, and strategic dialogue (van der Heijden, 2005; Wright et al., 2013; Vecchiato, 2015), and is increasingly associated with superior opportunity recognition, risk mitigation, and strategic renewal in turbulent environments (Rohrbeck, Schwarz, 2013; Costanzo, MacKay, 2009).

This paper positions CF as a foundational enabler (antecedent) of Dynamic Marketing Capabilities (DMCs), the higher-order routines through which corporations sense, seize, and reconfigure market-facing assets to sustain an advantage under uncertainty (Eisenhardt, Martin, 2000; Day, 2011). The paper argues that foresight provides the cognitive and organisational infrastructure for DMCs by institutionalising environmental scanning, sensemaking, and reflexive learning, and by embedding future-oriented narratives that catalyse strategic alignment and agile resource recomposition (Wilkinson et al., 2014; Rohrbeck et al., 2015).

The paper interrogates this relationship in a domain where generational change constitutes a first-order strategic variable: brand management in personal care. Generational cohorts (Gen X, Millennials, Gen Z, and emergent Gen Alpha) differ systematically in digital fluency, values, and brand expectations, rendering static positioning increasingly ineffective (Bolton et al., 2013; Djafarova, Bowes, 2021).

Empirically, the Philips draws on direct survey research with 3,000 Gen Z respondents across Poland, Romania, and Czechia, complemented by secondary research of market and expert sources. Using a two-stage clustering approach (hierarchical determination of cluster number followed by k-means partitioning), five salient psychographic segments: Aspirers, Mindfuls, Indulgers, Elementals, and Discoverers – were identified, which structure consumer logics within and across countries. Brand foresight implications for four Philips brands (Sonicare, Series, OneBlade, Lumea) were developed, illustrating how cross-country segment compositions suggest differentiated positioning pathways.

This study contributes by: (1) integrating CF theory with DMCs to articulate a foresight-led brand strategy framework; (2) demonstrating a replicable segmentation-to-foresight pipeline applicable to multinational brand portfolios; and (3) evidencing intra-regional heterogeneity in Gen Z psychographics within CEE – Poland (balance of Indulgers and Mindfuls → value, authenticity, life-balance), Romania (Aspirer dominance → status and recognition), and Czechia (Indulgers and Discoverers → fun, exploration, creative self-expression).

Collectively, the analysis advances both theoretical understanding of foresight-enabled marketing agility and practical guidance for localisation of brand architectures in transitional markets.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Corporate Foresight as a Strategic Capability

In an era of accelerating technological disruptions, shifting consumer expectations, and volatile geopolitical environments, organisations must move beyond traditional forecasting methods to embrace corporate foresight as a dynamic strategic capability. Corporate foresight (CF) refers not merely to predicting future trends based on historical data, but to an organisation's ability to anticipate, interpret, and act upon potential future developments in ways that enable strategic agility and sustained competitive advantage (Rohrbeck, Kum, 2018; Gordon et al., 2020; Iden et al., 2017).

Corporate foresight has been conceptualised as a set of processes and capabilities that enable organisations to detect early signs of change, develop plausible future scenarios, and integrate these insights into strategic decision-making (Rohrbeck, Battistella, Huizingh, 2015). Unlike forecasting, which extrapolates from the past, foresight emphasises futures thinking-imagining alternative, discontinuous, and even contradictory futures (Vecchiato, 2015).

A central theme is the distinction between foresight as an analytical tool and foresight as an organisational capability (Slaughter, 1997; Hines et al., 2017). The latter perspective emphasises corporate foresight as internal capacity building, developing routines, mindsets, and structures that enable organisations to engage with uncertainty and ambiguity continuously. While data-driven trend analysis remains a foundational element (foresight as an analytical tool), leading scholars argue that corporate foresight cultivates a readiness for strategic transformation rather than merely produce predictions (Rhisiart, Miller, Brooks, 2015). This involves embracing uncertainty, surfacing assumptions, and engaging in back casting and scenario planning (van der Heijden, 2005; Wright, Bradfield, Cairns, 2013). Organisations demonstrating high corporate foresight maturity tend to exhibit certain meta-capabilities, such as environmental scanning, sensemaking, strategic dialogue, and reflexive learning (Wilkinson, Mayer, Ringler, 2014). These are not passive capabilities but interactive processes

embedded in organisational routines and culture (Battistella, 2014), focusing on leveraging the potential of heuristic methods, respectively seeking synergies with quantitative methods for predicting the future. Corporate foresight requires a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, often applied together to generate richer insights (Sedighi et al., 2022; Gordon et al., 2020). Environmental and horizon scanning by continuous monitoring of signals and trends across domains. Uses databases, scientific publications, patent analysis, startup monitoring, industry reports, media, and expert sources. Identification of long-term shifts in consumer behaviour, technologies, demographics, and other factors, which involves bibliometrics, patent landscapes, or big data analytics. Spotting early, fragmented, low-visibility developments that might indicate future disruptions by using text mining, social media analytics, Delphi surveys, and expert interviews. Structured techniques like the Delphi method, interviews, or focus groups are used to gather expert judgment on uncertain or complex issues (expert elicitation). Development of multiple possible future paths, exploring uncertainties and interdependencies, is often visualised with causal mapping, cross-impact analysis, or systems thinking tools (Højland, Rohrbeck, 2018).

Empirical studies increasingly highlight the role of foresight in strategic renewal, innovation, and long-term orientation. Rohrbeck and Schwarz (2013) found that organisations with embedded foresight capabilities outperformed peers in turbulent environments due to better opportunity recognition and risk mitigation. Foresight supports not only strategic alignment but also strategic divergence, enabling firms to reframe markets, explore new business models, and redefine value propositions (Costanzo, MacKay, 2009). Significantly, foresight is being repositioned as a driver of strategic agility – the ability to rapidly reconfigure strategies and resources in response to weak signals and emergent disruptions (Doz, Kosonen, 2010). Internal organisational factors that affect the institutionalisation of foresight include a culture of openness, cross-functional collaboration, and absorptive capacity (Vecchiato, Roveda, 2010). Conversely, cognitive inertia, short-termism, and siloed structures often hinder the translation of foresight into corporate action (Mendonça et al., 2004).

The creation of corporate foresight typically follows a staged process, supported by critical methods of data gathering and analysis. Typical steps encompass strategic intent and commitment, when the senior leadership defines why foresight is needed (e.g., innovation, risk management, resilience, long-term brand competitiveness). In that phase, resources, governance, and responsibility are allocated, often within strategy, R&D, and innovation units. Later, scanning and data collection are carried out, and the organisation gathers weak signals, emerging trends, disruptions, and drivers of change from multiple domains (technological, economic, social, environmental, and political). Both internal and external sources are used. The next step, sensemaking and interpretation, is set. Data is organised, clustered, and interpreted to reveal patterns, uncertainties, and interconnections. The goal is to identify potential future scenarios or an organisation's strategic options. The corporate foresight, the focal point is scenario and vision building (Chermack, 2004), where alternative futures are developed to stress-test assumptions, highlight risks, and reveal opportunities. Desired futures

(visions) may also be articulated as a basis for strategy. Integration into strategy and innovation is an executive stage where insights are embedded into decision-making, R&D priorities, investment choices are made, and business model innovation occurs. The last stage, monitoring and renewal, makes the whole process an ongoing organisational routine.

Foresight is a continuous cycle, not a one-off project, while an organisation monitors signals, updates scenarios, and refines strategies over time.

2.2. Corporate Foresight as a Background for Dynamic Marketing Capabilities

Dynamic marketing capabilities (DMC) are a subdomain of the broader dynamic capabilities framework. They specifically refer to an organisation's capacity to sense, seize, and reconfigure its marketing-related assets and competencies to sustain a competitive advantage in turbulent environments (Eisenhardt, Martin, 2000; Day, 2011). Dynamic marketing capabilities encompass proactive market learning, agile customer engagement, and resource fluidity, enabling firms to respond to both anticipated and emergent changes in market environments. These capabilities are not innate but must be developed through continuous experimentation, strategic learning, and absorptive capacity. Dynamic marketing capabilities operate as higher-order routines that allow firms to not only respond to change but also actively co-create new market conditions (Witczak, Molin, 2024; Witczak, 2023).

The increasing generational diversity of the consumer base magnifies the urgency of cultivating DMCs. Generations X, Y (Millennials), Z, and the emerging Generation Alpha differ significantly in their digital fluency, environmental consciousness, brand expectations, and value systems (Parment, 2013; Djafarova, Bowes, 2021).

- Generation X tends to value authenticity and functional utility.
- Millennials (Y) emphasise experience, transparency, and purpose.
- Generation Z demands speed, inclusivity, and digital-native engagement.
- Generation Alpha is projected to amplify further expectations of personalisation, sustainability, and AI-enabled services.

These generational dynamics require not only new marketing communications strategies but adaptive brand architectures, fluid value propositions, and innovative customer experiences (Bolton et al., 2013). Static brand positioning and rigid marketing processes are increasingly obsolete. Generational shifts are not merely demographic trends but tectonic transformations in consumer logics that necessitate a reconfiguration of marketing infrastructures.

Whereas operational marketing capabilities are oriented toward short-term responsiveness, DMCs require a forward-looking strategic posture and corporate foresight plays a foundational role. Corporate foresight enables organisations to anticipate discontinuous change, envision alternative futures, prepare for long-term adaptation, create innovation capability, and be adaptive and agile solutions (Gordon et al., 2020, p. 22; Rohrbeck, Kum, 2018).

Foresight-informed marketing enables the identification of emerging consumer needs and the simulation of future generational behaviours, which is critical when planning for product development, digital innovation, and brand strategy five to ten years ahead (Vecchiato, Roveda,

2010; Haarhaus, Liening, 2020). Without such foresight, firms risk short-termism, leading to incremental innovation and brand stagnation. Strategic foresight is not an auxiliary process but a cognitive infrastructure upon which dynamic marketing capabilities must be built (Rohrbeck, Battistella, Huizingh, 2015). Foresight capabilities shape the learning and sensing mechanisms that feed into DMCs. The scenario planning literature emphasises the role of future-oriented narratives in stimulating strategic marketing conversations and organisational agility (Wright et al., 2013; Slaughter, 1997).

Absent long-term foresight, firms often rely on reactive adaptation driven by historical data and short-cycle trends. Limits the depth of insight into fundamental shifts such as the transformation of generational values or the convergence of digital and social platforms. Moreover, operational marketing capabilities, though useful in stable environments, are ill-equipped to address radical discontinuities, such as generational redefinitions of trust, loyalty, and identity. This poses strategic risks as loss of brand relevance due to misalignment with emerging generational values; innovation inertia stemming from an overreliance on past market models, and decreased agility in response to societal or technological disruptions (Dartiguepeyrou, Saloff-Coste, 2024).

Corporate foresight mitigates these risks by embedding a long-term perspective into marketing strategy formulation, thereby enabling firms to not only adapt but thrive in the face of generational and systemic shifts.

As generational values evolve, business models and brand strategies must follow suit. Dynamic marketing capabilities, underpinned by foresight, facilitate the redesign of brand purposes, customer journeys, and engagement ecosystems. This requires continuous brand renewal to align with changing cultural narratives; modular business models that allow for rapid recomposition and cross-generational segmentation strategies informed by foresight scenarios. Organisations that institutionalise foresight into their marketing functions are better equipped to lead rather than follow cultural and technological shifts (Danko et al., 2018).

2.3. Corporate Foresight and Generational Change in Brand Management

Brand management has traditionally centred around differentiation, positioning, and the creation of perceived customer value. However, in increasingly dynamic and generationally fragmented markets, the effectiveness of static brand strategies is eroding. Today's competitive brand landscape demands not only operational excellence and customer-centricity but also the capability to anticipate and adapt to long-term sociocultural transformations – especially those stemming from generational shifts (Kapferer, 2012; Keller, 2020).

Strategic foresight, traditionally viewed as a tool for long-term planning, has evolved into a core marketing capability underpinning effective brand management. It highlights how companies that actively scan for emerging consumer trends, forecast evolving generational values, and prepare for technological and communicative disruptions are better positioned to

build enduring brand equity and maintain relevance in competitive markets (Rohrbeck, Kum, 2018; Beverland et al., 2007).

Brand management has evolved from a communication-centric paradigm to a strategic function embedded within value-creation ecosystems (Keller, Brexendorf, 2019). Brands are no longer seen merely as identifiers but as dynamic assets that shape customer experiences and influence long-term consumer loyalty (Aaker, 1996; Iglesias, Ind, Alfaro, 2013). Central to this evolution is the understanding that brand value is co-created and constantly renegotiated in response to cultural and generational change (Louro, Cunha, 2001). Therefore, effective brand strategies must be continuously refreshed through insight into shifting values, identity constructs, and consumption patterns across cohorts.

Generational cohorts, such as Generation X, Millennials (also known as Generation Y), Generation Z, and the emerging Generation Alpha, differ fundamentally in their digital habits, social expectations, and attitudes toward brands (Bolton et al., 2013; Twenge, 2017). These differences are not transient trends but systemic shifts that demand a more nuanced segmentation and differentiated brand positioning. Millennials prioritise authenticity, purpose, and experiential value. Generation Z expects personalisation, transparency, and alignment with social justice. Generation Alpha is growing up with AI, immersive tech, and ultra-personalised media. The implication for brand managers is clear: a one-size-fits-all positioning strategy is no longer viable. Successful firms must utilise generational insights as a foundation for ongoing brand innovation and the customisation of value propositions (Schewe, Meredith, 2006; Djafarova, Bowes, 2021).

Strategic foresight refers to an organisation's structured ability to explore, anticipate, and act upon future developments in its environment (Rohrbeck, Battistella, Huizingh, 2015). In the context of strategic foresight, brand management extends beyond trend analysis, becoming a capability that underpins marketing agility. Key foresight-driven brand management practices include, among others:

- early detection of consumer and cultural trends (Heger, Rohrbeck, 2012),
- anticipation of shifts in consumer-brand relationships (Witczak, 2018; Beverland et al., 2007),
- proactive adaptation to new technologies and communication channels (Wang et al., 2019),
- building brand equity that is resilient to change (Aaker, Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Rather than reacting to market changes, foresight enables brand managers to design brands for the future – brands that are flexible, values-aligned, and able to maintain relevance across multiple generational lifecycles. Strategic foresight is not a forecasting method but a dynamic capability that enables firms to explore alternative futures and embed that knowledge into strategic brand positioning (Rohrbeck, Kum, 2018).

While many firms possess operational branding capabilities – the routines that support day-to-day brand communication and management – these are often insufficient in volatile contexts.

Without foresight capabilities, branding becomes retrospective and reactionary, vulnerable to disruption. Dynamic brand leaders, by contrast, embed foresight into:

- brand architecture design, allowing for scalable and adaptive brand portfolios,
- narrative development, aligning brand stories with emerging societal discourses,
- platform strategy, and anticipating shifts in consumer interaction with brands via AI, metaverse platforms, or decentralised technologies.

This aligns with the dynamic capabilities framework (Teece, 2007), wherein foresight enhances a company's ability to sense and seize brand-related opportunities before they become mainstream. Brands that fail to track generational expectations risk being seen as tone-deaf or obsolete. Foresight-informed brand management strengthens brand equity by:

- embedding future-proof value propositions aligned with emerging generational priorities,
- investing in long-term cultural relevance, not just short-term campaigns,
- fostering trust and emotional connection, which endure beyond specific touchpoints or platforms.

The importance of integrating strategic foresight into brand management seems to be a core marketing dynamic capability. As generational shifts accelerate and digital ecosystems become increasingly complex, brands must move beyond static identities and embrace foresight-driven agility to sustain relevance and value creation.

3. Philips corporate foresight background – company information, competitive brands, sources of information, and employed research method

Philips (Koninklijke Philips N.V., or Royal Philips NV) is a Dutch technology conglomerate with a global reach, headquartered in Amsterdam. The company has a vibrant history and has undergone a significant transformation – from a manufacturer of light bulbs to a leading company in the medical technology industry. Founded in 1891 in Eindhoven by Gerard Philips, initially to produce light bulbs, Philips has been a pioneer in many fields for decades. It invented, among other things, the cassette tape (1963) and the compact disc (with Sony, 1982), and was also a major player in the development of television and radio receivers. For many years, it was one of the world's largest manufacturers of consumer electronics (televisions, audio equipment, stereos). Philips gradually sold or spun off other divisions to focus on health. Philips focuses on innovations aimed at improving people's health and quality of life by creating impactful innovations that are intended to make the world healthier and more sustainable. Philips is an example of a company that has undergone a significant and highly successful transformation from a consumer electronics manufacturer to a leader in the health and personal care market. One of the company's key areas of focus is strengthening the Philips

brand's market position against its main competitors. To meet market challenges and effectively position Philips products and brands, it is essential to be future-oriented by building the capacity to shape corporate and marketing routines that will meet evolving customer needs. Hence, corporate foresight is the answer to building dynamic capabilities that will strengthen the Philips brand (stage – strategic intent and commitment).

In accordance with the corporate foresight methodology, in the second stage – scanning and data collection, Philips' management, including middle management staff (i.e. marketing, brand managers), identified potential sources of risk and areas of market volatility taking in consideration internal corporate's data and information, trends and forecasts collected from reports and expertises (i.e. PwC Global Consumer Insights Survey, EY Future Consumer Index, Kantar Global MONITOR / BrandZ Reports, Bloomberg Intelligence / Market Research Reports, McKinsey Global Private Markets Report 2025, IBISWorld – Industry Market Research & Statistics etc.).

At this stage, it has been decided to conduct direct research (survey) on a sample of 3000 respondents (Tab. 1) belonging to Generation Z in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Romania.

The direct research results played a pivotal role in the creation of Philips' corporate foresight building. Generation Z is not the core target group for Philips' product categories in the personal care market. Generation Z seems to be the future consumer of Philips products. Therefore, the primary objective of the research project was to prepare an information database about future customers. Based on the collected data and analyses of market and economic reports, corporate foresight has been generated that meets the expectations of Gen Z, who will occupy the target groups of Philips brands in the personal care market in the upcoming years. However, for this to be possible, the organisation must already have corporate foresight in place to meet customer expectations with an appropriate range of products and services in response to changing market conditions, including differences that may arise between the previously treated markets of the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania.

Table 1.
The survey sample distribution

Specification		Country			
		Total	Poland	Romania	Czech Republic
Country	%				
	Poland	33,3	100	0	0
	Romania	33,3	0	100	0
Gender	Czech Republic	33,3	0	0	100
	Male	50,0	50	50	50
	Female	50,0	50	50	50
Age	18-20	29,0	27	30	29
	21-24	39,0	39	40	39
	25-27	32,0	34	30	32
Place of living	Cities	33,0	33	35	30
	Towns and suburbs	30,0	31	26	34
	Rural areas	37,0	36	39	36
Total		100	100	100	100

Source: Philips direct research – internal organisation data.

Table 2.
Identified Gen Z clusters

Country	Aspirers	Mindfuls	Indulgers	Elementals	Discoverers
Poland	23%	31%	40%	42%	32%
Romania	51%	42%	17%	29%	28%
Czechia	26%	27%	43%	29%	40%

Aspirers: a strong orientation toward career advancement, social recognition, and status signalling; consumption is often aspirational, privileging prestige, symbolic value, and professional image-building over functional attributes.

Mindfuls: an emphasis on health, self-care, and family well-being, this group is value-conscious and sustainability-oriented; purchasing decisions prioritise long-term benefits, durability, and authenticity, aligning consumption closely with grounded, ethical lifestyles.

Indulgers: a hedonistic orientation toward pleasure, comfort, and material security. Indulgers are highly responsive to products that promise convenience, enjoyment, and aesthetic appeal, making them strong adopters of lifestyle and personal care innovations.

Elementals are guided by practicality, necessity, and functional utility, tending to value simplicity, affordability, and reliability; often resist unnecessary consumption and focus on essential goods and services.

Discoverers: curiosity and openness to novelty, this segment seeks exploration, experimentation, and new experiences; highly receptive to innovative, playful, and digitally interactive brand engagements, reflecting a more adventurous consumption ethos.

Source: Philips direct research – internal organisation data.

The consumer clusters were derived through the application of cluster analysis, a multivariate statistical technique commonly employed in marketing research to segment heterogeneous populations into more homogeneous subgroups. Using survey data on values, aspirations, and consumption behaviours, variables were standardised and subjected to a combination of hierarchical clustering (to determine the appropriate number of groups) and k-means partitioning (to refine membership allocation). This approach enabled the identification of five distinct clusters – Aspirers, Mindfuls, Indulgers, Elementals, and Discoverers – each representing coherent patterns of motivation and lifestyle orientation within Generation Z. The procedure ensures that intra-cluster similarity is maximised. At the same time, inter-cluster differences are preserved, thus enhancing the interpretive value of the segmentation for foresight and brand strategy development.

4. Gen Z Preferences and Values in the Personal Care Market – Brands Philips Corporate Foresight

Generation Z, those born from the mid-1990s to early 2010s, is rapidly emerging as a powerful consumer group. In Poland, this generation stands out for its digital fluency, economic awareness, and increasing influence over household purchasing decisions. To engage with Gen Z effectively, brands need a deep understanding of their core values, ambitions, behaviours, and decision-making patterns. Polish Gen Zs share a set of values that mix personal freedom with traditional anchors. Much like their peers in Czechia, they emphasise family, honesty, and the importance of enjoying life. Their Romanian counterparts, by contrast,

are more aligned with traditional ideals such as faith, defined gender roles, and a desire for recognition and status. For Polish Gen Z, enjoyment often means doing things simply for the joy of it, a mindset that influences both lifestyle and consumer behaviour.

In terms of aspirations, the top ambitions across Central and Eastern European countries are mainly aligned: financial independence, home ownership, the ability to travel, and professional success. In Poland, however, these ambitions are sometimes framed with a softer touch. While career progress remains essential, many young Poles express a desire for meaningful relationships and more free time, suggesting a greater emphasis on life balance compared to their Romanian peers. This generation is also financially cautious. The rising cost of living, healthcare affordability, and employment stability are among their biggest worries. As a result, Polish Gen Zs are savvy shoppers who look for value and practicality. Whether shopping for a grooming device or a household product, they carefully weigh product durability, cost-effectiveness, design, and brand reputation. Long-term savings and convenience often outweigh short-term appeal. Smartphones play a central role in their purchasing process. In Poland, two-thirds of Gen Zs shop via mobile devices, using them to compare prices, read reviews, check product availability, and locate stores. Their online habits extend to social media, where platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook dominate. Compared to Gen Z in Romania and the Czech Republic, young Poles are more engaged across a broader range of apps, making digital and mobile-first strategies essential.

When it comes to how they spend their free time, Polish Gen Zs enjoy a mix of digital and offline activities. Streaming content on platforms like Netflix and Spotify is popular, along with spending time outdoors or meeting friends face-to-face-something that's even more frequent in Czechia and among young women. Listening to music, doing chores, exercising, and gaming (especially among males) are also part of their routine. Roughly 40% of Polish Gen Zs meet up with friends weekly, highlighting the continued importance of real-world connections.

Living arrangements also offer insight into their lifestyle stage. Around half still live with their parents, primarily those in the 18-20 age group, while close to 40% live with a partner. Cohabitation is more common than marriage in Poland and the Czech Republic, unlike Romania, where formal marriage is more prevalent. About 20% of Polish Gen Zs are already parents, typically with one child, indicating early-stage family formation.

In terms of work and education, over 40% are employed, while roughly 20% are students. Another fifth manage to balance both, reflecting a generation already juggling multiple roles. Despite their concerns about the economy, most young Poles view their living conditions as stable: two-thirds say they live comfortably or average, while just 20% feel they're struggling. Compared to Romanians, fewer Polish Gen Zs describe themselves as affluent, which may suggest a different benchmark for comfort or financial success.

One of the most striking aspects of Polish Gen Z is their significant role in household decision-making. About 60% say they are the primary voice in choosing personal care items, with another 20% claiming significant influence even if someone else pays. This influence tends

to grow with age, emphasising the importance of capturing their attention early and building brand loyalty over time.

Within this generation, there are three main consumer groups. The largest is the "Indulgers", who make up 38% of Polish Gen Zs. These individuals prioritise pleasure, comfort, and material security, making them exceptionally responsive to beauty and personal care products. "Aspirers" comprising 17%, are career-focused and status-oriented. While they aspire to look good, they often feel conflicted about investing too much in their appearance. The "Mindfuls" at 21%, are more grounded in values such as health, self-care, and family well-being. They show strong intent to purchase grooming and oral care products.

For brands hoping to succeed with Gen Z in Poland, a clear strategy is essential. First, they must speak to Gen Z's desire for authenticity. Marketing that features real stories, user reviews, and relatable content will perform better than polished, corporate messaging. Personalisation, community engagement, and influencer partnerships can go a long way in establishing trust.

Second, brands should encourage creativity and self-expression. Products should not only deliver functional benefits but also enable users to feel more confident and authentic. Campaigns that focus on empowerment and lifestyle enhancement resonate well with Polish Gen Zs. Third, digital visibility is critical. Social media campaigns, YouTube content, and mobile-optimised experiences must be central to any marketing plan. Referral programs, SEO optimisation, and real-time customer interaction, especially on review platforms, are powerful tools to build credibility and engagement. Lastly, products that support family use or shared routines can foster deeper emotional connections. Highlighting durability, warranty, and cost-effectiveness—especially in comparison to pricier alternatives – can help reassure cautious buyers. At the same time, injecting fun and excitement into branding can help distinguish companies from one another.

Gen Z in Poland is a unique blend of traditional values and modern behaviours. They are thoughtful, digitally immersed, and eager to express themselves while managing financial realities. Their consumer power is already significant and will only grow. Brands that understand their mindset, respect their values, and meet them on their preferred platforms are well-positioned to win their trust – and their loyalty.

The comparative analysis of Generation Z consumer profiles across Poland, Romania, and Czechia reveals distinct attitudinal and behavioural orientations that carry significant implications for brand strategy.

In Poland, the generational landscape is characterised by a high share of Indulgers (40%) alongside a substantial proportion of Mindfuls (31%). This combination indicates a balanced consumer base that values both pleasure and self-care, while remaining anchored in family-oriented and health-conscious values. For brands, this suggests that market positioning should emphasise authenticity, lifestyle balance, and long-term value creation, addressing both emotional and practical needs.

In contrast, Romania is marked by a predominance of Aspirers (51%), reflecting a consumer orientation that is career-driven, status-conscious, and recognition-seeking. The comparatively lower presence of Indulgers (17%) highlights a generational focus less on hedonistic consumption and more on social mobility and professional image-building. Effective foresight strategies in this context require brands to appeal to prestige, ambition, and societal recognition, often through premium positioning and symbolic consumption cues.

Meanwhile, Czechia displays a markedly different structure, with a strong representation of both Indulgers (43%) and Discoverers (40%). These signals a generational ethos that prioritises fun, exploration, and enjoyment, indicating greater openness to experimentation than observed in Poland or Romania. Here, brand foresight should highlight playfulness, creative engagement, and exploratory consumption experiences, leveraging digital interactivity and lifestyle-driven campaigns.

Taken together, these findings underscore the heterogeneity of Central and Eastern European Gen Z markets, despite shared regional histories and socio-economic transformations. For multinational firms such as Philips, foresight-driven brand strategies must therefore move beyond uniform regional approaches and instead be calibrated to national consumer psychologies: emphasising value and authenticity in Poland, prestige and recognition in Romania, and exploratory engagement in Czechia.

The foresight analysis of Philips' personal care and beauty technologies across Poland, Czechia, and Romania highlights the extent to which Gen Z consumer clusters shape differentiated brand opportunities.

For Philips Sonicare (oral care), the Polish market demonstrates a strong resonance with the Mindfuls, who prioritise health, self-care, and family well-being. Financial caution among Polish Gen Z emphasises the importance of durability and preventive value, while peer reviews and mobile-first testimonials play a central role in trust formation. In contrast, Czech consumers, with a higher proportion of Indulgers, associate oral care not only with health but also with confidence and lifestyle enjoyment, requiring branding that conveys social benefits and a sense of fun. In Romania, where Aspirers dominate, oral care products are better positioned as enablers of professional image and status, with premium variants likely to perform well.

For Philips Series portfolio (grooming and shaving devices), Polish consumers, particularly Indulgers, value comfort, convenience, and cost-effectiveness, linking grooming to confidence and self-expression. In Czechia, grooming is understood more as an arena for playful experimentation, with opportunities to leverage influencers and socially engaging campaigns. Romanian consumers, however, emphasise grooming as an element of professional recognition and prestige, suggesting the appeal of premium lines and executive positioning.

The Philips OneBlade device aligns closely with younger Polish Indulgers, who appreciate versatility, style, and time-saving solutions. In Czechia, its flexibility resonates strongly with Discoverers, who prize experimentation and playful self-expression, making gamified

and creative digital engagement highly relevant. Romanian consumers are likely to interpret OneBlade as a modern and stylish tool that signals ambition, providing an accessible entry point into premium grooming culture.

For Philips Lumea (hair removal devices), Polish consumers from both Indulger and Mindful segments value comfort and self-care. Still, they are cautious spenders, making it necessary to highlight long-term savings relative to salon treatments. Czech consumers can be reached through narratives of freedom, exploration, and the playful integration of beauty technology into daily routines. By contrast, in Romania, Lumea is most effectively positioned as a symbol of sophistication, elegance, and status, benefiting from premium branding strategies.

Taken together, the foresight exercise reveals distinct national orientations: Poland reflects a balance of practicality, authenticity, and lifestyle management; Czechia emphasises fun, exploration, and creative self-expression; and Romania prioritises status, recognition, and premium aspiration.

These findings illustrate the necessity for brand strategies to be locally adapted within Central and Eastern Europe, even when targeting the same generational cohort.

5. Conclusions, limitations, and future research

The findings substantiate the proposition that corporate foresight operates as a strategic capability that undergirds dynamic marketing by linking weak-signal sensing and scenario reasoning to concrete brand choices. The Gen Z segmentation reveals distinct national psychographic profiles with direct implications for brand orchestration.

Theoretically, the study demonstrates how foresight-informed segmentation can mediate between macro uncertainty and micro positioning, operationalising DMCs through country-specific brand narratives and portfolio choices. Managerially, it offers a templated process – from scanning to clustering to scenario-linked positioning – that multinational marketers can adapt to other categories and regions.

Several limitations temper these conclusions. The reliance on a single wave of survey responses constrains causal inference and may be susceptible to common method variance and self-presentation biases. Psychographic clusters can drift over time, and cross-country equivalence of measurement, while designed for, cannot be fully guaranteed without formal invariance testing. The analysis focuses on three CEE countries and one corporate context (Philips, personal care). Generalisability to other industries, age cohorts, or regions is limited.

The translation from foresight insights to execution (media mix, pricing, retail channel, service design) is not evaluated, leaving open questions about organisational contingencies and capability maturity.

Future studies should follow the same respondents or comparable cohorts across multiple waves to observe how psychographic clusters evolve ("cluster drift") as macro conditions shift – e.g., inflation spikes, labour-market shocks, or platform algorithm changes. Such designs would allow managers to test the durability of foresight-informed positioning and to separate transient sentiment from structural value change. To ensure interpretability across countries and waves, measurement invariance testing (configural, metric, and scalar) should be implemented, so that observed differences reflect substantive change rather than instrument artefacts.

A robust research programme should integrate surveys with behavioural data (e-commerce logs, retail sell-out, usage telemetry), digital trace analytics (social listening, creator ecosystems, app event streams), and qualitative inquiry (ethnography, netnography, in-depth interviews). This triangulation would link stated motives to revealed behaviours, surface the cultural meanings that underlie cluster membership, and detect weak signals that precede measurable behavioural change. Mixed-method designs can also reveal contextual moderators (e.g., local norms, price sensitivities, platform cultures) that are often invisible in single-method studies. The limitations of the presented foresight approach stem from the absence of experimental or longitudinal research designs, which constrain the ability to draw causal inferences. Incorporating panel data or field experiments in future research could substantially enhance the credibility and robustness of foresight-based brand management recommendations.

To move beyond correlation, the research program should embed randomised field experiments in live channels (e-commerce, CRM, social platforms) that test foresight-derived propositions – such as premium vs. playful frames, status vs. authenticity cues, or prevention vs. enjoyment benefits. Outcomes should include both proximal (e.g., click-through rates, engagement) and distal (e.g., conversions, repeat purchases, retention, customer lifetime value – CLV) metrics. Analytically, models should estimate heterogeneous treatment effects by cluster, country, and context (e.g., price bands, device type), clarifying for whom, where, and when foresight-informed strategies are most effective.

Future research should operationalise and validate corporate foresight (CF) maturity and dynamic marketing capability (DMC) strength at the firm or business-unit level, capturing scanning routines, sensemaking practices, scenario use, and learning mechanisms. Structural models can then test whether CF and DMCs mediate the relationship between foresight practices and market/financial performance (brand equity lifts, innovation yield, margin resilience). Multi-source designs – combining leadership surveys, process audits, and performance panels – would help disentangle capability effects from favourable market conditions.

By embedding rigorous foresight practices within marketing systems – and by validating their effects on consumer behaviour and company performance – future work can consolidate the role of corporate foresight as a core dynamic marketing capability, enabling brands to sustain cultural relevance and economic resilience amid accelerating generational and technological change.

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