



## **Gen Z Offers Significant Opportunity for Contact Lens Adoption, According to New Research**

Contact Lens Institute Previews Latest “See Tomorrow” Data at Vision Expo West;  
Identifies Gen Z-Specific Purchase Drivers, Including Importance of Social Values

**WASHINGTON, D.C., September 15, 2025**—New consumer research from [Contact Lens Institute™ \(CLI\)](#) indicates substantial opportunity for increased contact lens adoption by Gen Z, as well as identifying purchase drivers that the eye care community can employ to encourage use. The data indicates an eight percent difference in Gen Z contact lens wear (35%) compared to Millennials (43%), with Gen X (22%) close to historic norms.

The findings—which will be the focus of a main stage panel at Vision Expo West this week—provide a sneak peek at expansive cross-generational insights in development as part of CLI’s [See.Tomorrow initiative](#). CLI surveyed 1,308 vision corrected respondents in the U.S. and Canada during July and August 2025 across three generations: Gen Z (ages 15-28), Millennials (ages 29-44), and Gen X (ages 45-60).

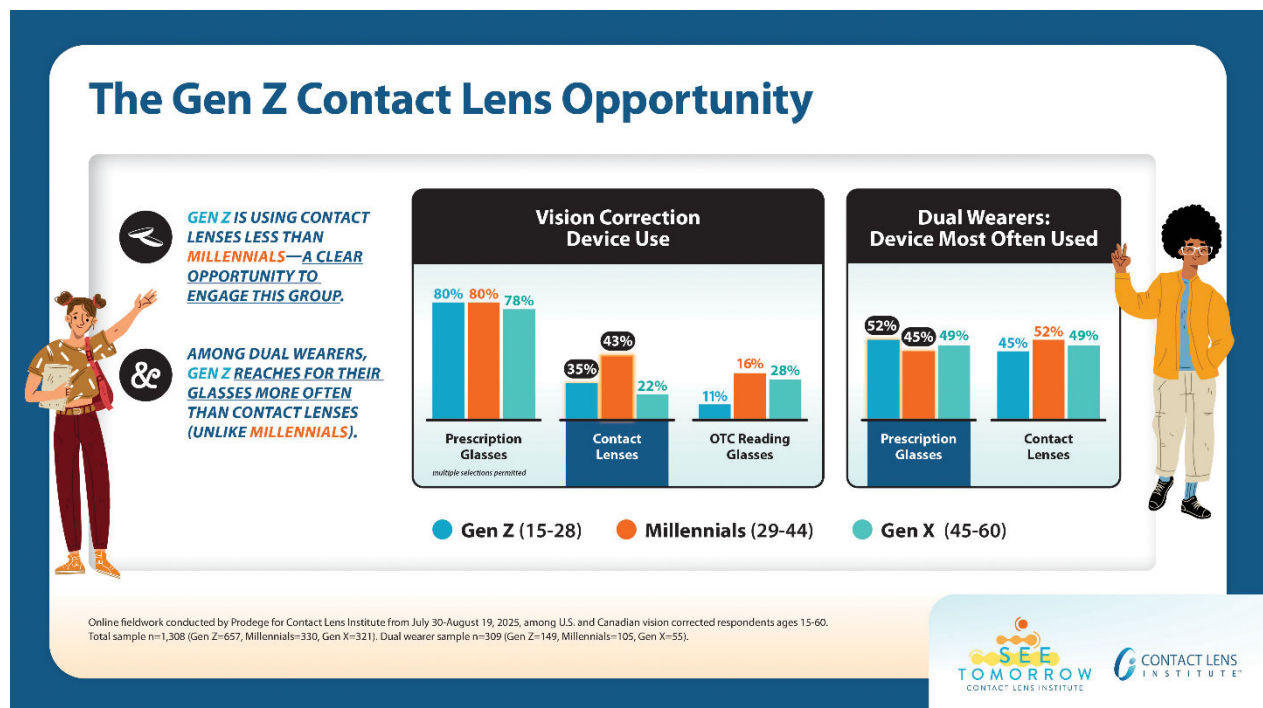
“Since 2021, our See.Tomorrow program has given the eye care community unique information and perspectives to help grow contact lens prescribing. To our knowledge, never before has work of this scale been conducted for contact lenses that also has implications for the entire eye care sector,” said Stan Rogaski, CLI’s executive director. “The takeaways can influence how practice teams and retailers shape their communications with current and potential patients alike. For instance, personal mindsets of Gen X owners or Millennial managers may not always align with the Gen Z customer, prompting new approaches.”

### Gen Z Upside

Millennial reporting of significant contact lens wear (43%) paints a picture of what may be possible with Gen Z; the eight-point gap represents considerable unmet upside in patient volumes, practice revenue, and wearer lifestyle benefits. So too does another measure, which indicated that among

dual wearers (i.e., patients who use both glasses and contact lenses), Millennials use their contact lenses seven percent more often than Gen Z (52% to 45%, respectively).

Beyond statistically significant differences that show Millennials appreciating contact lenses' comfort and ease of use more than Gen Z, pandemic-influenced short-term changes in practice visit frequency and prescribing may have had a greater long-term impact on a younger population. Reasoning for the variation will be more deeply explored in follow-up reports as data continues to be analyzed.



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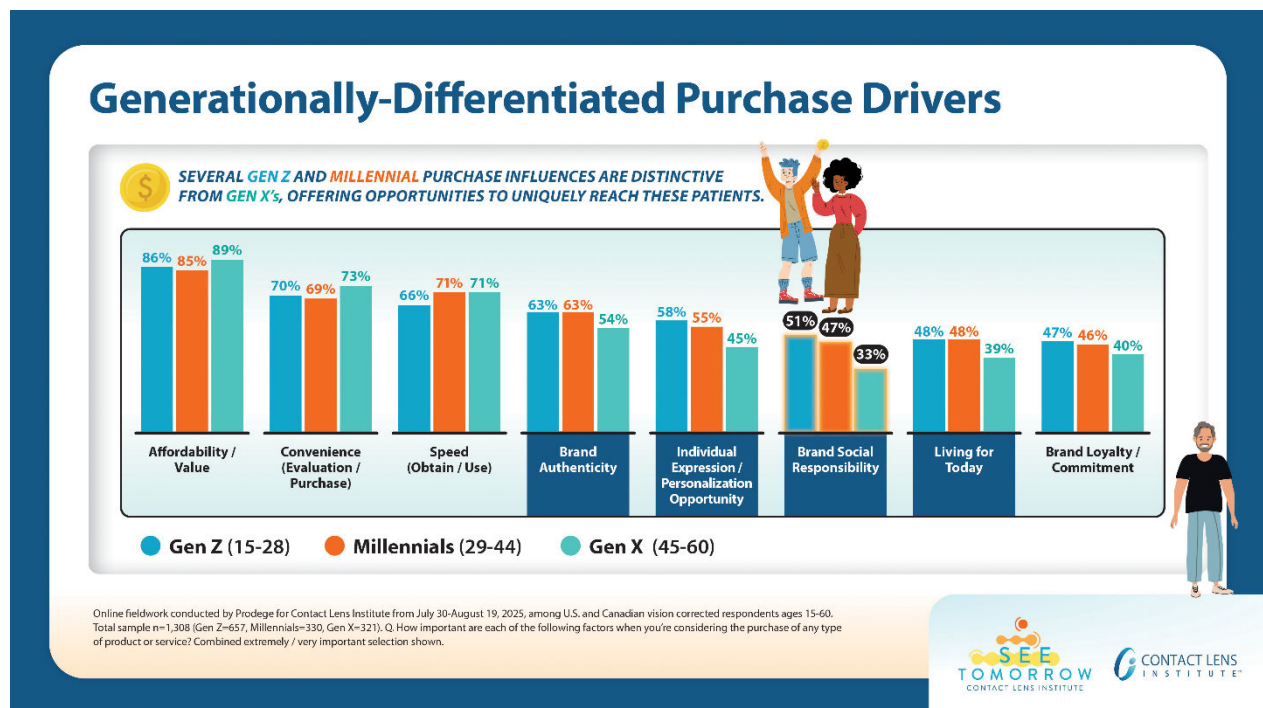
### Distinct Purchase Drivers

In an attempt to understand how Gen Z may be distinctive from older populations when it comes to choosing a product or service, CLI asked respondents to indicate the importance of eight values-centered factors in their decision-making, whether for eye care or otherwise.

The three values ranked highest across all ages: affordability (85-89%), convenience of purchase (69-73%), and speed to obtain the product (66-71%). This infers that the eye care community should

continue to optimize for these, knowing they'll be received positively by the vast majority of patients and customers.

However, four values demonstrated higher influence among Gen Z and Millennials versus Gen X: brand authenticity (Z: 63%, M: 63%, X: 54%), individual expression and personalization opportunities (Z: 58%, M: 55%, X: 45%), brand social responsibility (Z: 51%, M: 47%, X: 33%), and living for today (Z: 48%, M: 48%, X: 39%). All four present areas for practices to tailor their communications and marketing activities to better engage younger populations.



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### The Importance of Social Responsibility

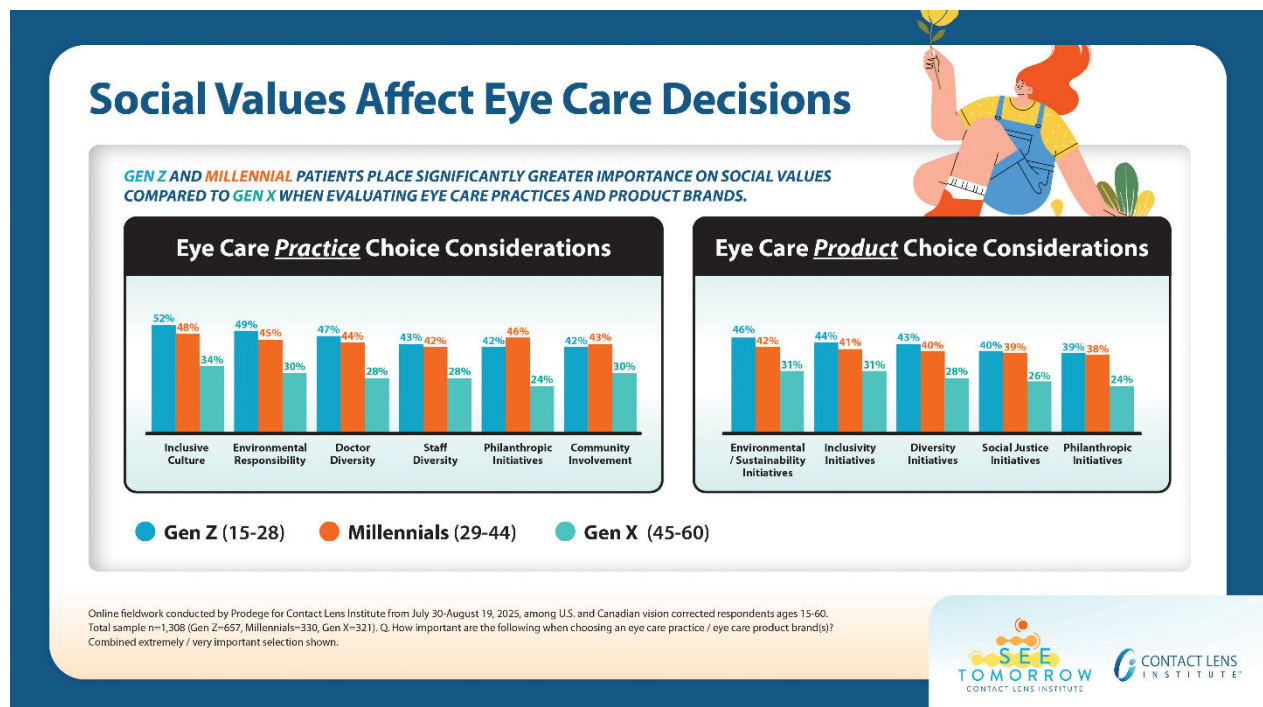
During [Vision Expo West](#), CLI is diving deeper on the social responsibility factor, since it exhibited the greatest variability between Gen Z and Gen X—an 18-point span. The CLI survey asked all respondents about the importance of particular social values on their choice of eye care practice and eye care products, revealing multiple opportunities for the eye care community to lean into existing and new initiatives.

When it comes to choosing eye care practices, about one in two Gen Z respondents said that inclusive culture (52%), environmental responsibility (49%), and doctor diversity (47%) were extremely or very important, with staff diversity, philanthropic initiatives, and community involvement ranking slightly lower (43%, 42%, and 42%, respectively).

For eye care products, environmental/sustainability (46%), inclusivity (44%), and diversity (43%) initiatives ranked highest, followed by social justice (40%) and philanthropic initiatives (39%).

While Millennial responses generally mirrored Gen Z, although to a slightly lesser extent, Gen X responses hovered from the mid-20% to low 30% range.

“Gen Z is known for being more socially connected than their older peers, and our research suggests that this also affects how they make eye care decisions. In many cases, practices and brands can amplify existing programs and efforts to highlight this shared value. At the same time, they should realize that these social values may not resonate as much with Gen X, so communication with older consumers may need to focus on other factors,” said Rogaski.



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[The Main Stage at Vision Expo West](#)

Four CLI Visionaries will take to the Vision Expo West main stage on Thursday, September 18, from 2:30 – 3 pm PT to discuss the initial findings. [Shifting Focus; How the Next Generation Sees Contact Lens Wear and Eye Care](#) features Harbir Sian, OD, the co-owner of Clarity Eyecare and Highstreet Eyecare Center in Vancouver, B.C., Jenn Seymour, LDO, NCLE-AC, ABO-AC, president of the Opticians Association of Nevada; Andrew Bruce, LDO, ABOM, NCLEM, FCLSA, the founder of ASB Opticianry Education Services in Vancouver, Wash.; and Jade Coats, OD, FAAO, the 2025 Theia Awards of Excellence Young OD of the Year co-honoree.

The panel will double as a taping for [The 20/20 Podcast](#), hosted by Dr. Sian, with the episode to air in the coming weeks.

CLI expects to release additional data from the cross-generational survey for the American Academy of Optometry annual meeting in mid-October, followed by publication of a comprehensive report in November.



The graphic features a purple-to-pink gradient background with a city skyline at night. In the top right, the 'vision expo' logo is displayed. Below it is the 'CONTACT LENS INSTITUTE' logo. To the right of the speakers is a circular logo for 'THE 20/20 PODCAST'. The bottom section is a dark blue/purple box with white text.

**vision expo**

**CONTACT LENS INSTITUTE™**

**THE 20/20 PODCAST**

**Harbir Sian, OD**  
Host, The 20/20 Podcast

**Jenn Seymour, LDO**  
President, Opticians Assoc of Nevada

**Jade Coats, OD**  
2025 Theia Young OD of the Year

**Andrew Bruce, LDO**  
Founder, ASB Opticianry Education

**RESHAPE YOUR PRACTICE WITH ALL NEW CONSUMER DATA**

**Shifting Focus:**  
**How Gen Z Sees Contact Lenses & Eyecare**

🕒 Thursday, September 18, 2:30 - 3 pm PT  
📍 Vision Expo West Main Stage, Las Vegas

Contact Lens Institute advances the latest innovations in safe and effective contact lens and lens care products and services that provide unique benefits to patients while satisfying the evolving needs of eye care professionals. CLI undertakes activities that properly assess, enhance, promote and balance contact lens and lens care industry welfare and growth, including the safe use of products in the marketplace. Its members include Alcon, Bausch + Lomb, CooperVision, and Johnson & Johnson Vision. For more information, visit [contactlensinstitute.org](https://contactlensinstitute.org).

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