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Research: As Gen Z Pulls Back From Social Media, TV, Streaming & Cinema Are Filling The Void...Creating A Unique Opportunity For Brands

—Plus: 58% Of Gen Z Prefer Free Ad-Supported Content Over Paid Ad-Free Content—

New York, NY (October 22, 2024)—The Video Advertising Bureau (VAB) today released [*Disconnect to Reconnect: How Real-Life Shared Experiences Are the Antidote for Social Media Isolation Among Gen Z*](#). An in-depth analysis of the extent to which Gen Z is stepping back from major social platforms and instead embracing real-life shared experiences, the report also examines how, by harnessing the deep emotional connections such experiences ignite, brands can develop more impactful campaigns that resonate with Gen Z and drive meaningful consumer engagement.

“To escape the increasingly negative impact of social media on their emotional well-being, Gen Z has been seeking out more real-life shared experiences that create positive and sociable activities among friends and family,” said Jason Wiese, Senior VP, Director of Strategic Insights, VAB. “Shared experiences—like watching TV and streaming content and going to the cinema with others—provide Gen Z with a sense of community and excitement, standing in contrast to the isolation of social media. High-quality premium video content profoundly influences Gen Z’s mood and behavior, providing brands with a unique opportunity to engage these highly attentive audiences.”

Among the report’s findings:

- **65%** of Gen Z are concerned about malware, viruses, buffering and other issues on social media, and **43%** often find themselves feeling annoyed or frustrated with the video ad experience on those platforms. (*Source: VAB custom research*)
- **58%** of Gen Z prefer streaming free video content with ads instead of paying for a subscription without ads, while **38%** say the ability to access free content in exchange for ads has motivated them to watch or sign up for a free ad-supported streaming service. (*Sources: VAB analysis of MRI Simmons 2024 August Cord Evolution Study & VAB custom research, respectively*)
- **58%** of Gen Z don’t trust the advertising they see in social media. (*Source: Marigold, 2024 U.S. Consumer Trends Index*)
- **83%** of Gen Z have taken steps to distance themselves from social media. (*Source: Harris Poll via EMARKETER*)
- Total time spent on social media by 18-to-24 year olds is down by **25%** in 2024 compared to 2023 (*Source: VAB custom analysis of Comscore Media Matrix data*)
- Gen Z audiences use TV and streaming as a primary way to foster shared experiences, as **43%** say that when watching TV or streaming, they enjoy the quality time they share with friends and family. (*Source: VAB custom research*)
- TV, streaming and cinema all create positive vibes which makes people more inclined to purchase products they see advertised, as a positive mindset leads to an **18%** increase in brand favorability and **35%** increase in purchase intent. (*Source: Hearst, Power of Positivity, 2023*)

Read the full report [here](#).

ABOUT VAB

The Video Advertising Bureau (VAB)—whose members include the national TV networks alongside a broader community of influential media companies—plays a dual role in the video advertising industry. VAB is fiercely advocating for the changes that bring about a more innovative and transparent marketplace. VAB also provides the insights and thought leadership that enables marketers to develop

business-driving marketing strategies. Visit VAB online and access its continuously growing content library at thevab.com.

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