

AN ADVANTAGE SOLUTIONS PULSE SURVEY

# GEN Z WANTS PRODUCT SAMPLES — WITH A FEW CHANGES, PLEASE

Teens and young adults weigh in on favorite and most influential samples

Most Gen Z consumers enjoy receiving product samples, which are often a deciding factor in their purchase decisions, according to a new survey of more than 1,000 consumers ages 13 to 25 by Advantage Solutions. What's more, six in 10 teens and young adults surveyed say they're likely to share a positive experience with a product sample on social media.

Food samples are most enjoyed by Gen Z consumers, followed by beauty items, beverages and personal care products. Asked to select the Top 2 product categories for sampling, Gen Z females favor food (51%) and beauty (48%) items, while males are more likely to enjoy food (60%) and beverage (47%) samples. Females are more likely than males to enjoy personal care product samples (30% vs. 21%).

Samples of household products and, to a slightly lesser extent, health and wellness products, appeal to female and male Gen Z consumers equally.

## Types of Product Gen Z Consumers Enjoy Sampling

(Respondents selected Top 2)

	By age				
	All	Female	Male	13-17	18-25
Food <sup>1</sup>	54%	51%	61%	69%	52%
Beauty <sup>2</sup>	38%	48%	13%	39%	38%
Beverages <sup>3</sup>	32%	26%	47%	53%	30%
Personal care <sup>4</sup>	27%	30%	21%	21%	28%
Household products <sup>5</sup>	19%	19%	19%	8%	20%
Health and wellness <sup>6</sup>	15%	14%	17%	5%	16%
None of the above	8%	6%	11%	2%	8%

<sup>1</sup>Snacks, candy, ingredients, etc. <sup>2</sup>Cosmetics, skin care, hair care, nail care, fragrance, etc. <sup>3</sup>Waters, kombucha, juices, soda, etc. <sup>4</sup>Razors, oral care, feminine products, etc. <sup>5</sup>Paper products, laundry care, dishwashing care, etc. <sup>6</sup>Vitamins, supplements, over-the-counter medication, etc.

Advantage Solutions survey of 1,107 consumers aged 13 to 25, average age 22, including 780 self-identified females and 327 self-identified males, July 12-13, 2022.

Sampling is a very effective way to influence Gen Z purchases, as seven in 10 respondents say food samples are very influential or “often a deciding factor” in post-sampling purchases. Two-thirds of female teens and young adults are swayed by beauty samples and nearly 60% of males say beverage samples are often a deciding factor in their purchases.

In the personal care category, females are significantly more likely than males to be swayed by a sample.

Beverage samples are much more likely to be enjoyed and influence purchases made by teens than young adults, while Gen Z shoppers 18 and older are more likely to say they enjoy and are influenced by personal care, household and health and wellness product samples.



### Categories in Which Samples Significantly Influence Purchase Decisions

(Respondents selected all that apply)

	By age				
	All	Female	Male	13-17	18-25
Food <sup>1</sup>	68%	67%	70%	72%	67%
Beverages <sup>2</sup>	55%	53%	58%	62%	54%
Beauty <sup>3</sup>	54%	65%	29%	49%	55%
Personal care <sup>4</sup>	50%	55%	40%	40%	51%
Household products <sup>5</sup>	39%	41%	35%	31%	40%
Health and wellness <sup>6</sup>	34%	37%	29%	24%	36%
None of the above	9%	8%	12%	9%	9%

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**“I’ve had samples I feel didn’t come with enough [and] was unable to decide if the product was worth buying or not.”**

S.H, male, age 25



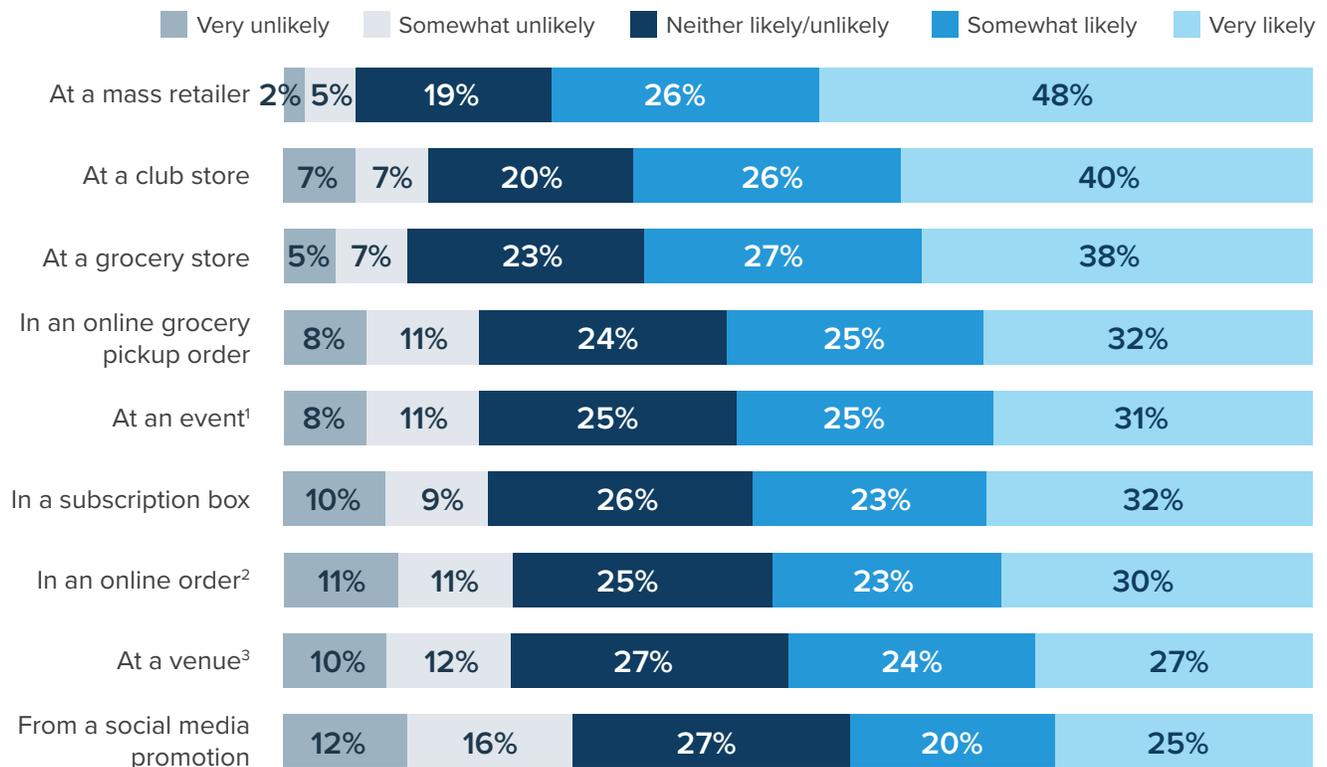
## “Offer a coupon to customers who review the samples (good or bad reviews).”

E.N., female, age 24

While Gen Z consumers are most likely to try a sample while at a physical store, samples are so popular among this generation that half or more say they're likely to try one nearly anywhere and any way they're offered. Nearly three-fourths say they're very/somewhat likely to try a sample while at a mass retailer store like Target or Walmart and two-thirds are likely to try a sample at a club store or grocery store. Close to six in 10 are likely to sample a product tucked into an online grocery pickup order.

Outside brick-and-mortar store locations, 56% say they'd be somewhat/very likely to try a sample at a concert, festival, sporting event or other event and just over half would take a free product sample offered at a health club, doctor's office or other venue. About as many say they would likely try samples that are delivered with a subscription box (55%) or an online order for clothing or something other than groceries (53%).

### Where Gen Z Is Likely to Try a Free Product Sample



<sup>1</sup> Concert, festival, sporting event, etc. <sup>2</sup> Kohls.com, H&M, Aerie, PacSun, etc. <sup>3</sup> Health club, spa/salon, doctor's office, etc.

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After trying a sample, Gen Z consumers are very likely to purchase the product. Simply liking the sample is enough to motivate six in 10 Gen Z consumers to purchase the product (females are more likely than males to buy a product after liking a sample). Almost as many are motivated to purchase a product they've sampled if they deem it a good value.

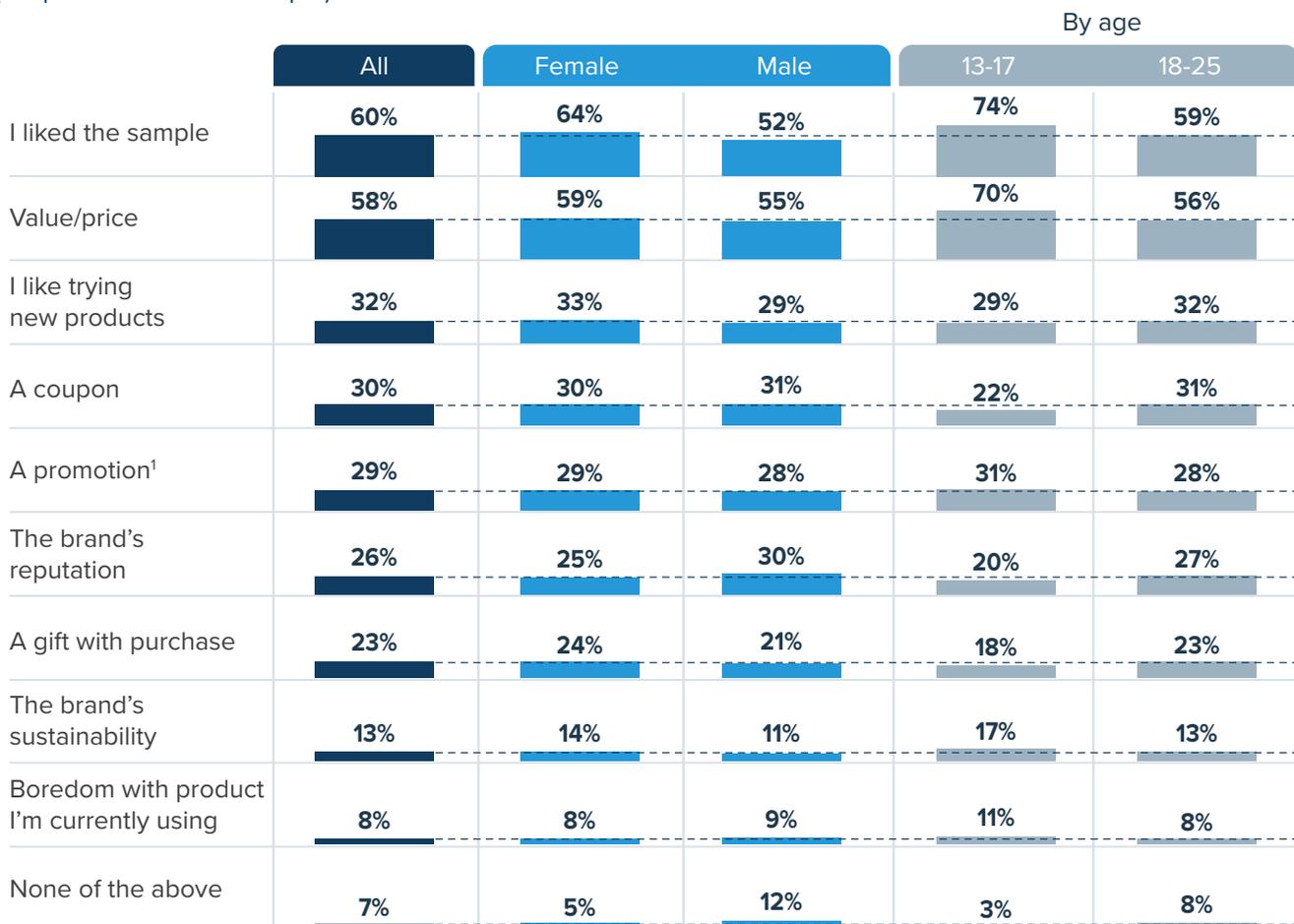
About one-third of Gen Z shoppers said the desire to try new products is one of the top motivators for buying a product after sampling it. Three in 10 are motivated by discounts, such as coupons and buy-one-get-one-free promotions. About one-fourth say a brand's reputation is a Top 3 influencer for buying a brand after trying a sample size.

Nearly two-thirds of females (just half of males) say liking a sample will motivate them to make a purchase. Twice as many males as females (12% vs. 5%) say none of these are motivators to buy a product they've sampled.

More teenage consumers than young adults say they're motivated to purchase a product when they like the sample (74% vs. 59%) or when presented with a good value/price (70% vs. 56%). Compared to their younger cohorts, more adult Gen Z consumers say a coupon for the sampled item or a brand's reputation are top motivators for converting a trial to a purchase.

### What Motivates Gen Z to Purchase a Product After Sampling

(Respondents selected Top 3)



<sup>1</sup>Buy one, get one free, etc.

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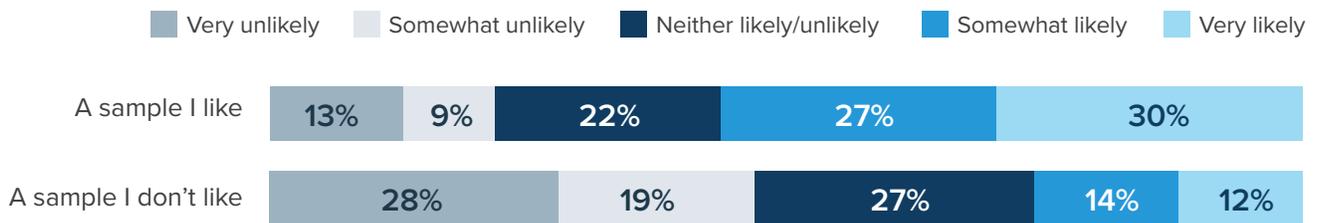
## “Give a special discount with samples to encourage buyers.”

J.A., male, age 24

As social-media savvy Gen Z consumers follow favorite brands and search for shopping inspiration, they’re often sharing their positive sampling experiences on Instagram, TikTok and other platforms (57% say they are likely to do this, and half of those are “very likely”). They are much less likely to share an experience with a sample they didn’t like.

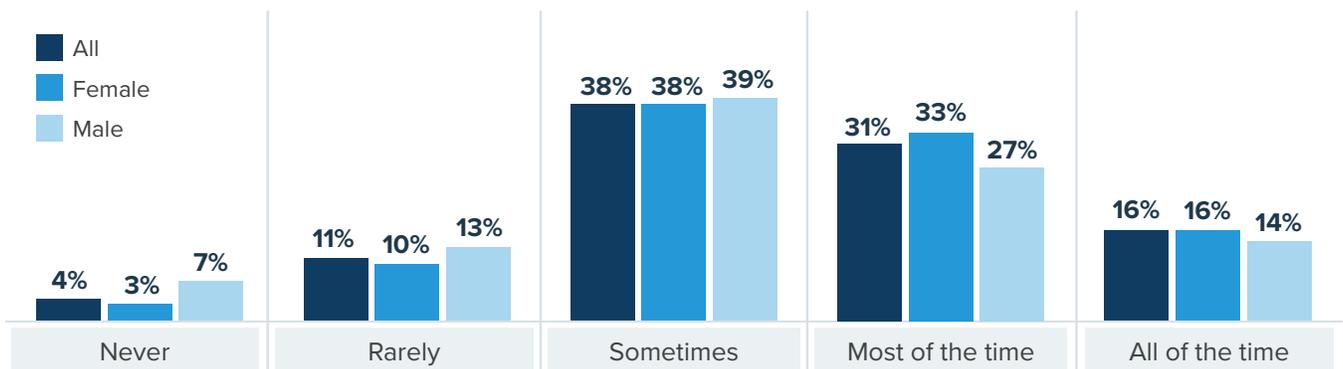


### Sharing Sampling Experiences on Social Media



Just as Gen Z consumers share their thoughts on products they try and buy, they’re influenced by others’ reviews. Nearly half (47%) say their buying decisions are usually or always influenced by product reviews. Males are slightly less likely to be influenced by reviews; one-fifth say product reviews rarely or never influence their buying decisions.

### Influenced by Product Reviews



## “Samples are more powerful than reviews.”

P.H., female, age 21

# “I think they should go to more events like marathons and farmers markets.”

H.H., female, age 18

Not every sample received is tried, of course. But the lifecycle of a sample doesn't necessarily end with the recipient. Three-fourths of Gen Z consumers pass unwanted or “not relevant” samples on to a friend or family member and one-fourth will donate or recycle them.

## The Fate of Unwanted Samples

(Respondents selected all that apply)



Asked to share their advice for ways companies can improve their sampling programs, Gen Z shoppers asked for more samples, more diverse samples, larger samples, more information about the product they're sampling, more sustainable packaging and discounts for purchasing after trial. Here are a few of their comments:

**“Provide a wider variety of things to sample instead of just one item.”** N.M., female, age 22

**“Companies can collaborate with big retailers to provide sample boxes to give out to customers. And this could be a seasonal thing.”** H.L., female, age 25

**“Making the packaging of samples more sustainable would probably improve the buyer's opinion of the company and influence their decision to buy the product.”** A.T., female, age 22

**“Provide more information about the product and the sample provided, how to use the product, if there are any risks associated with it, have reviews posted, have good customer service and good prices.”** M.B., male, age 15

**“I wish more companies would actually send out samples by mail. It's not easy to do a rebate, so I avoid those.”** V.R., male, age 24

Gen Z consumers are open to trying — and buying — new products, and they're shoppers who will share their opinions and experiences and who want to be heard. ●

