

The Rise of Kidults: Why They Matter and Why Brands Should Be Paying Attention

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Kidult

noun

A term that blends "kid" and "adult" to describe an adult who embraces interests (such as kids' movies or TV shows) or products (such as toys or plushes) traditionally associated with kid culture.

Kidults can be of any generation, but this trend is particularly strong with Gen Z.

Fun's Not Just for Kids Anymore

In 2024

At retail, consumers ages 18+ surpassed preschoolers as the #1 consumers of toys.



In 2025

The trend continued: the highest toy sales growth came from adults.

Toy sales were up 18% for adults in the first half of 2025 vs. the previous year.



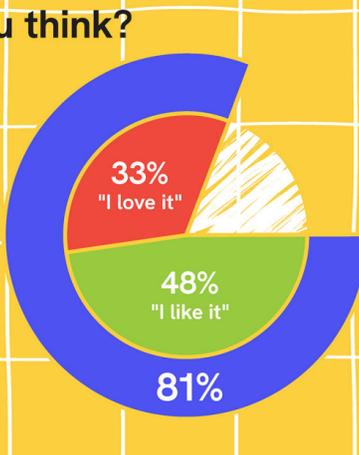
Source: Circana 2025

The Restaurant Industry Is Embracing Kidults



Kidults want their own version of a kids' meal toy.

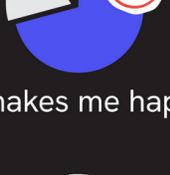
We asked: **When brands offer collectibles, what do you think?**



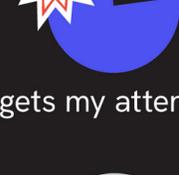
81% love it or like it

Fun Builds Your Brand

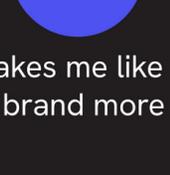
When brands offer collectibles, adults say:



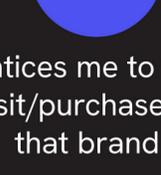
It makes me happy



It gets my attention



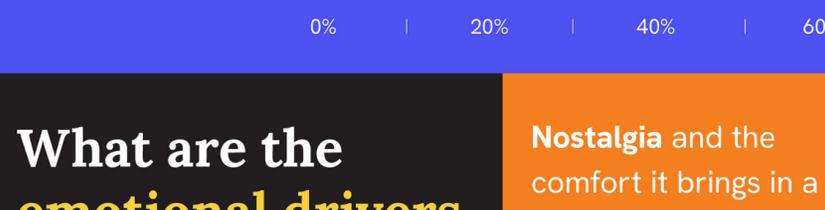
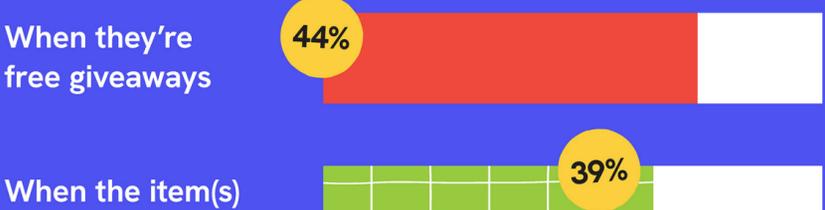
It makes me like that brand more



It entices me to want to visit/purchase from that brand

We asked Gen Z and millennial adults: **Which of the following types of collectible promotions would most motivate you to go to a restaurant or store?**

The top three answers:



What are the emotional drivers for kidults?

Nostalgia and the comfort it brings in a stressful world.

Tangible connection in a digital world
Give me memorable experiences!

The thrill of the chase and the collector mindset
I wonder which one I'll get?
I want to complete the set!

Cross-generational connection
Parents get to share some of their favorite childhood memories with their kids.

"Little treat" culture
I can't afford a house, but I can find joy in small, fun purchases.

"Collectibles create a sense of excitement and nostalgia. They add an element of fun to everyday experiences and give me something to look forward to [from] the brand."

— C3 Collectibles Survey Respondent

Source (unless otherwise noted): C3 Collectibles Survey with Gen Z/Millennials, n=400, March 2024

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Interested in hearing how your brand can tap into kidults with unique collectibles?

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