

AT&T Focus Group Analysis



Focus Group Team

1/31/2025

MC 4045

OBJECTIVE

To gain an understanding of Gen Z's perceptions, attitudes, and associations with AT&T and internet/mobility providers in general.

SAMPLE

1. 17 students ranging from 18-27 years old.
2. 4 non-students ranging from 23-26 years old.

METHODOLOGY

30+ question discussion including 2 projective techniques.

STUDENTS

INTERNET & MOBILITY

Sample	Internet Provider	Cell Service Provider	Internet Plan	Cell Service Plan
Students (Group 1)	AT&T: 5 Cox: 1	AT&T: 4 Verizon: 1 T-Mobile: 1	Unsure	Mostly family plan
Students (Group 2)	AT&T: 5 Cox: 2 Other: 3	AT&T: 5 Verizon: 2 Other: 3	Unsure; 1 participant has Base Plan due to 'affordability'	All family plan

(Kaylee)

PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Analysis of celebrity section (Kaitlyn & Kaylee)

Focus group 1:

1. Oprah
 - a. Verizon (2)
 - b. Comcast
2. Emma Chamberlain represents Spectrum
 - a. Could be represented by anyone from Gen-Z
3. Jennifer Aniston
 - a. Verizon (3)
4. Jennifer Lawrence represents T-Mobile according to the majority
 - a. Millennial humor
 - b. Hot pink color
 - c. Controversial people in comparison

Focus group 2:

1. Oprah to represent AT&T and Verizon
 - a. “Awesome”
 - b. “Reliable”
 - c. “Always there”
2. Emma Chamberlain for T-Mobile
 - a. Younger crowd
 - b. Newer crowd
 - c. More in touch with current trends and events
3. Jennifer Aniston for Boost, Comcast (and some said AT&T too)
 - a. Past her time
 - b. Past THEIR time in the industry
4. Some students viewed AT&T as superior because it is all they know and it currently is what works for them (for the most part)
5. Few students viewed AT&T as incompetent and do not like it at all

Analysis of magazine collage section (Lindsay Prado)

Focus Group 1:

1. One person was drawn to themes of luck and casinos, and made sure to include that “30% of profits are donated to children in need”
2. One person stayed true to themes of breakfast, including food spreads and espresso
3. Someone emphasized themes of “innovative, sustainable, reliable and versatile.”
4. One person included an image of Zuckerberg with red eyes, highlighting a distrust of billionaires and corporations in general, while also including themes of sustainability
5. This person included honeybees, and stated that they want to stand for causes like saving the bees and other environmentally friendly efforts
6. This one included themes of travel, such as fishing, Mexico, surfing, beaches, and space

This group seemed to really care about sustainability, environmentally friendly efforts, and helping out the little guy

Focus group 2:

1. This person chose a lot of aesthetically pleasing images that highlighted where they want to be in their future
2. This person also went the aesthetic route, including brands like Chanel and David Yerman
3. This is yet another aesthetically pleasing collage that includes fashion-based imagery
4. This is a clean-looking collage with simple images to convey cohesiveness
5. This collage did not include much, but did include a dinosaur eating various food items
6. This collage included images of a woman the participant stated “who looks like Marilyn Monroe” and other things the participant likes, like Patron.
7. This collage includes seemingly random images, such as ski goggles, various numbers, a basketball player, and 2 different and unrelated quotes

8. Thus collage is family oriented, including a couple and the Lively-Renolds family.
9. This collage also has seemingly random imagery, including pictures of a gorilla, people doing random things, motorcyclists on fire, and cigarettes
10. This collage also includes cigarettes and a gorilla, but also includes sports-related pictures and RedBull

This group prioritized aesthetics, including images of where they want to be or what they want their life to look like in the future

AT&T DISCUSSION

Group 1

1. Price, quality, and customer service are most important for a brand.
2. Favorite brands
 - a. **Hokas**
 - b. **Trader Joe's**- pricing, quality, convenience
 - c. Brands that aren't in your face
3. Usually recommends a brand or follow on social media.
4. Expect brands to have ethical/moral values.
5. When choosing a service provider, this group looks for reliability, speed, pricing, and customer service.
6. Doesn't have many experiences with AT&T. Participant describes ads as "weird."

Group 2

1. Look for when interacting with brands:
 - a. Reliability
 - b. Ethics- establishing brand voice and strong message and treatment of people
 - c. Good customer service
 - d. Affordability
 - e. Transparency
 - f. Quality
 - g. Putting customers first

2. What makes you excited to interact with these brands:
 - a. Student plans
 - b. Bundles
 - c. Catering to audience
 - d. Trends
 - e. Promotional items
 - f. Influencers and celebrities
3. What do you look for when choosing a mobile service provider:
 - a. Reliability
 - b. Fast connection
 - c. The best
 - d. Bundles – ex: features, multiple people
 - e. Student discounts
 - f. Promotional deals
4. AT&T users
 - a. Love it
 - b. Still support
 - c. Generally reliable
 - d. Easy and quick setup
5. Nonusers
 - a. Was able to contact others during power outages
6. Both
 - a. Don't remember last time saw an ad
 - b. AT&T stadium – Cowboys game
7. Mixed reviews on AT&T
 - a. "I hear things about if they are reliable or not, some people say that they have great service, and sometimes people say that it is bad service"
 - b. "I hear a lot of mixed reviews about AT&T and it makes me feel like I shouldn't try it out just in case it is bad"
8. Natural Disaster
 - a. "The flood of 2016, the AT&T customers didn't have internet connection or service, but the people with Verizon did"

- b. “I went through the Texas freeze and everyone’s power was out and wifi was out, but I still had internet service through data. I was able to let my family know I was still alive. I was even able to message people for my friends to let their families know they were okay”
9. Features provided by AT&T that help them stand out to you?”
- a. “I recently moved apartments, it was very easy to just call and get them to send me a box and a ten minute set up over the phone. Where I live now, everyone has AT&T... I was dreading the setup, but it was pretty easy.”
 - b. “The color they use” sticks out to them.
 - c. “I live a few hours away from my family so being able to stay in touch with them”
 - d. “Haven't seen a better deal.... I know some companies have hidden fees.”

SWITCHING PROVIDERS

Group 1

- 1. General consensus no
 - a. Never thought about switching
 - b. Didn't have enough issues to switch
 - c. Doesn't have a say- family plan

Group 2

- 1. General consensus no
 - a. Haven't seen a better deal
 - b. Not big enough issues has arisen

THEMES

AT&T Perceptions (Reagan)

- 1. Outdated (reagan)
 - a. The opinion of AT&T is that the brand doesn't take any steps to make itself feel new. Participants said that the brand felt boring overall and associated

with their parents especially considering how many people were on family plans.

2. Mixed opinions (reagan)

- a. The anecdotes from the participants were very mixed with some people having great experiences and some having very negative experiences. There seemed to also be a large portion of people that were just neutral towards the brand with no notable experiences from both users and non-users of AT&T

3. Lack of brand identity (reagan)

- a. Many of the participants couldn't associate anything with AT&T. They don't stand out from their competitors. Ex: Couldn't recall anything specific about brand, ads, or messaging. There was even someone who brought up State Farm commercial trying to make the connection to AT&T, which shows how helpful a strong identity can be.

4. Poor connection with Gen Z (reagan)

- a. Similar to the outdated theme, Gen Z overall just felt disconnected from the brand saying that they hadn't heard anything about AT&T in a long time. Gen Z also barely mentioned anything about branding/advertising principles in regard to AT&T, and the participants pointed out examples of brands that they do connect with more (at least from an advertising perspective) like State Farm.

Attitudes (Amyri)

1. Trends in feelings

Participants feel as though AT&T is reliable and does well in tending to the needs of customers. They also feel like AT&T is commonly used because it is a well-known brand. Everyone knows of AT&T despite their shortcomings in advertising and marketing. Furthermore, they feel that T-Mobile, for example, does a better job at targeting Gen Z than AT&T. This is also why they associate AT&T with millennials and generations before them.

2. Trends in beliefs

Participants believe that AT&T is a brand that is for older customers instead of GenZ, this is most likely due to AT&T's branding and how long they have been around. We also noticed that participants could not remember any AT&T advertisements that stood out which shows that AT&T falls short in creating content that resonates and is memorable. This is a big issue that needs to be addressed for this new campaign for GenZ.

3. Opinions about brand

In regard to feelings about the brand in general, it is clear that participants valued AT&T for its affordability. AT&T offers plans that provide quality service and products at a price that cannot be beat by other brands. However, they also felt that all service providers were the “same” and ultimately the difference lies in pricing and customer service. Participants have considered switching to other plans, but still remain AT&T customers due to familiarity. They mentioned that they would stop supporting a brand if politics becomes too much of a focus and if unethical practices were to take place, so while it is important for brands to be conscious, it should not be overdone.

Perceptions (Ellie)

T-Mobile

1. Most participants recognized T-Mobile as a younger, trendier internet provider because of their advertisements, deals, and “vibe” (pink, social platforms used)
2. When T-Mobile was compared to AT&T it was seen as the new and upcoming internet provider that would attract Gen Z since most celebrity comparisons for T-Mobile were Emma Chamberlain.

Verizon (Kaitlyn)

1. Most students viewed Verizon as superior
3. Most said that Verizon is reliable and “always there”

Boost, Comcast AND AT&T (Kaitlyn)

1. Students compared to Jennifer Aniston saying that like her, it is past their time

NON-STUDENTS

INTERNET & MOBILITY

Sample	Internet Provider	Cell Service Provider	Internet Plan	Cell Service Plan
Non-Students (Group 3)	AT&T: 1 Cox: 1	AT&T: 1 Verizon:1	Fiber-High Speed Panoramic Wifi Gateway	Family Plan
Non-Students (Group 4)	Cox: 2	AT&T: 1 Verizon: 1	Wifi extender connected to family's wifi next door (highest speed and pretty reliable, but still goes out from time to time)	Family plan

PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUES

Analysis of celebrity section

- Chose older or well-known celebrities to represent AT&T and Verizon (Dylan)
- Chose younger and more energetic celebrities for T-Mobile (Dylan)
- Weren't sure exactly who to choose for Comcast and Spectrum (crowded industry, not enough knowledge of these brands)
- View AT&T as an established and reliable brand, but not the "most fun" option (Dylan)

Oprah for AT&T (Jordan)

- Viewed as older
- "Middle-aged & not trendy"

Emma Chamberlain for T-Mobile (Jordan)

- Trying to stay trendy with younger audiences

Jennifer Lawrence for T-Mobile (Jordan)

- Tries too hard to be cool and trendy
- Giving a company that tries too hard to be young

Jennifer Anniston as Verizon (Jordan)

- Company is well known and has a reputable brand (Aj)

Meryl Streep for Comcast (Jordan)

- Even older than AT&T

Participants couldn't figure out a celebrity for Spectrum (Jordan)

Analysis of magazine collage section

Group 3 (Dylan)

- Group 3 collages featured travel destinations and outdoor activities (Dylan)

- Likely that Gen Z craves real experiences and a chance to escape and explore (Dylan)
- The “perfect brand” for Group 3 (older Gen Z) would commit to quality at every stage and use real people to create a great customer service experience. A younger brand would be more transparent and relaxed, not taking themselves too seriously. (Dylan)
- Quality over brand name, emphasis on affordability (Kaylee)
- Analysis of the perfect brands included brand authenticity and incorporation of personal style. The participants included a lot of furniture that felt sophisticated and comfortable. (Aj)

Group 4 (Chloe)

- Vintage things that tell a story and represent longevity in the product, values functional things that actually work with quality
- Attention to details where the brand shows that they actually care
- Spokesperson wouldn't be a huge celebrity, it would be someone up-and-coming that seems genuine and down to earth.
- Antique, quality pieces that are still unique and organic (shape wise). Artistic and free form things that you can tell are hand made but still have structure and substance.
- Includes elements such as real metals and natural fibers, further showing their value in being unique, organic, and of high quality.

Hobbies, Purchasing habits & Decision-making process

Group 3

- Participant 1 enjoys reading
- Participant 2 enjoys snowboarding; Service spotty in mountains but doesn't really matter unless needed.

“If you had \$500, how would you spend it?”

- Both participants took interest in travel, concerts, & savings.

Group 4 (Chloe)

- Conscious spending: participants would rather buy a somewhat higher-priced, high quality item once than purchase a cheaper, lower quality item multiple times.
- Enjoys shopping second hand to purchase brand's older items when their newer items are no longer made with the same quality.
- "Shopping is an investment; I don't like to waste money."
Participant wants every purchase to be thought out and of quality, no matter if it's \$20 or \$200.

AT&T DISCUSSION

Group 3-

1. Price point, quality, and customer service are most important when choosing brands.
2. Favorite brands are **New Balance, On Cloud, Target, and Dr. Scholls**
 - a. New Balance/On Cloud- Looks cool, consistent, and retro
 - b. Target/Dr. Scholls- Style and affordability
3. Participants usually recommend the brands they use.
4. Prefer that brands remain neutral especially in today's political climate. Absolutely would not support extreme practices though.
5. They view all providers as the same due to offering similar products. When choosing an internet provider affordability and simply being able to function is most important.
6. This group doesn't have many experiences with AT&T. Participant 1 came across an ad recently but described it as basic. Participant 2 has AT&T and described it as "can be spotty." Also remembers "the lady" just disappearing from AT&T's commercials and brand.
7. Their phone provider plays a big role in their communication and connectivity in personal life.

Group 4-

Favorite brands are **Barnes and Noble and Coach** (Madison)

Barnes and Noble- (Chloe)

1. Would still buy there even if it's more expensive than other retailers because of the experience they provide (atmosphere), effort, and attention to detail (not purchasing from them just because of the product itself; more goes into it).
2. They typically hire people who are genuinely interested in books, makes them seem more approachable in store; they actually care about what they are selling

Coach- (Madison)

1. Timeless
2. Targeting a younger audience without trying too hard to be relatable
3. Choosing celebrities and influencers that younger people like
4. Sustainability - Loved that the pieces lasted a long time
5. High, consistent quality

A brand standing up for what is morally right is a good and admirable thing, but it is not necessary for brands to talk about politics just to try to appeal to a particular audience (Madison)

1. Rolling back diversity and inclusion initiatives and statements is problematic and a turn-off for Gen Z
2. Not every brand needs to be talking about politics or putting out statements because that can cause a divide
3. A lot of political and moral statements from brands come off as performative, so it's better to not discuss politics at all if there is no real commitment to their statements

Reliability is very important when choosing an internet service provider (Madison)

1. If you work from home, your internet going out or your video lagging looks unprofessional
2. A fast network is important in choosing a plan

SWITCHING PROVIDERS

Group 1

1. More of a hassle to switch
2. Discussing switch- getting too expensive (AT&T user)

Group 2

1. Likes verizon, doesn't really have difficulty finding data in places compared to friends with AT&T
2. Would consider switching for things like when there's exclusive t-mobile booths at music festivals; Would switch for a company they used while living in France called "free" if they came to the US: Easy to work with, small fee for service that worked everywhere. (AT&T user)

THEMES

AT&T Perceptions

1. Established but Uninspiring (Henry)
 - a. "I will trust a brand more if they have been around longer and I hear their name more."
 - b. It feels like AT&T has been around the longest (finds them trustworthy and known) (Chloe)
2. Generic or unmemorable (Henry)
 - a. "I don't know if any of their ads have particularly stuck out to me because every time I see an ad, I'm like, you've already got me." - AT&T engaging existing customers. They should make an effort to appeal to the members of Gen Z who already have AT&T so when it comes time for them to get on their own plan, they choose AT&T.

- b. The only thing memorable is the brand color. They only associate AT&T with blue. (Jordan)
- 3. Works when needed (Henry)
 - a. “They provide me with my phone. That’s all I can ask for.” - AT&T meets the bare minimum.
- 4. Life-mobility aspect is most useful (Jordan)
 - a. AT&T passpoints allow you to connect to AT&T Wi-Fi in airport - a travel perk where users don’t have to connect to unsafe Wi-Fi
 - b. Not a lot of AT&T users know about this perk

Attitudes

- 1. Humor and Authenticity
 - a. They preferred brands that did not take themselves too seriously (Duolingo, Wendy’s, Pop-Tarts) (Henry)
- 2. Honesty and consistency
 - a. Dislike when brands change values based on external pressures. (Henry)
- 3. Quality as an investment
 - a. They would rather pay a premium for a product they know will last, and dislike when that quality changes overtime. (Kate)
- 4. Compassion and Empathy
 - a. They like when brands are understanding, especially in customer service. They value a human-to-human like experience over something robotic and corporate. (Chloe)
- 5. Reliability
 - a. They want things to be reliable and sustainable over time. (Chloe)

Perceptions

- 1. AT&T
 - a. One of the oldest providers, making them more trustworthy than newer providers (Mint Mobile, T-Mobile) (Kate)
 - b. Perceived as nerdy, geeky, weird or uncool (based off of party perception technique) (Chloe)
 - c. Only feels benefits during upgrade season, but that doesn’t apply to every

customer and is happening less and less. (Chloe)

2. Verizon
 - a. Has the same 'trustworthy' perception due, but is more reliable and widely liked than AT&T. (Kate)
 - b. Well-established and been around for a long time (Jordan)
3. T-Mobile
 - a. Seen as a trendy provider due to presence at music festivals. (Kate)
 - b. Tries too-hard to be trendy amongst younger generations (Jordan)
4. Cox
 - a. Known as outdated, even though they still have a strong presence in the South. (Kate)
5. Spectrum
 - a. Unknown to participants, never even heard of the name. It is assumed to be a newer, less heard-of brand. (Lindsay J)
6. Comcast
 - a. Unknown to participants, unlike Spectrum they assumed it to be a more niche brand. (Lindsay J)
 - b. Seen as very old and dated (Jordan)