

The top 5 problems UGC can solve for retailers



bazaarvoice™

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Introduction

UGC IS USEFUL FOR BUILDING LONG-LASTING RELATIONSHIPS WITH CUSTOMERS AND FOR HELPING INTERNET BROWSERS TURN INTO LOYAL BUYERS

User-generated content (UGC) is essential for retailers looking to succeed in today's retail climate. By getting insight into their customers' minds, retailers can make better business decisions. Through reviews, ratings, photos, videos, and Q&A, retailers can see how customers are using products, how they feel about them, and what they would change about them.

UGC is also useful for building long-lasting relationships with customers and for helping internet browsers turn into loyal buyers.

Why are customers so reliant on UGC? It's because it's authentic. It's straight from other customers' mouths. It's not brand copy full of sales-y terms or staged product photos. More than 70% of shoppers use reviews to evaluate similar products to make a purchase decision for that very reason.¹ UGC offers potential customers insight into how others really feel about a product and how it fits into a person's real life.

By collecting high-quality UGC for the products you sell, you can solve some of the biggest pain points that retailers face today.

How to collect more UGC

It's clear. UGC is a must for brands today. In fact, 95% of users rely on reviews to learn more about products. That's almost all of today's customers! And it's not just reviews.² 81% of brands and retailers agree that featuring visual UGC in the shopping experience increases conversion.³ That's why photos, videos, Q&As, and social media content are all just as important.

If you don't have any UGC, start building it today. And if you don't have any recent UGC on your product pages, these tactics will work for your brand too.

Need help collecting UGC?

Download our guide to building a review collection strategy.

▶ **Get the guide**

We recommend these collection strategies as a starting point:



POST-INTERACTION EMAILS

Do you know which customers have recently made a purchase? Whenever someone buys a product, send out an automated post-interaction email to ask for their feedback. These emails can also be triggered by non-transactional actions, like product registrations and coupon downloads.



PRODUCT PACKAGING

Include a call for reviews on product packaging, inserts, or on the product registration card. The URL should be short and simple. This tactic is especially useful for brands without a direct way to connect with customers.



GENERAL EMAIL REQUESTS

Send an email to contacts in your CRM list to request ratings and reviews for products they've purchased in the past. If you're not sure exactly what item they purchased, direct them to a generic review submission form with a product picker.



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Meet your customers and advocates where they are by running a promotion through social media for the chance to win a prize or free product in exchange for submitting honest product reviews. You can also do this over email.



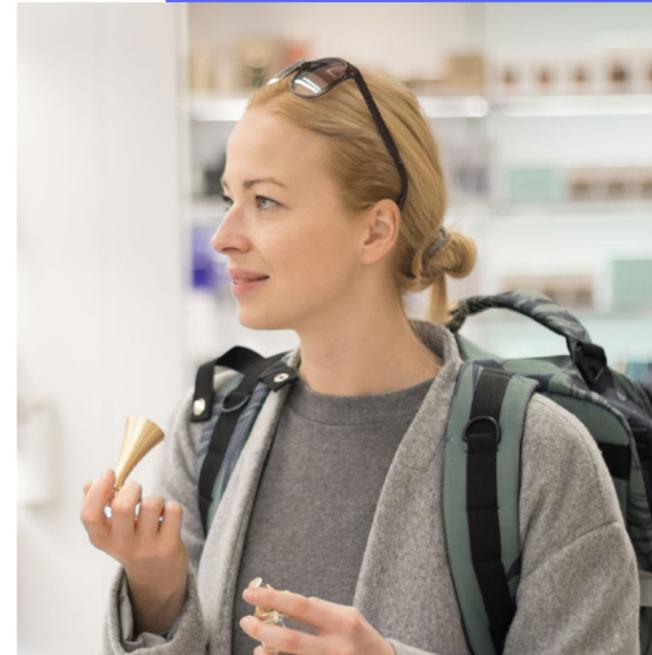
PRODUCT SAMPLING

A sampling campaign is a quick and reliable way to accelerate review collection and get authentic customer feedback in exchange for complimentary sample products. Launch new products with reviews on day one, boost your review volume, and get insights into your products, all while building customer engagement and loyalty.

Painpoint #1

My brick-and-mortar is struggling to maximize the impact of digital, in-store

Most UGC happens online. Customers are leaving reviews on your retail site or posting content to social media, like Instagram and Twitter. The online benefits of UGC range from increased SEO and keyword targeting, to increased engagement and conversion. But, offline benefits might not be as clear. Many retailers find it challenging to bring that online, engaging UGC experience to their stores. But it's possible.



53%

of brands and retailers consider ratings and reviews a key value driver of in-store sales³



How to bring UGC in-store

Get comfortable leveraging UGC in your offline marketing plans, whether that's in the form of photos, reviews, tweets, comments, or all of the above. You can include this content in on-shelf signage and promotions, billboards, TV ads, and more. The inclusion of UGC in mass communications like this helps create a brand image that is actively listening and proactive – it can also surprise and delight potential customers and boost trustworthiness. In fact, about 53% of brands and retailers consider ratings and reviews a key value driver of in-store sales.³

Another way to display UGC in your brick-and-mortar stores is to create a digital display of real-time social media content somewhere in the store. Yes, it might be a little more of an investment, but it will pay off.

How does it work? When a customer posts UGC on social media and tags your brand or uses a branded hashtag, the post would then be picked up by you, and then approved and displayed in real-time on an in-store screen. This content inserts customers into your brand story. For other customers-to-be walking around the store, it inspires their own shopping behaviors. You'll see higher conversion rates and get more social assets for your business in the process.

It also gives shoppers a similar browsing experience as though they were shopping through your digital storefront – your UGC will be present as they're in the final stages of their buying decision, helping them confirm your product is the right choice.

Takeaway

UGC isn't just for your online store. For your brick-and-mortar customers, UGC can surprise, delight, and ultimately help them make the right purchase. Invest in showcasing UGC in ads, in-store signage, and digital displays.

My retail business is having difficulty building an omnichannel experience

Retailers must build seamless, omnichannel shopping experiences that capture shoppers' interest and empower them to make confident purchase decisions — and there's no online content shoppers trust more than others' opinions.

Many retailers have pushed to check off all the multichannel boxes: robust physical presence, e-commerce site, social channels, and mobile apps. All of these elements are important, but their mere existence doesn't ensure success. The big winners will be the retailers that can blend the online and offline—the digital and the physical—into one seamless, omnichannel shopping experience. The messaging in your store should be a continuation of the messaging in your digital marketing efforts, social media content, and magazine advertisements.

Shoppers might make a purchase online but opt to pick up the item in-store. When shopping in-store, many people use their phone to look at product photos on social media, compare prices, or check customer reviews.

For example, about 62% of in-store shoppers use their phones to look up online reviews before making a purchase while in-store, so a great digital experience on your website is essential.⁴ Consumers quickly switch between shopping channels, and they expect a consistent experience no matter how they're interacting with you. They don't differentiate between various channels; they want to have a pleasant experience whenever and however they choose to shop, and they expect retailers to deliver an integrated omnichannel experience.

62%

of in-store shoppers use their phones to look up online reviews before making a purchase while in-store⁴



It's all in the visuals

Clever mobile marketing can drive shoppers to physical stores, but the use of technology in-store can also dramatically increase the chance that consumers will purchase on the spot. Retailers will need to provide nearly the same amount of information in-store that consumers can find online, like customer photos, ratings and reviews, Q&A, and more. Visual content is essential to online shopping.

59%

of brands and retailers say that featuring photos and videos from customers throughout the shopping experience is standard in e-commerce³

More than half (59%) of brands and retailers say that featuring photos and videos from customers throughout the shopping experience is standard in e-commerce.³ This means that UGC needs to extend beyond your product pages. Customer photos and testimonials should be displayed on social, in-store, and all of your other channels.

You also need to make it easy for customers to share their UGC anywhere they want and make it easy for customers to buy from anywhere, whether they're on your retail site, Instagram, or Pinterest.

Shoppers want to feel connected to your brand and to other shoppers and have a social shopping experience. UGC encourages shoppers and loyal customers to join in on the conversation with each other, which helps you build a whole community of fans who will tell your story for you.

Takeaway

Customers have multiple ways to shop online and in-store. Make your messaging and UGC consistent across every channel. By providing the same amount of helpful information in-store that consumers can find online, you'll increase the likelihood that these customers will purchase on the spot.

Painpoint #3

I don't understand how my products are performing

Understanding your customers — who they are, how they shop, what they like or don't like about your products — is critical to your business.

The retailers who see the most success in understanding customer sentiment and product performance have a robust UGC strategy and use insights from it to improve products and guide business decisions. Among brands and retailers in the Bazaarvoice Network, the majority leverage UGC to improve their messaging, products, and customer service, as well as learn more about who is buying their products — and in some cases, what the prime use cases are.

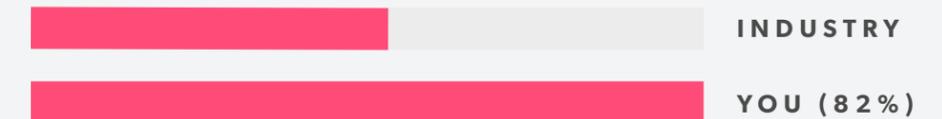
By diving into UGC, retailers can understand product performance, customer sentiment, competitive benchmarking, and more. For example, when it comes to product performance, UGC can help you identify and resolve areas for improvement across the product catalog.

You can also analyze reviews to understand customer sentiment. See how shoppers feel about the entire customer experience with positive and negative sentiment analysis on product quality, price, shipping, customer service, and more.



Benchmark

82%



It doesn't stop at reviews

Don't just look at reviews. Look wherever your customers are having conversations because they're out there talking about your products and your brand. Does your audience flock to a particular Facebook group? Are followers leaving comments on your Instagram photos? Are individuals making YouTube videos about your products? Take time to search for mentions of your business across social media and the web.

And once you find where they're talking about you, show your customers that you're actually listening! Collecting and analyzing customer insights is often a long process; depending on what you learn, you may not be able to make any necessary changes or craft the appropriate response right away. While you're analyzing and digesting the information you collected from any of the above methods, it is necessary to acknowledge customers' responses. Upon receiving feedback or information from a customer, thank them for their response and acknowledge that you will take the time to consider all feedback.

Identifying meaningful customer insights and trends from UGC is often a time-consuming and manual effort. According to Bazaarvoice research, half (49%) of brands and retailers report that they do not have the resources or tools to collect insights from their UGC.⁵ That's why many retailers choose to partner with a vendor that can provide them with the tools and applications they need to quickly and automatically access an unparalleled degree of customer and market intelligence.

In one survey
49%

of brands and retailers report that they do not have the resources or tools to collect insights from their UGC⁵

Insights can help you understand product performance

At Bazaarvoice, we offer in-depth insight analysis for retailers to understand how products are performing. Here are some of the metrics our Insights tool allows you to measure:

PRODUCT TACTIC	INSIGHT
Identify products that aren't meeting your consumers' needs and are receiving high page views	Ratings & Reviews > Product Performance > Products with low average ratings
Identify products that score worse than their Bazaarvoice category in terms of quality to understand how product quality is perceived at-scale	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with quality sentiment below their category
Identify positive or negative themes by product to improve your product or position in a way that meets your customers' expectations	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with highlights and lowlights <i>(Filter by product to narrow down your search)</i>
Refine your support processes, update FAQs, and improve product descriptions	Questions & Answers > Question > Products with frequently asked questions
MARKETING TACTIC	INSIGHT
Use fresh UGC in email, social, in-store, and print campaigns	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with notable quotes for marketing
Adjust product positioning or price	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with price sentiment below their category
Uncover potential business partners, marketing channels, and identify competitors	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with frequently mentioned organizations & people
Improve search and marketing copy by understanding products with common keywords customers are using in reviews text	Ratings & Reviews > Consumer Sentiment > Products with consumer keywords

Takeaway

UGC isn't just helpful for your customers. It helps your business too. By analyzing insights from UGC and other places customers talk online (like social media), you'll improve products and make better business decisions.

Product pages are stale on our online retail site

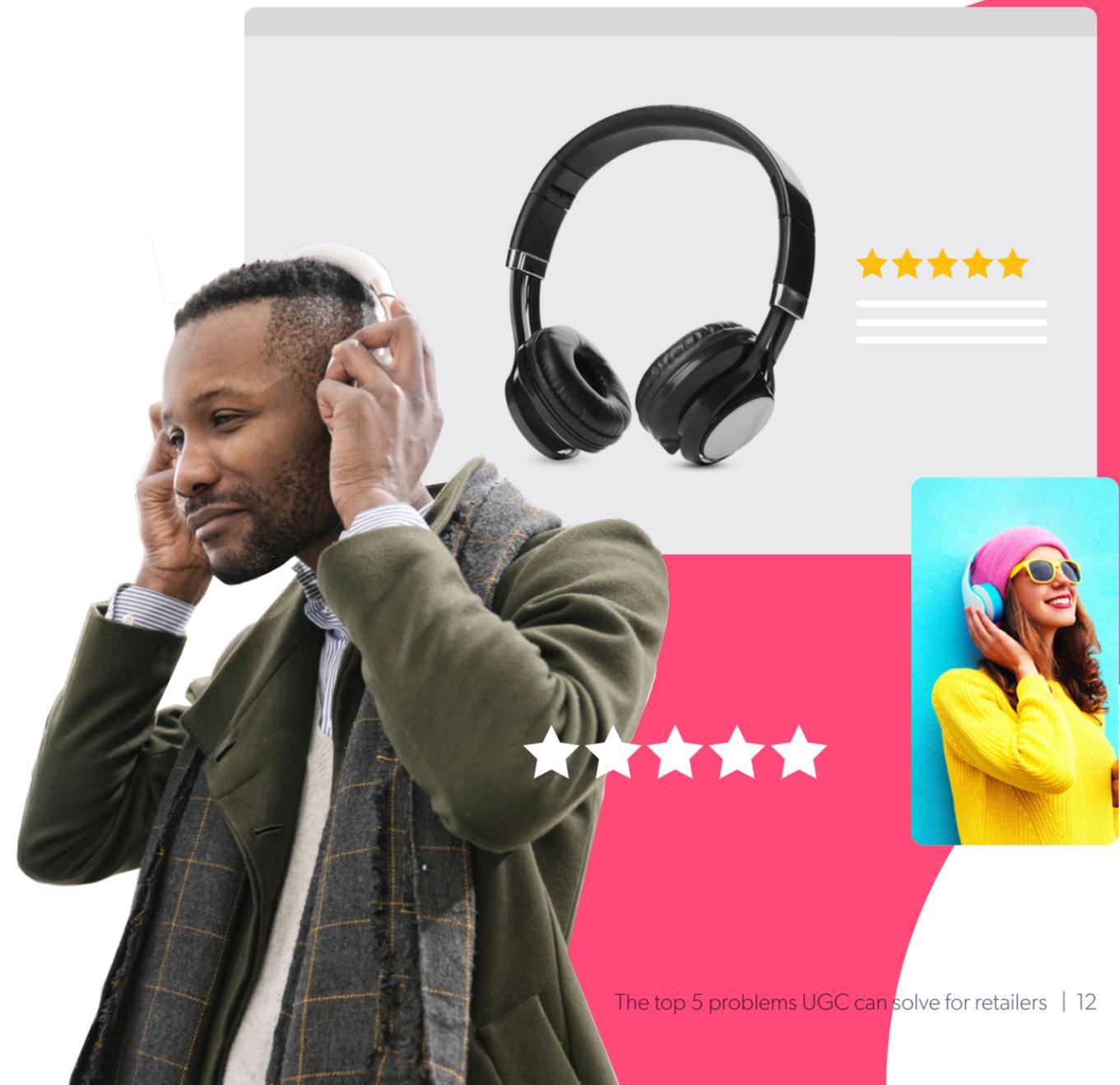
When's the last time you updated your product pages? And more importantly, when was the last time you received a product review?

UGC helps your product pages stay fresh with unique content that's been created by your customers. You can use customer quotes and photos from reviews and social media to update your product pages on a regular basis, and the constant influx of fresh review and photo content itself will be a huge boost for SEO and conversion. Product pages with at least 1 review experience more than 3x the conversions than those with no reviews.³

About 56% of online shoppers say pictures and videos from others give them the most accurate depiction of what they expect from a brand. And, 45% of online shoppers agree that studio or stock images posted by brands or retailers are more likely than consumer pictures to make them think the product claims are exaggerated.⁶ By letting your customers tell your story for you on your product pages, you can rank higher on Google, help customers discover new products, and earn shoppers' trust. It's a win-win-win!

56%

of online shoppers say pictures and videos from others give them the most accurate depiction of what they expect from a brand⁶



Include a variety of UGC

64%

of shoppers agree that reviews written in the past month are more reliable than older reviews⁷

We've already mentioned that retailers can collect UGC through general email requests, post-interaction emails, product packaging, social media campaigns, and product sampling. But it's also important to make sure your UGC contains a variety of voices and mediums. Collecting reviews and testimonials on social media, video, and plain text will help you reach more customers looking for information about your products.

It's also important that your UGC is current because 64% of shoppers agree that reviews written in the past month are more reliable than older reviews.⁷ ReviewSource is an always-on service from Bazaarvoice that continuously supplies organic, non-incentivized Influenster reviews to retailers in the Bazaarvoice Network. We pull reviews from Influenster to ensure your products are discoverable and to establish consumer trust.

Takeaway

UGC needs to stay current. You can't just do one push for UGC and be done with it. Your product pages should continuously be updated with fresh UGC to build trust and help customers discover new products.

My store has a very high return rate

Customers rely on reviews to tell them which products are the best fit for their needs. About 70% of the time, shoppers say they often or always look at reviews to evaluate products.¹

Why? Because UGC helps paint the full picture of a product and tells its complete story. Product descriptions can provide a great amount of detail, but customers don't just want to know how your product works in theory – they want to see it in practice. That's why it's important to have authentic UGC on your product pages – both positive and negative – to help customers understand what they're buying before they click add to cart.



70% of shoppers say they often or always look at reviews to evaluate products¹

Collect authentic feedback

We have found that clients who track return rates after implementing UGC programs have actually reported a 10-20% reduction in product returns.⁸ This is partially attributed to the quality and integrity of authentic consumer reviews and partially to trusting the opinions of other shoppers.

If you're only accepting and displaying positive reviews on these pages, shoppers aren't getting the full picture, which could lead to higher return rates. Around 60% of consumers find negative reviews as useful as positive ones, and 23% find negative reviews more useful than positive ones. This might be because 62% of consumers think that negative reviews contain more detailed info on product pros and cons.⁹ These reviews enable customers to make better purchase decisions.

We recommend retailers display all authentic content, whether it's positive or negative. When you do get negative feedback, taking the time to respond improves the customer's perception of you, the brand, and the product. In fact, 57% of consumers say they expect a brand to reply to a negative review; of those, 93% said their loyalty to the brand would be negatively impacted if the retailer didn't respond.¹⁰

Now, if you do have a product with a lot of negative reviews and returns, first, take the time to go through the reviews and figure out what customers don't like about it. Once you've done that, seriously consider improving the product based on this customer feedback. Then, send the new version to the customers who left a negative review (at no cost to them). You may be able to boost positive reviews of the product, increase sales, and lower returns.

If you fail to provide shoppers with authentic UGC and continue to ignore constructive feedback, you have a higher risk of customer disappointment and consequently, a higher rate of return. Providing access to honest and transparent content and improving offerings based on feedback is what brands and retailers must do to enable customers to make the most informed purchase decisions. In the same way, displaying authentic UGC demonstrates a brand's commitment to authenticity and helps build consumer confidence and achieve positive long-term results.

Takeaway

Authentic UGC helps customers weigh the pros and cons and ultimately guides them to make better purchasing decisions. While you may not love to see negative reviews, customers find them extremely useful while shopping. When customers buy the right products, return rates go down.

Conclusion

Once the UGC starts rolling in, take the time to respond to customers and engage with them to build relationships and trust. Do regular evaluations of your reviews to see if any common themes jump out. Is there a feature many people wish a product had? Are people using a product for something other than it's main use?

By providing these analyses to brands you work with, you can help improve the products on your site. It's a win-win for you and the brand.

With high-quality UGC, your value increases to current and future customers, you stand out among other retailers, and you alleviate many of the common pain points today's retailers typically face.

Want to learn more about responding to customer reviews and the impact it can have for your business?

▶ Contact us today.

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About us

Each month in the Bazaarvoice Network, more than a billion consumers create, view, and share authentic user-generated content including reviews, questions and answers, and social photos across more than 6,200 global brand and retailer websites. From search and discovery to purchase and advocacy, Bazaarvoice's solutions help brands and retailers reach in-market shoppers, personalize their experiences, and give them the confidence to buy.

Founded in 2005, Bazaarvoice is headquartered in Austin, Texas, with offices in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia.

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