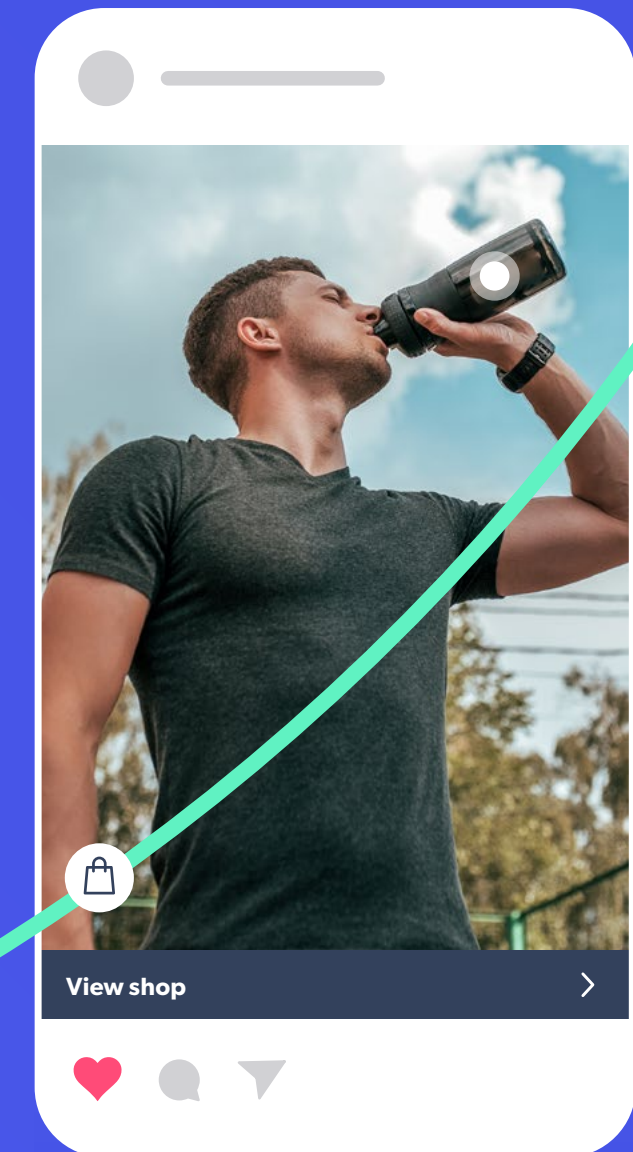
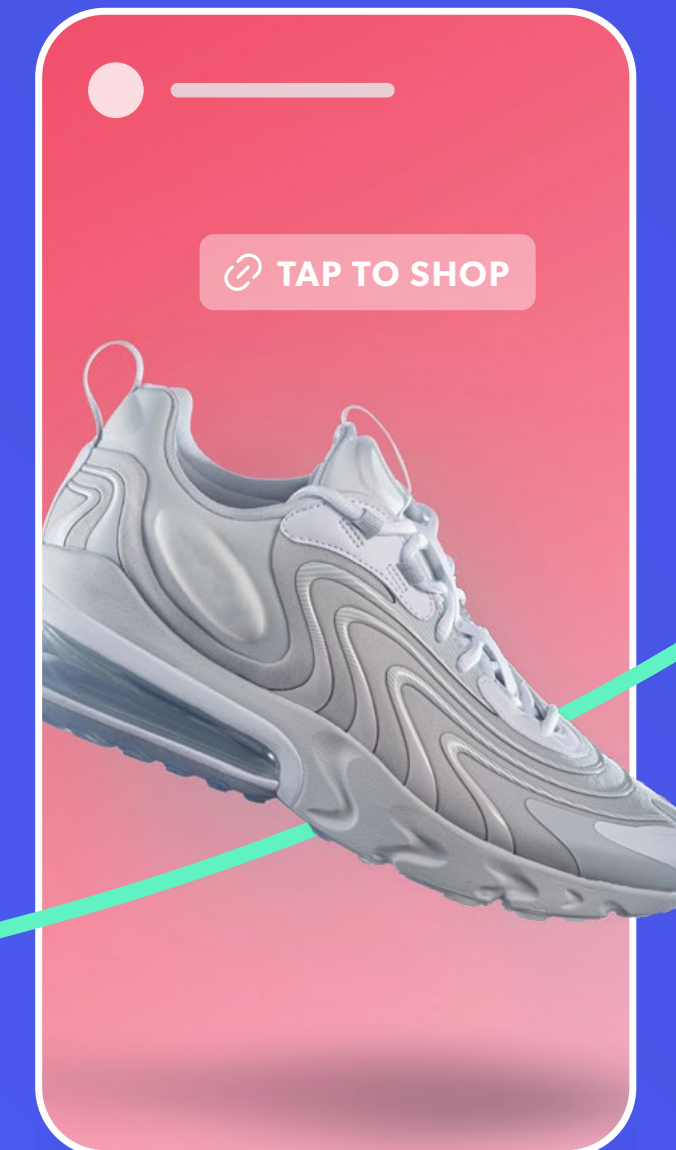
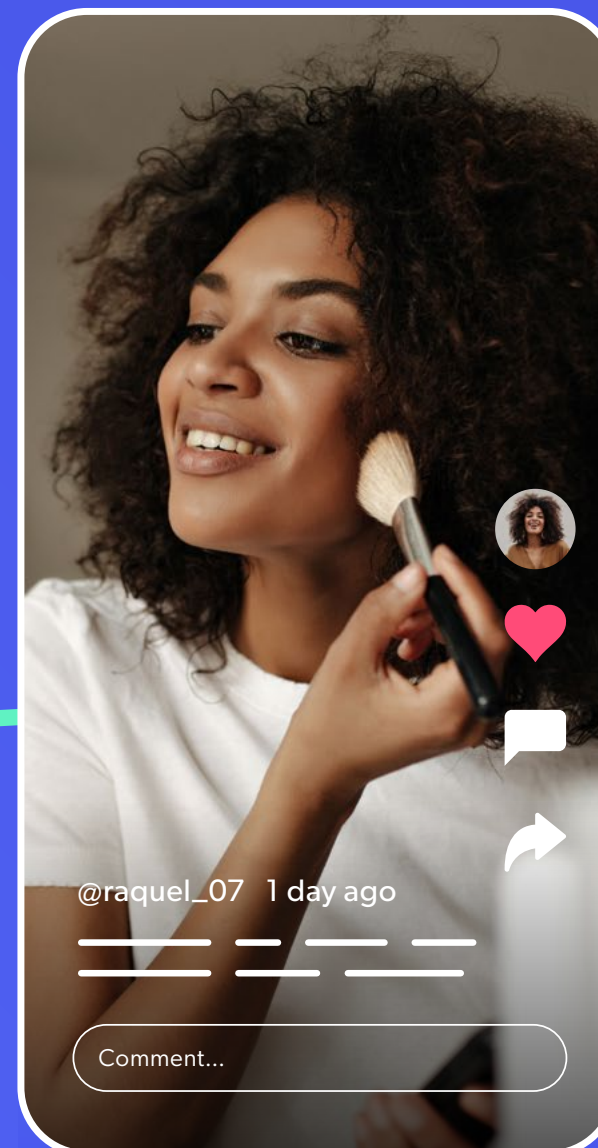


Driving sales in beauty, beverages, and everything in between

How shoppers feel about social commerce in 2022—and what your brand should do about it



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Introduction

There's no denying that the era of shopping on social — a.k.a. social commerce — is in full swing.

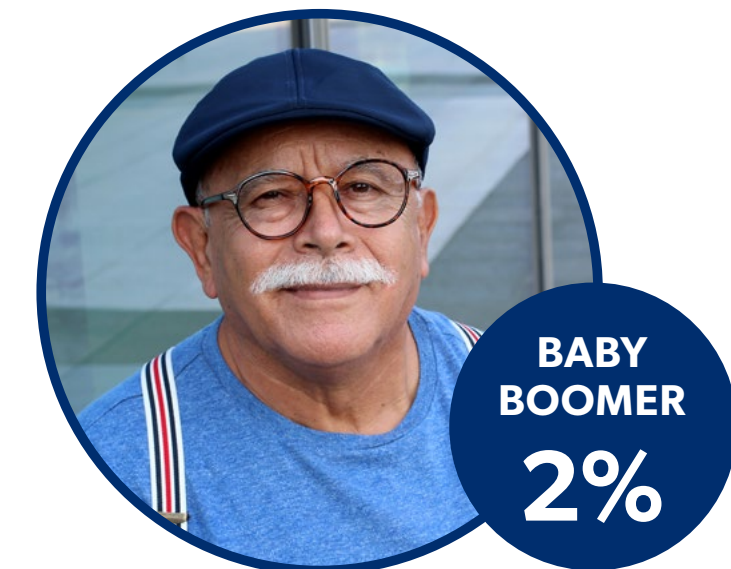
Our research shows that 80% of shoppers say their time on social media has increased significantly over the past year (social distancing, anyone?), and 76% have found themselves very influenced to shop on these platforms.¹

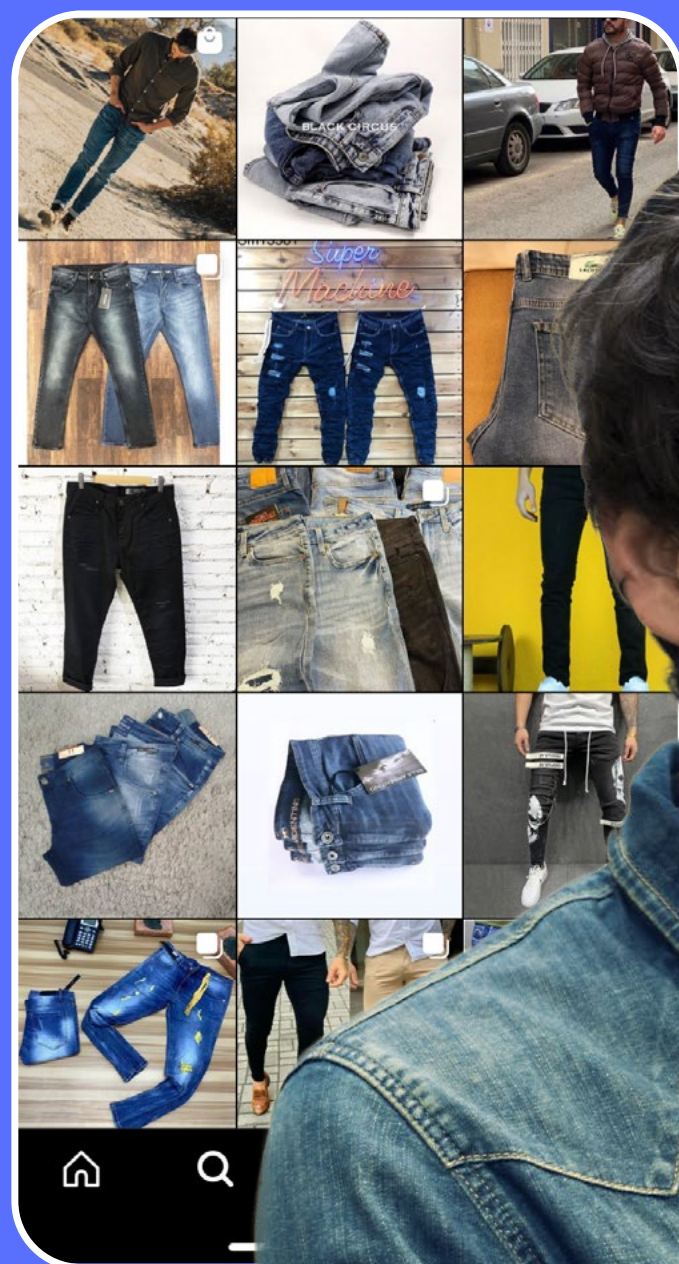
But for brands to take advantage of this newly booming shopping channel, we first need to understand why and how shoppers are using it:

- Are people looking to browse on social media or actively buy?
- What kinds of products are they shopping for?
- Which platforms do they buy from most?
- How do social influencers affect their interest in products?
- Which social shopping experiences interest people the most?

To answer these questions, we surveyed over 14,000 shoppers from our global Influenster community.¹ This e-book explores what these shoppers had to say — and how brands should respond to these evolving trends in social commerce.

RESPONDENTS BY AGE





They're bringing browsing back

While e-commerce sites have gotten ridiculously good at helping people to buy, they have largely failed at allowing them to shop.

There’s a lot of technology to help you find and purchase products you know you want. But what if you’re not ready to buy? It turns out people miss the browsing and spontaneous shopping inspiration inherent to the in-store experience (but missing from most digital experiences).

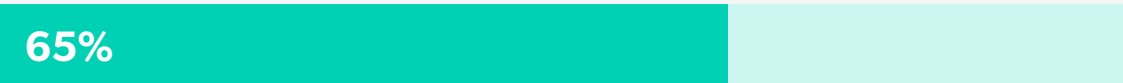
Social media is filling the gap with highly visual and engaging content that piques shoppers’ interests.

When asked to describe their shopping on social media, shoppers’ top responses were shopping inspiration (65%), shopping when they stumble across something in feed or stories (61%), shopping from influencer recommendations and links (60%), and shopping from content from brands they follow (60%).¹

While shopping habits vary slightly across social platforms, overall results are the same. Most of the shopping that happens on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter occurs when stumbling across something in-feed or stories. YouTube and Pinterest are primarily used for shopping inspiration.

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR SHOPPING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

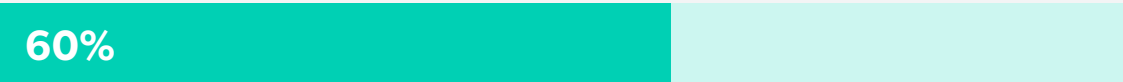
I use social media for shopping inspiration



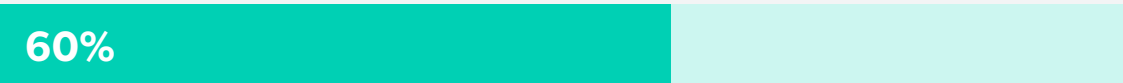
I shop when I stumble across something in my feed, stories, etc.



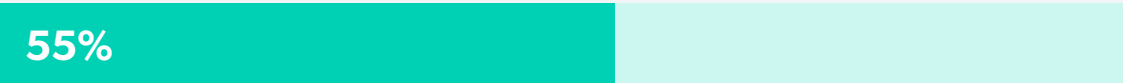
I shop from influencer recommendations and links



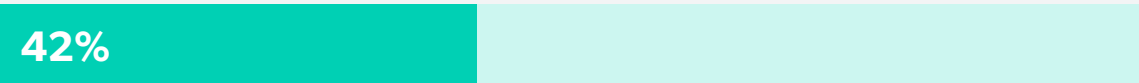
I shop from content from brands I follow



I shop from recommendation from friends and family



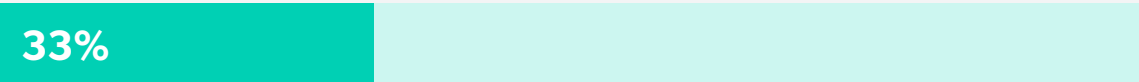
I use for shopping ‘information gathering’



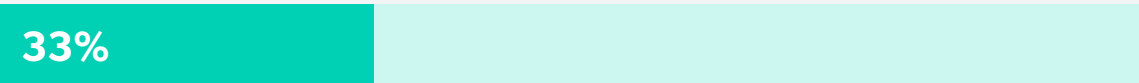
I actively look for products to shop in my feed, stories, etc.



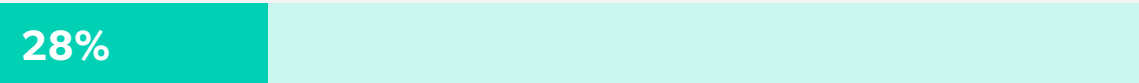
I shop from content from publishers I follow



I shop from video content



I shop from banner ads of items I have previously looked at



According to research conducted by TikTok, Publicis Groupe, and WARC, an organization that provides insight and intelligence to help marketers navigate industry challenges:

“Social media has disrupted the purchase journey, which is now led by spontaneous discovery and inspiration, and no longer follows the traditional path.”²

Bazaarvoice data reflects the same desire to replicate the ability to browse. For example, one shopper said they’d like to see a “curated digital market,” explaining that:

“...With Covid we’ve missed out on so many in-person things, but I miss walking around the flea market, wandering from stall to stall seeing what people were offering. A digital version of that could be cool.”

Another shopper responded that they’d love to shop from their oculus, explaining the optimal experience:

“I can walk into a store and look at everything in VR but get it shipped.”





Show them the goods

There is significant overlap in the kind of products respondents are buying through social media vs. in store — but beauty is leading the chart when it comes to social shopping. 91% of respondents said they shop for beauty products on social media. Less than half (44%) still shop for beauty in stores.

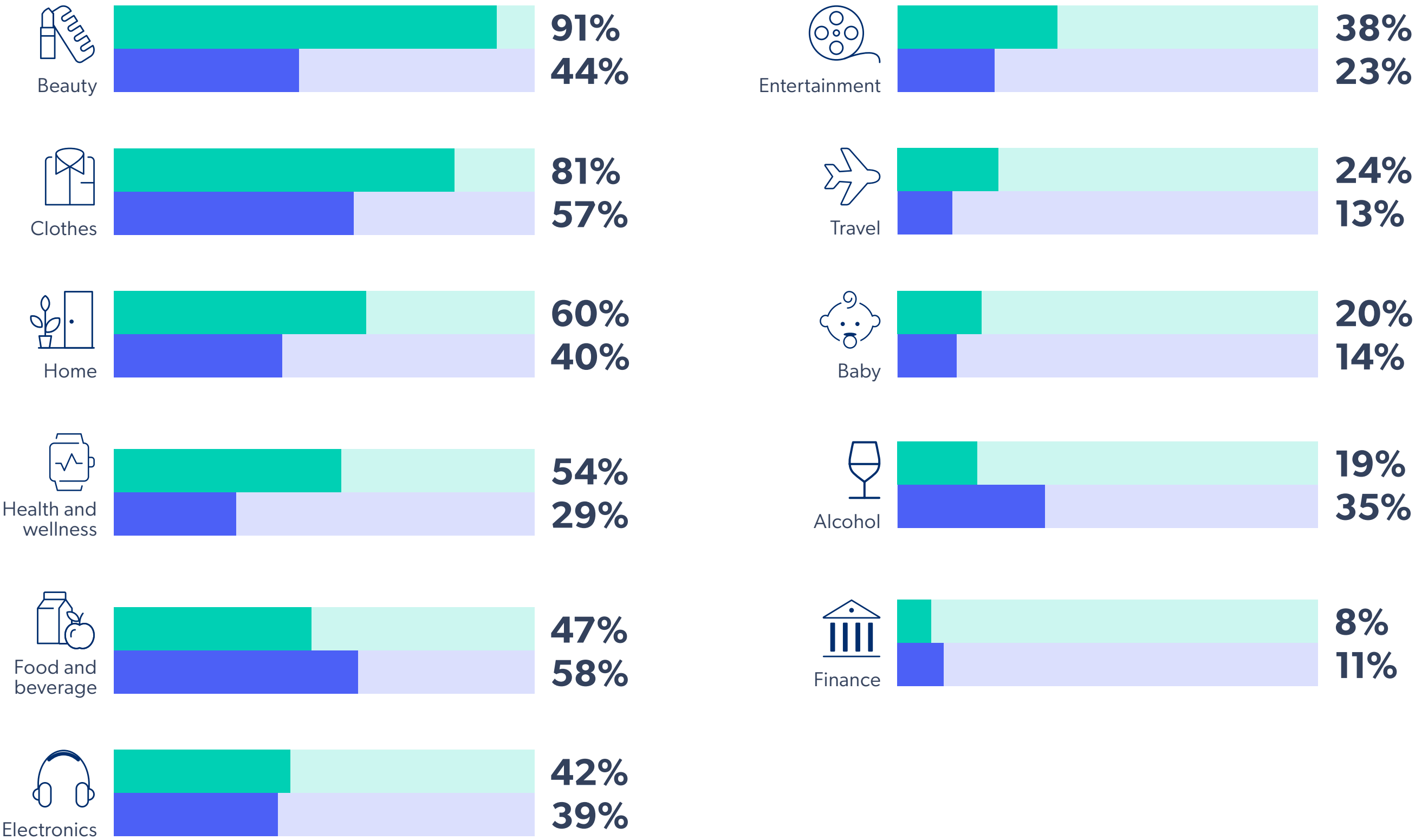
Apparel (81%), home (60%), and health and wellness categories (54%) are also thriving on social compared to in-store shopping.

Why are beauty, apparel, home, and health and wellness leading the way in social shopping?

Because shoppers crave images and videos of these products in use. They like to see clothing on a variety of models, matched with various outfits and accessories. Shoppers can visualize items in their homes when they see them styled in the homes of others.

PRODUCTS SHOPPED FOR ON SOCIAL VS. IN-STORE

● Social ● In-store



For example, shoppers told us they'd love to see the following to make their shopping experience easier:

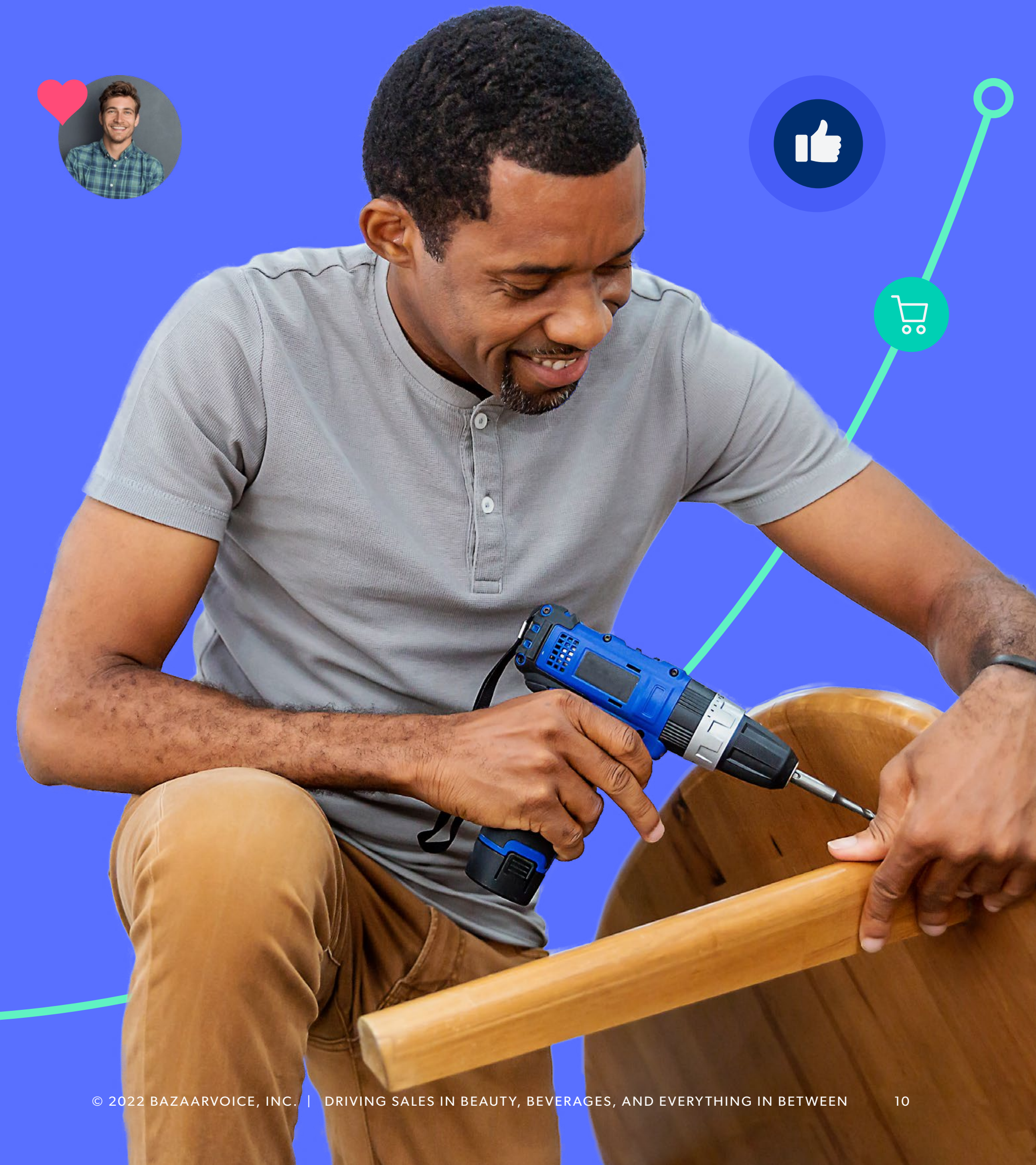
"Have different models to demo the products for example when [it] comes to beauty products, I'd like to see the look on the person that has a similar skin tone as mine so I can decide if I would like to get it or not."

"I'd like to [see] imperfect women modeling clothes and makeup. Most of us aren't 5'10", 130lbs, with perfect skin. Demonstrations of how to wear, apply and use the product are always inspirational and motivational to get me to make a purchase."



Shoppers trust subject matter experts

People also like to get honest feedback on products before they purchase, which is easier online than in store. Social influencers that create product content boost discovery, motivate audiences to try new products, and help make a brand relatable.²



WHICH INFLUENCERS DO SHOPPERS RELY ON MOST?



But shoppers don’t trust just anyone for these reviews.

Shoppers say they shop most from subject matter experts (35%). These influencers are an expert in a subject, post primarily or exclusively about it, and teach you how to do it, too. They often recommend, sell, or post sponsored content for products that have to do with their subject matter.

Think beauty gurus, fashionistas, chefs, DIYers, and stay-at-home moms.

Celebrity influencers are famous for something other than social media (e.g. actors, musicians, athletes). And while these celebrities once reigned supreme on social influence, only 5% of shoppers now say they shop from these stars.

It turns out the celebrities have a credibility issue

Shoppers don't believe the authenticity of paid or sponsored posts anymore.

One shopper told us that honesty is paramount:

"Too many people are more concerned with quantity [of reviews] over quality. I have to know the truth of people's experiences, even when it's awful. I want to know everything you hated and why you hated it, that way I can decide whether that issue would bother me for my situation. I don't care 'how' they sell their product—just do it honestly."

Another shopper told us they wished brands would rely more on SMEs:

"...only having actual makeup artist[s], skincare experts and so on talking about products versus just regular influencers who only say things are good because they are getting paid to do so."





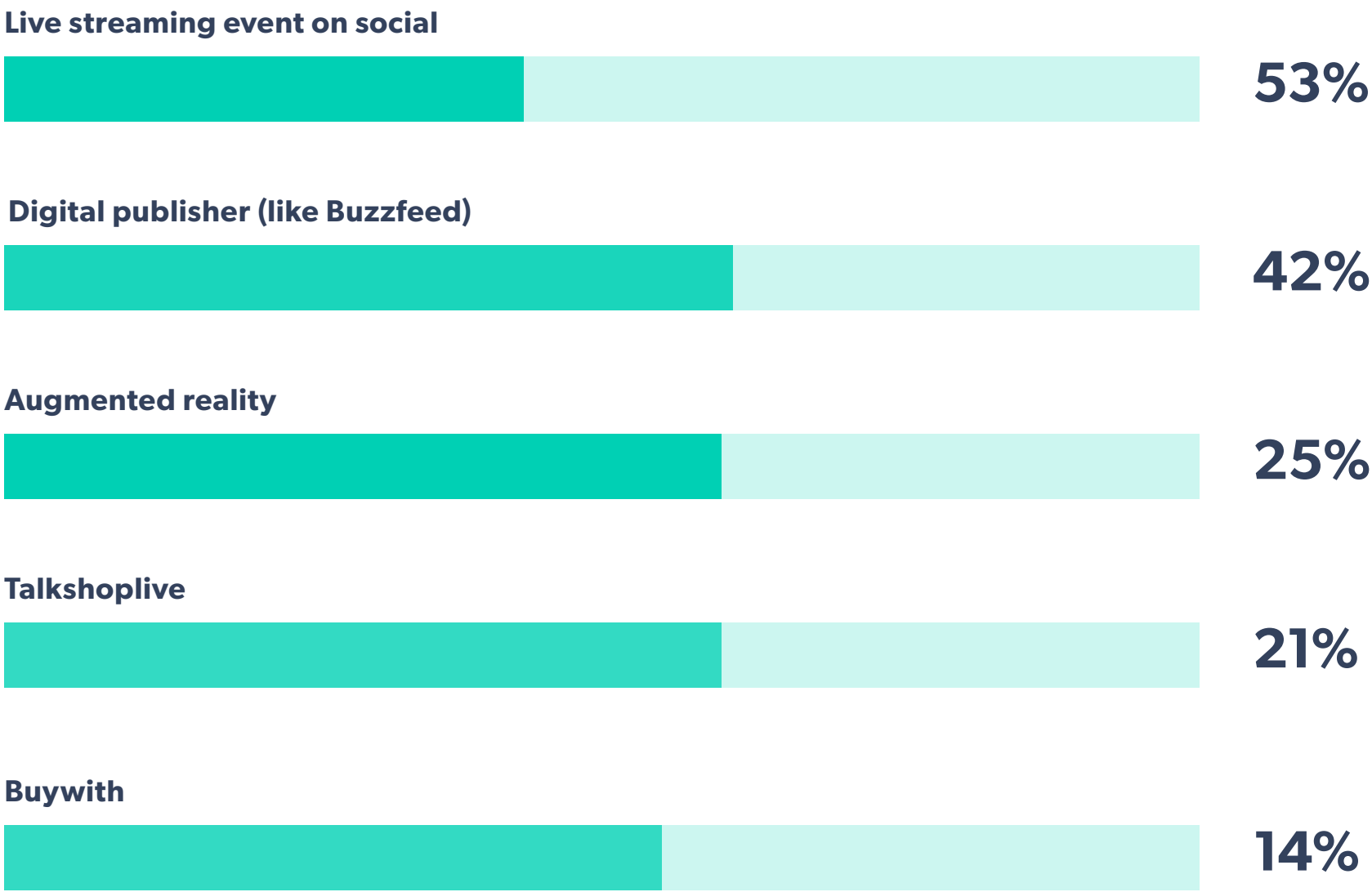
Live streaming leads the charge

How is all this social shopping going down?

TOP SHOPPING TRENDS ON SOCIAL

Over half of shoppers (53%) say they've already shopped via a live streaming event hosted on a social media platform. The top platforms for live streaming are Facebook (57%) and Instagram (47%).

Another 21% of shoppers say they've shopped via talkshoplive and 14% have shopped via Buywith—both platforms that offer livestream shopping events.



While live streaming is off to a steady start, shoppers have bigger visions for live shopping events, suggesting options like:



Virtual pop ups or parties people can join to be the first to get new items ("I hate seeing something cute only to click and it's sold out.")

Live events that help people get to know the brand and stay on top of what's hot ("...talk about their process and how they create their products, and talk about sustainable beauty and fashion that interests those who love the newest trends.")

Live try-ons with live Q&A ("I would also like to have a customer advisor present to answer any queries through live chat or a quick call.")



Fewer people have shopped with augmented reality options like virtual try-on or try-out (25%). But this may be because there aren't many brands offering AR/VR experiences yet. The low adoption does not seem to be in response to lack of shopper interest.

Several shoppers told us they'd love to try these technologies, wishing for things like "digital dressing rooms" and "augmented reality...that enables you to view the product from all angles."

Shoppers have been dreaming about these digital experiences for decades:

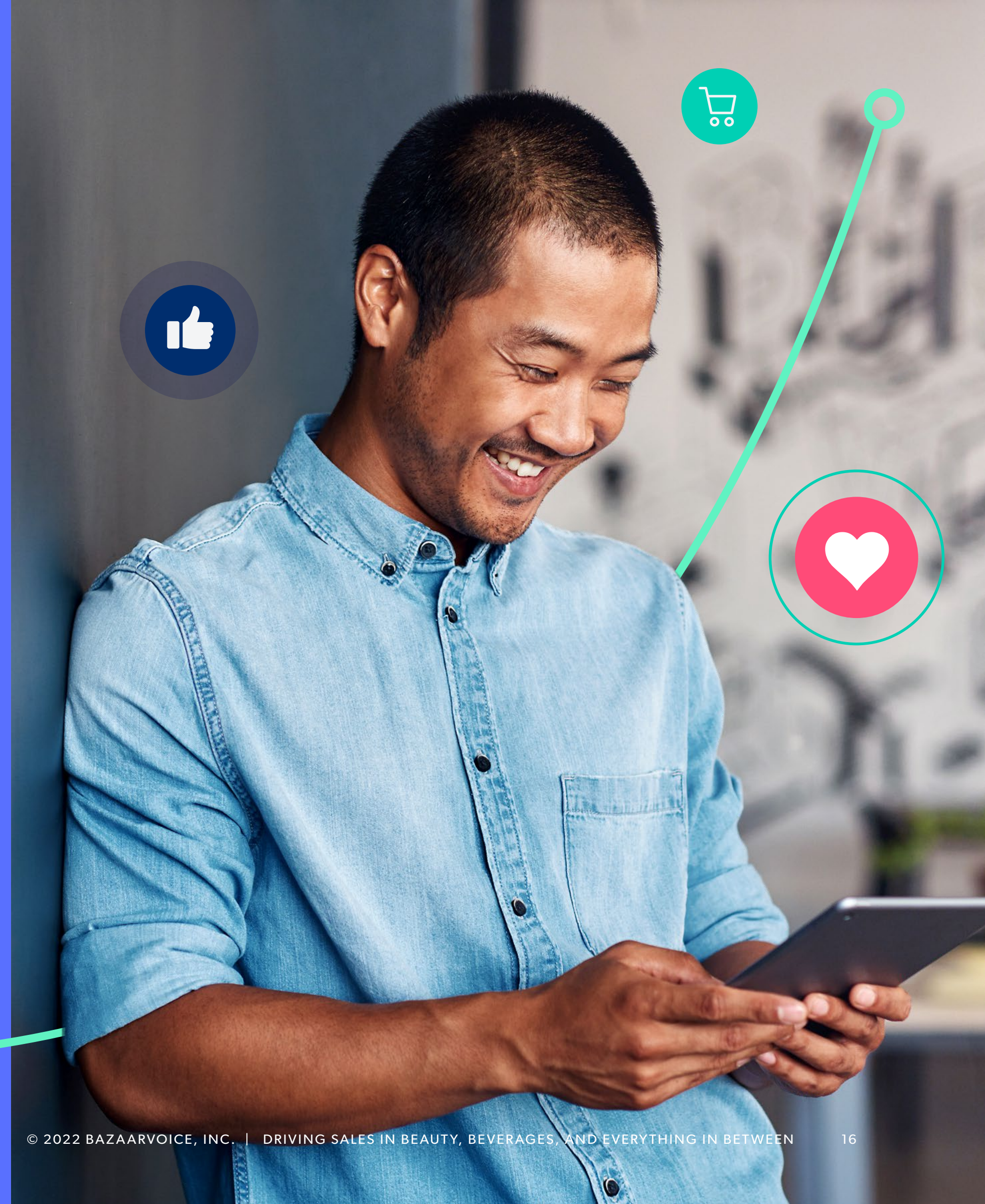
"I always wanted a closet like Cher in Clueless — now if they could just make a store that resembles that and can bring it to my front door for me to try on and buy. That would be a dream."

Bring it all into your buying experience

For a variety of reasons, social shopping is becoming more common than in-store shopping—especially in specific industries like beauty and apparel.

So it's time for many brands to rethink their buying experiences to cater to this trend. What does this look like as you move into 2022?

We have a few suggestions for you.

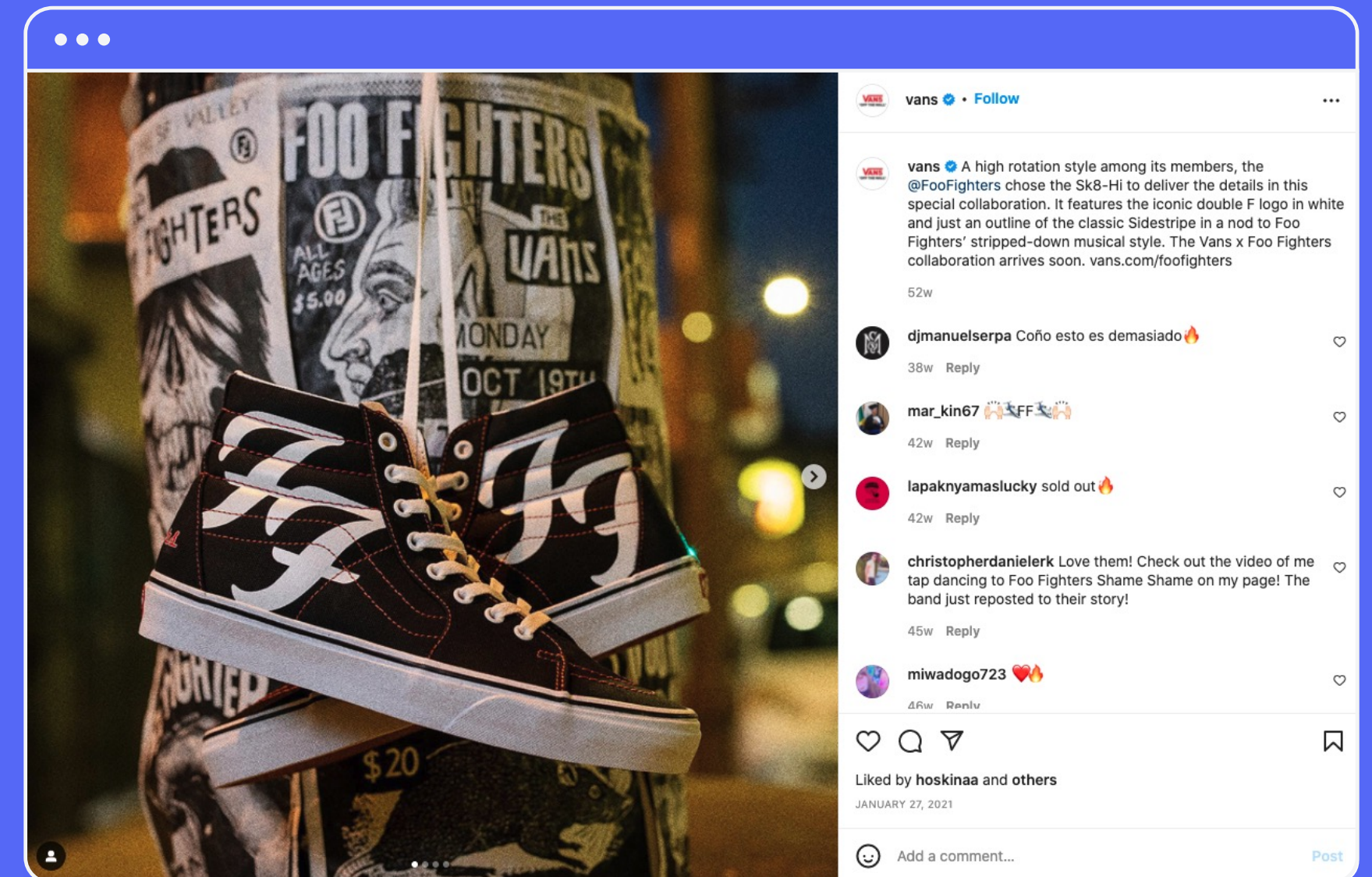


1 Make sure to show up in their feeds

Most shoppers are using social media to stumble across new products. They're not coming to you—so you need to go to them. You need to be there while they're scrolling or swiping with content that catches their eye. Both images and videos can do the trick, depending on what you're selling.

If you're having trouble growing your followers, consider a collaboration with another brand (or two or three!) that targets the same audience. Together, you create something exclusive for the campaign—which helps both brands boost their engagement.

Vans collaborates with other brands often, creating exclusive shoes that benefit both Vans and their partners—which have included the likes of the Foo Fighters and Harry Potter.



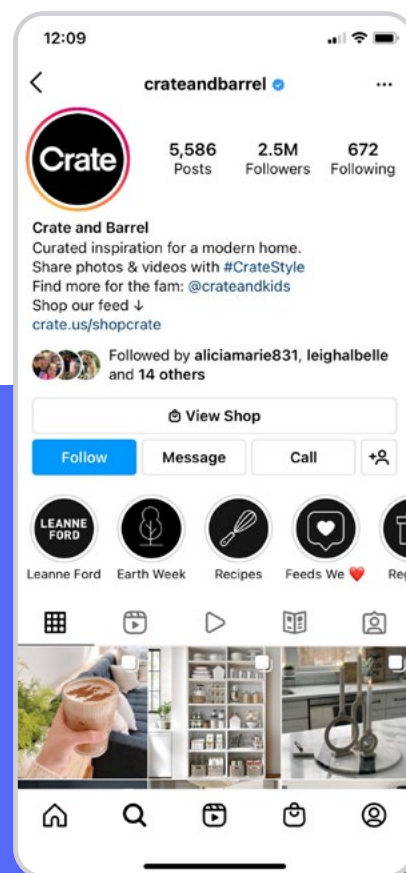
2 Use technology to encourage browsing

Create social experiences that let shoppers easily poke around and scan your offerings—without leaving the platform. One way to do this is creating shoppable images. When a shopper scrolls by your post and falls in love with your smudge-proof eye shadow pencil, they can easily buy it right in the platform.

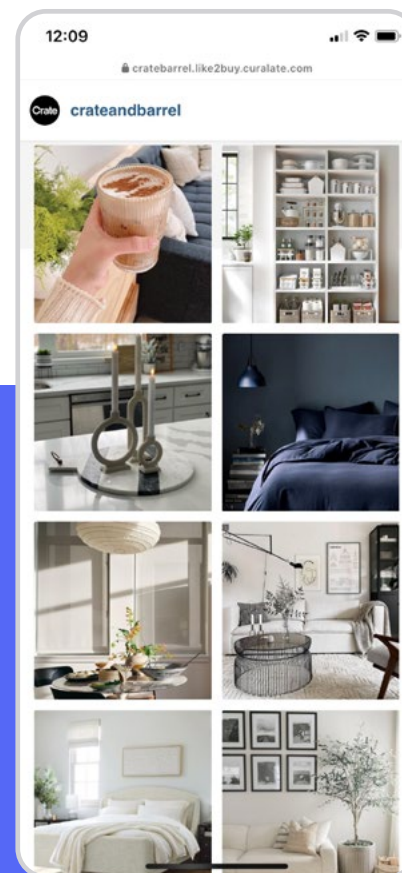
You can also encourage browsing with a link in bio approach that directs shoppers to a full gallery experience of shoppable products in an Instagram storefront. Your fans can browse your shoppable Instagram feed, read your stories, make a purchase, etc.

HERE'S HOW CRATE & BARREL DOES IT:

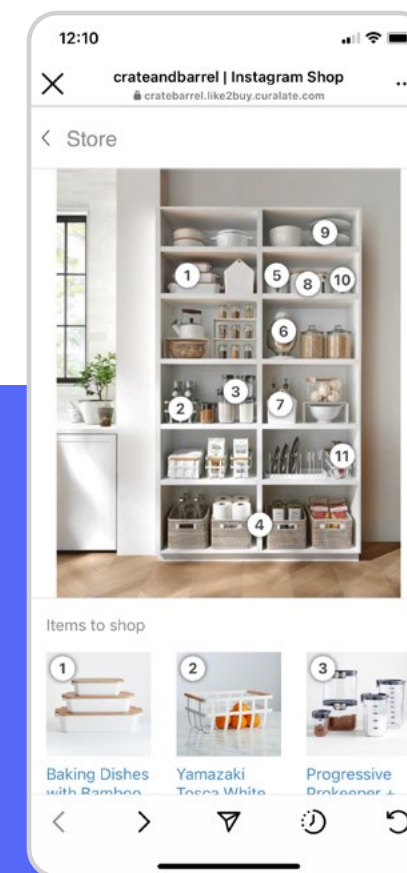
① There's a link in the store's Instagram bio.



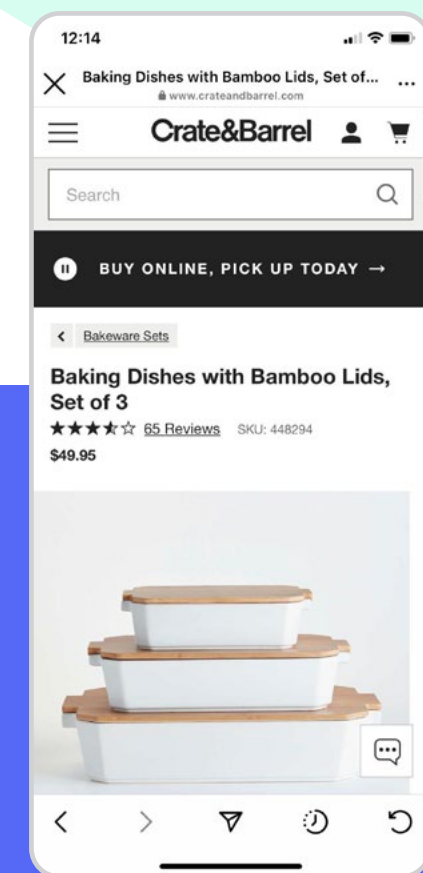
② When you follow the link, you're presented with a series of shoppable images.



③ Tap any photo, and you can see which products are featured in the photo.



④ Tap a product, and you're directed to the brand's product page.



3 Inspire them with products in the wild

One of the best ways to inspire shoppers is to show your products in action, in a variety of settings, with a variety of people. But that can be a lot of content to create.

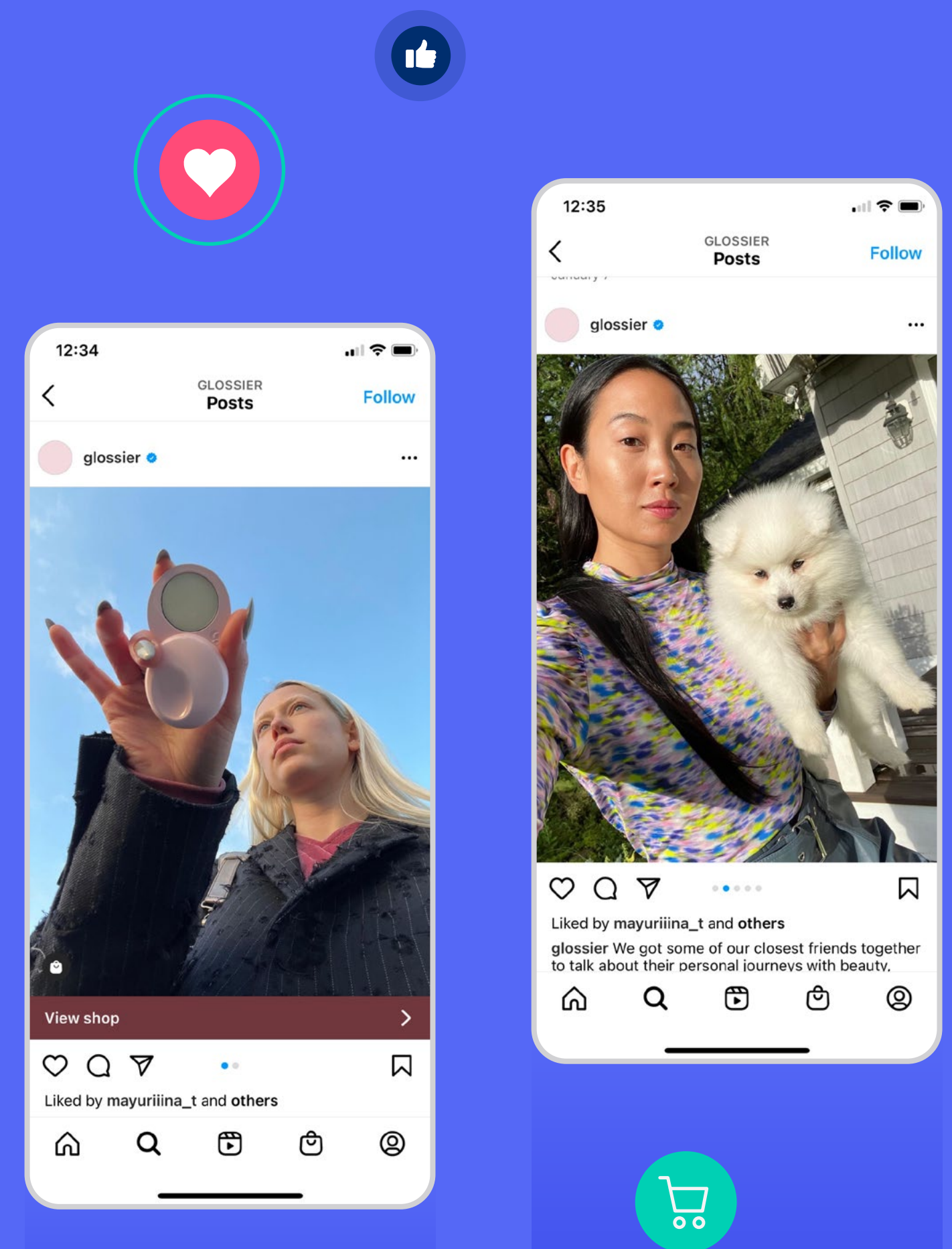
A better approach is to encourage and promote user-generated content (UGC). Community comes baked into social media platforms, which makes it the perfect place to collect images and videos your customers are already sharing about your products.

This UGC from subject matter experts and everyday influencers alike provides inspiration and credibility. You can reshare it via your own social channels and build it into your website.

Glossier does a great job using UGC to inspire fans—and transactions.

This beauty brand actually relies more on UGC than it does on professional models and product shots. By fostering a community of shoppers that want to share about Glossier, the brand can now attribute about 90% of its revenue to fans.

Glossier not only shares UGC on social—the beauty brand pulls user-generated content right into the product pages on their website, as well, making it easy for shoppers to see products “IRL”.



4 Get the word out with credible influencers

Speaking of credibility, you'll have more of it with the right social media influencers. How do you get more subject matter experts talking about your brand and products? A well-designed sampling program is the perfect place to start.

Getting your product in the hands of trusted influencers via sampling helps to:

- Power product launches by collecting reviews and imagery from your community pre-launch
- Revitalize core products by generating fresh content and reviews

THE KRAFT HEINZ SAMPLING PROGRAM

Global food company, Kraft Heinz, fueled their product launch success by getting new Vinaigrettes, Twisted Ranch, and Bitten salad dressings into the hands of hyper-targeted shoppers and empowering them to generate high-quality UGC and social advocacy.



The Kraft Heinz sampling program resulted in:

98,000
pieces of user-generated
content (UGC)

20,000
reviews

369,000
social posts, shares,
likes, and comments

39M
impressions

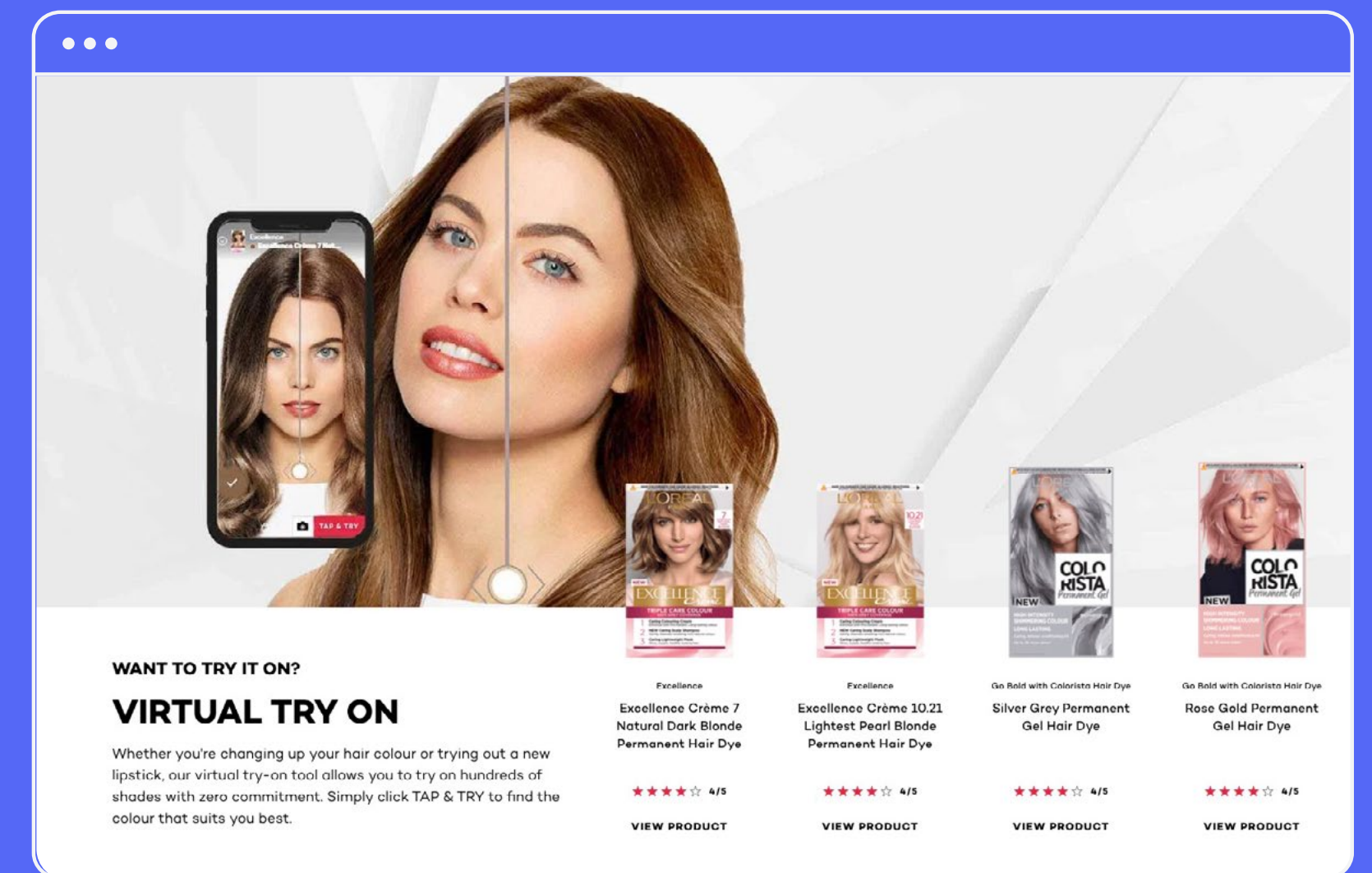
5 Imagine new ways to experience your products

If you haven't tried a live streaming event yet, it's a logical place to start. Shoppers are somewhat familiar with the experience, and you probably already have the technology you need to make it happen.

But don't stop there (remember, shoppers are envisioning Cher's digital dream closet).

Brands that want to maximize social commerce opportunities must make the most of technologies that facilitate a seamless experience.² Consider how new technologies, like augmented reality, can help shoppers more easily find and effectively evaluate your products.


L'Oreal provides a great example of a brand pushing the limits on the shopping experience, offering digital features like the Makeup Genius app. From lipstick to hair dye, this try-on app allows shoppers to virtually test out products on themselves, both in store and online. Augmented reality even allows shoppers to turn their heads and see products applied from different angles.



6 Don't forget the basics

While you're checking out new technologies and building new bells and whistles, it's important not to forget about some of the more fundamental pieces of your buying experience.

Shoppers reminded us that it's just as crucial to make it easy for them to find what they're looking for, pay for their items, and return them if necessary. Some shoppers wish brands would:



"Offer a very comprehensive return policy which is hassle free, as that is the only factor for me to not shop for certain items online."



"Allow better payment options."



"Create a specific page for shopping their business so that the experience is more straightforward."

7 Remember, it's *social* media

Social media is all about community, and shoppers don't want brands to forget that.

Here are some ways shoppers want brands to connect with them as people on social:

"Make it more personal like we have a connection to the brand. Rather than just products, give us people and their opinions and personal lives."



"Send out emails, DM on social media, and actually interact with the people who show interest, rather than just celebrities and influencers."



"Show more of why they started their brand, about who they are, and why and how they produce certain products."



A final word on social shopping

First, it was e-commerce driving the “death” of brick and mortar. Now, social commerce is changing how people shop (again). If you want to take advantage of the new commercial opportunities social platforms are offering, the time is now.

Be there for shoppers when they’re scrolling or swiping with content that catches their eye.

Create shoppable images to let shoppers browse and buy your products without leaving the platform.

Consider how AR and VR can help your customers evaluate your products.

Sample your products with everyday influencers to collect more UGC and generate social buzz.

Collect images and videos your customers are sharing on social and reshare them.



BAZAARVOICE SOCIAL COMMERCE

With Bazaarvoice, you can create social shopping experiences anywhere customers engage with your brand. Easily collect content from social, tag products, and distribute shoppable imagery on social media, webpages, emails, and more.

[LEARN MORE](#)

References

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