## UGC IN MARKETING:

# The role of shopper content in authentic branding
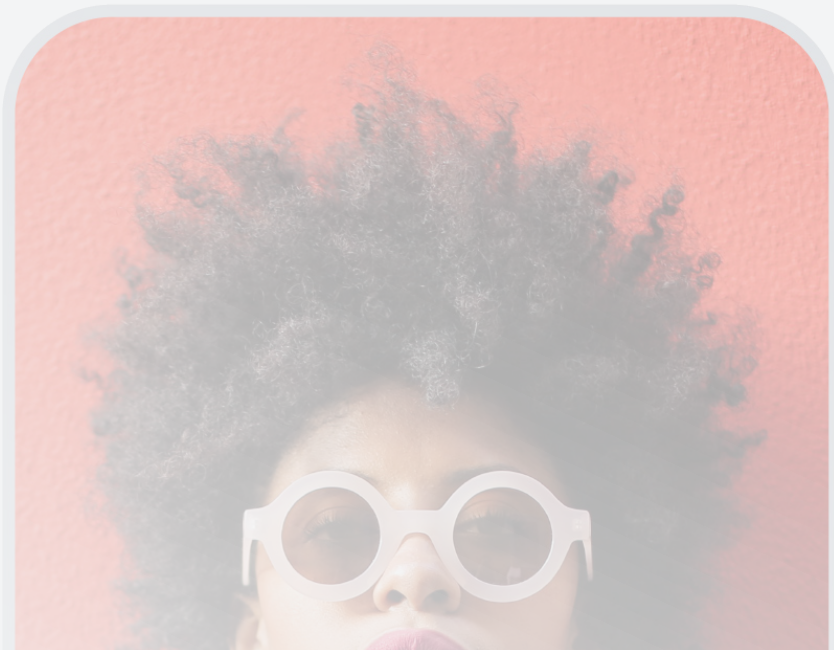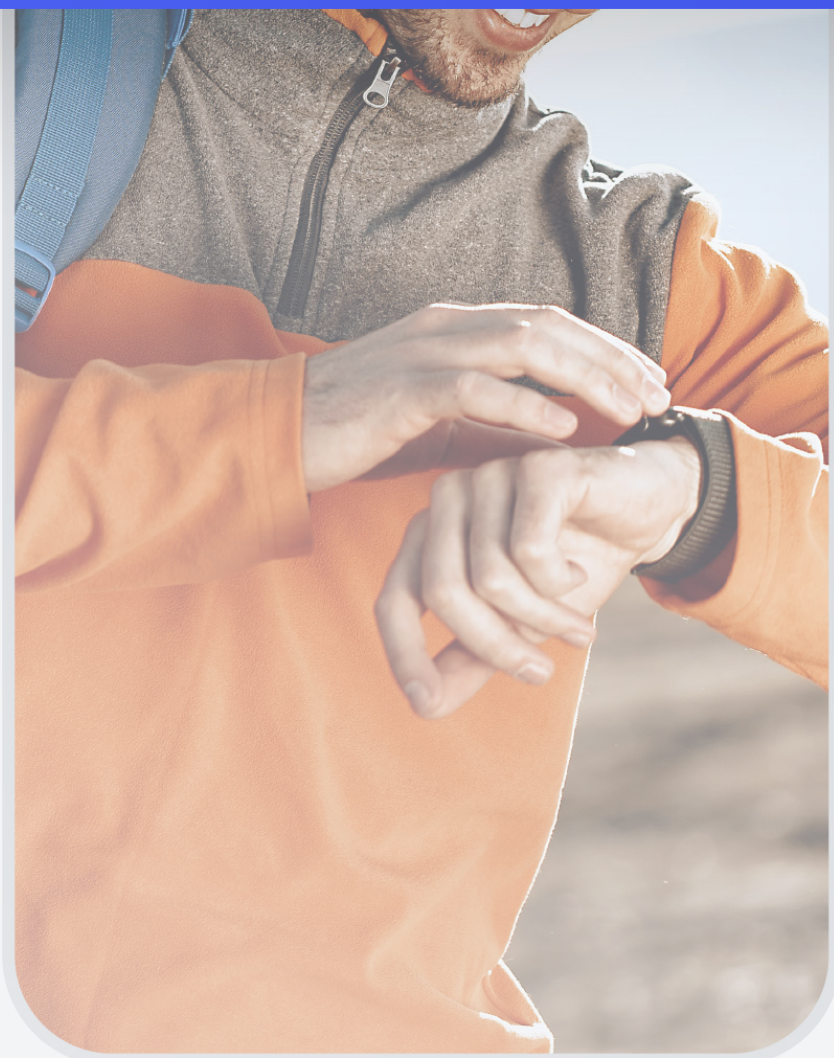
bazaarvoice™

# What's inside

# Introduction

There's many things that keep marketers up at night: maintaining brand awareness, launching new products, safeguarding your brands' reputation, and reaching the right audience even as paid ad effectiveness dips…all while trying to drive healthy profit growth and foster consumer loyalty.

As consumer behaviors and expectations shift, one part of the marketing mix is becoming more relevant and impactful, but not all businesses are fully leveraging it: How is your brand approaching the use of non-branded content?

Our own research shows that just about EVERYONE (100% of shoppers) has purchased a product based on a recommendation they saw online from another shopper.[1] The brand discovery and awareness between consumers and content creators on social have become the golden ticket to effectively reaching new audiences.

However, almost all shoppers (92%) trust peer recommendations more than traditional branded advertising[4] — yet 75% of brands still spend the majority of their marketing budget on creating and distributing branded content.[2]

Clearly, there's a disconnect. But there's a silver lining.

With brands being up against some of the toughest challenges, including diminishing return on investment (ROI) from relying on paid media, changing privacy laws, and tight budgets, one tactic shines as a great way for marketers to optimize their marketing mix — investing more in driving user-generated content (UGC) — like product reviews, star ratings, and photos and videos from social.

You can do this by adopting what we like to call the "And" strategy: integrating branded content AND UGC in your content supply chain. Having the right mix of branded and, yes, user-generated content is the way to authentically win the hearts and souls of your consumers in today's socially active world.

In this e-book, we'll delve into the benefits of allocating more of your marketing budget to UGC, how to give users shopping experiences that will keep them coming back, and debunk commonly believed myths about UGC.
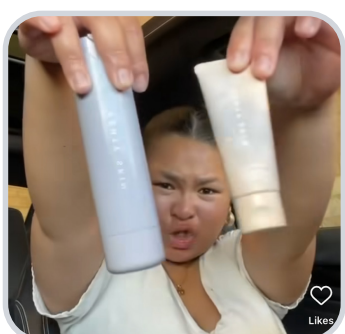
# You'll learn:
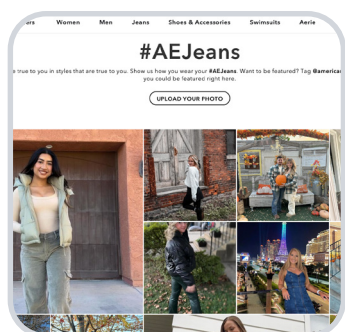
 How UGC can improve the ROI of your marketing mix
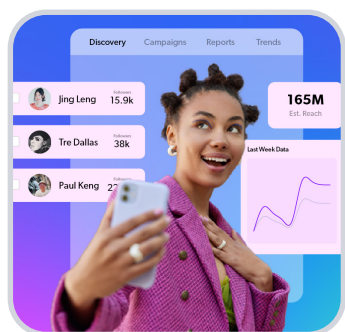
 How to choose the right content and platform for your UGC campaigns

 The value of amplifying your content strategy with content from everyday shoppers and content creators

 How top brands are saving time and money with UGC

 How to generate on-brand and brand-safe content with social UGC

# Shopper and creator content is the ultimate driver of authentic branding

We surveyed over 200 brand marketers and social media managers to understand the types of content most commonly used today and the sentiments towards each.

Marketers ranked branded content (created and owned by the brand) as the most important content — largely due to the ability to control quality and brand guidelines. While it only makes up about a third of photo and video content strategies, branded content takes up a whopping 75% of brands' content budgets.[2]

The other two-thirds of the material making up brands' content strategies is produced by an outside party — from everyday shoppers to mega influencers.



> " We love our creators, especially those who felt so excited or passionate about our brand that they created something interesting, fun, and unique to promote our brand. It's word-of-mouth marketing with a super high return potential.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **Sr. customer marketing manager, food and beverage**

# Types of creators

| | Everyday shoppers | Paid creators (Paid or paid in kind) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Everyday social media users** | **Nano** 2500-10,000 followers | **Micro** 10,000-50,000 followers | **Mid-tier** 50,000-200,000 followers | **Macro** 200,000-500,000 followers |
| **Adherence to brand guidelines** | Low | Medium | | High | |
| **Content volumes** | High | High | | Low | |
| **Follower count** | Low | Medium | | High | |
| **Engagement** | High | Medium | | Medium | |
| **Reach** | Low | Medium | | High | |
| **Budget allocation** | Low | Medium | | High | |
| **Authenticity and credibility** | High | High | | Medium | |
| **Tendency to consent to reuse content** | High | High | | High | |

# CONSUMERS TRUST SHOPPER CONTENT

While brands are heavily invested in brand-created content, the reality is the majority of consumers need to see both branded photos (83%) and shopper photos (76%) in order to make a confident purchase.[2]

And that trust in shopper content has grown over the past five years, as consumers' traditional buying habits have been shaken up after a global pandemic and an economic slowdown. Over the last five years, 78% of consumers have increased or maintained their trust in everyday social users, and 86% have increased or maintained their trust in content creators.
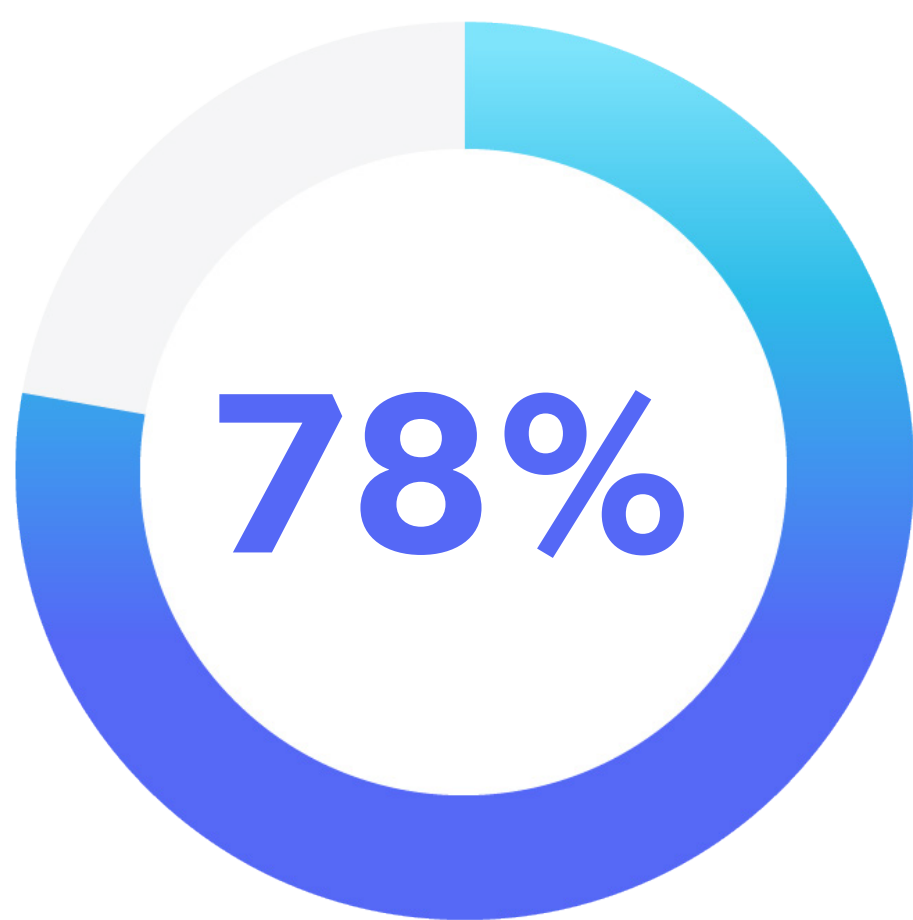
## 78%

**of consumers have increased or maintained their trust in everyday social users**

## 86%
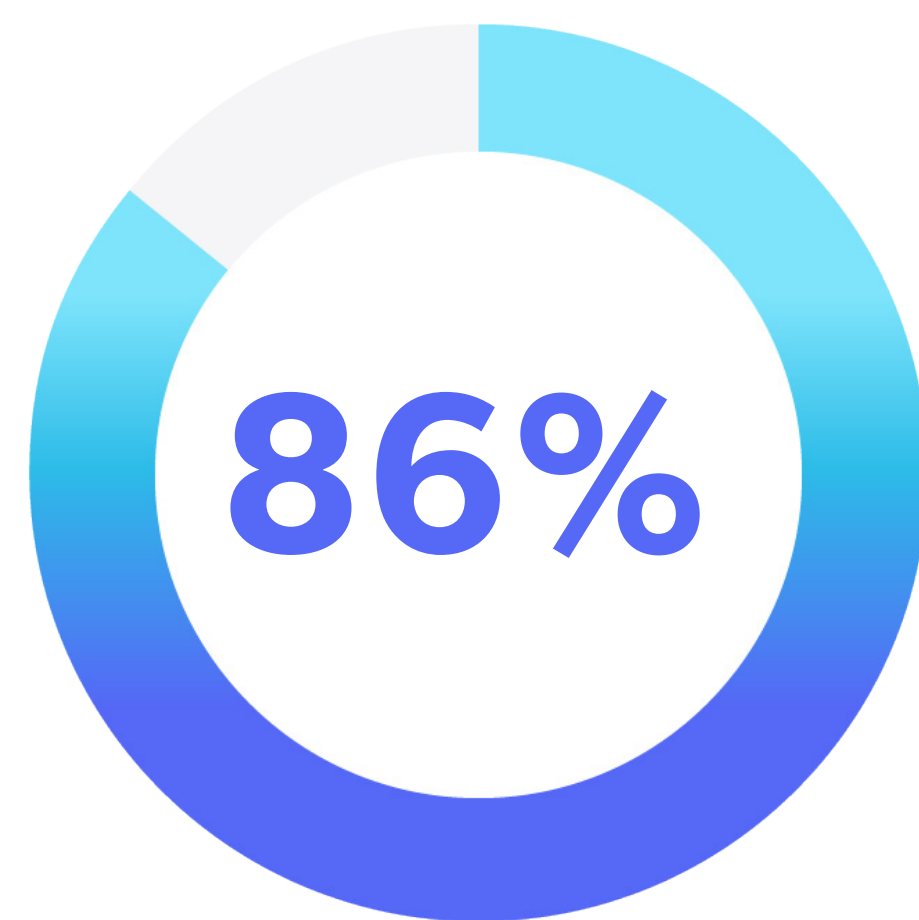
**have increased or maintained their trust in content creators**

> Consumers like to hear what their peers are saying about products. Photos help consumers to visualize a product in 'the real world.' We can all relate to this, and it can be the tipping point in the buyer journey.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **E-commerce content manager, manufacturing**

# Hobbycraft

As the UK's largest arts and crafts retailer, Hobbycraft wanted to showcase creations from other customers to help inspire purchases. With help from Bazaarvoice, the retailer collected shopper content from social media campaigns and added it to their website.
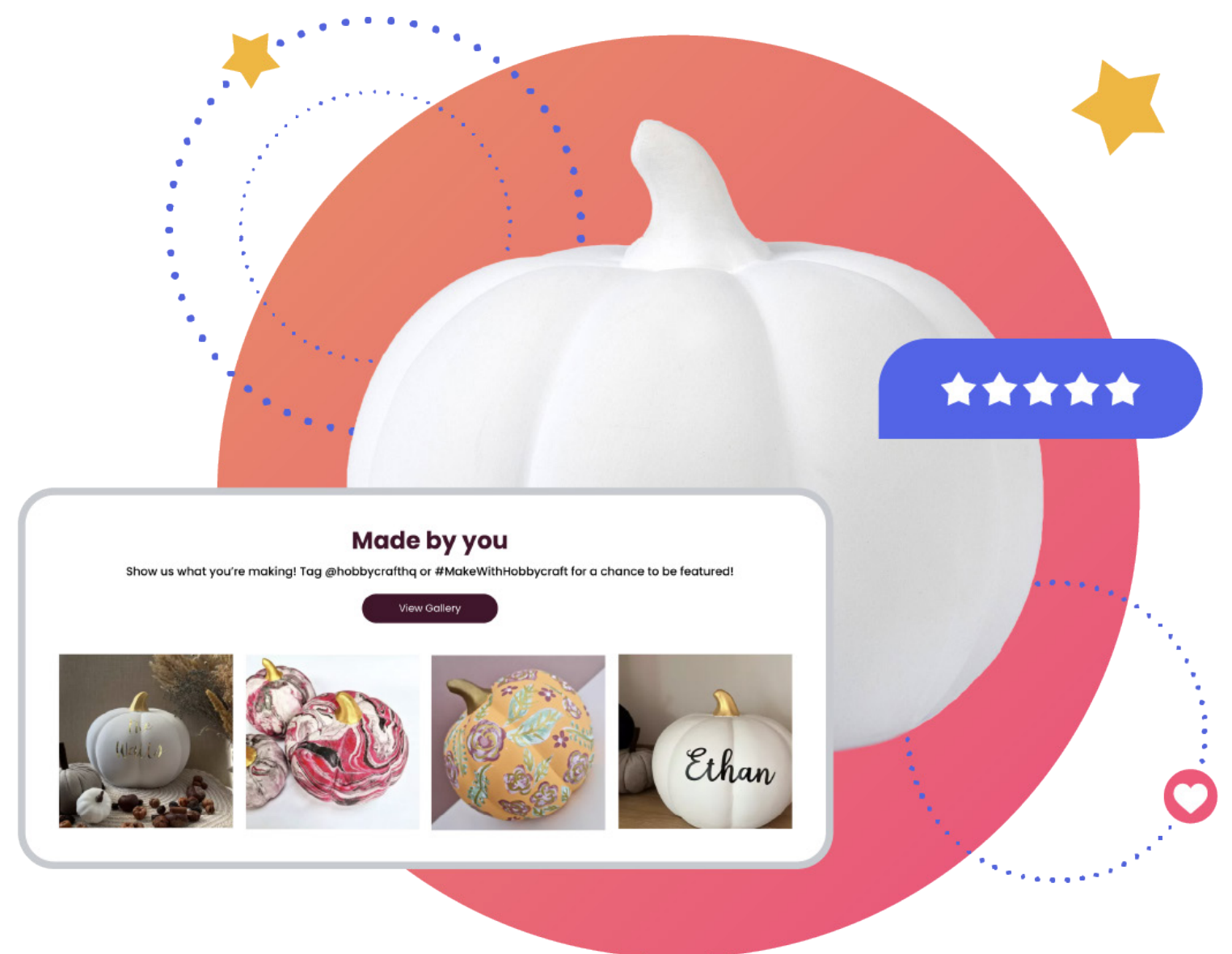
> "
>
> UGC is more authentic to our customers and complements our traditional brand product imagery.
>
> **Lauren Couston**
> **Digital Product Content Manager, Hobbycraft**

This shift in content is paying dividends for Hobbycraft. Incorporating social UGC into their strategy increased their click-through rate by 95%, and Hobbycraft achieved their annual ROI target in only eight months.

The brand also achieved:

| **367%** | **219%** | **24%** |
|---|---|---|
| increase in time on site[5] | increase in conversion rate[5] | increase in average order value |

# SOCIAL IS THE NEW SEARCH

Social media platforms play a huge role throughout every stage of the shopper journey — from product discovery and research to decision making and brand loyalty.

This is especially true for our youngest cohort of 18-24-year-olds:[2]

**79%** often discover products through social (discovery)[2]

**73%** research products via social (consideration)[2]

**73%** have purchased products from social media in the past year (purchase)[2]

**69%** follow their favorite brands on social (loyalty)[2]

Over three quarters (76%) of this segment are more likely to discover a product through social than any other way. Future generations may not search at all as they discover, evaluate, and buy more and more products through social channels.

Discovery is particularly important in the current economic climate, as 70% of shoppers are willing to try a different brand from the one they normally buy. But 55% of shoppers are unlikely to buy a new product if it doesn't have any UGC.[2]
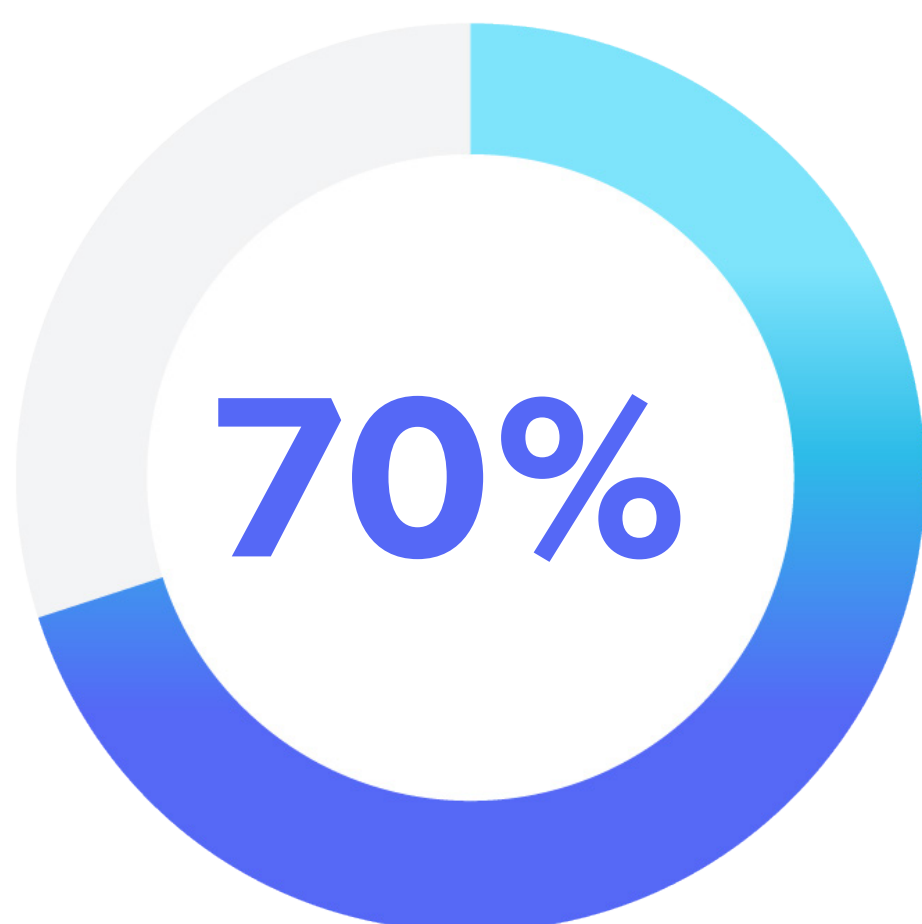
**70%**

**of shoppers are willing to try a different brand from the one they normally buy**

**55%**
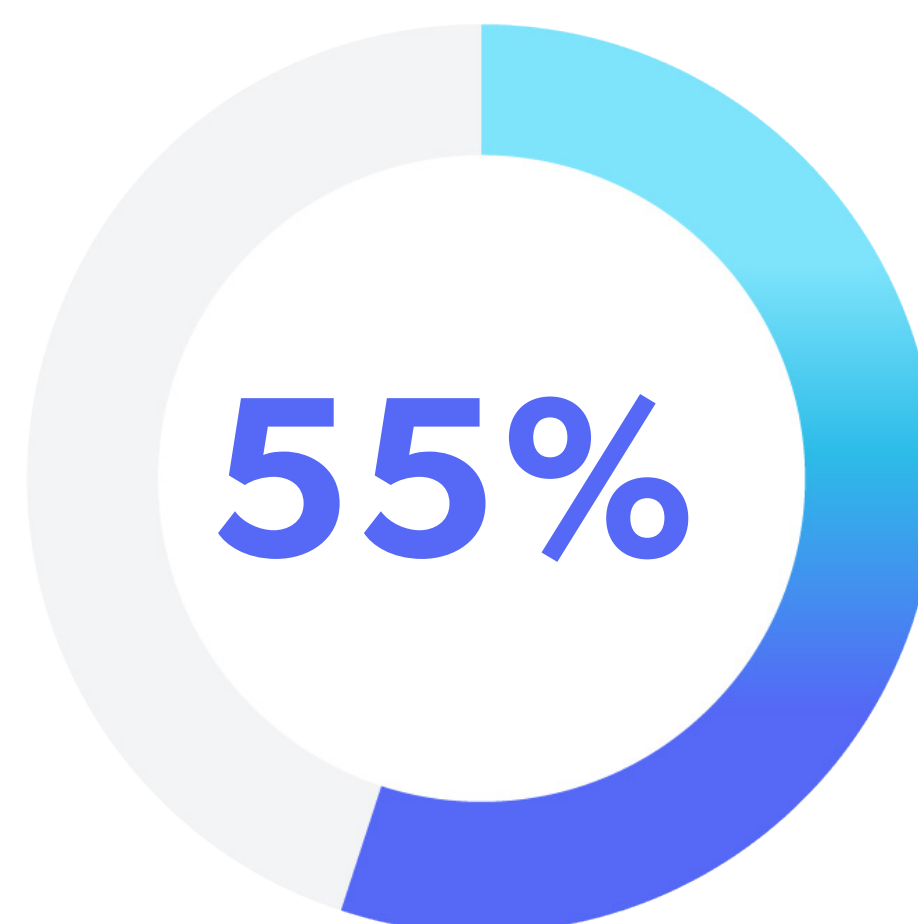
**of shoppers are unlikely to buy a new product if it doesn't have any UGC.[2]**

### IMPROVED REACH AND ENGAGEMENT

UGC can significantly extend a brand's reach beyond its existing audience. When users share content featuring a brand, their friends and followers see it, exposing the brand to a new audience and fostering organic engagement. Reaching these relevant social circles, starting with your core audience, helps you make the most out of every impression.

### REDUCED AD FATIGUE

Consumers are exposed to a massive amount of advertising every day, leading to ad fatigue and banner blindness. Featuring user-generated and creator content in your advertising can help to break through this fatigue by offering fresh, authentic content that's more likely to capture user attention. Hello, increased click-through rates and conversions (ultimately reducing your overall CPM)!

# Parachute

Historically, bedding and bath brand Parachute relied on its brand-created editorial content to provide sleek and eye-catching ads. Now, Parachute embraces the power of UGC in its marketing mix to show consumers how its customers are styling and using its home decor products in everyday life.

After introducing UGC into the mix, Parachute had a greater stream of new, high-quality content to leverage across other marketing initiatives.

> "
>
> We've seen that our customers have a higher propensity clicking on and engaging with rich UGC imagery than traditional product-centric imagery.
>
> **Luke Droulez**
> **CMO, Parachute**

When Parachute incorporated UGC into its retargeting ads, the ads generated:

**35%** higher click-through rate[6]

**60%** lower cost-per-click[6]

## USER-GENERATED CONTENT INCREASES CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

UGC is all about connecting with consumers, building an online community, and creating a conversation between customers and a brand. So it's no surprise that your content receives 28% higher engagement when UGC is integrated alongside your typical posts.[3]

# Rael

Rael entered the beauty space by developing a line of skincare products geared toward usage at different phases of a woman's cycle — like cleansers, toners, and moisturizers.
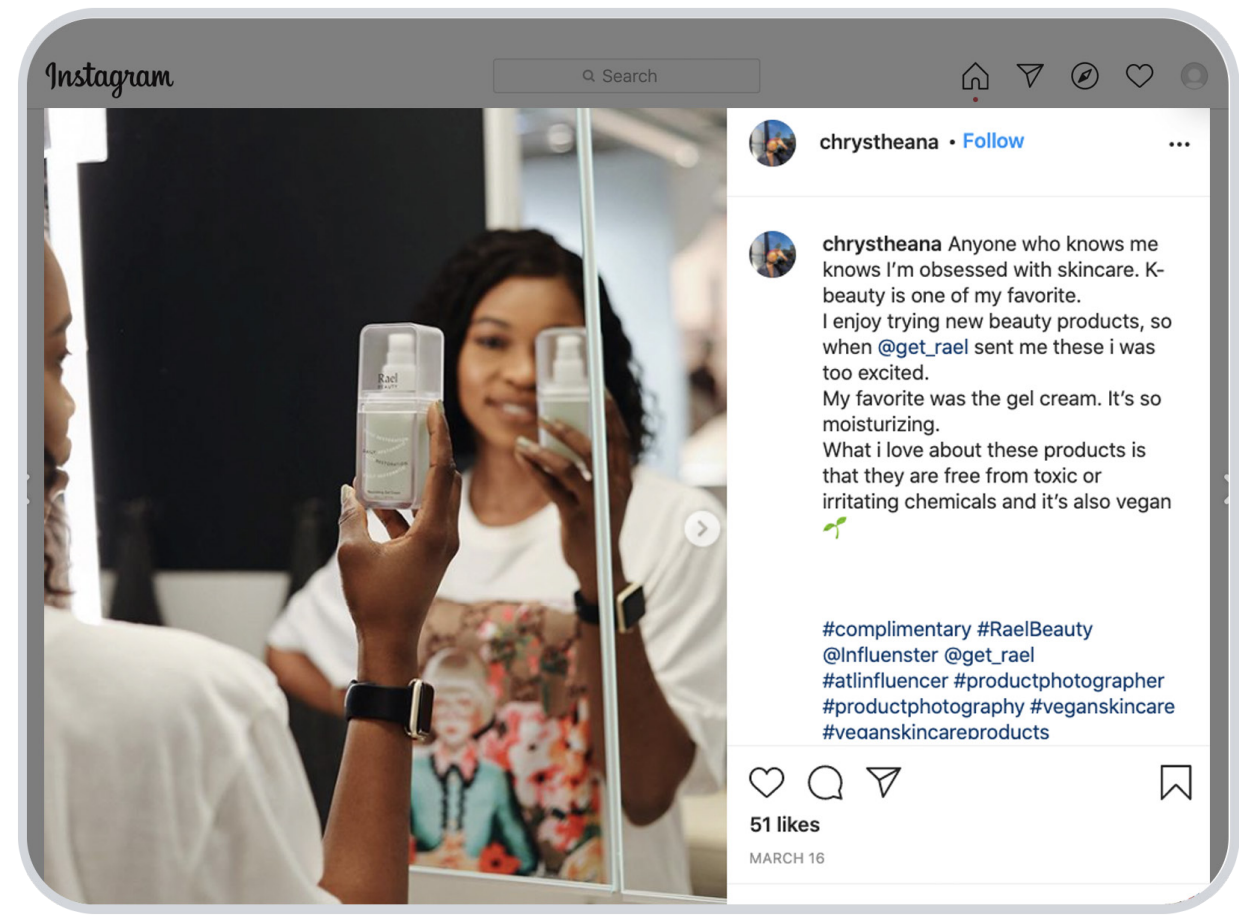


To venture into the new space, Rael needed to build awareness, establish credibility, and drive trials of new products — all of which can be accomplished with social proof from UGC.

Rael used Bazaarvoice's turnkey sampling solution that generates high-quality reviews and social advocacy by sending products to select members of Bazaarvoice's Influenster community. In turn, they boosted their engagement with this content and improved customer sentiment.

Through two sampling campaigns with Bazaarvoice, Rael was able to achieve:

**2,000** custom VoxBoxes sent to target buyers[7]

**9.8M** impressions from social post shares, likes, and comments[7]

> "
> It's all about building trust with consumers…Knowing that people can't touch and feel a product online, and with the sensorial aspect of beauty and skin care, the third-party validation from UGC is so important.
>
> **Sorah Park**
> **CMO, Rael**

What's behind this higher engagement? It comes down to the fact that people want to get in touch with their favorite brands through social media channels. In fact, social UGC contributes a lot to loyalty, with 46% of shoppers often following their favorite brands.[2]

Brands can boost engagement with UGC in a number of ways. Take the luggage brand Samsonite, for example: Samsonite put social media to work and created a summer travel-themed giveaway for the best "out of office" reply, encouraging followers to compete for $2,500 worth of Samsonite goods. With over 27,000 posts, they were able to collect enough visual UGC to expand their product imagery and drive more traffic to product description pages.

The most followed brands on social media are those that share their followers' content. And engagement breeds further engagement, which inspires the creation of more UGC. It's our favorite cycle.

"

By providing a platform for users to share their thoughts and showcase their product usage, UGC facilitates a two-way communication channel where customers can voice their opinions and be acknowledged. Furthermore, we've observed a notable ripple effect: When a few individuals contribute their feedback through [UGC], it stimulates increased interest from others to join the conversation…and collectively contributes to a rich tapestry of experiences associated with our brand.

**Bazaarvoice customer**
**Christopher Payne, Digital Web Experience Director, Rocky Brands**

# SHOPPER CONTENT DRIVES SALES

Shoppers face an abundance of choices, and in light of increasing prices — combined with the increasing uptake of e-commerce and social commerce — we're seeing a change in how consumers discuss, assess, and ultimately buy products.

Globally, 73% of consumers claim to have changed their spending habits. In most cases, consumers are choosing to make fewer purchases and spend less on products, particularly those that are practical (56%), delayable (61%), and non-essential (77%) purchases.[2]

The upside of the downturn is that 70% of consumers are also open to trying a different brand for products they regularly buy.[2] This represents a significant opportunity to attract new customers, drive sales, and build loyalty.

With consumers more cautious than ever when it comes to purchasing decisions, more shoppers are relying on authentic UGC to convince them to buy.

Over a third (35%) of shoppers say they depend more on UGC during challenging economic times. And the trend is particularly strong among younger age groups, with 50% of 18-24-year-olds leaning on shopper content more today than in previous years.[2]

Consumers are looking to UGC — like photos, videos, and social posts — to determine:

❯ **If they are getting value for money (62%)**

❯ **The quality of materials (50%)**

❯ **Whether the product matches the description (44%)**

As a matter of fact, over two-thirds (69%) of consumers claim that photos of products taken by other shoppers impact their purchase decisions more than any other factor.[2]

# Oliver Bonas

Shopping online is convenient but often limits people's ability to envision products in their own homes. On top of that, colors can look different on a webpage versus in real life.
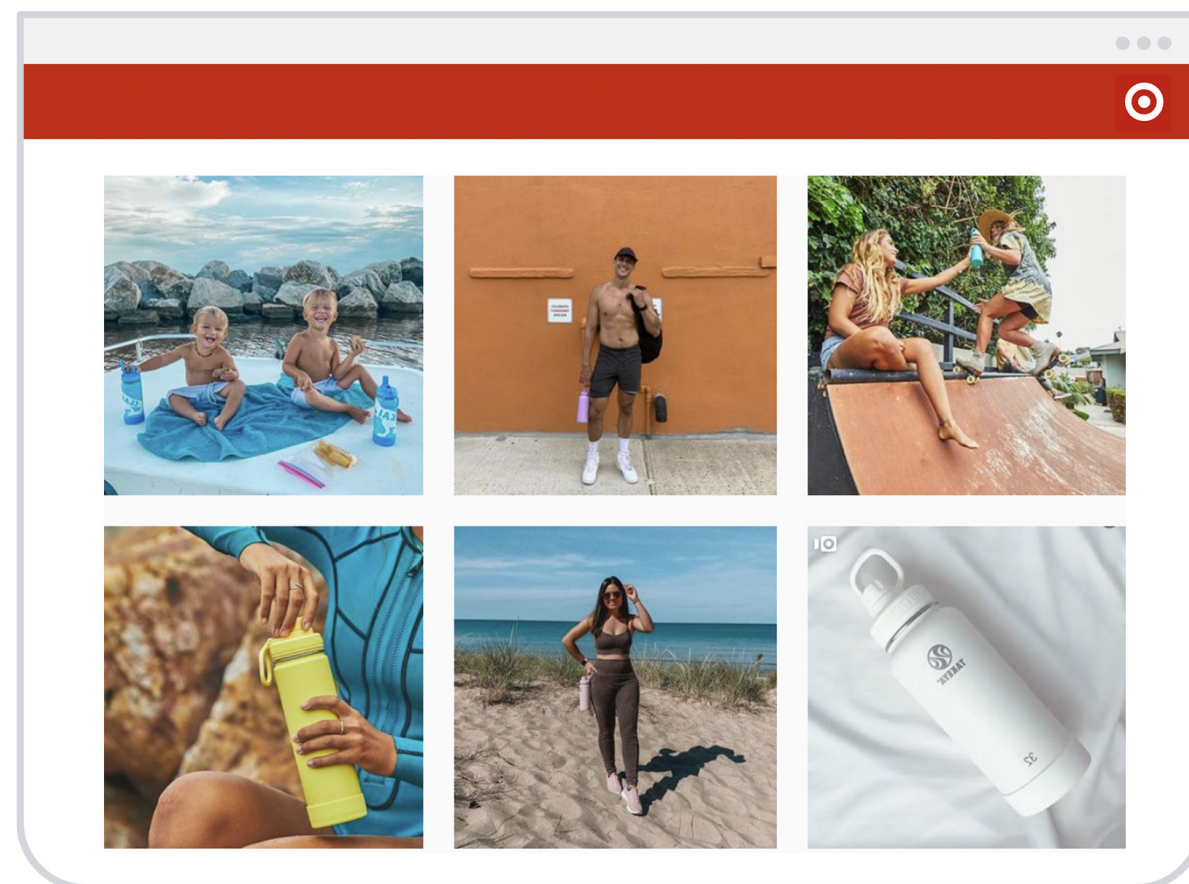


> " This content works as a 'visual review,' allowing customers a better idea of how products look by showing how they're used or styled in a real-life setting or on a real person...Using UGC has also helped us create a sense of community and personality on our site and channels. Our followers have great taste, and we love seeing how they are using their OB products.
>
> **Alice Lewin-Smith**
> **Digital Marketing Manager, Oliver Bonas**

To overcome this hurdle, Independent British lifestyle store Oliver Bonas evolved by working with Bazaarvoice to rely less on just professional product photos and pictures of models and more on social UGC.

With Bazaarvoice, Oliver Bonas enhanced their online experience with strong photos and videos collected from their social community to drive more engagement and conversions, as well as improve customer sentiment towards their brand. They featured UGC on their social media profiles and put shoppable UGC on their homepage, product pages, and other marketing channels.

These efforts helped Oliver Bonas achieve:

| **176%** | **188%** | **26%** |
|---|---|---|
| increase in time on site[8] | conversion lift[8] | boost in average order value[8] |

# "But what about…" Debunking myths about user-generated content

Considering all the ways UGC drives brand performance, it's surprising that most content creation budgets are still spent on branded content. Three-quarters (75%) of brands and retailers still spend over 60% of their budget on this content category.[2]

Fortunately, 67% of brands and retailers intend to increase their spend on UGC in the next year.[5] Those planning to increase their investments are looking to:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **80%** Improve the shopper experience | | **79%** Increase discovery | |
| **78%** Increase conversions | | **74%** Improve product pages | |
| **68%** Improve SEO | | **67%** Improve returns | |

Why have so many brands and retailers waited this long to make the investment in UGC? And what's holding back the rest of them?

Not everyone possesses expertise in influencer marketing or UGC. With this lack of hands-on experience, various myths have emerged. Here are some common concerns we've encountered.

**MYTH #1**

# FINDING AND CURATING UGC IS TOO TIME CONSUMING

Creating branded content often involves significant production time. In fact, most marketers say it takes between one and six hours to create a single piece of content.[23] It's no wonder most digital marketing teams are *busy*.

And time is one of our most valuable assets. It can be daunting to think about executing a robust UGC strategy on top of your current branded content efforts.

But studies show that working with an end-to-end UGC platform can improve the productivity of your content operations by 30% — taking some of the stress off your shoulders.[9]

Our newest affable.ai technology can also save you valuable time on your UGC operations by helping you find the best creators and influencers for your brand and budget. With Bazaarvoice's affable.ai solution, marketers save up to 80% of the time it typically takes to run creator marketing campaigns.[3] On top of the technology, the service offered by an end-to-end UGC platform can also save your team time and headaches. For instance, product sampling programs are a highly effective way to generate shopper content. At Bazaarvoice, we offer a white glove sampling experience that saves customers up to 34 hours they would otherwise spend on sampling efforts,[3] including:

- **Custom box designs**
- **Fulfillment**
- **Online and in-store activations**
- **Member targeting, selection, and communications**

> "
>
> Working with Bazaarvoice to collect UGC freed bandwidth, allowing marketing teams to focus on expanding the scale of outreach and analyzing content performance.
>
> **Forrester**
> **The Total Economic Impact of Bazaarvoice**

# SHOPPER CONTENT IS TOO EXPENSIVE

Groceries are getting awfully expensive these days, but our families still need to eat. Similarly, marketing budgets are getting pretty tight, but you're still expected to feed the business by producing the same results — or better.

Because of this, we all have to get creative, think differently, and shop around to maximize our resources.

When you actually crunch the numbers, branded content is more expensive for less return compared to UGC. Only 33% of brands' content is brand-created, yet it takes up an average of 72% of the content budget.[1] And despite the high levels of investment, it can still feel like you never have enough branded content.

Conversely, the ROI of using an end-to-end UGC platform like Bazaarvoice is incontrovertible. Forrester reported a 400% ROI for using the Bazaarvoice platform — that's a $4 return for every dollar spent![9] The analyst firm's Total Economic Impact of Bazaarvoice also reported:

> **3-month payback period**

> **4X increase in conversion rates**

> **2.71% contribution to total revenue**

> "
>
> We would highly recommend [Bazaarvoice] affable.ai for its insights on influencers and tracking and reporting capabilities. The process is a lot easier and convenient in getting details such as engagement rate and reach of influencers, which helps us curate our content more efficiently.
>
> **Celisse Ng**
> **Marketing Manager, L'Occitane**

That's because not only does shopper content cost less to produce, it's also more authentic and trustworthy to shoppers — leading to higher conversions, increased revenue, and ongoing loyalty. The variety in UGC also allows brands to be more responsive to a wider variety of content needs as they arise.

Finally, UGC pays residual dividends in the form of brand awareness. Campaigns that use the Bazaarvoice Influenster community to generate social content garner, on average, $3M total monthly earned media value.[10]

> "
>
> [Everyday shoppers] make authentic and relatable content that has the potential to reach a wide audience or go viral — and it's only the cost of product samples. We save having to pay them what could be thousands of dollars for similar content.
>
> **Sr. customer marketing manager, food and beverage**

## BAZAARVOICE INFLUENSTER COMMUNITY

Brands use Influenster to connect with the right samplers and advocates to try products, share authentic reviews, and create stunning visual content.

> Access a global community of 8 million+ members[21]

> Who have created 255,000+ social posts[10]

> And add 500,000 new pieces of UGC monthly[22]

> "
>
> Marketing today has a strong focus on meticulously crafted visuals and stories. User-generated content serves as our compass, leading us towards authentic connections with our customers. It transcends the mere transaction of products; rather, it encourages the art of narrative storytelling — a deliberate effort to construct a compelling discourse that aligns seamlessly with the genuine experiences of our most loyal customers.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **Christopher Payne, Digital Web Experience Director, Rocky Brands**

**MYTH #3**

# UNPOLISHED CUSTOMER CONTENT WILL LOOK UNPROFESSIONAL

We've heard some marketers are worried about the quality of shopper content — after all, maintaining your brand standards is important. Thankfully, there are steps you can take to make sure you're getting quality content from both your paid collaborations and everyday shoppers.

> "
>
> Capturing UGC organically can be a challenge, but the Influenster community is highly engaged, and we saw this as a good way to drive purchase intent.
>
> **Michael Kremer**
> **CMO, Pacifica Beauty**

## Provide detailed creator briefs

Teaching your creators about your brand is key to creating content that aligns with your standards and aesthetic. Some of the important elements to include in your brief include:

- ❯ **Your brand story:** Relay the story you want to tell — not just the content you want.

- ❯ **Product usage:** Is there a certain way the product should be used? Will the content show utility, or should it be an unboxing?

- ❯ **Encourage authenticity.** Your consumers want transparency, and it will help build brand trust in the long run. Make sure creators tag your brand and/or include a unique hashtag for the campaign. Don't forget to include #ad to comply with FTC requirements.

- ❯ **Don't hold information back.** You are enlisting a creator to help get the word out on behalf of your brand. The more they know, the better the outcome. Be upfront about any legal guidelines, and don't be afraid to share photo inspiration.

## Educate on content quality

You should also make sure your everyday shoppers and social media users are fully aware of the fundamentals of content creation. At Bazaarvoice, we champion The 3Cs education to ensure that UGC quality is top-notch:

❯ **Clarity** — Good light and focus. Is the image bright, clean, and crisp?

❯ **Center of attention** — Show the product front and center. Are products in focus and taken at a good angle?

❯ **Context** — Share how you use it. Is the product incorporated into an activity or routine?

We've built this education into our Influenster community; guided tutorials that appear across the Influenster journey teach members how to create strong photos.

And we've seen some amazing results with this approach. Brands and retailers achieve:[11]

❯ **566 million total impressions from social campaigns**

❯ **37 million total earned media value from social campaigns**

❯ **5% average social engagement from sampling participants**

Remember, part of the appeal of UGC is its authenticity, which makes it the most trustworthy form of content. In fact, 80% of consumers prefer to see real customer photos over stock photos.[11] When it comes down to it, you don't want your content to be overly polished.

> "
> While [UGC] may lack the meticulous curation associated with professional shoots, its comparatively lower or nonexistent expenses yield more genuine depictions of our products. This stands in contrast to the potential perception of [highly produced] content as promotional material, often incurring higher costs for a few shots that may be perceived by customers as advertisements rather than authentic representations of the product.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **Christopher Payne, Digital Web Experience Director, Rocky Brands**

**MYTH #4**

# I'M WORRIED ABOUT MY BRAND SAFETY

Investing in UGC can feel like a gamble. There are a lot of variables to working with so many shoppers and influencers outside of your brand — finding content that aligns with your brand, ensuring content volume, managing legal rights, and more.

But adding shopper content to your strategy doesn't have to be risky. You can simplify the process and maintain control of your program with an end-to-end UGC platform like Bazaarvoice that keeps content proactive, brand safe, and compliant.
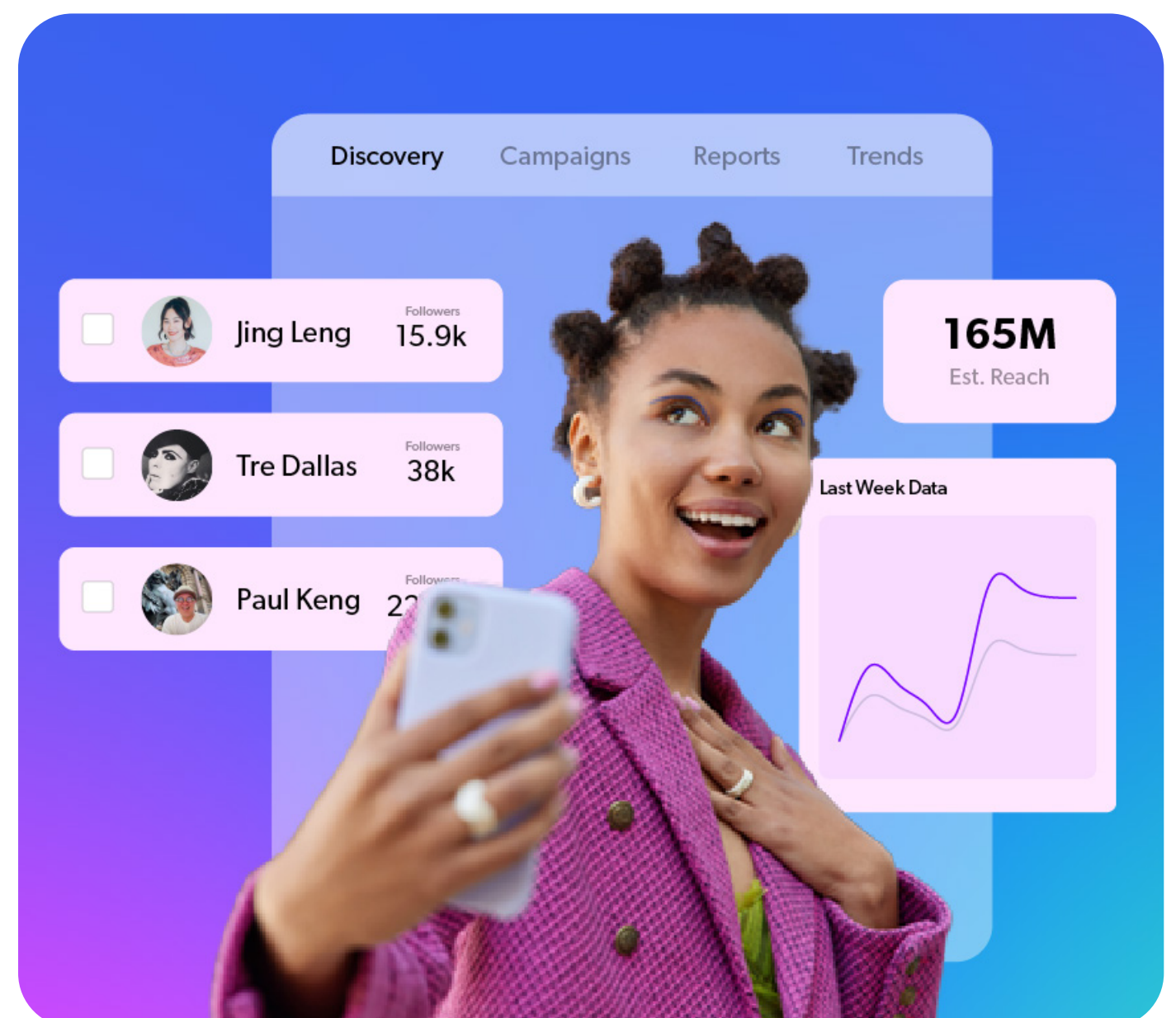


▶ **Identification:** Bazaarvoice affable.ai uses AI to help you find the most relevant and brand-safe influencers — it's as easy as entering a single text prompt, moodboard, or even a lookalike profile.

▶ **Curation:** Choose from pre-scored content. Our platform proactively recommends the best pieces to display, so you don't have to guess.

▶ **Moderation:** Keep all of your content on-brand. Bazaarvoice ensures the content you collect meets your brand guidelines (so you never display swear words or inappropriate photos, for example).

▶ **Compliance:** Avoid fines and fraudulent content. We ensure UGC meets all rapidly changing global standards and regulations to reduce your risk. Plus, our platform integrates advanced fraud detection technology and tracks content across the world's largest syndication network to detect fraud patterns others can't see.

All the authentication and moderation means increased brand safety, heightened consumer trust — and ultimately, more sales.

# How to craft an authentic user-generated content marketing strategy

## GENERATE ON-BRAND CONTENT WITH INFLUENCER PARTNERSHIPS

We might be living in the creator economy, but not all creators will be an authentic fit for your brand. To generate high-quality, on-brand content — from reviews to visual content to social content — you need to partner with the right creators.

The more you can match your creator to your customers, the more likely your creator is to resonate with your target audience. Age, gender, ethnicity, location, education, household income…you get the idea. But make sure to go beyond typical demographics. The secret sauce is looking at shopper behavior, current product preferences, interests, etc.

Finally, your creators must authentically align with your brand messaging and purpose.

Once you've found your creators, you need to clearly share what you expect from them and what you're looking to accomplish. Remember, to increase the likelihood that you get just the right content for your campaign, you should:

1. Provide a detailed brief that includes your brand story.

2. Educate your creator on what you consider to be quality content.

> " I remember when I was asked to partner with a baby toy company. If they did some more research on me, they'd realize that I don't have a child or younger siblings, and I'm not expecting soon. So if I said yes to the collaboration, I'd be putting out content that doesn't make sense.
>
> **Marina Mitrakos**
> **Digital Creator**

While you want to provide plenty of detail and instruction for your creators, don't forget to encourage authenticity and creativity. Shoppers want to see creators' unique personalities and uses of your products.

Pol Sanchez is a micro-influencer known for her quirky videos and vibrant personality. When Fenty Skin partnered with Pol, they made sure to give her free rein to retain the traits and attitude her audience knows and loves. It's this authenticity that fosters trust and creates lasting connections between Fenty and its audience.



This all might seem a bit complicated to execute — thankfully, paid collaborations can be a breeze with the right technology.

With industry-leading technology and automation, Bazaarvoice's affable.ai solution allows marketers to find the right creators, manage collaborations, track campaigns, and measure ROI — all from one platform.

# ACTIVATE SHOPPER COMMUNITIES TO SOURCE HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT

In addition to paid collaborations, you can also tap into existing communities of everyday shoppers to generate authentic, high-quality UGC. There are a few ways to engage with these creators, including product sampling, hashtag campaigns, email requests, and giveaways or contests.

## Product sampling

Burt's Bees relied on well-targeted product sampling to fuel the launch of the brand's cosmetics line.

"We knew reviews could be insurance for new products, and that early qualitative feedback and star ratings would ensure a smooth transition into a new market," said Taylor Steele, Assistant E-commerce Manager at Burt's Bees.



To collect plenty of high-quality consumer content early, Burt's Bees turned to Bazaarvoice Sampling to get pre-released products into the hands of consumers.

Within just two weeks, 94% of those who received a sample submitted a review, resulting in more than 300 reviews with a 4.48 average star rating.[12]

## Branded hashtag campaigns

Putting the spotlight on real people is a key component of fashion brand American Eagle's marketing strategy. After a significant rebrand in 2017, the company shifted its focus towards inclusivity and diversity, which drastically changed its marketing efforts.

Around the time of the rebrand, the company launch #AerieReal — a campaign featuring unretouched photos and plus-size models. The hashtag has since generated nearly 400,000 posts on Instagram, with women of varying shapes, sizes, and ethnicities sharing how their Aerie items fit.

"What we tried to do, going into it, is [figure out] how to take something positive and inclusive and make it really desirable and engaging and give it a voice," explained American Eagle's CMO Kyle Andrew.[13]

With nearly 120,000 Instagram posts, the hashtag #AEjeans has also racked up some impressive engagement and populates a gallery full of content on American Eagle's website (shout out to Bazaarvoice Social Commerce!).

These hashtag campaigns have helped American Eagle achieve their goal of building an inclusive community and instilling trust in consumers — with the company announcing increased revenue and an expanding customer base over the past few years.[15]
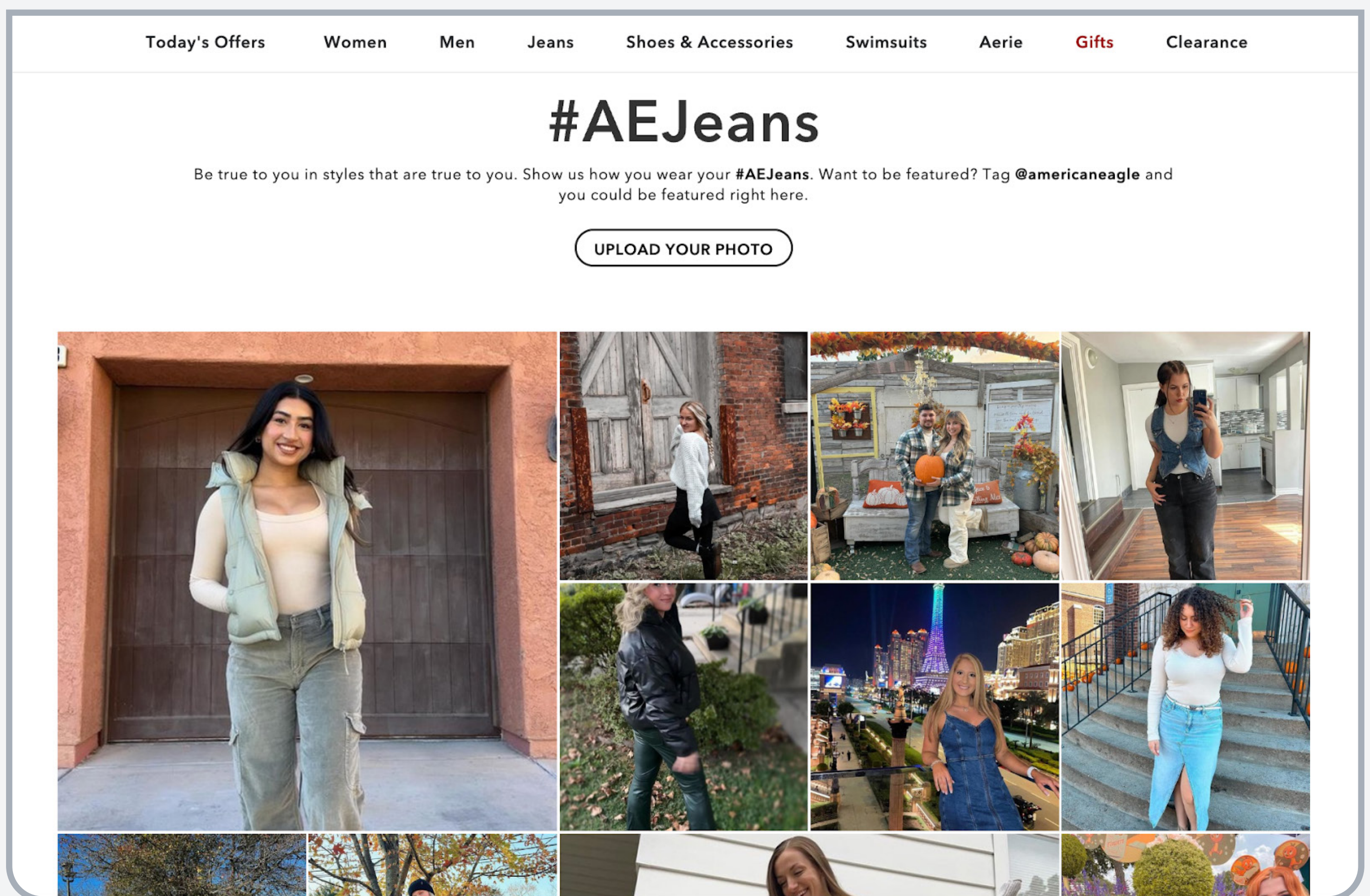
## Giveaways and contests

Giveaways and contests are a highly effective way to generate shopper content as well as excitement about your brand and products. And, if possible, collaborative giveaways offer the additional benefit of introducing your products to a broader audience.

For example, well-known cosmetics brand e.l.f. Beauty launched an #elfgameup challenge to promote their Twitch channel and new makeup set. It encouraged followers to share videos of their makeup looks using the hashtag for a chance to win prizes.

With 2.1 million views of the hashtag, e.l.f. amped up its brand awareness, creating a gamified experience that shoppers anticipated and engaged with.
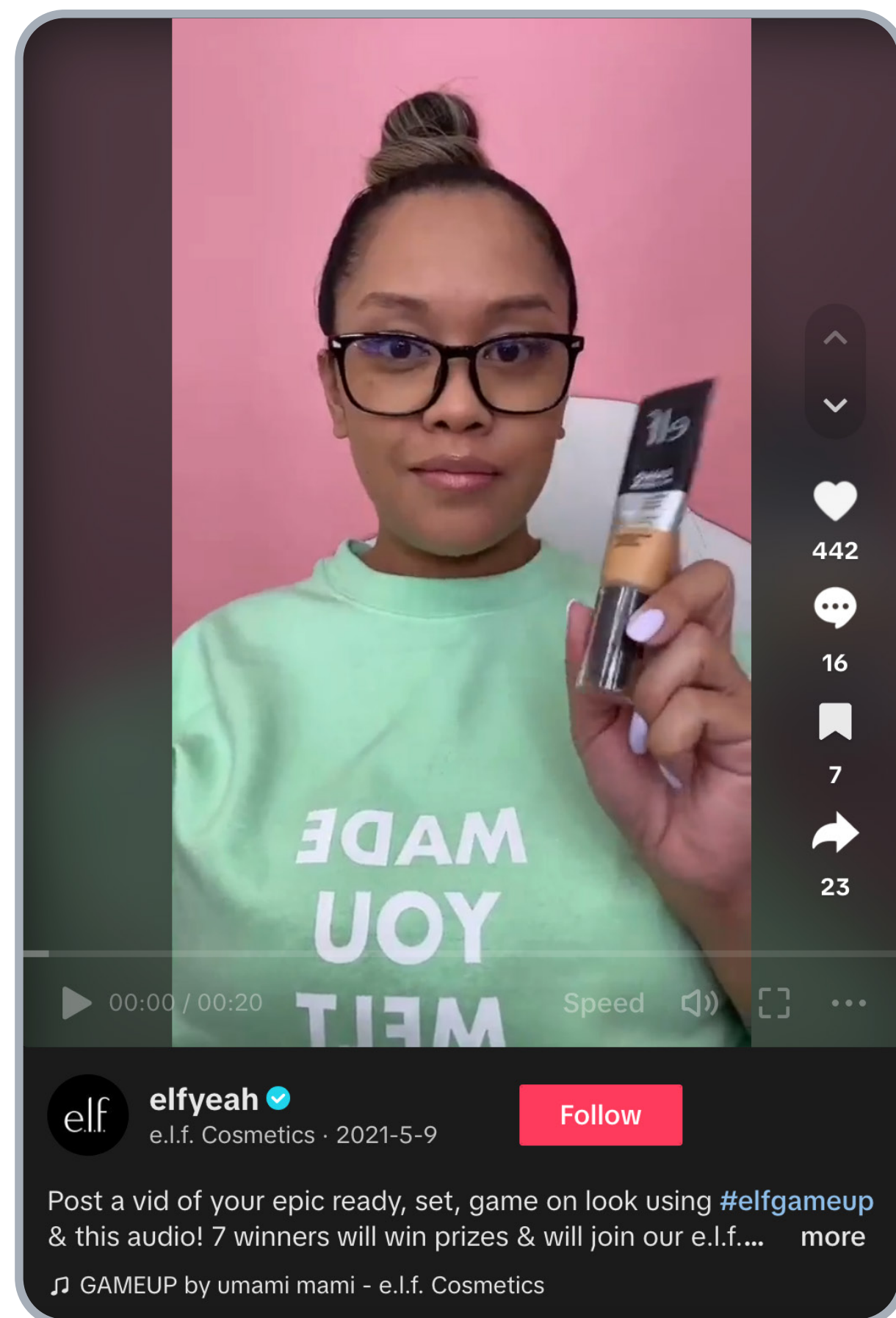


# DISPLAY UGC ACROSS THE SHOPPER JOURNEY

Curating content is only the first step to an effective UGC strategy. The next step is using that content to populate all of your channels throughout the customer journey — social, advertising, on-site galleries, product pages, email, in-store, you name it.

"Not having a robust omnichannel strategy is now a key barrier to success," said Ainslie Fincham, Marketing Director at Urban Barn. "We work to make every avenue available to our shoppers helpful in making a decision to convert, no matter where they end up making a purchase — be it in-store, online, or via social media."

Since customers who interact with UGC are twice as likely to convert, it's crucial to display this content at every interaction.[2] This instills confidence in consumers every time they come across your brand, increasing the odds that they'll find inspiration and click to buy something.

Social content is particularly important when it comes to piquing shoppers' interest — nearly 70% say social has inspired them to make a purchase.[2]

But once you've inspired your shoppers, you need to make it as easy as possible for them to find the products featured in that content. 54% of shoppers say they'd be more likely to buy a product on social if they could click the post and get product info right on the platform.[2]

People are busy, and they don't want to comb through your site — or worse, Google — to find the products you've just piqued their interest in.

Enter: shoppable experiences.

Imagine scrolling through TikTok or Instagram and a post with shopper content catches your eye. You can tap it, read or watch the review, and purchase the product — without going to a different website for the transaction.

It's easy, convenient, and encourages conversion.

Whether using Instagram's link in bio, a shoppable on-site gallery, or anything in between, all of your content should be seamlessly linked to buy functionality. **This is the crux of social commerce conversion and the key to driving revenue.**
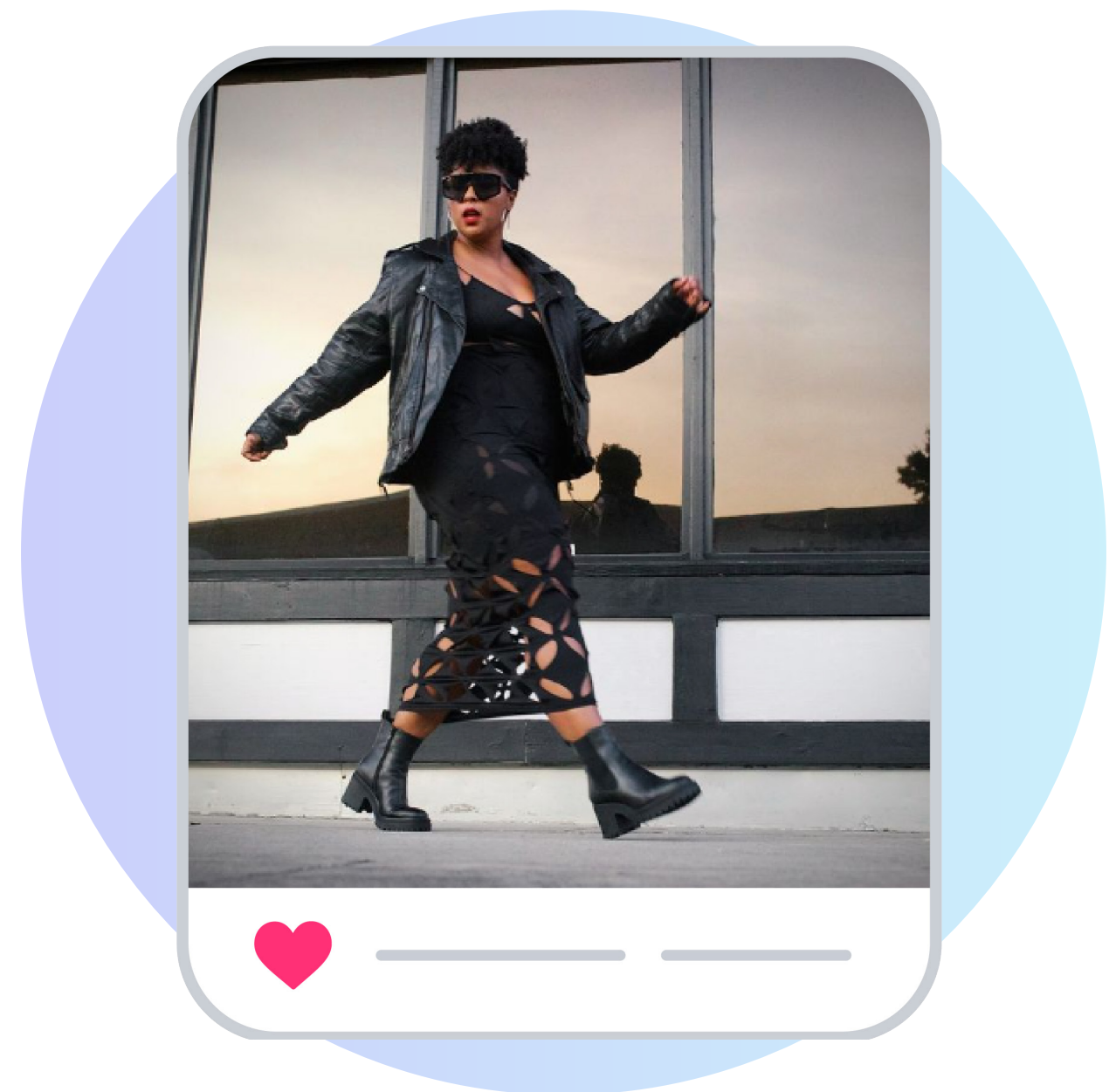
**TURN SOCIAL CONTENT INTO SHOPPABLE EXPERIENCES THAT DRIVE SALES WITH BAZAARVOICE SOCIAL COMMERCE.**[16]

> Up to 140% increase in conversion from shoppable social content on site

> Up to 15% increase in average order value

> Up to 308% increase in time on site

# Le Col

Premium cycling gear company Le Col was looking to reach new customers by using a shopper content strategy that promotes advocacy and loyalty from expert cyclists. The team cleverly integrated expert reviews and quotes with authentic customer photos in a shoppable on-site gallery to help shoppers feel confident about their purchases.

> "
>
> It improved the site experience, and we've seen great results. Customers who engage with our gallery are five times more likely to convert and are spending 12% higher [average order value].
>
> **Andrew Longley**
> **Head of Digital, Le Col**

Results of the unique gallery include:

| 5X | 12% | 25% |
|---|---|---|
| higher conversion rate[17] | higher average order value[17] | higher than average uplift in site metrics[17] |

# How to measure the success of user-generated content

It's common to focus on volume when investing in content, especially because it's one of the easiest measures to count. But when it comes to UGC, the benefit to your brand goes far beyond the number of shopper photos, videos, and reviews produced.

## Measure UGC on product detail pages

One of the easiest places to measure impact on revenue is the product detail page (PDP). Bazaarvoice's Social Commerce solution allows you to measure what content is converting at the highest rate. Revenue also goes hand in hand with content quality — which can be measured through indicators like quantity of reviews with media and helpfulness votes.

> "
>
> UGC serves as a valuable investment for your product team by providing real-time insights into the performance of your products. It acts as a dynamic feedback loop, showcasing which products are perceived as 'rock stars' by customers and identifying areas that may need improvement. This information enables your product team to make informed decisions, ultimately contributing to the overall enhancement of your product line.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **Christopher Payne, Digital Web Experience Director, Rocky Brands**

## Measure UGC on social media

Measurement looks a little different on social than on PDPs, but content quality should still be the focus. Whether you're examining the likelihood to regram on your feed or measuring engagement, Bazaarvoice has tools to help you easily do that in one platform. Our Social Commerce tools even let you track which social content leads to transactions.

### Recent post performance

| PUBLISH DATE | IMPR. | REACH | ENG. RATE | LINK CLICKS | REVENUE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| June 26, 2023<br>1:32 PM<br>View Details | 78,203 | 73,729 | 6.54% | 2,576 | $938.37 |
| June 25, 2023<br>3:15 PM<br>View Details | 87,367 | 48,359 | 7.89% | 7,847 | $456.29 |

## Measure the brand halo effect

One of the most beneficial aspects of content activation campaigns is the overarching halo effect, or the lasting influence on the brand.

Sampling products to shoppers, for example, not only boosts those individual products — it also boosts other products and overall brand performance. 86% of shoppers who receive product samples say the samples increased their overall brand favorability, and 66% actually switch to regularly using the sampled brand.[18]

We worked with market research company IRI and global cosmetics brand Rimmel to quantify this lift.

# Rimmel

Rimmel was looking to raise awareness of their new Wonder Ombre Holographic eyeliner and revitalize consumer interest in one of their core mascara products. The British cosmetics brand partnered with Bazaarvoice to get products into the hands of targeted consumers using custom sampling boxes.

The brand collected 1,200+ product reviews, which were displayed on Influenster, the brand's site, and syndicated to retail partner sites. The sampling campaign also resulted in 15.7 million impressions across 2,400 social posts from consumers.
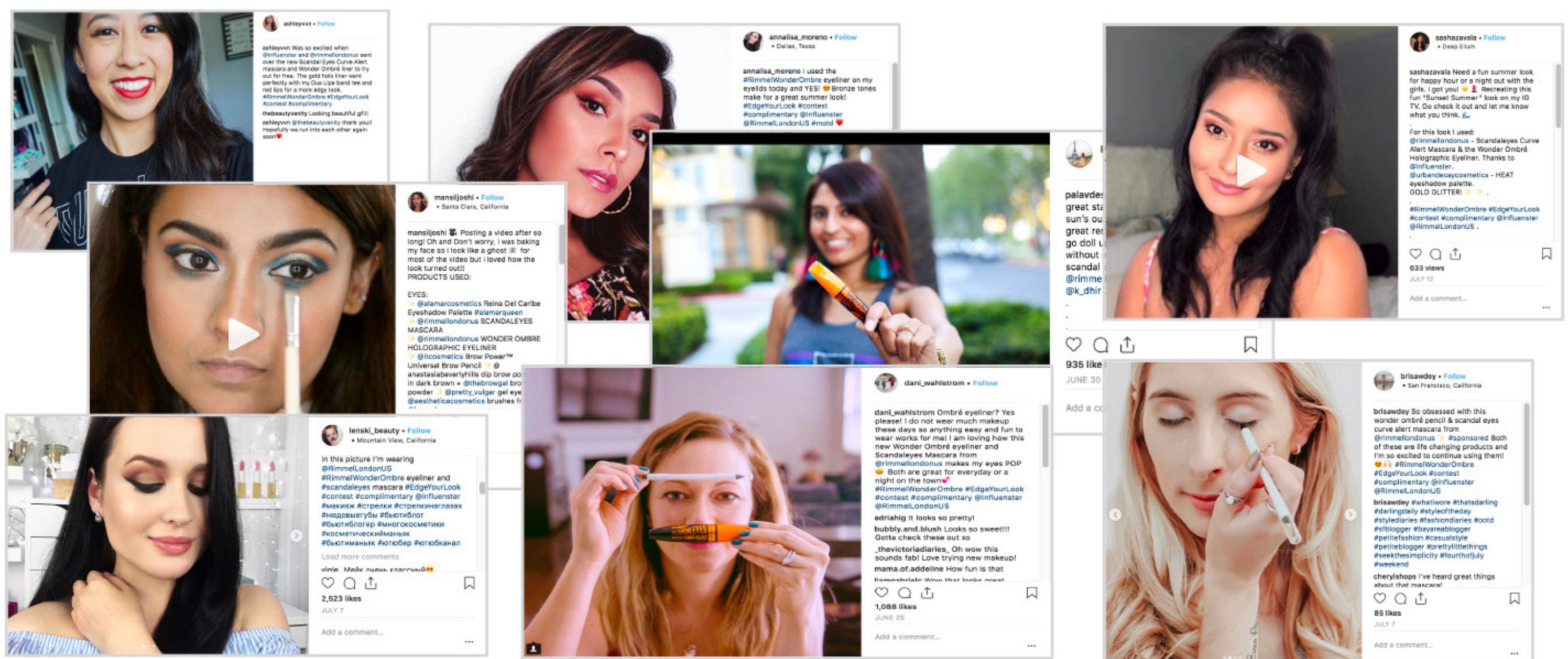


And all of this creator content generated real impact for Rimmel:

| 44% | 69% | 73% |
|---|---|---|
| higher sales lift versus the benchmark for average digital campaigns in the beauty category[19] | higher sales lift versus benchmark for the product categories in which the sampled products[19] | said they were likely to purchase something from Rimmel in the next six months[19] |

## Measure via consumer insights

Reviews also hold a goldmine of insights that can change the way you craft your brand strategy, such as key drivers of positive and negative sentiment. While seeing complaints about your products is never fun, negative feedback in particular, can provide some of your most powerful insights.

For example, you might uncover discrepancies between the descriptions of your products and the perception of those products by customers. Paying attention to customer pain points allows you to fix issues before earning a negative reputation and win back customers. This improves product perception and shows brand responsiveness.

> "
> We gauge the strength of product approval or disapproval by analyzing the rate of UGC collection around specific products. This allows us to swiftly recognize [popular products] as well as areas that may need enhancement, enabling our team to respond promptly and effectively to the dynamic landscape of consumer feedback.
>
> **Bazaarvoice customer**
> **Christopher Payne, Digital Web Experience Director, Rocky Brands**

# Nestlé

By collecting and leveraging UGC with Bazaarvoice, Nestlé Canada allows customers to directly inform brand strategy. Customer reviews and questions provide the Nestlé team with an in-depth look into their customers' minds, and the brand increasingly relies on insights from reviews to inform product development.

A few years ago, Nestlé made some changes to one of their customers' favorite iced tea products. But after tweaking a few of the ingredients, Nestlé saw a slew of negative customer complaints and reviews — then sales dropped.

Nestlé's CX team shared these reviews and sales numbers with the brand team, and within several months, Nestlé reverted to the original iced tea formula. The average customer rating increased from 1.7 to 4 stars.

> "
>
> Consumers do the talking for us. They speak, and we listen and take action. We're fortunate that our leadership really understands the values of a platform for consumers to share their opinions and voices.[20]
>
> **Lee Beech**
> **Director of Consumer Experience, Nestlé Canada**

# Advance your content measurement with cutting-edge technology

It's a heck of a lot easier to measure UGC performance with an end-to-end platform in place. Up your game with actionable performance insights from Bazaarvoice.

**Insights and Reports** offers a user-friendly dashboard to track and analyze the different types of UGC — from reviews to Q&A to social media posts. Easily prepare for important meetings, improve products and messaging, prioritize resources, and feel confident about adopting strategies that will make the biggest impact on your bottom line.

**Social Commerce Analytics** provide an easy way to measure performance for all social efforts and creator campaigns. Identify your top-performing content and creators and gain powerful competitor and influencer insights. Analyze top media by views, product clicks, and revenue attributed to each social post and gallery video or photo.

**Bazaarvoice's affable.ai technology** is an end-to-end AI-powered creator marketing tool that helps marketers activate campaigns in the shortest time. With industry-leading technology and automation, marketers can find the right creators, manage collaborations, track campaigns, and measure ROI — all from one platform.

# Key takeaways

Your teams are probably used to a content strategy heavy on brand-created content. Diversifying your content supply chain to champion all types of content including brand, shopper, and influencer content types may seem like stepping into the Wild West — new setting, unknown players, maybe a few rogue pistols and rattlesnakes.

But at the end of the day, UGC works. Here's what you should remember:

- ❯ **Consumers trust shopper content and need to view it alongside brand content —** 78% of consumers feel more confident in a purchase when they view content from other shoppers.[2]

- ❯ **Leveraging UGC can save you significant time on content production.** In fact, the right content platform can improve your productivity by 30%.

- ❯ **Implementing UGC gives you a huge bang for your buck.** Forrester reported a 400% ROI for using the Bazaarvoice platform — that's a $4 return for every dollar spent.

- ❯ **Put the airbrush down.** Part of the appeal of UGC is its authenticity, and 80% of consumers prefer to see real customer photos over highly produced and edited photos.

- ❯ **An end-to-end UGC platform** like Bazaarvoice moderates your content at scale and keeps content brand-safe and compliant, no matter what level of creator you have in your content mix.

**Learn more**    **Get started on your UGC strategy today**

**bazaarvoice** ®

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Thousands of the world's leading brands and retailers trust Bazaarvoice technology, services, and expertise to drive revenue, extend reach, gain actionable insights, and create loyal advocates. Bazaarvoice's extensive global retail, social, and search syndication network, product-passionate community, and enterprise-level technology provide the tools brands and retailers need to create smarter shopper experiences across the entire customer journey.

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