A comprehensive guide to

UGC for e-commerce

Coffee

★★★★☆

Add to cart

Awaken your senses, sip the perfection. Share yours with **#CoffeeBliss**
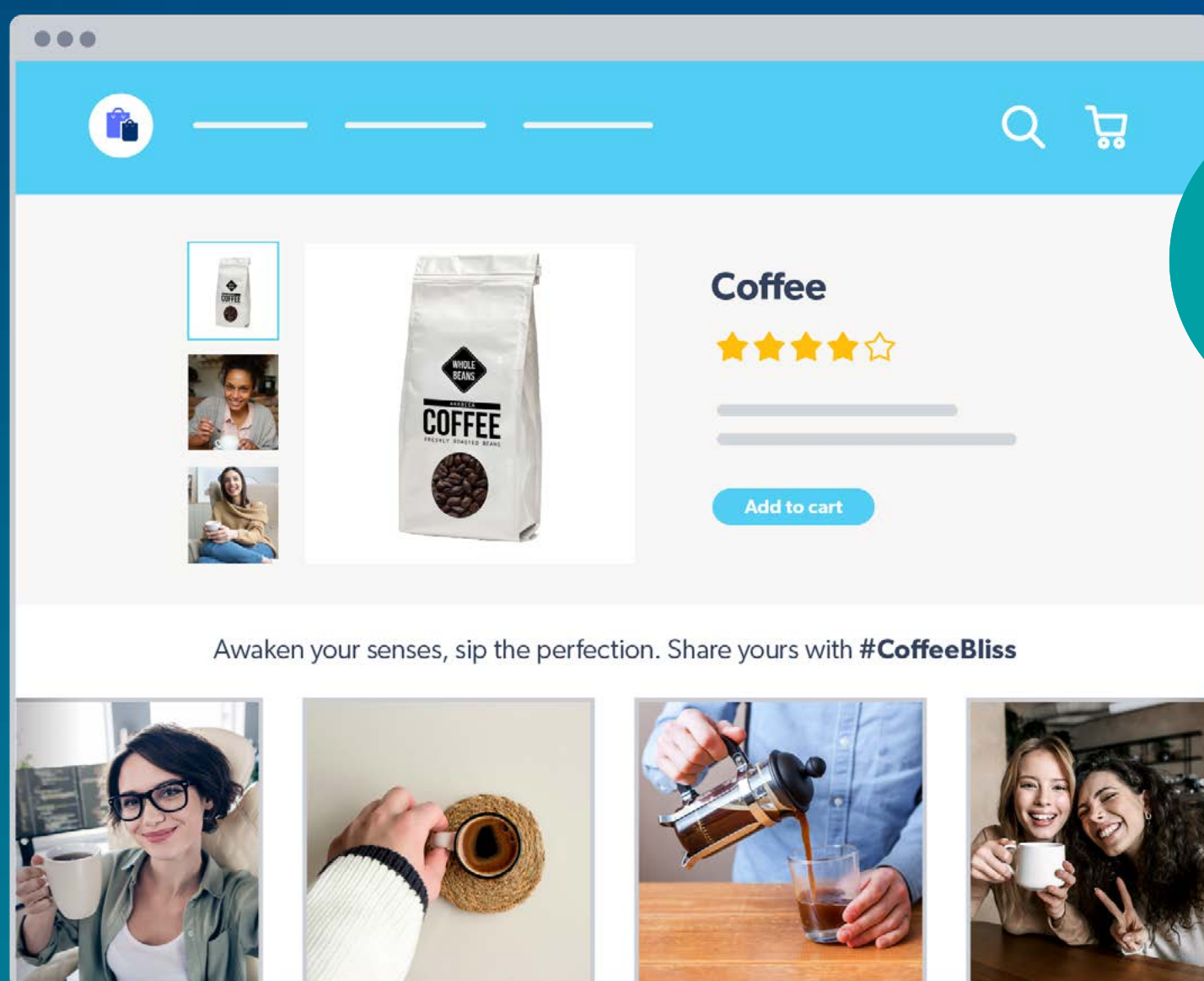
b:
bazaarvoice™

What's inside

Introduction

Commerce has shifted — brands and retailers are no longer leading the charge and dictating how and what consumers buy. Consumers are undoubtedly more effective at selling products than brands in today's commerce landscape.

But as marketers, we're biased toward branded content. And we've spent a sizable percentage of our budget and time creating it. In 2021 alone, brands spent $7 billion on advertising to inform and influence consumer behavior.

**The fact is shoppers want to hear from other shoppers.**

83% of shoppers surveyed in our 2022 Shopper Experience Index said they trust organic posts from influencers more than sponsored posts.[1] And user-generated content (UGC) outperforms branded content on all counts, authenticity included.

If engaging consumers solely by pushing messages through advertising no longer works, what does? Brands must empower their customers to advocate and sell on their behalf. Companies that pursue a UGC marketing strategy will increase their revenue, conversion rate, SEO impact, and in-store sales (if applicable).

Here's how to get those results.

★★★★★

This watch has been such an amazing addition to my workouts! I highly recommend this product for any fitness fan.
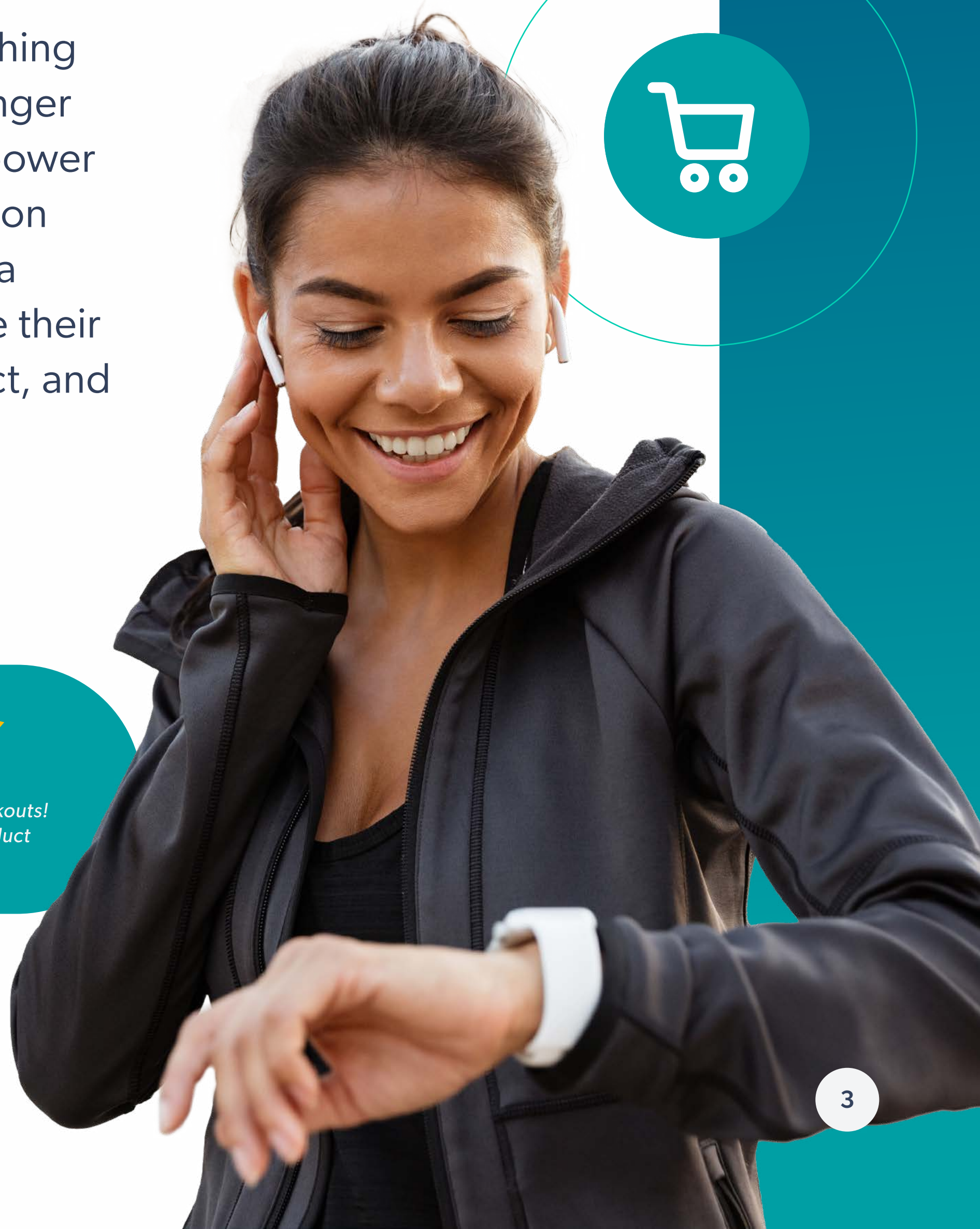
Build UGC-rich PDPs to grow revenue

Today, there's tremendous pressure on companies to operate more profitably. And there's also pressure on stakeholders to do more with fewer resources.

Many e-commerce managers are being asked to increase everything from traffic and conversion rates to average order values and revenue — and prove they're doing it efficiently.

You can accomplish all these things by focusing on one core area of your business:

The product detail page.

Well-optimized PDPs can improve search results, provide a better user experience, and give you a competitive edge over other brands and retailers. And today's shopper journey is fueled by the rich PDP.

Yellow backpack

Real people packing in the adventure with us. Share yours with **#GoFurther**
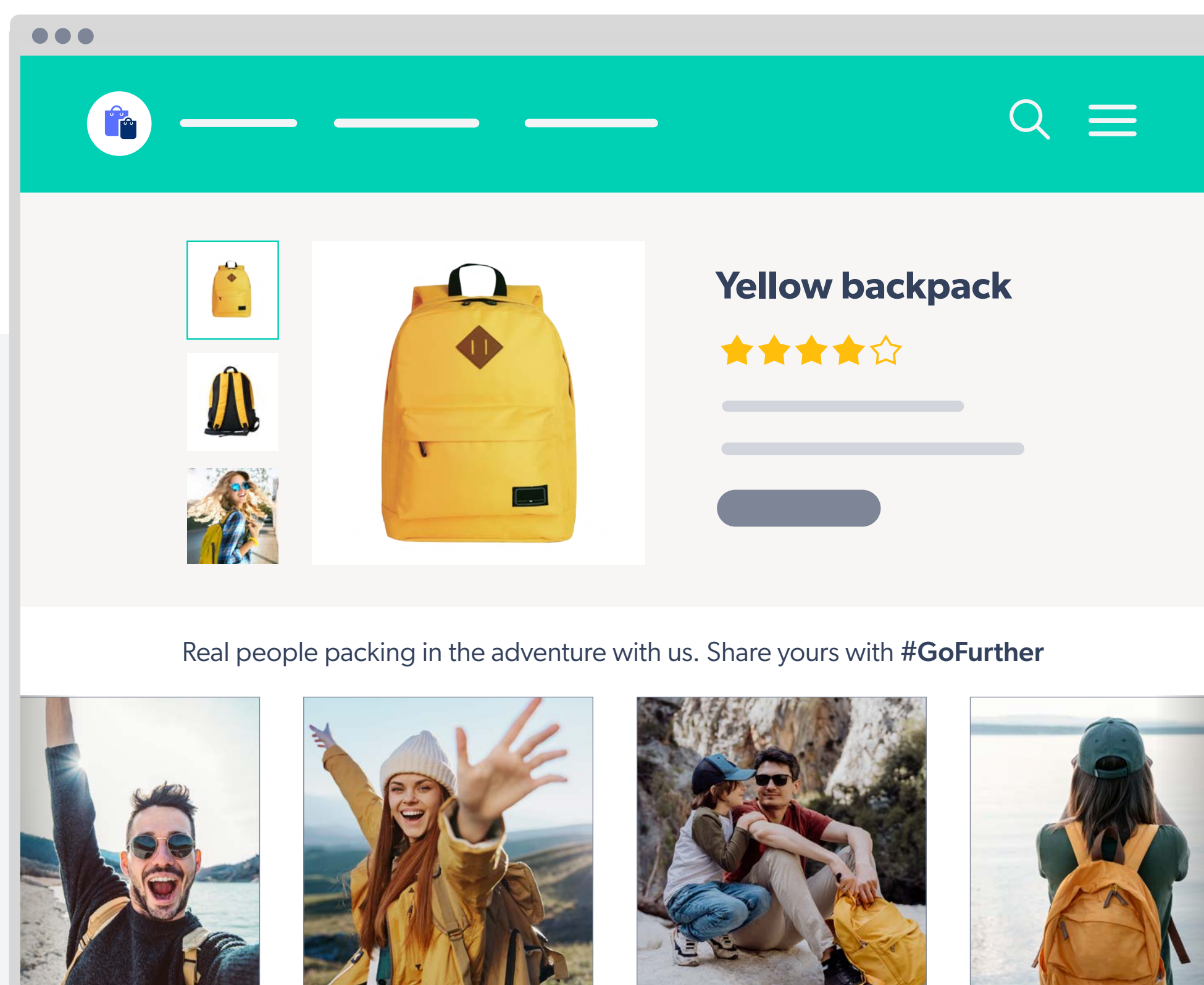
Why is a rich product detail page important?

The traditional PDP begins with a product and surrounds it with supporting content. Unfortunately, on average, only 1.77% of visits to these traditional e-commerce websites convert into a purchase.[2]

Struggling to convert traffic is a common problem.

In fact, only 15% of the 71 top-grossing US and European e-commerce sites have a "good" product page user experience — and more than half of all product pages rank either "mediocre" or "poor."[3]

Why are product detail pages underperforming despite being critical to e-commerce success?

The common reasons why PDPs fail are:

- They are too basic

- They haven't been optimized for target customers

- They don't inspire shoppers

Unlike a traditional product detail page, the rich PDP starts with images and user-generated content. Integrating shopper content drives interest at every stage of the shopper journey – from the initial search all the way through to the purchase — and helps to create a site experience that rivals the biggest of your e-commerce competitors.

How to build a high-converting, rich PDP

Optimizing your product detail pages makes it easier for customers to find the information they need about your products and improves their overall website experience. And providing a good user experience can help build customer loyalty, encourage repeat purchases, and increase sales.

But how, exactly, do you build a rich PDP? These nine tips will drive conversion and improve your website's user experience.

1. Feature content shoppers need to make informed decisions

Helpful product descriptions, reviews, and shopper images and videos inspire consumer confidence and increase the likelihood of a purchase.

88%
of shoppers use reviews to discover and evaluate products[1]

50%
of consumers prefer a mix of branded and shopper photos and videos[1]

2. Help in-store shoppers easily research your products online

Bringing user-generated content to the brick-and-mortar experience can help in-store shoppers make purchase decisions. For example, **36%** of shoppers want virtual displays in stores showing customer reviews, photos, and videos, while **34%** want QR codes that can be scanned to read online reviews. Additionally, **33%** of shoppers want to see live, up-to-date star ratings for products in stores.[4]

3. Showcase your highest converting content first

Showcasing high-converting user-generated content at the top of your product detail page is critical to capturing the attention of online shoppers. Why? Because **79%** of shoppers say online reviews have as much of an impact as recommendations from friends and family,[5] and **53%** feel more confident in their purchase when they see shopper images rather than professional photos.[4]

4. Set volume, quality, and recency goals

Set benchmarks to stay on top of your user-generated content. Regularly audit and optimize your shopper content for quantity, quality, and recency.
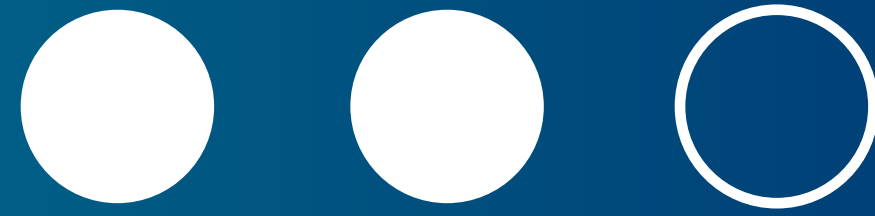
1/3 of shoppers consider reviews with photos more credible than reviews without[6]

1/3 say a product needs more than 100 reviews to be considered credible[6]

1/4 of shoppers expect between 51 to 100 reviews for credibility[6]

2/3 think reviews written in the past three months are more reliable than older reviews[6]

5. Make product highlights easy to skim read

Keep highlights brief, use bullet points to list features and benefits, or bold key words or phrases to help customers quickly find specific info.

Adding review highlights…

12%	**10+**	**3.5%**
increases content engagement[4]	works best with products that have at least 10 reviews or more[4]	increases conversion rates on product detail pages[4]

6. Build trust with authenticity and transparency of origin

It's essential to be open about how your content is curated and to crack down on fake and inauthentic content to maintain brand trust, despite the pressure to generate positive ratings and reviews. For example, **49%** of shoppers want daily oversight of customer content to weed out fake reviews,[4] while **81%** said they would avoid using a brand again after losing trust.[7] Additionally, **36%** of consumers say an overwhelming number of positive reviews is a clue that content may be fake.[7]

7. Grow conversions and engagement with shopper images

Displaying shopper images on product detail pages can help build brand affinity and help people envision your products. **74%** of customers say shopper photos increase their likelihood of buying a product. Additionally, there is a **22%** increase in average order value when shoppers interact with galleries of user-generated content and a **150%** increase in conversions when visitors interact with shopper images displayed in galleries.[8]

8. Optimize pages for transactional intent

Leverage customer sentiment in user generated content, which generally includes shopping-related and informational keywords.

63% of brands and retailers rely on ratings and review programs to meet their SEO goals[9]	**400%** higher click-through rates and a 50% drop in cost-per-click for ads based on user generated content[10]	**98%** average conversion lift for brands and retailers that display questions and answers[11]

9. Collect, curate, and display content in all the places you sell at scale

Including user-generated content everywhere your products are sold, both online and in-store, with a content syndication partner like Bazaarvoice can have several benefits. For example, **40%** of shoppers won't purchase if there isn't shopper content on the product page.[9] Additionally, there is a **138%** lift in conversion when shoppers engage with user-generated content and a **159%** lift in revenue per visitor when shoppers engage with shopper content.[4]

Add search value with user-generated content

Once you've created rich PDPs, you need to get shoppers to your pages. With most of today's e-commerce traffic coming directly from organic search, having a solid SEO strategy leads to more brand awareness, higher conversion, and an increase in revenue.

And user-generated content is a surefire way to boost SEO — studies have shown that using shopper content for SEO can increase traffic by 30%.[12]

Using shopper content to optimize your search ranking is the first step in making your web pages more authoritative and discoverable. When done right, SEO and user-generated content can be a powerful duo that won't cost you a dime. It's an opportunity to gain an edge without stretching your limited resources.

How does SEO add real business value?

87%
reduction of the cost of customer acquisition[14]

12:1+
ROI achieved[15]

Product page SEO is especially valuable because it skips over the discovery and exploration of your site and brings visitors much closer to the bottom of your funnel. Your product detail page is where you can really wow potential customers, so having them land on PDPs organically — without having to navigate through unnecessary pages beforehand — is an advantage.

Not only does user-generated content help get shoppers on-page — it also helps close the deal. Product pages with reviews see a stunning 354% increase in conversion.[13]

Gather keyword-rich reviews

The terms and phrases customers naturally use when discussing your product or leaving reviews align with the search terms people use to find it. By strategically incorporating customer reviews throughout your website, you can organically increase the volume of relevant keywords, thereby boosting your site's SEO performance. It's worth noting that reviews posted off-site, such as on Google My Business, also contribute to your overall search ranking.[16]

While it may seem logical that your customers' reviews would align with search terms, there's no guarantee, especially when dealing with a wide range of target keywords. Additionally, it's important to note you shouldn't explicitly instruct users on what to say in reviews.

Instead, your best approach is gently encouraging customers to create reviews that naturally incorporate relevant keywords. One effective method is politely requesting every satisfied customer to leave a review. Research indicates that **72%** of customers asked to leave a review willingly do so, ensuring your request won't be ignored.[17]

72%
of customers that are asked to leave a review will leave one[17]

80%
of consumers say online reviews for local businesses are as helpful as product reviews on sites like Amazon.com[18]

5.0 ★★★★★

This shoe is ideal for weight lifting and high-intensity workouts, and great for trails too.

The key to requesting customer reviews is to include concise questions that elicit target keywords. For example, if you sell computers, consider using a request like this:

Hi [Customer Name],

If you have the time, a detailed description of your experience with us is incredibly helpful for others considering our products and services. We'd love it if you could consider these questions when writing a review of our business:

> Which brand of computer did you buy?

> Did you add any accessories to your purchase?

> Which extra services or warranties did you decide to go with?

> Where do you live?

> How did your experience on our site compare to competitors?

We understand this is a big ask, and we also appreciate short reviews if you haven't got the time!

They may write out various computer brand names, accessories, and products you sell on your site. They might also mention a competitor (it's common for e-commerce brands to bid on competitors' names), location, and specific services that might be unique to your brand.

All in all, any review is great for your brand. But knowing how to guide your customers to improve your search standing is even better.

Get featured with Google rich shopping snippets

Over a third (35%) of all customers begin their product searches on Google.[19] Even Amazon, which is essentially built for product searches, only narrowly beats out Google. Having products featured on Google rich shopping snippets — bits of code that organize and display product information on the search engine results page (SERP) — can increase traffic by 20–30% and organic revenue from that traffic by as much as 677% compared to product links alone.[20]
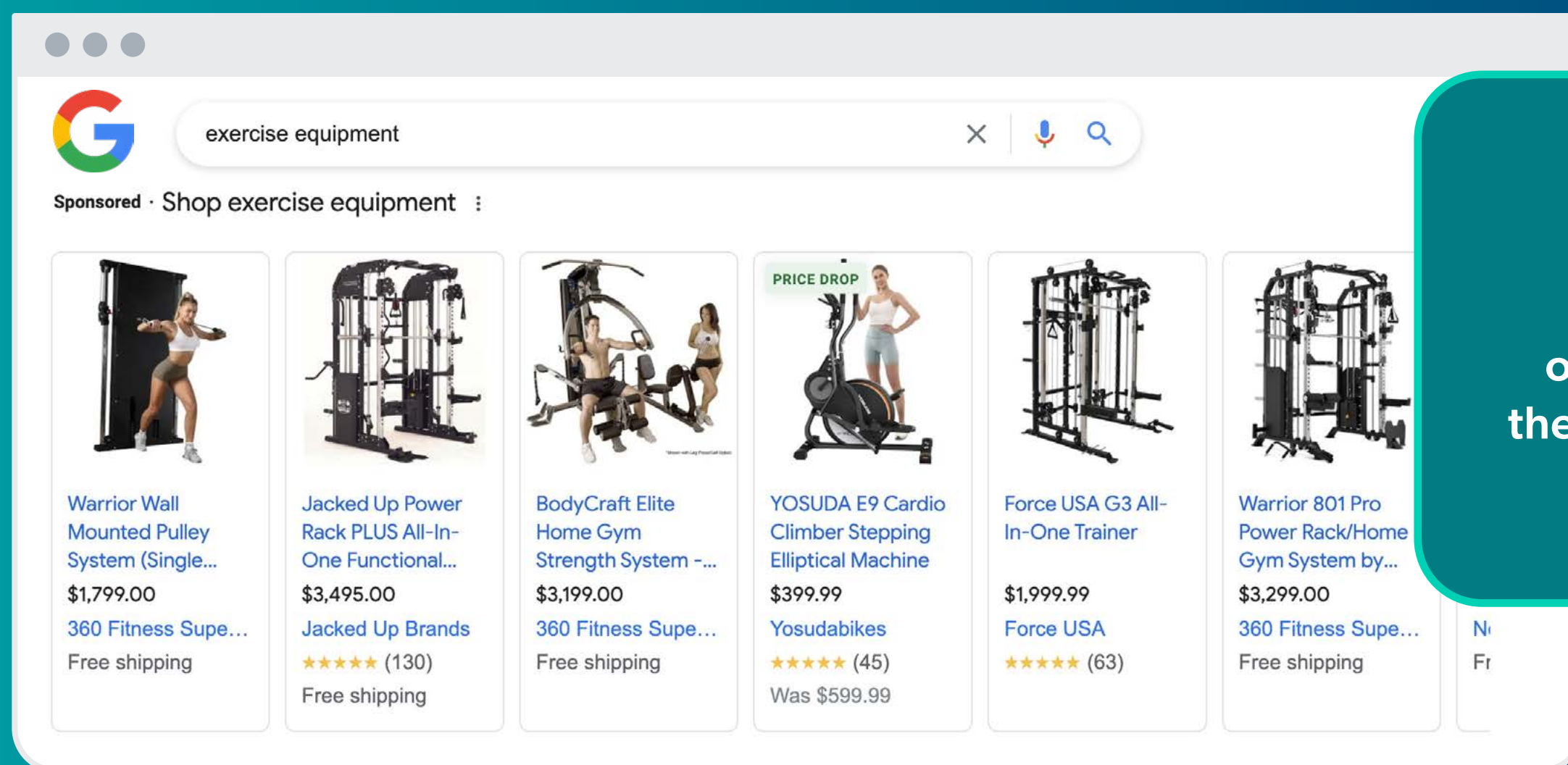
35%
of all customers begin their product searches on Google[19]

How to get your products featured front and center on Google SERPs

Unfortunately, there's no guaranteed way to hold a featured snippet, but doing so circles back to the question of impact vs. budget. Google shopping snippets are free real estate for companies large and small because they're unpaid and rely on the organization of information and SEO instead of money. Do your best to take advantage!

Understand and answer customers' specific questions

This strategy leans on user-generated content more so than the others. SEO goes beyond search terms and deeper into what's troubling customers. Their pain points inform the questions they ask about products, and having those questions represented through reviews on product pages will contribute to better odds of shopping snippets.

Do everything you can to rank for target keywords

Ahrefs' research shows that **99.58%** of products and pages that get featured already rank in the top 10 for specific keywords.[21] Use solid keyword research, prolific use of search terms, latent semantic indexing (LSI), and everything at your disposal to increase your odds of having a product featured on its own rich shopping snippet.

Make it easy for Google bots to understand your product detail page

This will require more technical skills than the others but is likely the most significant factor in how easily products get featured. According to Google's developer guidelines,[22] structuring code in a way that makes sense when the page is crawled, validating the page using the Rich Results Tool,[23] and keeping up with Google updates are the best steps to give your products maximum visibility.

Keep it fresh with written and visual content

Since the beginning of the internet, search engines have always rewarded websites with regularly updated content. There are numerous ways to achieve this, such as:

- Blogging

- Updating product descriptions

- Adding new images

Product images and descriptions are particularly important to shoppers — there's nothing worse than not having a clear representation of something before you buy it.

The risk associated with buying products online has always bogged e-commerce. Because customers can't experience the product in person, they have to put their faith in the brand to deliver what they expect. That's why 75% of online shoppers rely on product images to guide their purchase decisions.[24]

Make sure your pages offer a variety of fresh, high-definition images to give your customers more confidence in their online purchases, including:

- 360-degree views of your products

- Various size representations

- Images of the product in use (lifestyle images)

- Different sizes and colors

Then, encourage those customers to proudly share images of their products at home for the world to see.

You also want fresh, compelling copy in your product descriptions. These words should excite and inspire your potential customers to use their imaginations. For example:

"Let the worries of the world melt away when you snuggle into the Grayson king bed. Sturdy engineered wood is finished with a rich, dark grey colour that highlights natural-looking woodgrain and textures. Metal lines, buckles, and rounded nailheads add eye-catching accent detail across the headboard and footboard. A low footboard gives you plenty of extra room to stretch out your tired toes. Add the Grayson to your bedroom and help make your dreams just that much sweeter."

76%

of consumers say product specifications are most important when making a purchase online[25]

50%

of returns happen because the product doesn't match its description[25]

This description of a bed frame delivers sentence after scintillating sentence of powerful imagery that highlights the true benefit of the product. It makes you want to jump in bed and have the best night's sleep of your life. The lesson here is to be creative and unafraid to get a bit dreamy — literally, in this case — when it comes to your product descriptions. People buy the benefit, not the product.

While fresh product images and descriptions are effective for SEO, they also take time. Fortunately, you have a wealth of assets created by one of your most valuable resources: your customers. There are many ways you can leverage user-generated content to increase your site's freshness.

There's no truer description of a product than in customer testimonials. Featuring descriptions from real customers on your product pages is a home run — and better than any description you could ever write of your products. By hosting customer reviews and other keyword-rich user-generated content on your site, you can regularly offer visitors (and search engines) new content.

Having an active social media presence can also help you achieve your fresh content goals. Take advantage of tools and plugins that allow you to display social media content on your site, including potentially SEO-friendly content like images, videos, and influencer posts.

Petco

Petco set out to increase awareness of and SEO traffic and conversions for its owned Wholehearted and Reddy brands, leveraging several types of user-generated content. These products weren't generating the number of reviews Petco aspired to, so the pet giant activated its Bazaarvoice team to develop the new Spotted Sampling Program to generate shopper content.

> We've really seen a positive impact on visits, conversions, and improving the discoverability of new products. From a results standpoint, it's been a positive experience to see that we can get 10–15 reviews for new products quickly.
>
> **Hannah Kredich,**
> **Category Specialist at Petco**

67%
increase in number of pages ranked organically[26]

80%
increase in clicks from search[26]

140%
increase in impressions from organic search[26]

48%
increase in revenue per visit for sampled products[26]

Build your website's authority beyond SEO

The higher your domain authority, the easier it is for customers to find your e-commerce site through search. Strong SEO goes a long way to improving your site's authority and rank — but there are a few other things you should also do to boost authority.

Optimize your site for mobile users

Over half (55%) of internet users buy products online using mobile devices, so ensuring your website displays well on those devices is paramount.[27] Nothing ruins the experience like when a desktop site loads sloppily on your smartphone. Luckily, Google has a free tool that makes it easy to assess and optimize how mobile-friendly your site is.[28]

Improve page load speeds

Page load speeds don't just influence engagement rates and conversions. They also impact your domain authority. When search engines crawl your site, your search ranking may be downgraded and appear lower on the results list if it doesn't load at lightning-fast speeds. It's Google to the rescue once again; there's a free tool that will gauge your page speed and offer insights into how to improve it.[29]

Offer useful content site-wide

This suggestion is open-ended since what your target visitors consider 'useful' may vary. However, a good approach is to go beyond the bare minimum. In addition to providing product information, consider incorporating reviews and FAQs into your PDPs. Instead of a generic homepage, enhance it with engaging elements like video tutorials, testimonials, and promotions. By offering a wealth of helpful content, you can attract more traffic and increase the likelihood of earning valuable backlinks to your pages, ultimately boosting your authority over time.

# Reuse shopper content in your ads to drive additional traffic

Once you've highlighted user-generated content throughout your site and achieved positive results, you should also reuse that content in your paid advertising efforts. Ads that include user-generated content typically see click-through rates that are four times greater and the cost-per-click cut in half.[30]

The content you use in your ads doesn't have to be singular, either. If you've got an amazing image and an inspirational review but can't decide which one to feature, why not both? The combination of visual stimulation and the glowing praise from a real customer is utterly influential.

Hardy's

Hardys, the UK's number one wine brand, integrated user-generated content directly into their paid social ads. The new ads combined quotes from customer reviews, star ratings, and cinemagraph-style animated visuals to create aesthetically pleasing and informative content.
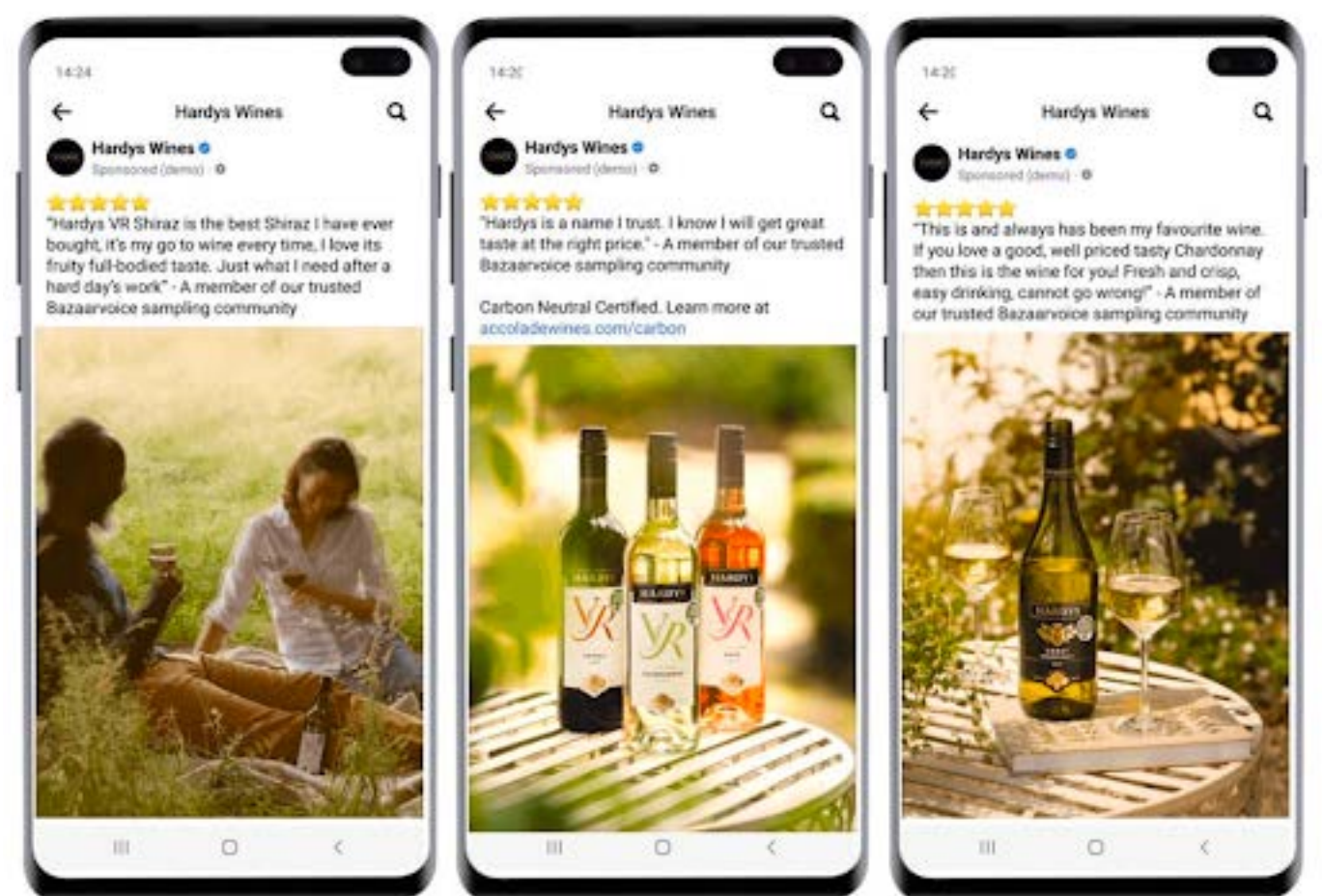
10,000
click to retail partner sites[31]

60%
decrease in cost-per-click[31]

"We've captured a lot of reviews that we can use in our marketing collateral, and we're really pleased to report that it has led to an increase in advertising effectiveness in the form of better cost-per-click and more engagement.

**Alister Dell,
Digital Marketing Manager, Hardys**

Power an efficient content supply chain

We've discussed leveraging user-generated content to enrich product pages and drive traffic. But there's another key use case — meeting shopper demands. Shoppers crave content. Today's consumers spend an average of 6 hours and 59 minutes per day consuming digital content.[32] But producing quality content for multiple channels and platforms is time-consuming and expensive.
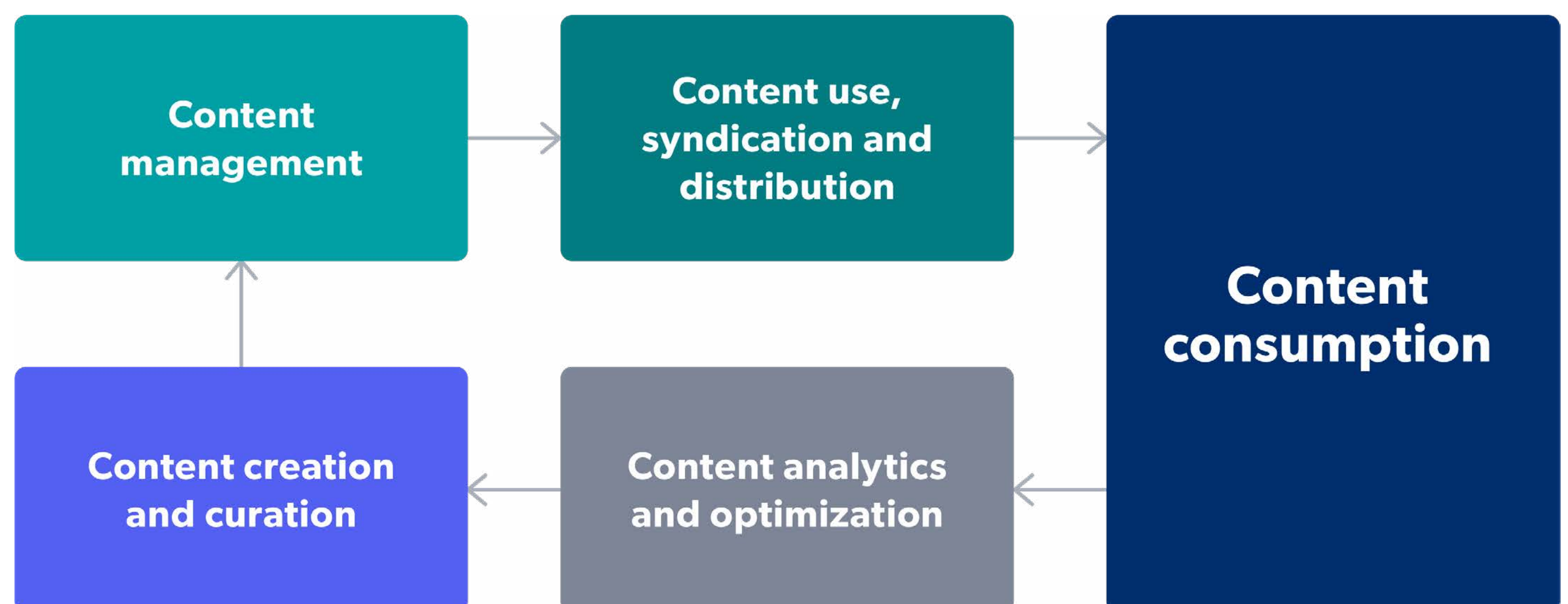
28%
of marketers say it takes between one and three hours to create a piece of content[33]

24%
of marketers say it takes between four and six hours to create a piece of content[33]

Creating a digital content supply chain puts your customers to work for you.

A content supply chain will help you shift your marketing strategy from branded content creation to content collection, curation, and distribution across brand touchpoints — at scale. It puts your customers to work for you so you can generate authentic, user-generated content consumers prefer.

```
Content management  →  Content use, syndication and distribution  →  Content consumption
     ↑                                                                      ↓
Content creation and curation  ←  Content analytics and optimization  ←
```

What is a content supply chain?

In a traditional supply chain, companies and suppliers work together to transform raw materials into finished products for customers. A content supply chain works the same way, except it's about optimizing the planning, creation, curation, and distribution of content about your brand and products. And it turns that process into an efficient system or platform. A content supply chain puts the content creation process in the hands of consumers and enables you to collect and distribute that user-generated content. The reward is a continually refreshed supply of user-generated content.

How to incentivize shopper content to power the supply chain

We've already discussed requesting customer reviews. How else can you incentivize customers to create and submit user-generated content to fuel your supply chain?

Here are 4 ways to jumpstart your collection efforts and build your UGC library:

1. Review request emails

Invite your customers to share visuals and leave reviews for online and offline purchases.

2. Product packaging

Include calls for visuals and reviews on product packaging and inserts. Make it easy by displaying a scannable QR code.

3. Social media campaigns

Run social media hashtag campaigns to encourage content submission across products.

4. Product sampling

Use product sampling to get your products into the hands of engaged consumers for collecting feedback and user-generated content.

Samsonite

Travel accessory giant Samsonite put social media to work by using the #takewhatsyours hashtag to gather user-generated and influencer content. They created a summer travel-themed contest for the best OOO reply and encouraged followers to compete for $2,500 worth of Samsonite goods.

Samsonite used Bazaarvoice Galleries to display their new shopper content generated by the campaign. These images also directed shoppers to product description pages and provided inspirational travel content that encouraged shoppers to stay longer.
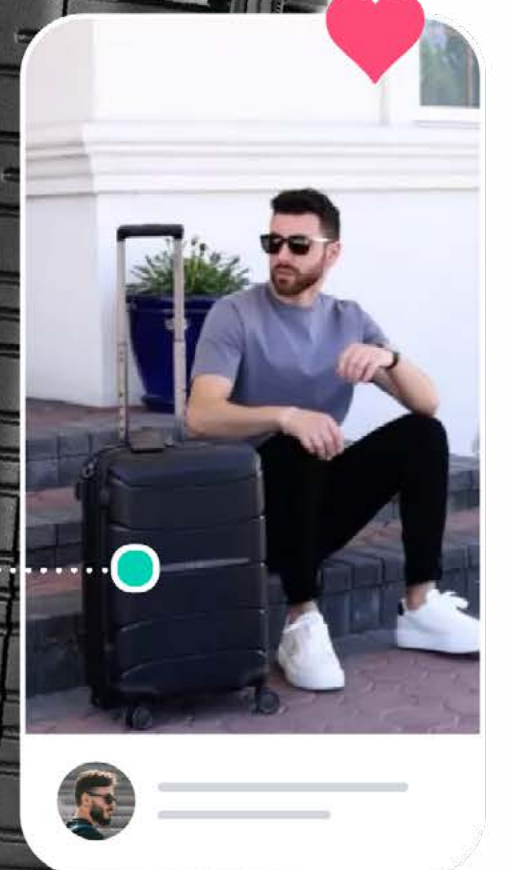
27K
posts with #takewhatsyours hashtag[33]

5X
more time spent on pages with user-generated content[33]

2.5X
lift in conversion rate quarter over quarter[33]

TAKE WHAT'S YOURS CONTEST

Submit your funniest out of office message and enter to win $2,500 + Samsonite luggage!

Samsonite

22" Elevation™ Plus

Keep people coming back to buy directly

User-generated content is all about boosting website traffic, trust, and engagement with your brand. But the true sign of loyalty is when customers return to buy from you again and again. Enriching the digital experience and making sure you have what it takes to compete with bigger players is the best way to earn that loyalty.

Replicate the in-store experience online

The in-store experience will always have aspects that can't be perfectly matched online, but as an e-commerce manager, you have some tricks up your sleeve.

When your shoppers can't physically pick up, try on, or test out products for themselves, inspiring lifestyle content from other shoppers is the next best thing. Shoppers want to see everyday people incorporating your products into their lives — people who love your products and brand so much that they want to show it off on social media for the world to see.

And this kind of inspiring lifestyle content comes from other shoppers, not your brand. It's authentic to your shoppers and gives them the additional social validation they need to say yes.

Oak Furnitureland

Oak Furnitureland's brand promise is "real furniture for real homes." The retailer promotes its use of top-quality materials — solid hardwood, and durable fabrics — that look stylish in any home, and can hold up to the demands of everyday living. The issue, though, is how can you prove this in an online world?

The best way to translate the furniture-testing experience to the digital world is showcasing real, authentic photos of the brand's furniture in people's everyday homes. Oak Furnitureland implemented Bazaarvoice Galleries to display this shopper content on the website home page, product pages, and throughout campaigns.

Since the brand increased its use of UGC, it's found that overall engagement with UGC is tracking at double the rate it sees with brand-generated content.

> We find that [user-generated content] UGC is just a lot more relatable for our audiences... It provides inspirational content that they can see and they can engage with. Real pictures in real settings show how our furniture blends seamlessly into customers' everyday lives, where you've got dogs jumping on the sofa and children chucking their school bags in the hallway at the end of the school day
>
> **Laura Quigley,**
> **Head of PR and Communications**
> **Oak Furnitureland**
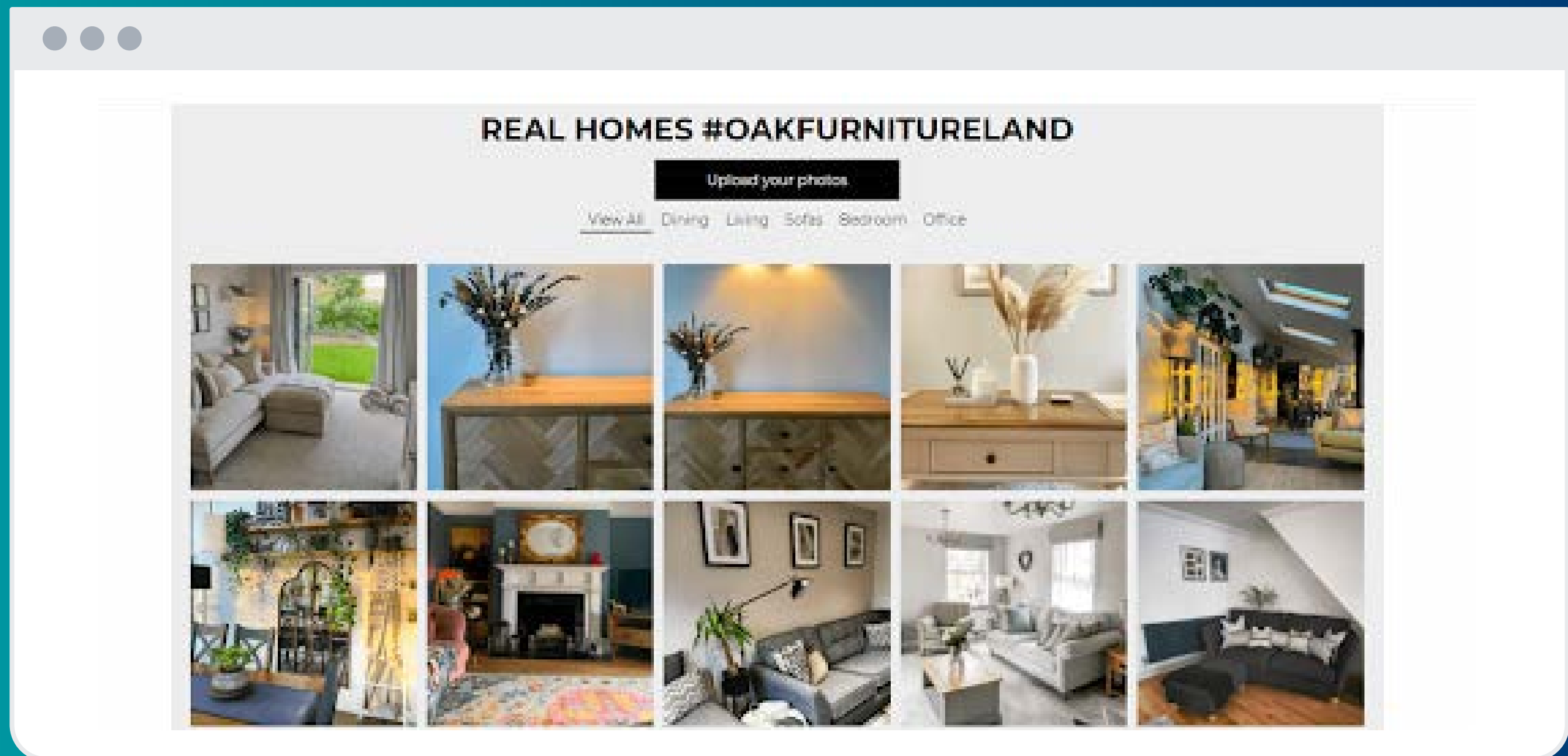
Besides showcasing authentic lifestyle content from shoppers, you could also:

Appeal to the senses with trending tech like augmented and virtual reality. These technologies allow products to be virtually overlaid in a real-life space through mobile device cameras, bridging the gap between online and offline retail.

Offer competitive pricing and free shipping so customers don't feel like they're spending more than they would if they picked items up in-store. You can also let customers track their orders in real-time every step of the way to build more confidence.
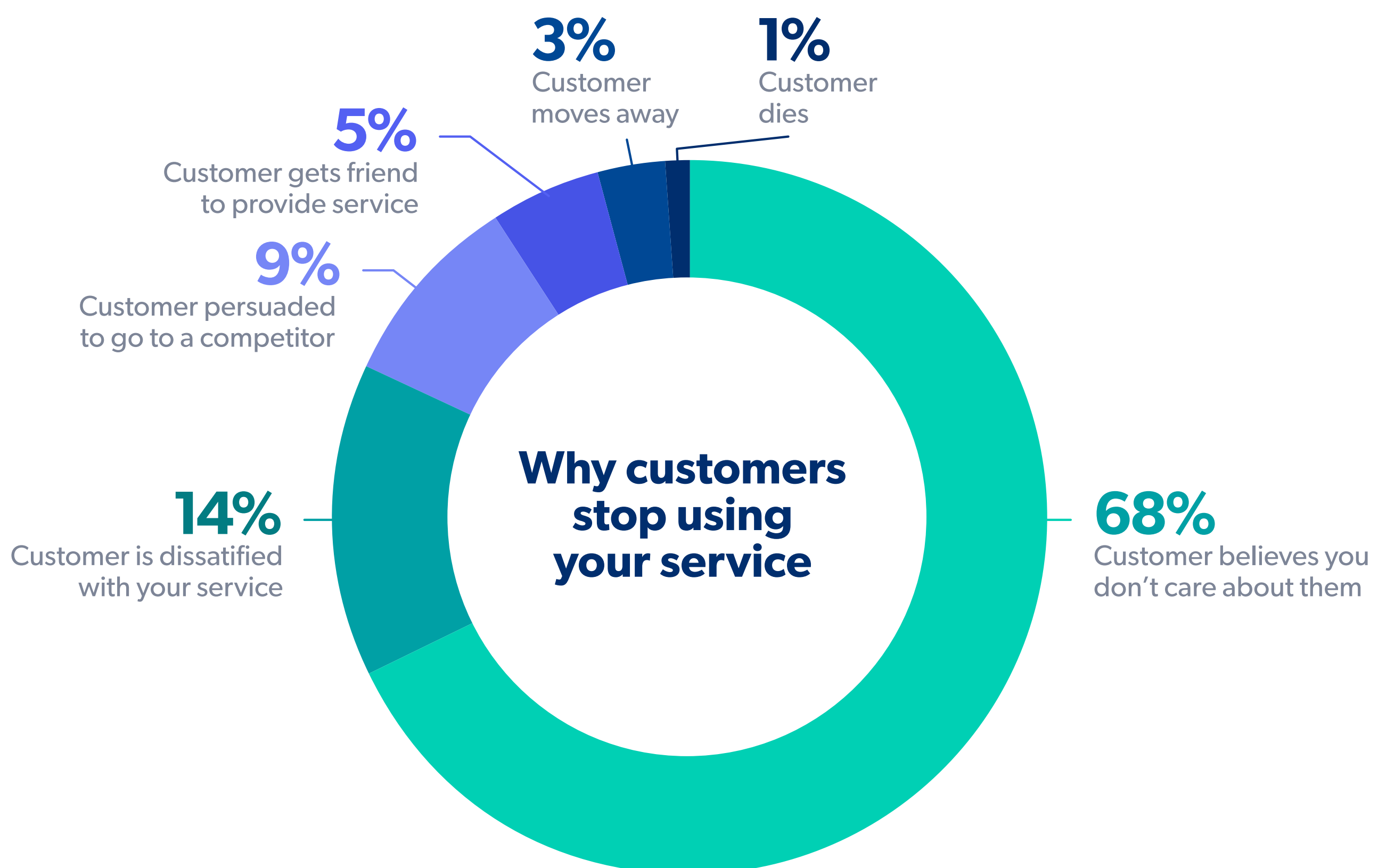
Use space on your site wisely to upsell and draw customers' attention. This mimics the experience of "window shopping," where the customers don't necessarily know exactly what they're looking for but enjoy seeing products on display that appeal to them. Amazon does this masterfully, but you know your customers better, so you can do it better!

Beat the big guys with better customer experiences (and product detail pages)

Competing with giants like Amazon in terms of scale and capital just isn't something that is possible for most e-commerce brands. But one thing you can almost certainly beat them at is the customer experience — especially on the support and customer service ends.

The challenge of serving millions of customers is the difficulty in establishing personal connections with each one. In order to handle their extensive support needs, Amazon relies heavily on AI automation, which may sometimes leave customers feeling unsatisfied.

Smaller e-commerce brands have a distinct advantage in creating a close-knit community, unlike larger corporations that may be perceived as soulless entities run by robots. This enables you to craft a unique brand experience that plays a significant role in cultivating brand loyalty and advocacy.

3%
Customer moves away

1%
Customer dies

5%
Customer gets friend to provide service

9%
Customer persuaded to go to a competitor

14%
Customer is dissatified with your service

Why customers stop using your service

68%
Customer believes you don't care about them

Source: The Rockefeller Group

The biggest reason customers churn is that they don't feel cared for — something smaller brands can correct.

Showing you care about your customers is the most significant way to keep them around. This is much easier to do at a smaller scale and with a closer community. Customer satisfaction and quality shopper content go hand in hand in making you more competitive with the Amazons and Walmarts of the world.

Another effective way to outperform the industry giants is to directly challenge them where it matters the most: the product detail page. Amazon and other e-commerce marketplaces have product pages that are packed with persuasive information aimed at driving continuous purchases. It can often feel like they have a deep understanding of your preferences with strategically placed product suggestions and enticing promotions.

Here's the truth: (de)personalization is entirely driven by algorithms. But you have the power to do things differently. By creating rich PDPs that feature shopper-generated content, you can showcase the strength of your close-knit community — without bombarding customers with excessive information solely aimed at boosting sales. No need for complex programming — simply let user-generated content authentically demonstrate that your product is a confident purchase for your customers.

Learn from the voice of your customer

As marketers, it's natural to look at your campaigns and products from a sales perspective. But it's important not to lose sight of the shopper's point of view and the customer experience with your brand and products.

The abundance of user-generated content from your customers provides valuable data that can inform improvements to your brand and products. Remember, some of the best advice often comes from your harshest critics, and in the long run, it leads to an enhanced brand and experience for everyone involved.

With a focus on continuous improvement, you can achieve a better product, an improved website, and an enhanced overall experience. These factors contribute to customer loyalty, repeat purchases, and positive word-of-mouth about your brand. As a result, the cycle continues, leading to further sales growth.

① Ask for customer feedback

The ability to listen to shoppers doesn't need to be a high-budget affair. Today's marketers are more empowered than ever to be responsive and attentive to their shoppers, thanks to the rise of social media platforms and the ease of answering questions through Q&A sections on product detail pages.

Many marketers try to get a feel for how shoppers use their products, as well as how they talk about and interact with the brand, by scrolling through comments on social media or relying on anecdotal information.

But leading companies understand it takes a lot more than a quick scroll to get substantial feedback on products and branding.

Instead, be straightforward and ask customers what they think. Most shoppers won't feel bothered by the request. In fact, they'll likely be happy to know their opinion is valued.

Online survey platforms, direct emails, customer interviews, social media polls, and focus groups are all tried-and-true methods for learning more about customers. Advocates and detractors both have something equally important to tell you. Collecting and engaging with feedback from both is crucial to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your products and brand.

The bottom line: Understanding your customers' interests empowers you to meet their needs effectively. By actively listening to their feedback and engaging with them, you demonstrate your company's commitment to their satisfaction and gain valuable insights that drive continuous improvement.

> "
>
> We aim to deliver the best products, services and personnel to get direct feedback from customers, understanding what works for them and what doesn't. Our customers feel that we're listening and we can learn from what they tell us.
>
> **Fanny Janiaczyk,
> Community Manager, Boulanger**

② Turn user-generated content insights into action

The best marketers understand shopper content is one of the most impactful ways to get insights straight from the source. Real-time customer feedback offers you a lens into what your business is doing well and where it needs to get better — from product development to marketing to customer experience.

> "
>
> Getting customer feedback provides an ongoing way to gather information about how a product is doing and where there's room for improvement
>
> **Jenna Spivak Evans,**
> **Digital Capabilities Manager, Unilever**

The bottom line: By actively seeking your customers' feedback on your products, you foster a sense of connection, making them feel like valued stakeholders in your brand. Simultaneously, this feedback provides your brand with invaluable insights that drive tangible business improvements.

③ Use insights to hone your marketing tactics

User-generated content supplies your marketing team with insights into where you're missing the mark in product positioning and how you promote your brand or products.

KidKraft, a manufacturer of children's products, conducts a quarterly evaluation of what customers are saying and leverages the learnings to improve messaging. The brand recently noticed customers commenting in reviews on how much they loved the storage feature of its Building Bricks Play N Store Table. KidKraft didn't originally consider the storage to be a major selling point of the product, so the brand edited the features section of the product page and promotional copy to highlight the table's storage. The brand saw an increase in sales after tailoring the marketing messaging.

The bottom line: Why make a positive claim about your brand, products, or services when you can let a satisfied customer say it on your behalf by amplifying reviews? Not only can you strengthen your marketing efforts by leveraging the third-party validation of reviews, but the content also presents you with opportunities to refine how you talk to shoppers.

> "
>
> From a marketing standpoint, I think it's really important to lean on your reviews to do some of the heavy lifting for you, particularly if you have a bit of a scrappy marketing budget.
>
> **Taylor Herrero Senior E-commerce Marketing Manager, KidKraft**

④ Explore insights to make better products

Targeting the right products for improvement is a critical early step in letting customers inform your product decisions — and mining shopper reviews is the perfect place to start.

Looking for your most popular products with less than 4 stars. This is the leading indicator that something is wrong with the product.

You can take this one step further by identifying products with quality sentiment below their category and by digging into product lowlights. Though keep in mind — even positive reviews often mention product suggestions, letting you turn a good product into an excellent one.

Nestlé Canada recently made changes to the ingredients of one of its iced tea products. Within a month of the new formula hitting shelves, the company saw a slew of negative reviews and customer complaints — then sales dropped. The customer experience team identified this issue and shared the reviews with the brand team and other departments.

> There was so much quality information provided by the consumer that it added a lot of power to the decision making around reversing the formula
>
> **Lee Beech Director of Consumer Experience, —Nestlé Canada**

Feedback can also spark new ideas. Oliso, a maker of irons and other home appliances, recently designed a new iron with a long power cord, high wattage, and extended automatic shut-off time. This innovative iron came in response to customers in the craft community who wanted features that make it more convenient to use their iron every day.

These changes ultimately helped revive the company by getting more retailers to carry the product and existing retail partners to sell more.

The bottom line: Reviews have made it significantly easier to understand shopper perceptions and respond accordingly, particularly in retail and e-commerce channels that were historically challenging to analyze.

⑤ Tap into the positive power of negative feedback

Seeing complaints about your products is never fun. But this kind of feedback is where you can find some of your most powerful customer 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 responsiveness.

Land O'Lakes, one of the most successful food brands, knows the value of all reviews (even the negative ones). Reviews helped the food brand spot an issue with a recipe, as customers called out the fact that a cinnamon roll wasn't turning out correctly.

Land O'Lakes investigated and found an error with the recipe, and the development team quickly jumped into action to revise the recipe and lift sentiment. By giving the customer a voice, Land O'Lakes not only remedies issues that arise, but also continues to build trust with shoppers.

The bottom line: See criticism as an opportunity for growth. By understanding your customers' pain points through negative feedback, you have an opportunity to address them head-on. Listening to your detractors can turn them into enthusiasts.

"

Negative reviews can be a gift. They give us a chance to learn more about a consumer's experience with our product or recipe, and we can turn around a negative experience to end up with a more loyal fan

Vicky Cherne Manager, Consumer Affairs and Customer Concerns, Land O'Lakes

⑥ Stand out in an increasingly competitive landscape

To gain a competitive edge, compare your business to key competitors by aggregating benchmarks and incorporating their data. Evaluate your performance by comparing retail search results, images, videos, product descriptions, review volume, average rating, and percentage of questions answered. You can then develop strategies to accentuate your strengths, address your gaps, and effectively prioritize where and how to make improvements.

As you uncover these competitive insights, make sure to:

Listen and learn: Use various data sources to guide confident decisions.

Act quickly: Respond promptly to stay ahead of competitors.

Engage cross-functionally: Involve multiple teams to maximize the value of insights.

The bottom line: In an increasingly crowded marketplace, differentiation is critical. But being the leader requires a deep understanding of where and how you are winning or losing.

Key takeaways

Commerce has undergone significant changes, and brands must adapt accordingly. Implementing a user-generated content marketing strategy can increase revenue, conversion rates, SEO impact, and in-store sales (if applicable).

Enrich your PDPs
Optimize PDPs with customer reviews and user-generated content for better search results and user experience.

Drive SEO with UGC
Keep site content fresh with keyword-rich reviews to rank well and drive traffic to your pages.

Build a UGC supply chain
Incentivize shoppers to contribute content via email, social media, and product sampling.

Gain insights from UGC
Mine social feeds, reviews, and Q&As to uncover opportunities to improve your brand and products.

Experience the impact of a robust user-generated content strategy and explore your company's growth potential with our UGC Value Calculator.

Learn more

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