

# The retail marketer's guide to global expansion

How to stand out and drive sales in a new retail market



bazaarvoice™



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# Introduction

You've got this home country thing down pat. You've built and launched at least one successful product (if not more), and while it was a challenge, the great minds in your business made it happen.

Now you're champing at the bit to expand globally and launch your products into new countries and regions—but you may also be a little uneasy about the process.

New places. New people. New cultures. New languages.

## Where should you start?

Your very first step is to evaluate opportunities in each local market you're considering, find your best fits, and devise your operational launch process. There's no sense in launching in a locale that has no demand for your offerings or one that you can't logistically support.

**But once you've got the nitty gritty hammered out, you can dive into the fun stuff.**



**This ebook gives you some practical advice on how to make your product launch in a new market a success.**

## WE'LL COVER:

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Learning about the locals and what they expect

2

Speaking their language

3

Localizing your content

4

Taking advantage of local trade shows

5

Generating social buzz in local markets

# 1

# Learn about the locals and what they expect

When you're entering a new market, you need to thoroughly understand the people in that market. You also need to be able to provide evidence they will want your product—and be able to articulate what it is about your product that makes them want to buy.

This kind of information will help you to differentiate your product in the market, design effective marketing campaigns, and convince retailers to stock your brand.



# There are a few reliable ways to go about understanding the locals and what they expect from your product:



FOCUS GROUPS



SURVEYS



CUSTOMER REVIEWS

# Focus groups

Running focus groups before and during your launch allows you to get constant feedback from local customers. Hearing what they like (and dislike) about your product allows you to both finesse the product and your local messaging. For example, focus group insights can be key in deciding how to differentiate your product in a new place to stand out from entrenched competition.



*That uniqueness is exactly what you're selling. Potential distributors want whatever you're offering to be something new—something they don't already have on offer. It will also make your pitch more memorable.<sup>1</sup>*

**MICHAEL DE LOS SANTOS**

MIKE D'S BBQ



*The best way to convince retailers to stock your product is to provide hard evidence that shoppers will want to buy it. Sharing testimonials and statistics from previous sales can help, but focus groups are the most convincing way to accomplish this.<sup>2</sup>*

**BRYCE WELKER**

TESTING.ORG

If you're looking to stock your products with local retailers, focus groups can also help provide the proof they need that customers will actually buy it off their shelves.

Plus, having these discussions with people in your target audiences teaches you about the language they use to describe all of these wants, needs, features, benefits, etc. Use their own language in your promotional efforts to connect with them—and sell to them—more successfully.



# Surveys

Surveys can be particularly useful when it comes to defining your ideal customers, understanding their preferences, and figuring out how to reach them.

For example, you can collect important demographic and household information about people that are interested in what you have to offer. You can also find out what sorts of social platforms they use, what kind of events they attend, etc.

**All of this information is invaluable during marketing execution.**

You can also use surveys during your launch to help understand how well your marketing is performing in your new market. Are customers hearing about you in the right places? Are your messages resonating? How likely are these people to buy? A survey can help you quantify these answers.





# Customer reviews

While focus groups and surveys are obvious tactics for brands looking to understand their audiences, reviews can also offer critical customer insights as you launch in a new market.

**Those who don't dissect and digest this feedback are missing a huge win in plain sight.**

Erica Schiebel, Marketing Communications Senior Specialist at 3M, is responsible for global brand and marketing programs for 3M's Post-it® Notes product lines. She explains that the voice of the consumer in the brand's product reviews provides valuable insight into how a new product is being perceived by consumers. The brand uses feedback from reviews to ensure launches focus on features that will resonate most strongly with target consumers.

If you don't have any customer reviews from your new markets yet, consider a sampling program that will get your products into the right hands, in the right locations.



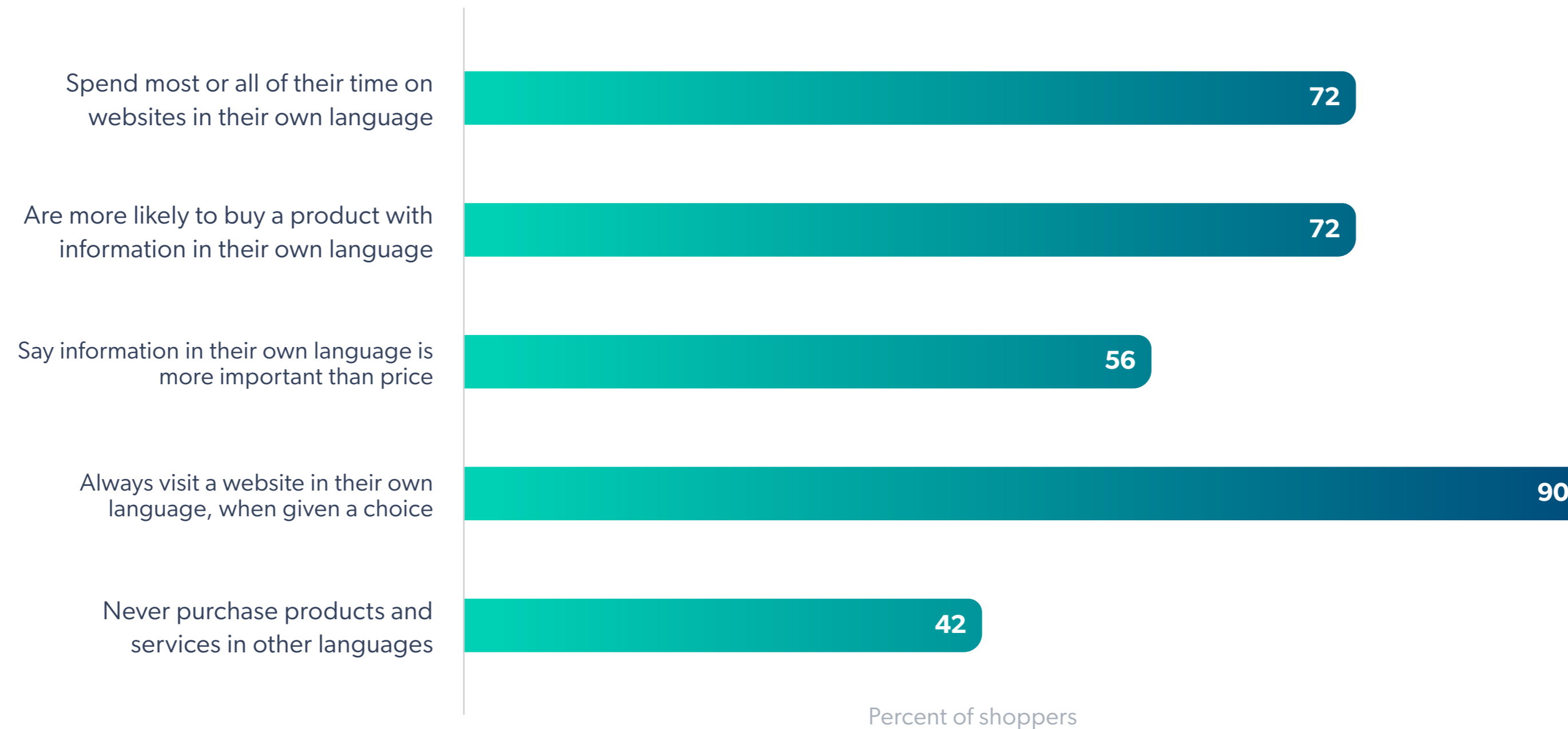
# 2

## Speak their language

Many countries around the world speak English—but that doesn't mean they don't prefer their own language. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of consumers said they would be more likely to buy a product with information in their own language. Conversely, 42% said they never purchase products and services in other languages.



# Consumers prefer shopping in their language



## It's important to consider translating your website into the local languages in the markets you're entering.

Don't forget to translate your customer reviews, too. This user-generated content is key to e-commerce conversions—and **73% of shoppers want product reviews in their language**. Plus, fresh reviews will also help you rank higher in search.



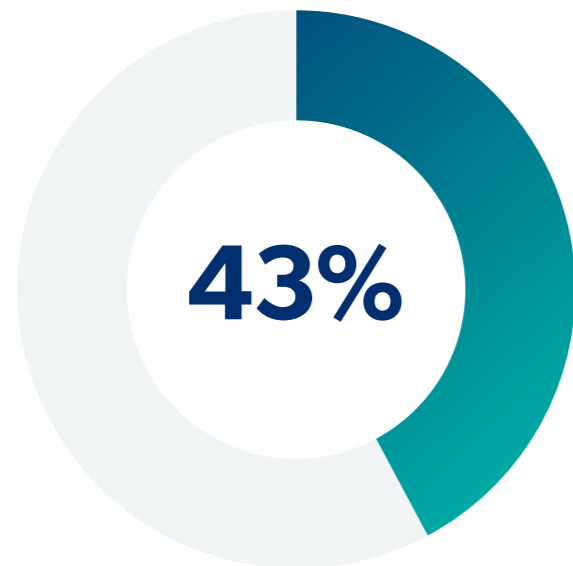
*Obviously, translation isn't the only thing that companies must do to reach a global customer base, but it's certainly one of the fastest, easiest, and most frequently overlooked.<sup>4</sup>*

**NATALY KELLY**

VP OF LOCALIZATION, HUBSPOT

# SEO translation

Translating content on your website not only offers a better experience for those that land on the page—it can also help local shoppers find the page in the first place. Seeing as about 43% of e-commerce traffic comes from organic google search, you'll want to make sure you translate your target keywords, tags, and meta descriptions to get more search exposure with your potential customers.



## E-COMMERCE TRAFFIC COMES FROM ORGANIC GOOGLE SEARCHES

Keep in mind that your target keywords may not translate one for one, as there are many cultural nuances, even within the English language. For example, U.S. English speakers refer to running shoes as “sneakers” while people in the U.K. call them “trainers.” You’ll need to understand local lingo and adjust your keyword strategy accordingly.



# Brother engages customers in 7 new markets

Brother International Europe is a global supplier of technology solutions—and demand for their products has increased over the past few years (with work-from-home becoming a new norm). The company has also been expanding its presence across Europe.

During this expansion, the Brother team realized they needed a way to share customer experiences in several languages across all of the countries they have a presence in.



*It's 10 times better to have 100 reviews about a product from different perspectives and backgrounds than just one review in someone's native language.*

**LUC GODARD**

HEAD OF EUROPEAN MARKETING AND CSR, BROTHER

Brother decided to use Bazaarvoice's translation services to make their reviews transcend borders. Today, the technology brand has about 26,000 product reviews on its website, and that number continues to grow.

**Brother has found that these reviews create a more engaging experience for customers across the continent—those who interact with reviews are twice as likely to click on the “Find a store” call to action, and they spend 3X longer on the site.**

# 3

## But don't just translate... localize, too

Making your website relevant to a new audience in a new part of the world needs to go beyond simple translation. You must also localize your content to this new audience, making it reflect their lives, cultures, and other expectations. This will help to create a comfortable, familiar experience for your shoppers—and begin to build their trust and confidence in your brand.



# When it comes to localization, think:



IMAGERY



COLORS



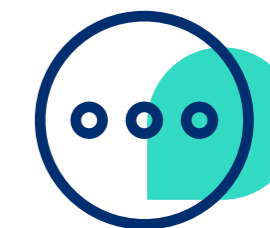
REVIEWS



CURRENCIES



DATE  
FORMATS



ETC.

While some of these items are quick technical fixes (e.g. currencies and date formats), generating local imagery and reviews can be a bit more challenging. You need to make sure imagery is representative of the local population and that reviews are in native tongues, for example.

# Generate local content with product sampling

Sampling products to your new audience before your launch date can help to generate the local content you'll want on your site—especially your product detail pages. With your product in hand, key influencers in your new locale can create and share the images, videos, reviews, ratings, etc. that shoppers are looking for before making a purchase.

3M says it's crucial there are reviews before a product launch. "It is ideal so that when a web page goes live, we'd have reviews there," says Schiebel. "We need to do things in advance."<sup>3</sup>

And consumers agree having reviews on the page pre-launch is important.

When asked what's most important to them on a product page, 39% of shoppers said reviews and 22% said the product description and professional photos. Even more telling, a third of shoppers won't buy a product without any reviews on the product page.

**Sending out product samples ahead of your launch in new markets will give you a product page full of UGC, encouraging your new shoppers to fill their carts.**

**Just one review has the ability to increase sales by 10%. And 50 reviews? 30% increase.**



# Burt's Bees launches with 300+ reviews

The well-respected natural health and beauty brand was keen to expand on its success with chapsticks and moisturizers and try their hand at cosmetics.



*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.*

**TAYLOR STEELE**

ASSISTANT E-COMMERCE MANAGER, BURT'S BEES

To collect plenty of high-quality reviews early ahead of launch, Burt's Bees partnered with Bazaarvoice to get pre-released products into the hands of consumers and collect feedback.

Taking this step yielded advance insights about how the products were received and gave them reviews in place as the products became available at retail stores.

**Within two weeks, 94% of those who received a sample submitted a review, resulting in more than 300 reviews and a 4.48 average star rating per product.**

# 4

## Take advantage of local trade shows

Events are an important part of any market entry. The right trade shows are a great opportunity to connect with your new audience and build your brand.



# Use events to generate trust

“The relationship is key. Encourage your staff to take time with attendees,” says Angela Delatore, Director of International Services for exhibit marketing agency Derse Inc. “It’s not about scanning a badge and moving on to the next attendee. It’s about developing a relationship, spending time with that person, and getting to know them. That really does go a long way toward generating trust and eventually business.”<sup>10</sup>

In addition to relationship building, trade shows can provide you a unique opportunity to test out your products, in person, with real customers. Talk about real-time feedback!



*It’s not about scanning a badge and moving on to the next attendee. It’s about developing a relationship, spending time with that person, and getting to know them.<sup>10</sup>*

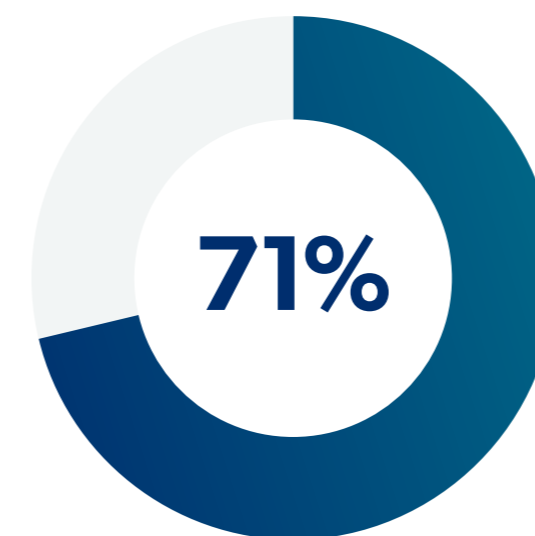
**ANGELA DELATORE**  
DIRECTOR OF INTERNATIONAL SERVICES,  
DERSE INC.

# Incorporate customer testimonials in your booth

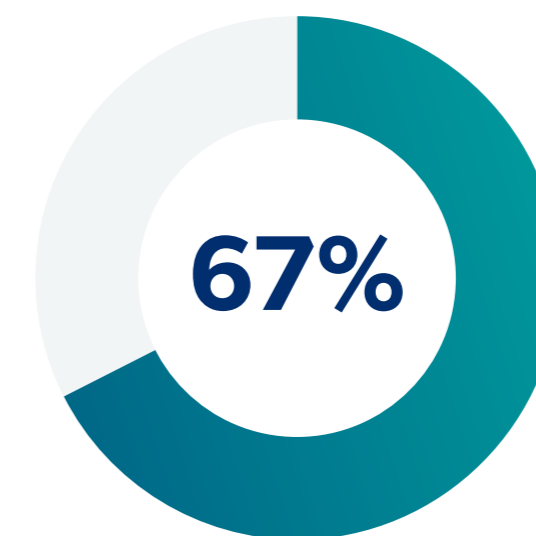
In these billboards, Chobani used customer tweets as quotes to promote their yogurt and build trust. Testimonials like these would work equally well displayed prominently across a trade show booth.



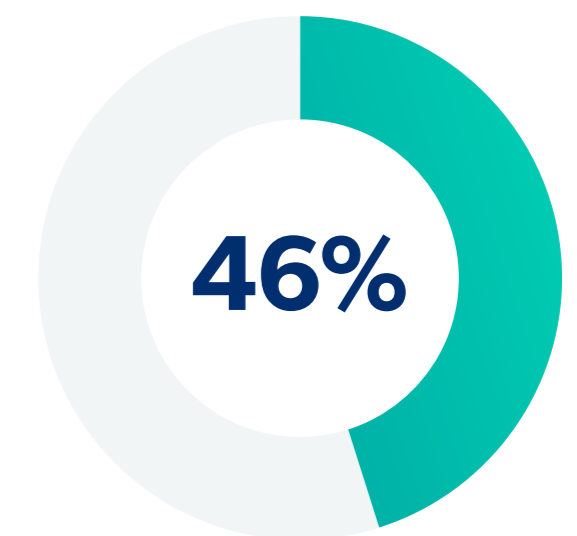
Finally, don't forget to promote your trade shows before you go. Exhibitors report that the most effective channels to promote these events are:



EMAIL



YOUR WEBSITE



SOCIAL MEDIA

# 5

## Generate social buzz in the local market

Generating buzz online among customers and retailers in your new market can help your product get a nice exposure boost. Social conversation is critical to fueling product discovery and trust.





*Before putting your product up on the retailer's shelves, I believe it's a good idea to sell some of them online. Start a social media campaign around your product to create hype. Create a good hashtag to increase your reach. Once it gains a little exposure, it can be easier for you to convince the retailer.*

**JOSH KOHLBACH**

CEO, FOUNDER, WHOLESAL SUITE

Keep in mind, that your new audience may not have the same social habits as those in your other regions. Before launching any social campaigns, go back to your focus groups, surveys, and customer reviews to make sure you understand:

WHICH SOCIAL  
PLATFORMS PEOPLE  
IN THIS MARKET  
PREFER TO USE

WHICH FEATURES  
AND BENEFITS OF  
YOUR PRODUCTS  
TO FOCUS ON

HOW THEY TALK  
ABOUT YOUR  
PRODUCT

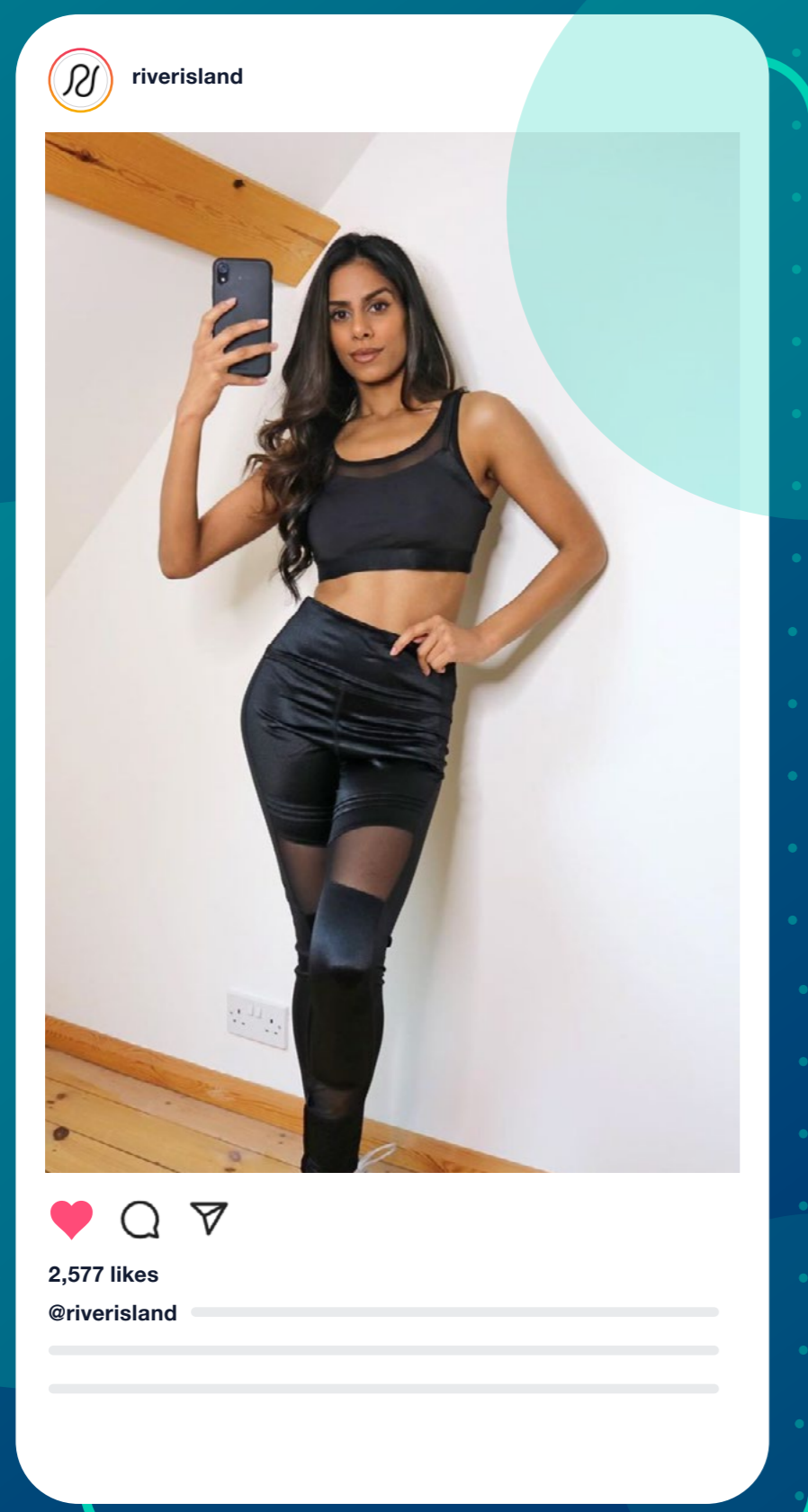
# Use video

Video is a solid bet for generating social buzz.

Canon, naturally, is a genius-level user of video content. When the brand launched the Canon EOS R5 and EOS R6, they live streamed the launch event and a Q&A using a 4K camera. The videos were posted on the Canon site and YouTube for 10 days after launch, where they continued to attract viewers and drive demand for the brand's newest products.

**The approach was so successful, according to Vishal Patel, Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe, they ran out of stock on their own website within hours.**





# Offer exclusives

Offering exclusives to local fans is another way to drum up some online interest, and nearly everyone loves a good online promotion. In fact, special offers are one of the top five reasons that users follow brands on social media.

Taking inspiration from Burberry’s similarly successful approach, River Island launched one of the dresses from a new collection exclusively via Instagram a few days before the full collection launched.

“Instagram has become more of a conversion driver and trend spotter, so we felt it was the right place to preview product launches,” says Chloe Bebbington, River Island Social and Community Lead in the U.K. “We are hoping to move more towards that in the future.”



*Exclusivity gives the community a reason to be there, to follow you, and to keep engaging.<sup>3</sup>*

**CHLOE BEBBINGTON**

SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY LEAD, U.K., RIVER ISLAND

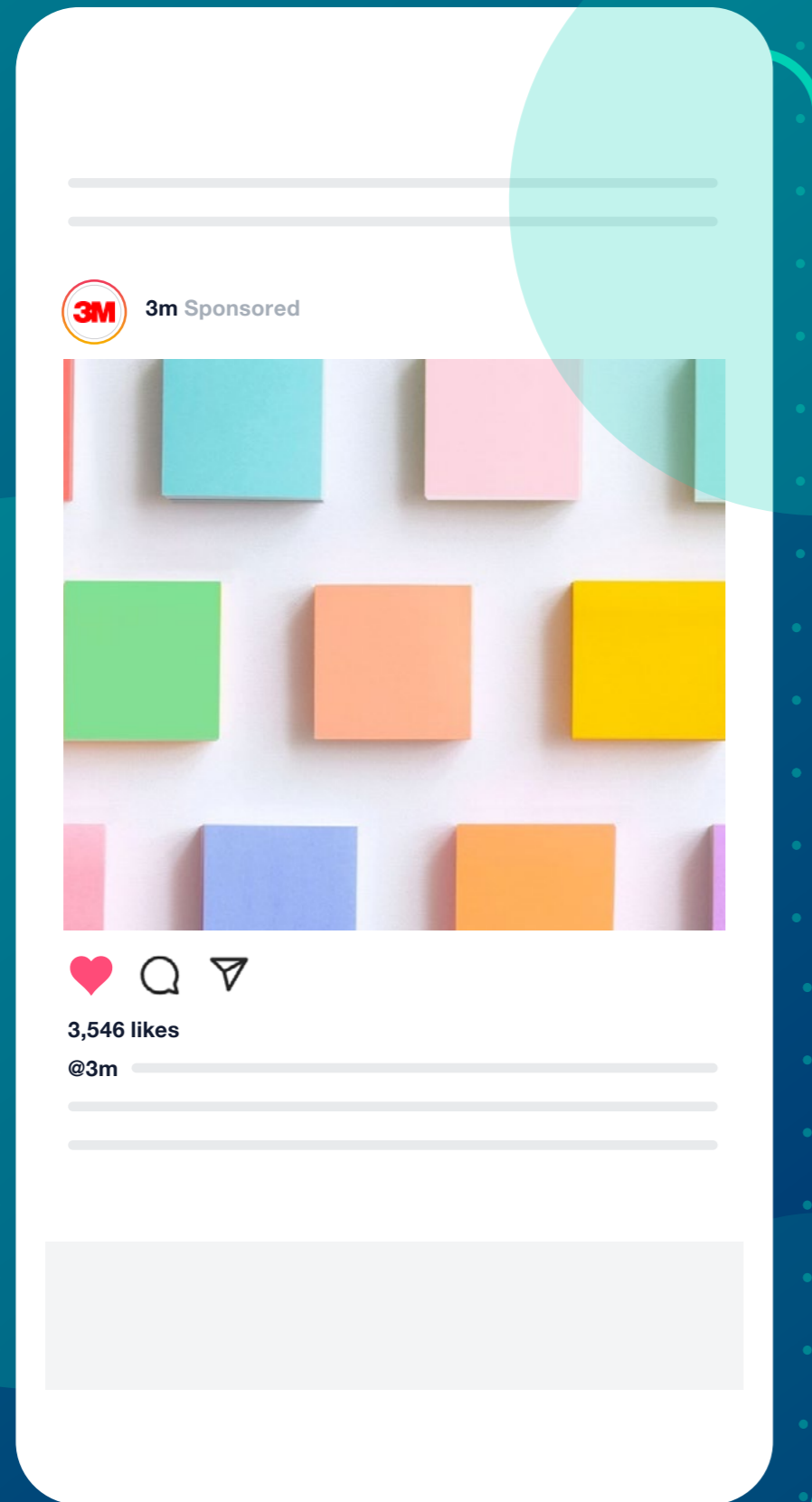


# Share content from local fans

Social media is a user-driven medium. The best launches harness this principle and put users in charge. “You can’t just talk to your audience,” warns River Island’s Bebbington. “It needs to be a conversation. Our social media accounts constantly chat to customers and share their images of their clothes. It’s why we’ve got 2.4 million followers on Instagram!”<sup>3</sup>

The evergreen River Island campaign called #ImWearingRI offers customers the chance to take selfies, which are shared on River Island’s official account. “There’s no better advertisement than a customer proudly wearing your new line and looking stunning,” says Bebbington. “The campaign has been a smash hit for us.”<sup>3</sup>





# Consider paid promotion

Sometimes just paying for ads can give a launch the push it needs to attain lift-off. Plus, paid advertising gives you the opportunity to specify where in the world your ad should be delivered.

3M's Schiebel says paid social paid off for a limited-edition launch.

"When we launched a limited-edition pack of Post-it® Notes in a gift box, we promoted it with paid social. Amazon ran out of stock, and there was a lot of engagement and buzz about when it would be available again. Social engagement is a meaningful measure of success that we can track."<sup>3</sup>

# Key takeaways

We hope your adventure into new, global markets feels a little less confusing and a little more exciting with these tips in hand.

## **You must understand your new market and audience.**

Whether you use focus groups, surveys, customer reviews, or another form of research, you need to collect the insights that will allow you to effectively promote your product in a way that resonates in this part of the world.

## **Speak their language, and localize your materials.**

Translating is important if you want anyone to engage with your content, but you must go beyond translation to create a relevant, comfortable experience for your new shoppers. This means localizing everything from colors to imagery to currencies.

## **Get out there and engage—both online and at in-person trade show events.**

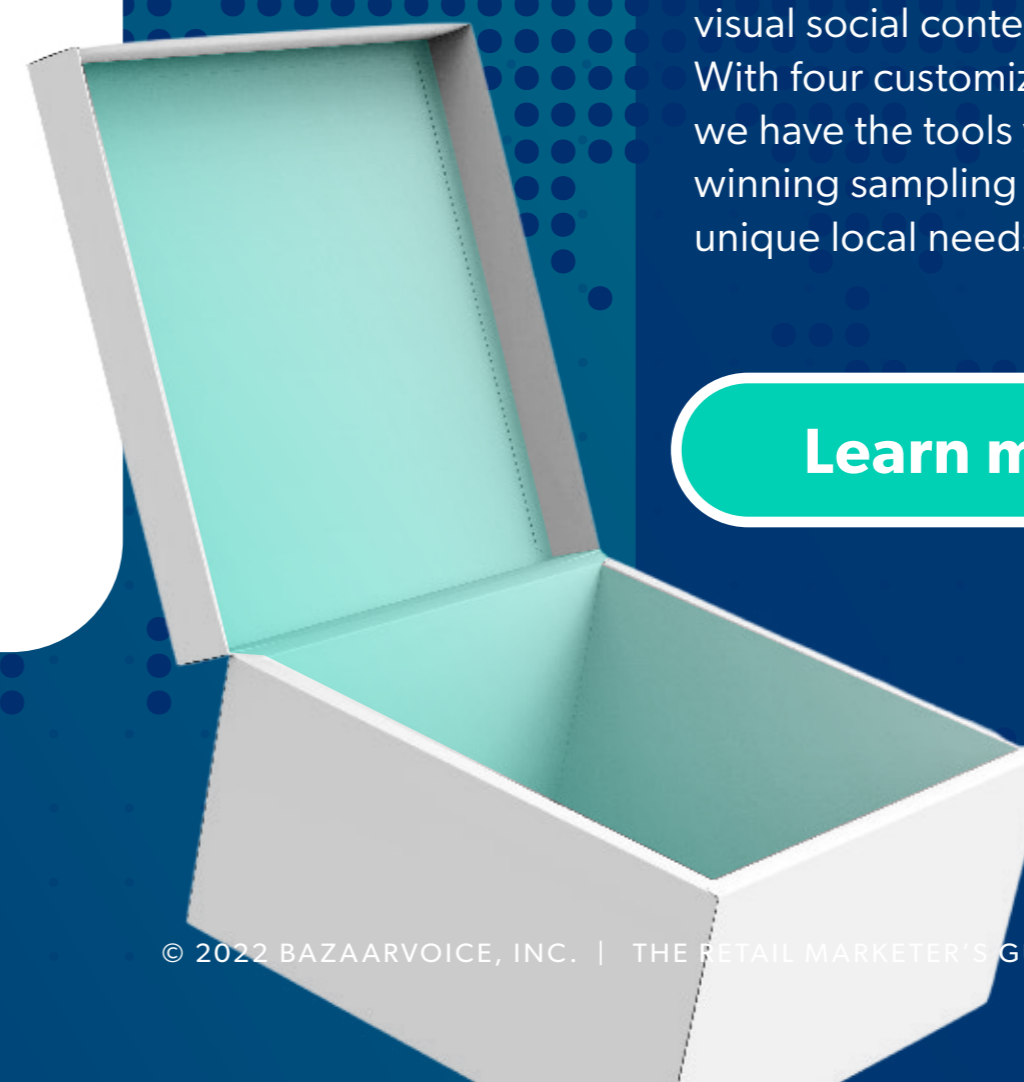
Make sure to create these experiences with your new audience in mind to generate the most buzz. Incorporate UGC across both your digital and physical presence to build trust (and make your life easier).

## **BAZAARVOICE SAMPLING**

Jumpstart your entry into new countries with Bazaarvoice Sampling.

We help you create and customize product sampling campaigns to collect reviews and visual social content from real consumers. With four customizable sampling solutions, we have the tools you need to shape a winning sampling strategy around your unique local needs.

[Learn more](#)



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