

# Retailer's guide to social commerce success

Best practices to maximize engagement, conversion and revenue



bazaarvoice™

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# Introduction

**Digital content consumption has reached an all-time high, with the average person spending 6 hours and 59 minutes online daily.** From scrolling aimlessly to constantly refreshing our feeds and checking out the latest memes, we are more connected than ever before.<sup>1</sup>

That's great news for retailers because active social media users spend 3x more than anyone else (\$580 per month vs. \$189).<sup>2</sup> It makes sense — shopping isn't just about buying things. And social media allow people to explore new products.

While e-commerce sites are great at handling transactions, they often fall short when it comes to replicating the in-store shopping experience. Browsing and exploring products online can be a challenge. That's where social commerce comes in — it's becoming a key way for consumers to discover and explore products in the digital world. Think of it as the online equivalent of a store's window display.

The global social commerce market is projected to grow by 34% this year<sup>3</sup>

**70%**

of shoppers discover products on Facebook and Instagram<sup>3</sup>

**50%**

of shoppers say social influences what they buy<sup>4</sup>

**33%**

have bought something on a social channel in the past year<sup>5</sup>

Social content is unlocking serious sales. Retailers who take full advantage of social commerce can increase engagement, conversion, and revenue. While there's no one-size-fits-all approach to social media, there are some best practices that can serve as the foundation for a successful strategy.

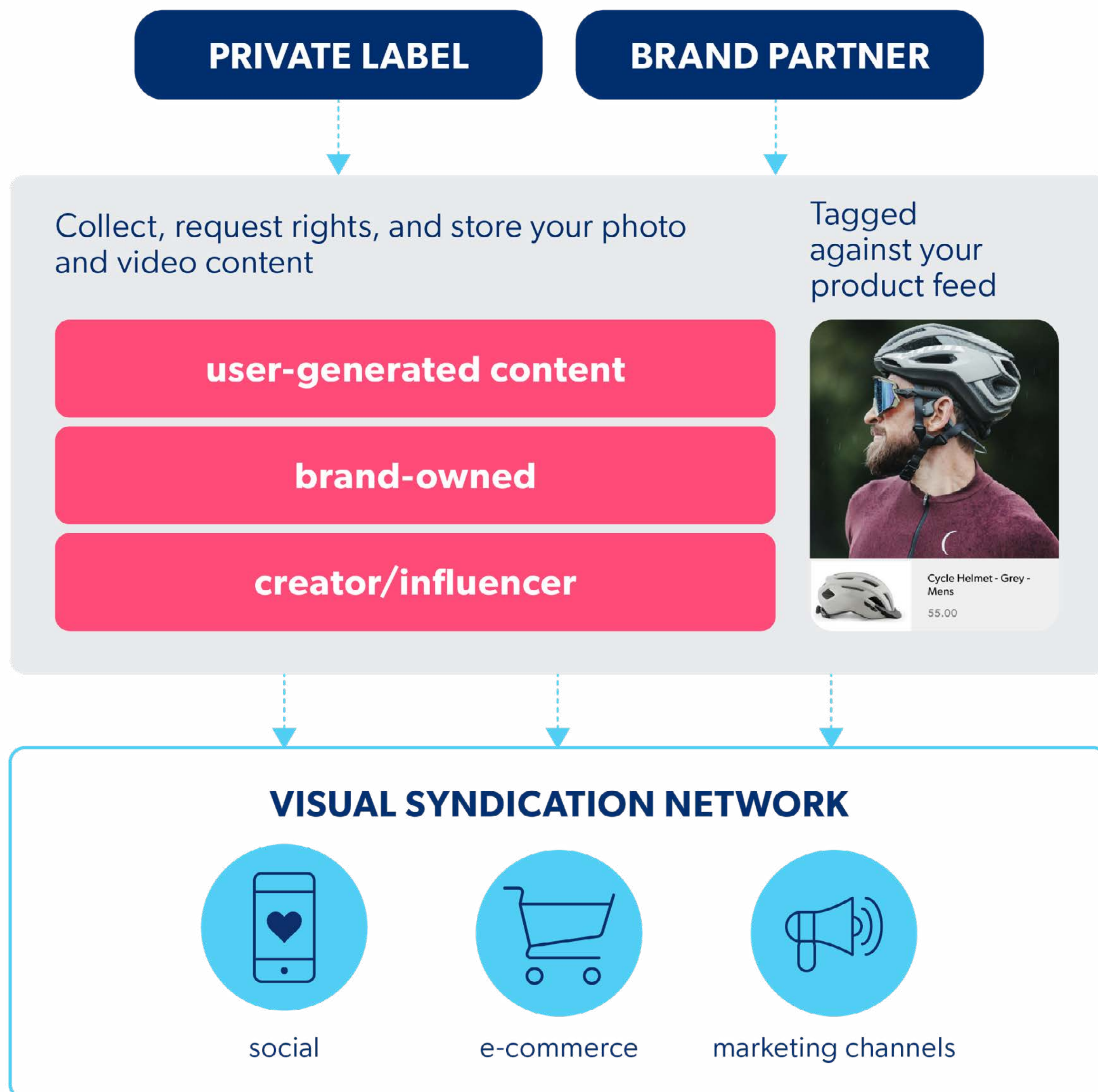
This guide provides tips for quickly and efficiently deploying a social commerce strategy that meets consumer needs and maximizes results for retailers.



# Sell on social—and sell WITH social

There are several ways to merge e-commerce with social media to create authentic, shoppable experiences in the digital world. While retailers can sell on social or with social — we recommend a combination of both.

To succeed, retailers should work with their brand partners and private label teams to create and share engaging social content that drives sales and enhances the customer experience. This content can be used across all sales channels to engage shoppers and drive revenue.

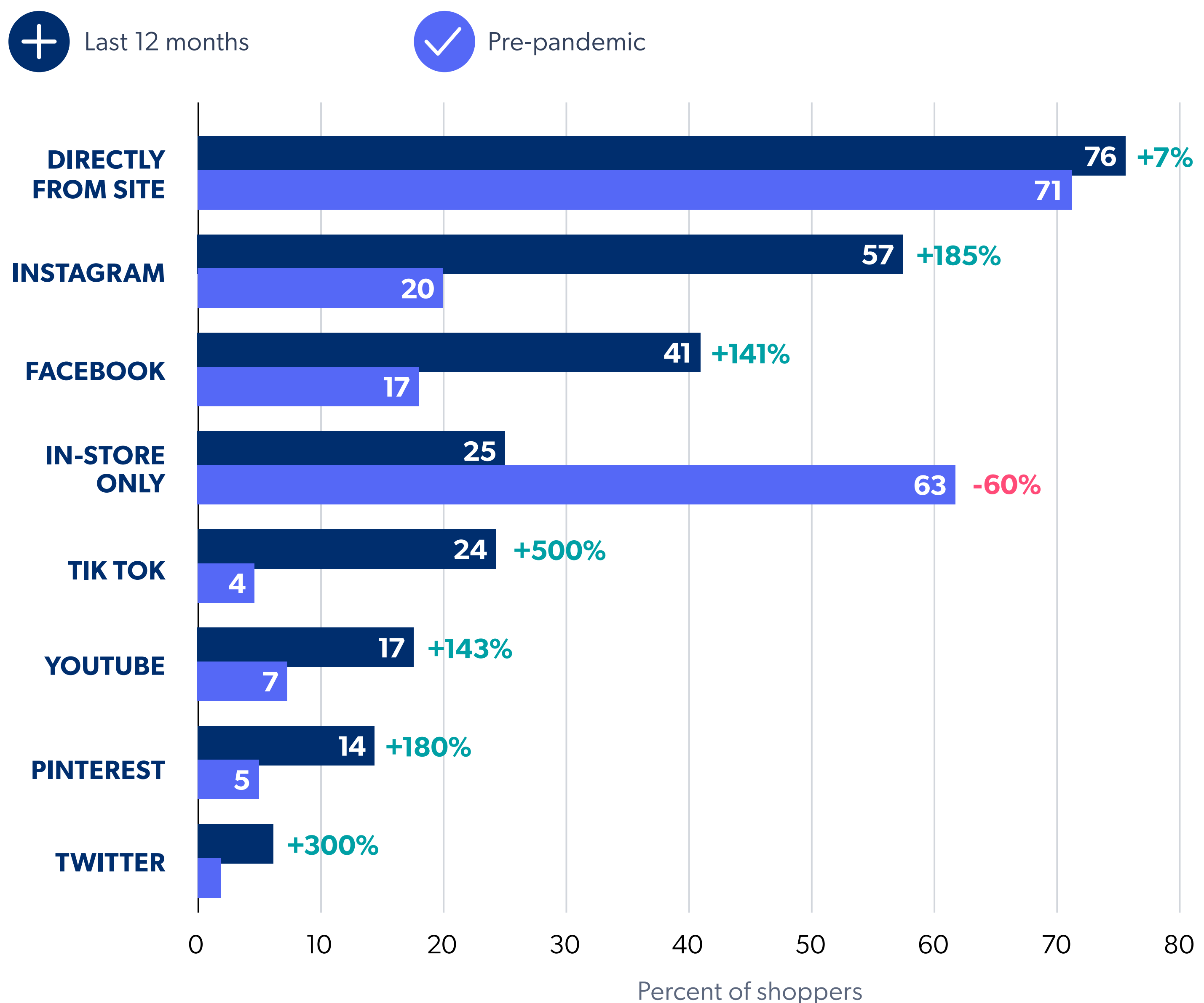


## Selling on social

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of shoppers want to see user-generated content (like shopper images and videos) on your social channels. This visual content gives shoppers a reason to follow your account, and it also adds authenticity and social proof to your social presence.

And more than half (55%) of shoppers like to shop on social channels. Over the past few years, we've seen a significant increase in this behavior. Shopping on TikTok is up 500% from pre-pandemic levels, and Instagram isn't far behind with a 185% increase in shopping.<sup>6</sup>

### Where have you shopped from?



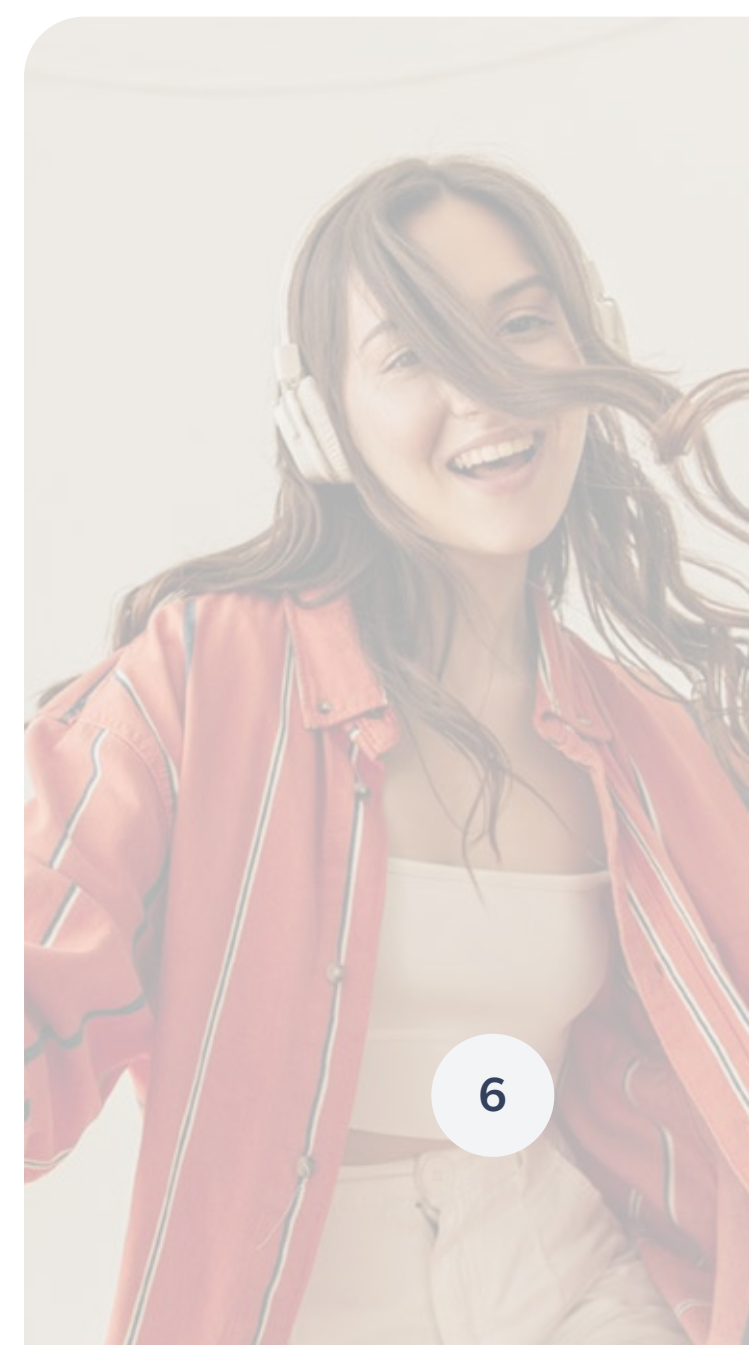


**To capitalize on these social shoppers, you need to create a social commerce strategy that:**

- Enables in-app purchases on social media platforms
- Features organic shoppable posts
- Displays testimonial ads, influencer content, videos, and other shoppable images

Social content should spark inspiration and make it easy for a shopper to purchase in the moment. Let shoppers check out directly from your social platform, or if you're driving them to your website, make the purchase process as seamless as possible.

Over half (54%) of shoppers say they'd be more likely to buy a product on social media if they could click the post and get product info right on the platform.<sup>7</sup>





## SUCCESS STORY

# Iconic London

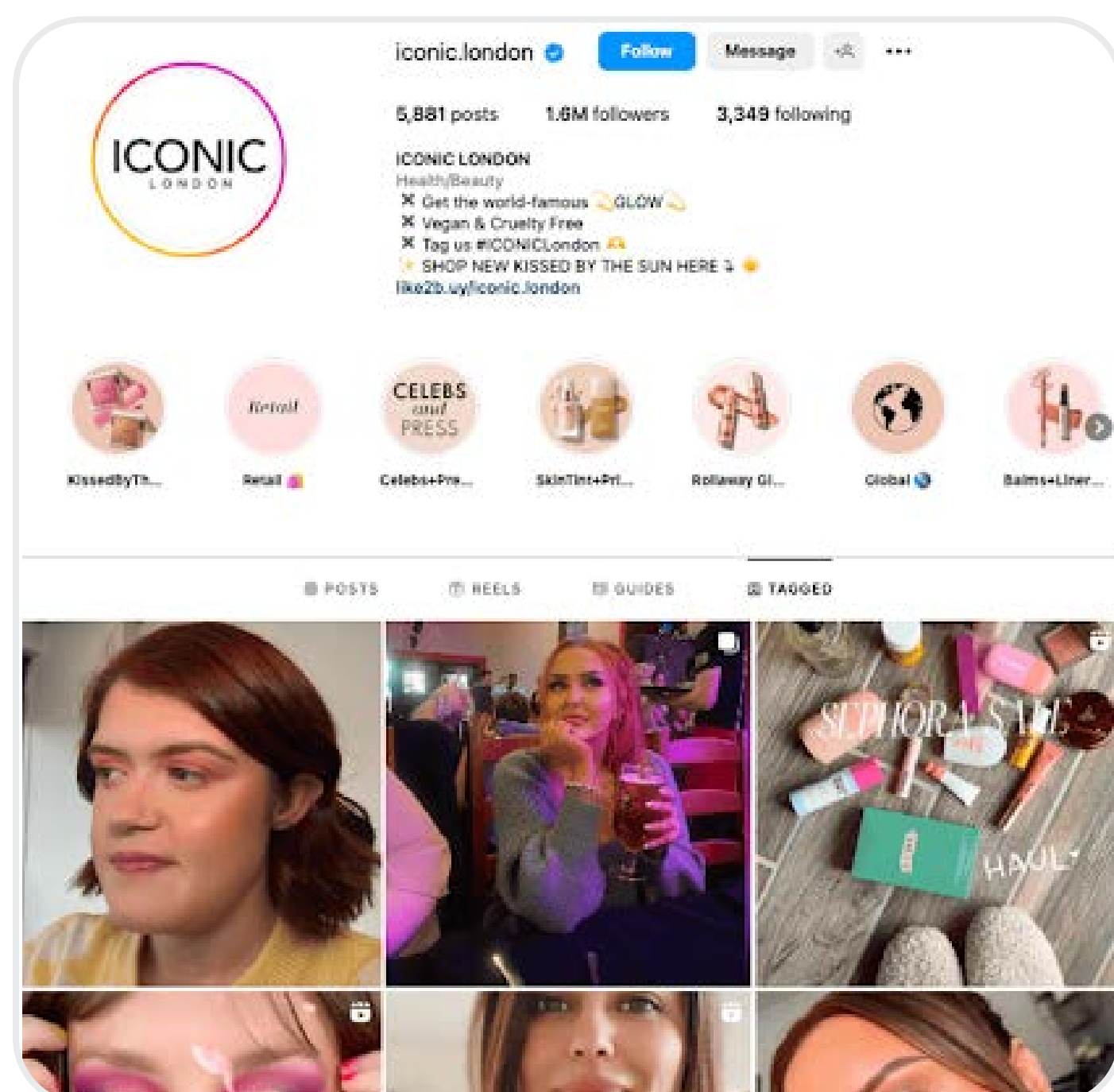
As a digital-first brand Iconic London had a wealth of user-generated content — but it was looking for ways to leverage that content to drive conversions, increase order value, and build customer connections.

The beauty brand used Bazaarvoice's Like2Buy solution to make its Instagram content shoppable and create an uninterrupted shopping experience.



Like2Buy has been amazing for us. We plugged it in at a time where we saw Instagram revenue starting to decline slightly due to digital landscape changes, and it more than compensated for that, bringing us back up again, which was really exciting to see.

**Lizzie Newell, Head of Marketing, Social, and Campaigns at Iconic London**



**361%**

lift in time on site<sup>19</sup>

**126%**

lift in conversion rate<sup>19</sup>

**11%**

lift in average order value<sup>19</sup>

## Selling with social

Social content can — and should — drive revenue beyond social channels.

In fact, 74% of shoppers expect to see social content on your website. Integrating this shopper content into your e-commerce site augments the shopping experience and helps consumers envision those products in their lives, which encourages them to buy.

One highly effective way to integrate social into your e-commerce site is with shoppable social galleries. These galleries trump staged photography with user-created lifestyle imagery.



You can also sell with social content by bringing it directly into your retail stores. In fact, when we asked consumers what technologies they'd like to see integrated into the brick-and-mortar shopping experience, 36% said they'd like to see virtual displays of reviews and customer photos.<sup>7</sup>



## SUCCESS STORY

# River Island

Fashion brand River Island uses social and visual content to help shoppers envision products in their lives while increasing site engagement and sales.

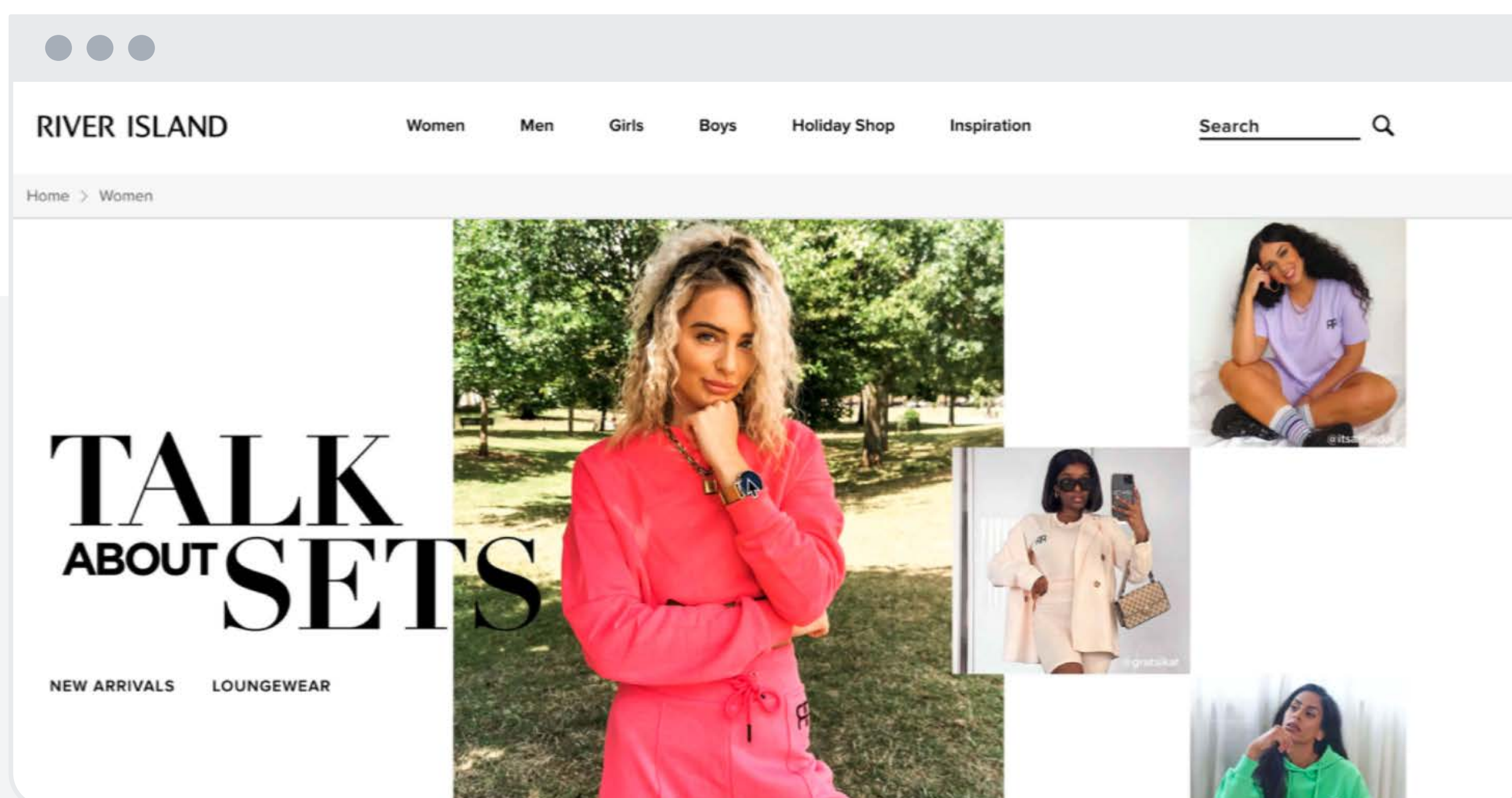
Using Bazaarvoice Galleries, the brand celebrates its customers by curating user-generated content from social channels and displaying it across its website.

The brand has a community of customers eager to share their photos wearing River Island's clothing, which helps other shoppers discover new items and take inspiration from their styling. This lifestyle-based visual content is displayed as engaging and authentic shoppable images on River Island's homepage, a full-page gallery, and carousels on product pages to show how the products fit into people's lives.

**148%**  
lift in conversion rate<sup>9</sup>

**45%**  
increase in average  
order value<sup>9</sup>

**200%**  
increase in time  
on site<sup>9</sup>



# Engage your visitors with rich PDPs

Shoppers seek out authentic user-generated content to make the right purchasing decisions. In fact, 40% of shoppers won't even make a purchase if there isn't any shopper content on the product detail pages.<sup>5</sup>

Visual user-generated content is a powerful tool for retailers to influence shoppers' purchasing decisions. One of the biggest opportunities is to integrate this content into product detail pages (PDPs) to create a rich shopping experience.

The key is to inspire consumers by reusing engaging videos and images you and your brand partners gather from social media. This can be done by collecting shopper content manually or using a platform like Bazaarvoice to curate and distribute social content from your brand partners at scale.

To tap into the existing goldmine of user-generated photos and videos that your brand partners can access, we make it easy to curate and share the content with retailers who are part of the Bazaarvoice Visual Syndication Network. This increases the traffic and conversions rate of your PDPs and provides shoppers with a delightful experience, no matter where they are browsing. Retailers already in the Bazaarvoice Visual Syndication Network include Kohl's, Very, Petco, Argos, and Target to name a few.

Check out how Target partners with Noursion and the 3x lift in revenue they see.



## SUCCESS STORY

# Nourison

Nourison is tapping into the growth opportunity that social commerce offers by collecting visual content from shoppers on social media, then distributing it to retailer sites via Bazaarvoice's Visual Syndication Network.

**Combined with syndicated reviews, the brand saw the following impact:**

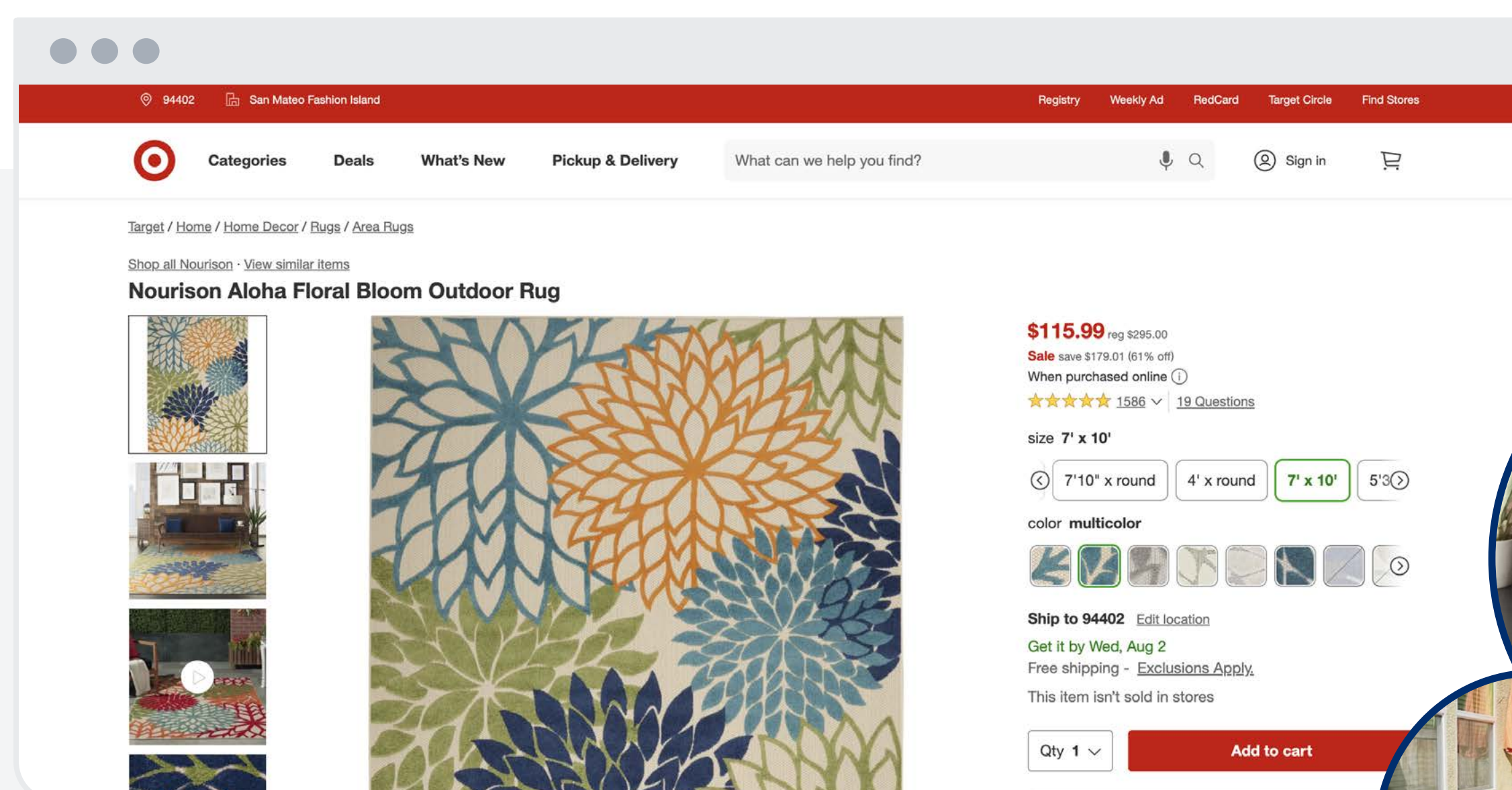
**4X**  
lift in conversions<sup>10</sup>

**3X**  
lift in revenue<sup>10</sup>



Nothing is better than seeing how others are styling their rooms. It helps our shoppers visualize a particular style in their living rooms and lifestyle.

**Megan Frederiks,**  
**Associate E-commerce Account**  
**Manager at Nourison**





# The Bazaarvoice content syndication process

- Retailer or brand sources the content, adds product tags, and requests rights from social user
- Social user receives the content request and approves it
- Retailer or brand approves the content for display

## Syndication for retail-sourced content

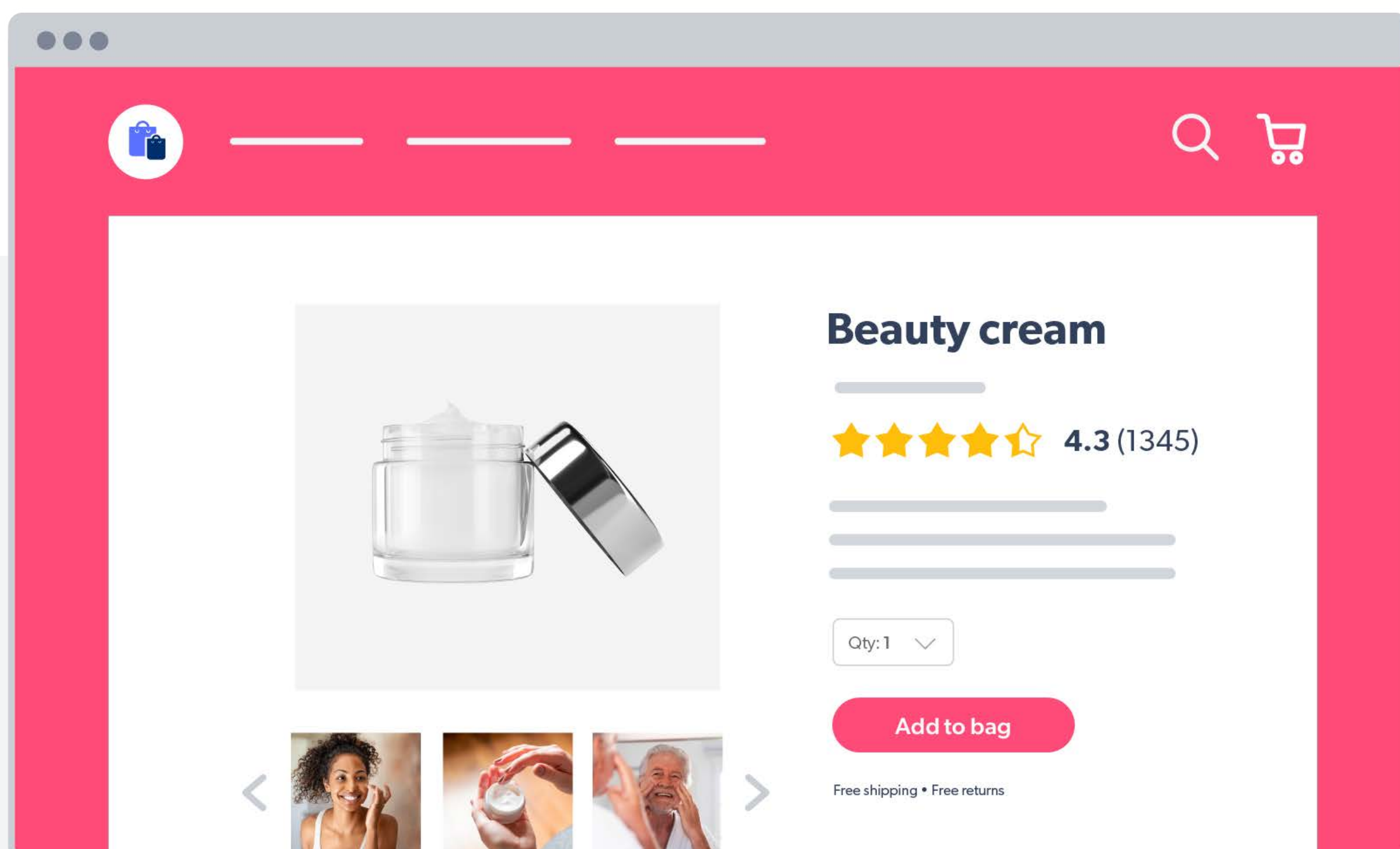




Just like you have a brand engagement program for collecting ratings and reviews, engaging your brand partners on social content is becoming increasingly important. By combining ratings, reviews, questions and answers, and visual syndication, you can build a rich PDP that showcases the voice of your customers and drives sales at scale. This is a powerful strategy for growing private label brands and collaborating with internal teams.

Your goal should be to duplicate the success of ratings and reviews syndication and increase coverage of your catalog by getting high-quality content on as many product pages as possible, driving higher conversion rates through broader coverage. Establish a sustainable content supply chain that consistently delivers value.

And just as you set benchmarks for review coverage, consider setting similar goals for the amount of user-generated photos and videos populating your product pages. With potential conversion rate increases of up to 140%, it's a win-win for you and your brand partners.






# Prioritize authenticity

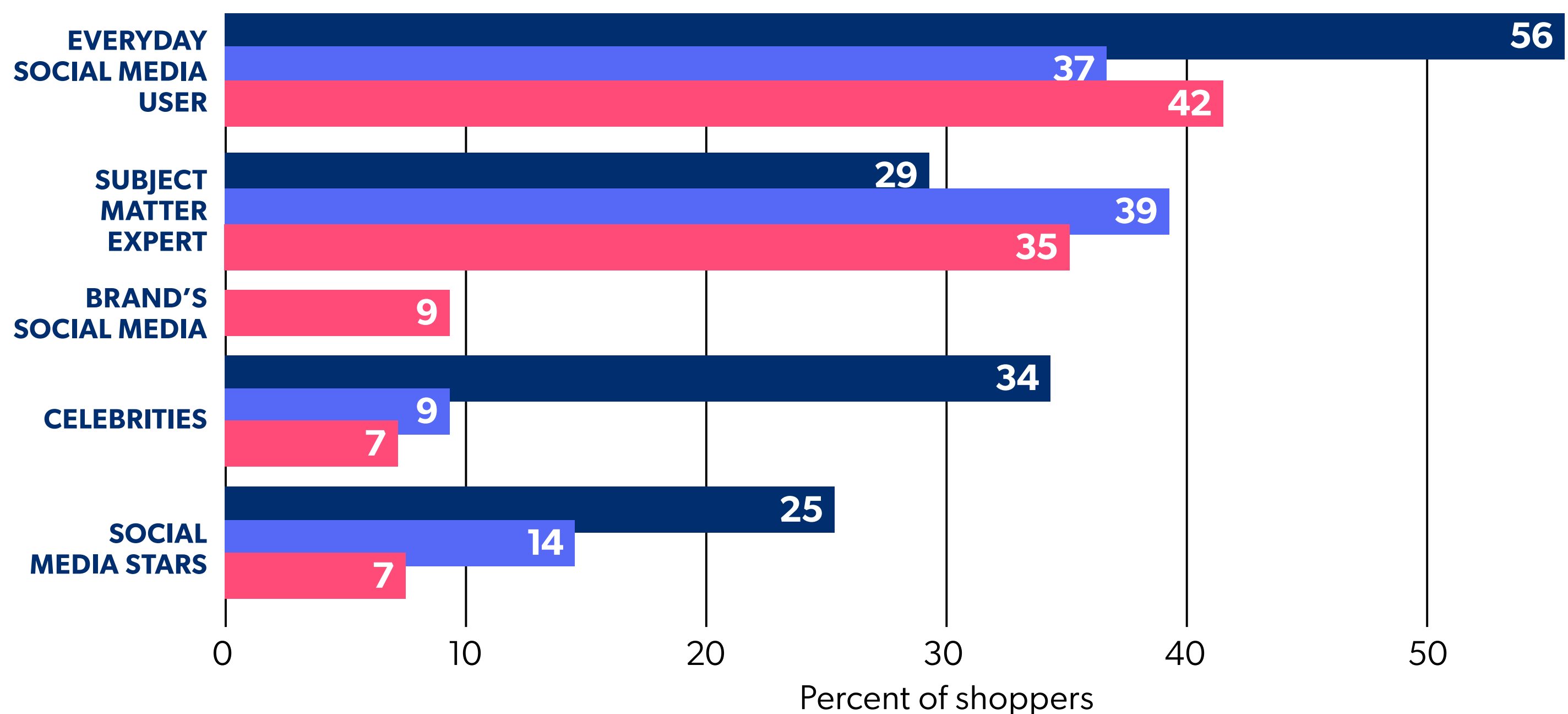
For 72% of shoppers, the reputation of brands and retailers plays a crucial role in their purchasing decisions. But who do consumers trust most when it comes to product recommendations?

According to our 2022 Shopper Experience Index, 83% of surveyed shoppers trust organic posts from influencers more than sponsored posts.<sup>7</sup> And user-generated content outperforms branded content when it comes to authenticity.

But not all influencers are created equal. Celebrities and social media stars don't have the sway they once had. Shoppers now prefer to see input from everyday people and are more likely to:

- Follow regular social media users and subject matter experts
- Trust these accounts to share authentic content
- Trust that these accounts will give unbiased views<sup>12</sup>

 Followed by shoppers       Trusted for authentic content and product reviews       Likely to purchase based on recommendation



The bottom line is consumers value content from their peers when making a purchase. To create effective social commerce content, tap into your pool of everyday users.



# Put your best advocates to work

Sampling is a great way to generate all kinds of user-generated content including social posts, photos and videos. Consider retailer managed sampling, like Bazaarvoice's Retailer Managed Sampling (RMS) solution. With RMS, you can create your own sampling programs, enable leading brands to share samples, reward loyal customers with these samples, and get exclusive and authentic content for your website and social channels. Plus, by combining RMS with social commerce, you can harness the power of social media platforms to make your program even more successful.

## Select your products



## Match with your audience



MATCH



## Ship your products



## Collect your reviews



## Here's how to maximize loyalty, engagement, and sales through RMS and social commerce:

### **1. Define objectives and establish sampling guidelines:**

Set RMS goals and sampling guidelines, including sample distribution, target demographics, geographical reach, social platforms, and campaign duration. Create a brief for creators with feedback expectations, brand considerations, and desired UGC.”

### **2. Craft irresistible sample offers:**

Create compelling offers with diverse product samples and persuasive messaging that highlights the value of your products.

### **3. Execute a coordinated sampling campaign:**

Work with an RMS provider to ensure smooth logistics, sample distribution, and real-time campaign tracking.

### **4. Leverage social media channels:**

Choose platforms that align with your target audience and amplify your RMS program's reach and engagement.

### **5. Monitor, analyze, and adapt:**

Regularly analyze performance metrics and adjust your strategy based on insights to optimize future campaigns.

By following these steps, you can effectively enhance brand advocacy, drive customer engagement, and boost sales through the power of RMS and social commerce.



# Don't forget your private label lines

Private labels are a major factor in why shoppers choose certain retailers. According to eMarketer, about 66% of shoppers assume that a retailer they like will also have good store brand products.<sup>14</sup>

To fully benefit from private labels, retailers should position them as consumer brands rather than generic alternatives. This can be achieved by using marketing strategies that drive trial, awareness, and brand loyalty. From packaging and design to social commerce strategies, private label marketing should resonate and feel authentic — and user-generated content is key to making it happen.

**Remember, almost 40% of shoppers won't purchase if there isn't content from other shoppers on the product page.**

To promote your private label products, we recommend curating user-generated content from social media. Running a hashtag campaign is an effective way to collect and boost shopper-generated content. A sampling campaign can also quickly increase your competitive advantage by generating more social content.

Take Petco, for example. Using user-generated content, the company wanted to increase awareness, SEO traffic, and conversions for their owned Wholehearted and Reddy brands. Along with Ratings & Reviews, Questions & Answers, Galleries, and Syndication, the Spotted Sampling Program completes a full-funnel UGC solution for Petco. The program generates better reviews and images that can be used in Galleries across category pages and social media.



## SUCCESS STORY

# Petco

Petco set out to increase awareness of and traffic and conversions for its owned Wholehearted and Reddy brands, leveraging several types of user-generated content. The pet giant activated its Bazaarvoice team to develop the new Spotted Sampling Program to generate shopper content.



The idea of getting not only reviews, but higher quality reviews with images for our own brand products was really enticing. We were looking to boost conversions and visits, and we've now seen that happen across sampled products.

**Hannah Kredich,**  
Category Specialist at Petco

"A lot of times, we get really fun photos of dogs wearing taco costumes or lounging in novelty beds," said Steele. "It's really fun to be able to sample seasonal collections to get a few reviews on the products since they have a much shorter life on-site than most items."

### The brand saw the following impact:

**48%**

increase in revenue per visit  
for sampled products<sup>13</sup>

**28%**

increase in  
conversion rate<sup>13</sup>

**15%**

increase in average  
order value<sup>13</sup>



# Create unified, cross-channel experiences

A strong social commerce strategy is made even stronger by sharing authentic, user-generated content consistently across channels. Shoppers want cross-channel consistency.

You must create on-brand, authentic experiences in all the places shoppers interact with you, offering a seamless journey from discovery to purchase.

Many shoppers enjoy a hybrid shopping experience that combines online and in-store purchases. According to our Shopper Experience Index, 64% of respondents prefer this approach.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, as many as 50% of consumers use multiple channels to complete a single purchase, such as researching on a phone before buying in-store or vice versa.<sup>15</sup>

One way to provide an authentic omnichannel experience is to cater to these in-store shoppers researching online by offering a robust collection of user-generated content on your mobile site.

Remember to leverage that shopper content in your in-store promotions, too. Make it easy for shoppers to find inspiration and social proof in all channels, and you'll be better positioned to close the sale.

**40%**

of shoppers use their phone in-store for research purposes<sup>16</sup>

**33%**

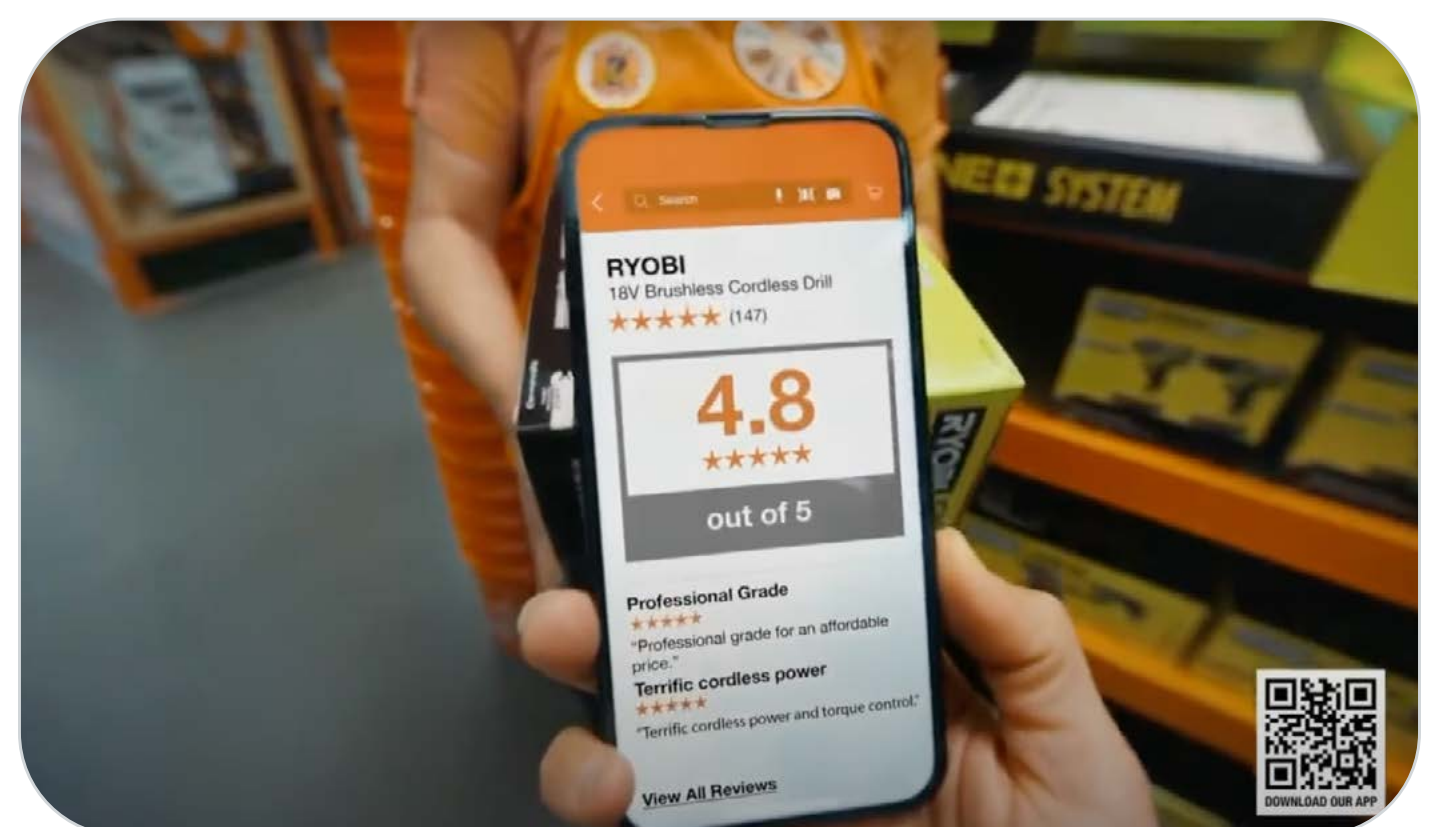
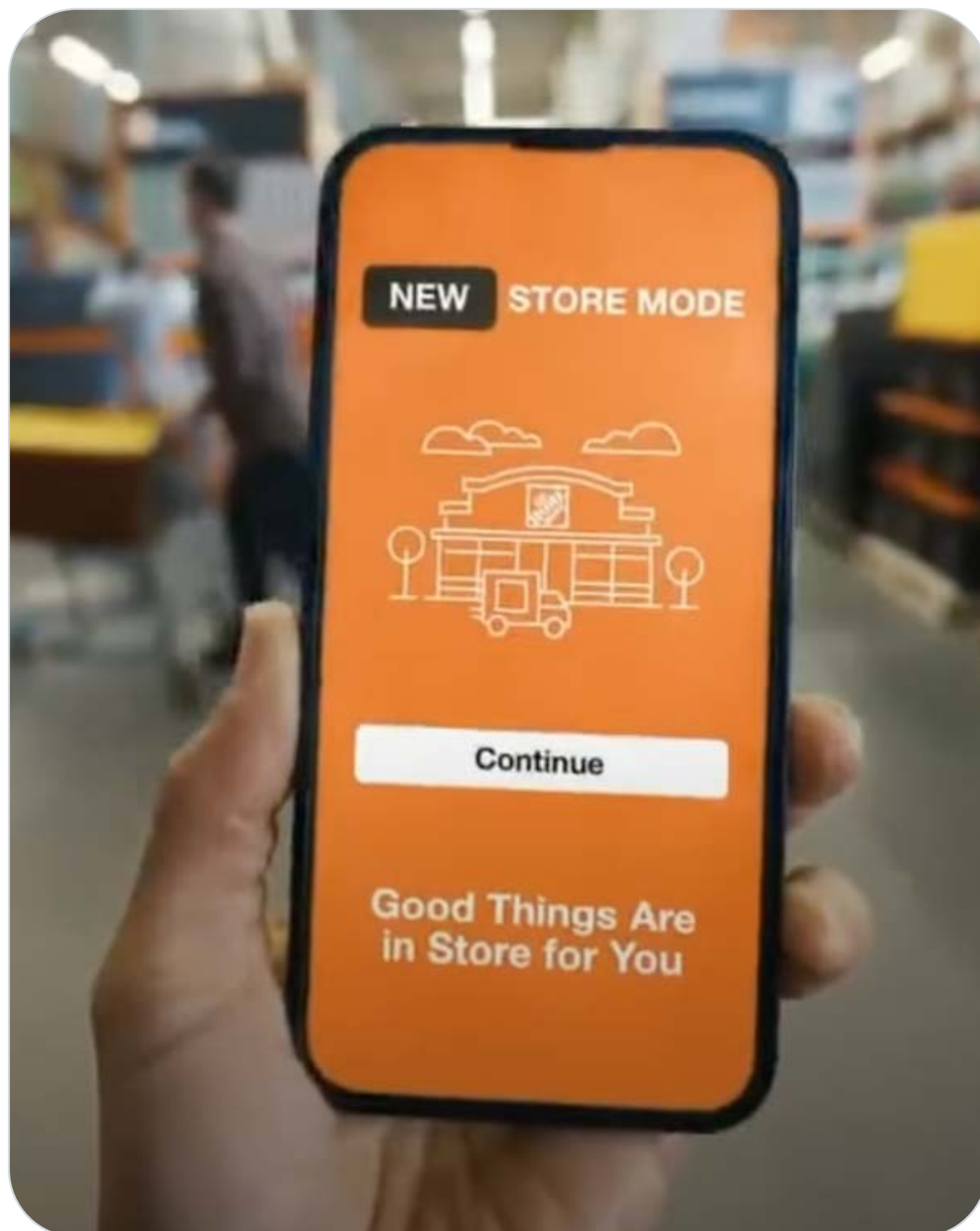
of shoppers have purchased a product online while in the store<sup>16</sup>

## SUCCESS STORY

# Home Depot

Home Depot is taking advantage of the omnichannel shopping trend. Store Mode is a new feature in the retailer's app that helps with in-store research.

Users can use the app to scan products, read reviews, and find products on a store map. As the digital shelf expands to keep up with emerging engagement trends, meeting demands with "buy" functionality and branded and user-generated content across all channels is a must.





# Balance your marketing channel mix

Are you making the most of all your channels? To stand out in a crowded market, consider connecting your paid, earned, shared, and owned channels using a PESO strategy.

Many marketers fall into the trap of channel bias. They tend to focus on what they have the most control over and what they invest in the most. That often means a reliance on owned content promoted through paid advertising.

Paid and owned marketing efforts can be expensive, time-consuming, and resource-intensive and may not always deliver the desired results. And with the deprecation of third-party cookies, managing and measuring the effectiveness of paid media has become increasingly challenging.

Because of the challenges associated with paid advertising, 82% of surveyed retailers and brands are considering reallocating portions of their paid media budgets to owned and earned channels.<sup>17</sup> Incorporating more earned and shared content into your channel strategy can increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness while still delivering significant results.



You've been trained to focus on the content you have the most control over.

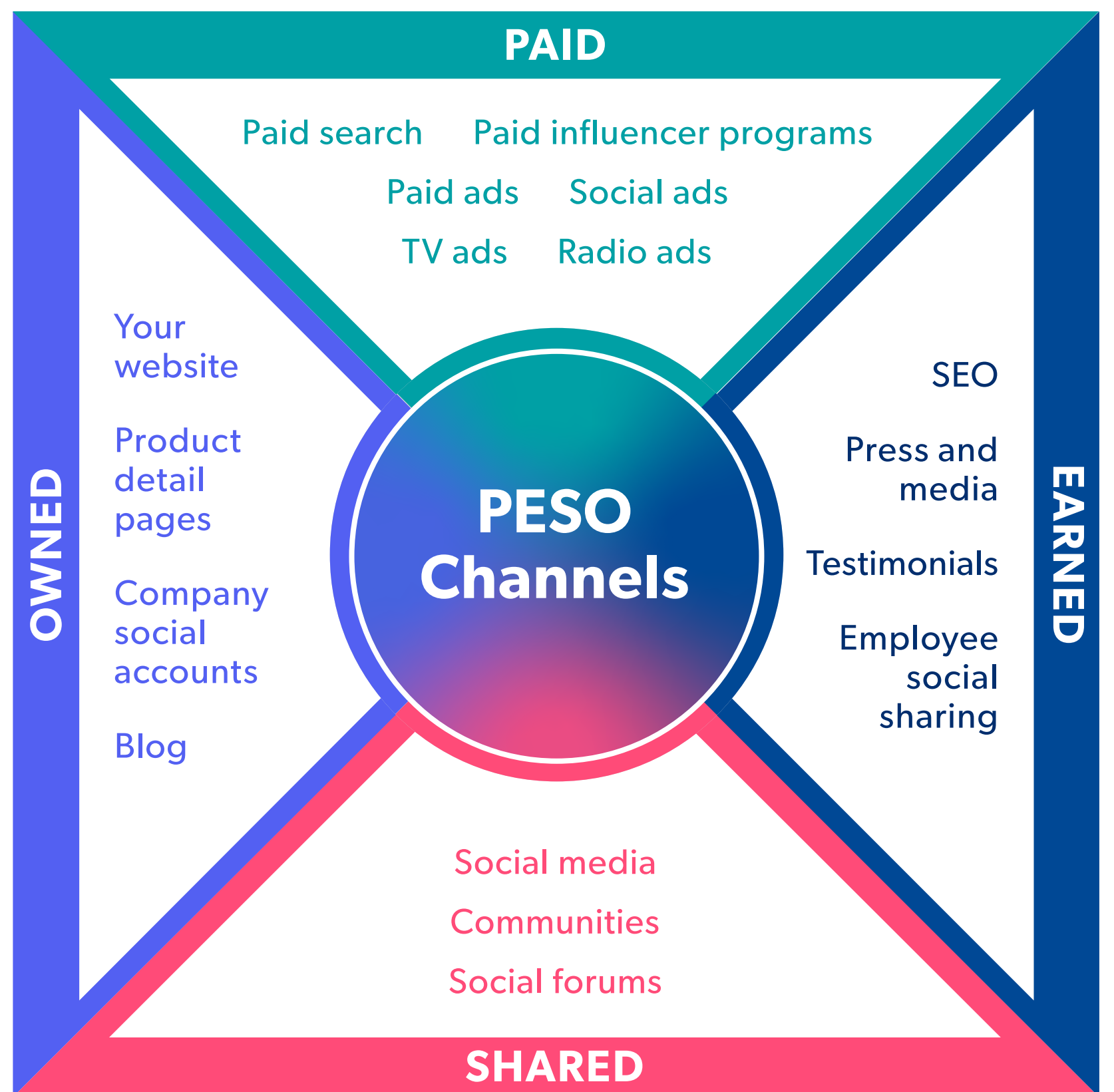
**Doug Straton, Chief Customer Evangelist at Bazaarvoice**

**Paid:** Advertising content and channels you pay for

**Earned:** Non-paid content created from publicity

**Shared:** Organic user-generated content created by customers

**Owned:** Content and channels you create, own, and manage



Implementing a cohesive marketing strategy that prioritizes the voice of the customer can help you deliver the personalized, conversational experiences that shoppers desire. Including user-generated content, such as photos, videos, and customer ratings and reviews, in your approach can further enhance its effectiveness, as shoppers value content from their peers.



For years, brands have always leaned on paid channels to amplify branded content, tactics, and offers. In fact, more than \$700B was spent on paid advertising alone in 2022. Now we are seeing a rebalancing to optimize the MMM (marketing mix modeling) as consumers are yearning for organic content from other shoppers i.e. earned and shared content and channels. As Bazaarvoice's CMO, I too am hunting for the perfect mix.

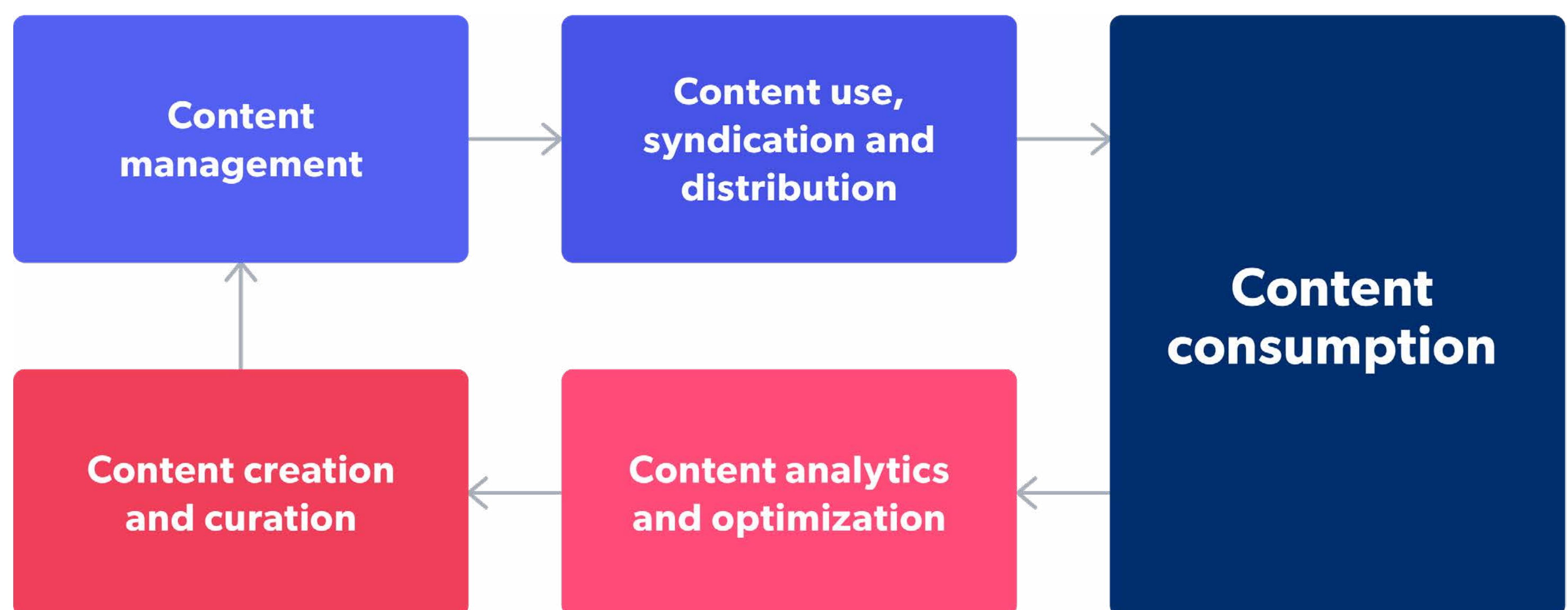
**Zarina Stanford, CMO at Bazaarvoice**



# Rely on a robust content supply chain

Building a digital content supply chain can improve efficiency and scalability.

In a traditional supply chain, companies source and transform raw materials into end products consumers consume at points of purchase, optimizing supply and demand. A content supply chain works and functions the same way — but instead of building products, the focus of a content supply chain is planning, creating, curating, and distributing content. Balancing content supply and demand at all consumption points is key.



The content supply chain process involves multiple departments and is not the responsibility of anyone. It can help you shift your marketing strategy from creating branded content to collecting, curating, and distributing content across channels.

One best practice is to curate images, videos, reviews, and other user-generated content across multiple channels. For example, you could collect shoppers' photos of your product from Instagram and reuse them across social media channels, product pages, emails, and retail displays.



Your specific content supply chain initiatives must support your business conversion objectives. Consider how different types of content can accelerate conversions, and ensure your content is optimized for each stage of the funnel.

And remember, enriching your brand’s visual presence across retail channels can be effortless with Bazaarvoice’s Visual Syndication Network. It can identify product-related images on social media, tag relevant products, and manage the permissions needed to use them on your channels. It’s an end-to-end solution, covering all aspects of content acquisition at a larger scale – from discovery, rights management, and syndication to reporting.

	DISCOVER	CONSIDER	PURCHASE	CHAMPION
<b>Buyer needs based on shopper journey stage</b>	What is the inspiration or motivation to use your product?	What are the various options and how do they fit my needs, budget and timeline?	Can I trust this vendor enough and make a confident purchase?	Did I make the right decision? What should I tell others? Do I see value in being loyal to this brand?
<b>Information are they looking for</b>	Engaging and inspiring experience that hooks me	Research all product options to confirm this will suit my needs best	Make it safe and easy for me to purchase	Join community, where to rate and review, and access to educational content or support as needed
<b>Content objective</b>	Inspire and build awareness (convert strangers into leads)	Educate, inform and build trust (turn leads into prospects)	Build confidence and trust (convert prospects into customers)	Demonstrate two-way value and loyalty (turn customers into advocates)
<b>Content / media mix</b>	Press articles, advertorials, blogs, user-generated content, inspiration galleries and boards, SEO-led content	Expert reviews, verified purchaser ratings and reviews, questions and answers, influencer reviews, in-store displays	In-store POS, coupons, discount codes, shopping cart content, purchase options, finance options, secure purchase infrastructure, add-ons, accessories	Email review request, text review request, how to videos, community invites, reminders
<b>Channels</b>	Search, paid media, email, text, public relations, blog, social media, community groups, OOH, website, influencers, sampling, events	Website, email, expert comparison article, product comparison sites/tools, price comparison site/tools, social media	Website or in-store point of sale	Community, email, text, website, social media, support, phone, events
<b>KPIs (measure by channel and content type)</b>	Impressions, engagement rate, cost per impression, volume, engaged community members	Traffic volume, cost per click, engagement rate, bounce rate, time on site, page depth, engagement with interactive elements	Revenue, order volume, average order value, basket size, cost per conversion, conversion rate, abandon rate, return on investment	Social proof impressions, customer lifetime value, referral, repeat purchase, NPS
<b>CTAs</b>	Learn more	Add to cart	Complete your purchase	Share your opinion
<b>Owner</b>	Public relations, brand, e-commerce, social, digital marketing, retail	Public relations, brand, e-commerce, social, digital marketing, retail	Retail, e-commerce	Brand, e-commerce, social, digital marketing, support



# Collaborate for conversions

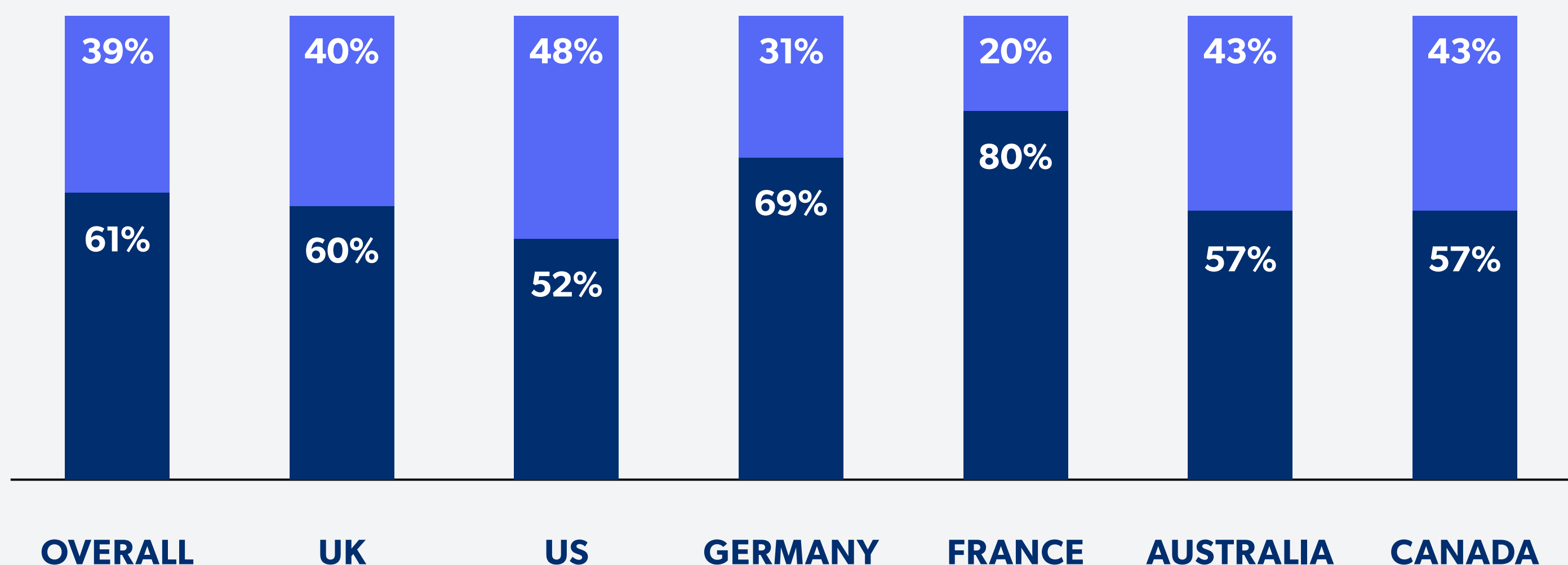
When it comes to ownership, social commerce falls on a blurry line — especially in large organizations. Is it site experience? Social media? Marketing? Product? It's anyone's game to start, but collaborating cross-functionally is the way to win big.

For most retailers, there are organizational silos that can make collaboration difficult, and many retailers don't have a holistic, company-wide content strategy. According to our 2023 Bazaarvoice Channel Mix study:<sup>17</sup>

- 61% of respondents say their e-commerce, content, and social resources sit in different teams
- 30% of teams are only somewhat or not at all aligned on content production
- 17% of brands and retailers have a centralized budget that does not divide PESO content

## DO YOUR E-COMMERCE, CONTENT AND SOCIAL RESOURCES SIT IN DIFFERENT TEAMS?

● Yes ● No



But retail teams can drive social commerce conversion by working together to collect, curate, and create high-performing social content. Different teams can leverage visual UGC to maximize its impact and drive growth and engagement. Here's how:

### **Merchandising**

Boost brand engagement by educating brands on program benefits and increasing product visibility at retail.

### **Private label**

Ensure a strong collection strategy is in place.

### **Product managers**

Partner with e-commerce teams to create the best display experience for customers.

### **Social media**

Help source retail-owned and user-generated content, as well as approved content from brand partners.

### **E-commerce**

Advocate for the adoption of a visual syndication program and work with marketing teams to leverage visual UGC across your website and marketing collateral.

### **Other cross-functional teams**

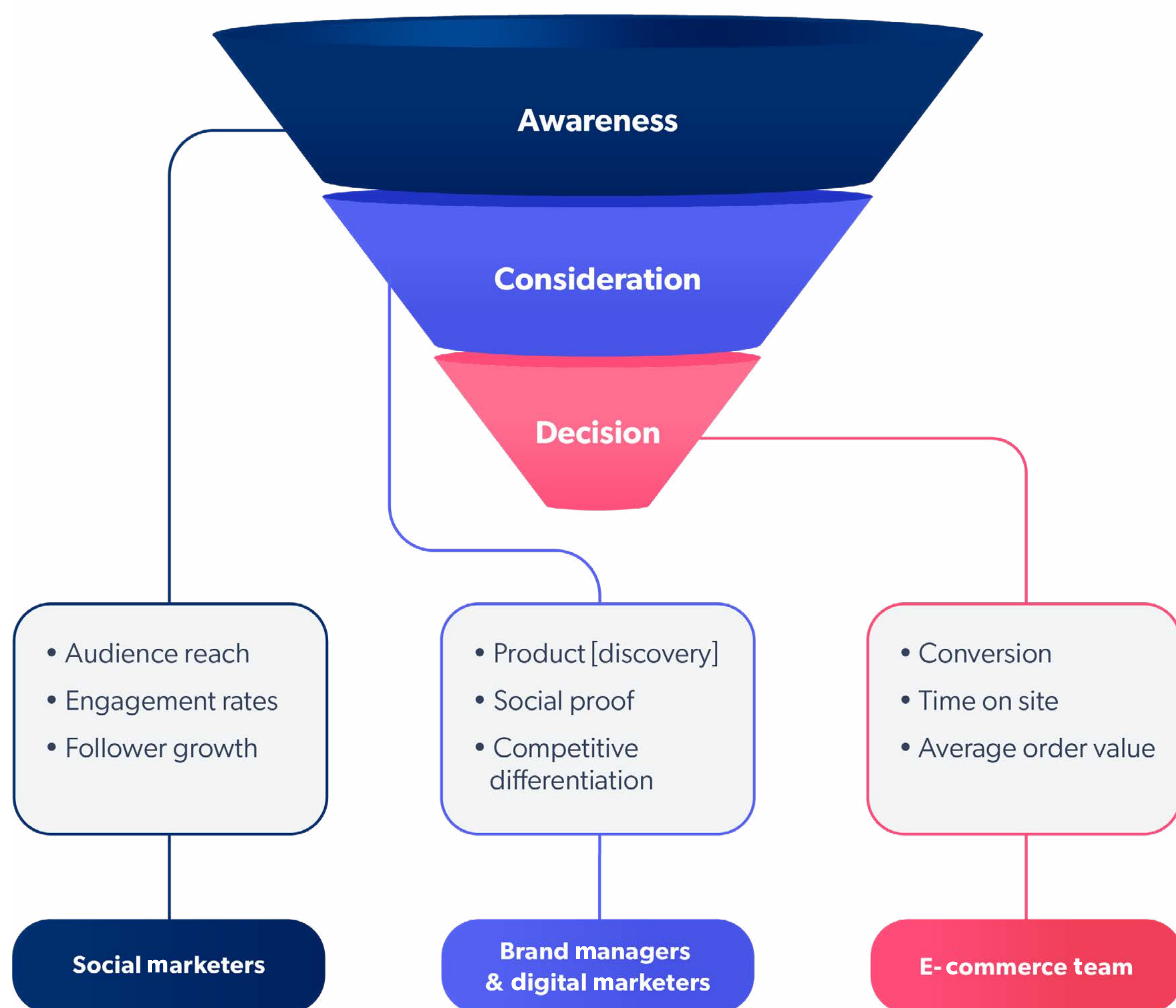
Receive conversion tracking and reporting to stay informed of the business impact.



# Measure results— down to revenue

A successful social commerce strategy produces proof of performance.

By aligning your various teams around your content supply chain and measuring brands' contributions, you can create a social commerce conversion scorecard that tracks your results throughout the funnel — from engagement rate and reach through average order value and revenue. This will help you prove ROI, identify areas for optimization, and uncover opportunities to increase revenue by collaborating with brands on common goals and benchmarks.



Your specific key performance indicators (KPIs) should depend on what kind of social commerce initiatives you're implementing. For example, if you're selling on social using a tool like Bazaarvoice's Like2Buy, which turns Instagram photos into shoppable images, you'd want to watch for improvements in:

- Traffic to site
- Time on site
- IG engagement
- Conversion

If you're selling with social via social galleries on your website, your KPIs will look a bit different. In this case, look for improvements in:

- Conversion impact (conversion rate lift and revenue per visitor lift)
- Engagement impact (increase in time on site and engagement rate lift)
- Traffic impact (traffic increases from search, social, and category level search position increases)
- Coverage report (percentage of PDPs with user-generated photos and videos)
- A benchmark version of the above, to see how brand partners and private label team efforts are doing and surfacing tactics to grow sales



# Execute with an end-to-end platform

Executing, scaling, and measuring a successful social commerce program comes down to using the right partner and platform.

Bazaarvoice empowers shoppers to create and share authentic product experiences that inspire and provide the confidence to buy. Our holistic platform helps brands and retailers generate, curate, distribute, and learn from authentic, user-generated content at scale.

By integrating all the pieces into a single platform, you can manage and measure social commerce in one place, driving growth and efficiency.

## **Streamline content collection and governance**

The Bazaarvoice Social Commerce solution helps you collect content, request rights, and store all your photos and videos for all the types of content you work with today.

## **Display content across the shopper journey**

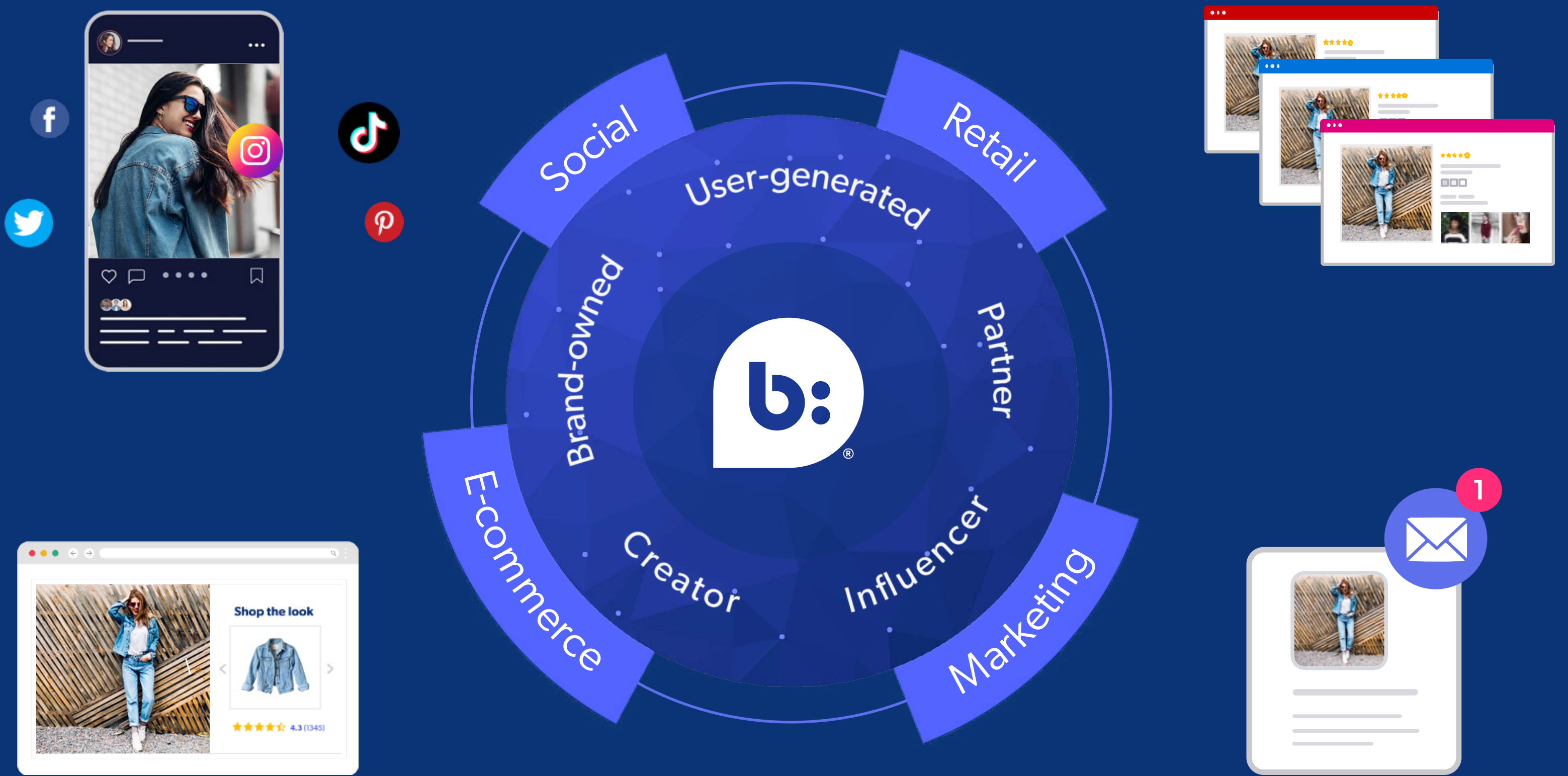
Tagged against your product feed, the Bazaarvoice platform allows you to make any content shoppable and distribute it to all the places your customers hang out.

## **Grow advocates and conversion rates with sampling**

A Bazaarvoice product sampling campaign effortlessly trades free product samples in exchange for authentic feedback in the form of customer reviews and imagery.

## **Easily report on the ROI of your social commerce program**

Bazaarvoice Social Commerce analytics provide an easy way to measure the success of your content strategy on the channels that matter with the metric that matters most — revenue.



As proven by the industry-leading Total Economic Impact study conducted by Forrester, Bazaarvoice customers see, on average:

**400%**  
return on  
investment<sup>18</sup>

**3X**  
increase in conversion on  
purchases<sup>18</sup>

**30%**  
productivity improvement<sup>18</sup>

**2.7%**  
of revenue generated<sup>18</sup>



Beyond ratings and reviews, this social content is the most important. It's a critical avenue for our shoppers to find out more about products.

**Director of product  
content, retail**



# Key takeaways

- **Sell on social and sell with social:** Enable partners to provide approved, tagged media for use on your website and social channels. Bazaarvoice's Visual Syndication Network can help you build a content supply chain by curating and distributing social content from brand partners at scale.
- **Engage your brand partners in your social strategy.** By engaging brand partners in your strategy and communicating your goals for visual user-generated content on product pages, they'll understand what great content looks like and how it can increase their sales with you.
- **Align teams around a robust channel mix and content supply chain.** Balance earned and shared content to meet shopper preferences and break down organizational down silos to produce more content customers want.
- **Measure program results—down to revenue.** Monitor native social media revenue and its influence on product pages. Engage with brands and provide them with actionable insights to help them increase sales.
- **Execute with one end-to-end platform.** Working with a full-funnel user-generated content platform helps boost your marketing efficiency, improve productivity, decrease return rates, and reduce risk to your reputation.

**Want to see up to a 400% ROI on your social commerce efforts?**

Learn more about Bazaarvoice Social Commerce today:

[Calculate my ROI](#)

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