

# GUIDE TO User-generated content for lean marketing teams



bazaarvoice™

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# Introduction

Capturing shoppers' attention and standing out in a crowded market can be especially challenging when your marketing team (and budget) is on the lean side. That's why we want to share our secret to making your day-to-day easier: building a comprehensive user-generated content (UGC) strategy.

[UGC](#) refers to any content — reviews, images, and videos — created by people rather than brands or retailers. Collecting this content from your community and displaying it across social media, product detail pages, and other touchpoints can help increase sales without increasing your workload.

That's why a UGC program is a winning strategy for lean marketing teams. It's a cost-effective way to generate content that resonates, boost social media optimization (SMO) and search engine optimization (SEO), gather customer feedback, and uncover insights.

This guide will provide lean marketing teams with a comprehensive strategy for harnessing the power of UGC to drive both awareness and conversion, helping you maximize results with limited resources.



## How does UGC benefit lean marketing teams?

**90%**

more time on average spent on your website<sup>1</sup>

**50%**

higher engagement when UGC is incorporated into social campaigns<sup>1</sup>

**20%**

increase in repeat visits to your e-commerce site<sup>1</sup>

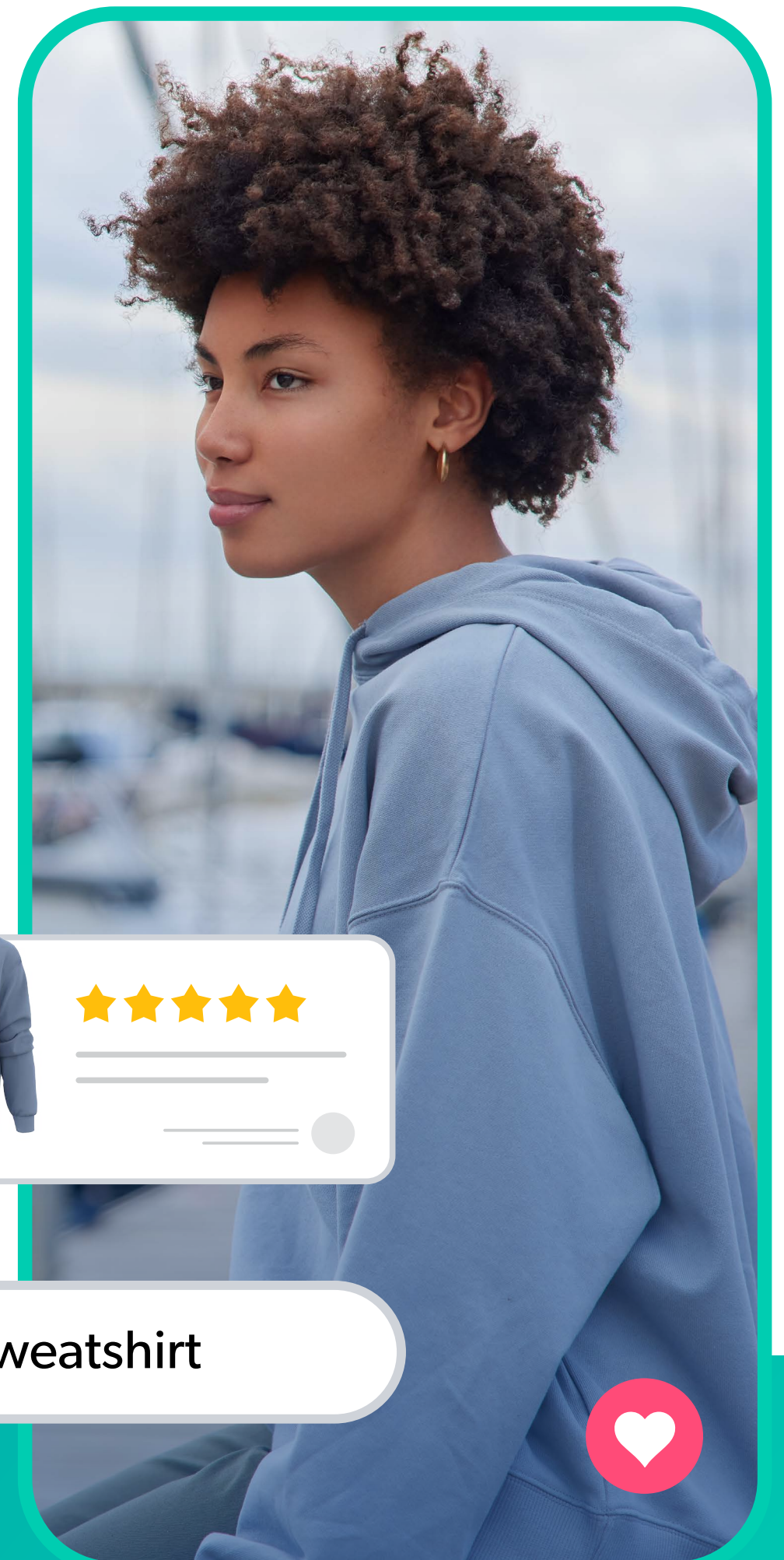
**203%**

higher conversion rate when shoppers interact with UGC<sup>2</sup>

# Boost e-commerce traffic with UGC

The days of strolling through malls and department stores to find the next exciting brand are over. Shoppers instead find themselves scrolling through the internet. And in between memes and viral TikToks, they're finding their next favorite brand.

If you want to make sure shoppers are finding your brand, let UGC do some of the work for you. UGC improves [search engine optimization](#) (SEO) performance and can reduce customer acquisition costs by as much as 75%.<sup>2</sup> SEO is the process optimizing your website to rank higher on search engine results pages (SERPs), resulting in increased traffic and higher purchase potential.



## How does UGC influence SEO?

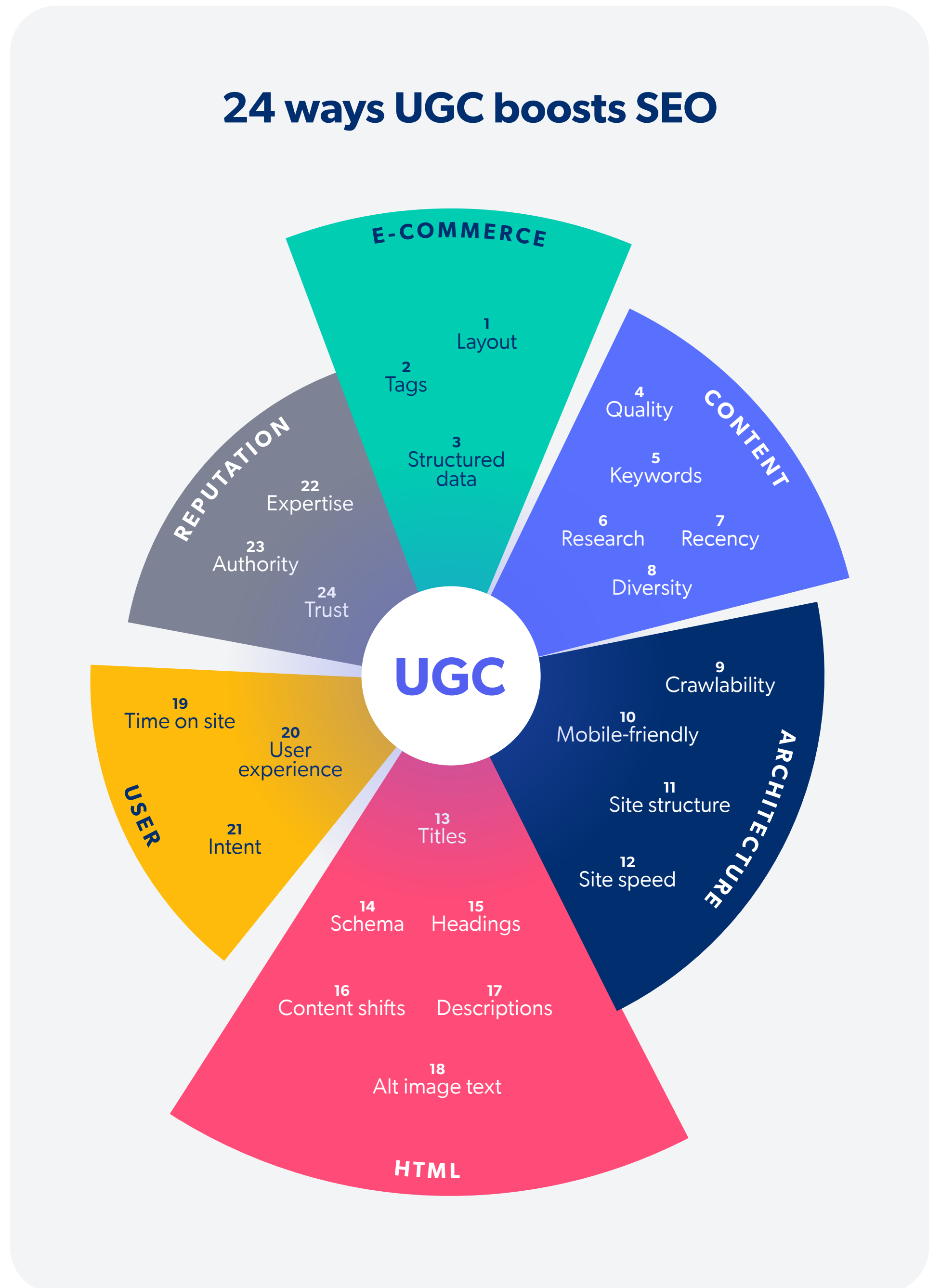
UGC provides a steady stream of keyword-rich review content<sup>3</sup>

UGC enhances the credibility of pages with multiple reviews<sup>3</sup>

UGC brings a continuous flow of fresh content to your website<sup>3</sup>

Featuring UGC on your product pages provides high-quality content for search engines to pull from. And when a shopper visits your page, these reviews and visuals reel them in, encouraging them to spend more time on the page.

And it doesn't just stop at Google. Many of these factors also help your products appear on retailer website category-level searches. Ratings and reviews help your products rank higher at retail sites, boosting brand consideration and awareness and driving channel sales.



**3x**

Bazaarvoice clients triple webpage traffic<sup>4</sup>

**63%**

of companies rely on ratings and reviews to meet their SEO goals<sup>3</sup>

**75%**

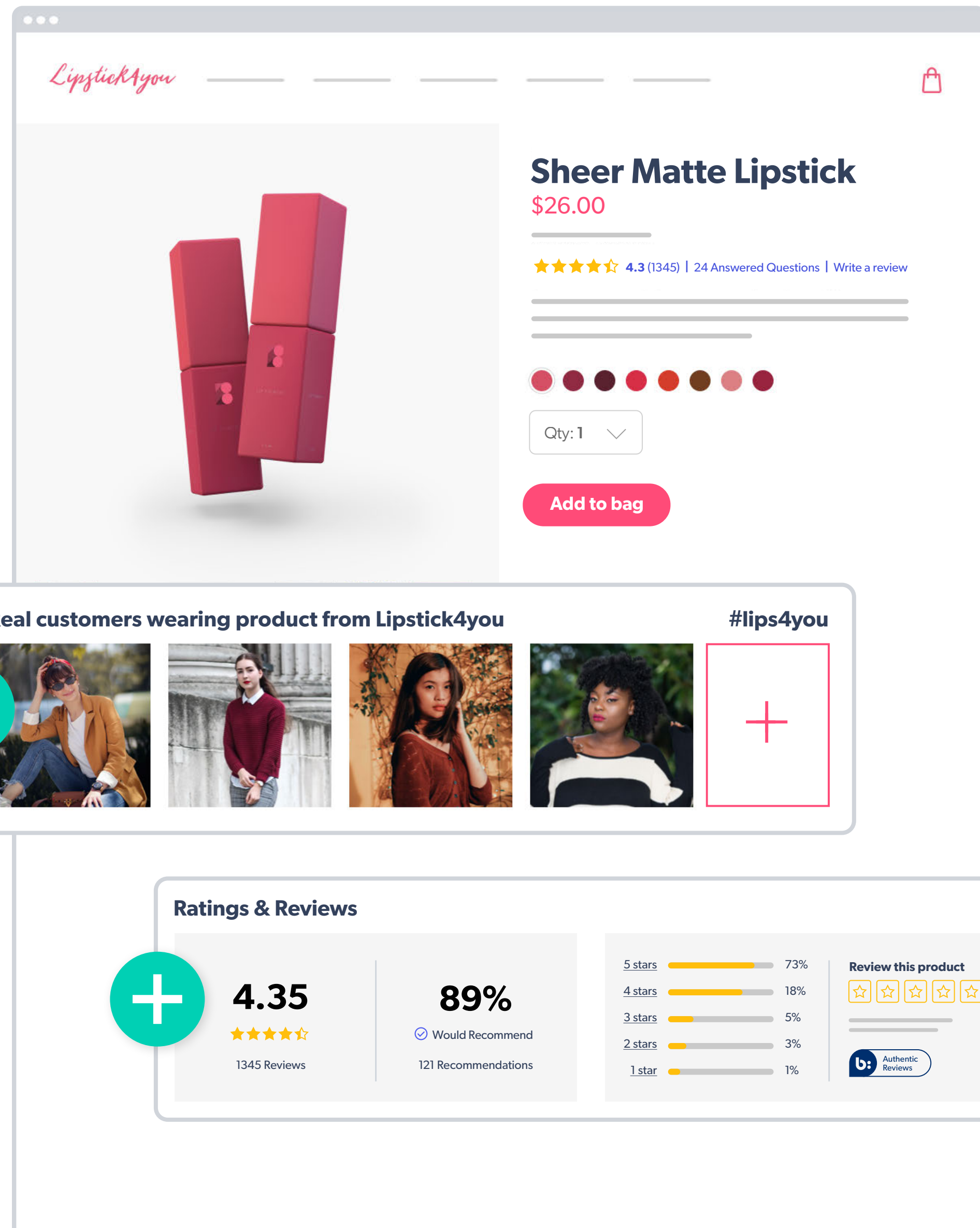
SEO can reduce your cost of customer acquisition by 75%<sup>5</sup>

# Increase conversion with rich PDPs

Product detail pages (PDPs) are the most important element of your e-commerce site. It's where shoppers research and discover your products, mull over whether to buy them and then complete the purchase. When you leverage quality user-generated content on your product pages, three things happen: You create confidence. You instill trust. And you generate up to 256% more revenue per visitor.

## Content type and impact on performance<sup>2</sup>

	CONVERSION RATE	REVENUE PER VISITOR	AVERAGE ORDER VALUE
Ratings & Reviews	+132%	+152%	+13%
On-site photo galleries	+203%	+256%	+26%
Questions & Answers	+127%	+162%	+17%



Devoting some of your marketing team's time to optimize your PDPs will pay off. Rich PDPs provide a top-notch customer experience, build loyalty, and increase sales. And UGC should be a key feature of every PDP! In fact, 40% of shoppers won't buy something if a product detail page doesn't contain any UGC.<sup>6</sup>

The quality of interaction with UGC can impact how trustworthy and helpful it is and how it influences a consumer's decision to buy online.



## How does UGC impact purchase confidence and conversion rates?

**53%**

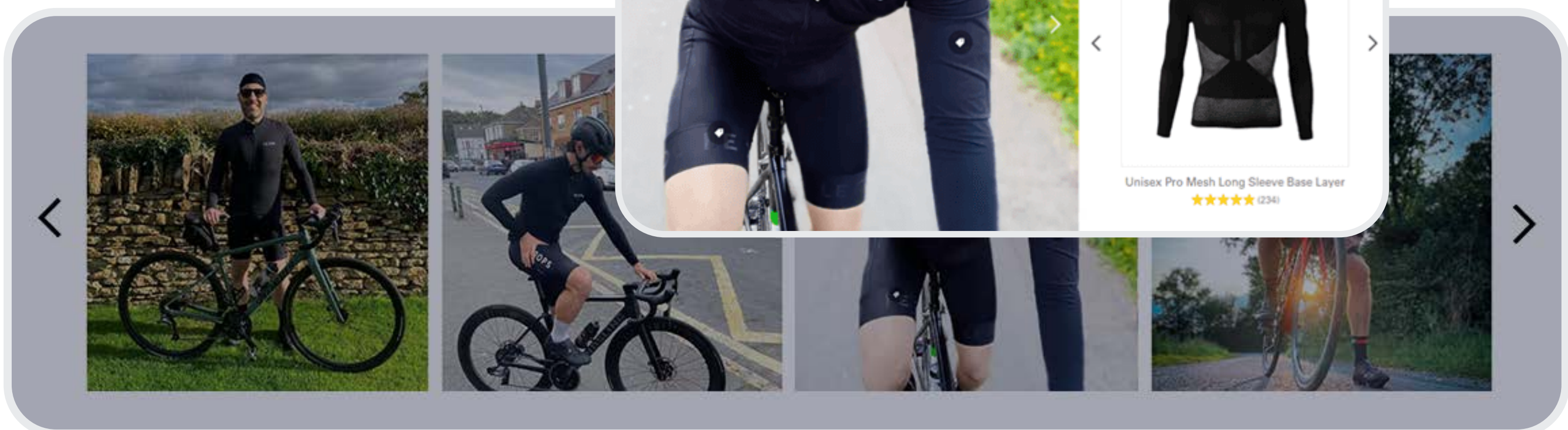
of shoppers say UGC increases their purchase confidence compared to professional pics<sup>7</sup>

**200%**

increase in conversion rates when shoppers engage with visual and social content<sup>4</sup>

## SUCCESS STORY

# Le Col



Cycling gear company Le Col relies on UGC to showcase its quality and instill confidence in shopping with the direct-to-consumer brand.

The company integrates reviews, quotes, images, and displays on its website, which has helped it grow. Some of the benefits its UGC strategy has brought include:

**13%**

higher order value for products with reviews<sup>8</sup>

**155%**

higher revenue per visitor<sup>8</sup>

**125%**

higher conversion rates when shoppers engage with UGC<sup>8</sup>



I think Bazaarvoice is a great solution. It's proven its worth in supporting discovery, engagement, conversion, and increasing revenue for Le Col.

**Andrew Longley, Head of Digital at Le Col**



# Amplify your content reach and impact with content syndication

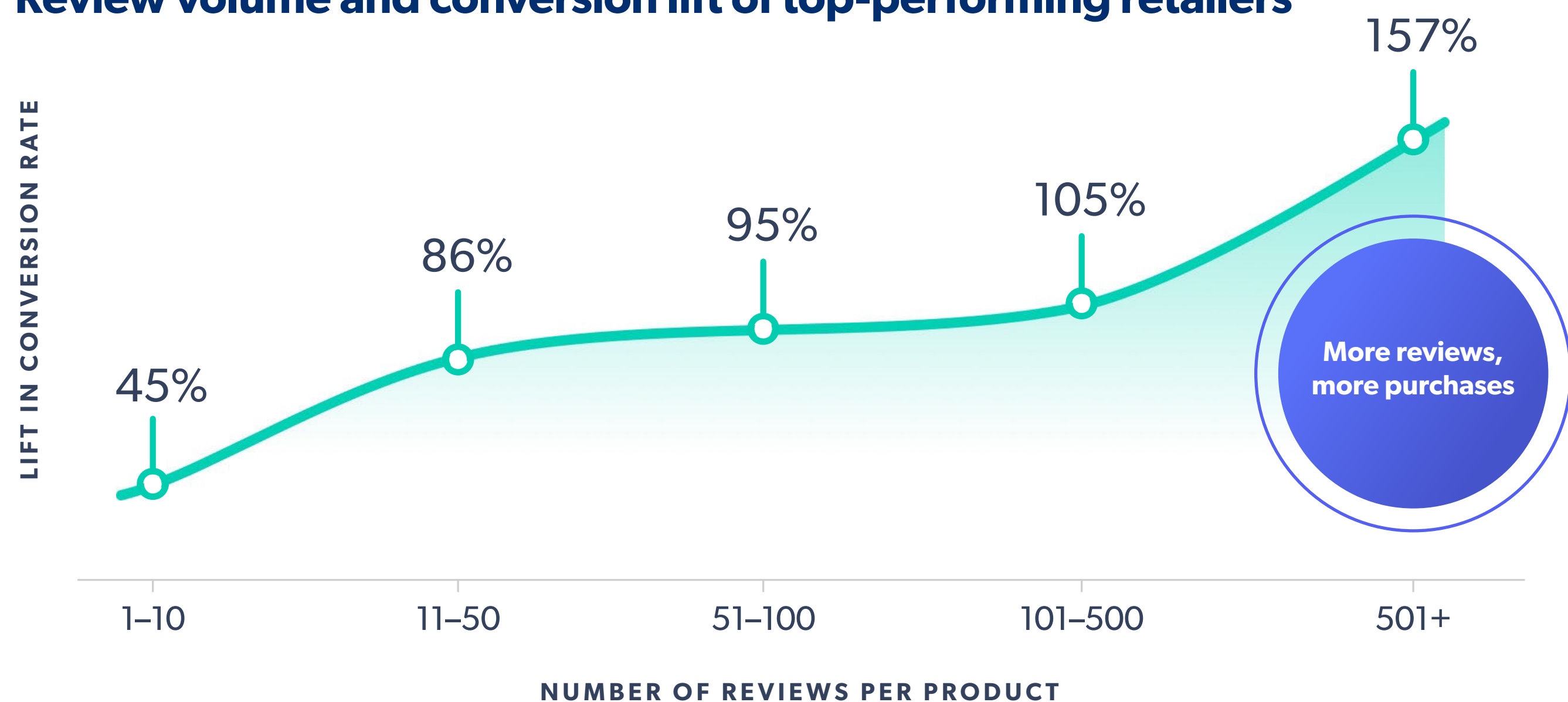
Getting your content in front of shoppers can be a real challenge for small marketing teams. That's where [content syndication](#) comes in. Content syndication refers to distributing your UGC on different channels, like social media or a retailer's site where your products are sold. It creates a consistent, cohesive experience while enhancing customer loyalty and your brand's reputation.

**There are 3 ways content syndication can amplify your highest converting content with less effort to help you win in all the places your customers are:**

## 1. Amplify the impact of every review collected

More reviews and images, more purchases. Content syndication helps you deliver the UGC volumes you need to inspire confident purchases at retail.

**Review volume and conversion lift of top-performing retailers<sup>2</sup>**



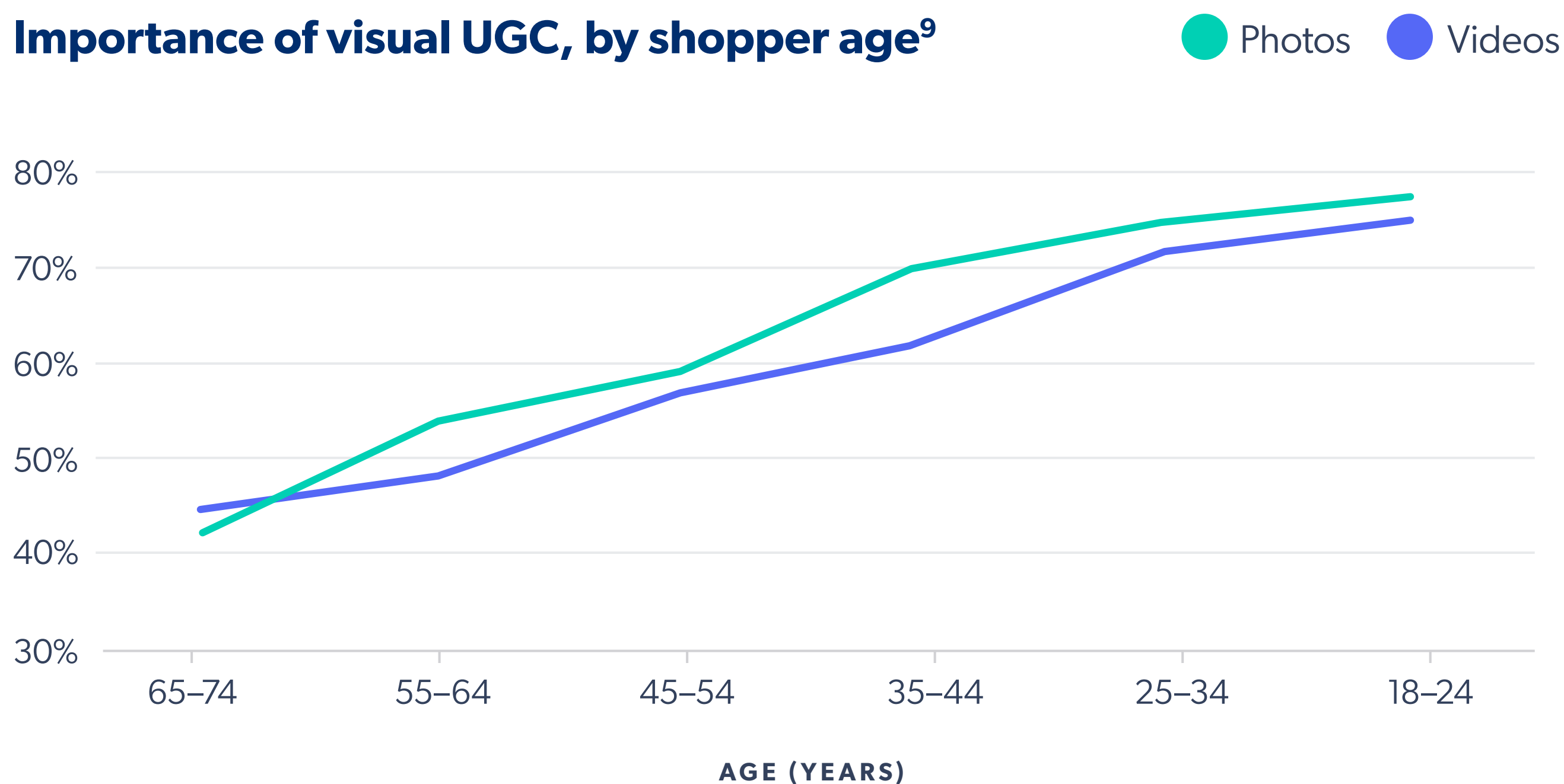
## 2. Deliver new content frequently to all your product pages

Review recency matters. Shoppers show a clear preference for reviews written in the last three months. 56% of shoppers would rather purchase a product with fewer reviews, but all written within the past three months. We recommend setting a target of three to four fresh reviews a month for all your product pages, and content syndication is a great way of achieving this at scale.

## 3. Provide social proof

In an increasingly visual-obsessed, digital world, product photos and videos provided by previous customers are quickly becoming one of the biggest drivers of shopper confidence and education. 62% of shoppers are more likely to buy a product if they can view customer photos and videos.<sup>5</sup> What's more, if your target demographic is younger, then the importance of visuals is even more important to them. The more realistic and authentic viewers feel the content is, the more confident they become in their purchase decisions.

**Importance of visual UGC, by shopper age<sup>9</sup>**



## Syndication gets your content everywhere your customers are. Here's how the Bazaarvoice syndication process works:

1

**Collect content** such as ratings, reviews, and other UGC through social media, product sampling, or review request emails and text messages.

2

**Authenticate and moderate** the content to ensure it's free from fraud, unaltered, transparent, and follows brand guidelines.

3

**Get reviews to retail rapidly** without waiting for a syndication cycle to start. Syndicable content will display within about an hour.

4

**Display the UGC** on retailer product display pages across our syndication network.

Bazaarvoice can help you get more eyes on your content at critical decision-making moments everywhere your customers shop. With a network of over 12,000 brands and retailers and 1.3 billion monthly shoppers, Bazaarvoice has a broad reach. No matter your industry, we've built retailer relationships to amplify the impact of your UGC. Retailers on the Bazaarvoice network see significantly more shopper traffic than other networks, so every bit of your UGC goes further.

## SUCCESS STORY

# Andi-Co

Andi-Co, a distributor of the appliance brands Falcon and Liebherr, wanted to syndicate reviews on the retailer sites where it sells products to help consumers easily learn about items and shop with confidence.

In just a year, Andi-Co collected over 1,000 reviews for Falcon products and 400 for Liebherr. This helped Falcon generate 690x more reviews on retailer sites.<sup>10</sup>



Prior to working with Bazaarvoice, you could probably count on one hand the number of reviews we had on partner sites. Now, there are hundreds or thousands depending on the brand. This volume of reviews plays a major factor in winning over customers.

**Robin Werth, Marketing Manager at Andi-Co**

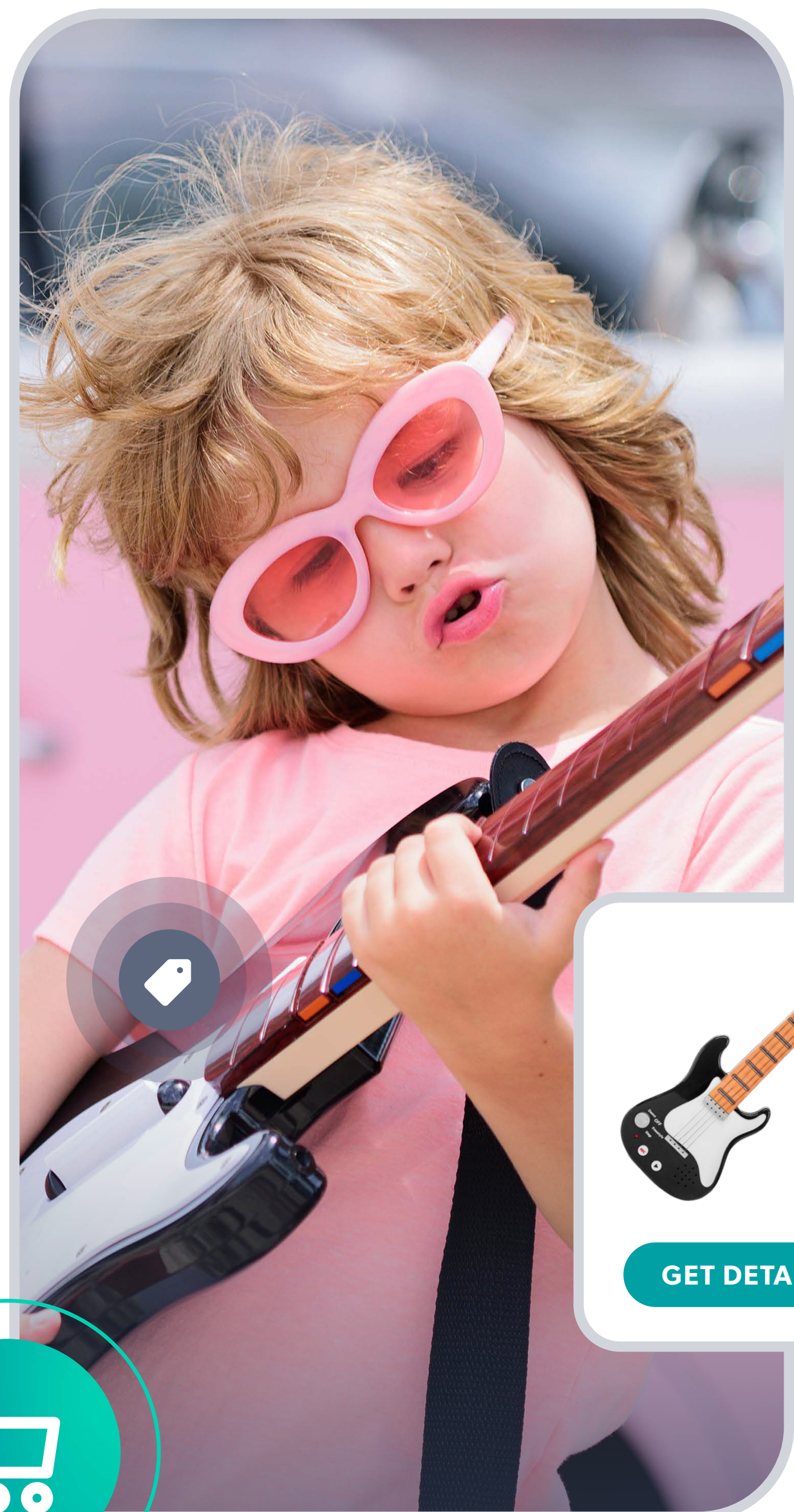
# Harness the power of social commerce to increase sales

Shopping is a social experience, even if shoppers aren't wandering through store aisles. Inspiration from friends, influencers, and everyone in between significantly impacts how and what people buy.

As a lean team, get comfortable finding and tapping into existing content about your brand. Places like Instagram and TikTok are goldmines for social content that can be repurposed and redistributed with great returns.

Social content is just one piece of social commerce – which is the buying and selling of products and services through shoppable content on and from social media. It enables consumers to shop directly where and when they're inspired.

Showcasing customers using your products lets them be the face of the brand. It also allows other shoppers to see your products in real-life settings and creates more interactive, relatable shopping experiences. Think about it: what's more enticing – a photo of a sundress on a hanger or someone wearing it at brunch?



## UGC can also help your lean team with social media optimization (SMO) by generating:

- **More engagement:** UGC is all about getting your fans involved. When they share their own content, like reviews, photos, or videos, it sparks conversations and interactions that make your social media more lively.
- **More authenticity:** UGC shows your customers' real stories and experiences. People trust and relate to UGC more than branded content because it's honest and genuine. That's great for your brand's reputation and social media image.
- **More variety:** UGC adds variety to your social media content. Instead of just posting your own stuff, UGC provides different perspectives, styles, and formats to keep things fresh for your audience.
- **More exposure:** UGC spreads the word about your brand. When your customers share their content on their social networks, it reaches new people who might not know about you yet. UGC can also go viral, giving you a huge boost in visibility and awareness.



**Social commerce combines fear of missing out (FOMO), convenience, and aesthetics to get shoppers to click add to cart.**

**69%**

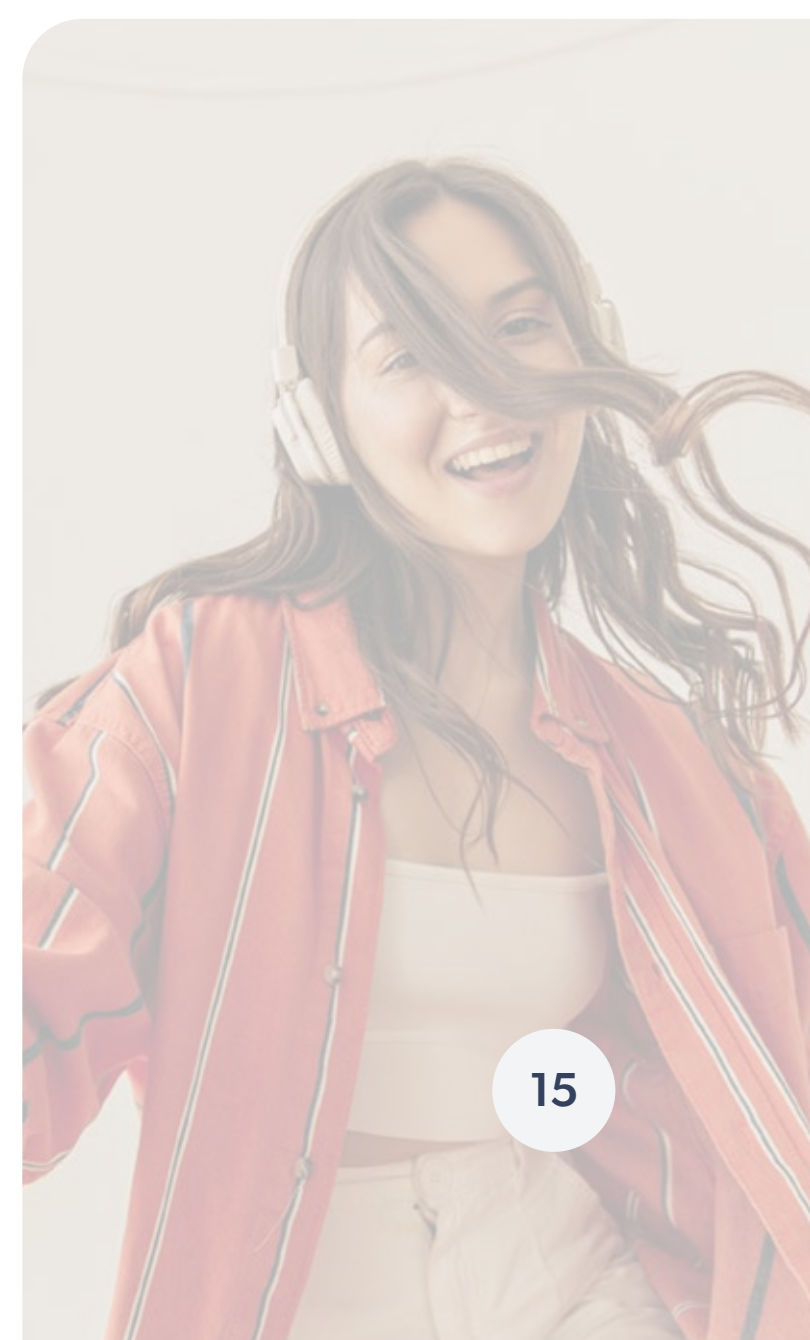
have been inspired by social media to make a purchase<sup>7</sup>

**54%**

are more likely to buy a product on social media when they can click the post and immediately get product info<sup>7</sup>

And one of the best things about UGC is that it's a constant stream of new content that you and your team didn't have to create. This keyword-rich, aesthetically pleasing, and minty fresh content builds trust with browsers and buyers. More trust leads to more traffic and, ultimately, more money.

Social content can be #sponsored, or it can be totally organic. One of the best things about organic social content is shoppers are literally providing you with marketing material because they love your products. When they tag your brand, post comments, or use a hashtag, it creates organic engagement — and you can syndicate this content on your website. Social proof we didn't have to pay for? Sign us up.



## SUCCESS STORY

# Villeroy & Boch

#yesvb



Lifestyle brand Villeroy & Boch wanted to showcase its products in real-life settings so customers could see how pieces may look in their homes. By incorporating visual shopper content across homepages, product pages, emails, and newsletters to increase conversions, Villeroy & Boch achieved:

**175%**

increase in time on site<sup>11</sup>

**275%**

increase in conversion rate<sup>11</sup>

**29%**

average increase in order value<sup>11</sup>



We want to show authentic, trustworthy, real-life content from our customers' lives, their tables, their rooms, and their homes,"... "A picture is worth 1,000 words. It can help describe a product far better than any words could.

**Sabine Kaufmann, Head of E-commerce Operations Dining & Lifestyle at Villeroy & Boch**



# Build a winning product review strategy

Part of being successful on a smaller marketing team is knowing how to get crafty, creative, and cost-effective. Building a product review collection strategy that is all three of those things can be easy. The trick is to tap into existing customer engagement and communications.

When it comes to collecting reviews, smaller marketing teams have several options:

- **Add a call-to-action** on your website's order confirmation page or confirmation email requesting customers leave a review.
- **Source customer feedback** from brand mentions, hashtags, or tags on social media — just ask the customer if you can share their comments about your product or brand.
- **Ask customers** to leave reviews. Send a post-interaction email after they've bought something that thanks them for the purchase and requests a review.





For teams with a bit more budget to spend, incentivizing reviews from shoppers is a very strategic play.

- **Offer incentives** by providing expert reviewer badges, giving a coupon for a future purchase, or through methods such as a sampling campaign. Sampling campaigns not only incentivize reviews but also boost conversions. In fact, when shoppers engage with content from sampling campaigns, conversion grows by 300%.<sup>2</sup>

Once you've gathered a trove of UGC, display and distribute it to reach shoppers and boost sales. Feature UGC on your website's PDPs, category pages, and social media.

## SUCCESS STORY

# Petco

Petco increased private-label product revenue per visitor (RPV), awareness, conversions, and SEO traffic through product sampling.

**48%**

increase in  
RPV for sampled  
products<sup>12</sup>

**28%**

increase in  
conversion  
rate<sup>12</sup>

**15%**

increase in  
average order  
value<sup>12</sup>

**405%**

increase in  
review  
volume<sup>12</sup>

# Respond to customers' online feedback

Shoppers expect your business to respond to reviews they leave. Did you know that around 87% expect a response when they leave a negative review, and 77% expect a response when they leave a positive one.<sup>13</sup> And how you respond to criticism speaks volumes about your brand values.

Seeing a brand responding to feedback helps shoppers know that you care, have excellent customer service, and make you more trusted. You can't get closer to knowing what your customers want than having a direct interaction with them.

## Where to start?

If you're a small team, keeping up with feedback can be overwhelming. We get it. To help you prioritize your efforts, we suggest starting with your most popular products or the items with the most reviews. Alternatively, you may want to focus on new products for upcoming promotions.



**Negative reviews matter to shoppers:**

**60%**

of shoppers think negative reviews are just as important as positive ones<sup>7</sup>

**93%**

of shoppers prefer products with positive and negative reviews over those with no reviews<sup>14</sup>

In either case, filter down to the 3-star and lower ratings. These reviews likely contain strongly-worded feedback from passionate customers. That's where you find the good stuff. As you're checking reviews, look for themes. Are most of the complaints about a specific feature? Or did the customer have problems with shipping and delivery? Keep a log of any recurring topics.

## Responding to positive feedback

When you have time, consider responding to 5 and 4-star reviews to show appreciation to happy customers. Share personalized, quick, and concise gratitude responses, like these examples:

"Thanks for taking the time to share your positive experience with us, Gabby..."

"We so appreciate serving customers like you, Kerry. Thank you for the review..."

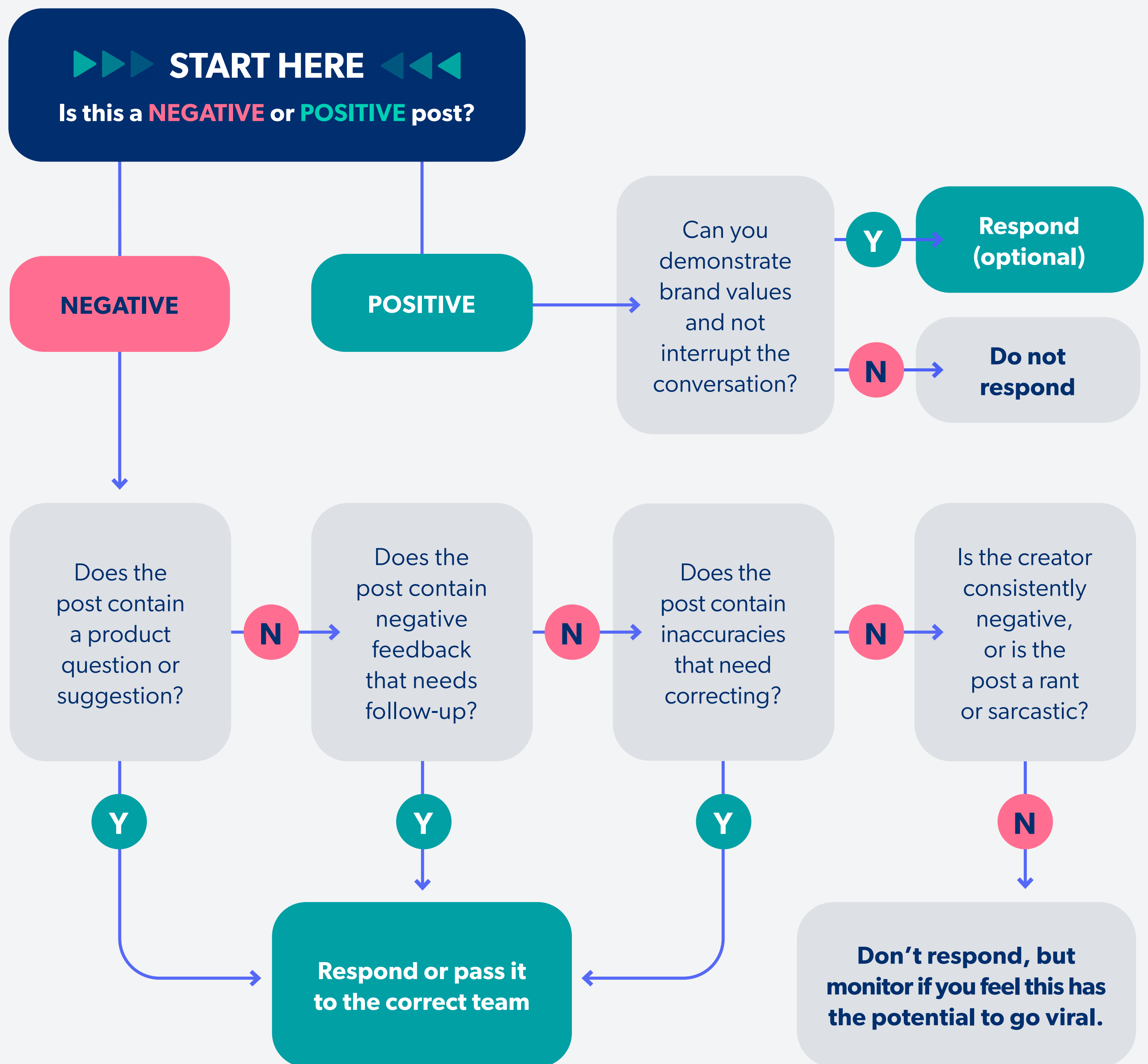
"Thanks for your kind words, Andrew. We're so happy to hear you love the [product]."

"Lisa, thanks so much for your feedback and for taking the time to share the photo. It looks like your project turned out great!"



## Response workflow and checklist

Whether you're responding to positive or negative feedback on social media or your product pages, use this handy response workflow and checklist.



## Response checklist



**Show empathy in your tone:** Acknowledge customers' feelings and frustration and show them their feedback has been heard. Don't be defensive in your response, and keep your reply short and sweet — especially if the review is insulting or contains factual errors.



**Accept fault (when warranted):** There are scenarios when you should accept responsibility — and apologize for it. When you are at fault, acknowledge it and explain what changes will be made due to the feedback received.



**Customer focused:** Take the time to personalize your response to the individual by using your customer's name/nickname and rephrasing the feedback in your response. Let customers know you care and they are getting the 'gold standard' from you.



**Keep it simple:** If you can get a quick resolution, do it. And if you can take the conversation offline, take it offline. Consider that over a third of shoppers prefer to connect privately. Connect one-on-one and involve any support or technical support as needed.



**Transparency of origin:** When responding to customers, make sure it's clear you are an official employee of your organization. Include your affiliation in your response to ensure transparency and avoid any appearance of bias.

Underlining all these consumer needs is an increasing need to work cross-functionally - brand marketing, digital commerce, in-store commerce, and support - one team, one dream! All customer touchpoints are merging with the rise of social media and changing consumer expectations.

Efficiently being able to respond to positive (and negative) reviews that come through multiple retail sites and channels can be tricky. It's beneficial to use a centralized portal, like [Bazaarvoice Connections](#), so you can quickly manage all customer feedback in one place and at scale.

## SUCCESS STORY

# Vertbaudet

When clothing retailer Vertbaudet began receiving a string of negative reviews pointing out problems with the sizing of a line of maternity dresses, they took action. They resized the line and saw a 12% increase in sales.<sup>15</sup>



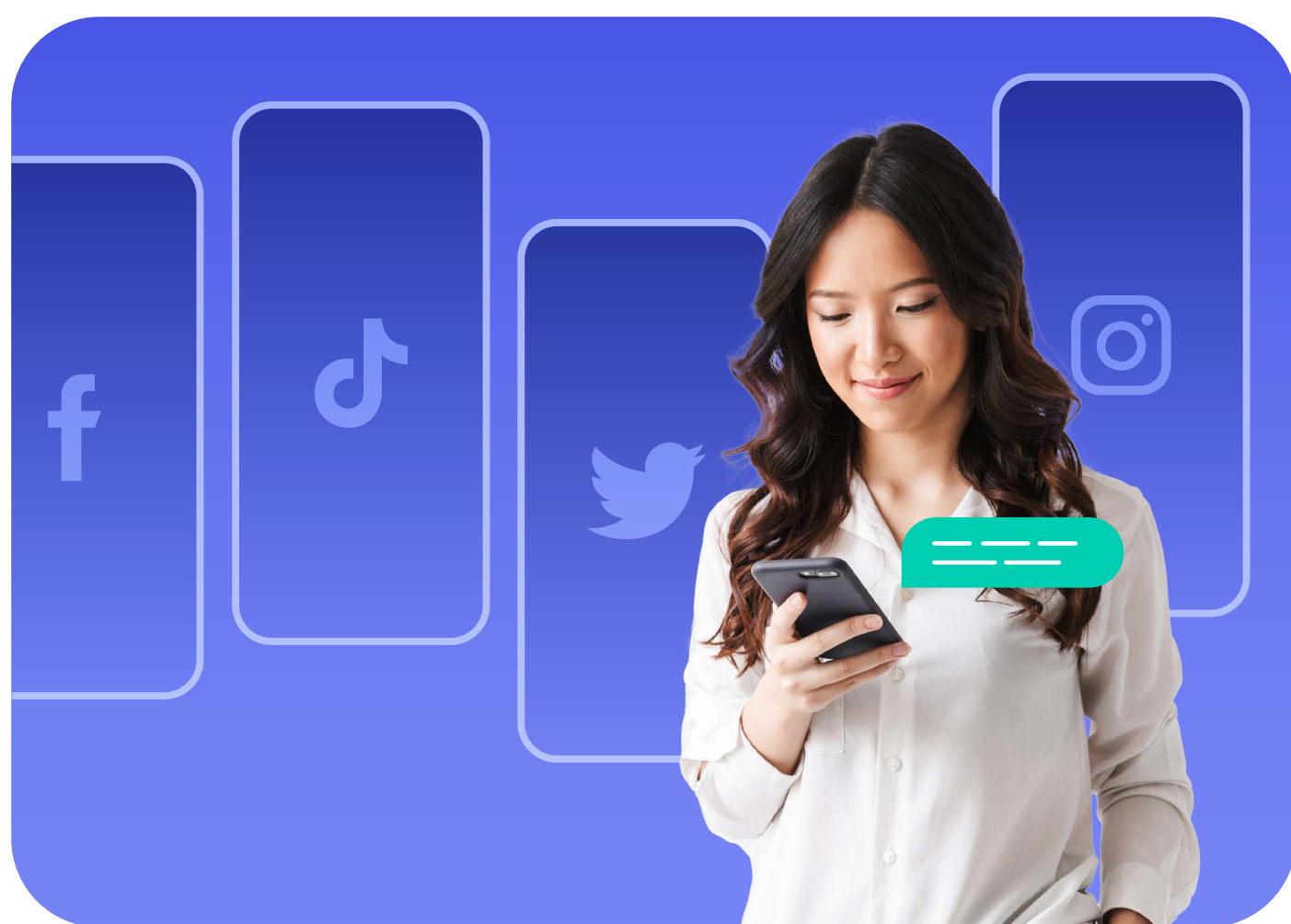
We hope to leverage both positive and negative feedback from customers, as both are truly valuable. The negative ones allow our teams to improve products, and the positive ones help inform other customers about the benefits. In both cases, the more, the better.

**Chrystel Desproges, E-commerce and Marketing Director at Vertbaudet**

# Optimize your strategy with 'voice of the customer' insights

Listening to your customers will help you create better products and establish meaningful relationships. This is especially valuable when your marketing team is tasked with doing more with less.

## What are some ways to tap into your customers' feedback?



**Social listening** is an effective way to gauge customer sentiment. Most shoppers use social media to talk about their favorite products and brands. You can tap into social listening by:

- Staying active on multiple social platforms to find out what users are saying
- Interacting with customers on social media by responding to their comments
- Monitoring how your competitors interact with their audiences and learning from it



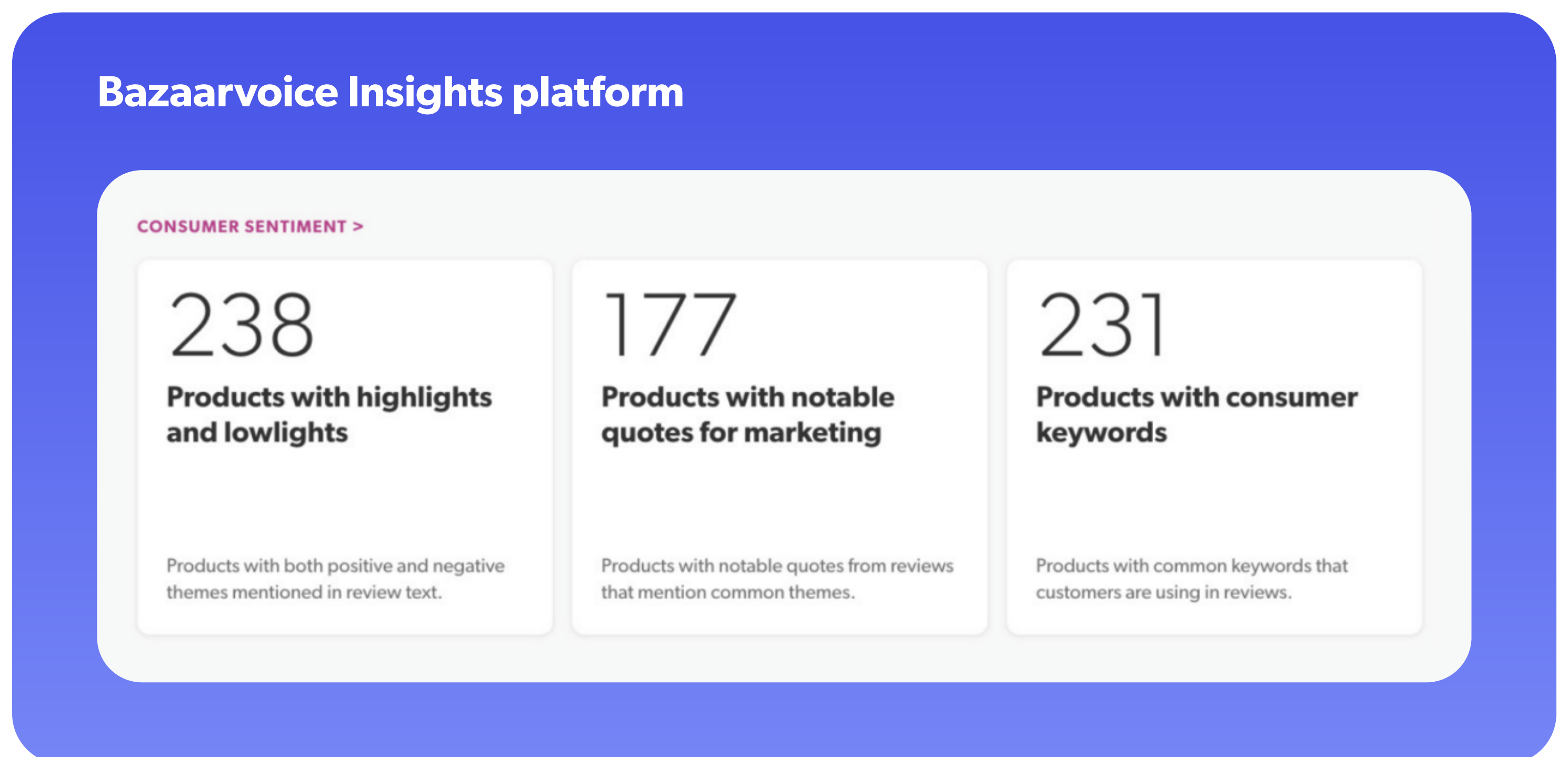
**Sampling** is another way to discover what consumers think about your products. It can also help support new product launches or line changes. Customers love freebies! Offering an item to try motivates them to leave quality reviews, and sharing feedback makes them feel seen and heard.



**Sentiment analysis** uses data to measure and interpret customer feelings and opinions about your brand and products. While it may be challenging for smaller marketing teams, conducting sentiment analysis is a must.

Using open-source natural language processing (NLP) algorithms to perform this analysis will save you time and money. These tools mine through reviews and other UGC to determine what customers like and possibly dislike about your brand and products.

Sentiment analysis reveals many important things you can use to improve your products, operations, and customer service. It helps with market research, finding new product use cases, and understanding your brand reputation.



It's important to respond to all types of feedback, whether positive or negative. Your shoppers are paying attention - in fact, one-third of them expect a public response after posting a review or sharing feedback.<sup>13</sup>

## How to do sentiment analysis in 4 steps:

1

**Collect customer feedback.** Look at customer reviews on your website, Google, and social media. Send out customer surveys, review social media comments, and pull remarks from customer interactions, like live chat transcripts or customer emails.

2

**Analyze customer sentiment.** Use NLP tools to analyze your collected feedback and uncover what customers think about your brand.

3

**Look for trends.** Data visualization tools, like Google Charts, Tableau, or Bazaarvoice can help you identify customer sentiment trends over time. You can see where customer opinions about products or services might be shifting.

4

**Take action.** You can learn from all feedback — negative and positive. Use negative sentiment to make improvements and communicate solutions to your customers.

## SUCCESS STORY

# KidKraft

When KidKraft, which makes swing sets and outdoor playhouses, used sentiment analysis, the company learned that many customers were building one of its playhouse models, but then painting it white. So, they started offering a white version. The move led to a significant sales increase.

Recognizing the value of customer feedback in reviews, the business rolled out a new process for closing the loop from customer feedback back into product development and marketing by conducting a quarterly analysis of product-level customer sentiment.<sup>16</sup>



Reviews and what real consumers are saying, that is your brand and can make or break you in a lot of ways.

**Taylor Herrero, Senior E-commerce Marketing Manager at KidKraft**

## Tap into the benefits of the creator economy

These days, everyone's an influencer. UGC is the king of content, queen of engagement, and heiress to remaining digital marketing budgets. This content is authentic, relevant, trustworthy, and budget-friendly for small marketing teams. Whether you're asking your second cousin or more well-known influencers, tapping into the UGC creator community is key.

## What is a UGC creator? A UGC creator can be anyone that creates content for your brand. For example:

### > **Celebrity influencers.**

Famous beyond social media, these creators can be actors, reality TV stars, musicians, artists, athletes, or business people. They often promote products that fit their lifestyle or aesthetic or promote a product or service.

### > **Everyday social users.**

These creators share posts with family, peers, or even people they've never met in person. They share content that interests them, give feedback, and share opinions.

### > **Subject matter experts.**

From beauty gurus to fashionistas, chefs to DIYers, and stay-at-home moms, these creators share their expertise, try out, and recommend related products.

### > **Social media influencers.**

These creators generally have a large social media following and use their online presence to promote engaging content to their audience. Some have a specific niche, while some post content on various topics.



### **Chloe Gardner**

Followers: 230K

Niche: Fitness

Engagement rate: 9.07%

There are several ways to find UGC creators. Comb through social media mentions of your brand. Ask employees to post about you. Or tap into platforms like [Influenster](#) that take care of finding the content creators for you.

UGC creators play a crucial role in the creator economy by developing authentic branded content that targets your followers. By sharing authentic content, building consumer trust, providing valuable information, and increasing sales, UGC creators offer numerous benefits to small businesses looking to harness the power of the creator economy.



**UGC is authentic social proof, getting shoppers eager to live, laugh, and love your products.**

**22%**

of shoppers say shopper review ads make them more likely to buy from an ad<sup>7</sup>

**40%**

of shoppers say UGC makes them most likely to buy a product from an ad<sup>7</sup>

# Measure and monitor your UGC program

It's not enough to have a UGC program; you need to have a strong UGC program. An audit can ensure your UGC has the highest possible impact.

Monitoring your UGC program doesn't have to be time-consuming. Small marketing teams can use cost-effective tools to measure their success and get specific, actionable recommendations to strengthen their marketing efforts. Doing so can increase everything from consumer awareness and engagement to loyalty and conversions.

**Here are 7 insights that you should [monitor regularly](#):**

## 1. The impact of UGC

You should monitor how shoppers engage with your UGC and how it affects sales. We've found a significant lift in conversion rates, revenue per visitor, and average order value when shoppers interact with UGC, including photo galleries and Questions & Answers.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Product coverage

Evaluate which PDPs lack an adequate number of reviews. You can get a better sense of popularity and gaps when you identify products with lots of page views but a low review volume. You want high-performing UGC in as many places as possible.

## 3. Brand, product, and category performance

You need to know which brands and products are performing well and which aren't. Tracking UGC insights at the brand, product, and category levels can tell you that. Use insights to identify opportunities and adjust your strategy to boost sales.

## 4. Customer sentiment

How do shoppers really feel about your products? Tracking customer sentiment lets you discover how to improve products and your messaging. Leverage data from your UGC program to identify customer likes and dislikes.

## 5. Overall performance

Digging into the individual aspects of your UGC strategy is important, but so is viewing your UGC program from a high level. Keep an eye on content collection and overall program performance. Ensure your hero products are optimized for quantity, quality, and recency. The more recent a product's reviews, the more likely consumers will buy it. Bazaarvoice's Insights & Reports tools can provide specific, actionable recommendations to strengthen your efforts.

## 6. Product lifecycle health

Another insight you should monitor is the product life cycle stages. Gather feedback through surveys to tweak packaging, messaging, and marketing. You can also use surveys to identify positive attributes and negative trends.

## 7. Community efforts

Is your brand community meeting your business goals? Whether your goal is to drive leads and conversions, increase customer advocacy, generate more UGC, or provide customer service, make sure you're analyzing your brand community's performance regularly. Monitor metrics like member growth, conversions, UGC collection, web traffic, and anything relevant to your goals.



# Key takeaways

Meeting consumer demand for content is more challenging than ever. Shoppers' needs, wants, and behaviors constantly change, and keeping up can be a challenge for small marketing teams with limited time and resources. UGC is a solution to many of these problems. It should be a central part of your marketing strategy.

## ➤ **Boost e-commerce traffic with UGC**

If you want to make sure shoppers find your brand, let UGC do some of the work for you. UGC improves search engine optimization (SEO) performance and can reduce customer acquisition costs.

## ➤ **Increase conversions with rich PDPs**

Optimizing product detail pages can help small marketing teams provide a top-notch customer experience, build loyalty, and increase sales. Follow our tips to make the most of your PDPs.

## ➤ **Amplify reach and impact with content syndication**

Content syndication can amplify your highest converting content with less effort to help you maximize sales in all the places your customers are.

## ➤ **Harness the power of social commerce to increase sales**

Tapping into UGC about your brand can help your team generate more engagement, authenticity, variety, and exposure on social media.

## ➤ **Build a winning product review strategy**

Product ratings and reviews are significant in every stage of the shopper's journey. For the best results, follow our tips for collecting product reviews from customers.



➤ **Respond to customers' online feedback**

Shoppers expect your business to respond to reviews they leave. Follow our response workflow and checklist and effectively reply to positive and negative customer feedback.

➤ **Optimize your strategy with 'voice of the customer' insights**

Create better products by tapping into social listening, and deepen customer relationships with sentiment analysis data to gauge customer views about your brand and products.

➤ **Tap into the benefits of the creator economy**

Tapping into the creator community is critical for small marketing teams. Share authentic content from UGC creators to build consumer trust, provide valuable information, and increase sales.

➤ **Measure and monitor your UGC program**

Measure and monitor your UGC program to provide specific, actionable recommendations to strengthen your marketing efforts. Follow our five insights to watch regularly.

**If you're ready to get started, Bazaarvoice can help you leverage UGC across the entire customer journey.**

[Learn more](#)

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