The guide to user-generated content for brand managers
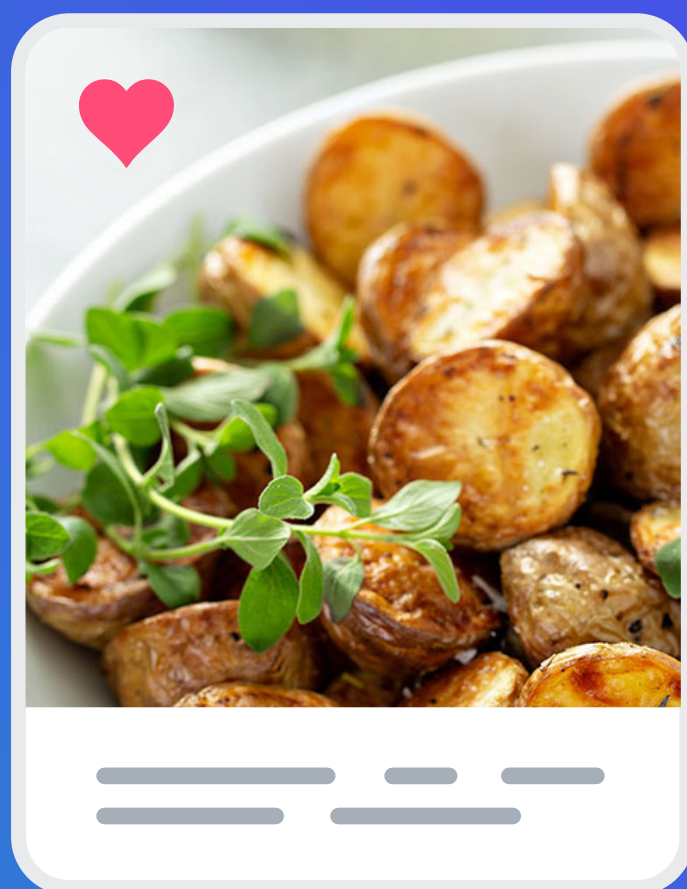
bazaarvoice™

What's inside

Introduction

As a brand manager, you're not only responsible for developing a brand strategy. You're also managing how that plan is implemented across various communication channels and marketing initiatives. In other words, you've got a lot to juggle.

There's one aspect of your brand's marketing strategy in particular that you can't afford to drop: user-generated content (UGC). UGC is any type of content — from a product review to a selfie in a recently purchased outfit — created and shared by actual customers. Why is it important? Because the success of your brand depends on what people say about your products and company.

And it's incredibly effective.

Investing in UGC offers up to

400% ROI

Earning you $4 for every $1 spent.[1] It works by helping companies drive sales, scale their brands, and build customer loyalty. This foolproof guide to shopper content best practices will empower you to do just that.

Do your homework

Brand managers need to understand their customers, competition, and challenges in order to implement an effective shopper content strategy. Use this checklist to set your brand up for success.

Understand your customers and their relationship with shopper content

You need to really know your customers — both current and potential — so you can reach them effectively with UGC.

Stay on top of the content your followers and customers tag you in on social, such as the example below from a fan of direct-to-consumer home goods brand Parachute.[2] Also, look at the product reviews customers leave and the questions they commonly ask about your products.

zoching
Portland, Oregon

126 likes

zoching If the clocks lose an hour then I'm staying bundled up. Also where did the sun go? 🕐 ☁️ #myparachutehome

Put on your detective hat and figure out:

- What kind of content are customers sharing?
- What are the common themes in their content?
- How are they using your product in content?

- What inspires customers to share content?
- What kind of shopper content do they respond to?
- What questions do customers often ask about your products?

Getting these customer insights is important because you have to know your customers well to understand how to communicate with them and give them exactly what they want. These insights will allow you to use shopper content strategically to inspire customers, communicate benefits, and drive preference at point of sale.

> Learn even more about your customers with **Bazaarvoice's Insights and Reports**

"

If you don't know who your shoppers are or what resonates, find out by digging into who's engaging now and what they're saying.

Colby Smith, General Manager of Influenster

# Know your peers and how they use customer content

Not everything's a competition. But some things definitely are.

That's why you need to be aware of competitors in your space — so you can assess how your brand fits, how it stands out, how you can improve your offerings, what competitive advantage you may have — and how you can showcase all of this with UGC.

Familiarize yourself with your competitors, as well as anyone else who's killing it with shopper content, so you can answer the following questions:

- What are competitors doing well with shopper content? Where are they failing? What do you do better than them?
- Whose UGC inspires you?
- Who's doing a great job with shopper content (even if they're not in your market) and why? How can you emulate this?

These insights will help you identify ways to improve your UGC strategy and take it to the next level.
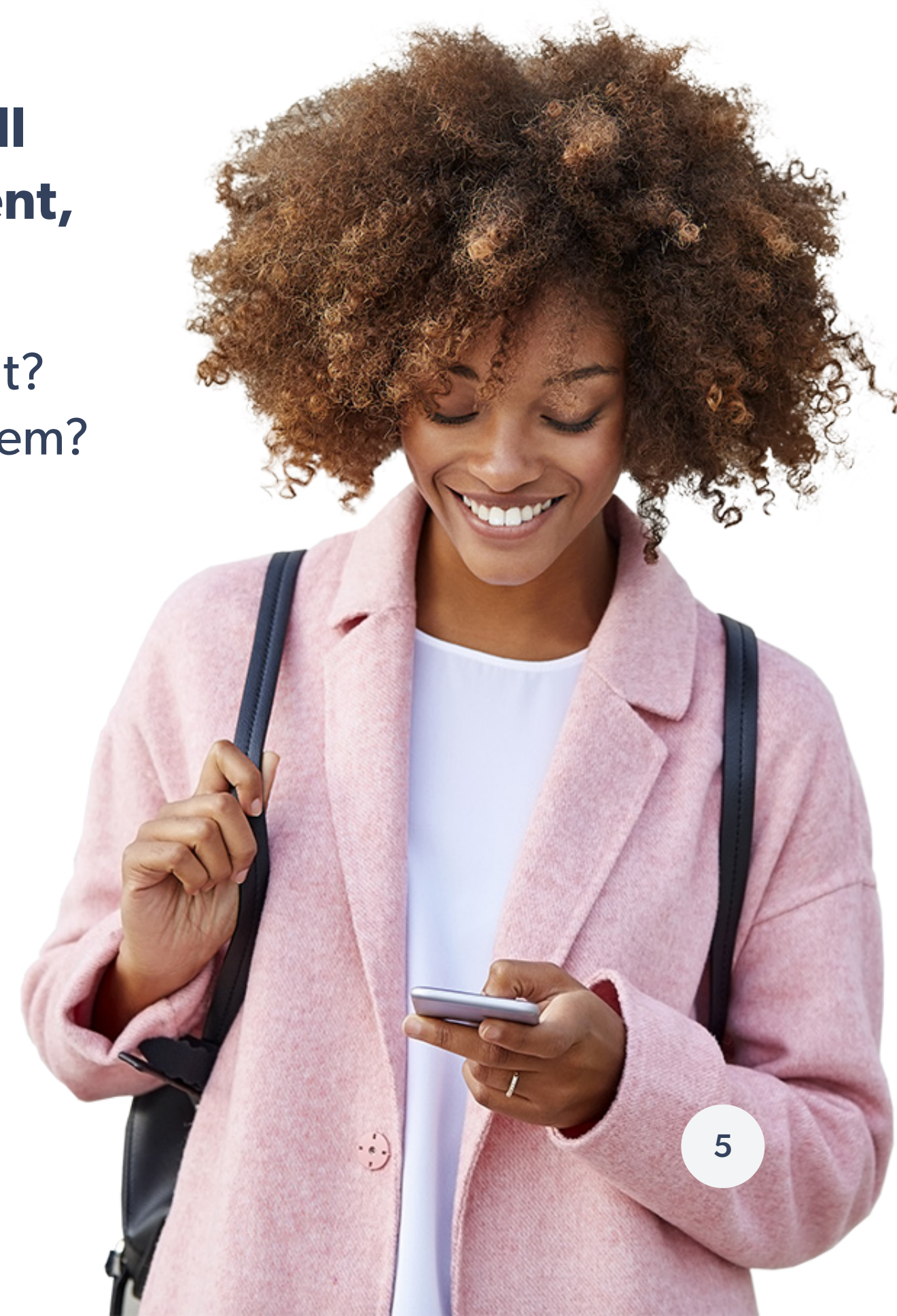
Understand your challenges and how shopper content can help you beat them

Finally, you need to determine what challenges your brand faces and strategize ways to overcome them with UGC.

Here are a few questions to get you started:

- What are your current marketing challenges?
  How can UGC help solve some of these issues?

- What have you tried and failed with shopper content? What's worked?

- How can you iterate and expand on your shopper content successes?

- What message do you wish your brand communicated better?

- How will you define and measure success?

Now that you've got a clearer picture of your shopper content strategy and how you'd like it to grow, let's take a look at how to expertly implement it.

Drive revenue and scale your brand

UGC is essential to boost sales and grow your business. In fact, customers who interact with content from other shoppers are twice as likely to convert.[3] But you need the right tactics and tools to get the most out of this content.

Create customer-driven campaigns
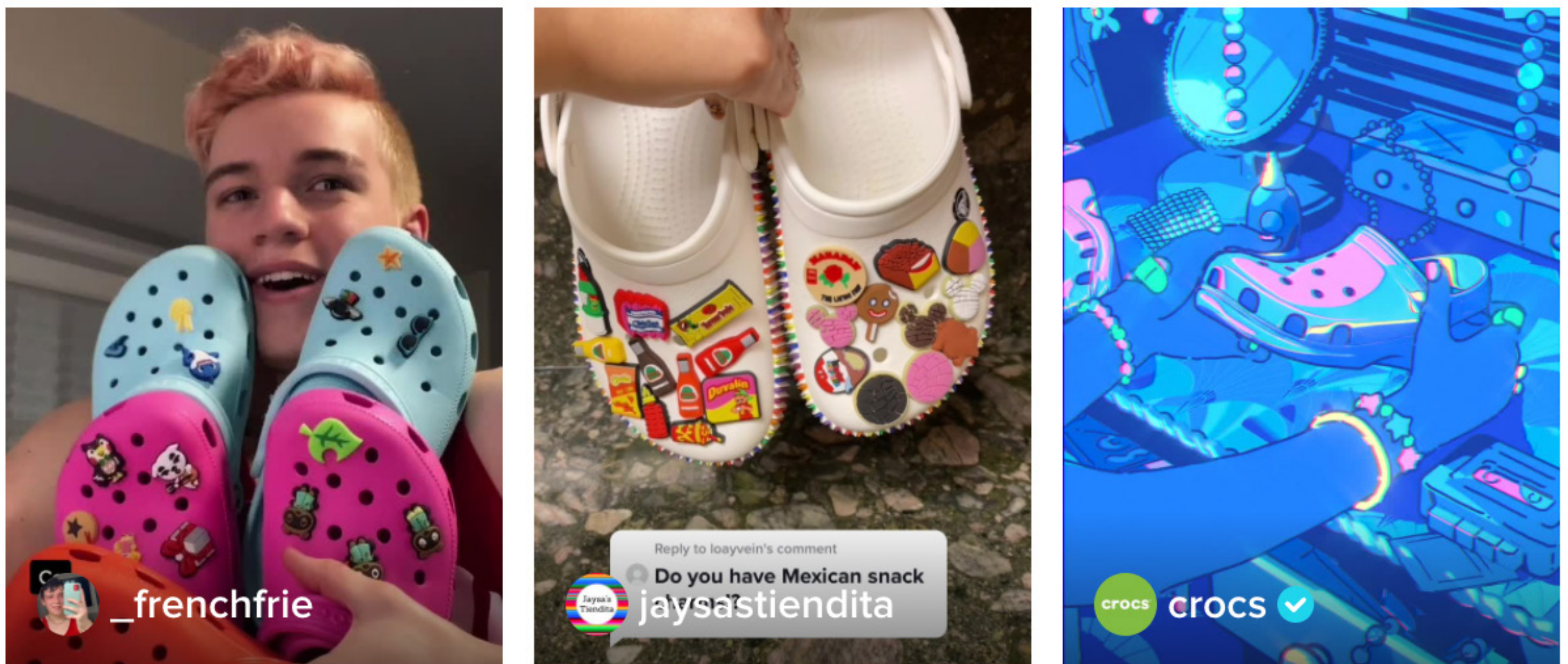
Over a third (36%) of the 8,000+ shoppers surveyed in our 2022 Bazaarvoice Shopper Experience Index said brand advertisement does nothing for them when it comes to making a purchase decision. Unsurprisingly, 83% of those shoppers trust organic posts from influencers more than brand posts.[3]

Brands can no longer solely rely on traditional advertising to lead the conversation and tell consumers what they need and why. Instead, the voice of the customer has grown powerful enough to also shape the voice of the brand — and brands must adapt to allow consumers to lead this conversation.

Enter: the customer-driven campaign.

Advertising that includes UGC typically sees click-through rates that are four times greater and half the cost per click.[4] But that improvement doesn't happen unless the content comes from the right customers — and resonates with other shoppers.

With 8 million members, Bazaarvoice's Influenster community provides the ability to curate shopper content from hyper-targeted audiences — that can be scaled across your advertising campaigns, as well your product pages, email marketing, and more.

This UGC also serves as your window into how customers feel about, use, and talk about your products. It often provides critical feedback that can help you improve how products are positioned, the copy on product pages and packaging, campaign messaging, what your brand shares on social media, and more.

Make sure the UGC you spotlight resonates with your audience by continually collecting customer feedback on campaigns and assessing how that content is performing.

Rating Snapshot

5 ★ 37
4 ★ 4
3 ★ 1
2 ★ 1
1 ★ 2

Average Rating

4.5

4.5

This jean jacket is a timeless wardrobe staple, it adds a cool and versatile edge to any of my outfits. Love!

Hardys

Hardys, the UK's number-one wine brand, integrated UGC 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[5]

60%
decrease in cost-per-click[5]
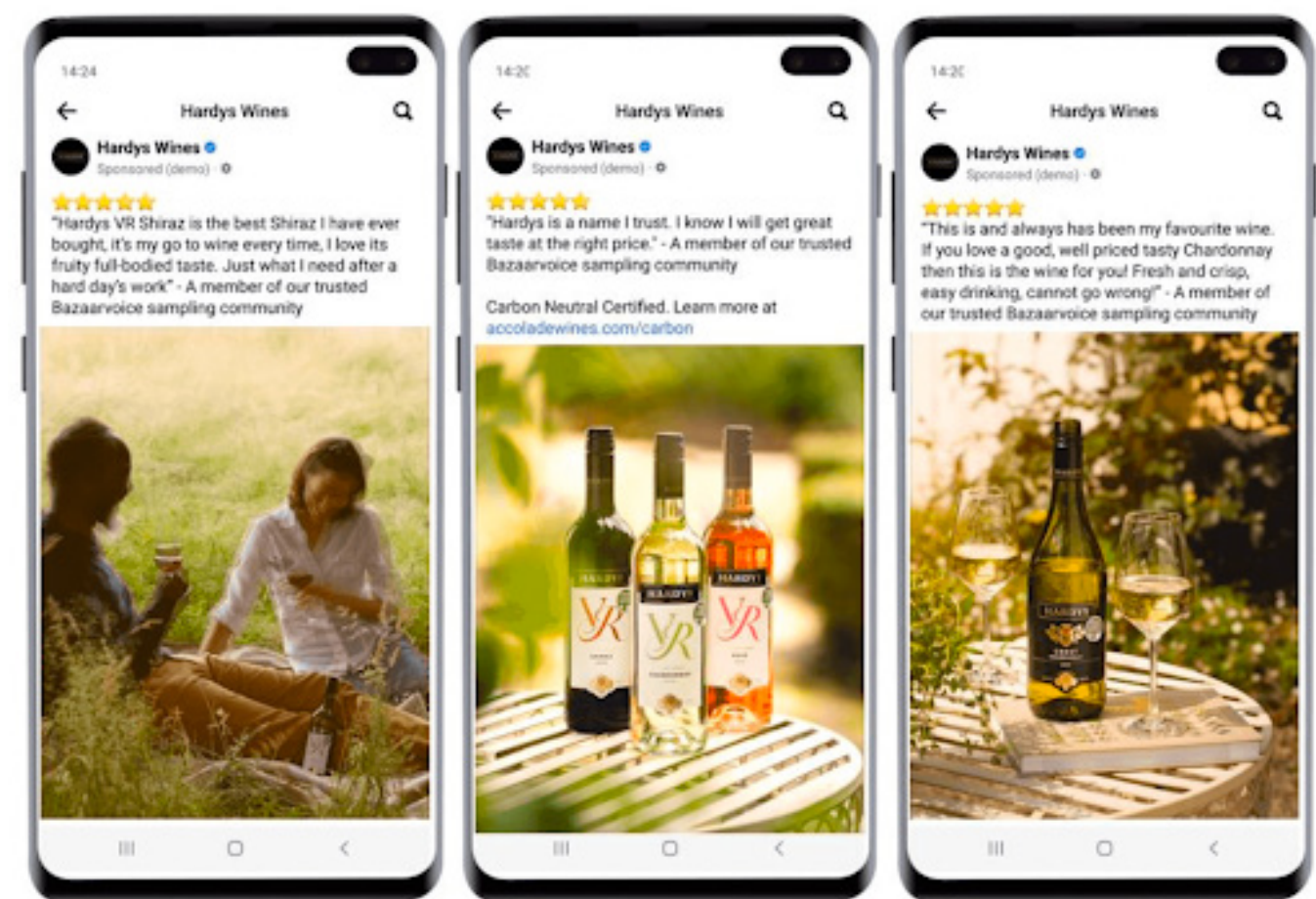
> We've captured a lot of reviews that we can use in our marketing collateral, and we're really pleased to report that it has led to an increase in advertising effectiveness in the form of better cost-per-click and more engagement.

Alister Dell, Digital Marketing Manager, Hardys

Inspire reviews, social buzz, and engagement around new products for launch success

An average of 30,000 new products launch every year — and 95% of them fail.[6] But a savvy brand manager can help avoid product launch disaster by taking advantage of UGC.

WITH SAMPLING
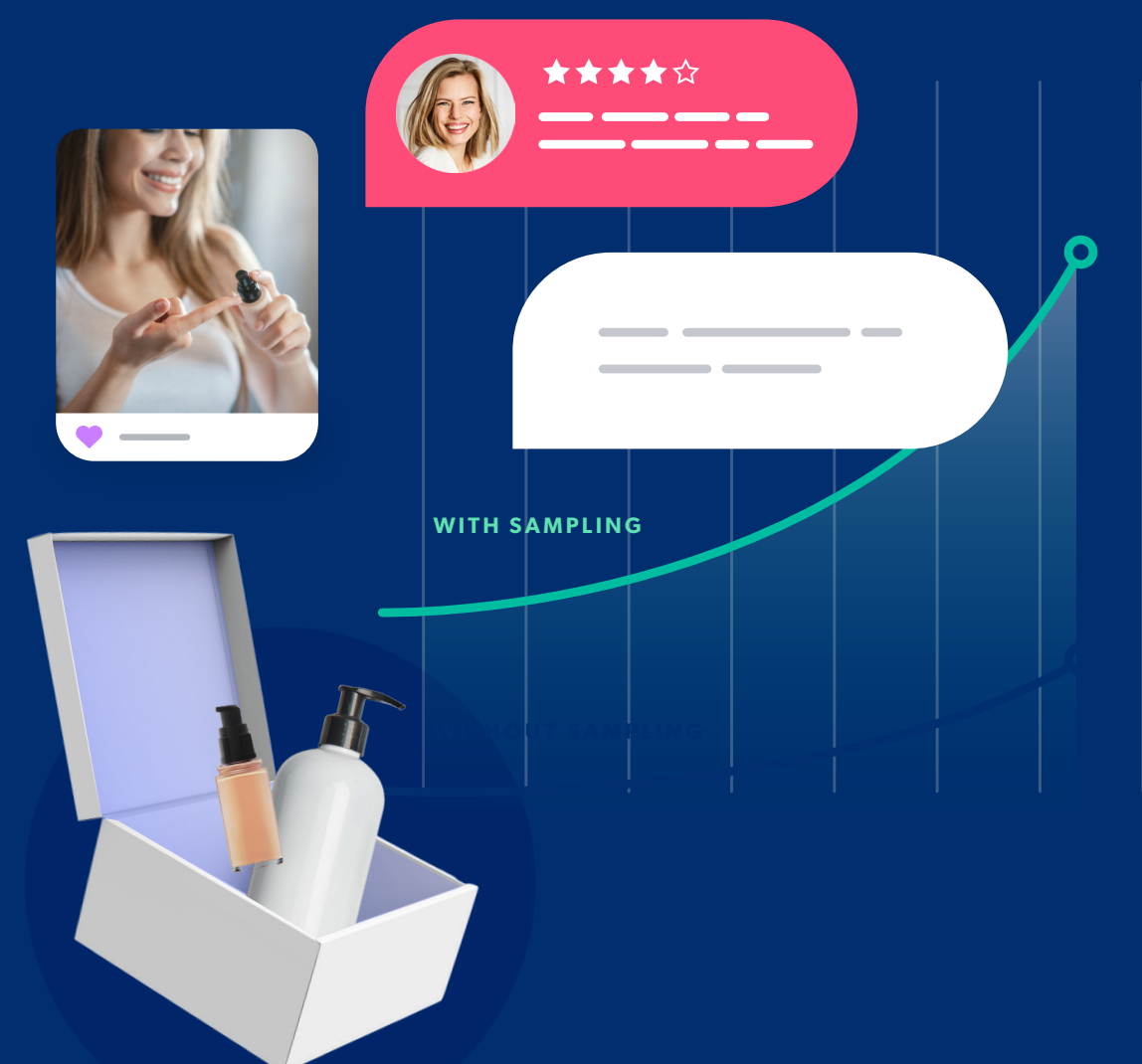
Product launch campaigns once relied on in-store activations like sampling, expos, and splashy end caps. Now, virtual displays and digital content feeds are the cornerstones of in-store activations and product launch strategies. Shared and earned content have become critical to product launch success.
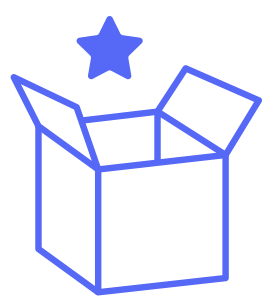
And just about every successful product launch has a pre-launch strategy for collecting UGC.

> "
> Customers will be your best advocates. If you want to launch with maximum impact, it's they — the people — who matter. Not your company. Let them do the talking.
>
> **Vishal Patel,**
> **Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe**

## Maximize your UGC impact for your next launch.

Sample before your launch date. Product sampling will help you to quickly collect customer content that drives transactions. Just one review can increase sales by 10%. And 50 reviews? A 30% sales increase.[7]

Listen to customer feedback. Feedback is critical to ensure launch initiatives focus on features that resonate most with consumers — and ratings and reviews provide insight into that feedback.

Build social buzz. Social media is a user-driven medium, and the best product launches put social media users in charge. Share content other users create and maximize its impact.
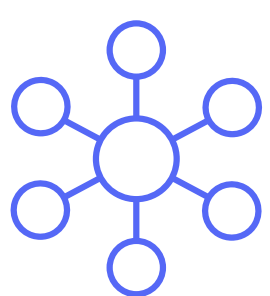
Balance your strategy. Companies tend to overemphasize paid and owned content and fail to measure and optimize shared and earned content. For a successful product launch, focus on your most cost-effective product launch elements, and cut back on less effective ones.

Learn more in our best practice guide:
6 ways to launch your product with a bang

Burt's Bees

Following the success of its lip balms and moisturizers, the health and beauty brand Burt's Bees was keen to expand its product range to include cosmetics.
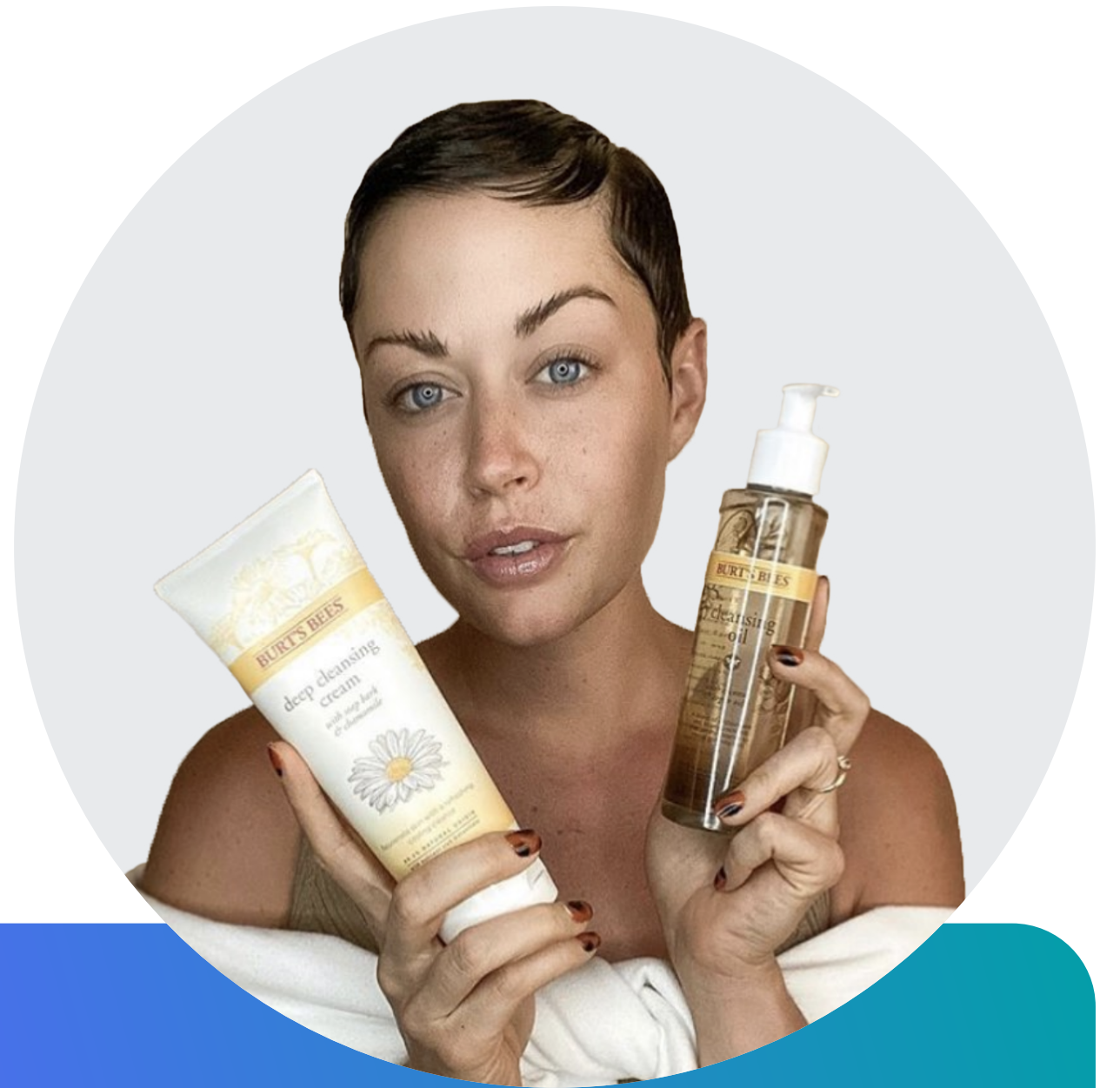
> "
>
> We knew reviews could be insurance for new products and that early qualitative feedback and star ratings would ensure a smooth transition into a new market.
>
> **Taylor Steele, Assistant E-commerce Manager at Burt's Bees**

Burt's Bees partnered with Bazaarvoice to get pre-released products into the hands of consumers and collect feedback. "The greatest thing was that when the lights went on with cosmetics, our reviews were syndicated to 15 key retailers," added Steele.

And the payoff at launch was huge:

94%
of people who received a sample submitted a review within two weeks[8]

20%
increase in revenue per visitor who engaged with reviews[8]

16%
incremental conversion lift from shoppers who engaged with reviews[8]

300+
reviews collected at launch with a 4.48-star average rating[8]

Support core SKUs, especially in a competitive market

You need to convince shoppers to buy — even when the economy is shaky. Your best bet is to double down on your core hero products. These are the ones your customers love and why your brand exists, so it's critical to optimize your landing pages for these hero products.

A successful landing page must attract customers and encourage them to buy. Your landing pages must therefore be optimized for:

- Search (SEO)
- User experience and conversions

Optimize your pages for search (SEO)

Optimizing your product page for search engines can reduce the cost of customer acquisition by 87%.[9] Your return on investment (ROI) on these efforts can be as high as 12:1.[10]

But how do you get your core hero products at the top of search results?

Incorporate keywords. Since Google focuses on how your product page matches a user's intent, keywords are critical. Talk about your products and the problems they solve using the words and phrases your customers use in UGC.
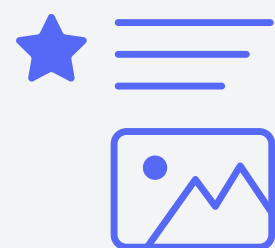
Keep it fresh. Fresh content from reputable sources is also a component of Google's ranking criteria. One of the best ways to add new content to your hero product page is through UGC like product reviews and Q&As.

Rely on the experts. When it comes to products or services, your customers are the experts. Google recognizes this and rewards product pages with authentic customer reviews.

Optimize your on-page experience

A well-optimized page should also meet customer needs and achieve company goals (e.g., generate conversions).

A few key components must come together for a positive page experience.
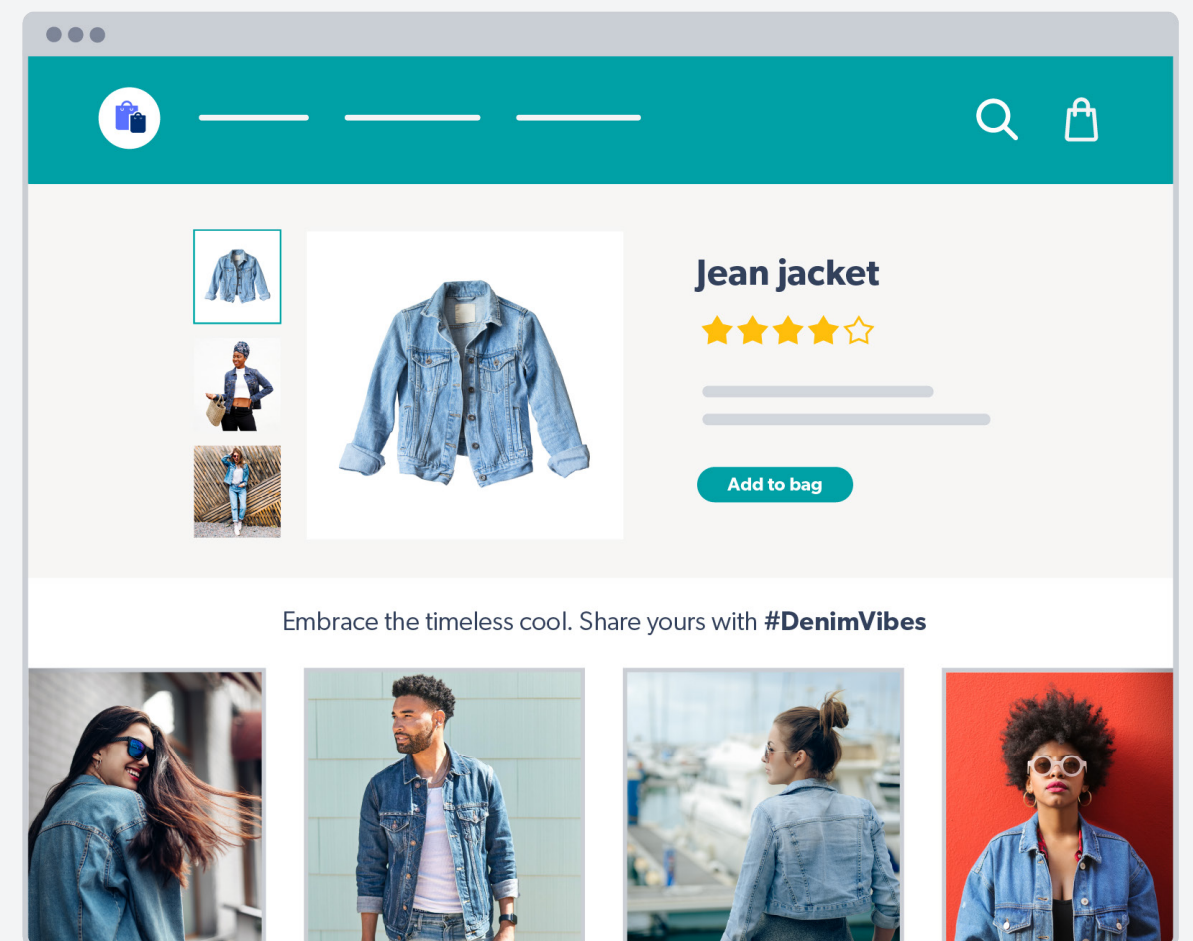
1

Give shoppers the information they need.

The best way to help answer customers' questions is to incorporate UGC — reviews, Q&A, images, and videos — on product pages. Research shows 70% of shoppers would pick a product with more reviews over an identical product with fewer reviews, even if it had a lower star rating.

2

Improve your site speed.

Consumers won't wait on a page to load — it has to be fast, or all those new visitors will likely bounce. 70% of consumers say page speed impacts their willingness to buy online.

3

Optimize the mobile user experience.

Retail mobile commerce (m-commerce) sales are expected to reach $621 billion (43% of all e-commerce) by 2024. Get your mobile product pages up to snuff with design improvements that encourage visitors to convert. Simplify your navigation, keep calls to action front and center, and support a multi-device purchase process.

DSW

DSW, a retail chain known for its wide selection of brand-name and designer shoes and accessories, faced a common challenge in the retail space — how to give online shoppers the confidence to purchase.

2X conversion lift[11]
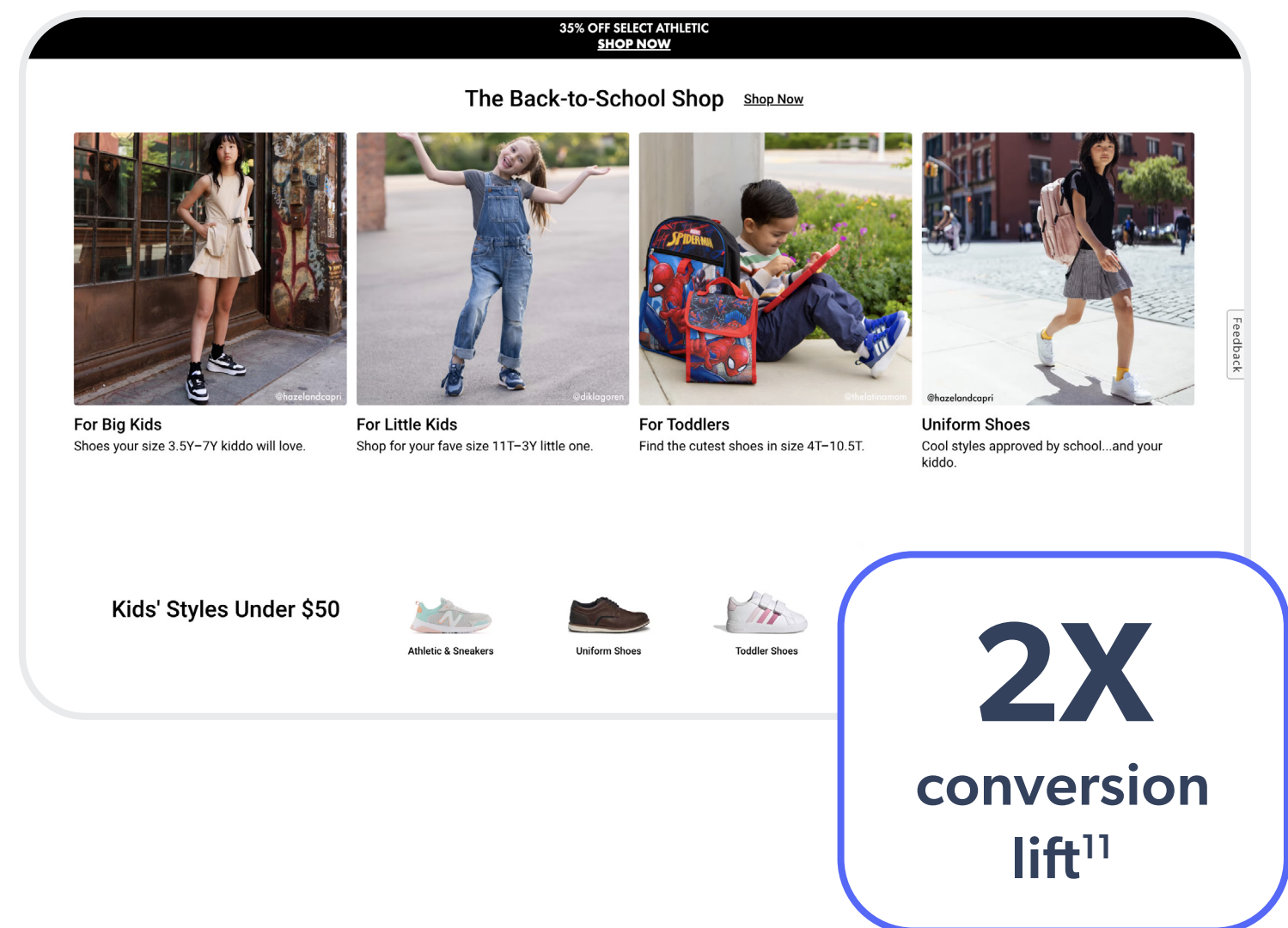
> "
> One of the Digital Team's main strategies is bringing DSW's assortment to life. Having more lifestyle photography and 'how to wear' information from user-generated content increases customer confidence and drives conversions.
>
> **Alison Wagner, Digital Product Specialist at DSW**

DSW implemented Bazaarvoice's visual content solution to collect and display user-generated photos from a variety of social platforms on their homepage, product pages, and some brand-level pages. This powers an engaging visual experience that showcases products in the real world.

Within six months of launch, most DSW site visitors were engaging with the visual content. And the shoppers who did were more than twice as likely to purchase than those who did not.

Bonus: They also spent substantially more money per order.

Bazaarvoice makes it fast and simple to generate shopper content brands need.

Quickly fuel your content supply chain for any product (new or core SKUs) with a steady stream of diverse, high-quality content from your ideal shoppers. Search-optimize your product pages, grow conversions for new and core SKUs, and increase ROAS with UGC. Increase profit on site and at retail by providing shoppers with enough reviews, photos, and videos that convert browsers to buyers.

Learn more about growing your core products during a downturn:
Fuel e-commerce growth during economic uncertainty

Grow trial and awareness at home

Generate buzz, collect valuable content, and drive revenue by getting your products into the hands of consumers who'll love them.

Sampling has never been easier or more effective than it is today. When consumers share positive feedback about samples they try, it often entices other shoppers to make a purchase. Sampling usually encourages orders from consumers who sample, too.

But if you want to increase sales, consumer trust, and brand awareness, start a dialogue with the right consumers — and leverage their voices and opinions to build up their authority.
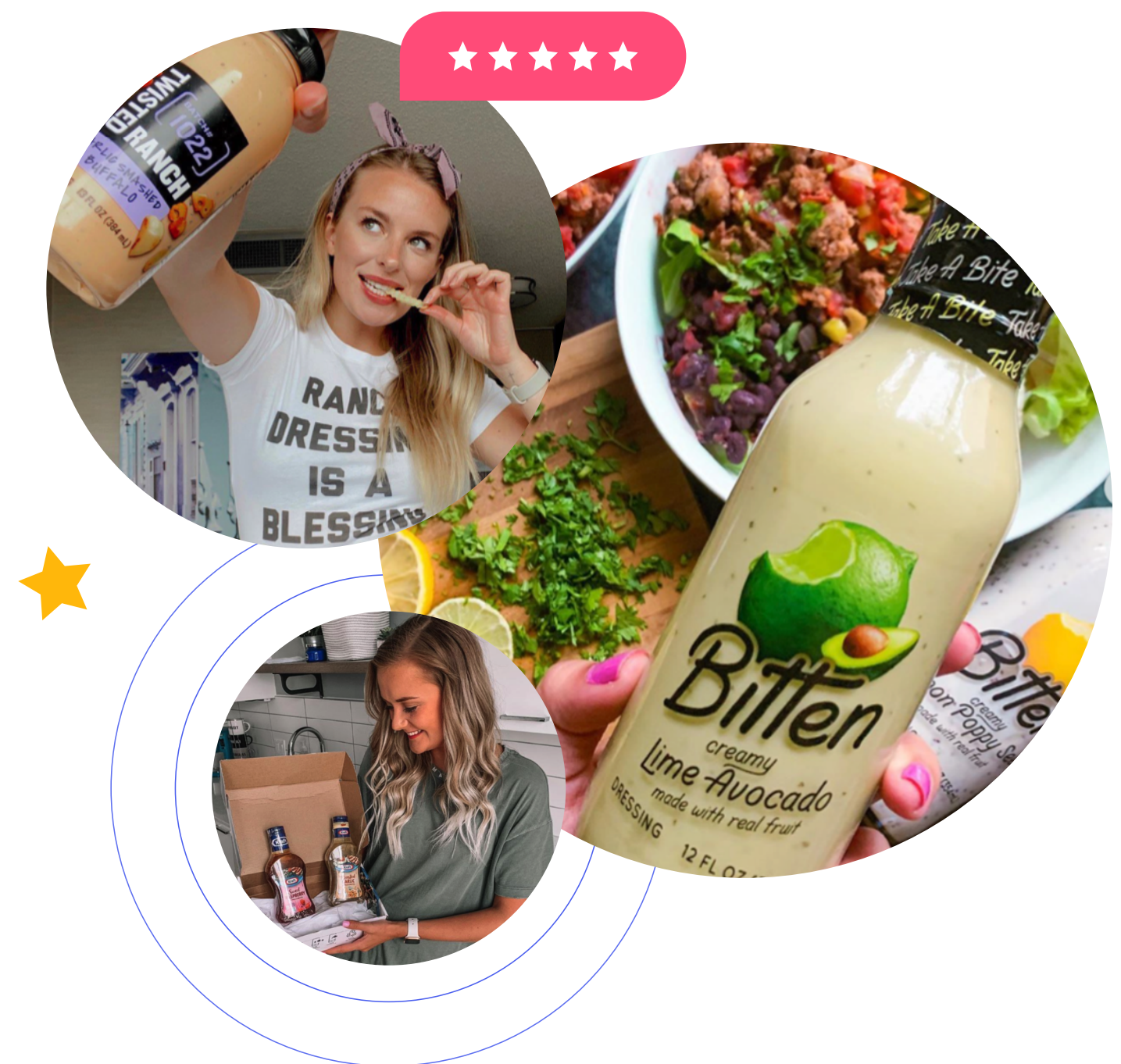
Influenster, Bazaarvoice's product discovery and reviews platform, matches your product to its ideal audience, resulting in quality photos, reviews, and influencer content. Using over 1,000 data points per member, brands can activate unique segments like:

- Loyalists and competitive users
- Members who shop at key retailers
- Those with specific dietary or skincare needs

And generating authentic, high-quality content from hyper-targeted sampling audiences generates impressive return on investment.

> The ability to hyper-target consumers based on behaviors and other characteristics beyond typical demographics was a key benefit in choosing Influenster.
>
> **Elizabeth Northrup,**
> **Associate Brand Manager, Kraft Heinz**

Sampling campaigns drive measurable results

86%
of samplers better understood the product after trial[12]

66%
switched to regularly use sampled brand[12]

86%
increased brand favorability[12]

Nearly 50%
re-purchased sampled product[12]

Both Rimmel and Petco are familiar with the impressive ROI driven by sampling campaigns.

Rimmel was looking to raise awareness of their new Wonder Ombre Holographic eyeliner and revitalize consumer interest in one of their core mascara products. The British cosmetics brand saw a 44% higher sales lift with UGC from Bazaarvoice's Influenster community than the benchmark for average digital campaigns in the beauty category.[13]

Similarly, Petco set out to increase awareness, traffic, and conversions for its owned Wholehearted and Reddy brands. The pet giant activated its Bazaarvoice team to develop the Spotted Sampling Program, which resulted in a 48% increase in revenue per visit for sampled products (driven by a 28% increase in conversion rate and 15% increase in average order value).[14]

SUCCESS STORY

Rimmel

With Bazaarvoice, Rimmel got products into the hands of targeted consumers using custom sampling boxes. The brand collected 1,200+ product reviews, which were displayed on Influenster, the brand's site, and syndicated to retail partner sites. The sampling campaign also resulted in 15.7 million impressions across 2,400 social posts from consumers..

And all of this shopper content generated real impact for Rimmel.

44%
higher sales lift versus the benchmark for average digital campaigns in the beauty category[13]

69%
higher sales lift versus the benchmark for the product categories in which the sampled products[13]

73%
said they were likely to purchase something from Rimmel in the next six months[13]

Petco

Petco wanted to further increase awareness, traffic, and conversions for its owned Wholehearted and Reddy brands. The pet giant worked with Bazaarvoice to develop the Spotted Sampling Program to generate content that inspires confidence, drives discovery, engages shoppers, and increases conversions…and it worked.

> "
>
> Being able to get the products into more reviewers' hands has given us higher quality reviews with images for new products. We've really seen a positive impact on visits, conversions, and improving the discoverability of new products.
>
> **Hannah Kredich, Category Specialist at Petco**

Thanks to the sampling program, Petco achieved:

48%	**28%**	**15%**
increase in revenue per visit for sampled products[14]	increase in conversion rate[14]	increase in average order value[14]

Bazaarvoice CAS is the leader in driving value at scale.

Activate highly targeted, relevant communities of shoppers who will create authentic content that maximizes reach and awareness for your brand. Syndicate content everywhere your shoppers are to achieve a more efficient CPM with social and review content.

Win in-store and on the digital shelf with your top shoppers

Give shoppers what they want — reviews, ratings, recommendations, and high-quality photos — no matter where they shop, online or in-store.

Bring UGC into your retail space by creating in-store displays, like Nordstrom did when it placed Pinterest signage beside its most-pinned products. Many other brands — including Whole Foods, Nine West, and World Duty Free — showcase consumer content on in-store screens to inspire people while they shop.

Ensure customers interact with your shopper content no matter where they shop by also distributing your top-performing content across leading retailers' sites. You can even enable consumers to shop from Instagram and other social platforms — and capture the shoppers who rely on social media for product research.

Social media drives product discovery.

83%
of Instagram users say they discover new products on the network[15]

80%
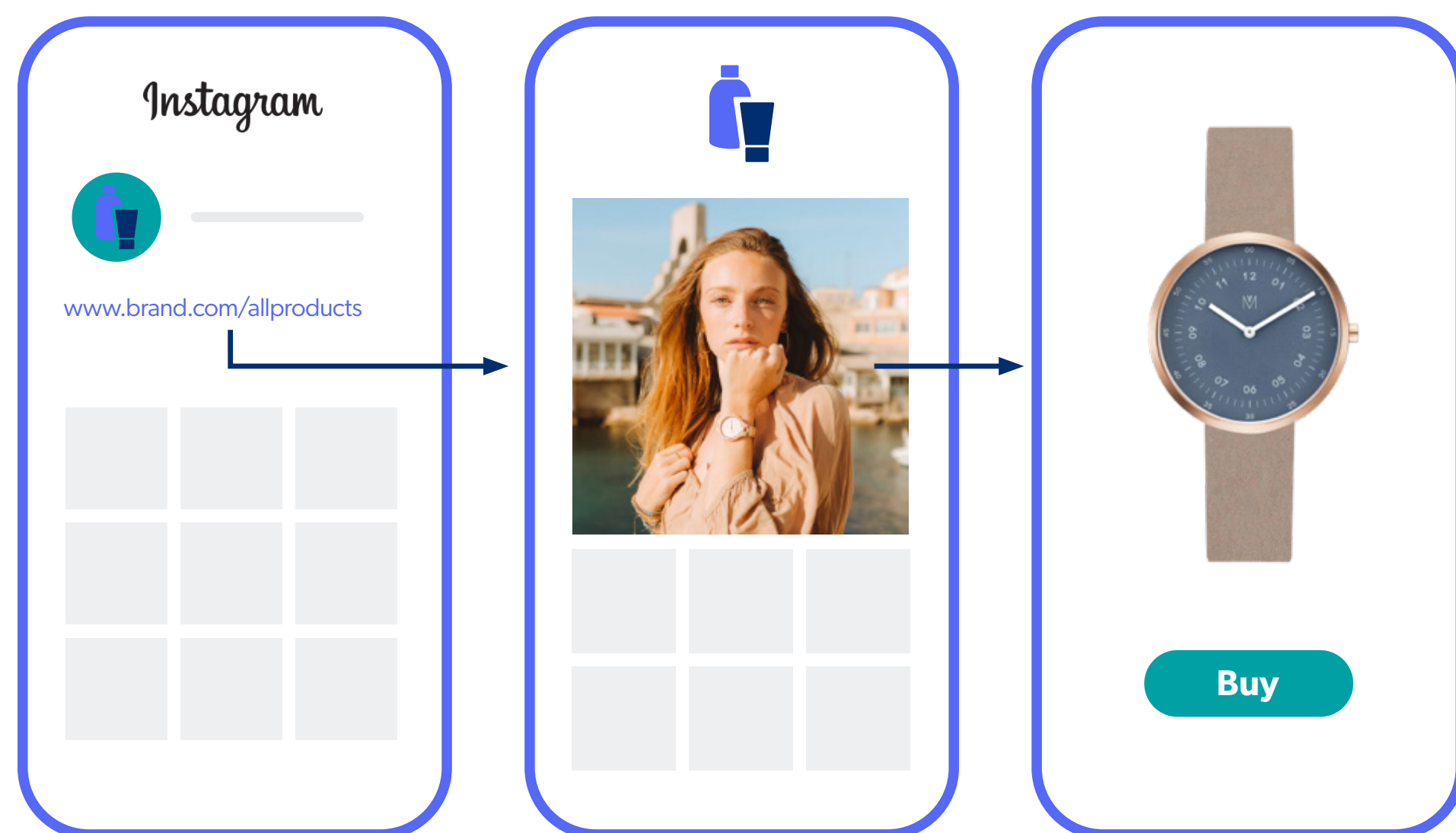of users discover new products and brands on Pinterest

78%
of consumers have discovered products on Facebook[16]

64%
want to see visual and social shopper content shared on social media[3]

Use Bazaarvoice to make your brand's Instagram truly shoppable.

Here's how it works:

Like2Buy

Like2Buy is a link-in-bio solution that allows customers to browse your Instagram feed and quickly and easily make purchases directly from the app.
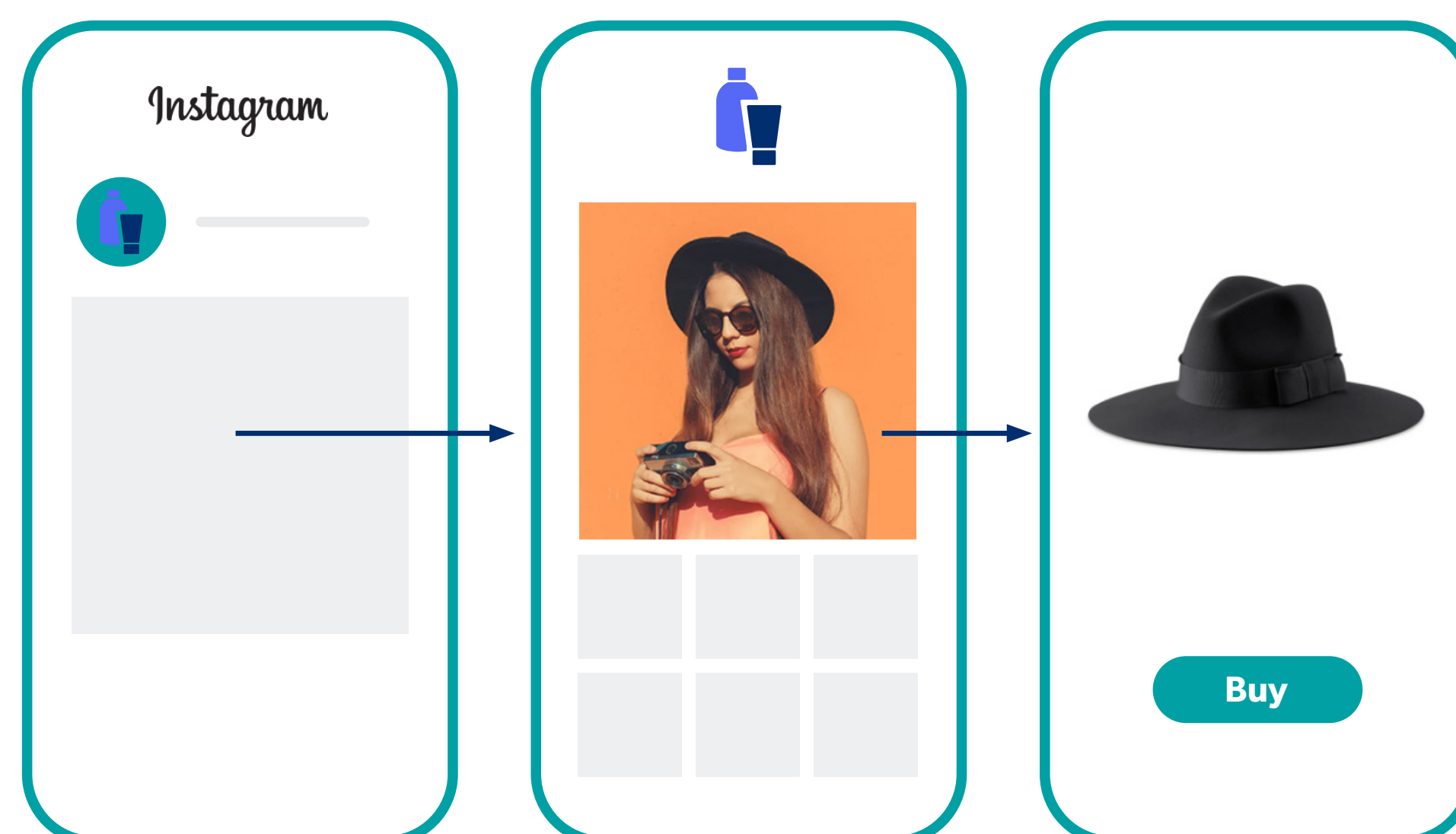
Showroom

Showroom enables you to transform any photo or video on Instagram into a shoppable storefront. In addition to making in-app purchases, consumers can also browse your other offerings and discover new products.

Build shopper loyalty and reduce shopper acquisition costs

Consumer confidence is at an all-time low, and convincing shoppers to buy is harder work when the economy is shaky. But you can still maintain market share, communicate brand quality, create brand loyalty, and reduce acquisition costs, even when times are tough.

Amplify the shopper voice

What factors contribute to product purchase decisions outside of price? We surveyed our Bazaarvoice Influenster members to find out. Their top three responses included:[18]

86% Star rating	**76%** Number of reviews	**60%** Brand values

Consumers seek out this information while evaluating products. We expect consumers' propensity for products with a higher star rating and number of reviews to increase as the economy — and shoppers' wallets — tighten.

Other notable survey results:

98%

of shoppers look for star ratings on retailer websites such as Walmart, Kohl's, and Target

70%

would buy a pricier product if it had more reviews and a higher star rating over a less expensive product

62%

would rather buy a product with fewer reviews but that had shopper photos versus one with many text reviews

Consumers assign value to ratings, reviews, and shoppers' photos — and seek out products that have this content versus ones that don't. **This is the content that will encourage shoppers to stay loyal to their favorite brands during tough economic times.**

It's important for your brand to have a strategy to collect, distribute, and amplify this UGC to increase retention and decrease acquisition costs. Now is the time to shift investment from expensive, brand-owned content to more efficient and effective UGC.

Show, convince, and inspire across the buyer journey

Give consumers what they need to be inspired and informed every step of the way, and they'll keep buying your products.

Social content plays a massive role in showing, convincing, and inspiring shoppers to buy.

- **Show me** the product features, size, fit, etc. Allow stellar product photos and videos to shine.

- **Convince me** that this is the right product for me. Consumers want to see products in context, from consumers they can relate to: Will this chair fit nicely in a space like mine? How does this dress look on a petite body frame? Does this stain remover really work on toddler messes?

- **Inspire me** to find my next favorite thing. Shoppers might not know exactly what they're looking for. Social media content can inspire shoppers to buy things they didn't know existed. Ever heard of the hashtag #TikTokMadeMeBuyIt? That's social commerce inspiration at its finest.

Our loyalty research shows this visual shopper content matters most to shoppers looking for skincare, haircare, and cosmetics.[19] By amplifying a wide variety of customers, Rare Beauty executes the Show, Convince, Tell approach masterfully on Instagram and other social channels.

> "By bringing social content to all the channels in which you engage consumers, you have the opportunity to provide people the joy of discovering things they never knew they needed in their lives.
>
> **Apu Gupta, Vice President of Social Content Revenue at Bazaarvoice**

Rael also made excellent use of shopper content to build awareness and establish credibility when it first entered the beauty space. The fast-growing brand fueled its launch success by making sampling-driven UGC, like high-quality visual content and customer reviews, a core component of its marketing strategy. Their campaigns resulted in 3,000 total reviews (300% more than their initial goal) and encouraged consumers to share their experiences on social, generating 9.8 million impressions from tens of thousands of social posts, shares, likes, and comments.[20]
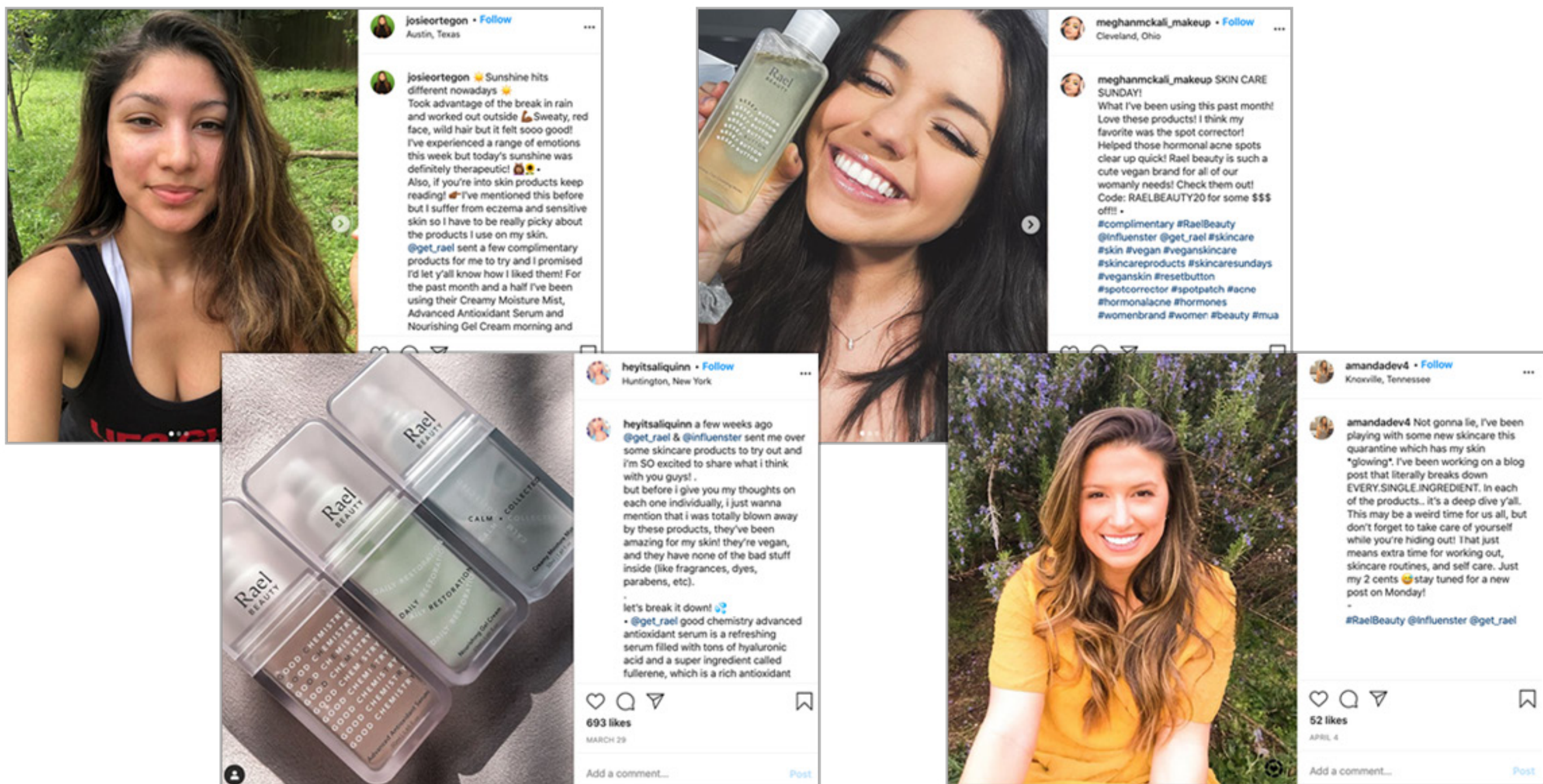
> " For a small startup, it's all about building trust with consumers because you're not relying on a big brand name that has long-term credibility. And knowing that people can't touch and feel a product online, and with the sensorial aspect of beauty and skin care, the third-party validation from UGC is so important.
>
> **Sorah Park, CMO at Rael**

Build a winning creator marketing strategy

Social media has become a non-negotiable for shoppers, with UGC like photos, videos, ratings, and reviews leading the charge.

But there's a new type of influencer in town.

Long gone are the days of big, mega celebrity influencers. People want to hear from the person next door — the modern content creator, the everyday shopper. Forward-thinking brands are leveraging these creators to drive more engaging and higher-converting shopping experiences than ever before.

Effective campaigns with these everyday creators that drive real business outcomes follow several best practices.

1. Find the right creators

It's incredibly important to be highly targeted with sampling campaigns to make sure you are sending your valuable inventory to the right people — who will then be tasked with content creation.

Finding the right samplers is the key to better results and value from your investment. The more you can match your creator to your customers, the more likely your creator is to resonate with your target audience. Age, gender, ethnicity, location, education, household income…you get the idea.

You may even consider further narrowing your selections by running a survey to collect new details on prospective samplers.

Don't forget to consider what kind of content you need to accomplish your goals and how you plan to use it. For example, some TikTok creators may not be as skilled on Instagram and vice versa.

2. Set the right expectations

It's important to provide inspirational guidelines on the quality of content you expect from your creators, especially when it comes to everyday social users. This helps teach your community how to create high quality visual content that helps your brand inspire on social and convert on e-commerce channels.

Specifically, you may wish to suggest that the creator use good light and focus, show the product front and center, and share how they use the product.

At Bazaarvoice, we teach our creators the fundamentals of visual content creation through The 3Cs:

- **Clarity** — good light and focus. Is the image bright, clean, and crisp?
- **Center of attention** — show the product front and center. Is the product in-focus and taken at a good angle?
- **Context** — share how you use it. Is the product incorporated into an activity or routine?

Guided tutorials that appear across the Influenster journey teach members how to create strong photos, while in-app guidance helps them create richer text reviews. This helps our community create the right content for your brand so you can inspire shoppers on social and convert on e-commerce channels.

Brands that incorporate this education to optimize shopper content quality can see:[21]

- 3X more reviews with photos than network benchmarks
- 2X longer reviews than industry benchmark
- 5% average social engagement from sampling participants
- 3X lower rejection rate than competition

3. Create a stellar brand brief

Teaching your creators about your brand is also key to creating successful social content that moves the needle for your business. Some of the more important elements to include in your brand brief include:

Your brand story. Relay the story you want to tell — not just the content you want.

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

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

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

Take advantage of at-home focus groups

Run a focus group at any time and win fans before a product even launches with sampling. A successful sampling program not only results in valuable UGC — it also helps solicit valuable product feedback. And this feedback gives you the opportunity to proactively fix problems that otherwise may cause customers to churn.

When skincare brand Sol de Janeiro launched a new body lotion, customers didn't care for the scent. The brand reworked the lotion and ran a sampling campaign with Influenster, specifically targeting people who didn't like the product. The results? 79% of samplers reported they liked the reformulated lotion better, and the brand improved its star rating.

> "
>
> Sampling to people who gave you low ratings feels really counterintuitive on the surface, but shows what a transparent and trusted brand Sol de Janeiro is. They leaned into authenticity and it paid off. Not only did they get the formula right, but they built a strong community of supporters. Taking that misstep and turning it into a strategic move helped keep propelling that line forward.
>
> **Colby Smith, _General Manager of Influenster_**

Find the perfect product sampling partner

While sampling can deliver the authentic shopper content and valuable customer feedback you want, you need expertise to pull it off. Without proper planning and support, you can easily go over budget and miss out on ROI. Choosing the right sampling partner can therefore mean the difference between a smashingly successful product launch — and a flop.
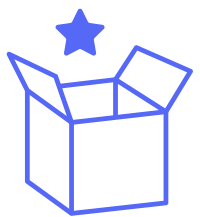
Some of the key attributes you should look for:
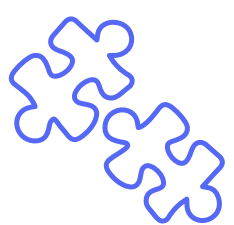
Flexibility. Cookie cutter sampling campaigns < sampling partner that offers a variety of flexible features to match your objectives.
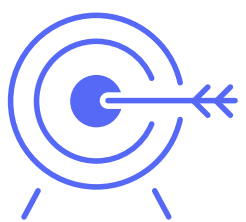
Targeting. Sizable community of engaged samplers to pull from — and the means to find the right people within that community.

Fulfillment. Multiple fulfillment options under a single roof for an exceptional sampling experience.

Dedicated support. Partner support in the form of end-to-end campaign management (helpful for a lean marketing team).

Campaign activation and engagement. Fun and easy-to-use platform or app that guides samplers through the sampling process.

Insights. Ability to measure the impact of your sampling experience, improve your products, and optimize your marketing

Bazaarvoice sampling solutions get your products to the right people.

VoxBoxes

Send a custom box of products to an engaged, targeted audience or engage in shared sampling with Co-op boxes that promise category exclusivity. Boxes reach a community of 8 million engaged members who deliver high-quality photos, reviews, and social buzz.

CashBack

Participants purchase your products in-store or online, and they're reimbursed after they post a review, for example. This makes it a cinch to gather UGC even if your product is bulky, heavy, or difficult to ship, such as alcohol or frozen foods. Keep in mind, not every product is ideal for this type of sampling, but you can still get your products to the right people and inspire UGC with CashBack sampling.

Learn more about evaluating sampling services:
**Buyers Guide: Find the perfect product sampling partner**

Learn more about your products and customers

90% of companies say their industry has become more competitive.[22] That's why it's more important than ever for brand managers to understand both their products and the customers who use them, so their shopper content campaigns can continually improve.

Gather data from user-generated content

UGC enables you to take the pulse of what customers are saying about your brand and its products. It's essentially a perpetual focus group.

Check out the social posts your company is tagged in, or see what's being said with your branded hashtag for real-time insights on how customers perceive your brand. You can also look at the product reviews customers leave or the questions they post on your site or on social media to learn how they feel about your offerings.
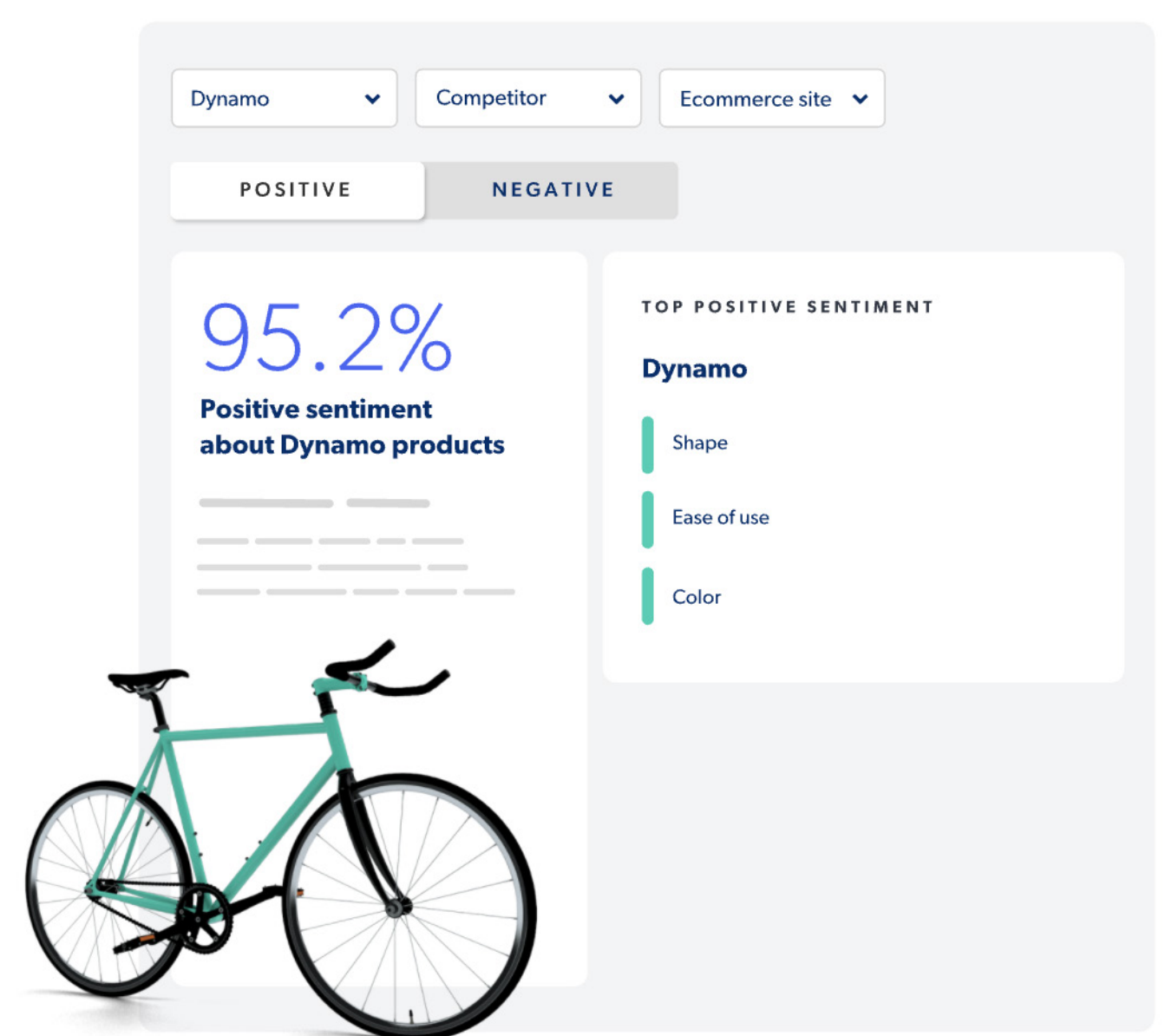
Take these qualitative learnings a step further by comparing them with your sales data. What's selling? What's not? And how might UGC affect these numbers?

"More data means more opportunities to get creative while still staying true to your brand," Smith said. "You have…[to] test and collect data, and continually look for ways to delight, inspire, and connect with your people."

Dive deep into the data with Influenster reporting and Bazaarvoice's Network Insights tool. These provide content performance tracking and sentiment analysis and help you better understand what customers are saying about your brand and its products through advanced machine learning and natural language processing.

Submit updated brand exposure reports to management each month

Keep the company up to date on shopper content campaign progress, gain insights from your team, and showcase your wins with regular reporting.

Bazaarvoice makes it easy to do all this and more with its Premium Network Insights, which rolls all that data and insights into a single dashboard. You can download comprehensive reports to share with your team. Bazaarvoice even provides specific, actionable recommendations to improve your UGC efforts.

Communicate key insights with vendors and distributors

UGC gives you insights into how products perform and how customers interact with them, providing you with valuable information you can use to communicate with vendors and retailers.

Not only does this improve your relationships with vendors and distributors, but it also sparks conversations about what their various audiences want from your products and messaging.

Implement industry-specific best practices

Featuring UGC in marketing campaigns is a proven way to drive brand awareness and increase conversions, no matter what industry you're in. But some industries are particularly effective at utilizing this content. Let's take a look at which sectors are killing it with UGC.

Beauty

From exquisitely packaged products to eye-catching palettes, the beauty industry has no shortage of incredible opportunities for UGC.

Benefits of UGC

- It shows how products look and perform for real people.
- It can demonstrate progress. For example, shopper content is a great way to showcase actual customers' before-and-after shots.

How to utilize UGC

- Collect and share customers' unboxing videos.
- Repost product tutorials from beauty bloggers.
- Highlight testimonials and product reviews on product pages.

Brands that do it well

FEELUNIQUE

When Feelunique teamed up with Bazaarvoice to utilize reviews and social content from customers, it generated an additional $10 million in e-commerce revenue.[23]

Glossier.

Glossier built its brand on UGC and features it on social media, on product pages, and in marketing campaigns. The brand attributes 90% of its revenue to fans.[24]

Apparel

The apparel industry is a natural fit for shopper content since countless people are already sharing their unique looks and #OOTD (outfit of the day) ensembles on social media.

Benefits of UGC

- Shoppers can see how items look on real customers, which helps them determine sizing and fit, increases customer satisfaction, and reduces returns.[25]

- Customers can be inspired, discover new products, and learn how to use and style products.

How to utilize UGC

- Feature UGC on product and checkout pages. This results in a 5-7% increase in conversion rate and increases average order value by 2%.[25]

- Showcase it in on-site galleries. Conversion rates increase up to 140% when shoppers interact with photos in galleries.[26]

Brands that do it well

DSW

With thousands of customers posting on social media with the #MyDSW hashtag, DSW has no shortage of shopper content to choose from. And shoppers who interact with content from other customers on the company's website are twice as likely to make a purchase.[11]
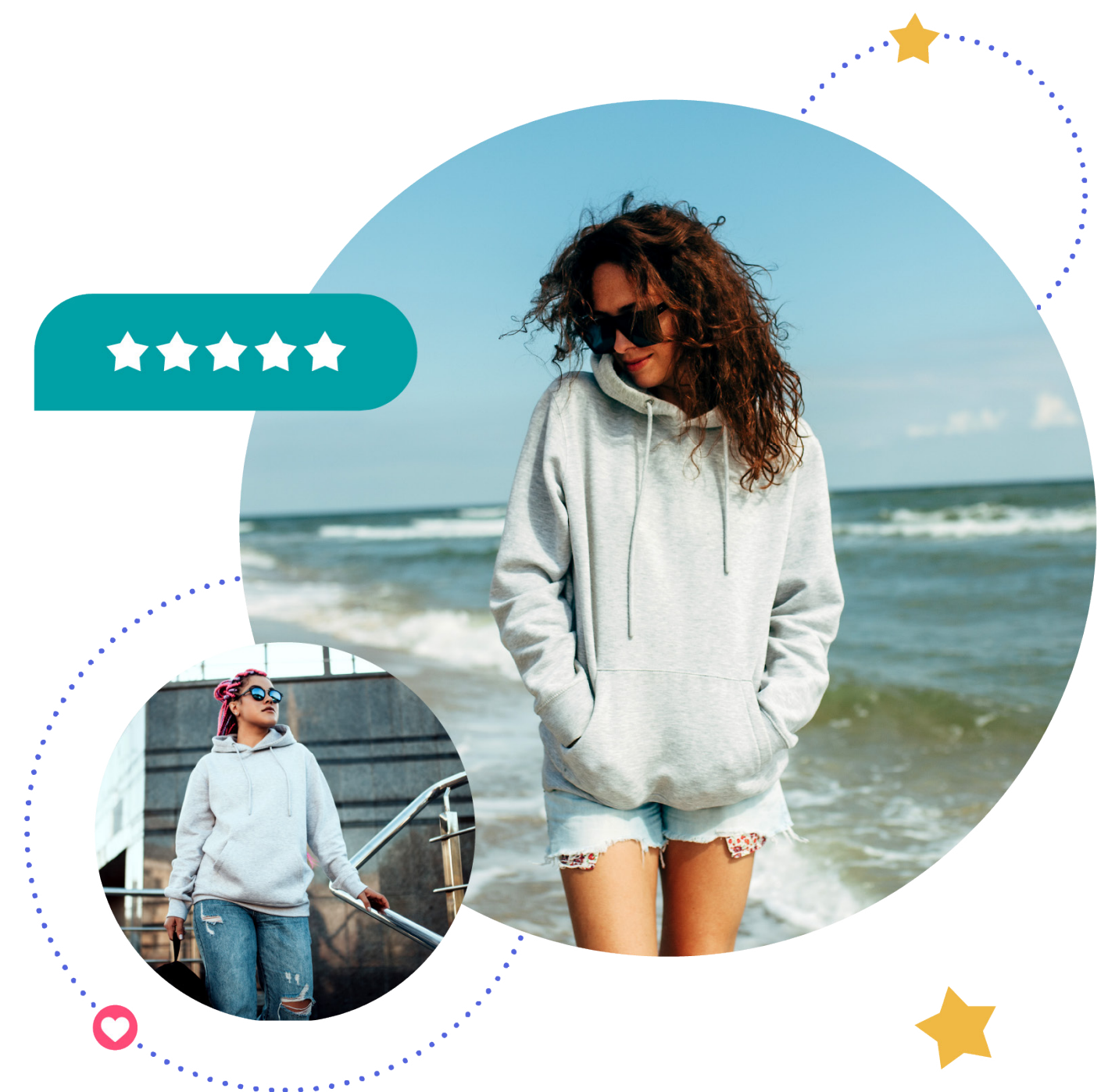
RIVER ISLAND

This international clothing brand uses Bazaarvoice Galleries to display social content front and center, throughout their website, and inspire purchases. It works — River Island sees a 184% lift in the conversion rate and a 45% increase in average order value among site visitors who engage with the UGC.[27]

Food and Beverage

40% of diners post photos of their food online, resulting in heaping helpings of delicious content for brand managers to serve to audiences.[28]

Benefits of UGC

- Social media impacts consumers' eating decisions,[29] and food fans consume 400% more content than the average Instagram user.[30]

- 78% of online grocery shoppers are more likely to purchase an unknown grocery item if there are customer reviews for that product. The figure is 64% among in-store shoppers.[31]

How to utilize UGC

- Host a hashtag contest to inspire and collect content and raise brand awareness.

- Give away new products to generate buzz on social media.

- Design a dedicated website for fans of the brand to create UGC.

Brands that do it well

LAND O LAKES®

Reviews are essential to Land O'Lakes' success. The brand has syndicated more than 30,000 reviews to various retail sites with Bazaarvoice, and its representatives frequently respond to customer complaints, increasing buyer loyalty.[32]

Doritos

Doritos' Legion of the Bold website allows visitors to create their own Doritos-centric content, which the brand shares on its social accounts. Doritos regularly launches new UGC challenges for its fans to participate in.[33]

Auto

A Think With Google report on the car buying process reveals that the average consumer's auto research during a three-month period includes more than 900 digital interactions.[34] Make sure engagement with your brand's shopper content accounts for 899 of those interactions.

Benefits of UGC

- Social media strongly influences which cars people purchase. In fact, 45% of people say UGC is the most influential type of content when they're deciding which car to purchase, and 68% of auto buyers have purchased a vehicle they saw on social media.[34]

- It establishes trust in an industry that has a long history of distrust among consumers. 80% of car shoppers say they'll turn to social media for car buying advice instead of a salesperson.[35]

How to utilize UGC

- Feature UGC on websites — J.D. Power reports a vehicle's reviews are a primary consideration for new car buyers.[36]

- Host contests on social to inspire customers to share content of their cars.

Brands that do it well

SUBARU

NISSAN

Subaru's MeetAnOwner website allows consumers to see what actual Subaru owners have to say about their experience.[37]

This tire brand was recently named one of the top automotive brands on social media, thanks in part to posing challenges for followers to submit UGC — like creative tire shots.[38]

Home and Hardware

Consumers are constantly looking for inspiration for home, hardware, and DIY projects, so UGC-savvy brands know to give shoppers what they want.

Benefits of UGC

- This type of UGC is ideal for discovery shopping because it sparks ideas and shows shoppers what other people are designing and creating.

- It allows consumers to see how products look in homes and the results they can get.

How to utilize UGC

- Make it shoppable. Reshare content on social media and use products like Showroom and Like2Buy so customers can make in-app purchases.

- Add UGC to all aspects of your marketing campaigns, including retargeting ads, packaging inserts, and more.

- Feature it on product pages and in on-site galleries, and be sure to syndicate that content across retail sites. Bazaarvoice found that syndication of social content drives up to a 150% conversion lift and up to 15% increase in average order value.[39]
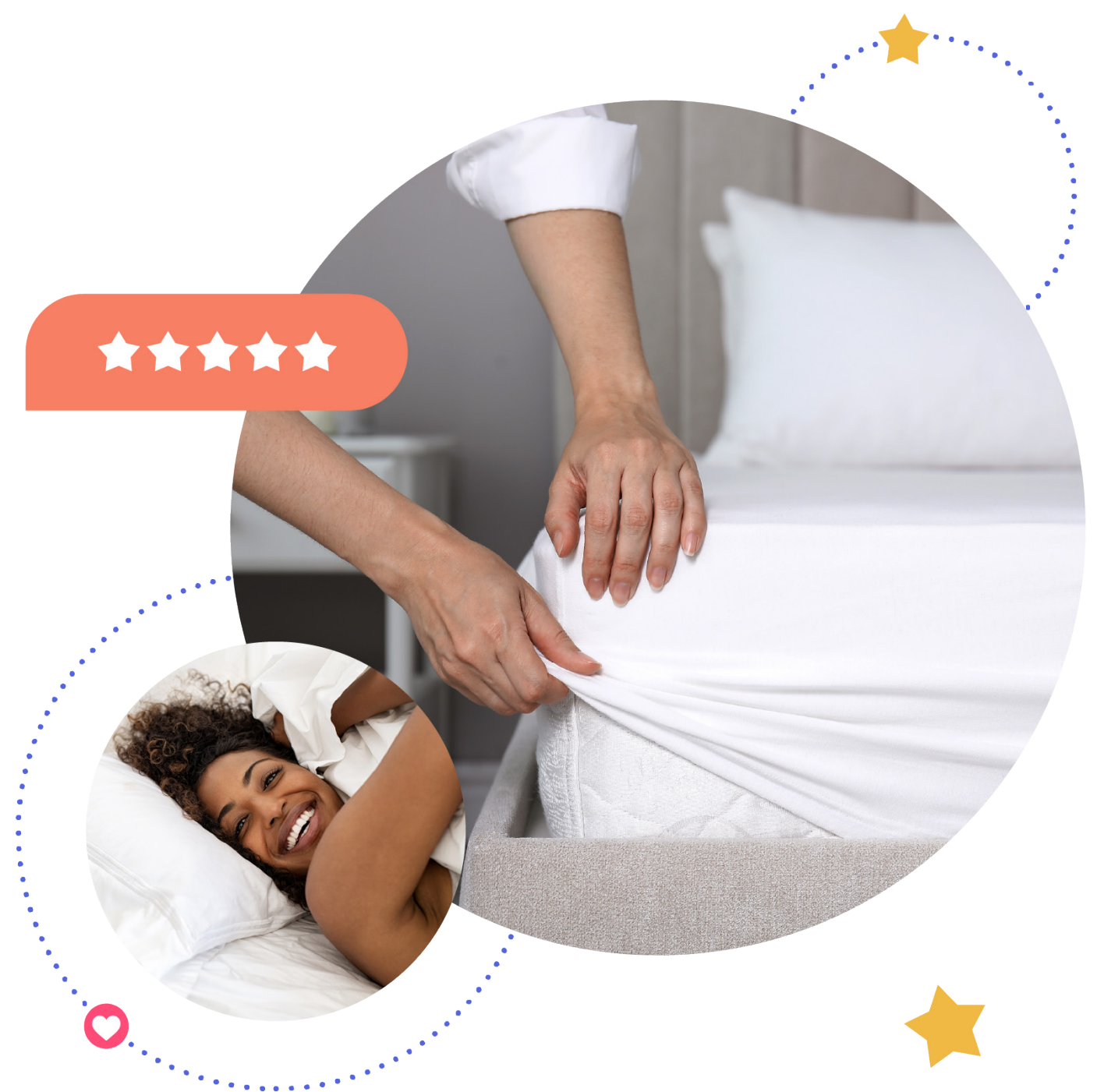
Brands that do it well

Einhell

German power- and garden-tool manufacturer Einhell relies on product reviews from its customers to showcase the quality of its products and entice more shoppers to click "add to cart."[40]

PARACHUTE

Parachute employs shopper content in much more than just its website and its social campaigns. The brand uses it in retargeting ads, direct mail, and more. And it pays off: It's seen a 35% higher click-through rate on its UGC ads and a 60% lower CPC.[2]

Other

UGC is an invaluable tool — even in industries that aren't traditionally known for using it in marketing. Let's take a look at brands that are employing shopper content in creative ways to drive sales, scale their business, and grow customer loyalty.

The **Swedish Tourism Board** launched an incredibly successful word-of-mouth content campaign that let anyone call a phone number and randomly be connected to a Swede to discuss any topic that came to mind.[41]

Kärcher, the top manufacturer of cleaning technology, uses Bazaarvoice TryIt sampling to generate high-quality reviews before a product launch so that the item goes up on its website with plenty of social proof.[42]
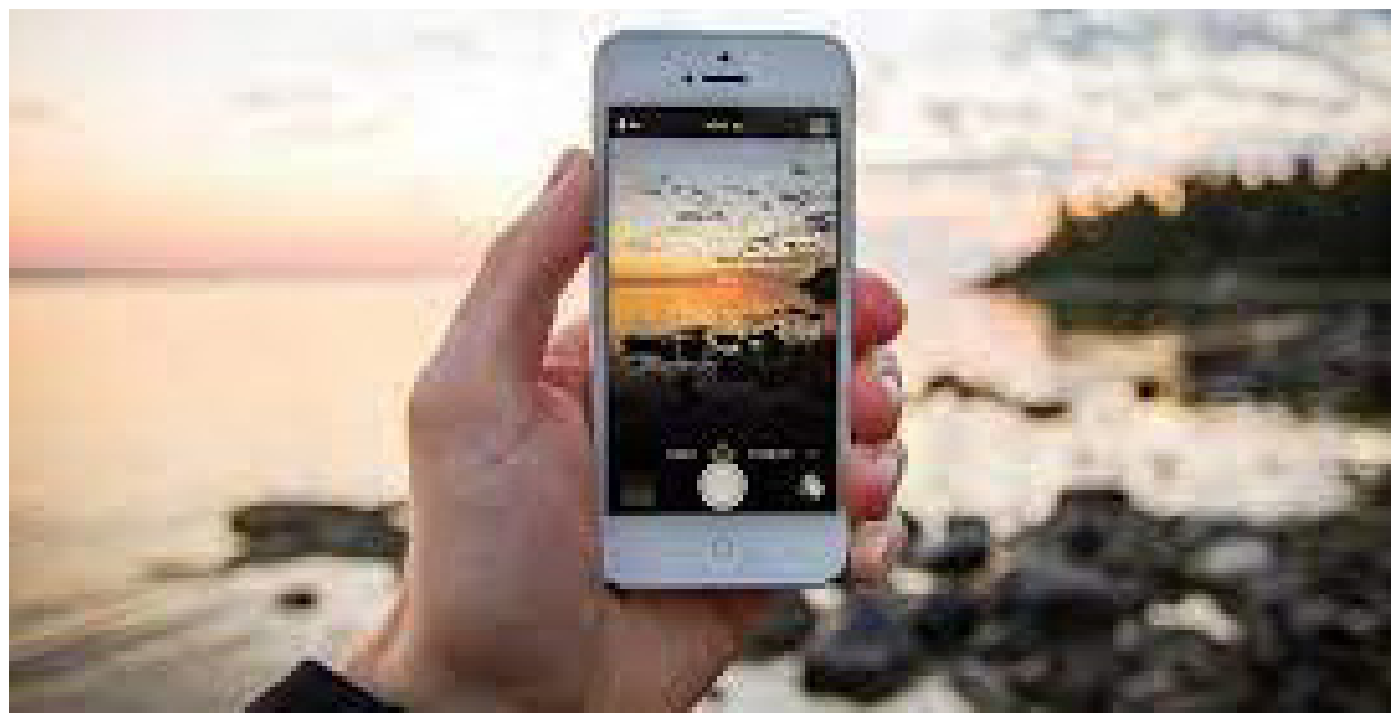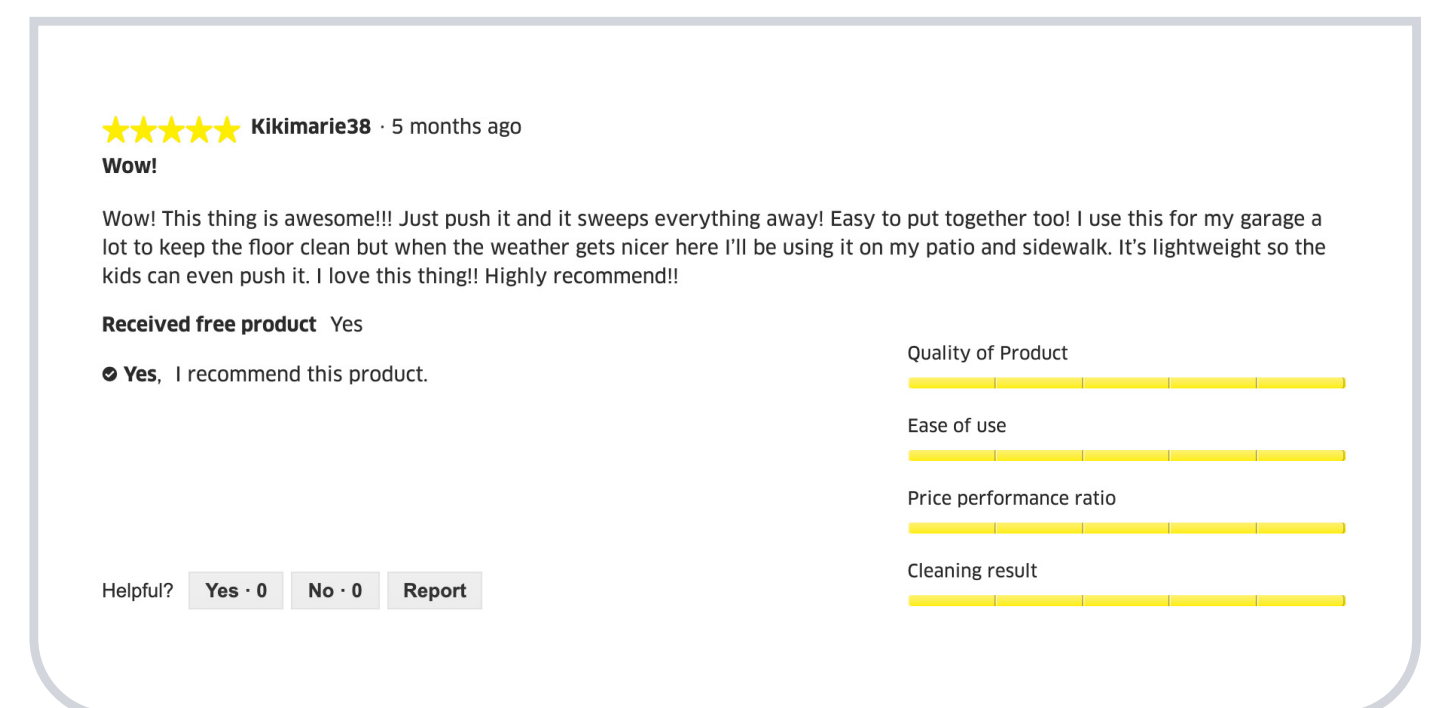
#Shotoniphone
Apple highlights both its customers and its iPhone camera with its UGC #shotoniphone campaign.[43]

GoPro showcases what its product does best with video footage and photos from its users. In fact, a minimum of 6,000 GoPro-tagged videos are uploaded to YouTube daily.[44]

# Simplify content management for your brand with Bazaarvoice

People are already talking about your brand. They're sharing their shopping experiences, taking selfies with your products, posting product reviews that influence potential buyers, and more. In other words, they're creating content and engaging in modern-day word-of-mouth marketing.

You may not be able to control what they say about your brand and its products as a brand manager. But it's your responsibility to influence this narrative and identify ways to employ valuable shopper content in a way that benefits the brand.

And UGC will certainly benefit your brand.

It's authentic, establishes trust among consumers, engages shoppers, and drives conversions, so it's no surprise that 86% of marketers say they have incorporated this content into their campaigns.[45]

Bazaarvoice is here to help. We have the tools you need to find, manage, and distribute the best content so that you can get the most out of it — and so that your customers can market your brand for you.
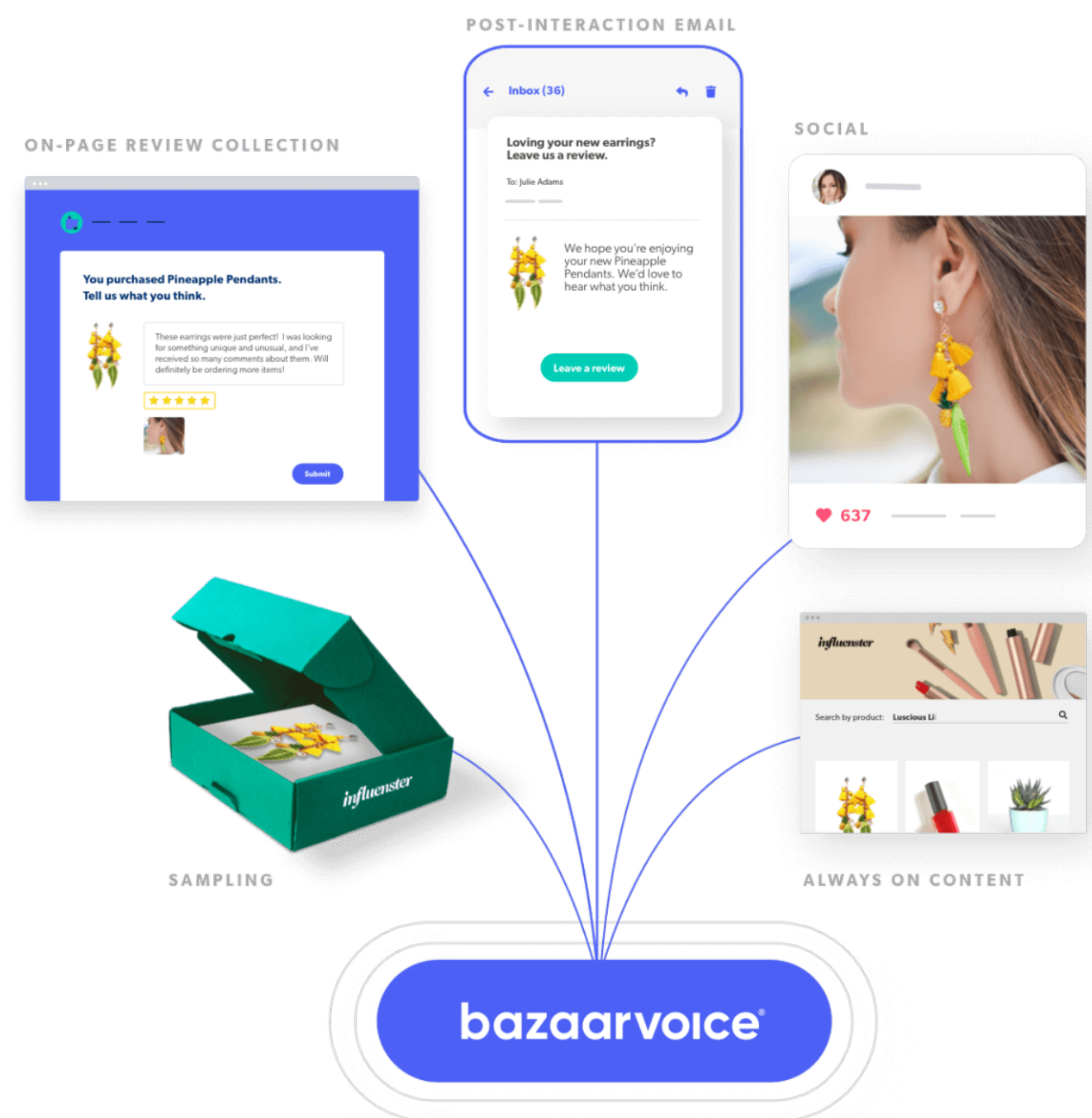
Key takeaways

Being a brand manager isn't easy, especially when budgets are tight. But thankfully, you don't have to do it all on your own. In fact, it's time to be leaning more than ever on the everyday creators that your shoppers trust — to help you stand out from the pack, drive sales, and build devoted fans.

- **Price isn't the only purchase factor.** Consumers prefer to buy products with UGC like star ratings, reviews, and shopper photos and videos over products without that content — even with increasing commoditization.

- **36% of shoppers say brand advertisement does nothing for them** when it comes to making a purchase decision. They trust their peers to inspire their shopping and communicate product benefits instead. Amplify these voices and their content.

- **Product sampling is a highly effective way to drive trial**, generate shopper content, and encourage future purchases for core SKUs and new products alike — but it's important to choose the right partner.

- **UGC also functions as a perpetual focus group**, allowing you to identify and proactively address areas for improvement before customers jump ship for another brand.

- **Do your homework before you get started.** Understand your customers, identify opportunities from your competition, and take inspiration from others in your industry.

Ready to get started with UGC?

Bazaarvoice is here to help.

Request a demo

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