



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE

How to Leverage UGC to Grow Sales Volumes

A step-by-step guide to extending the reach of user-generated content across channels for optimal results



Demand for User-Generated Content is Growing

By now, you've probably heard plenty of stats about the importance of user-generated content, such as ratings, reviews, questions and answers, photos and videos. You may even be fully bought in already. But in case you need a refresher...

For Consumers

UGC Fuels Informed Purchase Decisions

- **97%** consult reviews
- **40%** use Q&A to ask a question or get more product information
- **88%** specifically look for photos and videos submitted by other consumers prior to making a purchase

Informed purchase decisions = happy customers and fewer returns

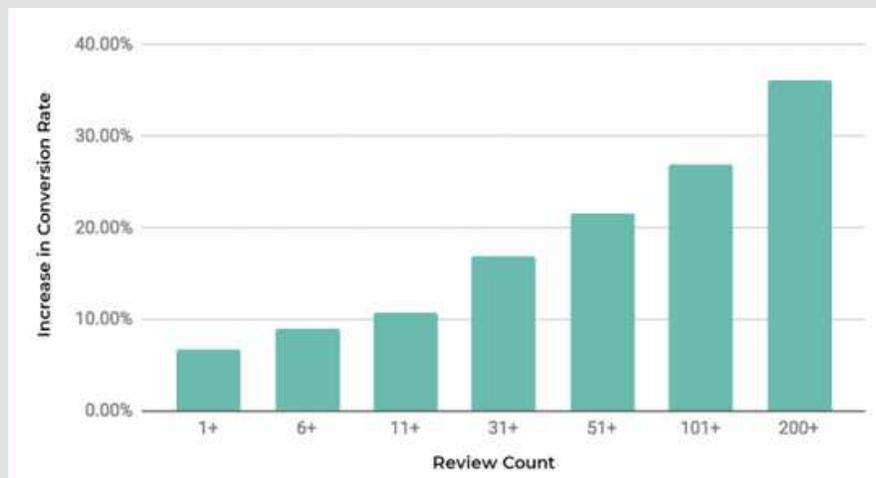
For Brands & Retailers

UGC Boosts the Bottom Line

- **65%** increase in conversion when reviews are displayed on a product page
- **6X** sales lift when a customer's question is answered via Q&A
- **69%** increase in conversion when one customer-generated image is added to a product page

Plus plenty of insights to improve performance (and sales)!

More Reviews Lead to Higher Conversion Rates





Clearly, UGC is a win-win for brands and consumers alike. So it's no wonder brands and retailers are constantly questioning how they can improve the quality and capture more of this proven conversion booster. In fact, here at PowerReviews, we talk to companies everyday that are looking for ways to generate more reviews, questions, photos and videos.

But collecting more user-generated content is only the first step. The next challenge is the actual marketing of it. You need to ensure you're fully maximizing its potential. How do you get this content in front of the maximum number of shoppers for the biggest possible impact?

UGC boosts consumer confidence. The more customers who are exposed to it, the more sales you will make. That's where this guide comes in.

Throughout these pages, we'll share proven best practices that will help you get more eyes on your UGC in the places and ways your shoppers want to consume it. In doing so, you achieve the results you work day-in day-out for: more sales and bigger bottom line impact.

Want to Collect More High-Quality Reviews?

If you want to find out more about "Perfect Reviews" and how to cultivate more of them, we have a Guide for that too.



ON YOUR PRODUCT PAGES

Let's start with the most obvious place to showcase your UGC: your product pages. But although it's obvious, many brands and retailers get it wrong.

Of course, UGC displays aren't one size fits all. For example, a display for a pair of shoes should feature size and fit information to help shoppers determine the correct size to purchase. But those data points would be completely irrelevant for a product page selling eye makeup.

There are, however, best practices that apply across all categories. This is an instance when showing is better than telling, though. So let's take a closer look at the elements of an ideal UGC display.

The Ideal UGC Display

- **Review Snippet:** A simple visualization of a product's review content -- right at the top of the product page, above the fold.
- **Review Snapshot:** A visual overview of the review content for a given product, including average star rating and rating distribution, and customized to your needs.
- **Search and Filter:** Helps shoppers find reviews relevant to their needs.
- **Demographic Information:** Shoppers can find relatable content from someone with similar characteristics and use cases.
- **Verified Buyer Badge:** Show shoppers a review was written by someone who actually purchased the product.
- **Visual Content Display:** Photos and videos from your shoppers -- collected both natively and through social media.
- **Q&A Display:** Customer questions displayed alongside the appropriate (and accurate) answers.
- **Q&A Search:** Eliminates duplicate questions.

The screenshot displays a product page for a "Rivno® Jacket". At the top, there is a large image of the jacket in a maroon color. To the right of the image, the product name "Rivno® Jacket" is shown, along with a star rating of 4.1 from 41 reviews and a "Write a Review" link. Below this, there are sections for "Sizing" (with a visual scale from small to big), "Q&A" (15 answered questions), and "Update Style" (showing a price of \$230.00). A "Size" selector shows options for S, M, L, XL, and XXL, and a "Color" selector shows options for BLACK, WHITE, and CRIMSON. Below the main image is a carousel of smaller images showing people wearing the jacket in various settings. A "Review Snapshot" section follows, featuring a star rating of 4.1 from 41 reviews, a "Write a Review" link, and a green checkmark indicating that 85% of respondents would recommend the brand. The snapshot is divided into three columns: "Ratings Distribution" (5 Stars: 18, 4 Stars: 14, 3 Stars: 5, 2 Stars: 4, 1 Star: 0), "Pros" (20 Comfortable, 10 Lightweight, 3 Great Color, 8 Attractive, 5 Stylish), and "Cons" (2 Wrinkle Easily, 2 Not Warm, 2 Zipper Catches, 1 Cheap Material, 1 Irregular Fit). Below the snapshot are two sections: "Sizing" (with a visual scale from small to big) and "Sleeve Length" (with a visual scale from short to long). The bottom section is titled "Most Liked Positive Review" and "Most Liked Negative Review". The positive review is a 5-star review that says "Looks good over work clothes too" and mentions that the jacket is comfortable and has a great color. The negative review is a 2-star review that says "Not warm enough" and mentions that the jacket does not keep the reviewer warm. At the bottom, there is a search bar for reviews, a "Reviewed by 41 customers" badge, and a "Most Recent" dropdown menu. A "Expected a better quality" badge is also visible, along with a snippet of a review that says "The product was good, but very light in color, hope so color won't get fade away in future. Small size is bit large for me but no problem it's still comfortable".

47% of consumers apply filters when consuming review content to seek out information most directly relevant to them.

THROUGHOUT YOUR WEBSITE

You've got your product detail pages in great shape. But that should only be the beginning...

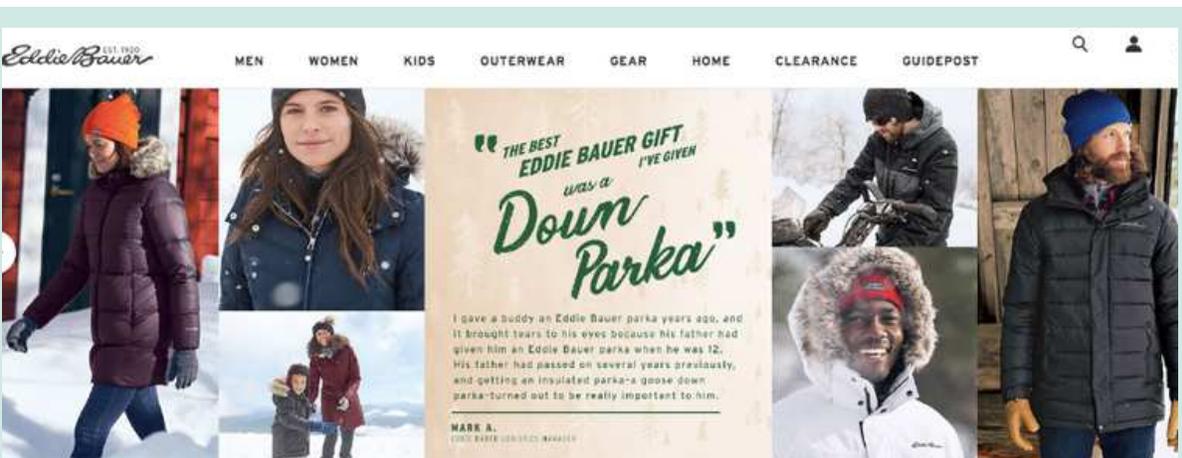
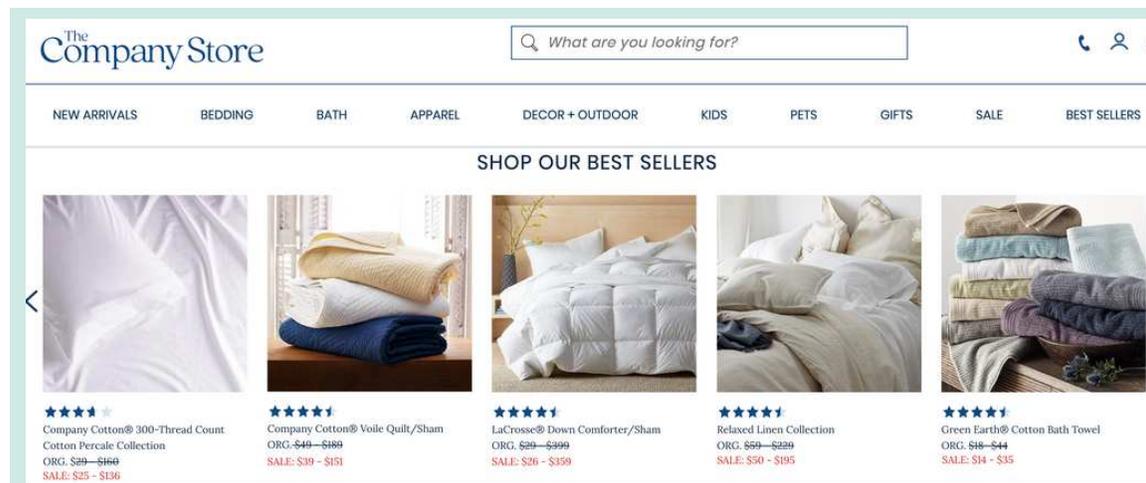
There are plenty of ways to leverage UGC throughout your website to entice visitors to click through to your product pages. Here are a few:

Transform your Homepage with UGC

A shopper has landed on your website. But where will they go next? Of course, your homepage is the springboard for the rest of the customer journey. So it represents a fantastic opportunity to guide consumers down the path to purchase.

Featuring user-generated content on your homepage does just that. Why? It helps shoppers more easily (and quickly) find the products that meet their needs. Attention spans are notoriously short nowadays so you have little time to influence behavior. As we've seen, UGC is among the most potent weapons in your arsenal. So incorporate it in your first "touch" with customers.

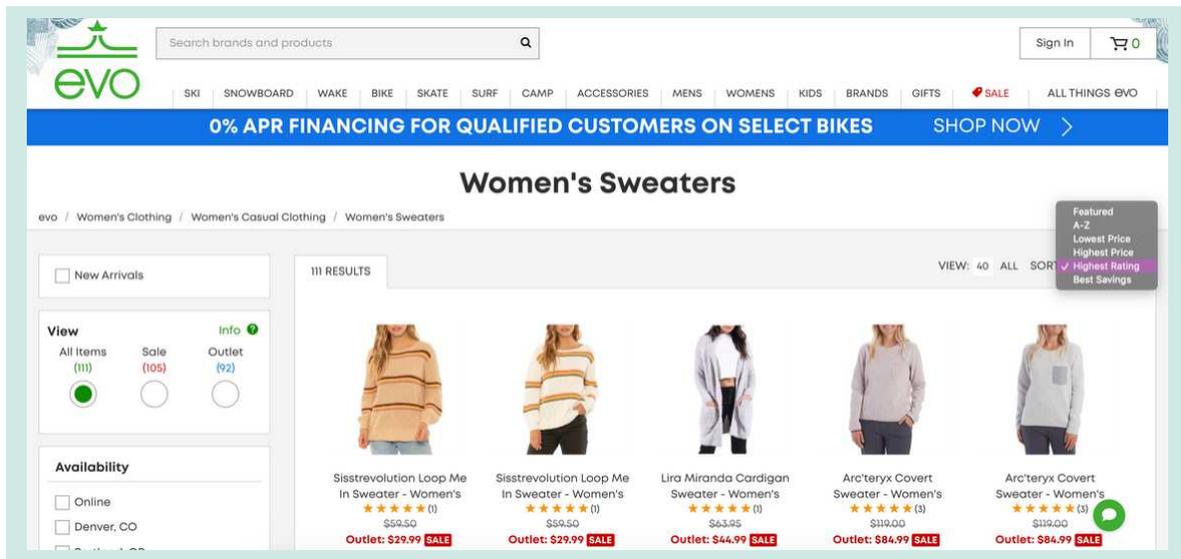
Be sure to display the average star rating and review volume for each of the products featured in your best sellers carousel. Or, consider adding a top rating products carousel to your homepage.



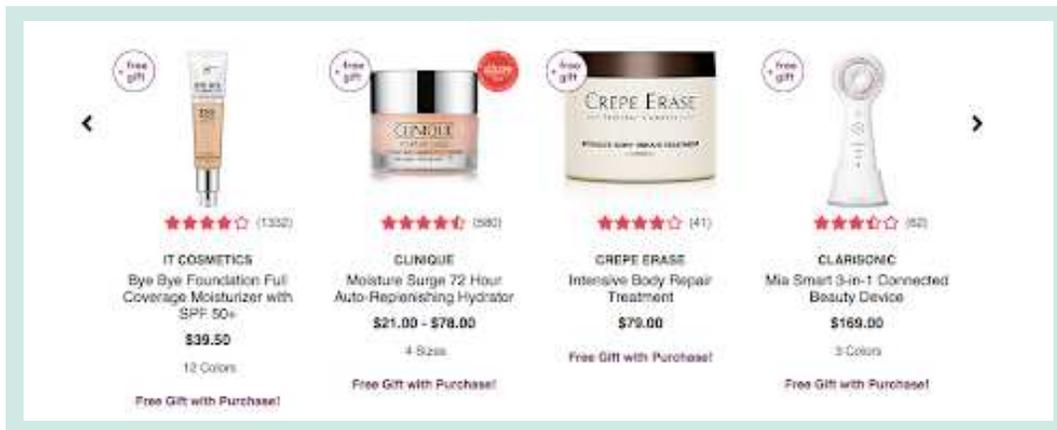
If featuring specific products on your homepage, include user-generated photos, as well as the text of a glowing review, to entice visitors to click to learn more.

Spruce up your Category Pages

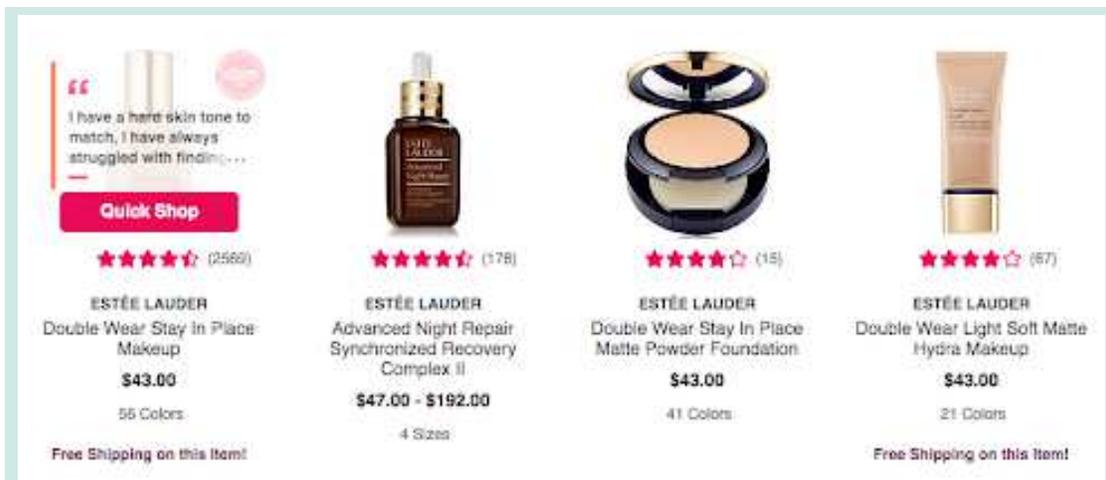
Today, when shoppers hit a product category page, they likely have the option to filter the results by a number of different categories, such as price and new arrivals. Make sure your shoppers can sort by “top rated,” too.



Also, be sure to include the average star rating and the number of reviews for each product in a category to make browsing easier for shoppers.



Want to include even more social proof on your category pages? When a shopper hovers over a product, display a preview of a written review to entice them to click through.



Feature Customer Photos and Videos Throughout Your Website

Your professionally shot photos and videos are certainly important. But shoppers actually prefer to see photos and videos of your products being used by real people like them. In fact, according to our own research, more than half of consumers under 30 say user-generated visual content is more important than glossy photos produced by a brand or retailer.

Consider adding a visual content gallery to your website that showcases images and videos of your products that you've collected from social media.

#AEROWORLD

These inspiring individuals have united from around the globe to share their personal stories and come together as one.

Meet the newest members of #AeroWorld inspiring us by being themselves. Hear their stories. Shop thier style.

GABRIELLA
A WORLD

LUIS
A WORLD

NOOR
A WORLD

TEYDIE
A WORLD

Tag @aeropostale and #AeroWorld for a chance to be featured on our site #InAero.

The image is a promotional graphic for the #AeroWorld social media campaign. It features a large central photo of a woman with curly hair, wearing jewelry, with the text "#AEROWORLD" and a short paragraph. Below this is a smaller text block and a carousel of four smaller photos of other individuals, each with their name and "A WORLD" overlaid. At the bottom, there is a call to action to tag @aeropostale and #AeroWorld for a chance to be featured on the site #InAero.

ON OTHER ECOMMERCE SITES

So you've enhanced your own website with user-generated content. But what about all the other places where your products are sold?

Many brands sell their products through retailer sites like Target, Walmart and others -- as well as through ecommerce marketplaces like Amazon. If that's the case for your brand, make it a priority to give consumers the content they need to make confident purchase decisions, regardless of where they're shopping for your products.

Here are a few ways you can do that:

Syndicate Your Content to Retailer Partners

Typically, a shopper will write a review on the same website where they purchased a product. That means only customers who shop on your website will see this content, as opposed to the shoppers who browse your products on retail partner sites.

But when you share your content, your reviews, Q&A, and customer-submitted photos and videos from your own site to your product pages on retailer sites, your reach obviously increases significantly.

For example, this review for a Melissa & Doug toy was originally written on the company's own site, but it also appears on the product page on Target.com.

Life-like and utterly adorable

★★★★★

Margaret - 1 month ago
originally posted on <http://www.melissaanddoug.com>



I sent this Ice Cream Counter to my granddaughter for her second birthday (along with the pink M&D birthday cake). The morning of my granddaughter's birthday, we had a family zoom meeting, and she could be seen enthusiastically licking* the top scoop (the one with colored sprinkles) on a three scoop cone in her video screen. When her three-year old cousin in another city saw her with what looked like a real ice cream cone, he leaned into the zoom camera as she simultaneously held out her cone from her screen to let him have a lick. It was utterly adorable! Virtual reality is not imaginary; at least in the mind of children, it's the actual thing. (BTW, the reason my granddaughter was such a pro at 'fake' ice cream licking? Her dad had put honey on the sprinkled scoop for her!) I highly recommend everything from Melissa & Doug.

Did you find this review helpful?

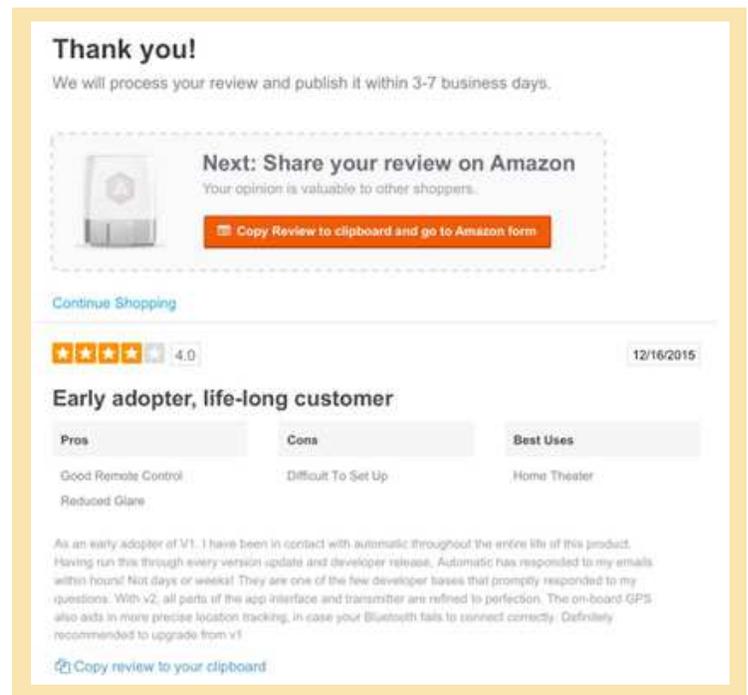
[Report review](#)

Because of this, shoppers can access the same confidence-building content regardless of the channel they use to shop for your products.

Share Reviews to Amazon

Today, nearly half of product searches start on Amazon. If you sell your products on Amazon, you've got to make sure you have plenty of this content on your product pages.

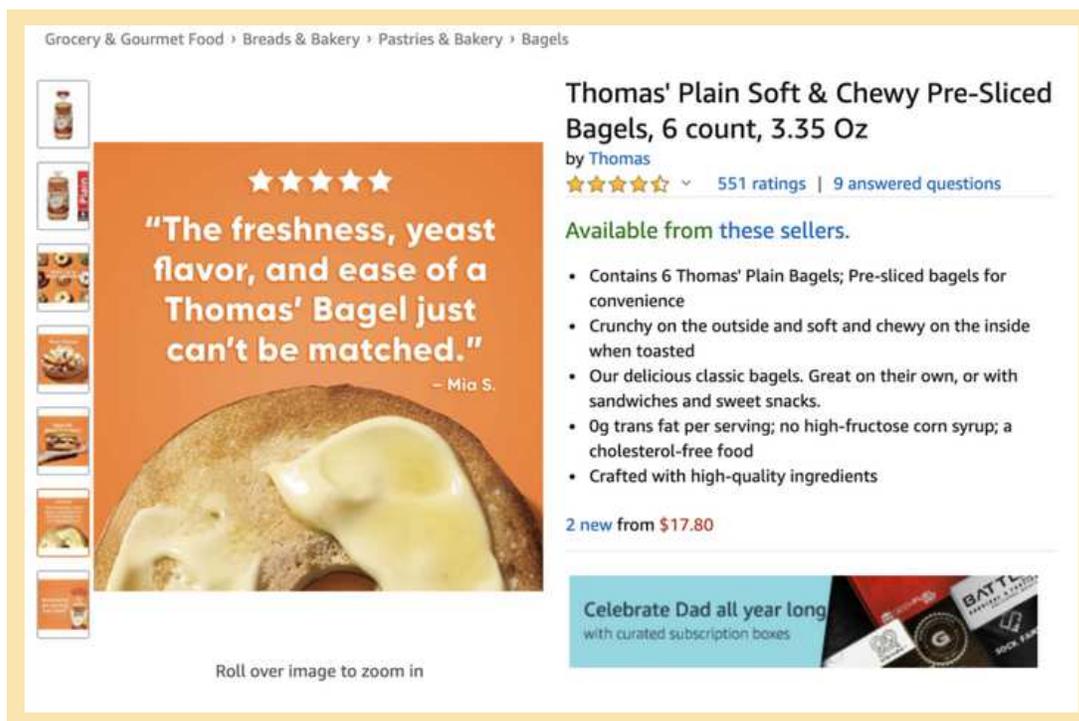
One simple way to do that is to allow your shoppers to share the reviews they've written on your website to your Amazon product pages. Ask your UGC vendor if they have a feature that allows this.



Showcase UGC on Amazon Product Pages

Product reviews are a top reason consumers shop on Amazon. So think of creative ways to put this content front and center on your Amazon product pages.

One way to do that is to create an image that includes the text of a product review. Then, upload it alongside your other product images.



You can also feature user-generated visual content alongside your professionally shot photos and videos to give shoppers a better idea of what your products look like being used by “real” people.

IN DIGITAL MARKETING

If you're like any other brand, you are constantly questioning how to improve the performance of your digital campaigns to drive more shoppers to your website. The good news is user-generated content offers a fantastic opportunity to drive the enhancements you seek.

Here are a few ideas:

Build Email Campaigns that Showcase UGC

These days, most inboxes are overflowing with promotional emails. But showcasing UGC can help yours stand out.

Add star ratings and review text to your existing email campaigns. Or create completely new campaigns that feature your top-rated products. For example, if summer is approaching, you might build a campaign featuring top-rated swimwear. Be sure to display star ratings or review excerpts in the email -- as well as on the campaign landing pages.

FREE SHIPPING ON ORDERS OVER \$99
*Excludes P&H. Other restrictions may apply.

TOP-RATED FOOTWEAR

EGGO BIOM HYBRID 2:
★★★★★
"Most comfortable golf shoe on the planet!"
"There are plenty of good golf shoes out there but these are the best!"
COMFORT & STYLE >

FOOTJOY FURY:
★★★★★
"These shoes are the best purchase yet from FJ."
"The new Fury takes shoe comfort to a whole new level."
PLAY FURY >

THESE ARE DEFINITELY WORTH A SECOND LOOK.

classic clog
★★★★★ (2837)
shop now >>

Another idea is to feature star ratings in your cart abandonment emails. In many cases, that social proof may be enough to draw shoppers back to your website to complete their purchases.

Feature Shopper Content on Social Media

Consumers use social media to connect with family and friends. But they also use these channels to discover products -- especially those in highly visual categories like apparel, accessories and beauty.

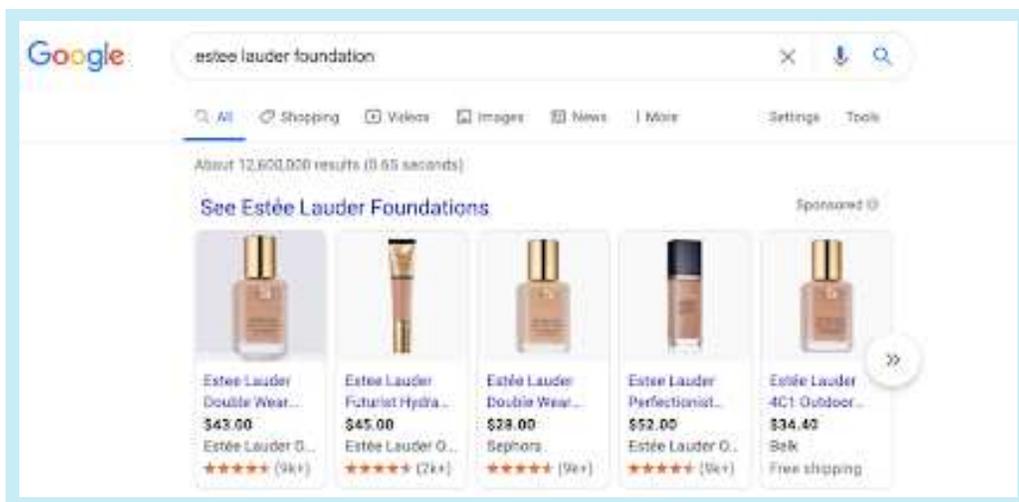
UGC can help you capture the attention of consumers when they're browsing popular social sites like Instagram and Facebook. This content will intrigue them enough to click through to learn more.

Feature star ratings, review quotes and customer-submitted photos in your Instagram posts and stories. Also, add this content to your sponsored posts and stories on Facebook and Instagram to attract attention and boost performance.



Add Star Ratings to Search Ads

Our research found that 35% of consumers start their shopping journey on Google or another search engine. Search ads are a great way to reach these shoppers -- and they're even more effective when they include star ratings. Be sure to syndicate your product star ratings to Google. That way, stars will appear in your ads -- and you will further optimize inbound traffic to your product pages.



IN TRADITIONAL MARKETING

Digital marketing spend continues to grow quickly. But traditional marketing is still critical for most brands. Incorporating user-generated content can make this activity even more effective.

Here are a few ideas for enhancing your traditional marketing initiatives with UGC.

Add Social Proof to Print Ads

If your brand runs printed ads in magazines or newspapers, think of ways to enhance these ads with user-generated content. The easiest way to do that is to feature the star rating for a product and quote a positive review.



Add Star Ratings and Reviews to Print Catalogs

If you send out paper catalogs to customers, consider adding star ratings, text reviews or even shopper-submitted photos alongside your key products. Or, include an entire spread of your top-rated products. For example, if you're a luggage brand and it's back-to-school season, you could include a spread featuring "top rated backpacks."

Create More Credible TV Commercials with UGC

If you're looking for ways to make your TV commercials pop, UGC may be the answer. Feature star ratings for your products (or even your company as a whole) in your television commercials.



Add UGC to Your Out-of-Home Advertising

Out-of-home advertising like billboards and transit ads can be a great way to reach a large audience. Adding UGC can make them even more effective.

When developing your next out-of-home campaign, look for opportunities to showcase star ratings, excerpts from reviews or photos submitted by your shoppers. For example, Apple regularly runs advertising campaigns -- including billboards -- that feature photos taken by their users of their products.



IN YOUR BRICK-AND-MORTAR STORES

We know consumers use UGC to make smart purchase decisions when shopping online. But they also depend on this content when shopping in a physical store. A PowerReviews study found that 70% of consumers are interested in accessing product ratings and reviews in-store.

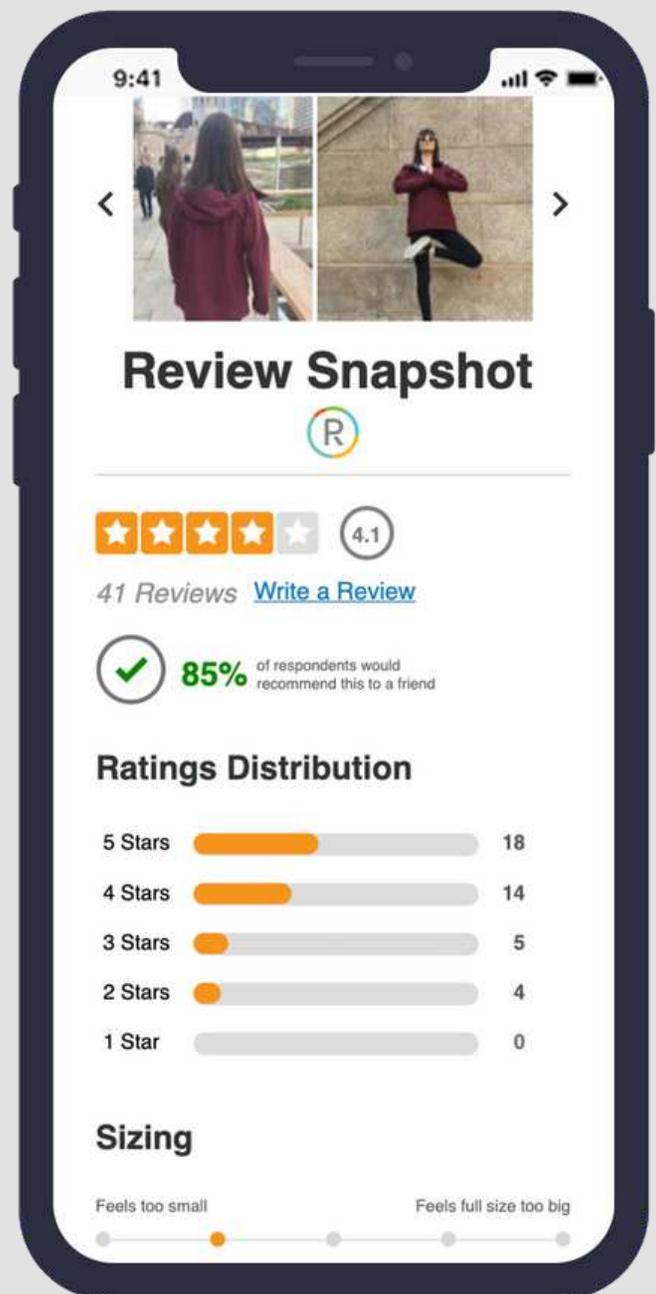
It's important to make this conversion-boosting content easily available to your in-store shoppers. Here are a few ways to do that.

Ensure Your UGC is Mobile-Friendly

These days, everyone has a smartphone and treats it as an extension of their own bodies. When shopping in a store, it's now become common practice for shoppers pull out their phones to get more information about a product. [A RetailMeNot study found](#) that when shopping in a brick-and-mortar store, 69% of shoppers are likely to use their smartphones to find customer reviews.

That's why it's important that all of your user-generated content - including ratings and reviews, Q&A, and user-submitted photos and videos - is easy to find and consume, regardless of device.

70% of consumers are interested in accessing product ratings and reviews in-store.



Enhance Store Signage with UGC

Strategically placed user-generated content can attract the attention of in-store shoppers -- and give them the confidence they need to add an item to their shopping cart.

Some stores are starting to use digital signage to showcase UGC. But featuring this content in your stores doesn't have to be an expensive, high tech initiative.

For example, create a display of "top rated" products. Include a product's average star rating or the text of a positive review to your pricing labels. Or create in-store signage for a product that showcases photos submitted by real shoppers.



Feature UGC on the Product Itself

Another way to give in-store shoppers the social proof they crave? Feature UGC on the product itself. This can be as simple as including the average star rating or the text from an especially glowing review on the packaging of a few of your key products.





Conclusion

Today's shoppers depend on user-generated content - including ratings and reviews, Q&A, and photos and videos - to make informed purchase decisions. In fact, if they can't find the information and context they're looking for, they're likely to skip your brand altogether.

UGC is therefore critical to boosting traffic and sales, while providing insights that can help you improve products and the overall experience of your customers.

But generating this content is only the first part of the equation. In fact, this is an entirely pointless exercise if no one ends up actually seeing it.

Brands that don't effectively showcase this content will increasingly lose out to those that do. Your success is therefore likely to depend - at least in part - on your ability to get this conversion-boosting content in front of more shoppers. So make sure you think about how you can leverage the best practices highlighted throughout this guide to your benefit.

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PowerReviews helps leading retailers and brands generate reviews in larger volumes to significantly increase sales, while enabling you with the analytics to optimize product quality performance.

Request a Demo

