BEST PRACTICE: UGC

Intro

UGC is any type of content created and shared by real customers. It's modern-day word-of-mouth marketing that can take the form of a product review, a selfie, a video of a consumer using a product, and so much more.

This content is often found and shared on social media, and today, more than 86% of companies rely on UGC from social media.

Why?

Because nearly 80% of people say UGC from social media highly impacts their buying decisions and shoppers are six times more likely to purchase an item if the product page contains images from social media.

Let's delve a little further into why UGC is so valuable...

Builds authenticity

Creates social proof

Provides insight on target groups

Fosters a community

Cost effective & flexible

Consumers are 2.4 times more likely to view UGC as authentic compared to content created by brands and retailers. There has also been a decline in trust of Influencers.

In a 2022 survey, just 8% of consumers say influencer content highly impacts their purchase decisions, representing a 23% decrease from 2017.

Social proof builds trust and strengthens brand credibility. If interested buyers see visuals, reviews, or ratings, it encourages them to buy.

92% of shoppers trust peer recos more than brands or retailers.

UGC enables further development and improvement for brands.

It allows them to better understand their target group as it shows who uses the products, when, how, in which context, and what the motivation behind this is.

Utilising UGC and commenting on users tagged posts or branded hashtags help to grow engagement and brand loyalty.

Almost half of shoppers say they're more likely to buy when they see a brand or retailer respond to reviews.

UGC is a cost effective way to build a library of varied content from the people who use the products most.

It can be used as part of always on activity or as part of a specific campaign which (with the right permissions) can be utilised as part of an omni channel strategy.

How to build UGC into our 2023 strategies

Reshare UGC

Resharing UGC shows support for fans and acts as product promotion in the process. Through direct @mentions you can credit the original user. On adding UGC to website under a specific product or category, there is also the option to add tags to respective social media profiles through external links. This demonstrates a close connection between brand and community and thus ensures a stronger relationship and long-term brand loyalty.

Note: even if you're tagged or mentioned you must still ALWAYS ASK PERMISSION!

Partner with influencers to create UGC

This doesn't always need to require a huge budget. It's actually better to identify and engage existing users who already have a genuine passion for a brand and are a good fit for a given product category or ethos. Micro-influencers, those with 1,000 to 100,000 followers, are ideal for this. They get higher engagement rates and more conversions, and they're the gateway to niche 'social bubbles' who have a highly engaged audience that trust their recommendations.

Use branded hashtags

Not only do hashtags increase social media engagement and brand awareness, they also establish a clear way for users to get involved in a specific activity. Using a branded hashtag as part of an always on or campaign strategy (often placed in the Instagram bio) gives users an opportunity to join and makes it easier to curate a library of UGC.

How to build UGC into our 2023 strategies

Consider a sampling program

Running a sampling campaign is an effective way to get the word out about a brand or product and generate authentic UGC. The key to an effective sampling program is to source and engage a wide selection of micro influencers, carefully chosen for their influence in niche areas (that the brand doesn't necessarily have prior access to/authority with) to reach new communities.

Add an Instagram feed to website

UGC creates an inviting and inspiring aesthetic which can also improve web KPIs. 77% of shoppers say they are more likely to shop with brands that offer a personal shopping experience. So, among other things, UGC lengthens the time-on-page of website visitors and thereby improves SEO. Consequently, it also favours visibility in Google rankings and reach.

How to build UGC into our 2023 strategies

Scope beyond social

UGC can be used off social in other marketing campaigns, making the strategy an omnichannel approach. For example, you could add UGC images in an abandon cart email to help nudge the prospective buyer to make a purchase or add user-generated content to key landing pages to help increase conversion.

Engage with users on UGC posts

People want to interact with brands that engage with them so regularly liking and commenting on a users post encourages them to feel there is a two-way connection. It also pushes others to post their own UGC in the hope they may receive the same recognition.

HOW TO ACQUIRE & UTILISE UGC ACROSS CHANNELS

Instagram

Look at tagged photos and mentions
See what UGC already exists by checking out the content the brand is tagged or mentioned in.

Host a hashtag competition
Ask users to share content on social media with a specific hashtag as a competition entry. Not only does this flood social with marketing for products, but it also allows collections of UGC. Don't forget to draft T&Cs!

Reshare UGC in posts and stories
People are more likely to create content about a brand or its products and share it when they know there's a possibility that it might be featured.

Source and organise existing UGC
Keep track of the users you've contacted and build a library of approved content.

Make the prospect of sharing of UGC known!
Feature your branded hashtag in your bio and direct fans to use it for a chance to be featured. Like Maybelline below, you can also add direction for UGC in a bio link:

Pinterest

Crowdsource content with competitions
Ask participants to submit original pins or even entire boards to enter a competition to generate a lot of high-quality UGC.

Pin UGC to branded boards
Show followers that their content is appreciated by repinning their UGC on owned brand boards.

Pin reviews
Pinterest is a visually-focused platform, but you can still showcase those rave product reviews by creating a pinnable image.

Add a "Pin it" button
Make it easy for Pinterest users to pin UGC from a brand website and product pages by adding a button to site that allows them to pin with just one click.
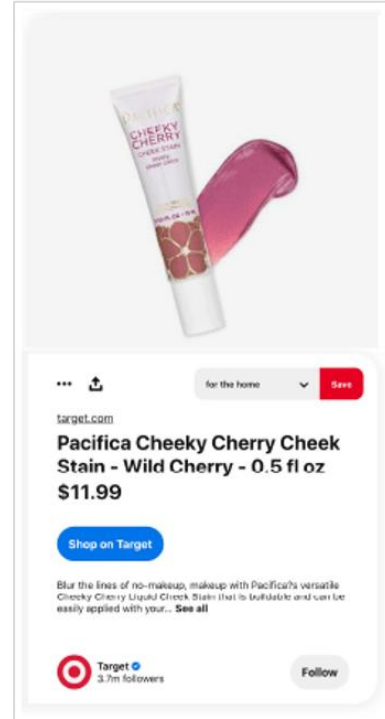
Tiktok

Identify trends
Trends are central to TikTok, so take a look at what's currently popular and brainstorm ways the brand can jump on board and start inspiring users.

Create a hashtag challenge
Challenges are huge on TikTok because they allow users to get creative and showcase their own take on a particular trend. So get people excited about a challenge — and amass some engaging UGC.

Incorporate music
TikTok is all about music — in fact, the platform is responsible for launching numerous viral songs. So identify ways the brand can incorporate music into videos.

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BEST PRACTICE FOR ACTIVATING UGC

What is good UGC?

Aligns with brand purpose and goals

You want your community to be amplifying a story that the brand wants to tell. Firstly, so that the brand message comes across clearly and consistently in the marketplace, and secondly because you want your UGC creators to stick around long-term, which can only come from creating a strong bond over your shared values.

The quality is right for the brand

UGC is as much about the community as it is about the brand, Whilst nobody expects fan content to be produced at the same high level of quality as you might get at a branded shoot, when selecting UGC, you want the content to still have inspirational values for the rest of the community. The best way to get the kind of quality you want from your legion of amateur content creators is to be very clear about what you're looking for.

It delivers the results you want to see

As with any other strand of marketing activities, you should know what you want to achieve from a UGC strategy or campaign, set appropriate metrics for it, and be able to measure them.

Key metrics to consider are:
- Fan growth
- Engagement
- Reach
- Impressions
- Views
- Clicks (if agreed with user to add a link elsewhere using their visual)

Best Practice

To get the most out of user-generated content — and encourage others to create and share UGC with your brand — it's important to abide by these key best practices:

Ask for permission
Even though a user tagged you in a photo, still take the time to get permission (via DM) to share their creation before sharing it on the brand website or reposting it on social accounts.

Give credit
Always credit the creator and tag them if you can.

Curate content from a variety of users
Social media users come from myriad backgrounds, and they expect brands to acknowledge that in the content they share. So be inclusive when sourcing UGC and share content from a variety of different people.

Never use UGC for advertising
UGC should never be used for ads/boosts on any social channel unless previously agreed. If you find a user/artist creating consistently beautiful on brand content, consider reaching out to offer them a partnership.

Keep tabs on existing brand partners/influencers
The Global team will spend time each month sourcing UGC based on mentions or hashtags associated to their brands. Local teams should inform Global brand teams when they have built a relationship with a user or have an existing agreement or contract in place. This will ensure no conflict in communication between brand and the given user. Furthermore, if there is UGC created for brands at a local level that can be shared on our Global pages, it helps give the brand a more Global appeal and saves time searching! Access the partnership doc here.

When UGC becomes more...

If you find an artist via brand social channels who consistently creates high quality content using owned products that warrants regular UGC, it might be worth reaching out to build a relationship so they can contribute to campaigns and longer term activity, thus making them a brand influencer rather than just a single repost.

This new relationship and requirements may require a contract to outline responsibilities on both sides.

See featured example for items to consider before turning a UGC user into a more formal brand partner.

For the full influencer toolkit click here.

Project:	*Insert sentence with project name/identifier*
Influencer:	*Name of Influencer*
Product:	*Set out details of the product*
Effective Date:	*Set out the commencement date for this Project i.e. the date this Agreement will come into force from. It can be a retrospective date if service provision has already begun.*
Services & Delivery Times:	*Set out a description of the Services and Deliverables to be supplied by Influencer for this Project and the timings for delivery. This section is important, make sure you list all the content you want the influencer to create in here and when it needs to be created.*
Fees & Payment Schedule:	*Set out the fee payable and when it is payable e.g. Consider offering 50% when the influencer signs-on and 50% on completion of the Services etc.*
Expenses:	*If the Influencer is likely to incur 3rd party costs, add details of how to claim.*
Territory:	*Insert geographical territories where Contributions will be used. Ideally insert "Worldwide". Include details of the local retail partner if applicable.*
Specified Media:	*Insert the types of media the licence rights covered.*
Licence Term:	*Insert the licence period e.g. "from date X to date Y", or "2 years from the date the Contributions are first posted online" etc.*
Named Competitors:	*Insert any competitors who the Influencer must not work with during the Term of the Agreement.*
Non-Compete Period:	*Insert time period in which the non-compete restrictions are imposed e.g. for the Term of the Agreement / 2 weeks / None etc.*
Additional Terms:	*Insert details of any other additional terms which shall apply. Ensure if you are paying them, you ask them to disclose using #ad*

Thank you!