2017 Consumer Content Report: Influence In The Digital Age

Stackla

The State Of Content In The Digital Age

Digital ad investment is skyrocketing worldwide. Beginning to surpass TV ad expenditure for the first time in many countries, online ad spend is expected to see double digit growth globally through at least 2020. Worldwide digital ad spending will reach $223.74 billion in 2017 representing 38.3% of paid media investments, according to eMarketer. The brands who can break through that noise have a lot to gain.

But as marketers face fierce competition to attract audience's attention online, big budgets may not be best spent on production and flash. In this report, we explored the content being created and shared online, and asked consumers what influences their purchasing decisions most.

In a consumerism and celebrity-centric culture, it's authenticity that shines through, with 86% of consumers saying that authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support. This matters when it comes to who you have represent your brand: the survey found that nearly 3X as many people said content from friends and family influences their purchase decisions compared to content from celebrities. But with the majority of consumers thinking that less than half of brands create content that resonates as authentic, there is a lot of room for brands that can accomplish this to rise above.

Methodology

An online survey was conducted to a panel of potential respondents 18 and older from the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia between September 29, 2017 and October 5, 2017. There was a total of 2,008 respondents with 1,007 from the United States, 501 from the United Kingdom, and 500 from Australia. The sample was provided by Market Cube, a research panel company with a margin of error of 2.2%.

Stackla

Contents

Key Takeaways

Authenticity Drives Brand Affinity

- 86% of consumers say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support

- More than half (57%) of consumers think that less than half of brands create content that resonates as authentic

## Consumers Can Spot Professional Vs. User-Generated Content (UGC)

- On average, people are able to identify if an image was created by a professional or brand vs. generated by a consumer 70% of the time.

UGC is More Authentic and Influential Than Brand and Celebrity Content

- Consumers are 3X more likely to say that content created by a consumer is authentic compared to content created by a brand

- On average, 60% of consumers say content from a friend or family member influences their purchases decisions, while just 23% of consumers say content from celebrities influenced their purchasing decisions

Massive Amounts of UGC Are at Brands' Fingertips

- 85% of people share their positive travel experiences on social media, 63% will post about a positive food or beverage experience

- Nearly 52% of people say they post on social media at least once a month about products they've purchased

Stackla
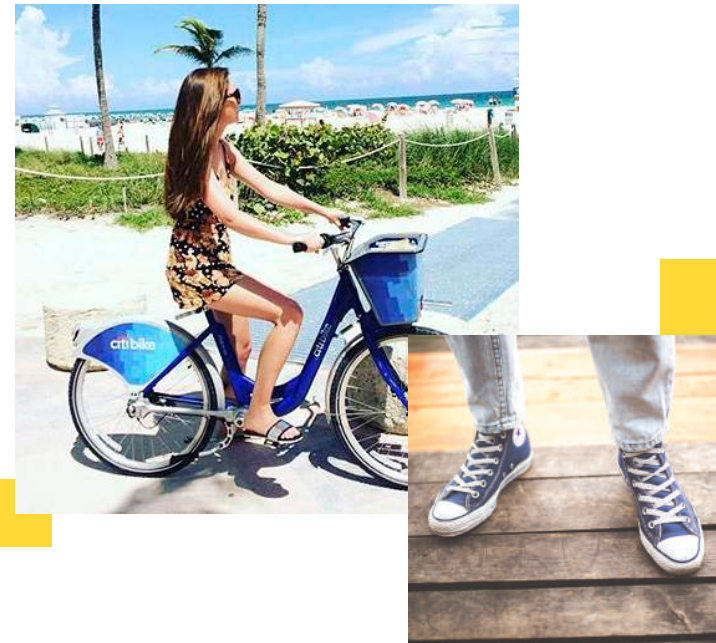
Consumers Are A Brand's Best Advertisers

86%

of consumers said authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support
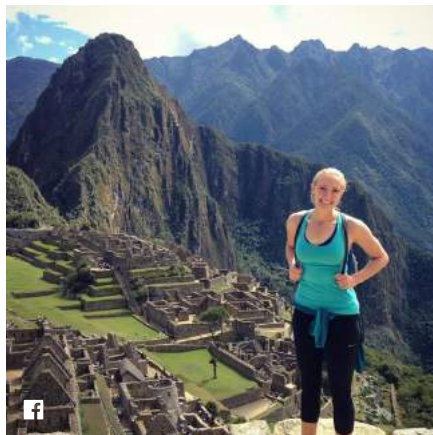
Authenticity Matters To Consumers

Most consumers **(86%)** greatly value authenticity in brands. Yet, consumer-created content is seen as most authentic.

What kind of content is most authentic?

Created by consumers — 60%

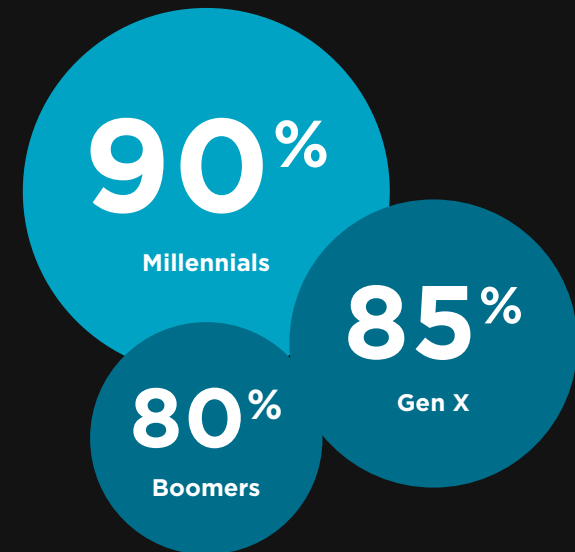**Created by brands** — 20%

Stock Imagery — 8%
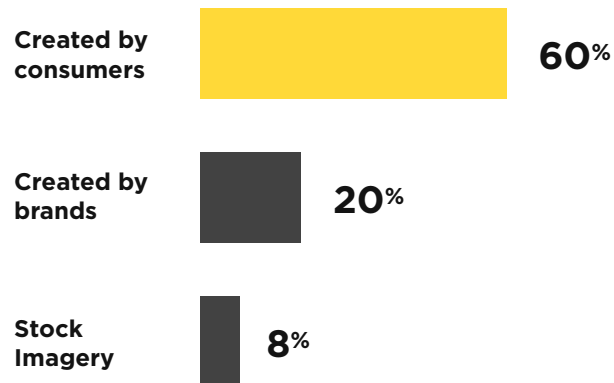
3X

UGC is seen as 3x more authentic

Authenticity Matters Most To Millennials

The overwhelming majority of Millennials say authenticity is important to them when deciding which brands they support.

90% Millennials

85% Gen X

80% Boomers

Millennials: Under 35

Gen X: 35-54

Baby Boomers: 55+

Stackla

Brands: Don't Try To Mimic UGC, Consumers Know The Difference

We put consumers to the test, asking them to identify which images were consumer-created versus marketer-created.

Before the test, **less than half of people (49%)** said they thought they could tell the difference between UGC and brand-created content more than half the time. In actuality, they can do much better than that.

70%

of the time, people can identify if an image was created by a brand as opposed to a consumer

### Millennials Are Best At Spotting Brand-Created Content

Percentage of time age groups can distinguish between UGC and brand-created content:

Millennials 75%

Gen X 73%

Boomers 66%

Stackla

How Are Brands Stacking Up?

We asked consumers to share their opinions on the content brands produce and publish across their marketing channels.

The majority of consumers think most brands aren't creating content that resonates as authentic.

57%

of consumers think that *less than half* of brands create content that resonates as authentic
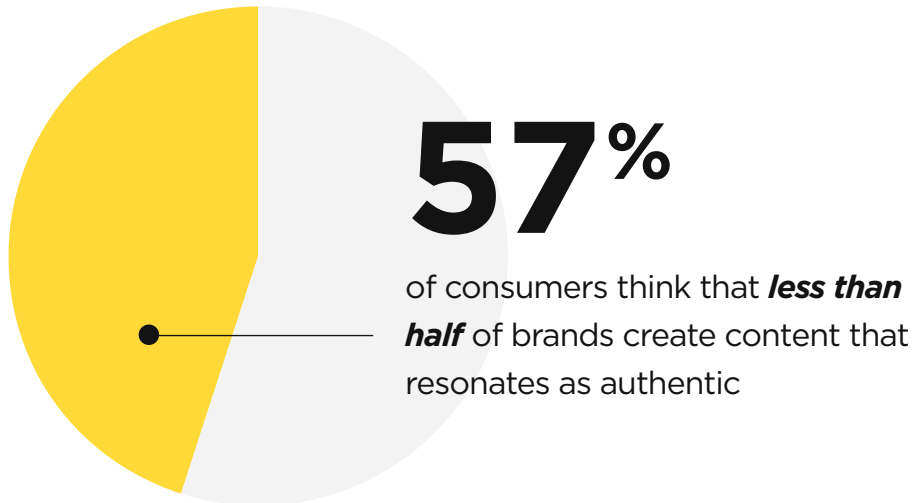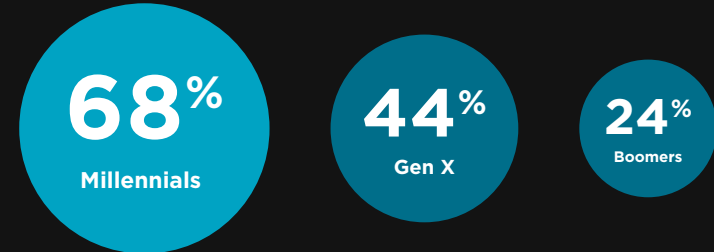
Lack of Authenticity is a Threat to Brand Loyalty

20%

of consumers have unfollowed a brand on social media because they thought the content was too corporate or not authentic enough

Brands Must Work Hardest to Maintain Millennials' Loyalty

Age groups that have unfollowed a brand on social media:

68%
Millennials

44%
Gen X

24%
Boomers

Consumers who have unfollowed a brand based on inauthentic content:

Millennials	**30%**
Gen X	**16%**
Boomers	**11%**

Stackla
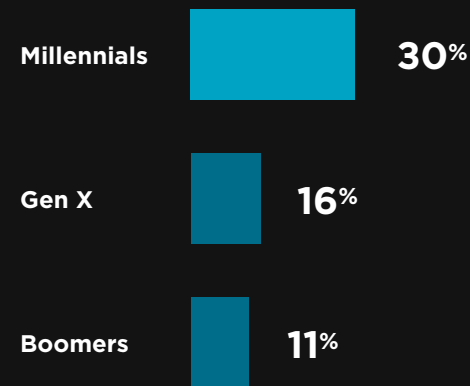
Europeans Are More Likely To Think Brands Need To Be More Authentic

Consumers who think less than a quarter of brands create authentic content:

22%

32%

27%

Stackla
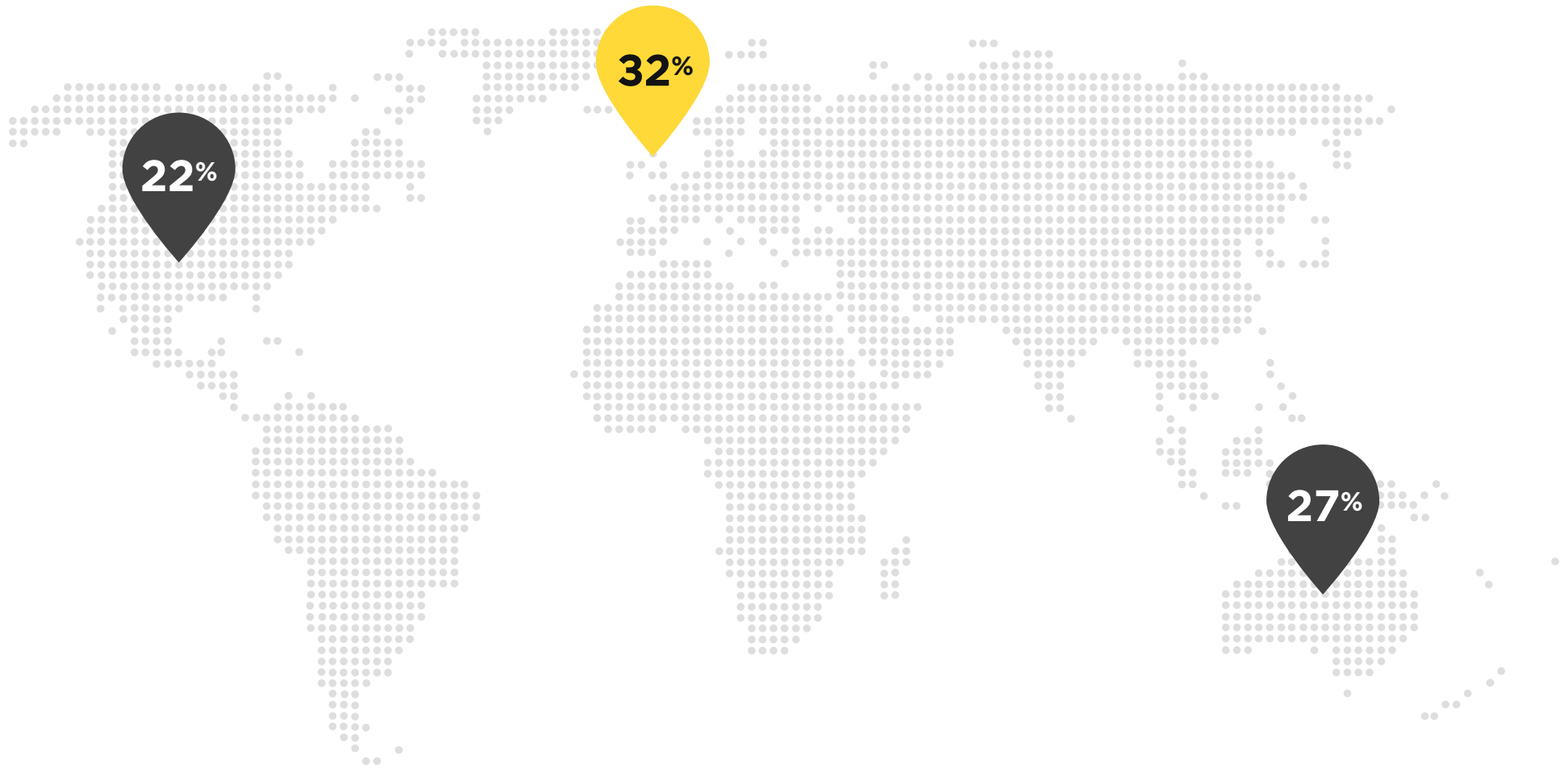
Where Do Consumers Think Brands Are Succeeding?

Of all the core marketing channels, the majority of consumers believe brands are doing the best job at creating and posting the content they want to see on Facebook. For Millennials, **Instagram is rising as a channel of influence**, with **30 percent** saying it's a platform where brands are creating content they want to see – more than **2X** the amount of Gen X and Boomers that feel that way.

Where brands are doing the best job creating and posting content consumers want to see:

Legend: Millennials · Gen X · Boomers

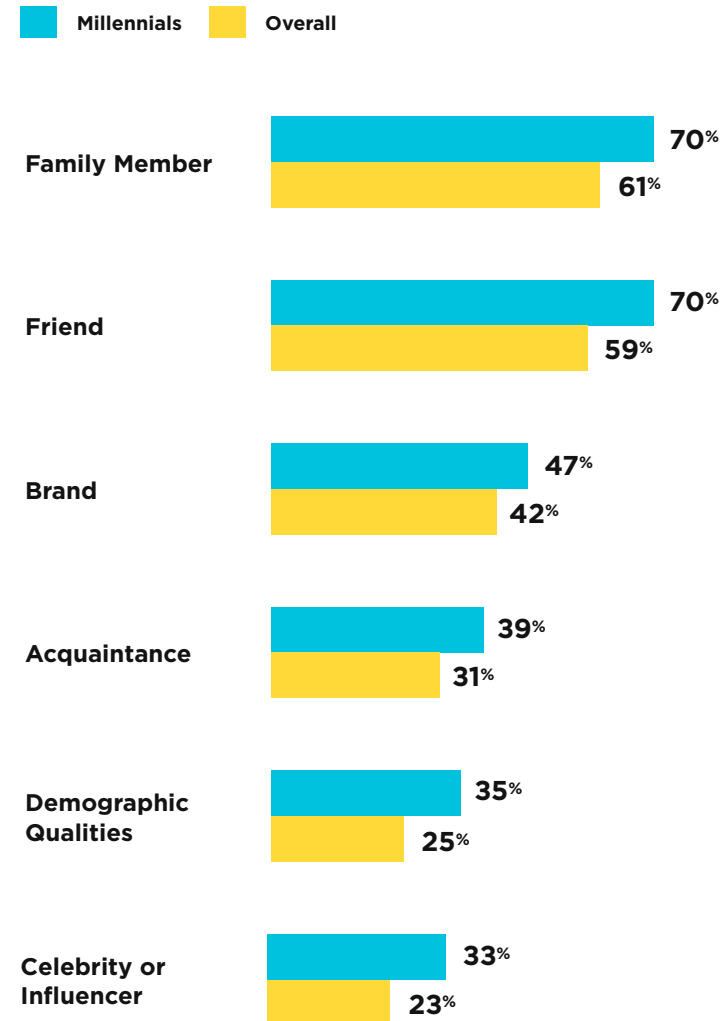| Channel	Millennials	Gen X	Boomers
Facebook	65%	69%	65%
Instagram	30%	13%	4%
YouTube	30%	29%	27%
Snapchat	14%	6%	0%
Twitter	12%	11%	10%
Website	12%	22%	24%
Email	11%	23%	36%
Pinterest	10%	9%	10%
Ads	9%	13%	17%
Review Sites	8%	7%	7%

Stackla
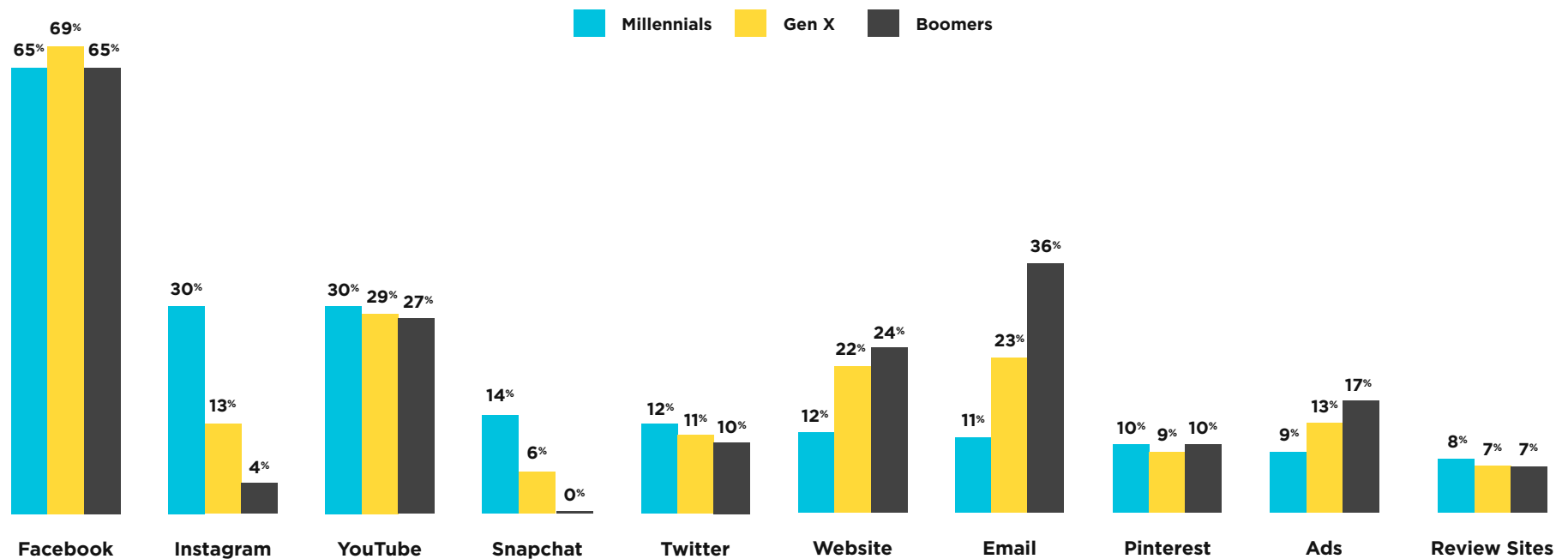
Consumer-Created Content Influences Purchase Decisions

Although younger generations are more likely to say celebrities and influencers have an impact on their purchase decisions **(33% of Millennials, compared to 20% of Gen X and 6% of Boomers)**, they are more influenced by everything they see online... and UGC dominates by a landslide.

Social posts or reviews from the following groups would be impactful in purchasing decisions:

- Millennials
- Overall

Family Member
- 70%
- 61%

Friend
- 70%
- 59%

Brand
- 47%
- 42%

Acquaintance
- 39%
- 31%

Demographic Qualities
- 35%
- 25%

Celebrity or Influencer
- 33%
- 23%

Stackla

Australians Are Least Likely Be Influenced By Celebrity Content

Celebrities as an influencing factor by country:
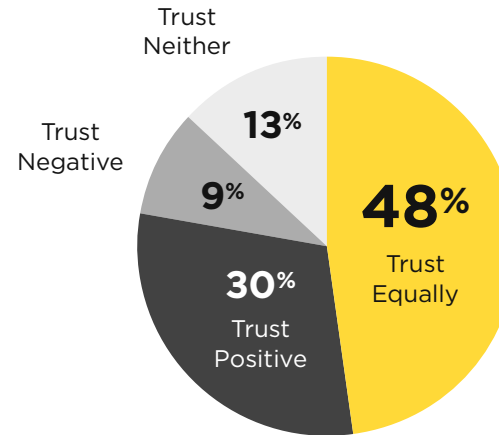

23%

23%

17%

Stackla

Consumers Are Sharing Positive Experiences Marketers Can Tap Into

People are not just consuming content on the web — they are adding to it in droves. And people are much more likely to post about their positive experiences than negative ones. That means there is a lot of content out in the world that marketers can be leveraging for their own campaigns.

People post at least 2X a month about:

🌴 **48**%
Places Visited

📣 **42**%
Events Attended

🍔 **39**%
Food or Drinks

🛒 **34**%
Products Bought

✉️ **26**%
Political Opinions
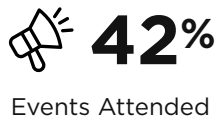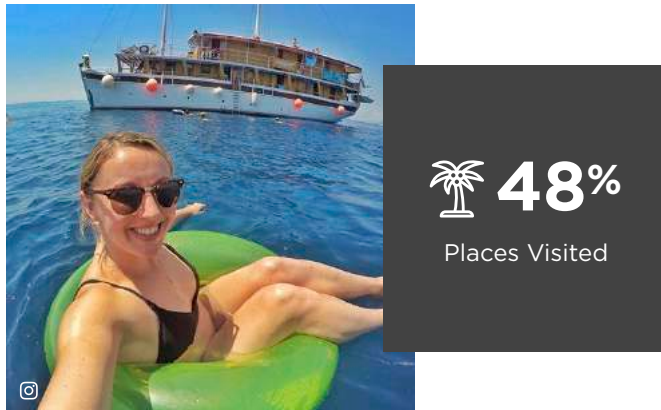
What type of reviews are trusted most on social review sites?

Trust
Neither
13%

Trust
Negative
9%

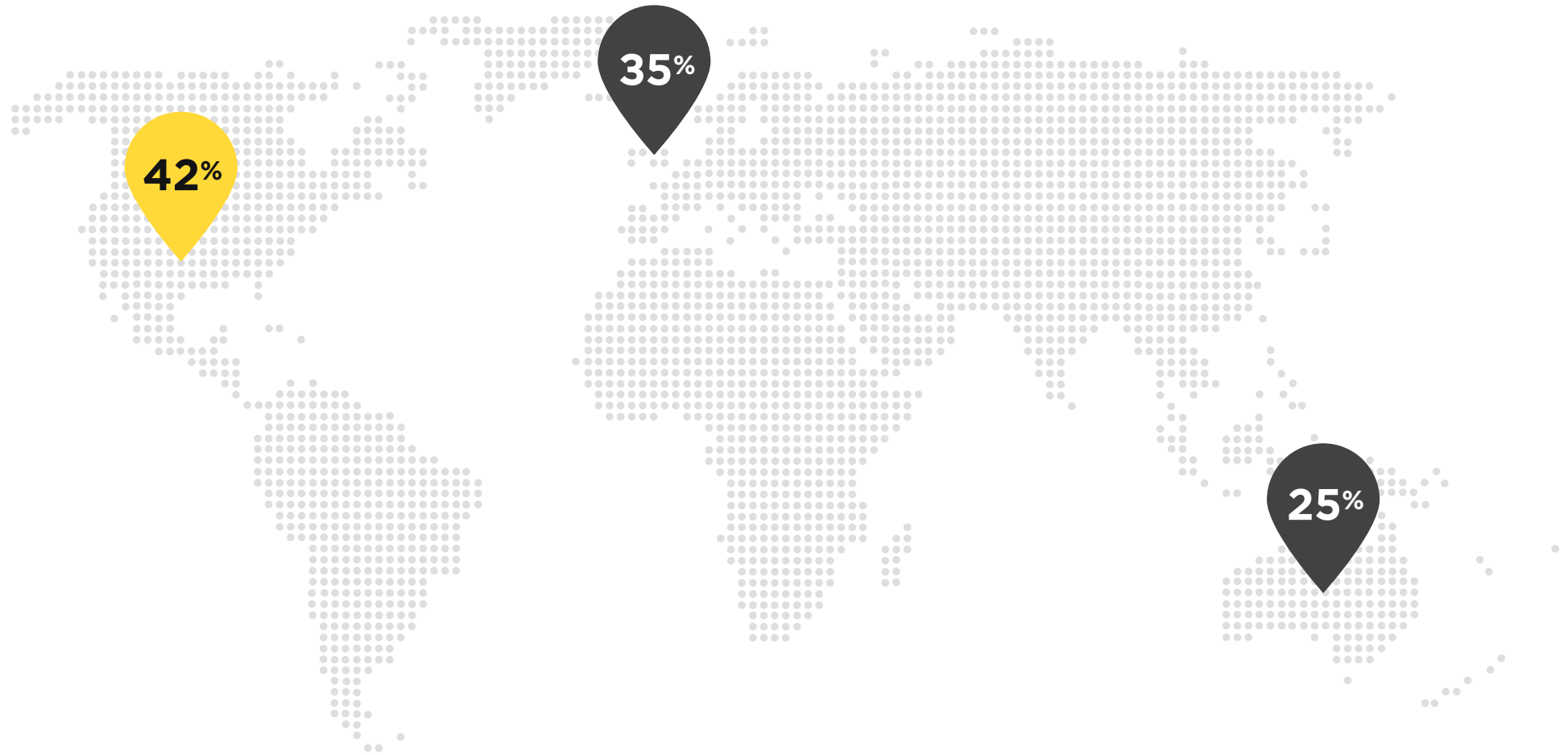**30**%
Trust
Positive

48%
Trust
Equally

The only channel people are more likely to post a negative experience is on a social review site.

People post to following platforms at least 2X a month:

72%

33%

29%

28%

stackla
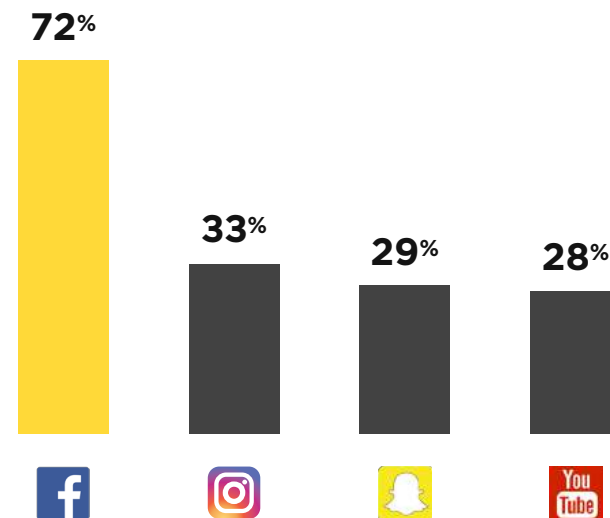
The U.S. Posts On Social Media Most Often

Percent of people that post 6X a month on Facebook:

35%

42%

25%

Stackla

78%

of people said they would post on social media after having a positive experience taking a trip, dining out or buying a car

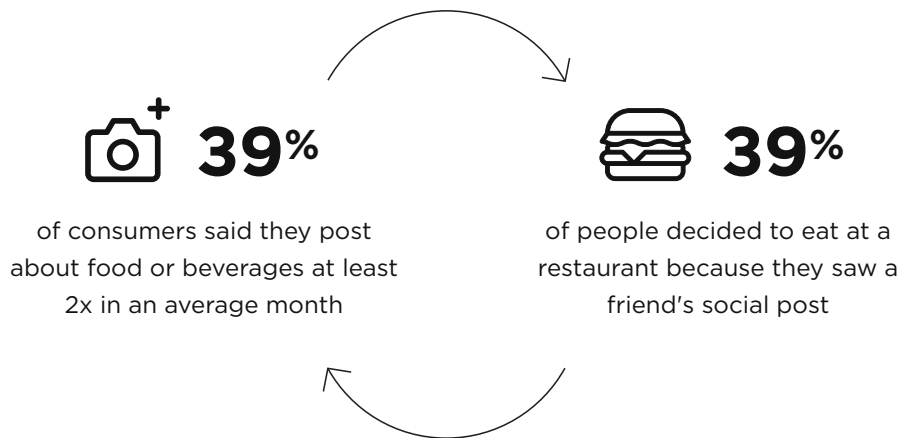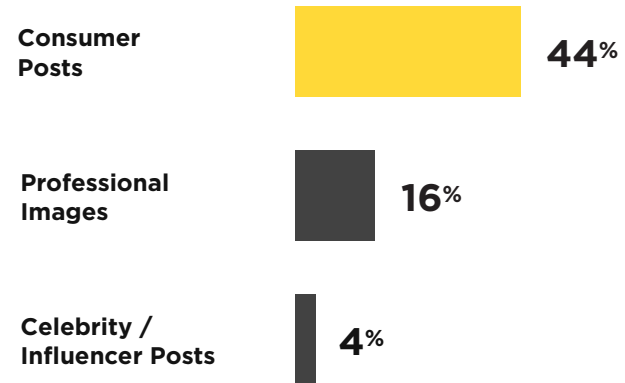# Influencing Food And Beverage

76%

of people said they would post on social media after a positive experience dining out or purchasing a food or beverage

Consumers Fuel Food UGC Cycle Of Posting And Purchasing

People are referencing a lot of content before they have a meal, but also regularly post food photos while dining. This consumer-created content is creating food FOMO (fear of missing out) that greatly impacts dining decisions.

39%

of consumers said they post about food or beverages at least 2x in an average month

39%

of people decided to eat at a restaurant because they saw a friend's social post

What has more impact on food and beverage purchase decisions?

Consumer Posts	**44**%
Professional Images	**16**%
Celebrity / Influencer Posts	**4**%

Millennials are Creating and Acting on Food Photos
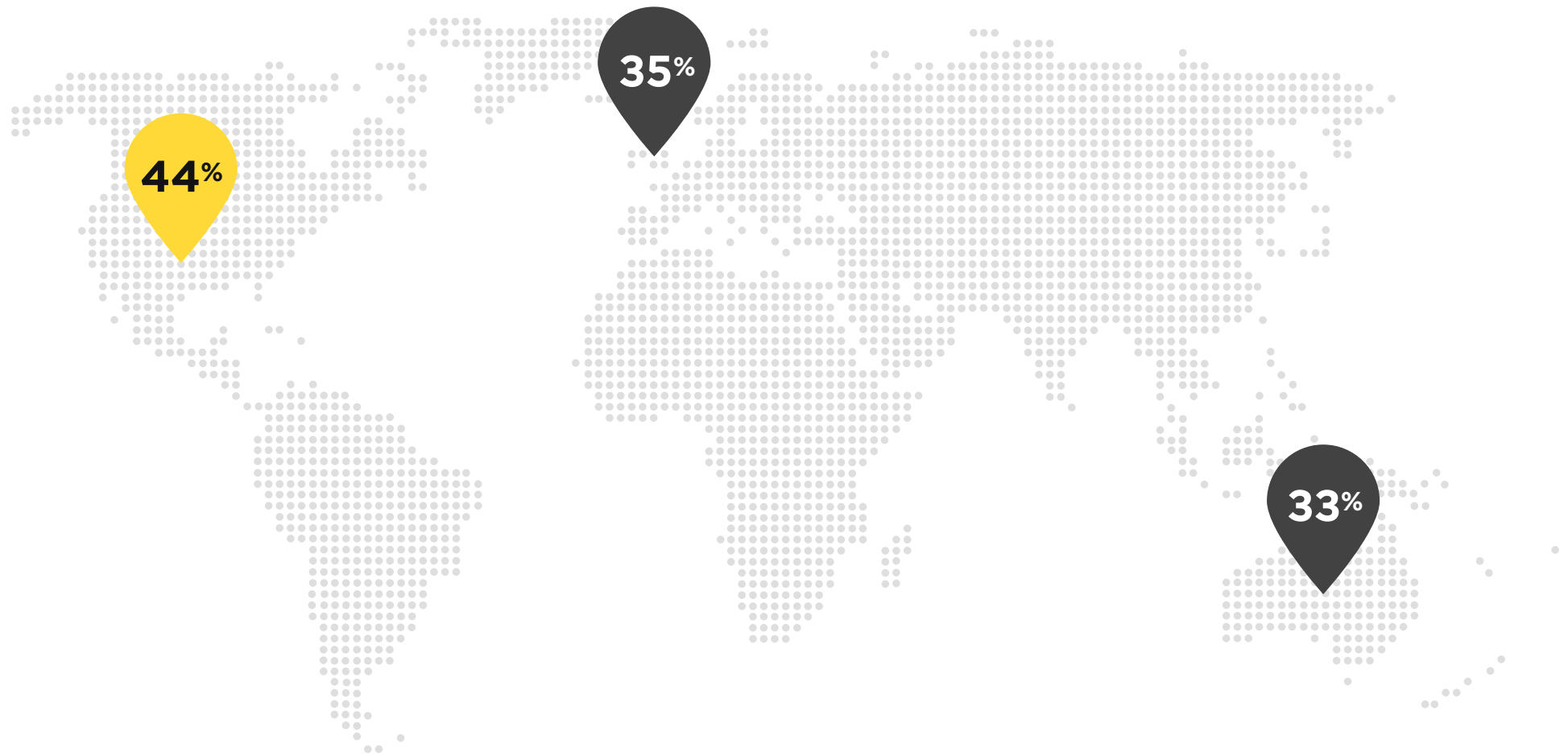
54% of Millennials said they post about food or beverages at least 2x a month on average

56% of Millennials decided to eat at a restaurant because they saw a friend post content about it on social media

Stackla

The U.S. Has More Food Fomo Than Other Countries

Percentage that said social content from friends influenced a meal decision:

44%

35%

33%

Stackla

Influencing Travel

85%

of people say they would share a positive travel experience on social media

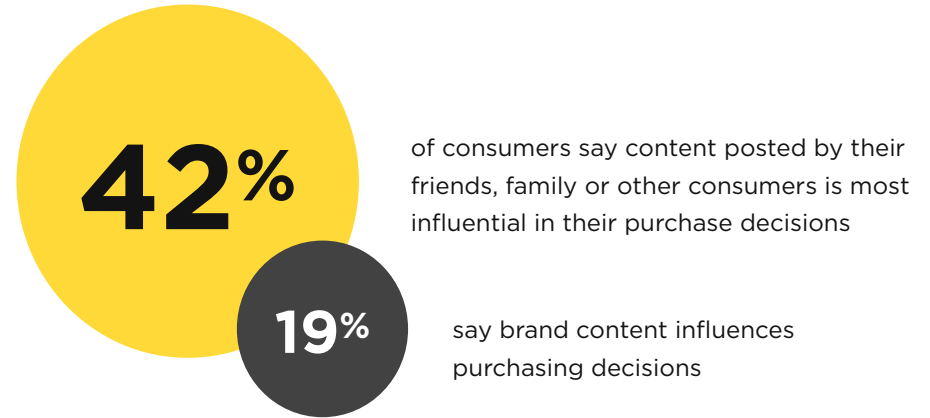# Consumers Fuel Travel UGC Inspiration And Validation

People look for travel inspiration and validation before deciding to book their next adventures. Luckily, consumers are constantly sharing their travel memories and experiences online, fueling travel FOMO for others.

48%
of consumers post about places they visited at least 2X in an average month

43%
of consumers have made travel plans to visit a certain location based on a friend's social post

42%
of consumers say content posted by their friends, family or other consumers is most influential in their purchase decisions

19%
say brand content influences purchasing decisions

After traveling, people are most likely to post travel content on Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat:

69%

29%

20%

Stackla
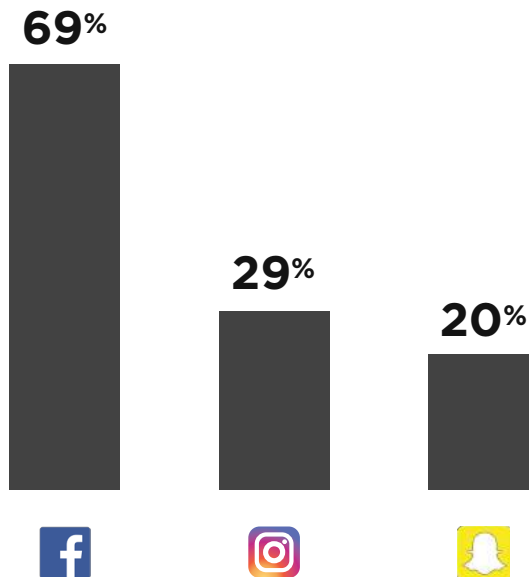
Influencing Millennial Travel Decisions

Millennials are more likely than other age groups to reference content in every category before making a purchase decision. However, consumer content still has the greatest influence on their purchasing decisions.

57%

of Millennials have made travel plans to visit a certain location based on a friend's social post

97%

of Millennials say they would share a positive travel experience on social media
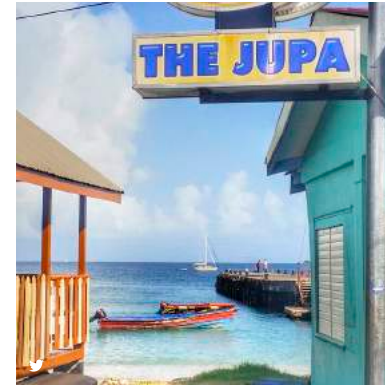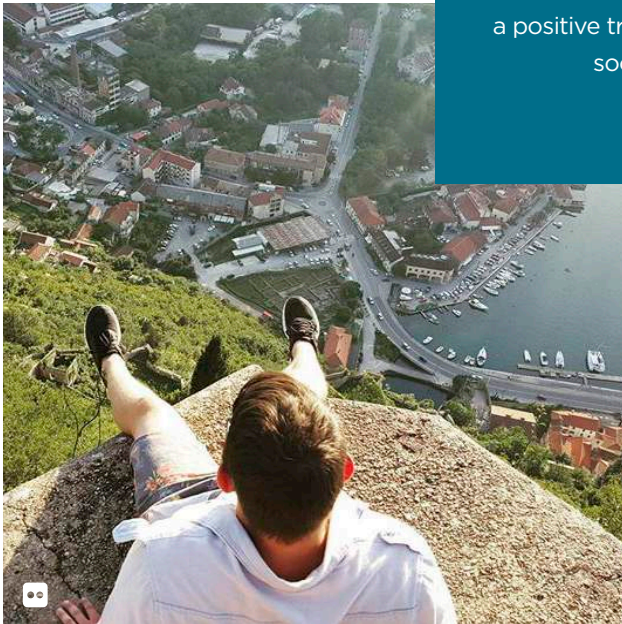
Content Millennial's say is most influential in making travel decisions:

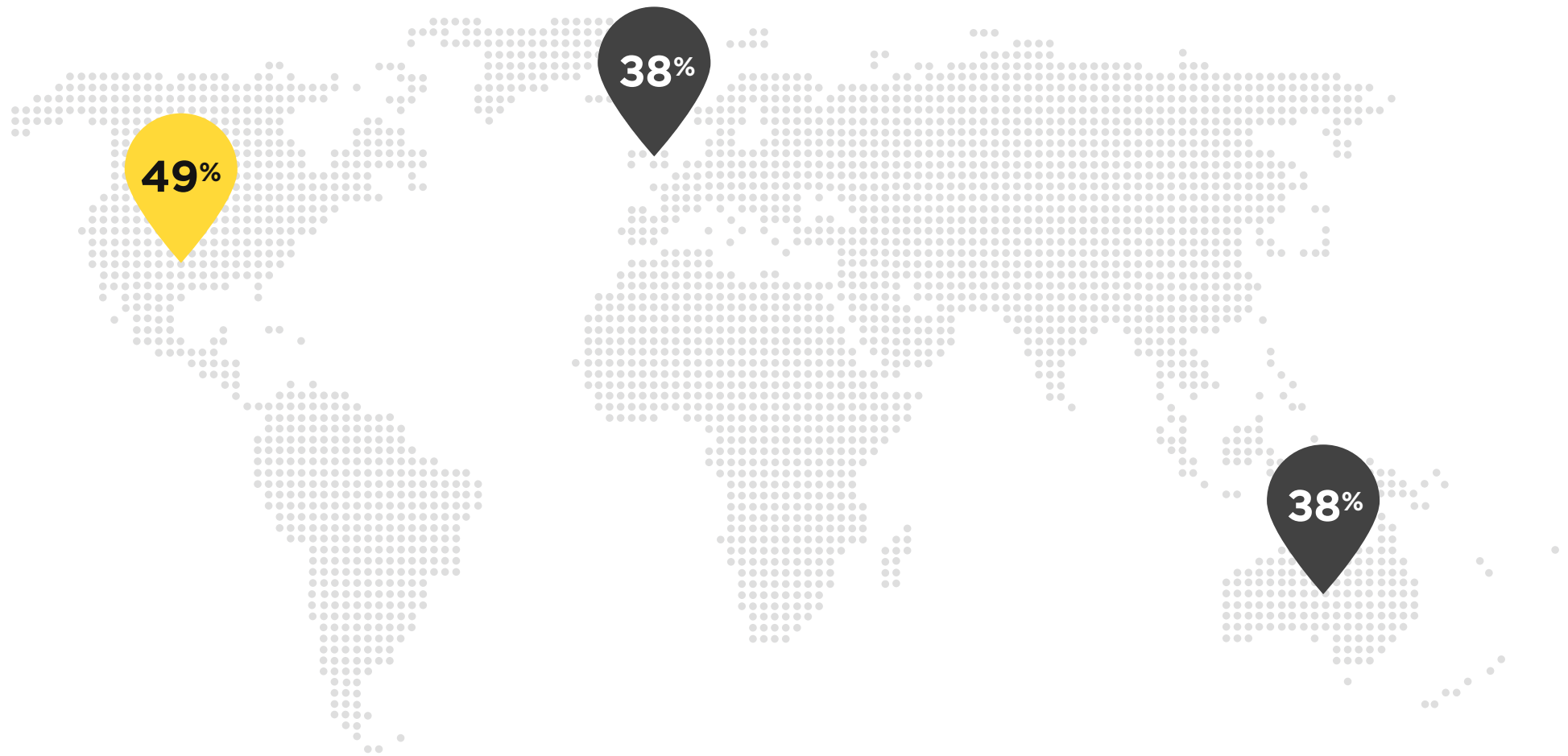|	
Consumer Posts	**49%**
Professional Images	**18%**
Celebrity / Influencer Posts	**5%**

Stackla

The U.S. Has More Travel Fomo Than Other Countries

Percentage that said social content from friends influenced a travel decision:

49%

38%

38%

Stackla

What Does This Mean For Marketers?

Since today's consumers have more ways than ever to discover, research, purchase and promote products and services, they're constantly confronted with a myriad of content competing for their attention. Yet, when it comes to who they trust and what content is most persuasive, brands can't beat the authenticity and influence of user-generated content.

Consumers can't be fooled either, with the overwhelming majority of people able to distinguish between consumer-created content versus brand-created content. Not only can consumers tell the difference, but they'll also punish brands that try to fake it by disconnecting with them online.

Sixty percent of people said UGC is the most authentic form of content and that social content from their friends and family impact their purchasing decisions. And this isn't just talk. Over half of Millennials have made travel plans or decided to eat a restaurant because of consumer-created content they saw on social media.

But people aren't just referencing UGC when making purchases, they're actively creating it. Consumers are constantly sharing positive experiences on social networks about everything from the places they visit to the products they purchase and food and beverages they consume. This abundance of UGC is a goldmine for marketers who are constantly struggling to break through the noise and reach people with content that resonates. The content is out there—marketers just have to tap into it.

Stackla

About Stackla

Stackla is the leading user-generated content (UGC) platform that puts customer stories at the heart of brand marketing. Through predictive intelligence and automation, Stackla helps brands identify authentic, compelling customer content across the social web and showcase them at scale throughout their core marketing channels – increasing engagement, strengthening customer trust and driving sales. Trusted by more than 450 brands across travel, hospitality, CPG, retail, sports and nonprofits, Stackla is designed to meet the content personalization needs of enterprise-level organizations such as Disney, McDonald's, Toyota, Sony, Expedia, Heineken and Virgin Holidays.

To learn how Stackla can help your brand attract, engage and convert consumers with UGC throughout the customer journey, please visit **www.stackla.com** or email **sales@stackla.com**.

Stackla