

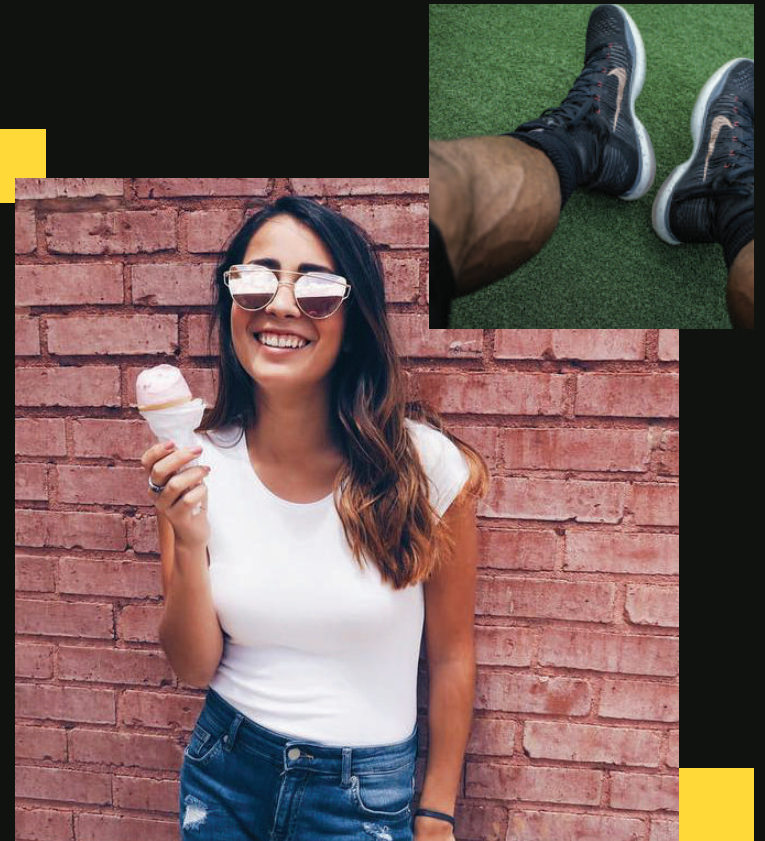


The Ultimate Guide to Building an Effective User-Generated Content Strategy



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Introduction

There has been a dramatic shift in way people discover, research and interact with brands.

The Internet, smartphones and social media have given consumers more choice and access to information than ever before. As a result, consumers – particularly Millennials – have become experts at tuning out marketing messages.

Beckon Research reports that while brands are spending 3x year-over-year on content creation, only 5 percent of all brand-created content gets noticed by consumers.¹ Instead, people are increasingly turning their focus to the content friends, family and peers are posting and sharing on social networks.

In fact, Millennials spend 30 percent of their daily media time—about 5.4 hours per day—looking at social rather than branded content.² And it's no wonder when people are posting over 1.8 billion photos daily on Instagram and Twitter alone.

How can brands compete with this volume of engaging, visual content that naturally captures so many people's attention? Start leveraging it!




3x

**Brands spend 3x year-over-year
on content creation**

5%

**of all brand-created content gets
noticed by consumers**



*“ You can use social media to
turn strangers into friends,
friends into customers and
customers into salespeople. ”*

— Seth Godin, Author, Entrepreneur, Marketer

The Power of User-Generated Content

User-generated content (UGC) has become the most trusted, memorable and influential content marketers can get their hands on.

User-Generated Content is any content – posts, tweets, images, videos, etc.– created freely by consumers on any online or social network.



UGC is Trusted

Consumers have always considered word-of-mouth recommendations to be the most credible source of advertising. Today, people still look to their friends, family and peers for advice, but now their recommendations are on social platforms in the form of UGC.

According to Nielsen, 92 percent of consumers trust earned media (like UGC) more than any other form of media.³

When it comes to Millennials, who are the group of consumers least trusting of and engaged with brands, 86 percent believe UGC is generally a good indicator of a brand, service or product's quality.⁴



UGC is Memorable

One of the most challenging tasks marketers face is trying to cut through the noise to not only grab people's attention, but hold their attention. You can come up with the best message or imagery, but what is it worth if no one remembers it?

UGC has been proven to be more memorable than traditional advertising. Millennials, in particular, find UGC 35 percent more memorable than other media.²



UGC is Influential

Because UGC is widely trusted, more memorable than other media and ubiquitous in people's everyday lives, it has emerged as one of the most influential forms of content.

In fact, 81 percent of consumers' purchase decisions are influenced by social media posts⁵, and 84 percent of Millennials say user-generated content from strangers has at least some influence on what they buy.⁶

92%

of consumers trust earned media (like UGC) more than any other form of media

86%

of consumers believe UGC is generally a good indicator of a brand, service or product's quality

35%

Millennials find UGC 35 percent more memorable than other media

Strategically Integrating UGC Throughout The Customer Journey

To break through the noise and forge deeper, more meaningful connections with consumers, you must take an omni-channel approach to leveraging UGC as a core element of your marketing strategy.

From awareness and consideration, through purchase and advocacy, today's consumers demand consistent brand experiences and look to visual content for inspiration and validation.

By integrating engaging and authentic customer stories throughout your entire customer journey, you can:

- Humanize your brand story
- Create authentic and consistent brand experiences
- Strengthen customer trust
- Drive broad customer engagement
- Decrease the cost of content creation
- Build a library of unique customer content
- Set yourself apart from your competition
- Increase sales



Drive Awareness with Impactful Advertising

When trying to reach new audiences, you need content that's going to cut through the noise and truly grab people's attention.

Since UGC is more engaging, trusted and memorable than other form of media, it's proven to be most effective at driving engagement and conversions across various advertising channels:

- Social ads
- Display Ads
- Digital Out of Home Ads (DOOH)

Studies have shown that Facebook and Instagram ad campaigns using user-generated photos see up to a 50 percent increase in click-through rate over campaigns using brand-created images, which can lead to a 5x return on ad spend.⁷

Another key benefit of UGC-powered ad campaigns: freshness. One of the reasons consumers tune out ads is that they get bored of seeing the same creative over and over again.

Incorporating UGC into your advertising provides you with a nearly endless source of fresh, engaging content and serve images dynamically, so your ads don't get repetitive.




50%

UGC ads yield a 50% increase in click-through rate over ads using brand created images

5x

UGC ads can result in a 5x return on ad spend



“ Ads that are shown around 3 times or more tend to decline in performance. We recommend creating a new ad with a new image or text about once a week. ”

— Facebook Business

Getting Permission

Before you start leveraging user-generated content in any paid promotions, you should get permission from the content creators. Comprehensive UGC platforms, like Stackla, have automated rights management workflows that make it easy to request and obtain legal rights to user content – helping to delight your advocates and keep your legal team happy.

Rights By Hashtag

Give your best advocates a shoutout on social media while asking them to grant you rights to republish their content by replying with a simple hashtag of your choosing.



Summer fun at the Saguaro! We'd love to feature this in our marketing, if you agree and you're 18+, please reply [#yespalmsprings](#). Link to T&C's found in bio.



@visitpalmsprings

Absolutely! I can't wait to see it on the site. [#yespalmsprings](#)



@samhavas

Rights By Registration

Need more explicit permission? Using a rights by registration method will allow your legal team to get terms and conditions agreed to while letting you capture additional consumer data—name, email, phone number, etc.



Hey [@mollymass](#) great photo. We'd love to feature it on our advertising. Agree? To approve visit <https://stack.la/b3lcaMp0>



@belcampomeatco

Hamilton Island Creates Facebook Ads That Resonate

Like most businesses, global travel destination, **Hamilton Island**, relies on Facebook advertisements to help attract new customers. Instead of using costly commissioned photography, they decided to feature the real traveler photos their guests were posting on social media.

Using Stackla's **Rights Management** workflows and **Facebook ad plugin**, Hamilton Island was able to easily request and gain permission to use travelers' content – seamlessly creating Facebook ads with approved UGC from their guests.

The result? Hamilton Island's Facebook ads featuring UGC received 3x higher click-through rates than their branded Facebook ads for 1/3 of the cost per click. Not only did their UGC-powered ads achieve higher engagement rates, but they also cost less – the ultimate win/win.

“Real visitor photos are more relatable and credible with potential travelers than expensive professional photography.”

— Aida Merdovic, Director of Online at Hamilton Island



3x

Higher click-through rates than their branded Facebook ads

1/3

of the cost per click compared to the branded ads

Key Ad Metrics To Track

✓ Impressions

The number of times your ad is displayed. This number by itself is mainly used to calculate other key metrics. (Impression does not mean someone actually saw the ad, just that it was shown on a webpage or within a mobile app.)

✓ Engagement Rate

This metric only applies to paid social where users can interact with your ads without actually clicking through to the ad landing page. The Engagement Rate is the percentage of interactions (likes, shares, comments) per ad impression. $(\text{Number of Interactions} / \text{Total Impressions}) \times 100 = \text{Engagement Rate (\%)}$

✓ Click-Through Rate (CTR)

The number of clicks per ad impression. $(\text{Clicks} / \text{Impressions}) \times 100 = \text{CTR (\%)}$

✓ Conversion Rate

The number of actions taken by visitors that arrived on your website from an ad (e.g. the number of purchases, downloads, signups, etc.)

✓ Cost Per Click (CPC) or Cost Per Impression (CPM)

Different types of ads have different costing metrics. The two most common are CPC (more common with social ads) and CPM (more common with display ads). CPC is the amount you pay for each click your ad receives $(\text{Cost} / \text{Clicks} = \text{CPC})$. CPM is typically the amount you pay per 1,000 ad impressions. This number will be set by the display service or publication you're running your ads through.

✓ Revenue

The total revenue that can be directly attributed to conversions from digital ads.

Create Engaging Web Experiences

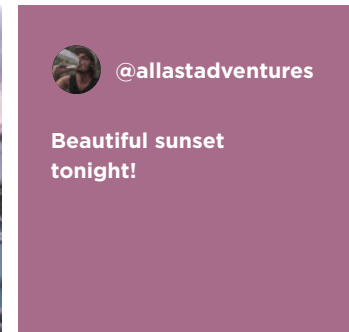
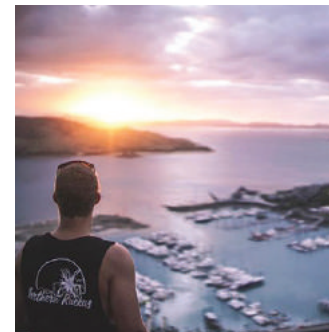
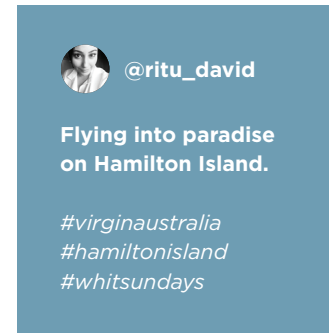
As a marketer, the last thing you want is for a potential customer to land on a static webpage filled with stock imagery after clicking through from an engaging ad. To keep that experience consistent and compelling, you need to showcase UGC throughout your website. By doing so, you will create a more consistent brand experience while also being able to deliver more dynamic and personal content to your online audiences in way that's scalable and cost-effective.

Additionally, UGC gives you a chance to tap into the power of social proof. By showing your brand, products or services in real-world scenarios, you can effectively help website visitors envision what it would be like to take that flight, explore that destination, stay at that hotel, eat that food, drive that car, attend that school, own that outfit... you get the picture.

In fact, 51 percent of Americans trust user-generated content more than other information on a company website.⁴ Not to mention that websites featuring UGC see a 20 percent increase in repeat visits and up to a 90 percent increase in the time spent on site.⁹

The following are the top places brands can use UGC to create interactive and engaging web experiences:

- Homepages
- Landing Pages (eCommerce Pages)
- Blogs



20%

Websites with UGC see a 20% increase in repeat visits

90%

Visitors to websites with UGC stay on the site up to 90% longer

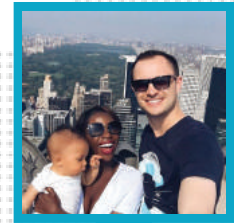
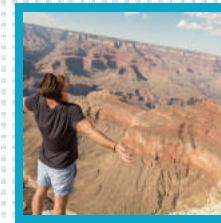
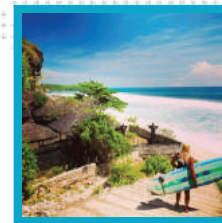
Homepages

Your website's homepage is the virtual storefront to your brand. It's your chance to make a good first impression. By putting UGC front and center, you can build consumer trust, showcase social proof and boost online engagement.

It can also be used to shine a spotlight on your brand's biggest fans, showing where people are talking about you and the interesting content they're sharing.

Take **Helloworld**, for example. They wanted to inspire people to plan their next holiday, while demonstrating their brand's global reach and expertise. To do so, they hosted a worldwide social relay, turning their site into an interactive map to track and highlight images posted by real travelers from around the globe.

With the #helloworldRELAY, they were able to not only activate their audiences and generate over 20,000 unique pieces of engaging content, but also received over 10,000 enquiries from customers over the seven-day sales period following the relay. In addition, the campaign won the Award of Excellence for Marketing Effectiveness in Social Media at the 2016 Communicator Awards.

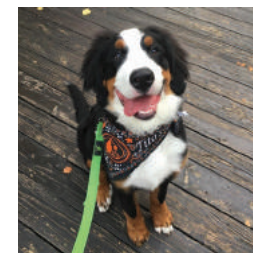
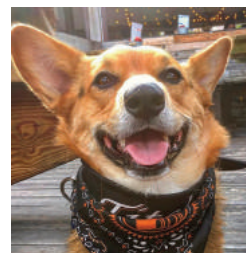


Landing Pages

For all the time you spend optimizing your paid landing pages, there is a simple truth that will always guide you in the right direction: people are far more likely to engage with a landing page if it features fresh, dynamic content. In fact, customers are six times more likely to purchase a product if the page includes pictures from social media.

With the help of a UGC platform, like Stackla, you can quickly and easily embed a constant stream of compelling customer content – customizing the display to fit your brand style. Not only will your landing page be consistent with your brand and your UGC ads, it will also have a real-time mix of engaging, trustworthy and influential content.

Tito's Handmade Vodka has taken advantage of this UGC strategy, adding interactive UGC carousels to their online store as social proof for their branded wearable merchandise, barware and dog swag.



“ This helps us further establish both digital- and real-world connections with our consumers. ”

— Katy Gelhausen, Web and Social Media Coordinator, Tito's Vodka

Blogs


Anyone who's ever run a blog knows that it can be time-consuming and creatively exhausting to maintain a steady stream of interesting content for readers. The better you know your customers, the easier it can be to create content for them. But even brands with fully developed audience personas and heaps of customer data points can often be surprised by what blogs seem to resonate with their readers and which seem to fall on deaf ears.

The best marketers among us have learned that UGC can help inform and improve your long-form content strategy. Why waste your time reworking a tired blog from last year when you can leverage the unique insights and lived experiences of real customers?

This is what wearable fitness tracker brand, **Amazfit**, did with their blog. Having already incorporated UGC into their homepage and community page, they decided to take that powerful customer content and use it to develop blogs that would resonate with readers and highlight their micro-influencers.

One of their most successful blogs was in celebration of Mother's Day. They published a story around the Mom's of Amazfit, sharing lessons and stories from real customers who were mothers. By blogging about how real moms were using Amazfit fitness trackers, they were able to double their pageviews and increase sales by 29 percent.

**2x****Amazfit achieved 2x growth in pageviews****29%****Amazfit increased sales by 29%**

A background image showing a person's legs in jeans and pink socks, a wooden board with fruit, and a hand with a watch.

“ Moms don’t want a company to tell them how to balance family time with personal fitness, they want to hear how other Mothers are navigating those same challenges. ”

— Frederik Hermann, Amazfit’s Head of Marketing and Sales

Key Website Metrics To Track

✓ Pageviews

The number of views individual pages have received on your website. Pageviews can help you identify which pages are performing best on your site and can track changes in page performance over time.

✓ Pages/Session

The average number of pages a visitor views in a session.

✓ Avg. Session Duration

The average length of time a visitor spends on your website. $\text{Total Duration of All Sessions (in seconds)} / \text{Number of Sessions} = \text{Average Session Duration}$. (This one is a little tricky because Google can calculate it differently depending on whether there are “engagement hits” on the last page of a session. [Learn more](#))

✓ Bounce Rate

The percentage of single-page sessions with no interactions. In other words, the percentage of people who came to a webpage, then left without clicking through or exploring your site.

✓ Interactions

The summation of impressions, likes, clicks, shares, comments.

✓ Conversions

The number of actions taken by visitors that arrived on your website from an ad (e.g. the number of purchases, downloads, signups, etc.).

Shorten The Path To Purchase with Social Commerce

Social media is no longer just about driving conversations; it's about driving commerce. And authentic social content – particularly images – are a powerful way to show online shoppers products in real-world scenarios.

Although social commerce is the next natural evolution of online shopping, it's time to think beyond just dropping a “buy here” link in an Instagram post.

The social commerce of today is stuck in third-party platforms, like Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest. The social commerce of tomorrow empowers brands to make content more shoppable in more places.

At this point in your UGC strategy, you already have people interested in and engaged with your brand on your owned marketing channels.

To turn them from browsers into buyers, you don't want to send them back to third-party social networks just so they can act on a piece of engaging social content. You need to make the UGC on your site shoppable.

With powerful UGC platforms, like Stackla, you can add interactive ShopSpots on any piece of visual content, creating a seamless path to purchase for interested buyers ready to take action.



6x

Customers are 6x more likely to purchase a product if the page includes social media

Social Proof Drive Sales Boost for Wanted Shoes

Wanted Shoes was aiming to give website visitors a unique way to browse their shoe catalogue, while providing the social validation shoppers crave at the point of purchase.

To solve this challenge, they used Stackla to turn their online catalogue into a real-time, interactive UGC experience – linking shoppers directly from the boots they saw on a girl in the park, to the purchase page for those same boots. By making their content shoppable and augmenting professional product photography with real customer photos, Wanted Shoes strengthened customer trust and improved their eCommerce conversions by 30 percent.


“With a bounce rate of just 5 percent, [the interactive catalogue] is the most engaging page on the website. Ninety-five percent of users click through to specific product pages. We have no doubt that the social catalogue certainly does assist in the overall path to purchase.”

— Jennifer Christodoulou, Marketing Manager, Wanted Shoes



30%

Wanted Shoes saw a 30% Improvement in eCommerce Conversions on their pages with UGC

A person's legs are visible on the left side of the image, wearing light blue denim jeans with frayed hems and gold-colored strappy sandals. To the right, a pink quilted Chanel bag with a gold chain strap and a silver-tone Chanel logo is resting on a wooden floor. The background is a textured, light-colored wall.

“ Stackla puts us ahead of the trend. Our customers, can share content and enjoy a shortened path to purchase. They trust their peers, and this is proven by the results we’re getting with Stackla, driving social sharing as well as purchase. ”

— Jennifer Christodoulou, Marketing Manager, Wanted Shoes

Key Social Commerce Metrics To Track

✓ Pageviews

The number of views individual pages have received on your website. Pageviews can help you identify which pages are performing best on your site and can track changes in page performance over time.

✓ Pages/Session

The average number of pages a visitor views in a session.

✓ Social Revenue

The amount of income directly attributed to social commerce sales.

✓ Avg. Order Value

The average amount spent each time a customer places an order.

✓ Shopping Cart Abandonment Rate

The ratio of abandoned online carts to the number of completed purchases. $[1 - (\text{number of completed purchases} / \text{number of shopping carts created})] \times 100 = \text{Shopping Cart Abandonment Rate (\%)}$

✓ Repeat Purchase Rate

The percentage of your customer base that has come back to make a least a second purchase with your brand. $(\text{Number of customers who have shopped with you more than once} / \text{Total number of customers}) \times 100 = \text{Repeat Purchase Rate (\%)}$

Develop More Dynamic Emails

If you're one of the 73 percent of marketers who say that email marketing is crucial to your business¹⁰ and a channel that delivers one of the highest ROIs, you already know the power of this staple marketing tactic. Emails have long been one of the most effective tools at a marketer's disposal – particularly when it comes to re-engaging past customers and inspiring repeat purchases.

Although email may be an oldy, but goody as far as marketing tactics go, that doesn't mean your email content has to follow tradition email templates


Add some dynamism and personalization to this static medium by infusing a steady stream of relatable, authentic content into your new and existing email marketing campaigns.

Leading UGC platforms, like Stackla, allow you to easily and dynamically display the most recent and relevant user-generated images in any email marketing platform – ultimately creating more customized emails for individuals in your database. Featuring fresh, personalized and visually-compelling content in marketing emails has proven to produce higher click-through and conversion rates.



73%

of marketers say that email marketing is crucial to their business

A hand with pink nail polish holds a large, metallic, copper-colored pineapple. The pineapple has a textured, diamond-patterned surface and a crown of spiky leaves. In the background, a dense city skyline with various skyscrapers is visible under a clear sky. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

“ The most captivating emails today have images that stretch edge-to-edge across different screen sizes, and the most engaging images are the most authentic to a particular brand, often created by real customers. ”

— Andrea Wildt, CMO, Campaign Monitor

Amazfit Improves Email Performance with UGC

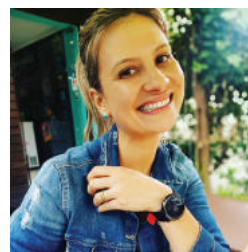
Nearly every email newsletter wearable brand, Amazfit, sends to their audience includes a Stackla UGC email widget displaying the dynamic social content their customers create every day.

They often incentivize customers via email to continue posting content by offering giveaways or discounts as a reward for sharing their stories with the rest of Amazfit's growing community. Not to mention that Amazfit advocates are often excited to simply be highlighted in their emails (as well as across their website).

Since they began adding UGC to all their marketing emails, Amazfit's click-through rates rose by an average of 8 percent.

8%

Amazfit's email click-through rates increased by 8% with UGC



Key Email Metrics To Track

✓ **Email Click-Through Rate (CTR)**

The percentage of people who clicked on one or more links within your emails.

✓ **Conversion Rate**

The percent of people who took a desired action after clicking on a link within your email. (e.g. made a purchase, downloaded an asset, filled out a form, etc.)

✓ **Unsubscribe Rate**

The percentage of people who actively unsubscribe or opt-out of receiving additional emails from your brand. You want to be retaining and growing your email list, not losing them.

✓ **Email Sharing/Forwarding Rate**

The percentage of people who click on a “share this” or “forward this” button from an email.

Enrich Live Experiences

While web and email may be the most important marketing channels throughout the purchasing process, UGC can also be leveraged across other real-time channels to help motivate existing customers to create more content while also amplifying your brand's reach to help grow awareness and discovery.

Reinvigorate your fans by creating two-way conversations that shine a spotlight on the content they're creating about your brand, product or service in real-time.

Whether you're hosting a customer contest, a pop-up sale or an annual charity event, UGC platforms, like Stackla, can enable you to find and curate all the content people are posting and seamlessly showcase that content across live event screens and digital billboards. You can even invite audiences to live vote, like and share event content as they are posted.



Topshop Drives Sales with Live Screens at London Fashion Week

Topshop used real-time tweets from London Fashion Week to power live billboards that allowed passersby to purchase the trending looks from the catwalk.

Each billboard was within walking proximity of a Topshop store. Customers were prompted to tweet with the trend hashtag from the billboards (i.e. #Modernism, #Embroidery and so on) to receive a link to the curated product for instant purchase from their smartphones.

The same live event content was featured across all of Topshop's customer touchpoints, including web, mobile and physical stores in the region – with customers also being promoted to visit the nearest store to see and shop the trends.

This Stackla-powered campaign for Topshop resulted in \$11 in revenue for every \$1 spent.



11:1

return on investment (ROI) achieved with this interactive campaign

Key Live Experience Metrics To Track

✓ **Volume of Posts**

The amount of social posts about the event. This can be tracked through the use of an event hashtag and/or geolocation filters.

✓ **Interactions**

The summation of impressions, likes, clicks, shares, comments.

✓ **Conversions**

The number of people who took a desired action from a live event display (e.g. purchases, downloads, signups, etc.).

✓ **Growth in Social Audience**

The amount of new followers you gain across all your social channels during the event.

Tips to Help Generate More UGC

Worried about your customers and fans not creating enough quality UGC to sustain this type of integrated marketing strategy? Here are some ways to encourage consumers to not only share content about your brand, but share the right kind of content to support your marketing needs.

Create (and Promote!) a Unique Hashtag

Hashtags have become a common way for brands to create, track and promote conversations with audiences around their company, products, services or campaigns.

When creating a hashtag for your brand, it's important to make sure it's unique, relevant and easy to remember. While some brands like to keep their hashtags broad and simple for ongoing use – like **Tito's Vodka's #LoveTitos hashtag** – others try to get more creative and specific around particular campaigns – like the **#EyeWanderWin hashtag Expedia** used for a recent UGC photo contest. And before you finalize any new brand hashtag, make sure to perform social media searches to ensure the one you chose isn't already being used to discuss another organization or a topic you might not want to be associated with.

Once you'd decided on an awesome hashtag, you need to promote it. Naturally, you'll want to start using it consistently across all your social channels, throughout your website and even in your marketing emails, digital advertisements and direct mail materials. A great way to launch a new hashtag is to run a competition.



📍 Host an Event

Whether it's online or in person, hosting an event is another great way to encourage your audience to create more UGC while also giving your brand more control over the environment in which that content's being created. Again, having an identifiable hashtag for

your event will be key in spreading the word and organizing the conversations people are having around your brand.

Last year, **Virgin Holidays** organized a #RedIsTheNewBlack online sales event during Black Friday weekend, inviting bargain-hunters to participate on social media to unlock incredible travel discounts. Using Stackla they created a dynamic visualization of the collective volume of tweets to encourage their community to keep posting in order to reveal more offers on their website. Within 8 hours, their community generated over 6,000 tweets and Virgin Holidays improved their overall social sentiment by 37 percent and increased online bookings by 260 percent.



Other brands, like the **British Heart Foundation**, have used annual in-person events to drive fresh UGC. Their nonprofit organization hosts the London to Brighton bike race that attracts over 18,000 participants every year. Yet, only few actually fundraised. This year, they placed a Stackla-powered Jumbotron on Brighton Beach displaying pictures posted by participants with the #LondonToBrighton hashtag. The race produced over 36,000 social impressions and lifted online engagement by 586 percent.

Run a Competition

Competitions are a great way to engage and reward your customers while sourcing more of the types of content you want customers to publish about your brand. Top UGC platforms, like Stackla, provide comprehensive tools to launch, moderate and display contests within your owned web properties and marketing channels.

With Stackla, you can easily set up competition rules and parameters, as well as voting tools, leaderboards and terms and conditions workflows to streamline contest management. Not to mention, you can collect entries across over 25 of the most popular social networks to maximize exposure and minimize barriers to entry.

Social competitions can be a highly effective method for driving audience engagement, building awareness or generating a high volume of content quickly. Compelling discounts and giveaways are great motivators to ensure the success of any competition.

For example, Expedia asked people to submit their best travel

photos using the contest hashtag #EyeWanderWin to be entered to win a free trip to a mystery destination. During the 3-week competition, Expedia and their partners promoted the contest on their paid and owned social channels, in their blogs and in cinema ads throughout Singapore – while dynamically showcasing incoming entrants' photos across their campaign site in real-time. As a result, they received over 4,300 authentic traveler photos they can use in marketing materials going forward – including localized images

of food experiences throughout Asia. They were also able to freely engage with travel influencers and feature UGC from the contest in their blogs, increasing traffic by 34 percent month over month.

Social competitions can be a highly effective method for driving audience engagement, building awareness or generating a high volume of content quickly. Compelling discounts and giveaways are great motivators to ensure the success of any competition.



Identify and Incentivize Influencers

With their built-in audiences and broad reach, engaging influencers (and micro influencers) can be a targeted and effective way of kickstarting your UGC campaign—particularly for brands that don't already have a large, active group of advocates.

When kicking off their #helloworldRELAY, Helloworld know they needed to gather strong momentum from the start. To do so, they

selected 80 influencers from different locations around the world, charging each with posting 12 photos in 12 hours. With these influencers leading the relay, others were encouraged to join in and tens of thousands responded organically, making the campaign a great success.



Your Effective UGC Strategy Checklist

✓ **Develop a stated purpose and hypothesis**

You must have a business need or purpose behind your UGC strategy. Once you understand the challenge you're trying to solve and the outcome you want to achieve, the easier it will be to develop goals, determine what type of content you need to support it (post, photos, videos, etc.) and what metrics you need to track to determine success.

✓ **Determine goals and performance metrics**

If your goal is to increase awareness, you should probably focus on infusing your digital and social ads with UGC before expanding into a broader strategy. If your goal is to improve customer engagement, what point(s) in the purchasing cycle do you want to influence most?

Whatever strategic UGC mix your goals demand, you need to determine key performance metrics to monitor upfront. This will ensure you and your team can accurately track your success, making adjustments when needed and demonstrating return on investment (ROI) to the broader company.

✓ **Get buy-in from key stakeholders**

You can have all the great ideas you want, but if you don't have the support of decision-makers and your broader team, then chances are they'll never leave the ideation phase. If you want your UGC strategy to take off and truly be successful, you'll need to present your plan to the necessary parties and make a convincing business case. Luckily, you will have already developed a plan complete with stated goals and defined success metrics, so how could they say no?

✓ Find a comprehensive UGC platform

While it might not seem like a must-have at first, once you start attempting to sift through the massive amounts of content people share online to find the best stories, you'll quickly be in search of an automated solution to help manage this overwhelming task.

Leading UGC platforms, like Stackla, can help you scalably discover, curate, showcase and analyze all the most compelling customer content from across the social web. Stackla's powerful visual recognition technology scans each piece of visual content as it is aggregated, deciphering its contents and automatically applying relevant tags for scalable content personalization. We've also applied machine learning to content moderation and optimization with **Co-Pilot**, our predictive recommendation engine. Co-Pilot's deep learning algorithms evaluate published content, analyze how your customers interact with it and provides intelligent recommendations for what content will perform the best – helping you publish better content with less effort.

✓ Launch, test and iterate

With company buy-in, a stated plan, goals set, metrics being monitored and a scalable UGC platform, you'll be ready to put your strategy in action. Once you've launched your integrated UGC strategy, you should constantly monitor your key metrics, test new ideas and keep iterating to ensure you're always learning and improving to get the best business results.

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.

Appendix

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