

# Adding user generated content in your marketing strategy

[Business](#)



64% of customers rely heavily on the reviews of current and past users before buying a product [1]. Think back to your last purchase. Did you search for recent reviews first?

The bigger the investment, the more likely a customer will ask others whether they recommend the service or not. This is a form of user-generated content (UGC).

Currently, 86% of businesses are incorporating UGC into their campaigns [2]. And 82% of customers say UGC is a big part of their buying decision [3].

But what exactly is UGC?

Any time a brand reaches out to their customers to partake in their marketing campaign is UGC. This 'social proof' is often shown through photographs (Instagram) or video (Youtube).

Created by real customers for real customers.

Examples of UGC

Think Pepsi's name campaign. People were thrilled to take a photo while holding or drinking a Pepsi with their name on it.

The point of UGC: A brand uses a physical product to connect with a customer. But you need to include a hashtag for customers to join in on the fun.

Pepsi's campaign worked because the buyers felt special seeing their name on a drink. It's a novelty, sure, but it played up customers emotional responses with an " Oh cool!" vibe.

Whether customers drank the soda or not doesn't matter, but the sales do. And they show. Pepsi's sales increased by 2% following this campaign [4].

UGC works well in any industry, but we see it most often in the health and/or beauty industry. Take any weight loss program or supplement. The proof is in pounds and inches lost. ' Before and after' shots are the ultimate social proof whether a health product works or doesn't.

' Before and afters' creates motivation. They inspire. They make a customer believe they too can get results and feel renewed. So they share their results, build a community for support, and take on the challenge.

Make-up is another product great for UGC.

Eyeshadows or lipsticks look great in their packaging. But how do they look on real people? And how do they compare on different skin tones?

Customers have these questions. And they would rather have them answered by fellow customers than spend their own money on a product that may or may not be a dud.

Image: file404/Shutterstock. com

So what do you need to use UGC?

- A product (preferably physical)

- A specialized hashtag
- Customers to start taking part.

As said above, customer reviews are a type of UGC. And while important to the average customer questioning whether or not to click ‘BUY’, a campaign would include a hashtag and encourage photographs and video from users (think the ALS challenge that circulated Facebook like crazy).

With UGC you can:

- Build relationships with customers
- Provide social proof of a working product
- Encourage/develop a community
- Use UGC examples in other content

UGC does all of this and yet it’s highly simple to incorporate. The truth is, the ways to connect with customers online is limited. We have email (passive), live chats (active yet technical) and social media. But they’re mostly one-way communication or very limited in expression.

You don’t want expressionless customers. Expressionless customers are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. They’re just there but not necessarily buying anything. Because they desire proof the product is worth their hard-earned cash.

If customers can contribute to enticing further purchases, why not let them? In fact, why not encourage the process?

We've got studies indicating 92% of customers much prefer the recommendations from real people, rather than the corporations they assume are biased in order to make a sale [5].

Get in on this.

To connect with your customers, and prove your product is worth the price, add UGC with a relevant hashtag to your next marketing campaign.

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