



BEST PRACTICE GUIDE

# 6 ways to launch your product with a bang



bazaarvoice™

# What's inside

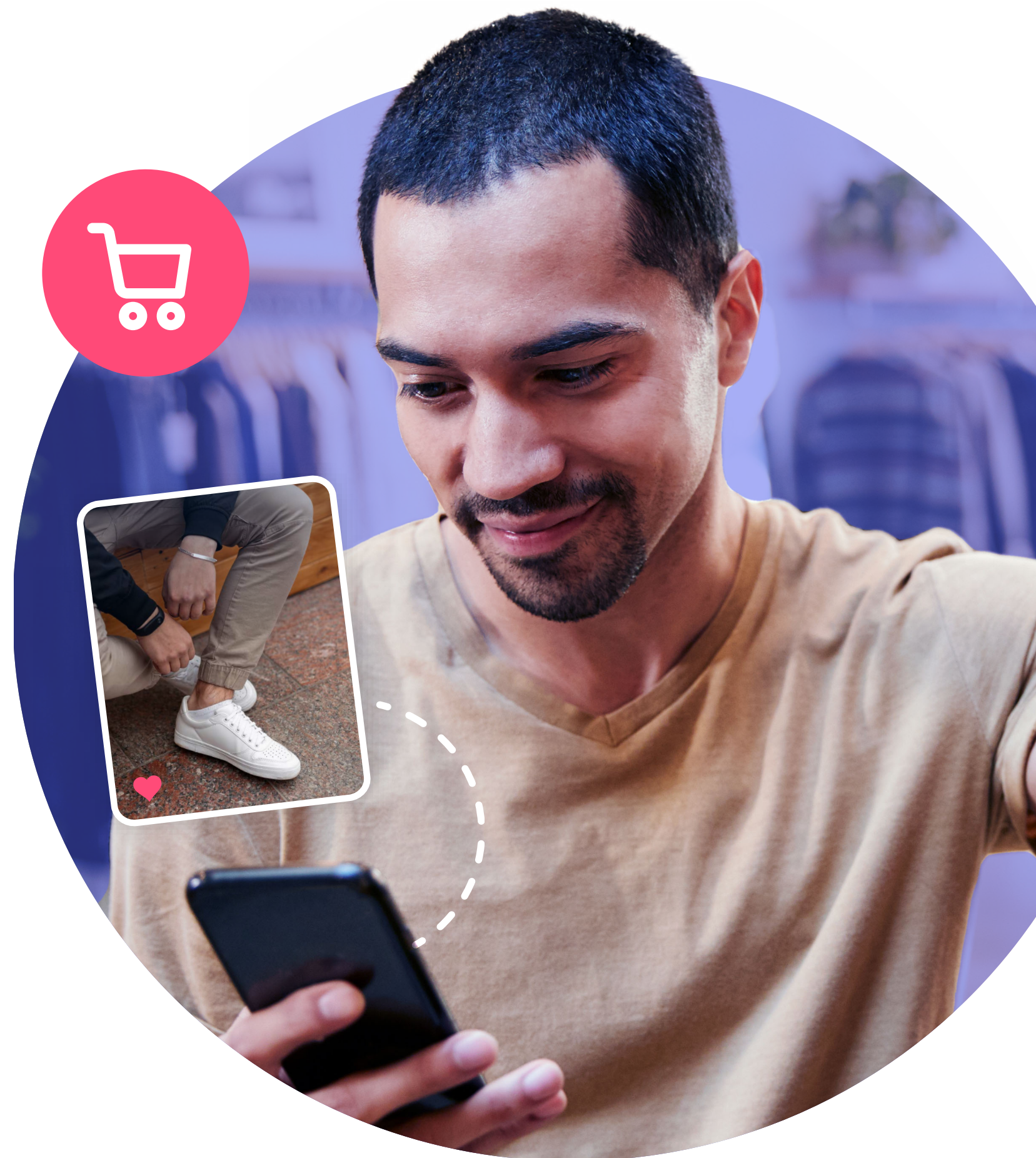
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# Introduction

Launching a product is a delicate moment. Months and even years of work culminate in a single moment – will customers love this product, or will it flop? A great launch can generate positivity as consumers rush to investigate the hype and leave enthusiastic reviews. A flop, however, may be impossible to recover from.

Product launch campaigns once relied on in-store activations like sampling, expos and splashy end caps. Now, virtual displays and digital content feeds are the cornerstones of in-store activations and product launch strategies. And shared and earned content has become critical to product launch success.

How can brands successfully adapt to the new ways consumers discover, research, and buy products? The key to any product launch success is preparation and execution – and successful brands leave nothing to chance.

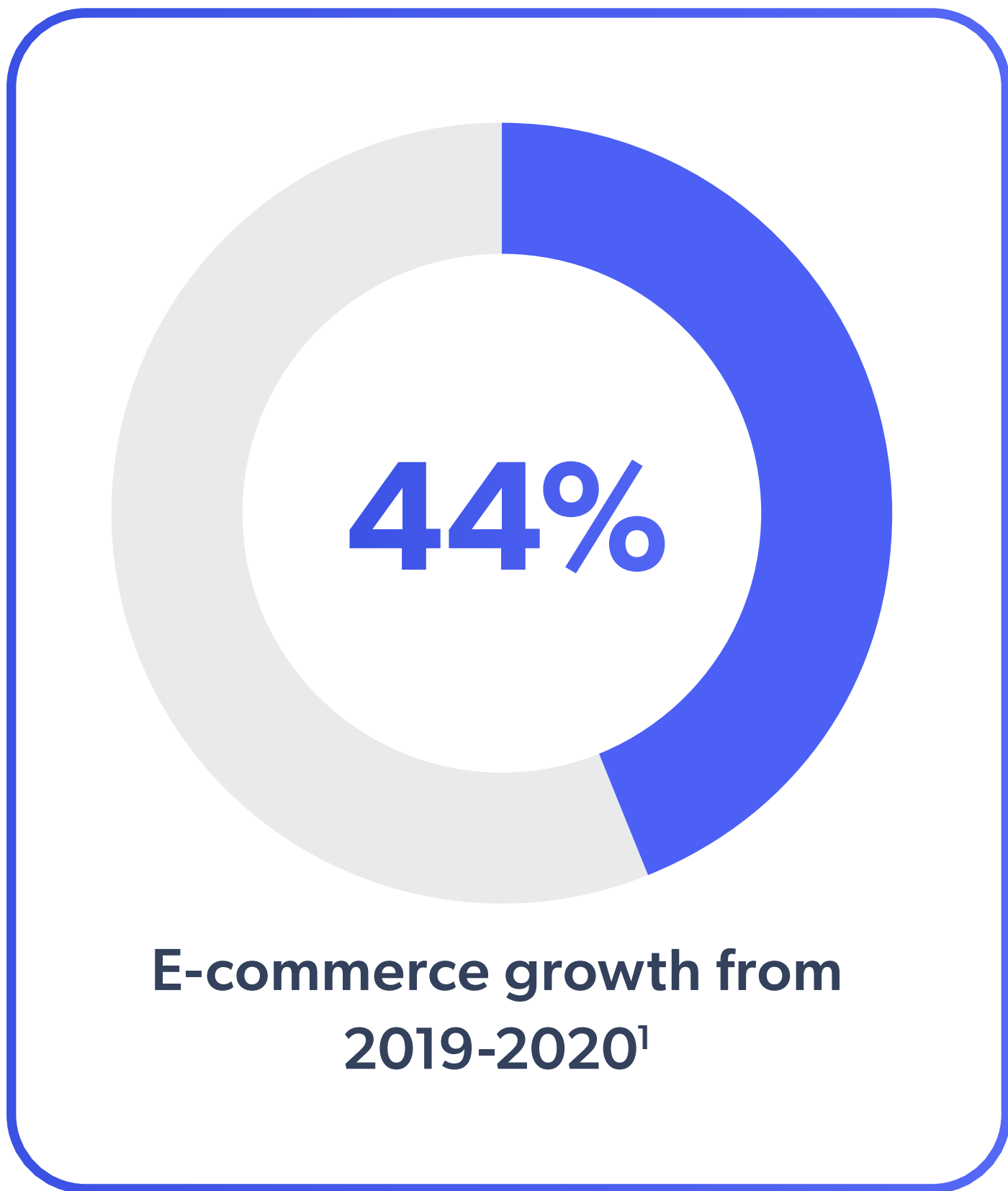


At 3M, Brand Communications Supervisor Erica Schiebel says the key to a successful launch is content.

“People are becoming more e-commerce driven, and it has happened a lot faster than anyone anticipated,” said Schiebel.

“It has prompted a greater focus on e-commerce and how we can get quicker at getting content online.”

**\$861.1B**  
What shoppers spent on e-commerce in 2020<sup>1</sup>



In today’s omnichannel world, brands need to create engaging and seamless experiences across online and offline channels.

In this guide, 3M, Kraft Heinz, and Canon share their content marketing formulas for winning product launches.

**Follow these 6 steps to ensure your next product launch is a hit!**

## STEP 1

# Start planning early

A good rule of thumb is to expect delays during your planned launch. The past few years exposed vulnerabilities in manufacturing and supply chains. Businesses that plan early and allow for flexibility can better adapt to meet objectives.

While every industry has nuances, this timeline can be used to check against your plan and identify opportunities to generate customer reviews, feedback, and social buzz.





## 2-3 MONTHS

- Launch sampling campaign
- Get product samples out to consumers
  - Start generating reviews and images and make them available to retailers
    - Use feedback to improve product pages and launch materials
- Use reviews in marketing (e.g. emails, ads, and social media)

## 6-8 WEEKS

- Write pre-embargo announcement of product launch

## 10-14 DAYS

- Run countdown activity across website and social media
  - Invite people to sign up for alerts



## 3 MONTHS

- Begin media planning

## 2 MONTHS

- Post product and copy sign off
- Brief in channels with required assets

## 1 MONTH

- Work up and sign off on assets
- Hand over assets to channels to prepare for launch

## 2-3 DAYS

- Launch teaser activity on social media
- Pre-sell products exclusively via social channels



## LAUNCH

- All channels go live
- Product made available for sale with reviews on day one

### IMMEDIATELY POST-LAUNCH

- Monitor reviews and social engagement
  - Tweak marketing messages based on customer feedback
  - Share customer feedback with product team

### 6 MONTHS POST-LAUNCH

- Monitor product sales to measure success

### 10-14 DAYS

- Continue to gather and syndicate fresh user-generated content

## POST-LAUNCH

## STEP 2

# Sample before your launch date

Following this timeline will help ensure your product page will be full of rich and thoughtful user-generated content at launch.

The secret to launch day success? Quickly collecting customer content with product sampling.

Consumers agree having reviews on the page pre-launch is important. When asked what's most important to them on a product page, 39% of shoppers said reviews, while 22% said product description and professional photos.<sup>2</sup> A third of shoppers said they wouldn't buy a product without any reviews on the product page.



**Just one review can increase sales by 10%. And 50 reviews? A 30% sales increase.<sup>3</sup>**



We need to do things in advance. It is ideal so that when a web page goes live, we'd have reviews there.

**Erica Schiebel**

**Brand Communications Supervisor at 3M**



## SUCCESS STORY

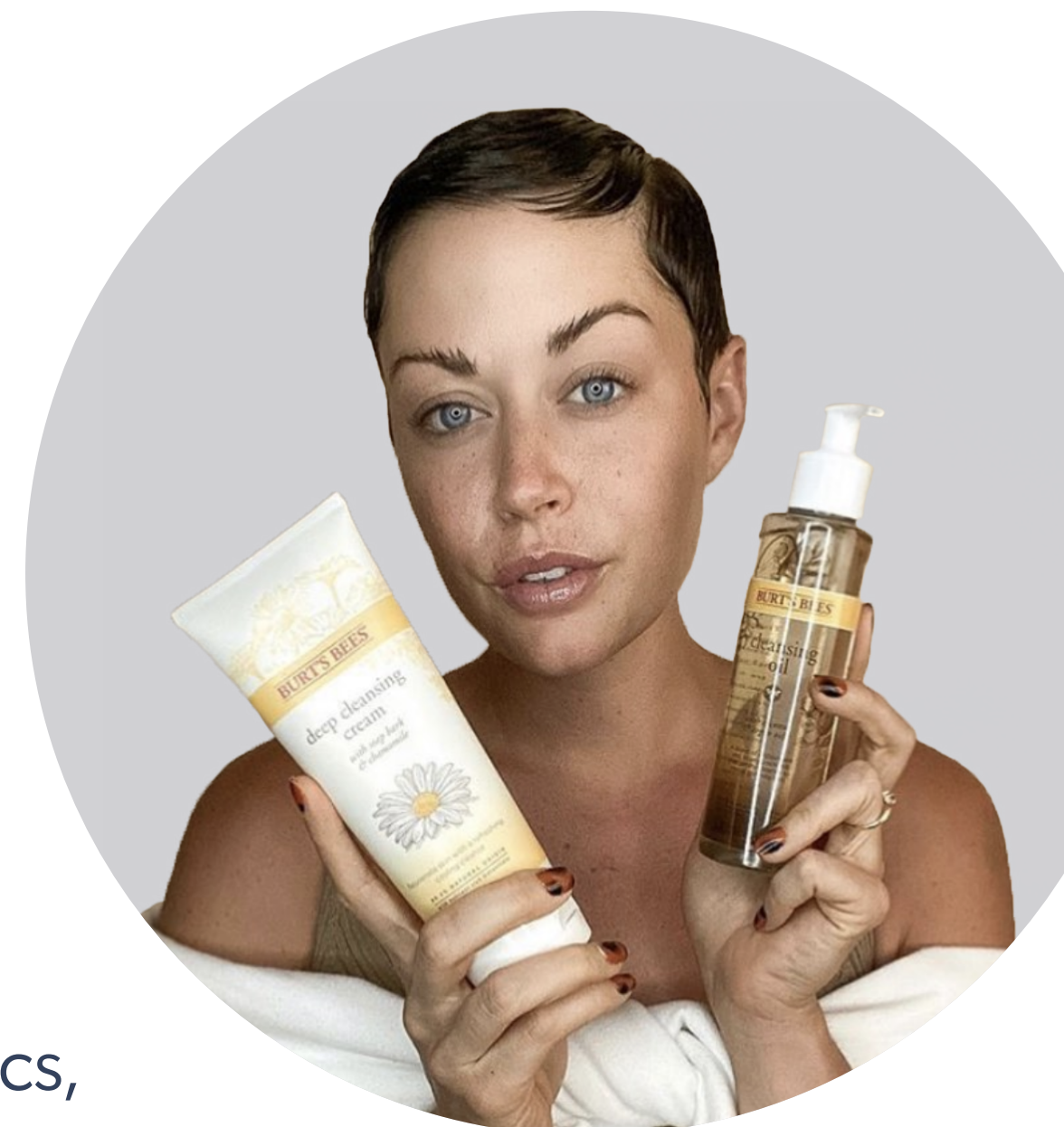
# Burt's Bees uses sampling to ensure new product success

Following the success of its lip balms and moisturizers, the health and beauty brand Burt's Bees was keen to expand its product range to include cosmetics.

"We knew reviews could be insurance for new products and that early qualitative feedback and star ratings would ensure a smooth transition into a new market," said Taylor Steele, Assistant E-commerce Manager at Burt's Bees.

Burt's Bees partnered with Bazaarvoice to get pre-released products into the hands of consumers and collect feedback.

"The greatest thing was that when lights went on with cosmetics, our reviews were syndicated to 15 key retailers," added Steele.



### And the payoff at launch was huge:

**94%**

of people who received a sample submitted a review within two weeks

**16%**

incremental conversion lift from shoppers who engaged with reviews

**20%**

increase in revenue per visitor who engaged with reviews

**300+**

reviews collected at launch with a 4.48-star average rating<sup>4</sup>

This step gave Burt's Bees advanced consumer insights into its new cosmetics line, and plenty of published reviews as products became available at retail stores.

[Read full success story](#)

## STEP 3

# Listen to consumer feedback

Ratings and reviews offer critical insight for brands. Those who don't dissect and digest feedback miss a big win in plain sight.

3M sees reviews as an opportunity to innovate and improve ahead of launch. Its brands, such as Post-it®, rely heavily on review content to introduce new products. In partnership with Bazaarvoice, 3M developed a program called Discover 3M, which feeds live reviews directly to its product pages.

According to 3M's Erica Schiebel, the voice of the consumer provides valuable insight into how they perceive new Post-It® products.

"Sometimes reviews reinforce our key uses, and sometimes it's a surprise in terms of how people use it," said Schiebel. "We also hear some negative things, but that is an opportunity for our product development team to re-evaluate and incorporate that feedback."

Feedback is critical to ensure marketing initiatives focus on features that resonate most with consumers.



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**Erica Schiebel**  
Brand Communications Supervisor at 3M

## SUCCESS STORY

# Rael uses product sampling to refine marketing messages

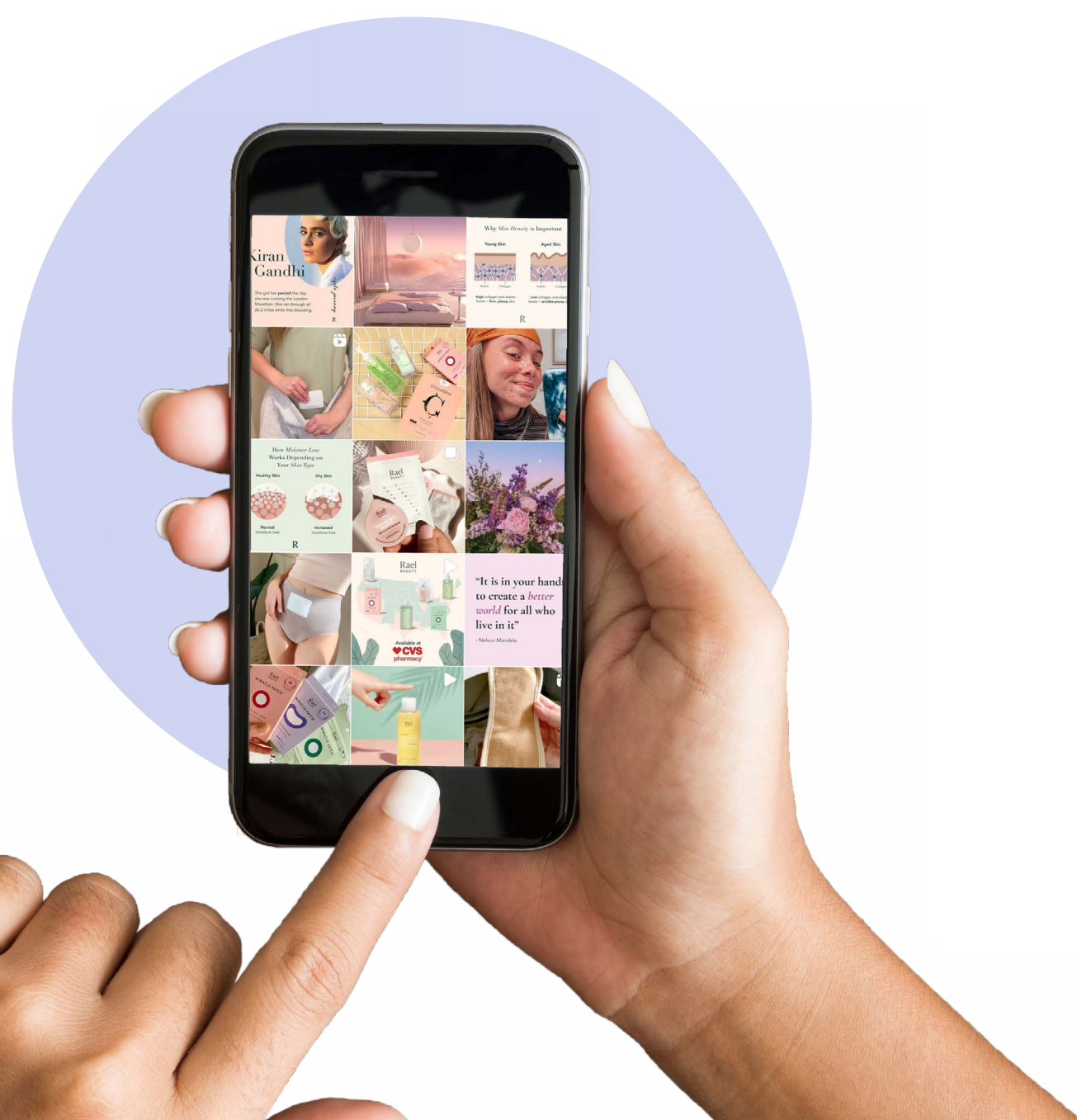
Product sampling gave Rael an easy and impactful way to mine customer sentiment about its new products, identify ways to refine marketing messaging, and turn feedback into action.

“Broadening our range from natural period care products to beauty has been a major hit,” said Sorah Park, CMO at Rael.

Rael sent products to select members of Bazaarvoice’s Influenster community of 7 million highly-engaged consumers. Through two sampling campaigns, Bazaarvoice curated and sent 2,000 custom VoxBoxes with Rael’s skincare products to a hyper-targeted audience of ideal buyers.

The campaigns encouraged consumers to share their experiences on social platforms, generating 9.8 million impressions from tens of thousands of social posts, shares, likes, and comments.<sup>5</sup> It also armed Rael with powerful content to use across other marketing channels.

“UGC guides our overall marketing strategy by showing us how to speak about each product and position them based on what consumers like,” said Park. “From a learning perspective, Bazaarvoice sampling lets us get much more granular information on our products compared to other sampling providers.”



**Want to launch your own sampling campaign?**

**Connect with us**

## STEP 4

# Build social buzz

Every brand wants to go viral, but the mechanics are complex. The only way to play the game is to share content your shoppers want to see and maximize its impact.

Video content works brilliantly online, and Canon is a genius-level video user. For its most recent products, the Canon EOS R5 and EOS R6, the launch event in July 2020 live-streamed using a 4K camera, followed by a live Q&A. The videos were posted on the Canon site and YouTube for 10 days after launch, and they continued to attract viewers and drive demand.

“This was new, and we had two targets — people who had watched the launch video and those who had watched the Q&A — and we exceeded,” says Vishal Patel, Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe. “We ran out of stock on our web store within hours — the demand was crazy.”



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**Vishal Patel**

**Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe**

## SUCCESS STORY

# River Island offers exclusives to fans to generate FOMO

Exclusivity is an excellent way to inspire fear of missing out (FOMO) for your brand before and during a product launch. Social media is one of the best places to generate FOMO.

River Island launched a dress from its 2019 collection exclusively via Instagram ahead of its entire collection.

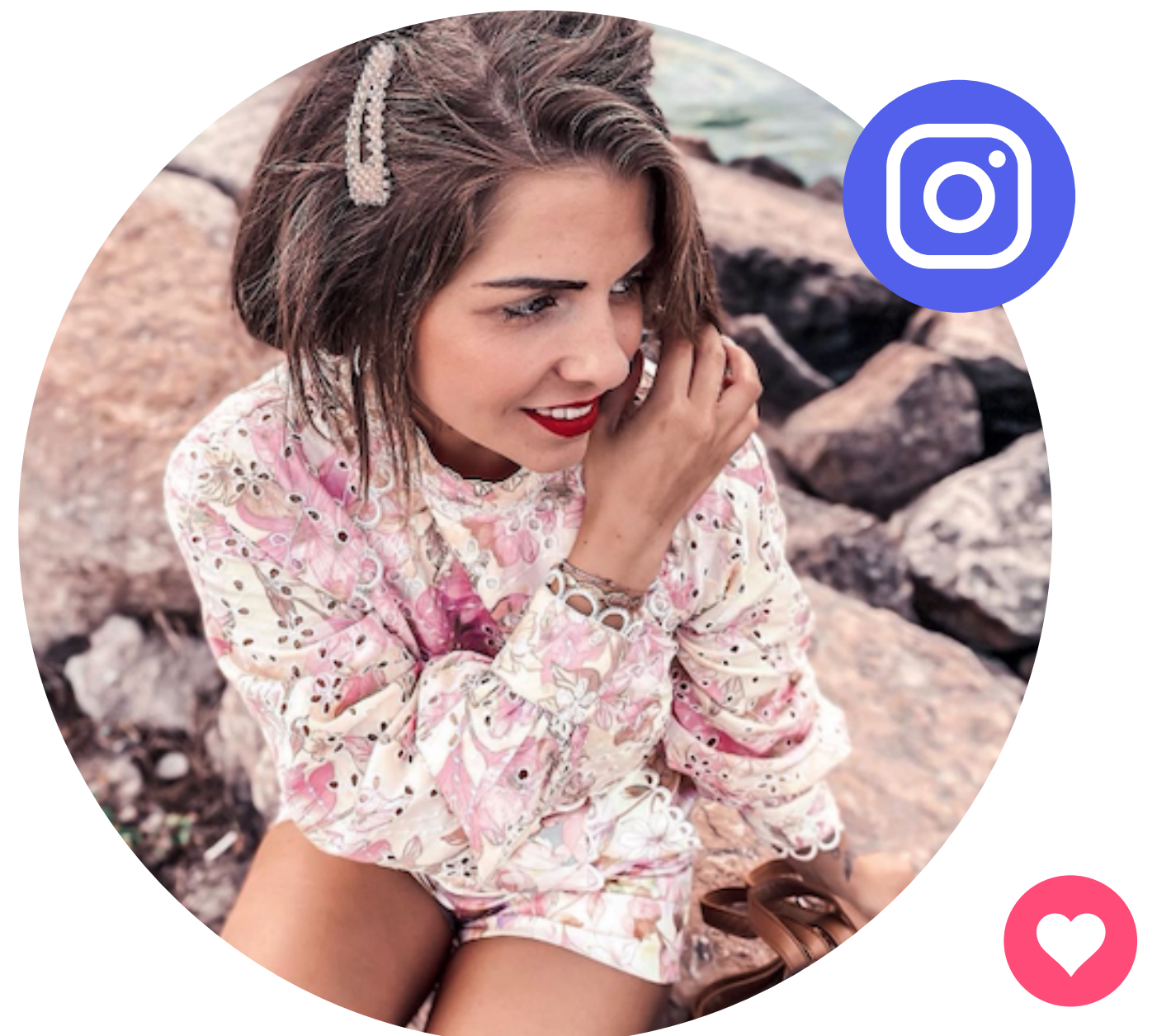
“Instagram has become more of a conversion driver and trend spotter, so we felt it was the right place to preview product launches,” said Chloe Bebbington, River Island Social and Community Lead in the UK. “That exclusivity gives the community a reason to be there, to follow you, and to keep engaging.”

Use social to inspire FOMO before and during your product launch, and you can watch the orders roll in.



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**Chloe Bebbington**  
UK Social and Community Lead at River Island



[Read full success story](#)

## STEP 5

# Share content others create

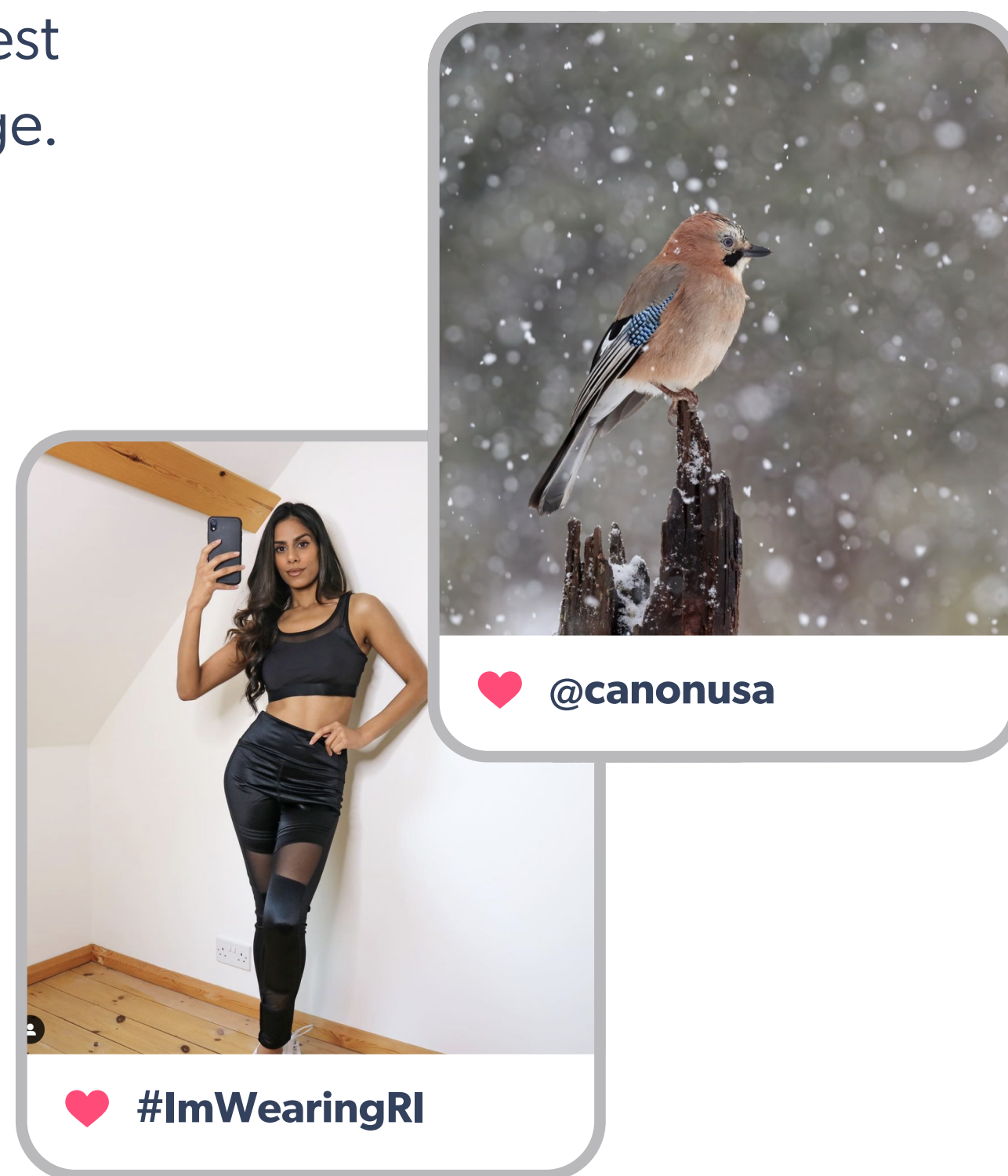
Social media is a user-driven medium, and the best product launches put social media users in charge.

“You can’t just talk to your audience. It needs to be a conversation,” warns Chloe Bebbington, River Island Social and Community Lead in the UK. “Our social media accounts constantly chat with customers and share their images of their clothes. It’s why we’ve got 2.4 million followers on Instagram!”

The River Island campaign #ImWearingRI offers customers the chance to take selfies, which are shared on River Island’s official Instagram account. “There’s no better advertisement,” said Bebbington. “The campaign has been a smash hit for us.”

Canon, meanwhile, uses its popular Instagram feed to share images taken by customers, who are credited in the captions. It’s an authentic way to market new products.

“Customers will be your best advocates,” said Vishal Patel, Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe. “If you want to launch with the maximum impact, it’s they, the people, who matter. Not your company. Let them do the talking.”



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**Vishal Patel**  
Digital Interactions Specialist at Canon Europe

## STEP 6

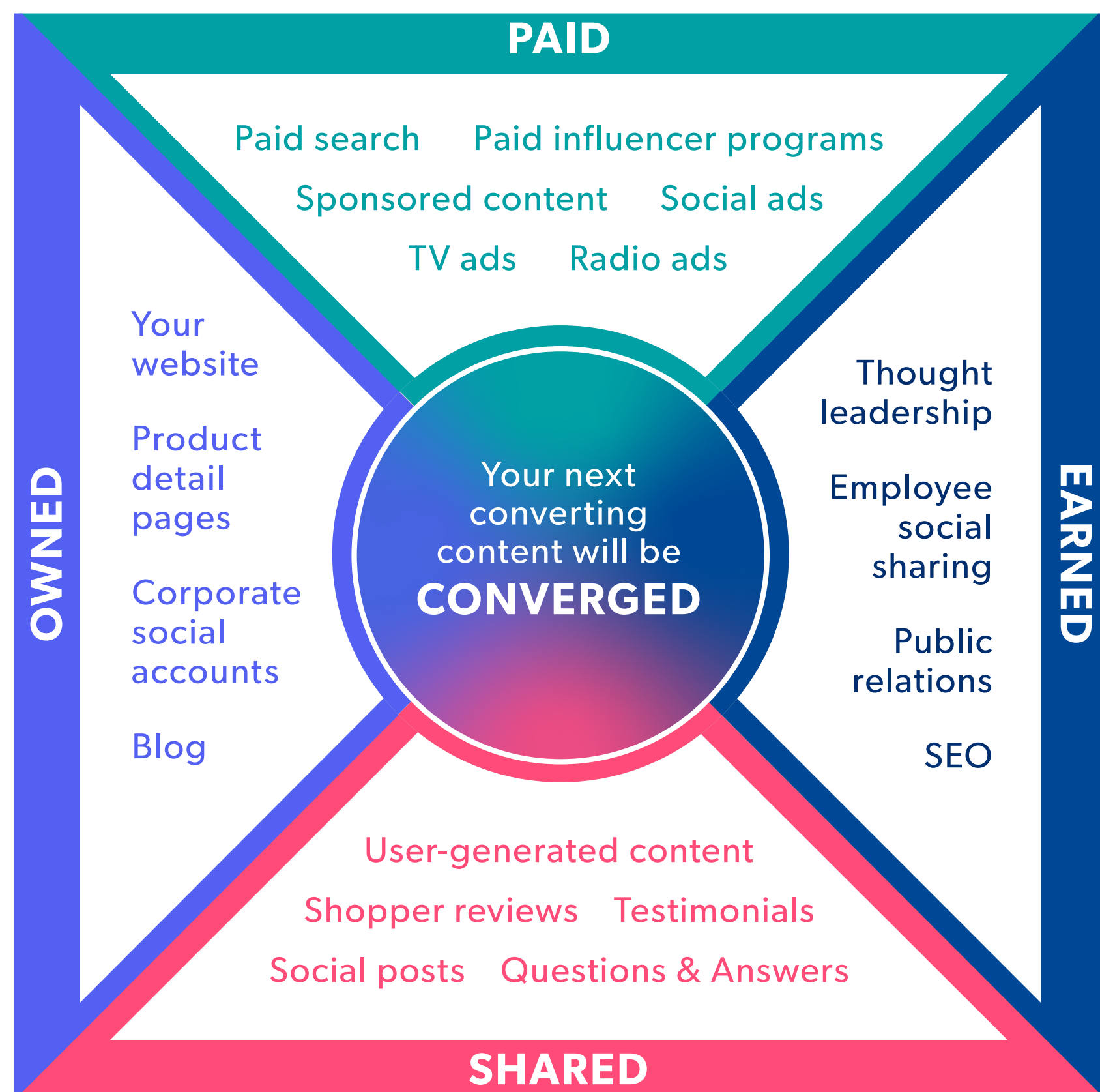
# Optimize your strategy

Companies tend to overemphasize paid and owned content and fail to measure and optimize shared and earned content.

For a successful product launch, focus on your most cost-effective product launch elements and cut back on less effective ones. A PESO strategy can help.

PESO (paid, earned, shared, and owned) is a way of segmenting launch activity into distinct tactics. A PESO strategy can help you identify which assets deliver the best return on investment (ROI) with an apples-to-apples comparison of all your launch activity.

You might find the content that drives loyalty and connects best with customers is ratings and reviews, Q&As, and curated social content, making user-generated content an integral part of your content supply chain.



## SUCCESS STORY

# Share content created by your community

Kraft Heinz understood the importance of shared and earned content when it introduced new salad dressings.

Before launching eight new offerings from its Kraft Dressings Vinaigrettes, Twisted Ranch, and Bitten lines, the company tapped into Bazaarvoice's Influenster community to help generate reviews and visual content.



**The 13,500 VoxBoxes sent to Bazaarvoice's Influenster community generated:**

**98,000**

new pieces of user-generated content

**369,000**

new posts, shares, likes, comments, and follows

**39M**

social media impressions

**20,000**

new product reviews<sup>6</sup>

[Read full success story](#)



# Looking forward

Getting more content in more places (faster!) is top of mind for marketers as companies respond to a sharp swing in consumer behavior. And while uncertain, the future looks exciting for brands focused on delivering a seamless and engaging omnichannel experience for their customers.

3M is a brand that has responded to the growing importance of e-commerce content. "There has been an increased desire and appetite from consumers," said Erica Schiebel, Brand Communications Supervisor at 3M. "The team has tried to prioritize e-commerce content more than before."

Launching a product with a bang requires preparation and execution.

**For a winning strategy:**

**1 Start planning early**

**4 Build social buzz**

**2 Sample before your launch date**

**5 Share content others create**

**3 Listen to consumer feedback**

**6 Optimize your strategy**

Follow these 6 steps to help ensure your next product launches with a bang.

# References

1. [Digital Commerce 360. "US ecommerce grows 44.0% in 2020." 2021.](#)
2. [Bazaarvoice. "2020 Shopper Experience Index."](#)
3. [Bazaarvoice. "What shoppers look for in reviews." 2020.](#)
4. [Bazaarvoice. "Burt's Bees." 2019.](#)
5. [Bazaarvoice. "Rael." 2020.](#)
6. [Bazaarvoice. "Kraft Heinz." 2020.](#)

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