

# **The social tipping point**

Discover how brands are reacting to the explosion of user generated content and how they're turning their best customers into their best marketers.

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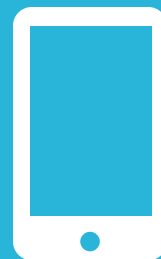
# Introduction

Marketing is undergoing a fundamental change. Three technical innovations are combining to transform the way brands relate to their customers:

The rise of mobile  
broadband



Smartphones with  
powerful cameras



Explosion of  
social media





**As a result, people are creating and sharing images and words like never before.**

Two thirds of the content in the 'digital universe' is created by consumers, not corporations.

72% of all internet users are now active on social media, and they're using it every single day\*

 **350m** photos uploaded

 **55m** photos posted

 **500m** tweets posted

 **5m** articles pins

 **144,000 hours** of video uploaded

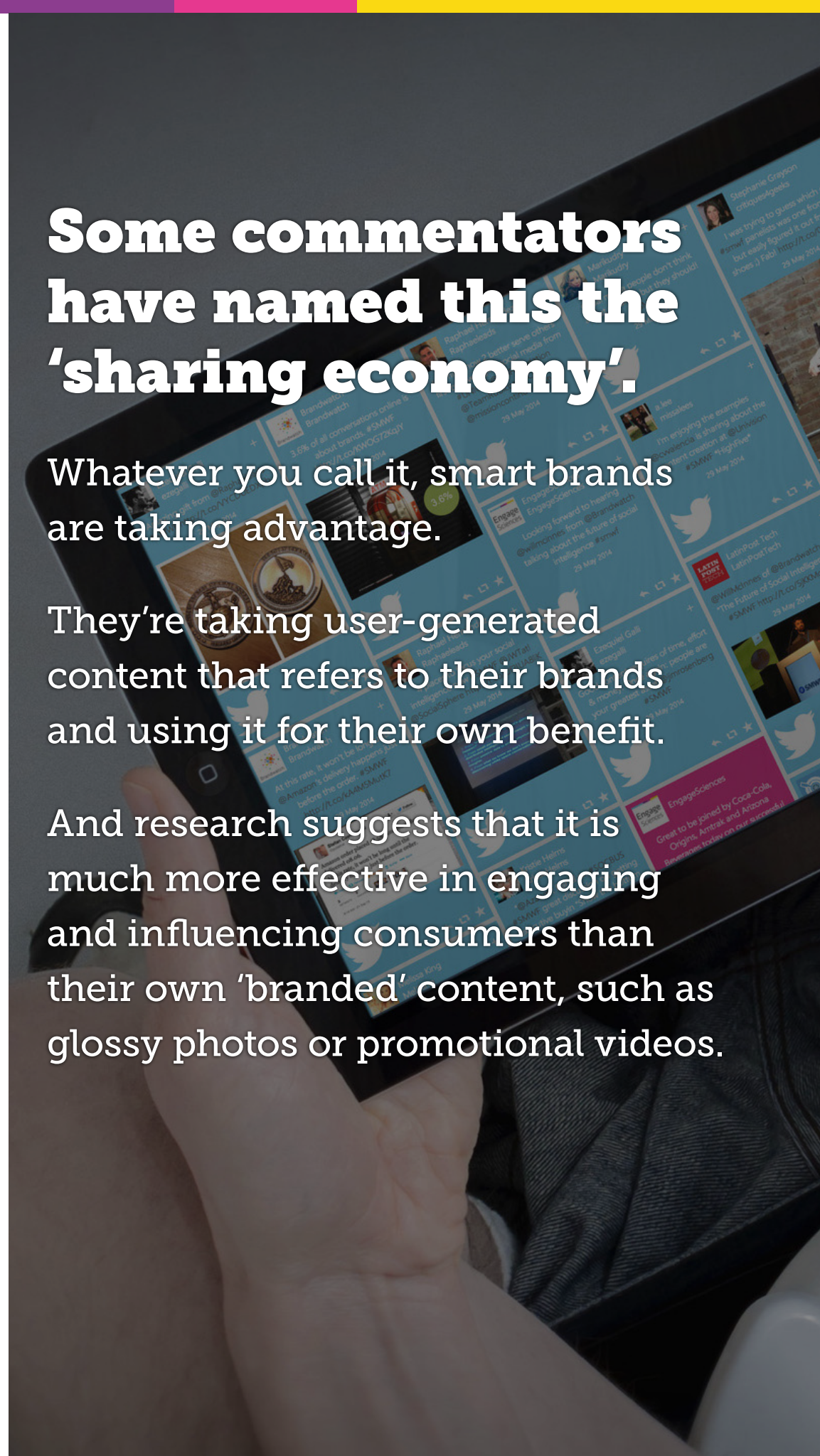
\* L2 Think Tank

**Some commentators have named this the 'sharing economy'.**

Whatever you call it, smart brands are taking advantage.

They're taking user-generated content that refers to their brands and using it for their own benefit.

And research suggests that it is much more effective in engaging and influencing consumers than their own 'branded' content, such as glossy photos or promotional videos.





## The reason behind this change is simple:

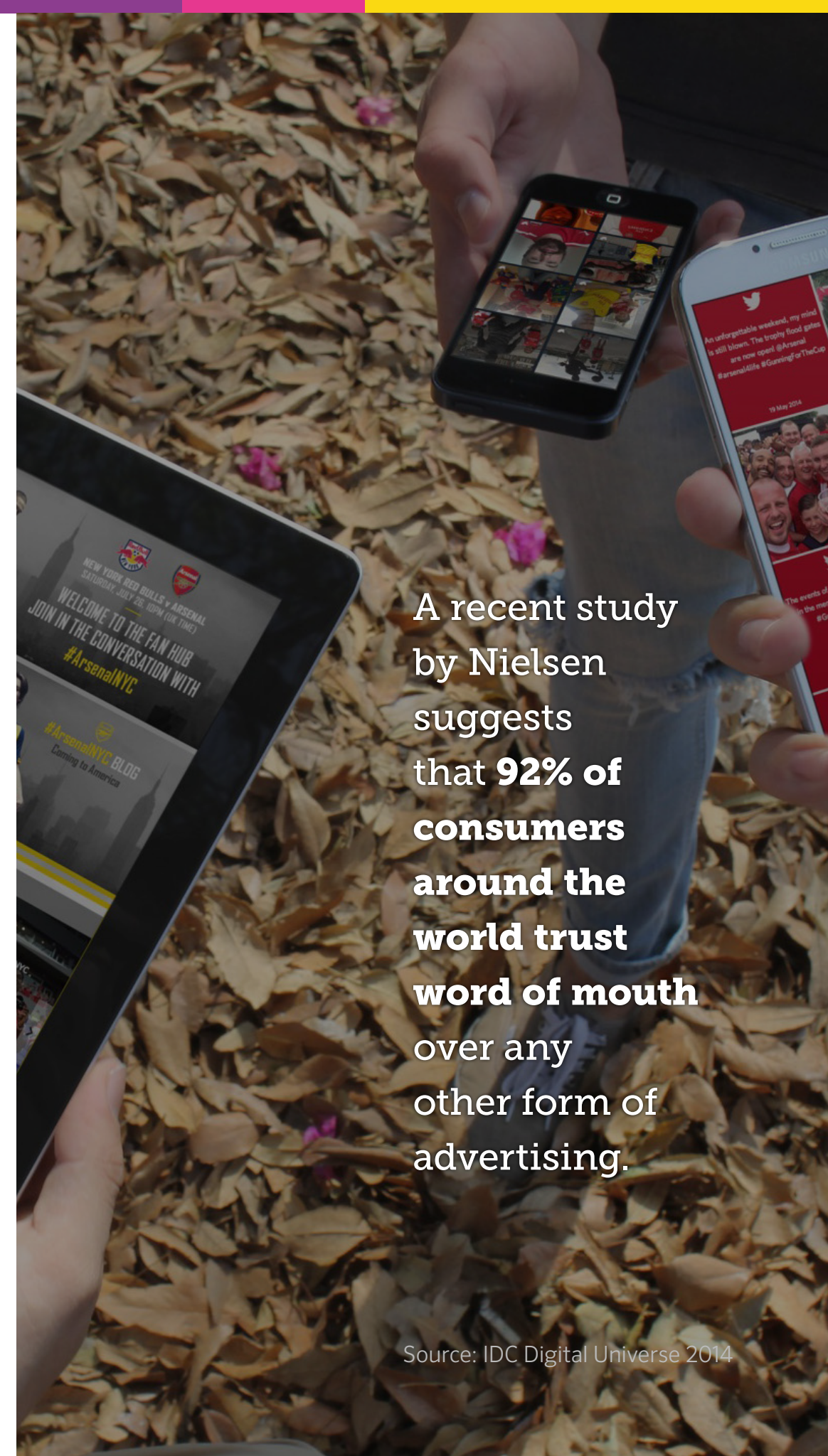
Consumers trust their peers. They take inspiration from other people's experiences, ratings, reviews and their sharing of products and services.

A brand is now defined by how its community perceives and uses it, rather than by expensively commissioned marketing stories.

Laundry Service, a New York social media agency, analyzed data from 100 million impressions, including ad campaigns from more than 15 advertisers.



They found that Instagram-style photos achieved a 25% better conversion rate than glossy product shots.



A recent study by Nielsen suggests that **92% of consumers around the world trust word of mouth** over any other form of advertising.

# Pressure on content

So what sort of content do consumers like most – and what makes them respond? It's difficult for marketers to know. Social media is changing and becoming more complex every day. Just keeping pace with new developments is a daunting task.



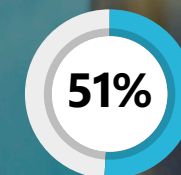


Brands are already spending a huge amount of time, energy and money managing social channels and creating and distributing content. According to a CMO survey by Duke University, spending on social media accounts for 6.6% of marketing budgets (about \$4.6 billion) and is expected to climb to nearly 16% over the next five years.

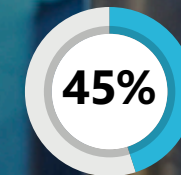
Even so, only the largest global brands can afford to establish a tangible presence across all social networks and populate them with enough content to stand out from the crowd.

In addition, most marketers just aren't able to produce the volume and variety of content that will resonate with their target audiences. What's more, even if they create and distribute the content, how do they measure its success and ROI?

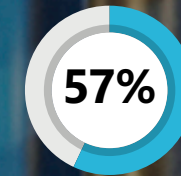
B2C marketers are finding it difficult to keep up:



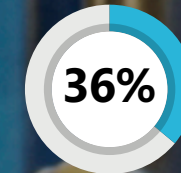
struggle to produce engaging content



struggle to produce enough content



struggle to find enough time



struggle to measure content effectiveness

Source: Content Marketing Institute. (2014). B2C Content Marketing 2014 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends - North America

# User-creators

Today's consumers publish words, photos and videos online to share all aspects of their lives, including their favorite brands. The Pew Research Internet Project found that 54% of adult internet users now post original photos or videos online, up by nearly half on last year.



In fact, people upload and share more than **1.8 billion** photos a day across Flickr, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook and WhatsApp. That's **21,000** photos a second!





What's more, consumers are skilled at selecting the most appropriate channel for each piece of content – and they subscribe to the channels that meet their needs:



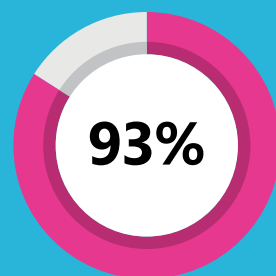
- YouTube for long videos
- Twitter for news and updates
- Instagram for photos and short videos
- Vine for ultra-short videos
- Snapchat for messages they don't want hanging around



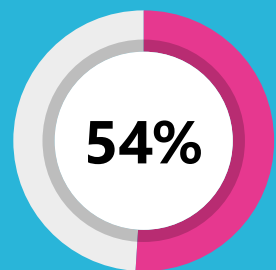
They have become expert marketers of themselves – and potentially of the brands they love, as long as brand marketers can harness their creativity and influence.

## The dawn of the socially-powered website

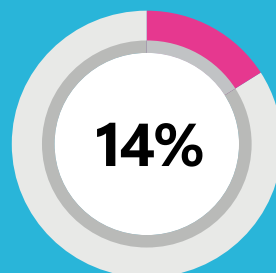
Research suggests most brands have not seized the opportunity that user-generated content presents for transforming web experiences and driving socially-referred commerce. They may be going through the motions of creating accounts on social networks:



of prestige brands have an Instagram account.



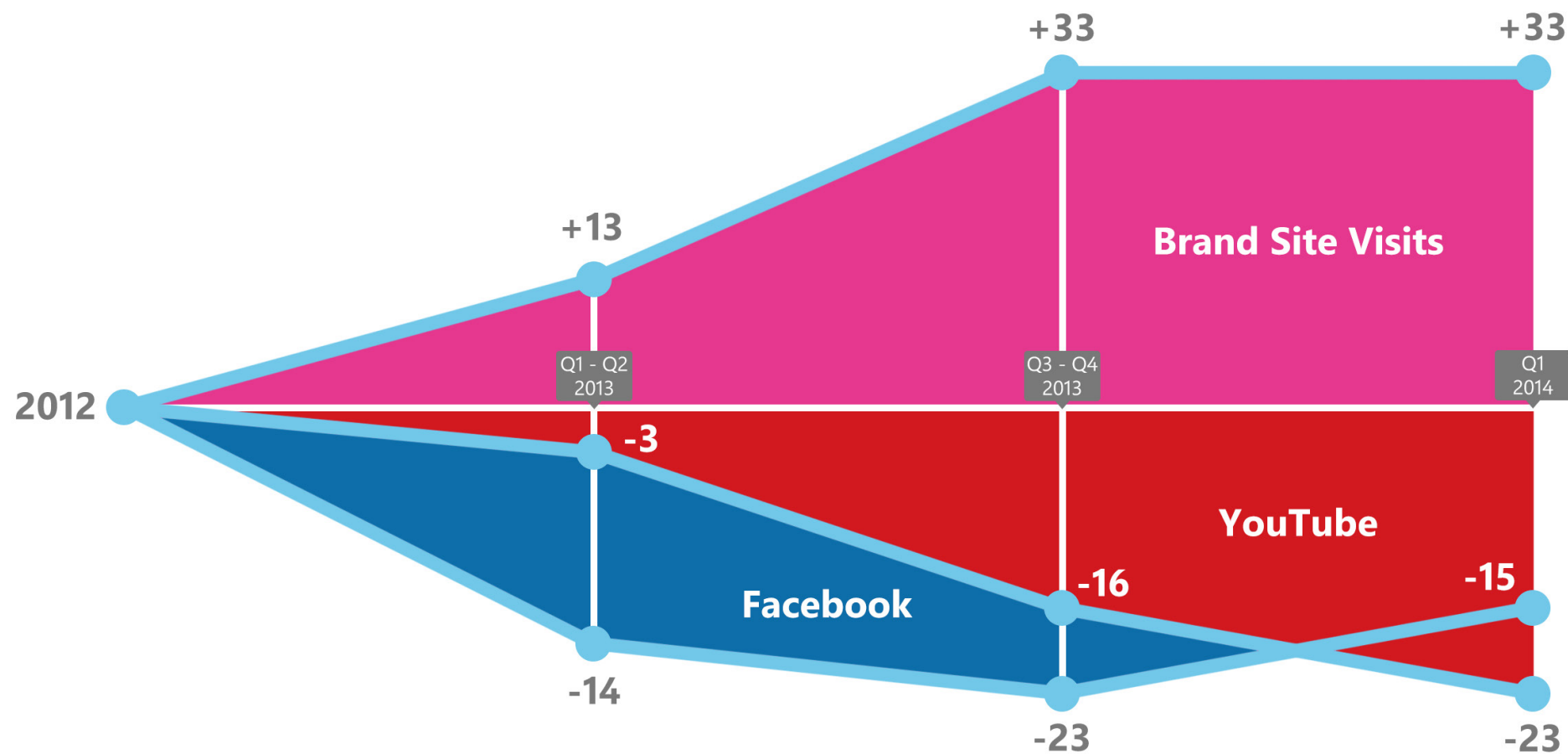
link from their websites to their Instagram profile, but only a few are tapping in to the real power of social.



feature Instagram photos on their own websites, where they can really start to influence potential customers.

## However, the tide may be turning.

Marketers are changing their campaign objectives from generating 'likes' on a social network to landing consumers on their own websites.



According to the JunGroup, in 2012 Facebook and YouTube accounted for 69% of all campaign destinations. By end 2013 this fell to just 30%. In contrast, websites as the primary destination rose from 25% to 61% in the same period.



## So, why is this happening?

Well, brands are starting to realize that pointing traffic to a single social network such as Facebook or Instagram is no longer the best way to engage consumers. After all, a single network provides a rather narrow view of your brand and your community.

Instead, brand websites and microsites now represent an efficient and effective central repository for credible and authentic user-generated content that has been curated from a range of social networks.



This is vitally important because this kind of content has a startling ability to drive brand engagement, consideration and sales conversions. In fact, 84% of millennials say user-generated content has influenced what they buy.

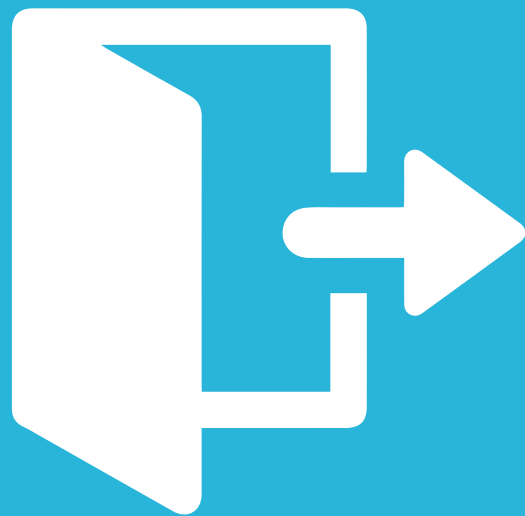
However, while user-generated content is one key to a successful website strategy, brands shouldn't ignore their own professionally produced content. According to comScore, brand engagement rises by 28% when users are exposed to both types of content.

And you need to know where each type of content works best throughout your website and ecommerce experience. For example, featuring user-generated photos at the point of purchase boosts conversion by up to 7%.



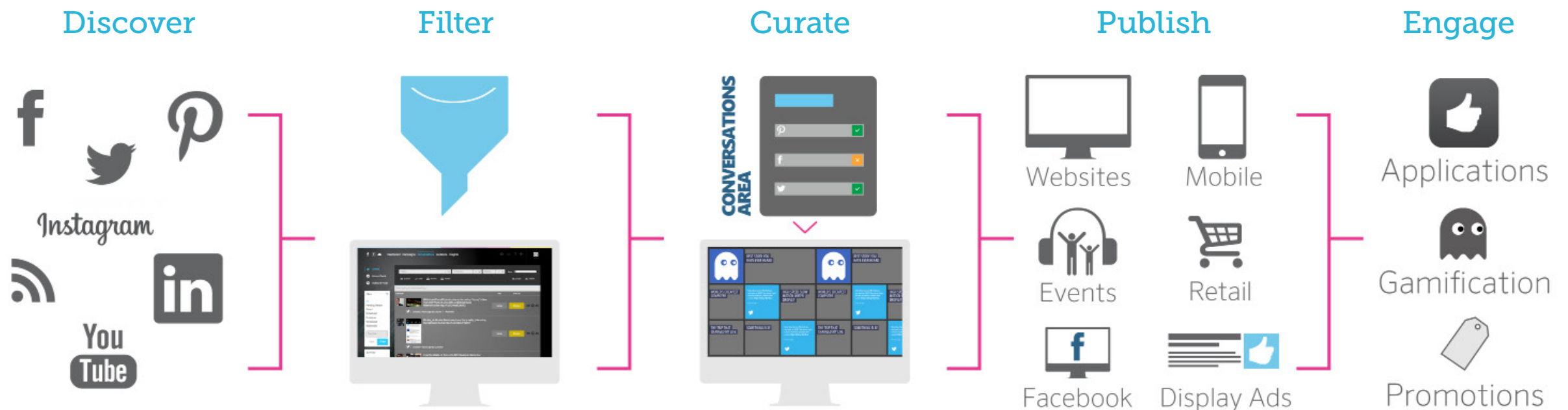
# Placement, Participation, Conversion

Whether people are coming to your website from social media interaction between friends or a paid post, your website must be ready for them. You can't afford to disappoint.



# To make sure you're delivering the kind of authentic and persuasive user-generated content consumers want, brands need a new set of tools.

They must be able to easily discover, filter, aggregate and curate social content. They can then publish it to multiple destinations, including their own websites and other digital and mobile channels.





## Brands that take this approach have had some impressive results:



**11%** increase in web traffic once sites feature social content



**10%** reduction in bounce rates



**300%** increase in dwell times on pages that feature social content



**22%** increase in click-throughs on calls to action compared with other web pages

Source: EngageSciences 2014

## Worth a thousand words?

Some social marketing platforms tell you that success is all about 'visual content'. However, we've discovered that truly effective brands use a mixture of words, photos and video on their websites. And they build on the user-generated content by linking other elements to get customers involved, including ratings and reviews, polls, promotions and hashtag competitions.

The more involved people become, the more engaged they become, the more insights you can gather – and the more you can sell.



# Placement

With the EngageSciences marketing engagement platform, you can decide how best to publish both curated user-generated content and branded content. Marketers have the choice of embedding a social hub directly into their digital properties or using our automated content feed.

So, whether you're looking to promote new products on your website, support a campaign with a socialized microsite, or boost the performance of your online advertising with social content, the EngageSciences platform has it covered.

And, many brands are now thinking beyond web based experiences and are using persuasive UGC to drive sales in retail stores, to bring mobile apps to life and to highlight the buzz at events and festivals.



Websites



Facebook



Microsites



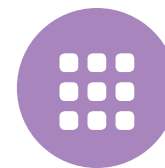
Online ads



YouTube



Event screens



Mobile apps



Retail  
installations



# Participation

As well as powering higher performance on web pages and ecommerce, user-generated content can also deliver valuable insights into customer demographics and behaviour.

Unlike many other platforms, EngageSciences helps you do this by creating social hubs that host a range of additional features:



User ratings and reviews



Instagram and Twitter hashtag competitions



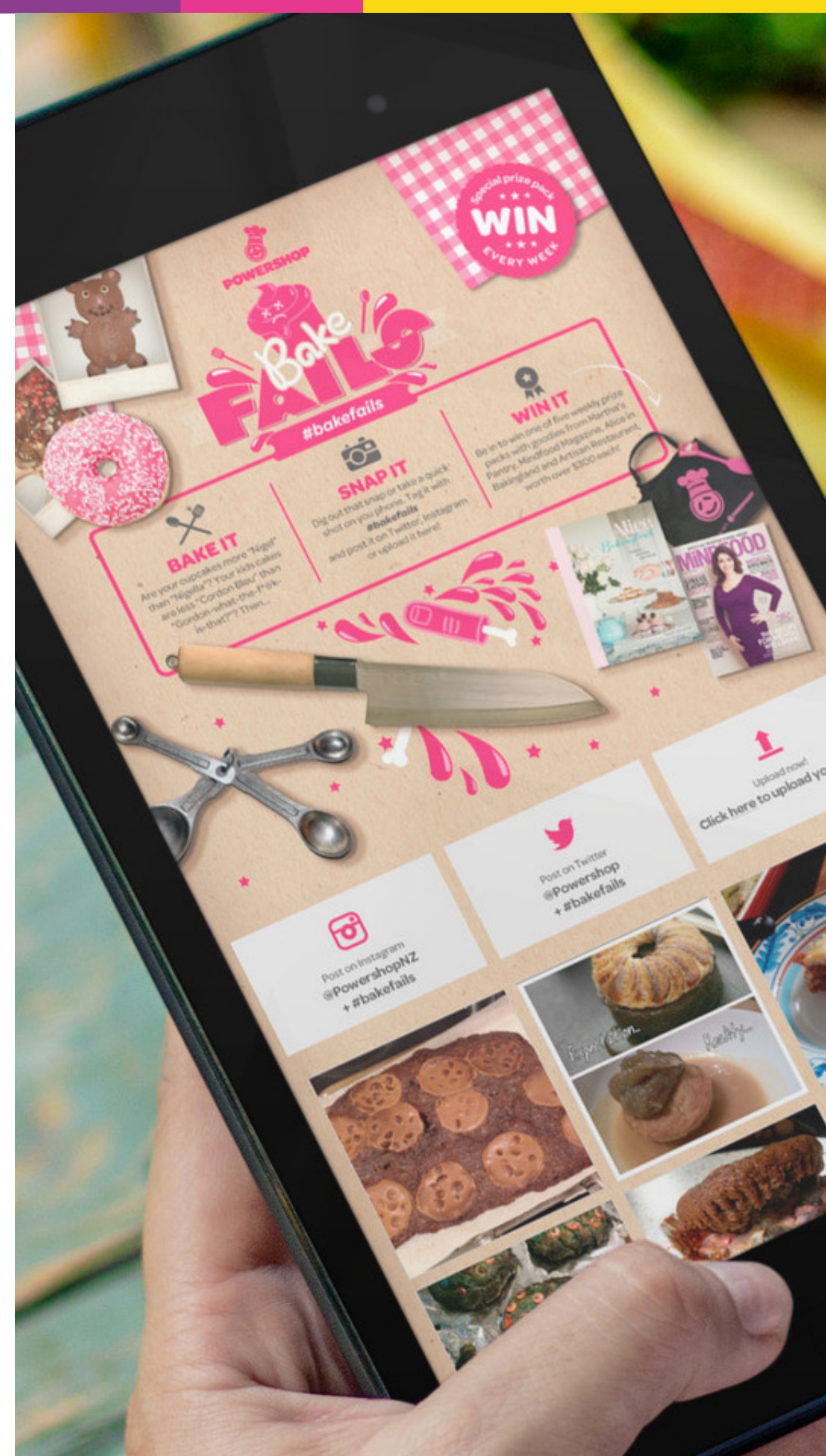
Interactive apps (hosted on your own website or Facebook)



Voting/polls



Third-party reviews





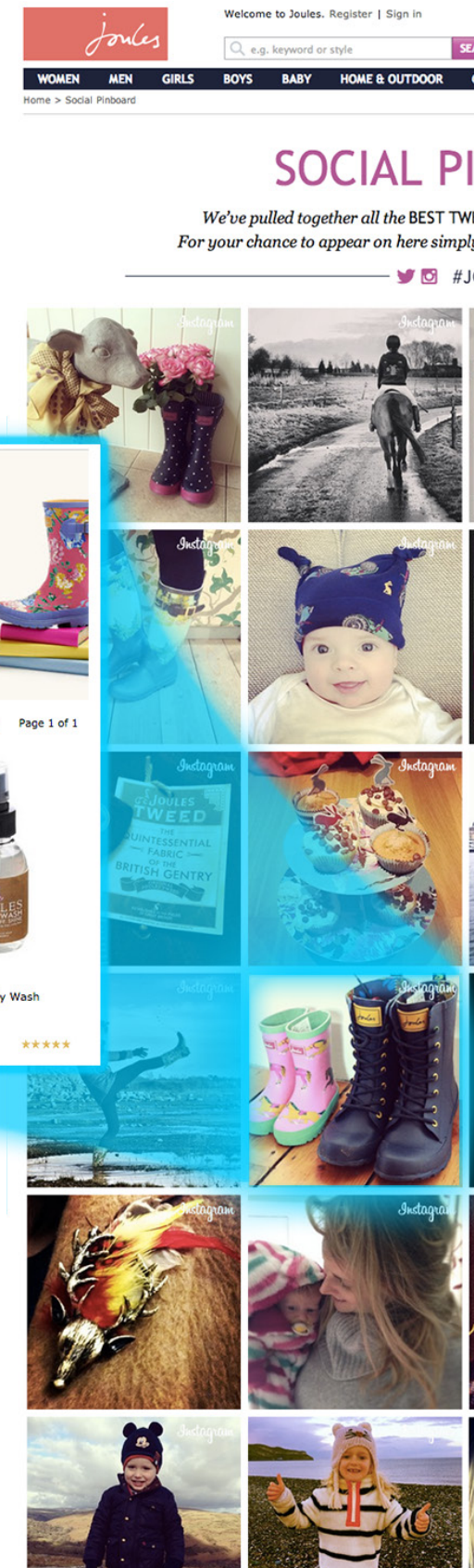
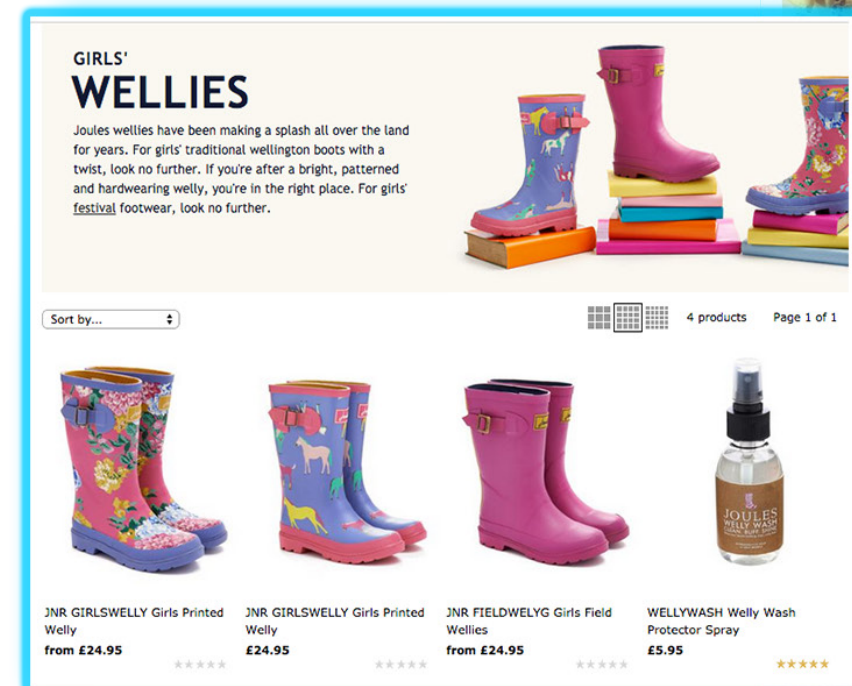
# Conversion

Brands can use our platform to maximize engagement and ultimately sales conversions. It enables you to feature content from your most persuasive advocates on your most visited web pages, where it really counts during the ecommerce journey.

It's also a great opportunity to promote a mix of products within a single social hub and inspire consumers to make multiple purchases in a single transaction.

You can combine authentic customer photos, videos and tweets alongside aspirational studio shots. By expertly blending earned and owned content in this way, you can dramatically increase engagement.

You can tag users' photos in your social hubs with your own products IDs. This lets you add relevant calls to action, so a would-be shopper can go straight to your ecommerce portal.



# Summary

The explosion of consumer generated content is unstoppable. Brands must accept that their glossy, expensive branded content is now playing second fiddle to the authentic words and images created by their advocates.

However, brands can be reassured that there is no shortage of photos, videos and updates featuring their products. What's more, consumers enjoy the recognition of having their content featured on brand websites and other digital properties.

We're now at a tipping point where user-generated content isn't just outweighing branded content, it's outperforming it. There's tangible evidence this stuff really works – and we're just getting started.

## About EngageSciences

The EngageSciences marketing engagement platform enables brands to dramatically boost brand engagement and drive socially-referred commerce. By transforming digital channels into powerful social hubs, marketers can now discover, curate and publish authentic user generated content and encourage onward traffic to product pages, ecommerce and interactive apps.



## Request a demo

If you want to see it in practice, book a demo of the EngageSciences marketing engagement platform:


- See how you can boost brand engagement and use social media to drive commerce.
- Take a look under the bonnet to find out how to create the ideal blend of social campaigns, user-generated content and unparalleled customer insight.
- Decide whether EngageSciences is right for you.

# EngageSciences

The Marketing Engagement Platform

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