



THE MILLENNIAL MINDSET:

Visual Marketing Tips for Fashion & Beauty Retailers



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A background image showing a person's hands holding a smartphone. The phone is held over a magazine with a large circular graphic and the word 'UPPERCASE' visible. A white cup of coffee is also visible on the right side of the frame. The overall scene is dimly lit, with a focus on the hands and the phone.

A Generation of Digital Natives

The millennial generation is known for being the most diverse group of young adults in the history of the U.S. – from their distinct cultural backgrounds to their precarious career paths to their varying living arrangements. **What undeniably ties them all together is their use of modern technology.** Smartphone penetration, for example, is higher among this generation than any other demographic group. Some 86% of U.S. millennials own smartphones, according to Pew Research Center.

The ubiquity of mobile devices has resulted in the fervent creation and consumption of digital content. Visual content, in particular, is leading the way, with more than 2.6 billion images shared daily via social alone. Factor in shopping sites, messaging apps, text messages, blogs, and a slew of other communications tools, and, well ... it's total content overload. As a marketer, how can you stand out?

**86% of U.S. millennials
own smartphones**

Pew Research Center

The Impact of Visual Content in Fashion & Beauty

There's no downplaying the effect this phenomenon has had on the fashion and beauty industries; people have long relied on photos and videos to share and to gain style inspiration.

Instagram, Pinterest, blogs and other highly visual channels have become go-to places for style-conscious millennials seeking answers to their questions. According to a 2015 Millennial Consumer Study from Elite Daily, 62% of millennials say that if a brand engages with them on social, they are more likely to become a loyal customer. **33% of millennials make it a point to check out a company's blog before deciding to make a purchase.**

This guide will delve into how millennial shoppers are using visual channels to discover, engage with, and purchase from apparel, beauty and cosmetics brands, as well as strategies that marketers can use to win over this influential demographic.

62% of millennials feel loyal to brands that engage on social

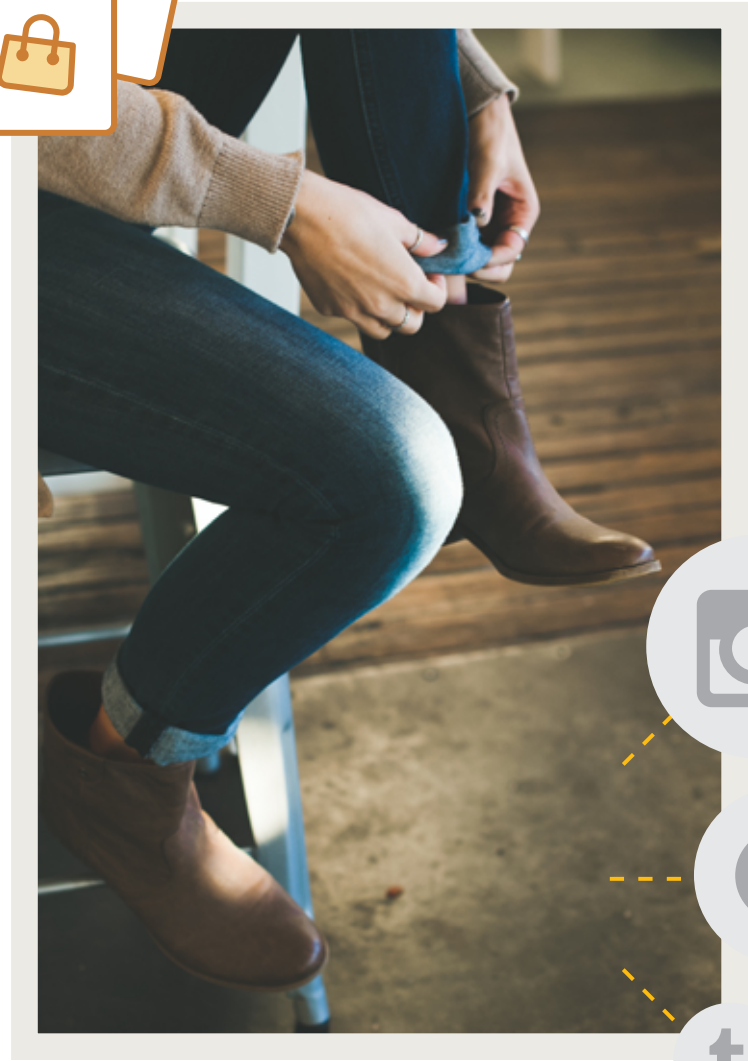
Elite Daily

THE BEST BANG FOR THEIR BUCK

Despite having faced a rough transition into adulthood due to bleak economic prospects, millennials have not abandoned the fashion industry. A Q3 2015 Nielsen survey found that saving more money remains the No. 1 priority for millennials. Nearly half reported that they were spending less on clothing year-over-year to help save money.

Yet, after accounting for their living expenses, **35% of millennials said that they *still* make apparel purchases with disposable income** – with one important caveat. These consumers aren't spending cash on beauty and apparel without conducting a solid amount of research first. According to an Edelman Digital study, **42% of millennial shoppers check at least four sources when deciding on a purchase.**

Because they want to get the best bang for their buck, millennial shoppers rely heavily on visual media—such as Instagram, Pinterest and blogs—for inspiration around how to rock new outfits; ways to repurpose pieces; and the quality of the items they find.



CREATING VISUAL EXPERIENCES

One of the most fascinating things about visual communities like Instagram, Pinterest, Tumblr and other blogging platforms is that they actually turn products into experiences. In a 2014 Eventbrite survey, 78% of millennials reported that they would rather put extra disposable income toward a desirable experience over a desirable item. In other words, buying a new shirt or an eyeshadow goes beyond owning that product; **it's about the memories your products can form.**

Seeing your products in realistic scenarios is enough to spark desire among most millennial shoppers. Images from friends, influencers and even total strangers can add a layer of authenticity to your products, especially when consumers have yet to see or try it on.

78% of millennials would rather spend on experiences, not things

Eventbrite

How to Connect With 6 Style-Savvy Millennials

So we've established that the key to engaging millennial shoppers is sharing inspiring visual content that's driven by desirable experiences.

But here's the thing: Visual content is nuanced. There are GIFs, videos, cinemagraphs, photos and more. There are product laydowns, model shots, traditional product photos and lifestyle images. There's brand-, influencer- and user-generated content.

To raise the stakes, millennials themselves are as nuanced as the creative that drives them. With so many different personas and lifestyles comprising this influential generation, tailoring effective messages can be tougher to navigate than a subway grate in stilettos.

As a marketer, **how can you determine not only who your target buyer is but, more importantly, what type of visual content will excite them?** In the following pages, we've identified six millennial personas for apparel, beauty and cosmetics brands. Read on for a deeper understanding of the visual content that resonates with each segment.



The Athleisure Aficionado



Ladies of Luxury



The Frugal Fashionista



The Renaissance Man



The Makeup Maven



The Custom Curator

THE ATHLEISURE AFICIONADO

Since 2014, media outlets have been reporting a large decline in denim sales – largely driven by female consumers. Why? Millennial consumers are increasingly seeking comfortable clothes, and brands are responding in kind.

In case you haven't heard, athleisure is a thing now. And millennial-focused brands like lululemon and Forever 21 are speaking athleisure fluently by heavily weaving activewear products throughout their content.



It's official:

*Yoga pants aren't just for yoga anymore. To reach athleisure-loving millennials, **show how easily athletic wear can take a consumer from day to night – or at least from yoga to lunch.** Whether it's a popular set of sneakers or a fancy sports bra, flaunt how versatile it is.*

@adidas



@forever21



@lululemon

LADIES OF LUXURY

Roughly half of millennial workers are bringing in less than \$50,000 per year, according to Nielsen. But that's not stopping them from reveling in luxury purchases – particularly during the holidays.

In fact, millennials comprise the majority of luxury shoppers—a whopping 57%—during the holiday season, according to findings from Shullman Research Center and as reported by Luxury Daily.

In the past, luxury retailers relied on highly edited photos to exemplify the idealness of their brands. Yes, luxury is all about exclusivity, but millennial shoppers are constantly consuming content from amateur photographers – from their peers to casual bloggers. Don't think too much into making photos perfect. **Images that have a bit of an unrefined quality will go a long way.**



Pro tip:

You don't have to create all of this content yourself. Millennials in this segment are just as likely to share photos of their luxury purchases. Tap into your communities.

@gucci



@louboutinworld



@chanelofficial

THE FRUGAL FASHIONISTA

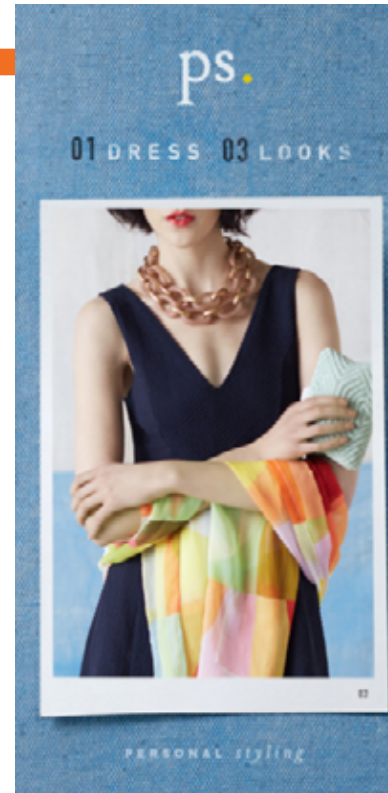
As previously noted, most millennial shoppers aren't rolling in vast amounts of dough. Nielsen's 2015 report found that **roughly one-third of millennials only make retail purchases when they have a coupon or promotional code.**

Despite price sensitivity, however, fashion remains top-of-mind for millennials, and retailers are acting. Affordable retailers that are popular among Gen Y have been partnering with upscale brands to reach that segment of price-conscious consumers. Target and Lilly Pulitzer released a line in 2015, as did H&M and Balmain. Other brands are using imagery to **show millennials how they can repurpose quality pieces or dress up basic items with accessories.**



Pro tip:

Laydown images are a hit here, too. They do a great job of illustrating how an item someone might already own coordinates with a variety of other items. **The key is to show off the versatility of your products.** So, if a certain lipstick can easily take someone from day to night with the addition of a colorful mascara, illuminate how to do it.



Anthropologie, aBlog

Lulu*s, Pinterest



THE RENAISSANCE MAN

If you think millennial marketing only applies to fashionable women, think again. Millennial men are making waves in the fashion and beauty industries too. In a 2013 JWT survey, roughly half of millennial men said it's acceptable to wear deep V-neck t-shirts and man bags these days. This is a significantly higher share than the Gen X and Baby Boomer men who agreed.

In short, the young men of today are investing more in fashion and personal care products than those who came before them. And brands like JackThreads, Bonobos, Frank & Oak, Kiehl's and Birchbox Man are leading the charge.



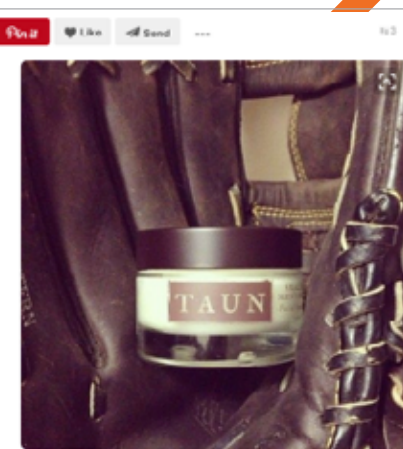
Keep it light:

According to a 2012 Comedy Central study, 88% of millennial men said their sense of humor was crucial to their self-definition. **To reach these men, make them laugh.** Images of everyday dudes laughing, athletes enjoying themselves and relevant memes will resonate.

@bonobos



Birchbox Man, Pinterest



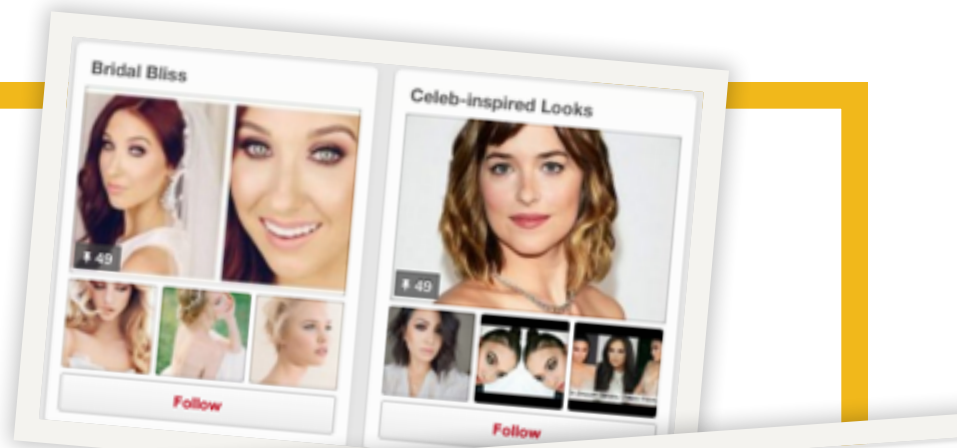
@frankandoak

THE MAKEUP MAVEN

While many industries have found success in the e-commerce space, the beauty sector has had a more difficult time breaking into online sales. From the consumer's perspective, **it's not easy buying lipstick, nail polish and blush via digital means without knowing how colors will come across in real life.**

That's starting to change. Research from The NPD Group and Nielsen (as reported by eMarketer) shows that the internet accounted for 8% of beauty sales in 2014, up 3% from 2013. We can probably attribute that to the growing number of beauty brands that are using imagery—from fans, bloggers and influencers—to convey how products will look in person. Sephora, Sigma Beauty and Julep are among the brands that work with influencers and even fans to do this.

Sigma Beauty,
Pinterest



@julepmaven

Sephora,
the Glossy



BEAUTY BREAKDOWN: HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE THE MILLENNIAL MAKEUP MAVEN?

SHOW 'EM HOW IT'S DONE

Don't forget about makeup tutorials! Showing shoppers how to use products before they buy them goes a long way.

CUSTOMER PHOTOS

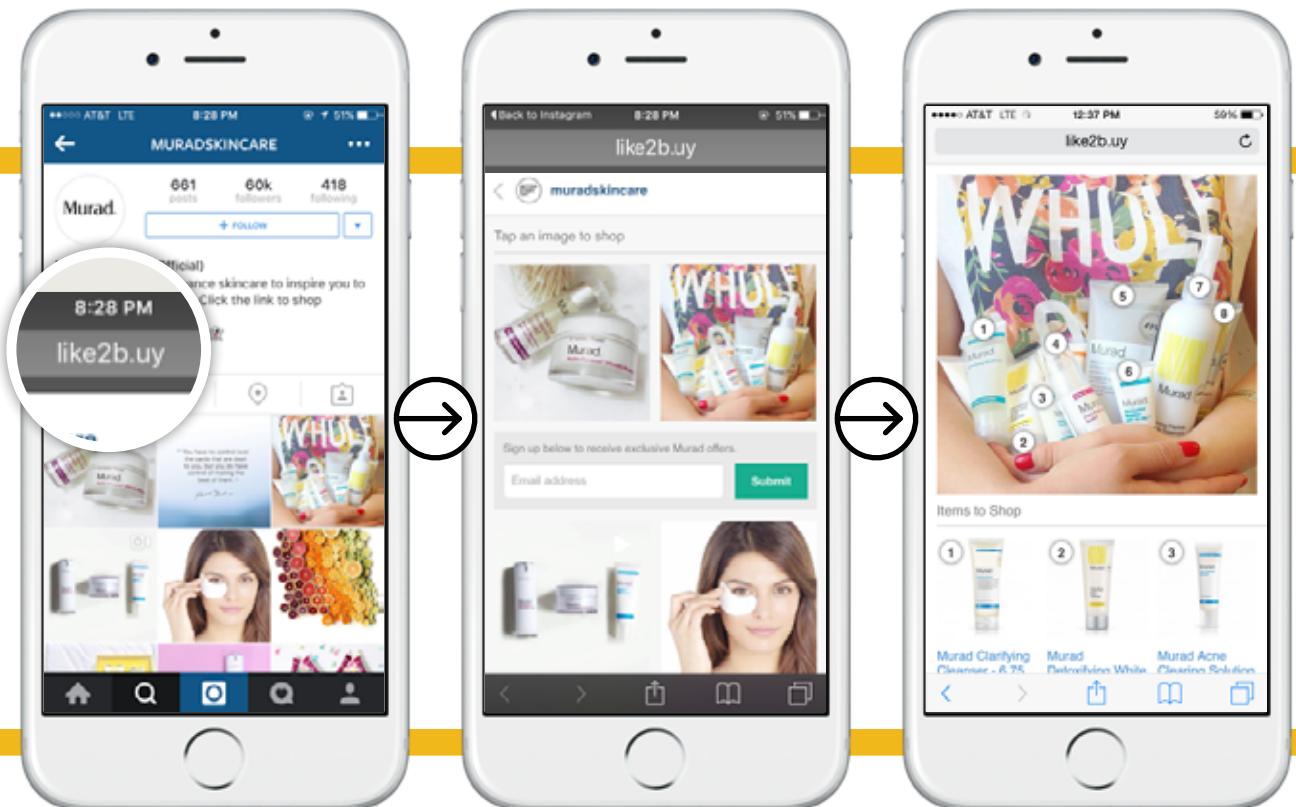
Tap into your customers' talents by featuring them across your channels. Authentic and inspiring, user-generated photos have a tendency to appeal to The Makeup Maven.

BEAUTY INFLUENCERS

Highlight beauty experts! Fans feel connected to influencers who not only provide useful tips, but share little aspects of their daily lives. It creates a level of trust that brand marketers often struggle to achieve.



Once you've got that strategy down, **make it easy for consumers to take action on eye-catching images and actually buy your products.** The example shown here demonstrates how Murad is making Instagram images shoppable using the Curalate Visual Commerce Platform.



THE CUSTOM CURATOR

A significant portion of the U.S. millennial population strives to support local businesses. In fact, a report by FedEx shows that some 40% of millennials claim a preference for buying local – even if the goods or services cost more than mass-market alternatives.

Why? Two reasons: 1) They want to do what they can to support their local economies, and 2) Local shops often carry specialized or personalized products.

Personalized products are valued among Gen Y shoppers because, well, people like feeling special. **Nielsen found that roughly half of millennials say that they are more likely to buy something if they can customize it.** Brands like Moorea Seal and ModCloth are built on the premise of supporting independent artists and designers. And the popularity of Etsy speaks volumes.



Pro tip:

Engage this segment of shoppers by highlighting what makes your brand different. Show off how they can personalize your products and make them one-of-a-kind.



@etsy



@modcloth



Moorea Seal blog

Ready, Set, Sell!

Whether you're a high-end luxury retailer or you dabble in discount, the takeaway is the same: Millennial shoppers are relying on visual content to make purchase decisions and to share their experiences. **If they come across an experiential lifestyle photo, but it's difficult to take action on it, your efforts were for naught.**

When creating relatable and engaging content, the next step is to connect those creative assets—all of them—to commerce. The following pages will explore how you can:



Tap Into Influencers and Fans



Think Multichannel



Connect Your Content to Commerce

1. Tap Into Influencers and Fans

There's no shortage of fashionable photos on the visual web. With the prevalence of #ootd ("outfit of the day") and #mua ("makeup artist") photos on Instagram, the platform has established itself as a destination for people who are sharing and seeking ideas. Nearly 75 million Instagram photos have been tagged with #ootd, while more than 15 million #mua images have been shared.

For apparel, beauty and cosmetics brands, influencer and fan-sourced content can be a cost-effective way to build community, boost credibility and drive sales. Up the ante by sharing this content directly on your owned channels, including your social pages, emails, blog posts, ads and e-commerce site.

Don't forget!

Ask first, and always credit the photographer. A little recognition goes a long way.

1. Find the perfect photo

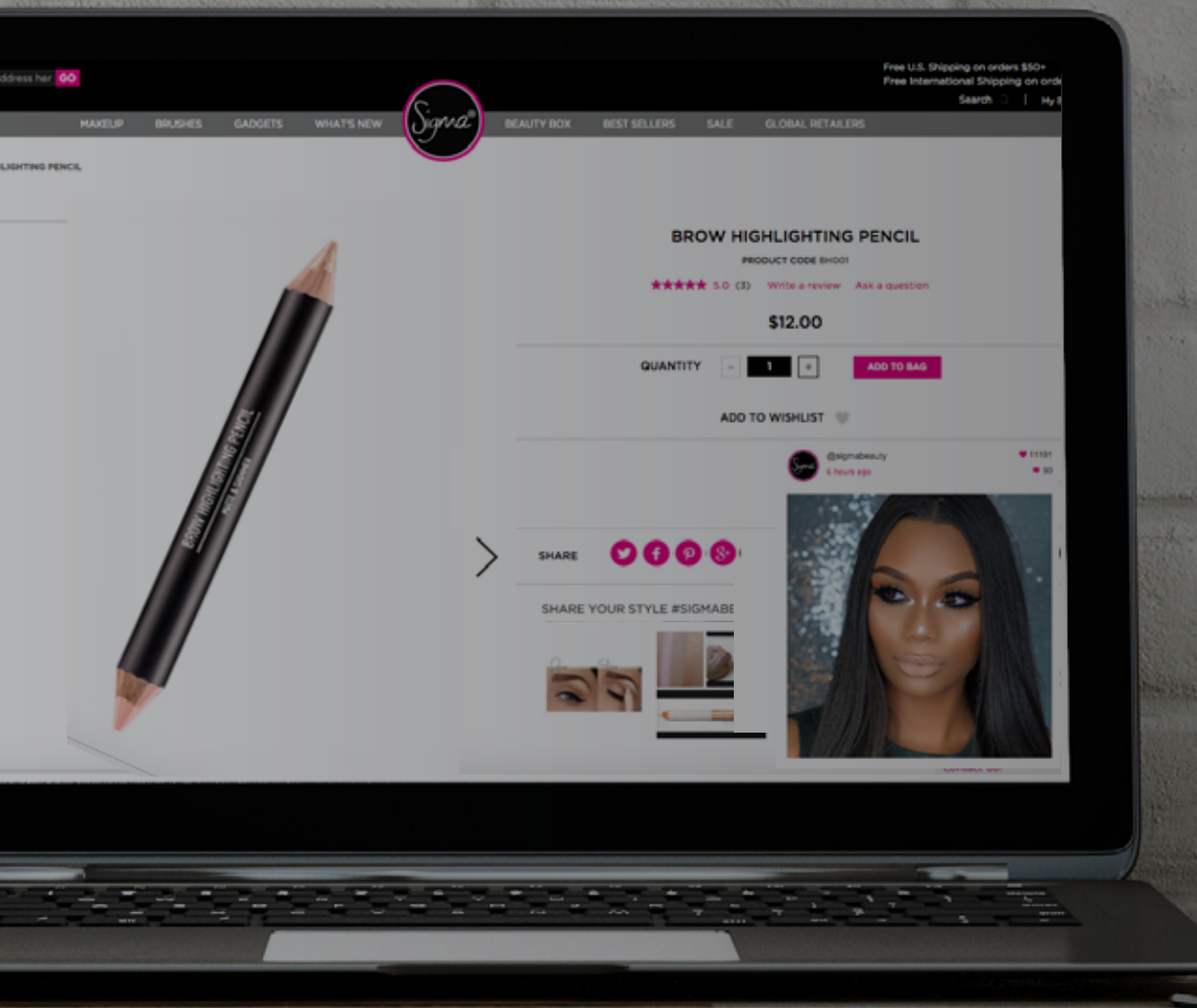


2. Ask nicely!



3. Get the green light








SUCCESS STORY SIGMA BEAUTY



One brand that's mastered influencer marketing is Sigma Beauty. The international cosmetics company shares crowdsourced content within a shoppable Instagram gallery as well as on their website, via Curalate.

-  24k monthly Instagram clicks
-  4x lift in time-on-site
-  16x Fanreel ROI

[SEE MORE](#)

2. Think Multichannel

While mobile devices are pervasive—enabling consumers to discover products and brands across a growing number of channels—the majority of purchases still happen in brick-and-mortar locations or on a brand or retailer’s site. As a result, you need to be proactive. Seed your content across many digital touchpoints, but **make sure that this content drives consumers back to an environment that’s optimized for shopping.**

This is especially pertinent if your business is strictly e-commerce. Taking advantage of social media, your blog, emails, and other relevant channels is key to growing your visual footprint and driving consumers to your .com.

SUCCESS STORY

Lilly Pulitzer



Brands that share visual content across a wide range of consumer touchpoints frequently see higher clicks and conversions, especially when that content is driven by data. Lilly Pulitzer, for instance, harnesses Instagram data to predict which colorful patterns will engage shoppers in stores, in emails, on social and online. The brand even hangs printouts of popular Instagram images throughout retail locations to inspire consumers as they shop.

[SEE MORE](#)



3. Connect Your Content to Commerce

Ultimately, all of these efforts are fruitless if you don't connect your visual content to the products they contain.

So, don't just show people how droolworthy your products are; make it easy for them to learn more about your merchandise and to buy the stuff they love.

The more details you share up front, the better.

By highlighting important information—such as the product's name, price, description and so on—you can trigger a sense of desire. And by creating a seamless path from your pictures to your product pages—making it effortless for people to take action on images—you can accelerate the buyer journey and facilitate a potential sale.

Now that's haute.



About CURALATE

The Curalate Visual Commerce Platform connects content to commerce throughout the customer journey to generate awareness, increase engagement, and drive revenue. For more information, visit www.curalate.com.



Visual Insights

Analytics, community management, publishing, and promotions across the visual web.



Fanreel

Feature fan, editorial, social, and influencer imagery in shoppable galleries on site to drive conversions and revenue.



Like2Buy

Instantly drive traffic and revenue from Instagram to your brand's website.



Reveal

Enable consumers to discover and shop the products they love by simply pointing to them within blog pictures.



Ads

Launch more effective Instagram and Facebook ads with proprietary audience data and image insights.

LET'S TALK BIG PICTURE  learnmore@curalate.com | (855) 223-1459