The Guide to Digital Marketing & Building Community During Social Distancing

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Introduction

Everything experiential is currently on pause. From public transit ads, to cancelled events, we're facing an unprecedented shift to digital media. Brands need to find creative ways to connect to their audience digitally. Digital community isn't a new concept for consumers, but brands championing and owning these initiatives has become increasingly important as in-person events see an unsure date of return.

Even once in-person events start to return and stores reopen, digital engagement will remain critical to consumer affinity.

In this guide you'll see how brands can partner with Pixlee to build a compelling digital community, do 'more with less' content, and keep the brand community engaged digitally well beyond this time.
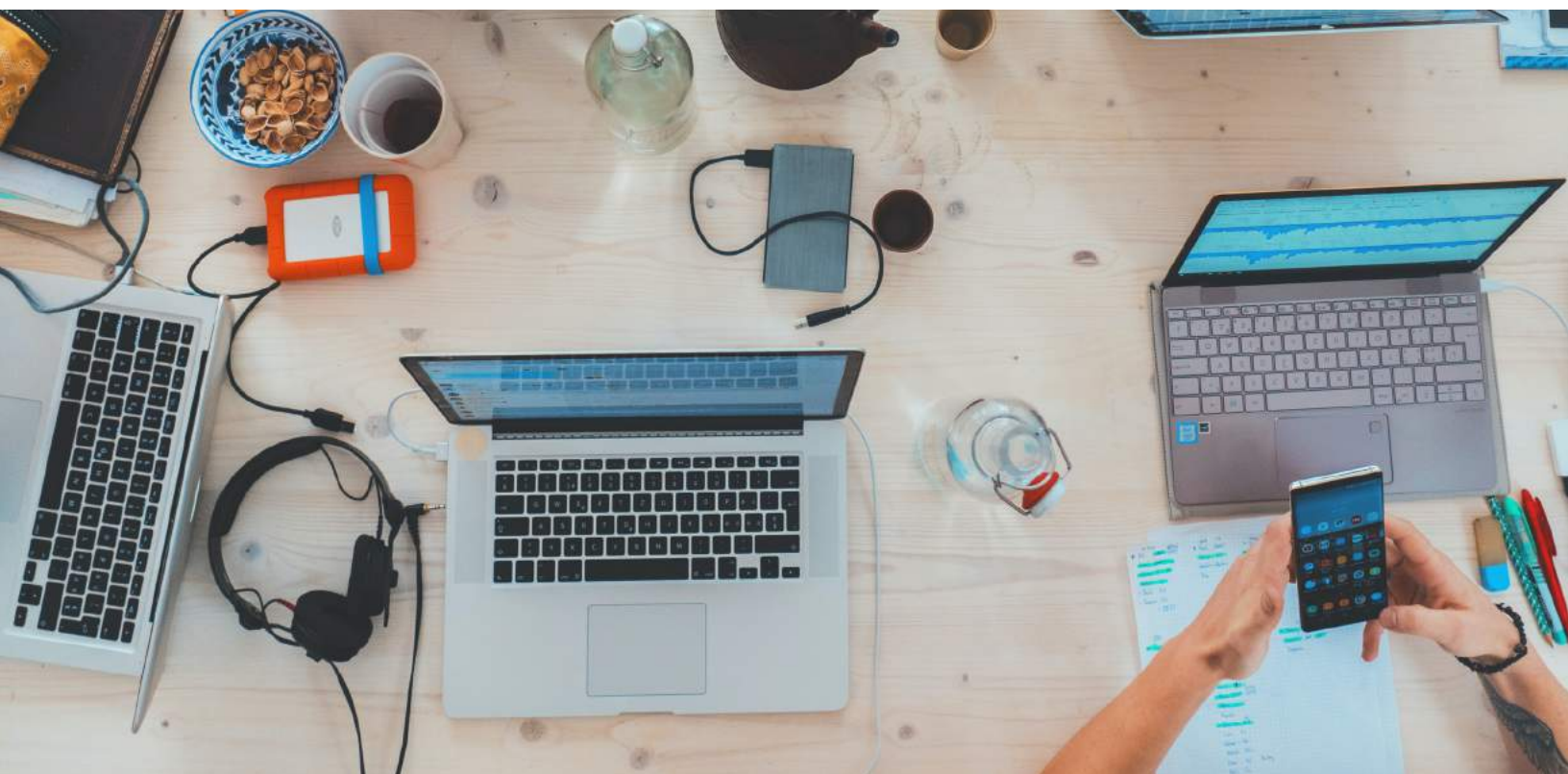
Building Digital Communities

Many brands are trying to be less brand-out and more community-in. You can bring your community together by encouraging your customers to share their stories, and help them find other stories that resonate best with them.

BRANDS WHO ARE EXCELLING AT BUILDING DIGITAL COMMUNITY

1. SENHEISER

Sennheiser originally built a page to showcase their employees and customers using their products to celebrate their 75th anniversary, but adapted specifically to stay connected during this time of crisis. Sennheiser showcases a great mix of professional creative, branded content, and community connection.
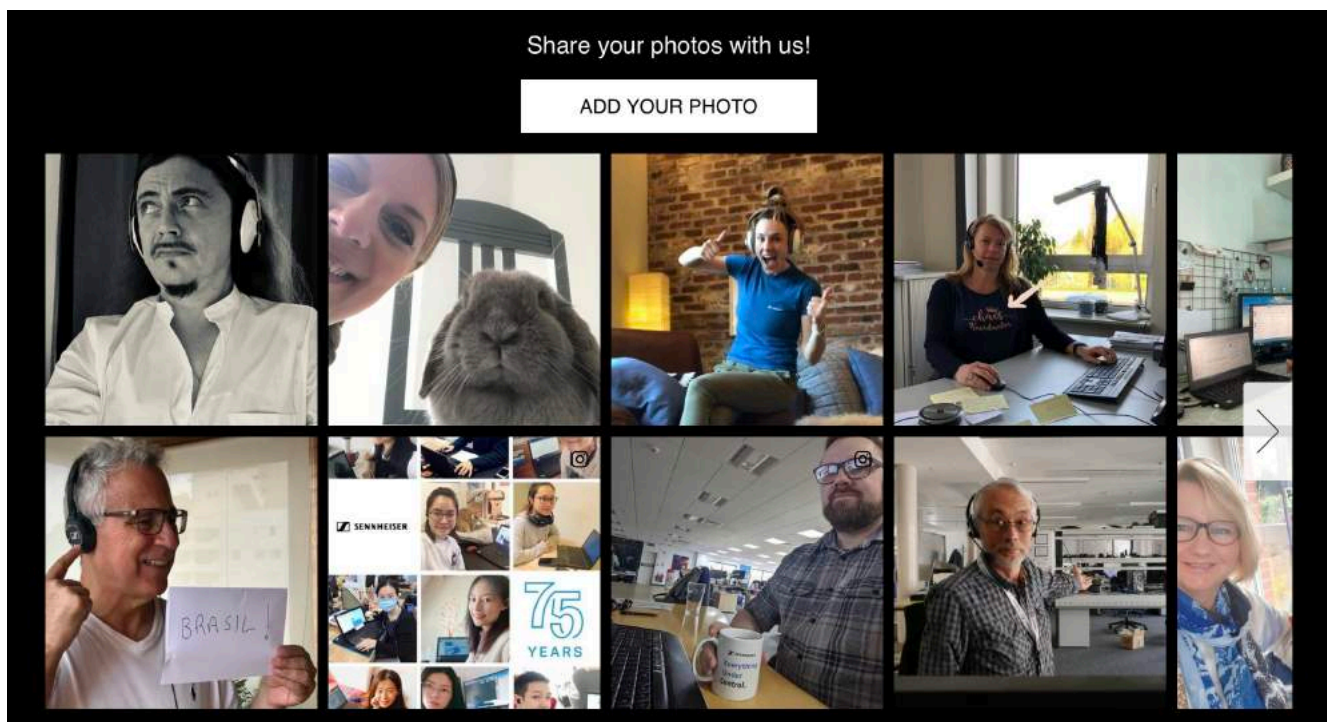
2. MAPIFUL

See how Mapiful was able to build a global community of customers who inspire each other with decor and design ideas.
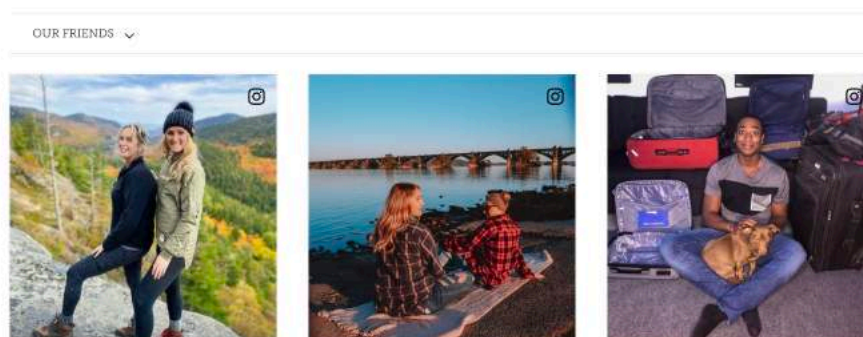

3. 1800 CONTACTS

This huge global company successfully enhanced their brand narrative from contact lenses as a product story to the adventures they enable for their customers.

4. BRECKENRIDGE TOURISM OFFICE

This local tourism bureau has begun sharing stories of local businesses giving back with a local restaurant converting to a free daily meal provider and a local distillery converted to make hand sanitizer.

5. HYLETE

HYLETE has done an incredible job building out their #HYLETENation for both professional trainers, their military community, and everyday customers.
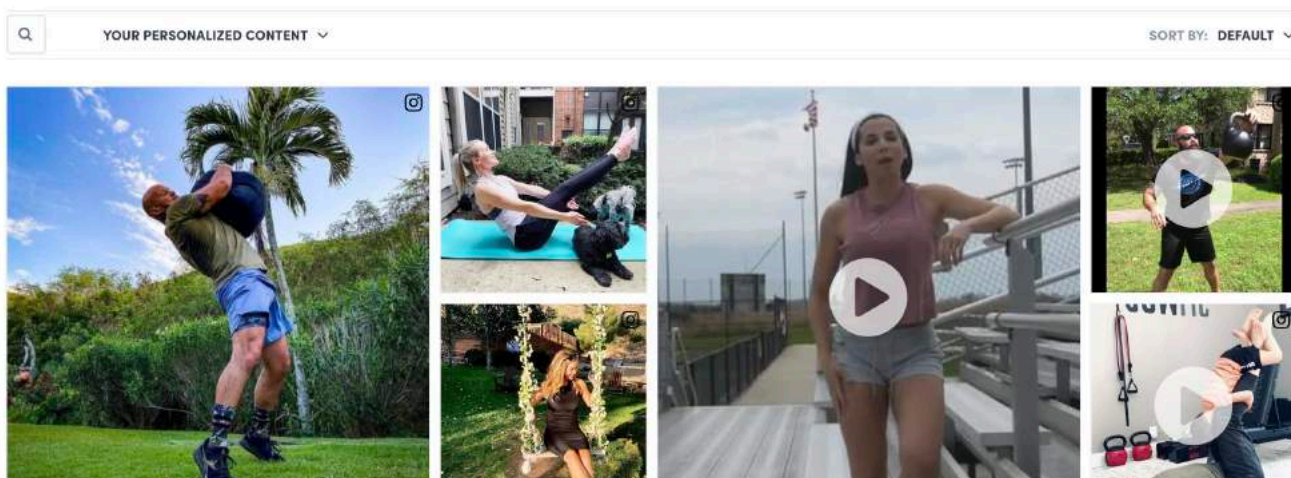
6. REVEL NAIL

Revel Nail has successfully leveraged their Facebook community to submit content showing multiple variations of nail colors across a variety of hand types and skin tones.
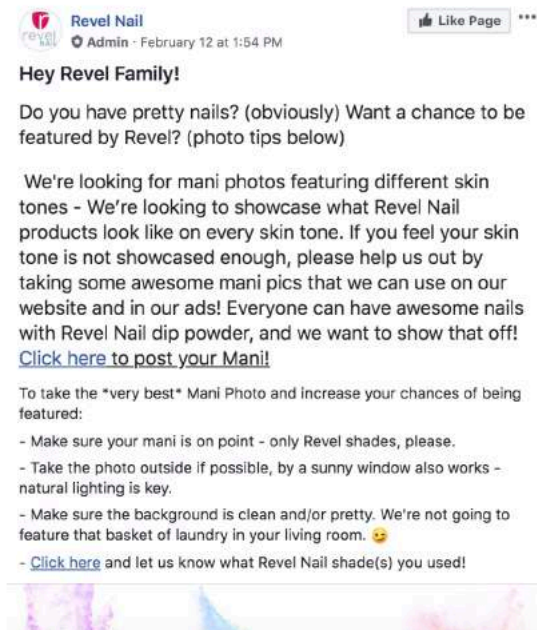
7. MILANI COSMETICS

Milani Cosmetics went beyond traditional influencer marketing and built a community of diversity champions. With Pixlee they were able to find micro and nano influencers who are "Here to Fuel your Self-Expression" to showcase across their website, social media, as well as marketplace sites like Walmart.
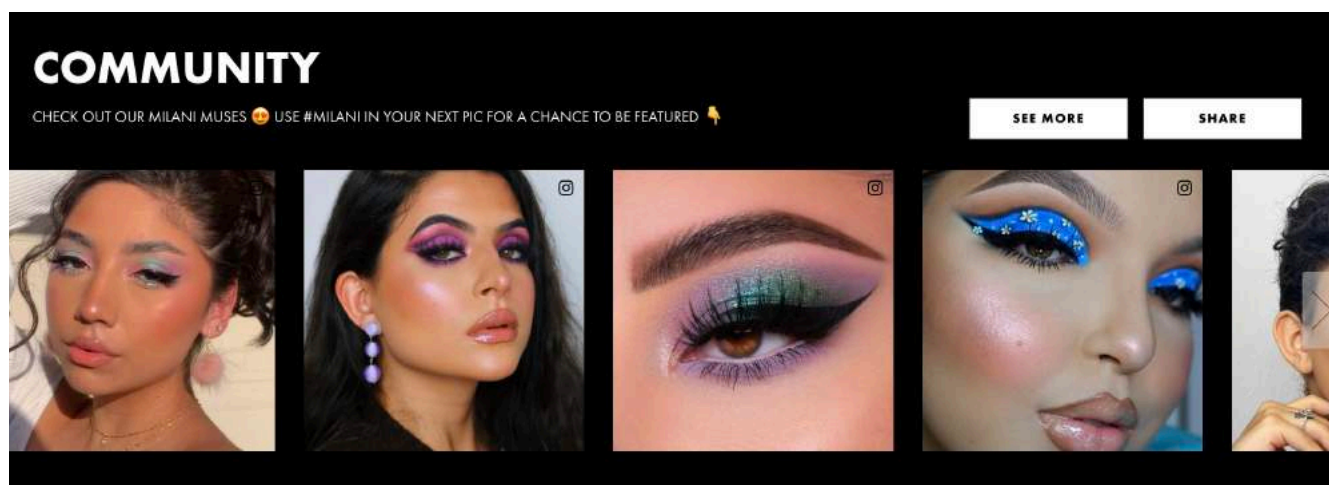
Tactics for Building Community During Challenging Times

BLOGS

Blogs are now more important than ever as an effective avenue to give customers a sense of how your brand is handling these uncertain times. Right now, marketers should focus on bringing branded blogs to life by putting the spotlight on the real experiences of other customers, and encourage purchases by connecting inspirational content to product pages.

KNOCKAROUND

Knockaround is building community through their blog by rallying around content that brings everyone together: customers hanging with their dogs.

#KnocksOnDogs

Who ever said Knockarounds are strictly for walking, talking, humans? We're fans of pooches, and by the looks of it, pooches are fans of Knockarounds. If you've got a canine throw a pair of Knockarounds on them, snap a pic, share it on social, and use hashtag #KnocksOnDogs. Sun's out, let the dogs out...right? Here are a few of our favorites:

ADD YOUR PHOTO
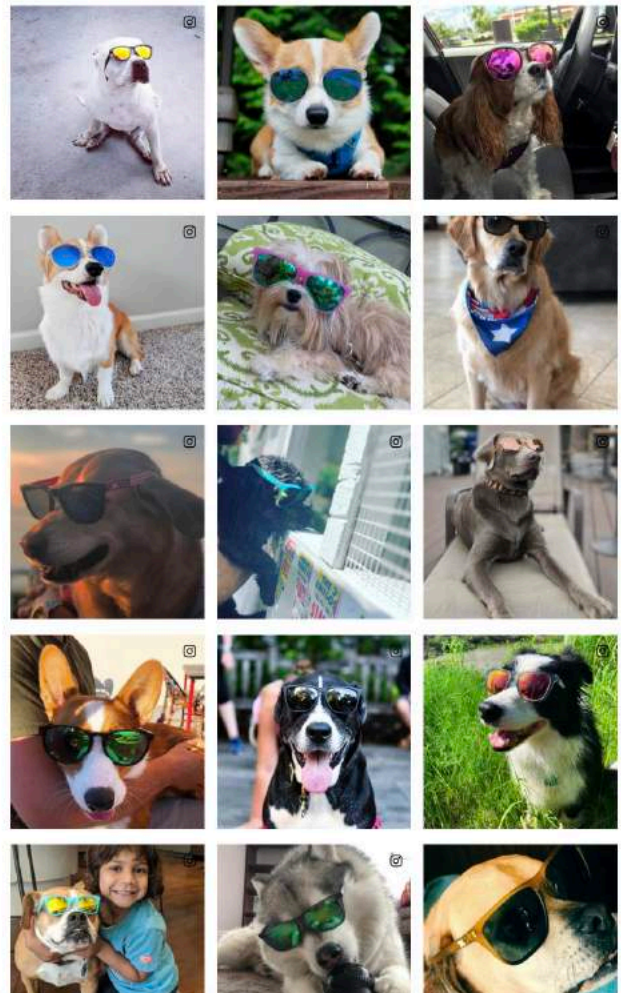
INFLUENCERS AND AMBASSADORS

Now, living aspirationally even if its through #latergram content can keep your audience inspired and engaged. Influencers and ambassadors produce some of your best content, so why keep it contained on social? Now is a time to digitally evangelize that content, and focus on tools that enable you to harness the power of your influencer content across every channel.

BRANDS WHO ARE EXCELLING WITH INFLUENCERS AND AMBASSADORS

1. MICHAEL'S MAKERS STORIES

Michael's is sharing the whimsy of their creators through Instagram stories and leveraging the Pixlee uploader to encourage more customers to share their creativity with the brand.

THE MICHAELS MAKERS

Our Michaels Makers represent some of the best minds in Making. These expert crafters, industry leaders and bloggers are here to bring you monthly projects, tips, do-it-yourself decorating and entertaining ideas, and more.

Each month, we challenge our Makers to design an inspirational project in response to a specific theme, trend or season. You too can participate in the monthly Michaels Makers challenges by creating a project with the monthly theme. Share your photo on Instagram and tag it with #MadeWithMichaels for a chance to be featured on Michaels' social media channels.

2. MILANI COSMETICS

Milani Cosmetics went beyond traditional influencer marketing and built a community of diversity champions. With Pixlee they were able to find micro and nano influencers who are "Here to Fuel your Self-Expression" to showcase across their website, social media, as well as marketplace sites like Walmart.
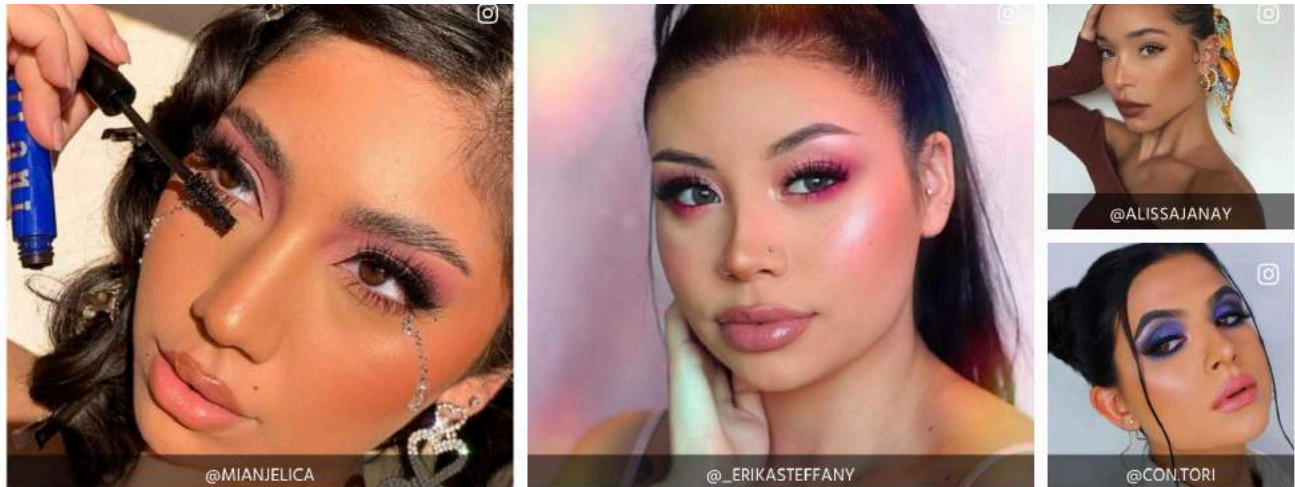
3. KIRA GRACE AMBASSADORS

Kira Grace is driving more value from their influencer program by capturing content and bringing it to life through their ambassador pages.

Introducing our KiraGrace Ambassadors

Great change in the world starts with the beat of one passionate heart. Our Global Ambassador and Warrior Ambassador programs recognize and applaud the strong, influential women in our yoga community and support the impact they are making in the world. These local and global ambassadors embody the ideals of KiraGrace and inspire us to live fuller, freer, and more graciously every single day. We are so thankful to share this community of mutual support and inspiration with these amazing women.
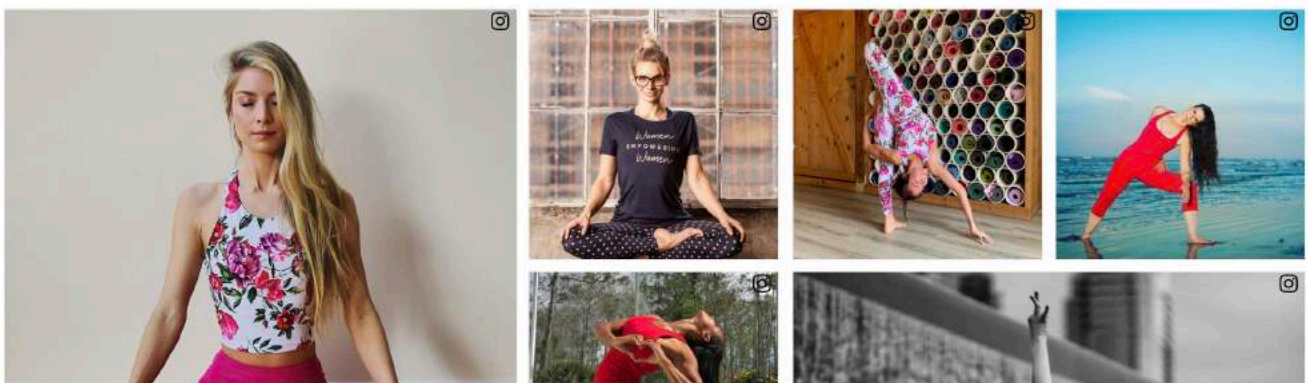
4. REVEL NAIL

Revel Nail has successfully tapped the potential of their Facebook community to submit content showing their nail colors across a variety of hand types and skin tones.
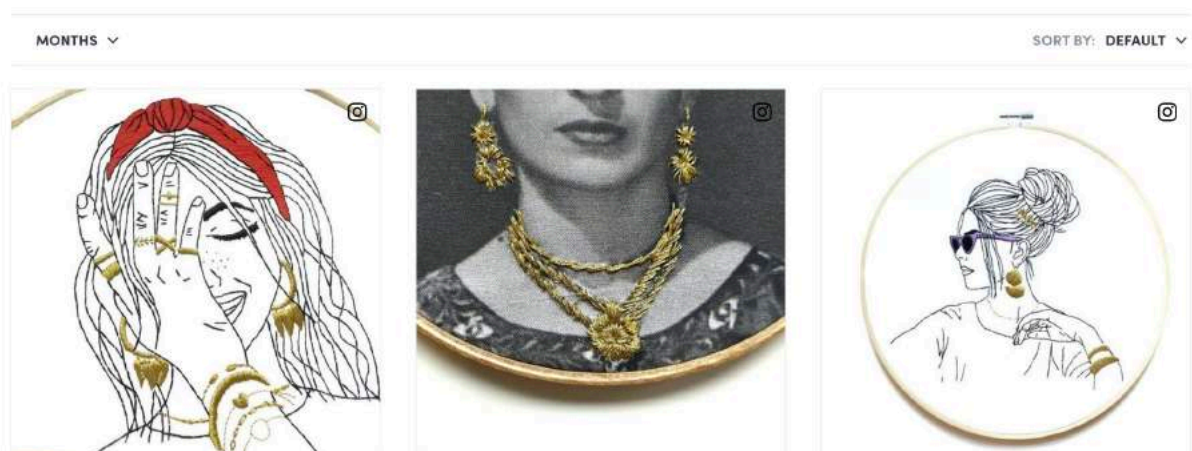

5. DMC

DMC prides itself on the creativity of its community and Pixlee gives them an easy way to highlight these designers and give them promotion opportunities.

EMAIL TO BUILD COMMUNITY

Brands are unable to communicate in person these days, making email more relevant than ever. Showcasing authentic customer content in email helps you connect with your audience on a more personal level – directly into their inboxes.

BRANDS WHO ARE EXCELLING WITH EMAIL

1. MORPHE

Morphe features customer stories as part of their new customer welcome emails to inspire new Morphe customers and invite them to join the community.
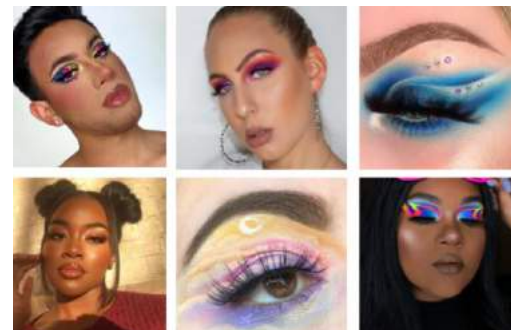
2. OLD NAVY

Old Navy uses the abundance of content from their customers to personalize content in email based on their unique customer profiles. They are at the forefront of demographic personalization in emails through their deep UGC content library linked through tagging to their demographic personas.

3. NATURE LAB

Highlighting philanthropic work in this time can be important for brands who want to showcase their shared values and shared mission with customers. Nature Lab donates proceeds to local food banks including the LA Food Bank and were able to highlight this message in a community-centric email.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT TO BUILD HUMAN CONNECTION

As much of the workforce is facing uncertainty and coping with the reality of working remotely, it's more important than ever to maintain connections and relationships within our own organizations. Brands can benefit by sharing the personal stories of their employees to strengthen company culture, and let customers connect with the people behind the brand.

BRANDS WHO ARE EXCELLING WITH EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

1. DELTA MOMENTS

Delta uses Pixlee to highlight the best moments of the day - from helping new families take their first trip to getting business travelers back from a long trip abroad.

2. BIG SKY

Big Sky highlights their employees favorite parts of the job like getting fresh tracks at first light.

3. SENNHEISER

Sennheiser originally built a page to showcase their employees and customers using their products to celebrate their 75th anniversary, but adapted specifically to stay connected during this time of crisis. Sennheiser showcases a great mix of professional creative, branded content, and community connection.

Doing More with Less: Content Creation

As we shift to buying online, fresh and relatable content is an absolute necessity. Content creation was a challenge before social distancing, and now with photoshoots canceled, creatives adapting to new workflows, lack of resources, and life circumstances, that challenge is only increasing. UGC gives your brand the ability to bring your community together by encouraging your customers to share their stories, and help them find other stories that resonate best with them.

> "It's about embracing a high quantity of content in a centralized way. Don't focus on one-hit wonders or viral experiences. Brands always want viral hashtags, and those can be very successful, but you can't start one every day."
>
> - Ray Butler, CEO of BEN Courtesy of Marketing Dive

BRANDS WHO ARE EXCELLING WITH CONTENT CREATION
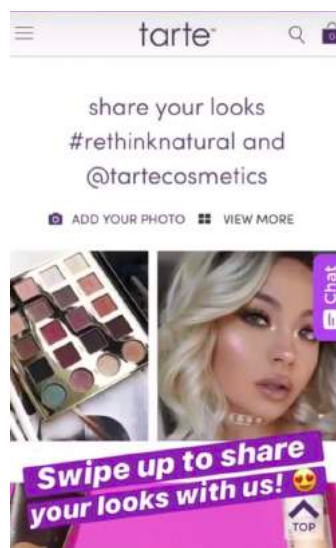
1. TARTE

Tarte Cosmetics has successfully incentivized their customers to share pictures, video and their stories through an integration with their loyalty software with points given for each submission. Tarte also innovatively uses their Instagram stories as a call to action to get customers to share content.

Quarantine and Chill
Share photos of you and your pup of how you quarantine and chill
📷 ADD YOUR PHOTO

2. TEDDY THE DOG

Teddy the Dog, an apparel company for dog lovers, has embraced that their customers are at home with their dogs more than usual through quarantine. Their community has embraced what they love - sharing pictures of their dogs - while submitting to the Quarantine and Chill gallery at an incredible rate to bond and share their personal quarantine stories.

CONTESTS AND CAMPAIGNS

Launching contests and content campaigns are great ways to engage your community and source a wealth of images concurrently – both incredibly important in these times. Celebrate real customer stories in your marketing and make it easy for fans to participate in your brand conversation.

WISH

As daily routines change, and many shift to working from home, Wish encourages their community to share the #WishFromHome products that are helping people get through this time.

It's not easy being cooped up at home, but we've got you, Wish Fam. Show us how you #WishFromHome with your favorite products that are helping you get through these uncertain times.

■■ TERMS & CONDITIONS
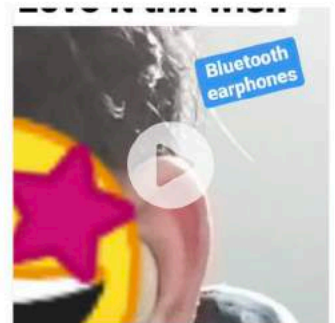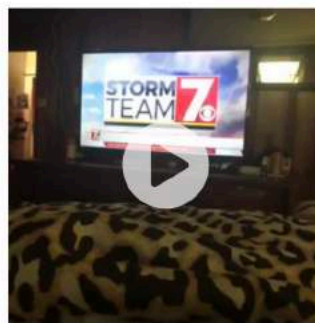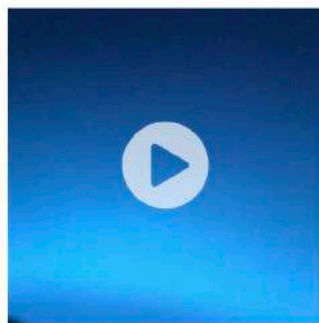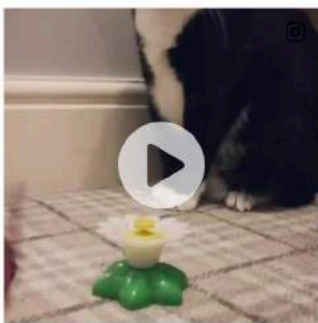
YAKIMA

Yakima uses contests and campaigns to connect a utilitarian product to the inspirational journey and destination that it enables.

THE STORIES SO FAR

BAREFOOT WINE

Embracing the uptick in virtual happy hours, Barefoot's #CheersToYouSweepstakes encourages fans to submit their photos for a chance to win a delivery meal.

#CHEERSTOYOUSWEEPTAKES

Virtual cheers to you! Barefoot wants to treat you to your next food delivery order, because nothing pairs better with a virtual cheers than takeout food and PJs! Show us your virtual cheers and tag @barefootwine #cheerstoyousweepstakes between Fri 4/3 – Thurs 4/30. 200 lucky Barefoot lovers will have a chance to win a $25 food delivery service gift card! Your profile must be public to be entered to win.

| ADD YOUR PHOTO | RULES |

Tyler Longman
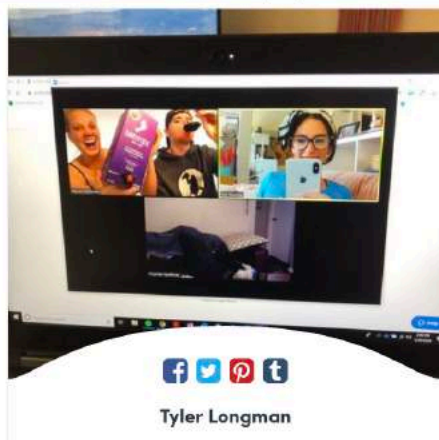
Do More with Less: Scale Earned Media

As we see a lot of brands shift towards more cost-saving strategies and ways of better using and driving earned media, we know it's important to make sure you're armed with ways to directly prove ROI from every technology provider you partner with. Here are some ways brands are already getting the best ROI with their earned media.

1. MORPHE

Morphe leverages their customer and influencer content as part of their paid social and digital strategy through UGC in category pages, facebook ads, and welcome emails to first time shoppers.
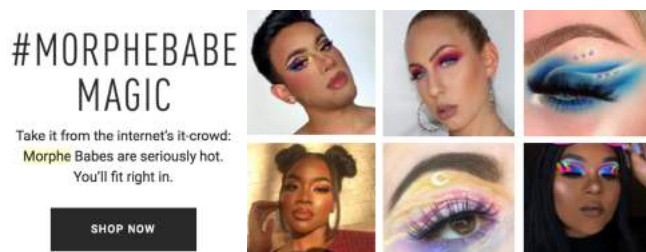
2. ALO YOGA

Alo Yoga features customer content as a core part of their email marketing strategy to engage and retain customers by showcasing professional Yoga instructors doing aspirational poses and end customers who are more relatable.

3. NATURE LAB

Highlighting philanthropic work in this time can be important for brands who want to showcase their shared values and shared mission with customers. Nature Lab donates proceeds to local food banks including the LA Food Bank and were able to highlight this message in a community-centric email.

4. COLE HAAN

Cole Haan has a browse abandonment campaign where they integrated Pixlee's API to serve authentic content to customers on Facebook Messenger. retargeting in facebook messenger.

Doing More with Less: Tech Consolidation

Many brands are looking to save costs by consolidating their UGC, influencer, and community management into one system. Pixlee positively affects all three areas by reducing con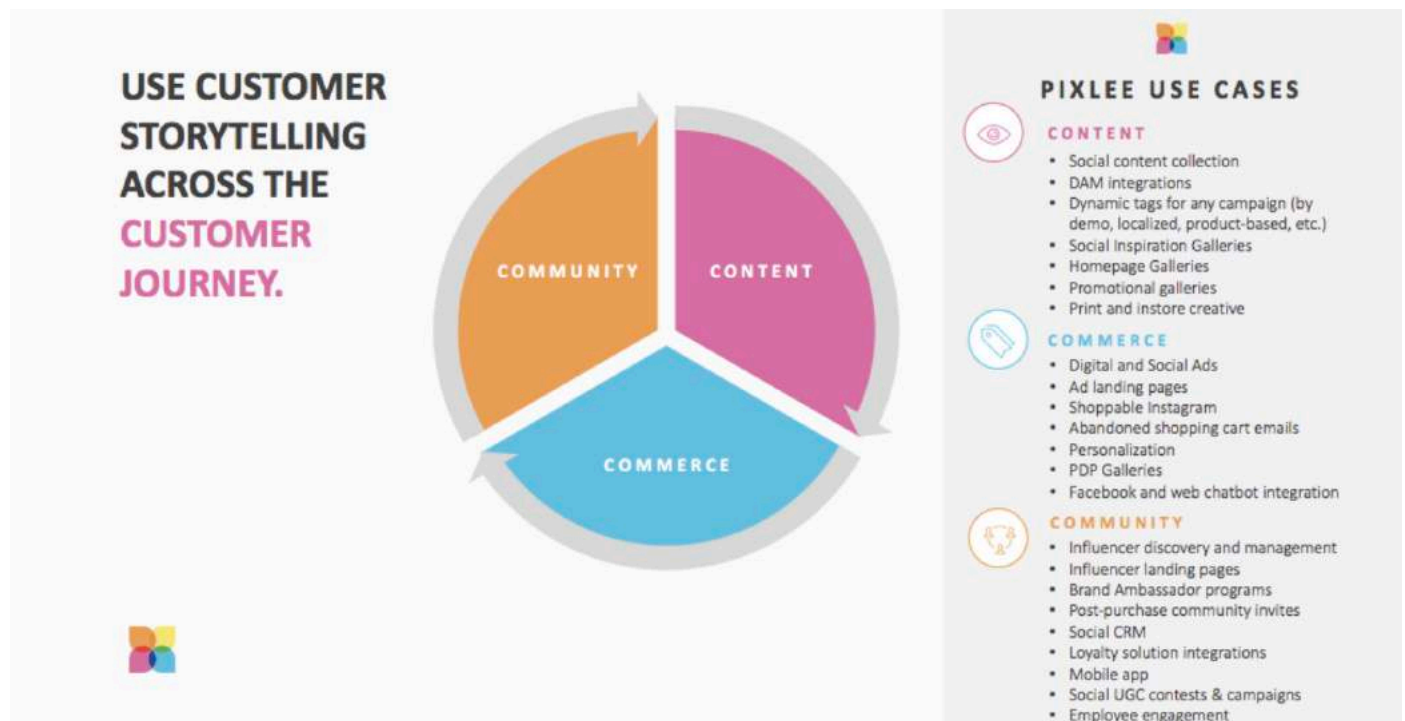tent costs and lowering dependency on paid channels altogether. Consolidating these different programs not only helps with reducing costs, it can help break down silos in your organization. Alo Yoga currently uses Pixlee to connect all of these programs across four different teams.

> "To be able to implement applicable UGC into our emails allows us to have more options for a customer to actually purchase when they get an email. With Pixlee, we're now able to have all content in one easy tool, and we just approve it and schedule it. So our social team is able to benefit from it as well. And the same with our influencer team."
>
> - Chris Moynihan   Digital Marketing Director at Alo Yoga

USE CUSTOMER STORYTELLING ACROSS THE CUSTOMER JOURNEY.

COMMUNITY | CONTENT | COMMERCE

PIXLEE USE CASES

CONTENT
- Social content collection
- DAM integrations
- Dynamic tags for any campaign (by demo, localized, product-based, etc.)
- Social Inspiration Galleries
- Homepage Galleries
- Promotional galleries
- Print and instore creative

COMMERCE
- Digital and Social Ads
- Ad landing pages
- Shoppable Instagram
- Abandoned shopping cart emails
- Personalization
- PDP Galleries
- Facebook and web chatbot integration

COMMUNITY
- Influencer discovery and management
- Influencer landing pages
- Brand Ambassador programs
- Post-purchase community invites
- Social CRM
- Loyalty solution integrations
- Mobile app
- Social UGC contests & campaigns
- Employee engagement

How Pixlee Can Help

Pixlee helps you build and strengthen your brand community across all channels by putting authentic, customer-driven content front and center. We give you the tools you need to find your best customer advocates, collect compelling content, engage with customers to get their permission and publish that content to your website, your social channels, and even your ads.It starts with collection. Pixlee helps you find content on social, or collect content directly from your customers through your website or email campaigns. From there, you can find the best content, and reach out to customers to secure their permission for you to use it. You can also tag that content with the relevant products, so when others view it, they can seamlessly find and buy. With Pixlee, you can easily publish your content to any channel, and customize your gallery to match your brand's look and feel with simple graphical editing, or custom CSS. We also give you a set of tools to track how your content is performing, from engagement, down to conversions and revenue by product, category, or overall.

As perpetual optimists, we feel these challenges inherently breed new opportunities. For example, digital communities are growing as is digital engagement. We're seeing a whole new generation of innovation from those digital communities, and coincidentally, a reinvigoration of desktop browsing. At the center of all these trends are people, making honest and relatable content that connects us all.

Now, more than ever, we need community and stories. After all, social distancing doesn't mean we can't still build something strong, together.