

# 3 Ways to Engage Advertising-Weary Consumers

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According to recent research by the American Marketing Assn., consumers are bombarded with up to ten thousand brand messages daily. According to a 2015 Microsoft study, our attention span has been reduced to six seconds — which also happens to be that of a goldfish. Add to this declining trust in traditional advertising and what's a brand to do? In a world filled with bots, ad blockers and a bleak consumer regard for advertising, how can brands truly break through and connect with consumers?

Well, the good news is that while trust in traditional advertising is declining, trust in user-generated content (UGC), recommendations & reviews is on the rise. According to a Nielsen study, 92% of consumers trust the recommendation of a friend or family member over any other form of advertising. And research from *Great Shopper*

magazine confirms that 88% of shoppers say that if they enjoyed an experiential interaction with a product away from a store, they would add it to their shopping list. Additionally, a recent article in the *Huffington Post*

noted that 76% of consumers view UGC as more honest than traditional advertising and suggests that marketers should strive to insert UGC into all phases of the purchase cycle, from discovery to point of purchase to post purchase.

All this research suggests that to connect with consumers, brands need to deliver unique experiences, provide a platform for UGC and bridge the gap between online, at home and in-store. It starts with building an emotional connection between the consumer and the brand. It used to be that a standout :60 spot with a sappy soundtrack accomplished this but that's no longer the case. Today, a proven way for brands to build that lasting emotional connection is to engage with consumer influencers and provide them with a unique, relevant, and shareable experience that will attract their friends and followers. How?

## **Identify and activate everyday, real consumer influencers**

Find the people who are passionate about your brand and loyal to your retail partners. Why consumer influencers instead of a celebrity, notable YouTuber or Instagrammer with thousands of followers? For starters, they are more authentic, trusted and credible. In fact, an Accenture study confirmed that consumer influencers have twice the impact of paid influencers. As consumers, we're far more likely to trust the mom next door or the review our friend shared on Facebook than any message from a paid endorser.

## **Give them a reason to talk about you**

Provide a compelling, memorable, content-generating experience that can be shared. Maybe it's a sample. Maybe it's some branded swag. Maybe it's a piece of exclusive, entertaining content. We crave these experiences — especially Millennials, 75% of whom say that they also “crave real content when making a

purchase, meaning a selfie taken while wearing or using a favorite product could be more influential than traditional marketing.” (

*Huffington Post*

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## **Get them to spread the word, online and off**

So much of what we do today — and where marketers invest today — is online, but don't forget that those physical brand experiences and offline conversations matter too. It turns out that 90% of brand conversations are still happening offline and that one in five sales is impacted by social conversations online and off (Engagement Labs). So, if you can get a real consumer to spread the word on your behalf, you're likely to see the results at the cash register.

We can't control the “goldfish effect” but we can find ways to deliver memorable, shareable brand experiences — and when that happens, everyone wins — consumers, brands and retailers.

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