

The Glossier Playbook: How to Become Community- Driven to Succeed



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How Glossier Re-Invented the Rules

Glossier is an extremely interesting case study to examine, and not just because of their recent billion dollar valuation. As a relative new-comer to the multi-billion dollar beauty market, Glossier faced a number of challenges as they launched a new brand, a new philosophy, and a new marketing playbook—but have clearly proved that change can certainly be for the better.



A billion dollar
valuation



Over 1.6 million
followers on
Instagram



Over a hundred
million dollars in
annual revenue

Glossier is a force to be reckoned with.

But it's their unique approach and underlying business strategy that makes their success so interesting, and such a great opportunity to learn from.

Glossier essentially turned the beauty market on its head by redefining the marketing, sales, and product development paradigm.

Glossier also redefined the term "customer". With traditional beauty brands, distribution and ultimately product sales fall to the hands of beauty outlets like Sephora, Ulta, and department stores. This leads traditional brands to look to mass purchasers as the real customer, and has a serious impact on how they develop and market their products.

The concept was
simple, put the
customer first,
but the impacts
of that decision
are profound.

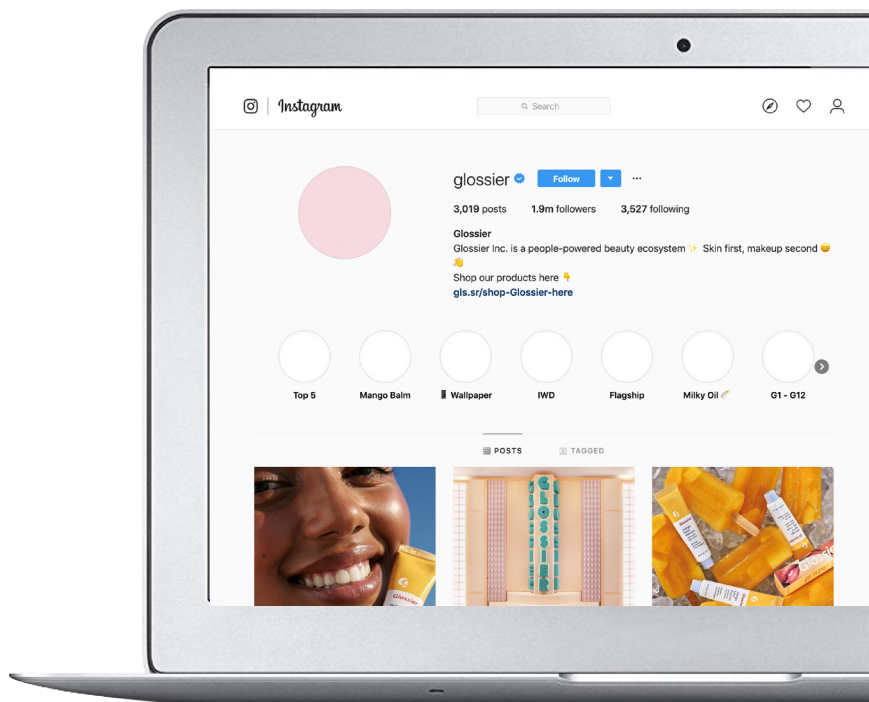


Instead, Glossier chose to sell directly to consumers, making the end user the customer from start to finish. Beyond redefining the customer, Glossier redefined their entire approach to product development, marketing, and sales, to put the customer at the core of every activity.

This profound change is inherent in everything Glossier has done to date, from evolving from a beauty blog to a beauty product vendor, to creating their first physical store, and to developing new products as they expand their lineup.

Glossier re-invented the rulebook in three key ways by putting their customers and their community first.

- 1 COMMUNITY
- 2 CONTENT
- 3 AUTHENTICITY



COMMUNITY

Before Glossier ever launched their first product, they already had a strong following from their beauty blog, and had transformed that readership into a community of over 13 thousand followers on Instagram.

This emphasis on community was only strengthened as they grew their brand and product portfolio. Instead of spending time and resources pursuing traditional beauty sales and marketing channels, they realized that their customers were on Instagram and social, and focussed their attention on growing that following, by highlighting and engaging with customers and superfans.

For many brands, social channels are simply an extension of their existing marketing engine. Instead, Glossier put their focus on their customer and evolved to make the social channels in which their customers were most active the core of their marketing efforts.

CONTENT

Content plays a huge role in a brand's ability to build and engage a community on Instagram and other social channels. This also required a significant shift in thinking. While many beauty brands rely on celebrities and highly choreographed studio photography to showcase their products, Glossier realized that this made products feel out of touch for actual consumers. Instead, Glossier focussed on creating and collecting content that would resonate with the busy lifestyles of their actual customers.

Glossier's content shows products the way that they appear in the real world. On a shelf in a crowded bathroom, being used with a dog in the background, or featuring Glossier girls that only wore a little bit of makeup, recognizing that most people don't have hours to spend getting ready everyday. This made Glossier's content, and ultimately its products feel much more accessible to their fans, and has made a huge contribution to their success on Instagram, and in sales overall.



YOU LOOK
GOOD.



AUTHENTICITY

That theme of authenticity, accessibility, and realism feeds into the final piece of the strategy as well—turning their customers into their brands best advocates. Glossier chose not to use a string of high profile celebrity influencers to promote their products. Instead, when launching a new product, Glossier sends samples to their fans, and leaves it to their community to create a buzz—and it works beautifully.

When product recommendations come from your friends, and your peers, it's far more effective than advertising and expensive creative assets can ever be. By recognizing this simple fact upfront, Glossier has been able to focus their energy on building a community of customer advocates that have propelled incredible growth.

Putting the Glossier Playbook in Action for your Brand

- 1 BUILD YOUR SOCIAL COMMUNITY
- 2 FOCUS ON AUTHENTIC CONTENT
- 3 TURN CUSTOMERS INTO ADVOCATES



KEY 1: BUILD YOUR SOCIAL COMMUNITY

That really starts with building a social community. For most brands, this is probably not an effort that you have to start from scratch, but rather, adapt your strategy to make your efforts more successful.

Focus on Your Customer

That starts with putting your focus on your customers, and letting them help to drive the conversation.

Many brands today view social as an extension of their traditional marketing channels. But that fails to account for the most significant change that social communities introduced to commerce. Traditional marketing channels are one way—you push a message, and customers listen.

Responding to questions, suggestions, or even just encouraging sharing makes your customers feel valued, and generates an enormous amount of goodwill for your brand. By prompting conversations and starting dialog with your customers on social, you can generate engagement, and gain insights that can help shape your marketing, and even your product.

When Glossier ran a campaign asking their customers to post pictures of their products on a shelf, they noticed a consistent theme—skin cleansers were never on the shelf. They realized that this would be a great opportunity to expand their product line, and ran another social campaign to determine what attributes would make the best cleanser.

That feedback resulted in a new cleanser, and when launched, it became an immediate success because their community had a direct hand in its creation.

Instagram and
other social
communities are
two way channels.
Your customers
now have a voice
in the conversation
and they want to
be heard.



How to Do It

Building community doesn't mean you have to turn to Instagram to guide your product development. It simply means constantly engaging your customers in a conversation, and making them feel valued and heard.

Social contests can be a great way to kickstart community, and give both you and your customers a reason to engage on your social channels. As a bonus, contests can often generate a lot of amazing content that you can repurpose later on. Creating and tracking hashtags is a great way to organize discussions, and track the success of your social strategy. Hashtags enable you to have multiple threads of discussion alive at the same time, without creating chaos in your

social channel. And, by associating unique hashtags with every campaign or contest, you can gather great content and easily sort out what's creating the most engagement with your brand.

Of course, simply creating a contest or asking a question isn't enough. Communities require conversation, so it's important to listen to customers, respond to their questions and posts, and re-share content that you love.

Ultimately, this creates a positive feedback loop, where the more content and conversation there is, the more it grows, and you get more social credibility and buzz for your brand as a result.



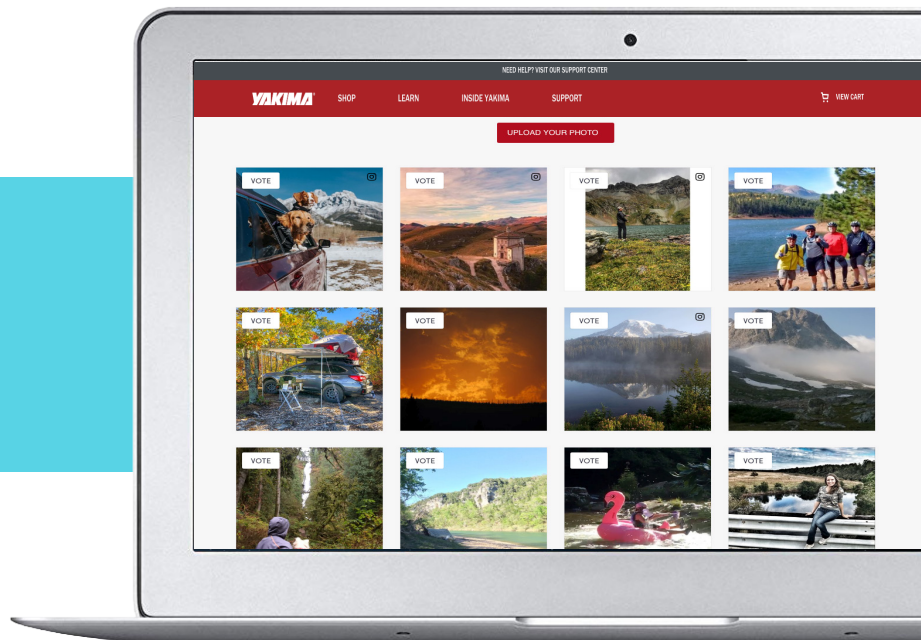
Community Spotlight: Yakima

Social communities and contest work for almost every industry, not just beauty. Yakima is an outdoor focussed brand that sells roof racks and accessories to enable their customers to haul their bikes, skis, and belongings to their favorite activities and destinations.

While roof racks by themselves may not be that interesting, Yakima still seeks to be a relevant lifestyle brand, and realized that they can do that by focussing their community on what you can do when using Yakima products.

They launched a series of social contests featuring themselves and their partners to showcase some of the amazing lifestyles that their customers were living.

The results have been spectacular. After running these social contests, Yakima has seen more traffic to their site, their visitors are more likely to return, spend longer when they visit, and engage heavily with the content that's been generated. It has created awareness about the brand, and the Pacific Northwest Pride it represents, in a way that was previously out of reach.



KEY 2: FOCUS ON AUTHENTIC CONTENT

As we just saw with Yakima, authentic content is essential to achieving the results we all desire, so relentless focus on content is essential to social success.

Content as Inspiration

Content is essentially the lifeblood of your community. It inspires engagement, and ultimately helps you to drive sales.

But content alone is not enough. Content needs to be relatable, and relevant to your customers varied lifestyles, or else it doesn't resonate and it fails to create a compelling reason to engage.

In fact, research from ExpertVoice shows us that 96% of consumers feel that traditional marketing is intended to mislead. This intuitively makes sense. We are bombarded with hundreds to thousands of brand messages everyday—all with the intention of getting us to buy another product, or subscribe to another service, and only with the word of a seller or a celebrity to back it up. We don't believe these messages because we know they are motivated by sales, not the intention to make our lives better.

But our family, friends, and peers aren't motivated by sales. When they tell us something, we believe it because we know that it's based on their experiences and what they know to be true. That's why the majority of consumers trust content from their peers,

and say that the presence of that content greatly increases their confidence to buy.

Glossier recognized this simple fact and has made a core part of their content strategy. Content on their website and in their community features people that look like their customers, in scenarios that echo their life. By establishing a level of realism, and authenticity, Glossier becomes more credible as an advisor, and their products become far more appealing as a result.



How to Do It

Authentic content is easier to find and use than you may think. Your customers are already generating photos and videos about your brand everyday, as part of their daily lives.

Harnessing that content and putting it to work across your site and in your social communities can make a huge impact on how consumers view your brand, and how much they trust your message.

By using authentic customer content, you can greatly increase clickthrough on social ads, because those ads now appeal directly to the lifestyle of your customers, and come from a peer source they already trust.

Shoppers who see customer content on product pages convert at a far higher rate because social proof is built directly into the shopping experience. They aren't taking just your word that a product is great, they can verify that from the content of other customers using the product like they would.

And the benefits build from there. When consumers trust your brand, they spend more, leading to higher average orders, and more return purchases.



Content Spotlight: Breckenridge

Consumer trust is relevant to every industry, and authentic content is one of the best ways to build trust.

Breckenridge Tourism wanted to increase their visitors and bookings and decided to turn to their community of travelers to help them do it. They realized that sharing the experiences that others had when visiting Colorado would be far more effective than simply telling people that Colorado is great.

By showcasing the amazing views, activities, and experiences that Breckenridge had to offer—through the lens of real people who went there—they were able to attract more visitors, and even collect more great content. Like before, this created a positive feedback loop where content lead to more traffic, and more traffic leads to more content.



KEY 3: TURN CUSTOMERS INTO ADVOCATES

Social proof is the best form of advocacy for your brand. And your customers are the best possible advocates you can have.

Social Proof

Your consumers crave content that reflects their own lifestyles and values. Because not every customer looks alike, it's impossible to create content that serves each of your markets on your own.

But your customers can help. When we buy a product, we are generally passionate supporters, and often very eager to share how that product has helped us in our lives.

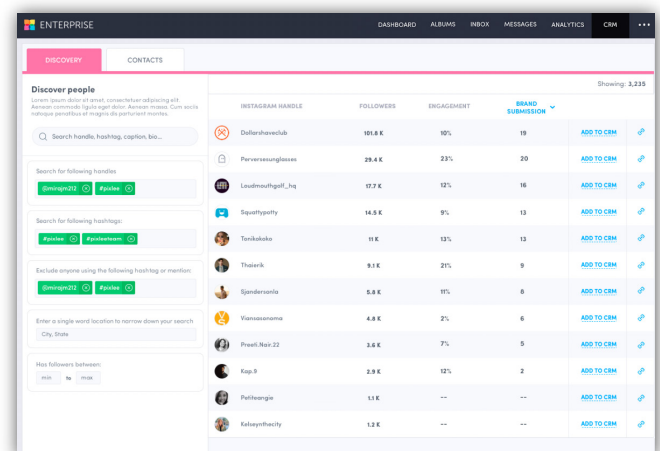
Glossier highlights these customers directly on their homepage, with a section on how their customers use their products every day. This helps people new to Glossier to quickly understand how a product can fit into their busy routine, and provides social proof that the product works in real life. Glossier features dozens of customers from different backgrounds, with different skin tones, and different professions to show how no matter what your needs are, there's probably something that will work for you.













How to Do It

Creating social proof requires finding the customers that are most passionate about your brand, and most reflective of your target markets.

Pixlee helps to identify key customers based on their bio, engagement, following, and more to quickly find the customer that can be your best advocates.

By forging a relationship with these customers, you can tap into their social networks and multiply your brand's reach within those communities. Collecting and sharing content helps you to engage those communities in a conversation, and provide relevant proof on your site and in your ads—leading to higher traffic and increased conversion.



ENTERPRISE					DASHBOARD	ALBUMS	INBOX	MESSAGES	ANALYTICS	CRM	...
DISCOVER		CONTACTS									
Discover people											
Showing: 3,235											
Search handle, hashtag, caption, bio...											
Search for following handles											
Search for following hashtags											
Exclude anyone using the following hashtag or mention											
Enter a single word location to narrow down your search											
View followers between											
New Followers between											
Showing: 3,235											
PROFILE	FOLLOWERS	ENGAGEMENT	BRAND SUBMISSION								
 Dallanthea	191.8 K	10%	19	ADD TO CRM							
 Pernice	29.4 K	23%	20	ADD TO CRM							
 Lindsey	17.7 K	12%	16	ADD TO CRM							
 Squid	14.9 K	9%	13	ADD TO CRM							
 Tori	11 K	13%	13	ADD TO CRM							
 Therese	9.1 K	21%	9	ADD TO CRM							
 Sandra	5.8 K	19%	6	ADD TO CRM							
 Vannessa	4.8 K	2%	6	ADD TO CRM							
 Preston	3.6 K	7%	5	ADD TO CRM							
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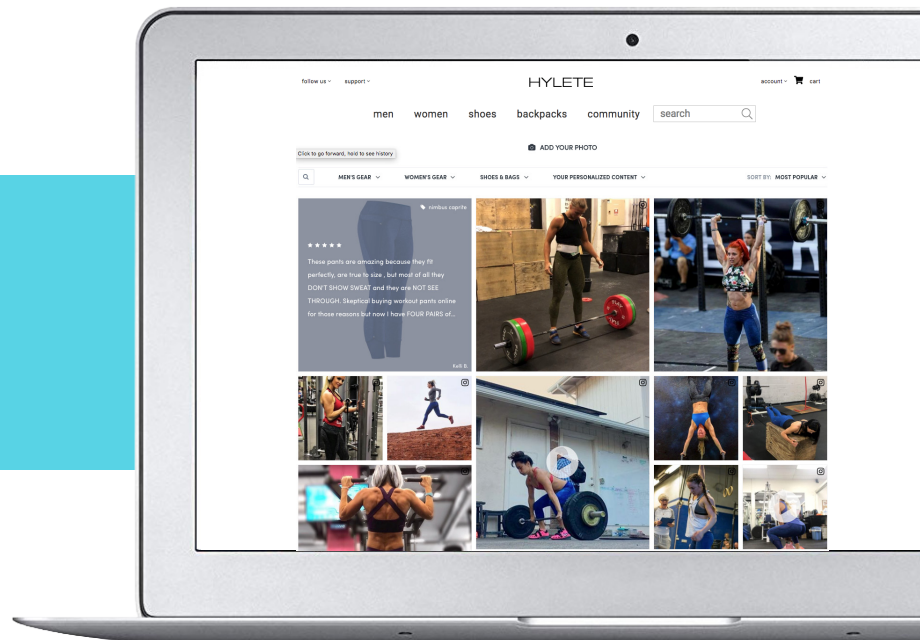
Customer Advocate Spotlight: HYLETE

This strategy works in every consumer industry. HYLETE is an athletic apparel company who depends on their community buying their products again and again.

They realized that they aren't going to get people to buy from them again unless they feel a strong connection to the brand. After all, there are tons of companies that sell athletic apparel. HYLETE customers are loyal to them because they trust the brand and the community behind it.

And HYLETE does a great job of establishing the strength of their community, and the social proof it provides, across their channels and their website. Even from the homepage, you can see their products in action with their customers, and read reviews of how the product performed, so you can immediately feel comfortable that the product will work for you, too.

By leveraging this social validation, HYLETE has been able to increase their conversions by 30%, and increase the level of repeat visitors and customers.



How Pixlee Can Help

Pixlee helps you build and strengthen your brand community 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.

Reach Glossier-Level Success

By using Pixlee to build your community, you can increase revenue by increasing conversion and order values through established social proof from real customer stories. You can increase customer engagement and loyalty by sharing content and engaging customers in conversation.

You can decrease your content costs by leveraging the authentic content your customers are already posting. And you can create a data-driven strategy, leveraging analytics to determine what content performs best in every channel.

