



**FROM
RIPPLE**

**TO
WAVE**

The Ascent of Authentic Visual Content

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Customer photos are the most authentic and compelling brand assets available today.

Thanks to the mass adoption of smartphones and photo-sharing platforms like Instagram, they are also incredibly abundant.

Until recently, few brands understood the true depth and breadth of the customer photo opportunity, but as more and more of them begin to incorporate photos into the ecommerce experience, real, measurable results are proving that visual commerce is changing the way we shop.



THE ASCENT OF AUTHENTIC VISUAL CONTENT

When the first ripples of authentic visual content started to swell, some dismissed it as merely a fad. But the ripples became waves as camera-laden smartphones, mobile broadband connectivity, and image-centric social media platforms became standard features in people's lives. It was the perfect storm of technology, personal expression and communication.

Many brands began by sticking their toes in the water, crafting strategies that pursued engagement and reach. Measured against likes, comments, and shares, this "strictly social" approach can be remarkably successful, but customer photos offer brands much more than the promise of engagement.

On average, Olapic clients see a 4.6% conversion rate when customer photos are displayed on a product detail page and a 9.6% conversion rate when visitors interact with these photos, meaning that this interaction nearly *doubles conversion*. These engaged visitors look at nine customer photos, on average.

Laundry Service, a social media agency based in New York, analyzed data from 100 million impressions, including ad campaigns from more than 15 advertisers.¹ The agency found that "Instagram-style" photos yielded a conversion rate increase of 25% over "glossy product shots." These organic photos also triggered two to four times the engagement rates of the traditional product photos.²

4.6%

Conversion rate
when shoppers
SEE customer
photos



9.6%

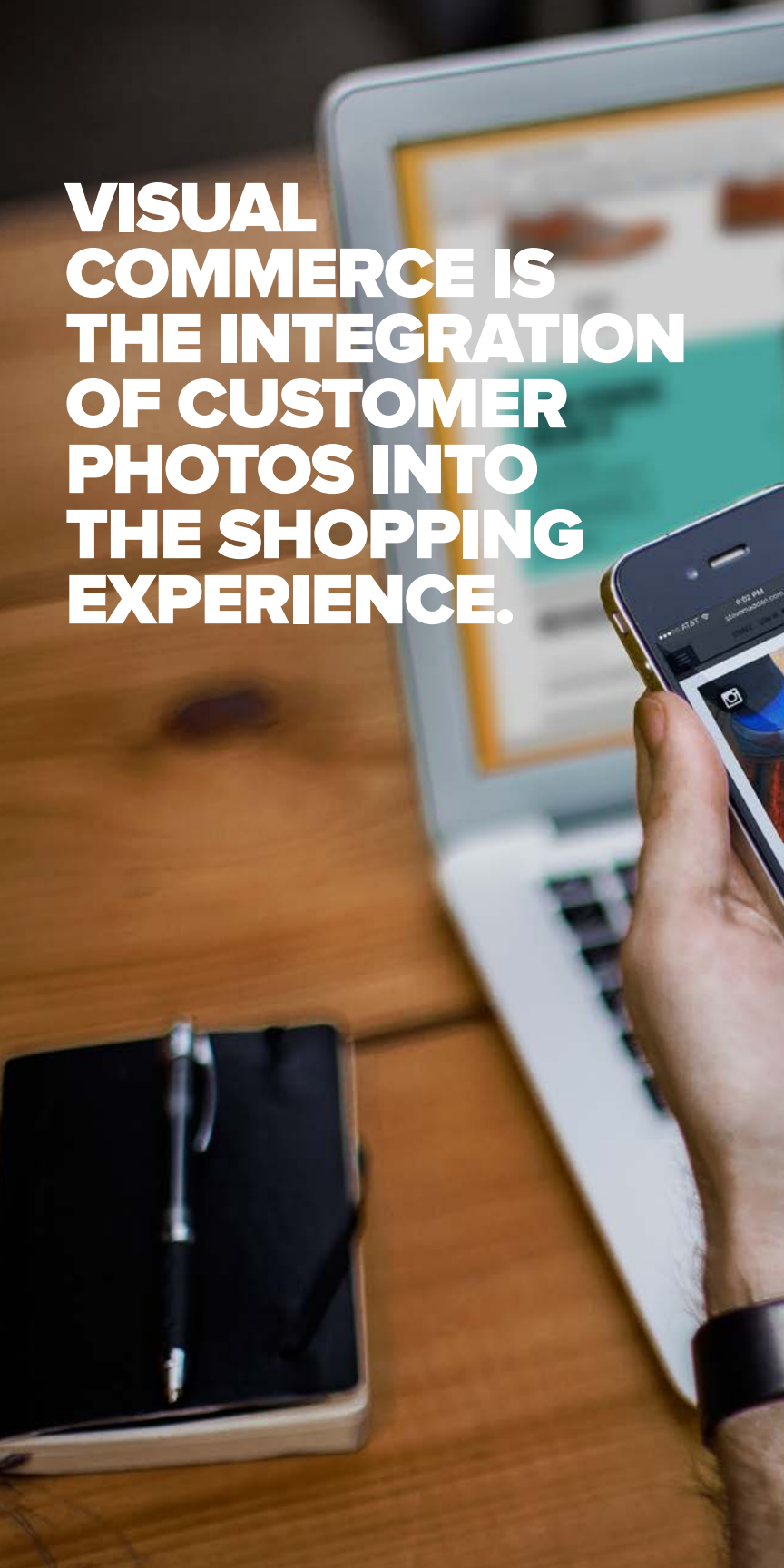
Conversion rate
when shoppers
INTERACT WITH
customer photos



Most brands are still just skimming the surface of the customer photo waves. For example, L2 Think Tank's research shows that, while 93% of prestige brands have an Instagram profile and 54% link from their websites to that profile, only 14% have integrated Instagram photos into their websites.³

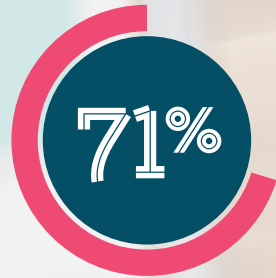
Marketers are feeling the content crunch. The Content Marketing Institute found that 71% of B2C marketers list customer acquisition as a content marketing goal (second only to brand awareness), and 44% list direct sales as a success metric. Their challenges include lack of time (57%), producing engaging content (51%), lack of budget (48%), producing enough content (45%) and the inability to measure content effectiveness (36%).⁴

Olapic believes that brands and retailers can overcome these challenges while also improving sales—and nearly every aspect of the shopping experience—by collecting wave after wave of fresh visual content and making it shoppable by placing it in the purchase path. We call this simple idea “visual commerce.”

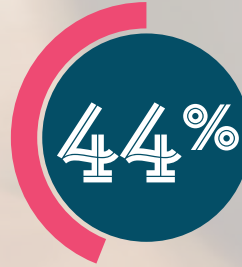


**VISUAL
COMMERCE IS
THE INTEGRATION
OF CUSTOMER
PHOTOS INTO
THE SHOPPING
EXPERIENCE.**

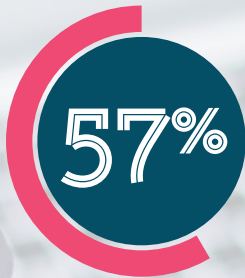
B2C marketers feel the content marketing crunch



list customer acquisition as a goal



list direct sales as a success metric



struggle to find enough time



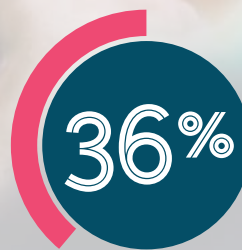
struggle to produce engaging content



struggle to find enough budget



struggle to produce enough content



struggle to measure content effectiveness

Source: Content Marketing Institute. (2014).

QUANTIFYING THE CONTENT EXPLOSION



In 2007, only 4 in every 100 people in the world had an active mobile-broadband subscription. In 2013, it was 30 in every 100.⁵

2.25 billion picture-taking devices will be sold in 2014. Smartphones as a percentage of picture-taking devices sold exceeded 50% for the first time in 2013; in 2009, smartphones accounted for roughly 11% of total sales.⁶

Active mobile broadband subscriptions per 100 people

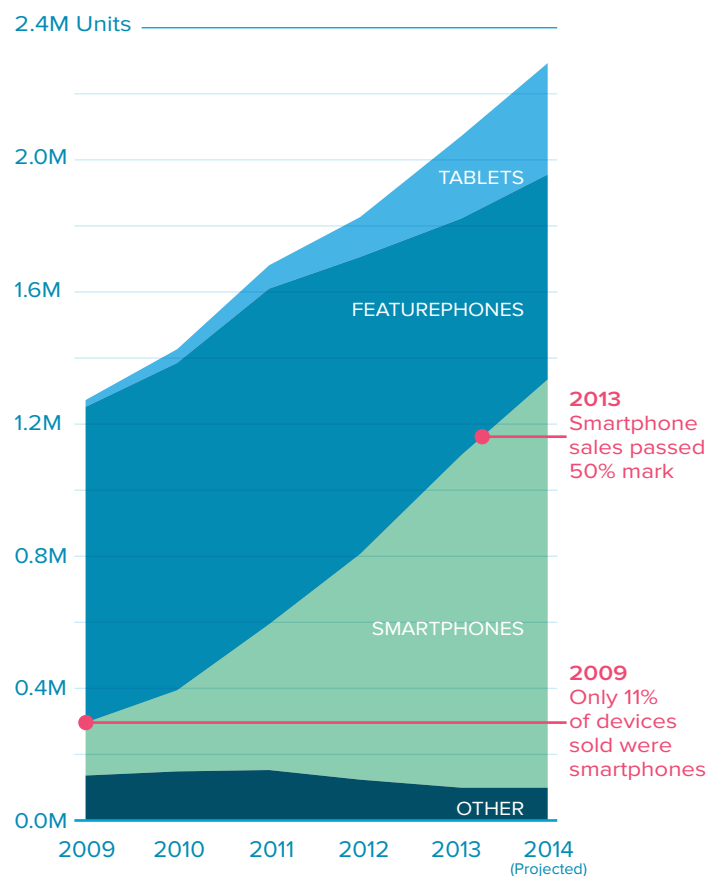
2007



2013

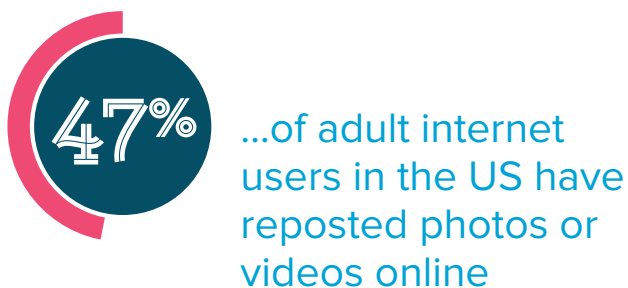


Smartphones as share of picture taking device sales

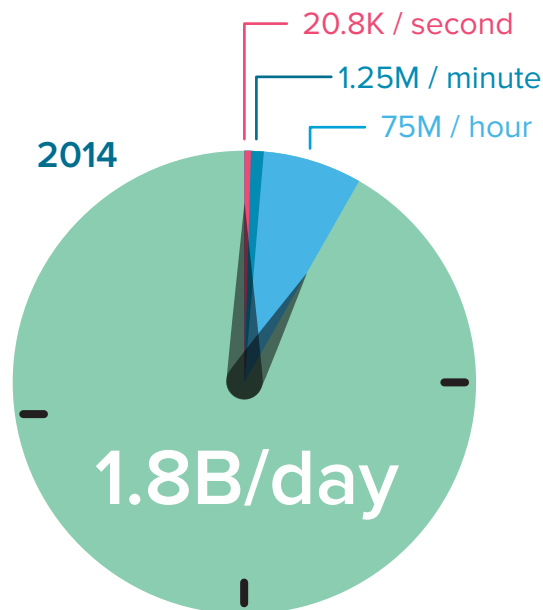


54% of adult internet users in the US have posted original photos or videos online, 47% of adult internet users in the US have reposted photos or videos online and 17% of adult internet users in the US are Instagram users.⁷

500 million photos were shared per day in 2013.⁸ 1.8 billion photos are being shared per day in 2014.⁹ That's 75 million per hour, 1.25 million per minute and 20,833 per second.



Rate of photo sharing



TOP BRANDS HAVE MILLIONS OF CUSTOMER PHOTOS ON INSTAGRAM ALONE.¹⁰

Brand	Hashtagged photos
Nike	27,100,000
Disney	16,300,000
Starbucks	12,300,000
Vans	9,500,000
Adidas	6,700,000
Zara	5,800,000
Hollister	4,000,000
Gucci	3,800,000
Prada	3,600,000
Ray Ban	3,100,000
Dior	2,900,000
LEGO	2,300,000
H&M	2,100,000
TOMS	1,900,000



SHOPPERS
USE AND
TRUST
CUSTOMER
PHOTOS

Customer photos are clearly abundant, but how do shoppers use them to make decisions, and how much trust do they place in this content?

We partnered with Fluid to survey tens of thousands of consumers in the US and the UK, and the results speak to their embrace of rich authenticity over perfection.¹¹

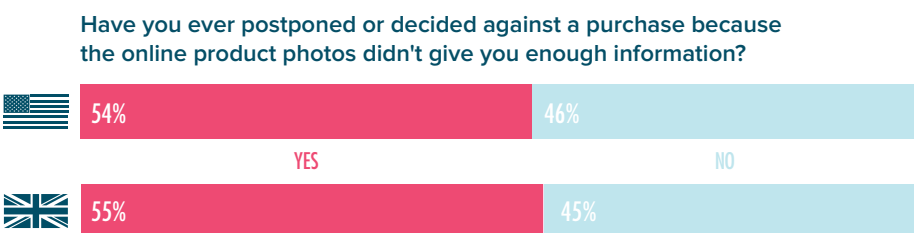
Shoppers trust each other.

63% of US consumers and 66% of UK consumers trust customer photos more than brand or retailer photos.



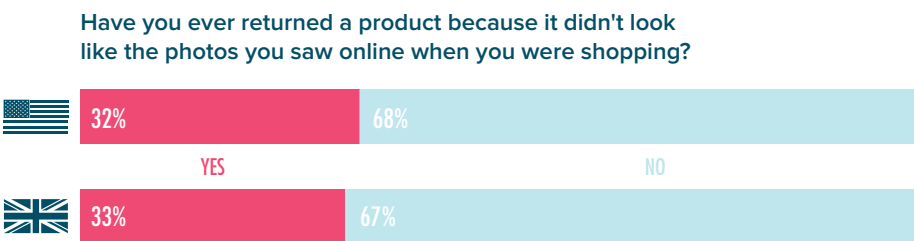
Unhelpful photos harm sales.

54% of US consumers and 55% of UK consumers have postponed or decided against a purchase due to unhelpful product photos.



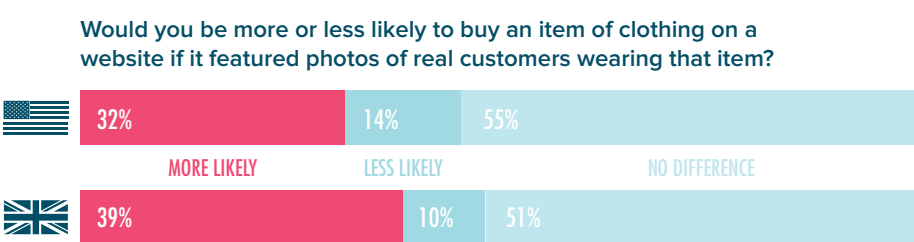
Inaccurate photos cause returns.

32% of US consumers and 33% of UK consumers have returned a product because it didn't look like the photos they found online while shopping.

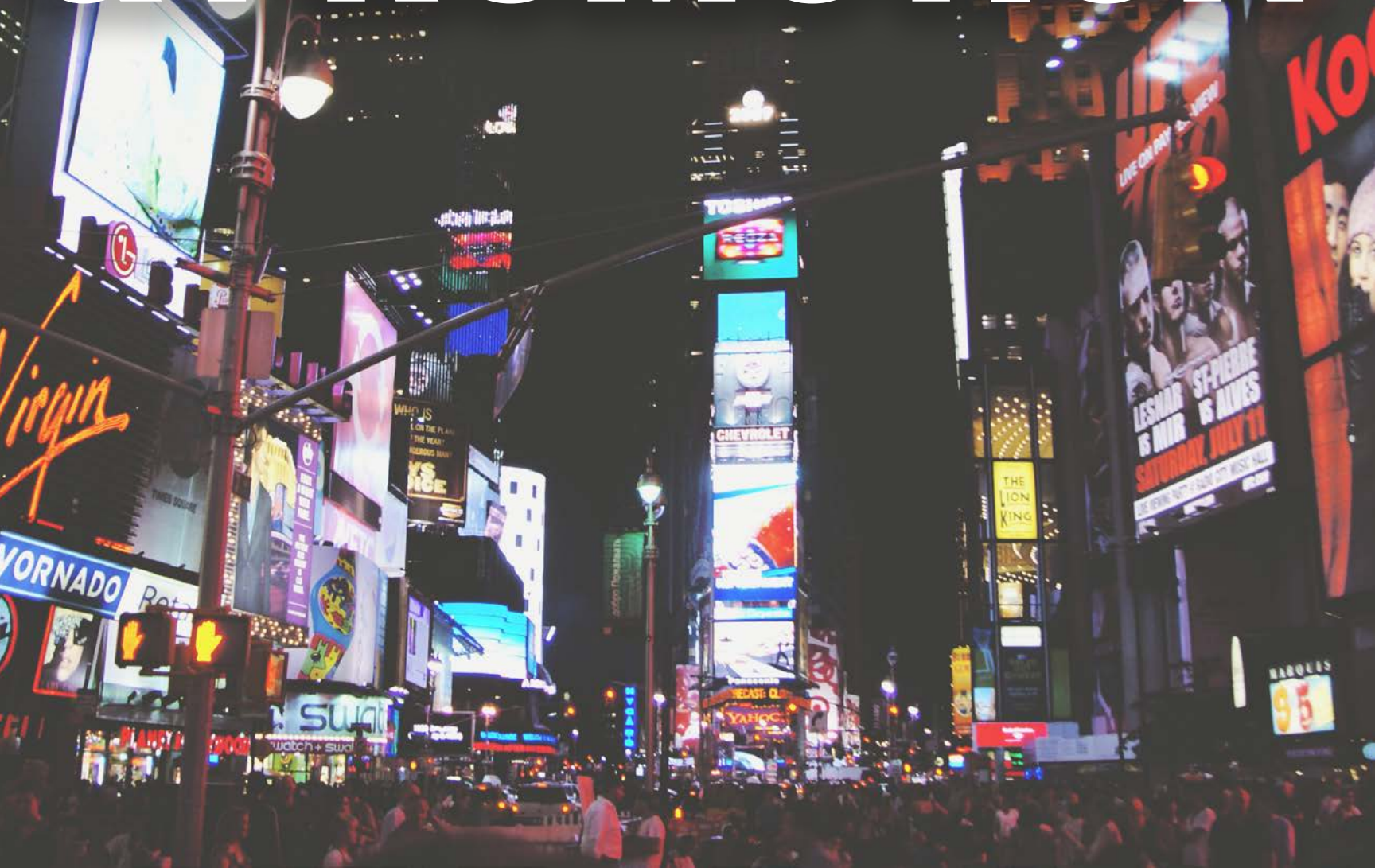


Customers are the next models.

32% of US consumers and 39% of UK consumers would be more likely to buy a clothing item if it was "modeled" by a fellow customer.



PLACEMENT, SHOPPABILITY & PROMOTION



Visual commerce success is shaped by three core factors:

Placement: How customer photos are displayed on product pages and within galleries.

Shoppability: How customer photos are integrated into the purchase path.

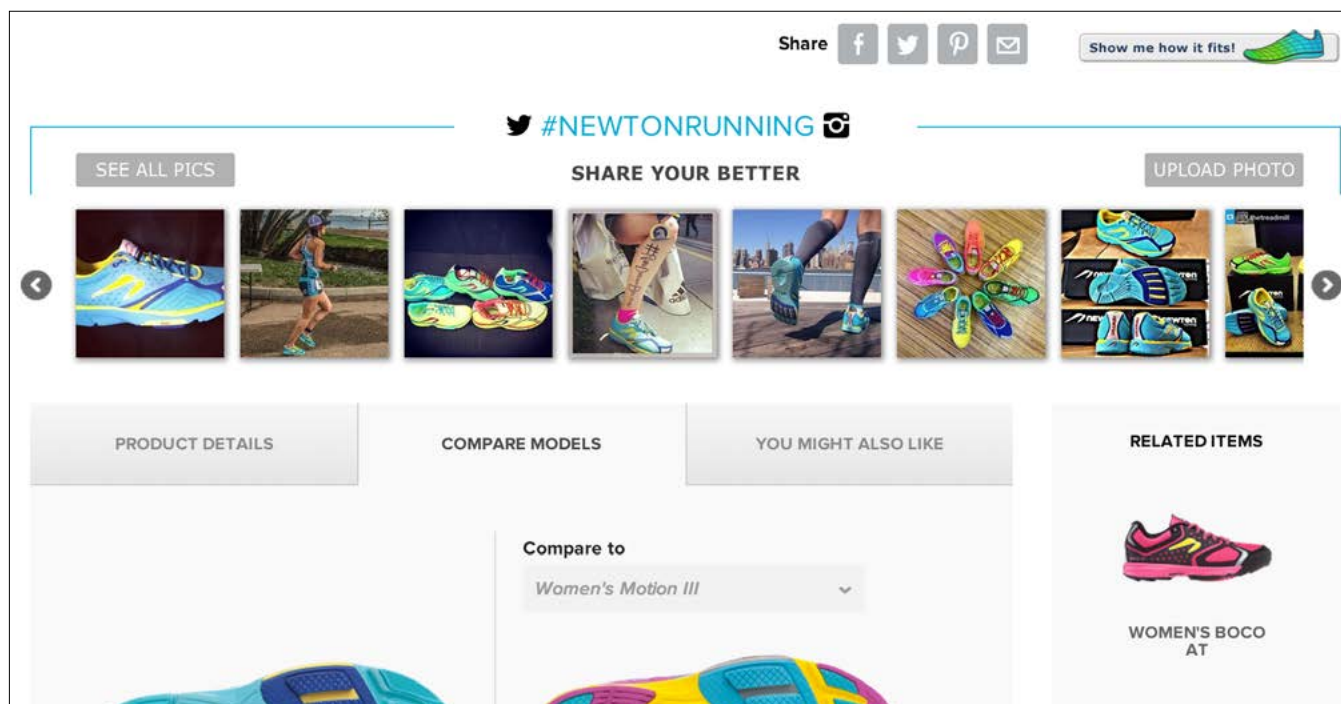
Promotion: How customer photos are promoted and collected.

By focusing on these core factors, brands and retailers can maximize the influence that authentic visual content has on shoppers.

Placement Great placement yields great results.

Best practice: Display customer photos in line with and/or close to other key page elements.

Recent Olapic tests have indicated that higher conversion rates are achieved when customer photos are aligned with product photos and when customer photos are displayed above text reviews and related items.



Newton Running

Shoppability

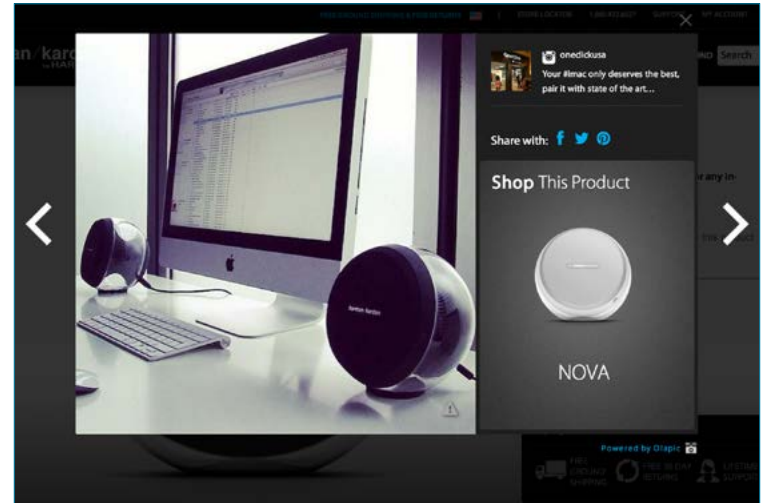
Seamless integration of earned and owned content inspires shoppers.

Best practice: **Pair customer photos with high-quality product photos, strong calls to action and mix-and-match “looks.”**

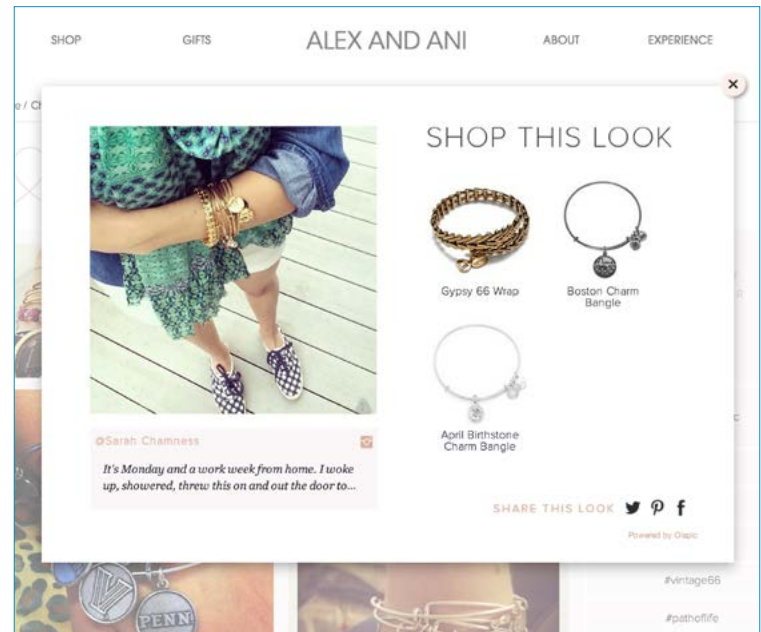
Maximize the interplay between earned and owned content by complementing the authenticity of customer photos with the crispness and consistency of high-quality studio shots. The next step in the purchase path should be abundantly clear to shoppers who view customer photos, so make your calls to action impossible to miss.

Many of the customer photos we collect and display feature more than one product, which allows brands to inspire shoppers with complete “looks.”

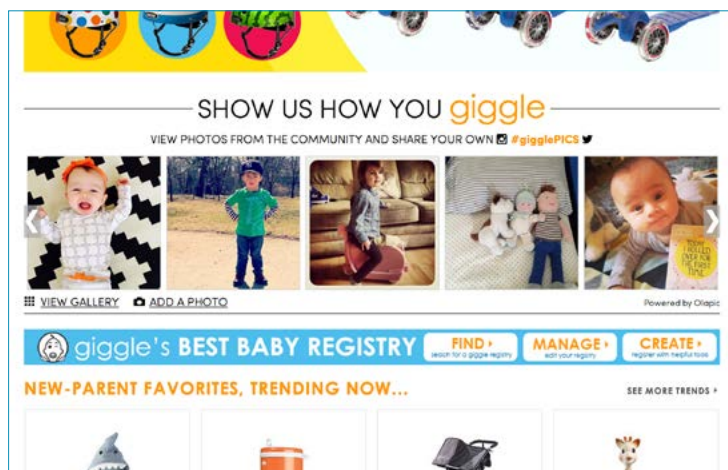
This is a big cross-selling opportunity, which is why Olapic gives clients the ability to feature multiple products in a single view.



Harman Kardon



Alex & Ani



Giggle

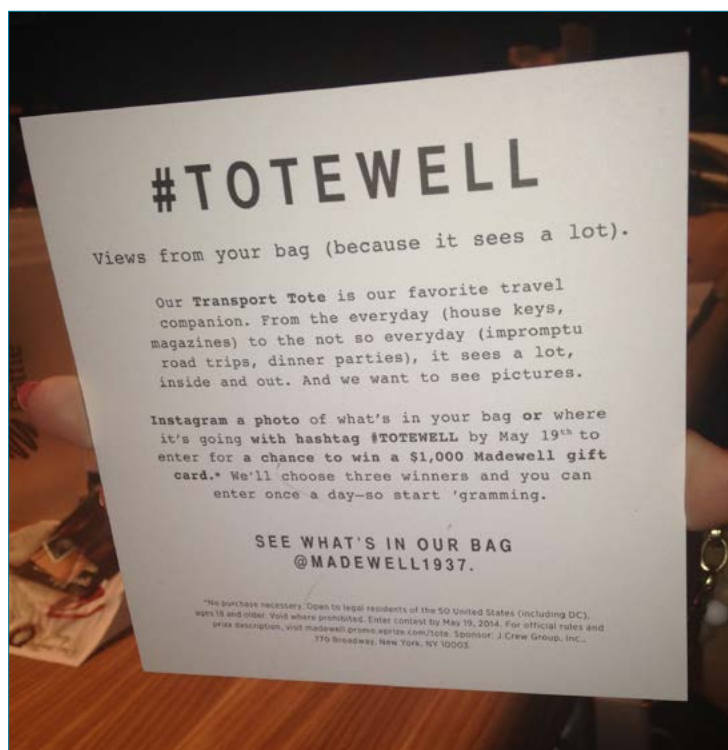
Promotion

Turn on the “surround sound.”

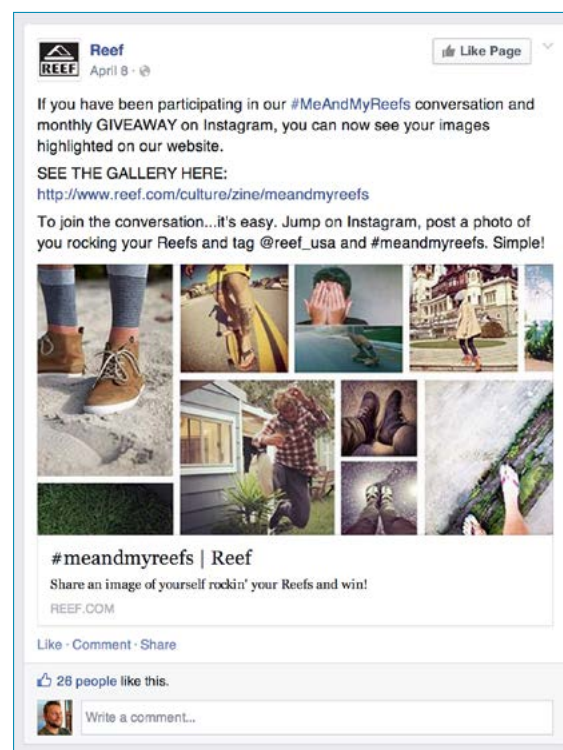
Best practice: Use strong calls to action across your website and beyond.

Shine a spotlight on your customer photos with prominent, on-brand calls to action, and placement on your most-visited pages.

Place your calls to action at points throughout the customer journey. We've seen it all: Facebook posts, TV commercials, packaging inserts, and even billboards.



Madewell packaging insert



Reef Facebook post

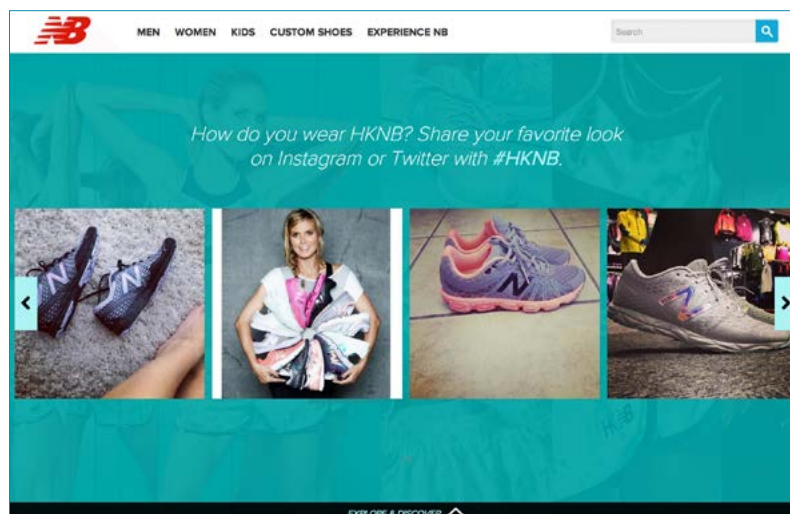


VISUAL COMMERCE **CASE STUDIES**

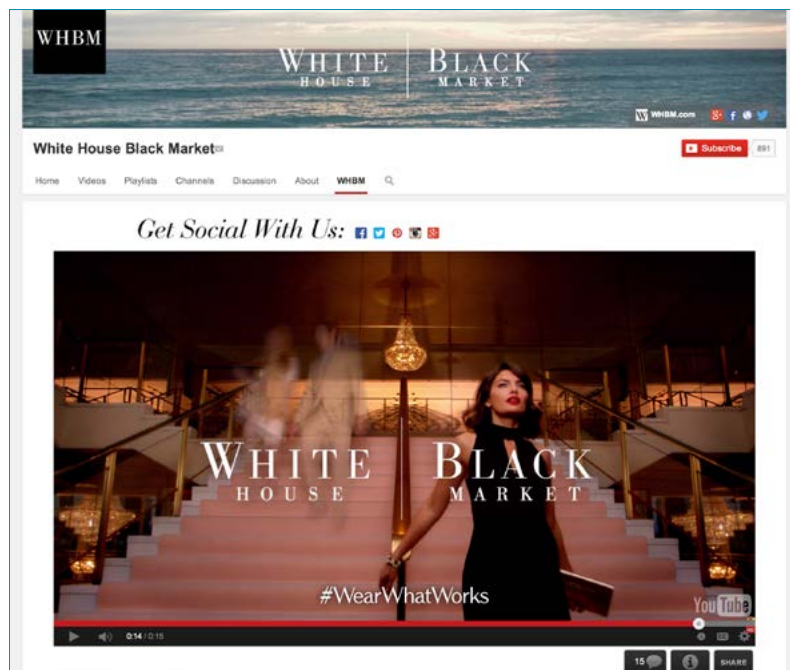
When **New Balance** launched a new athletic wear collection in collaboration with **Heidi Klum**, they knew they could generate a lot of social buzz — but they decided to take it to the next level by tying it to ecommerce. As part of the launch, they encouraged customers to share photos and linked these directly to products, creating a shoppable community gallery.

In the 120 days following the campaign's inception, over 6,000 Instagram photos were collected using **#HKNB**. By linking these images directly back to products available for purchase, New Balance was able to enhance their product presentation beyond what their normally encounter on an ecommerce site. The quality of these pictures was phenomenal, and fans who used **#HKNB** were able to experience a more authentic and connected New Balance community. This resulted in an impressive 39% conversion rate increase, and our work with New Balance was selected as a finalist for Forrester's Groundswell Awards. New Balance's foray into visual commerce has now been extended beyond **#HKNB**.

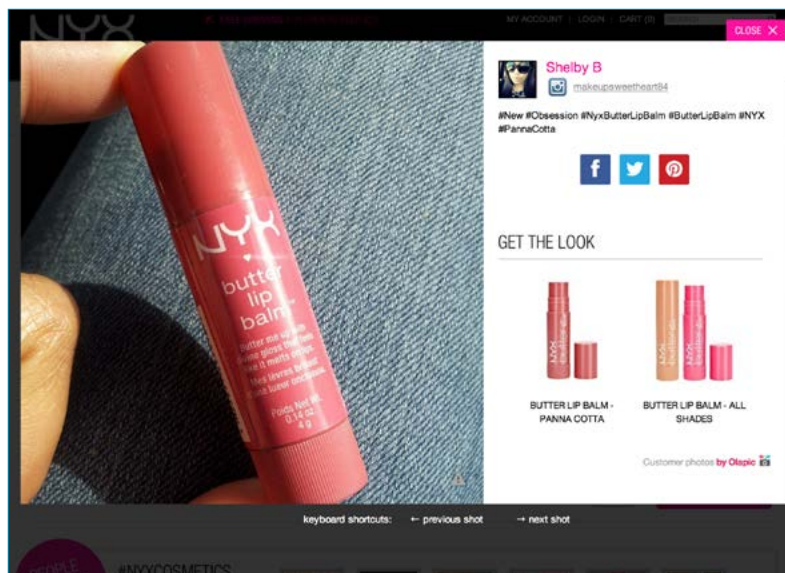
White House Black Market's #wearwhatworks campaign gallery launched in August 2013. In just over one month, 1,500 photos were uploaded, and hashtag volume increased 40% every two weeks. Fifty percent of the photos came from direct uploads, whereas Olapic clients normally see the vast majority of their customer photos collected from Instagram. The **#wearwhatworks** hashtag was promoted via TV, social, email, the Web, display ads and elsewhere.



New Balance #HKNB



White House Black Market #WearWhatWorks

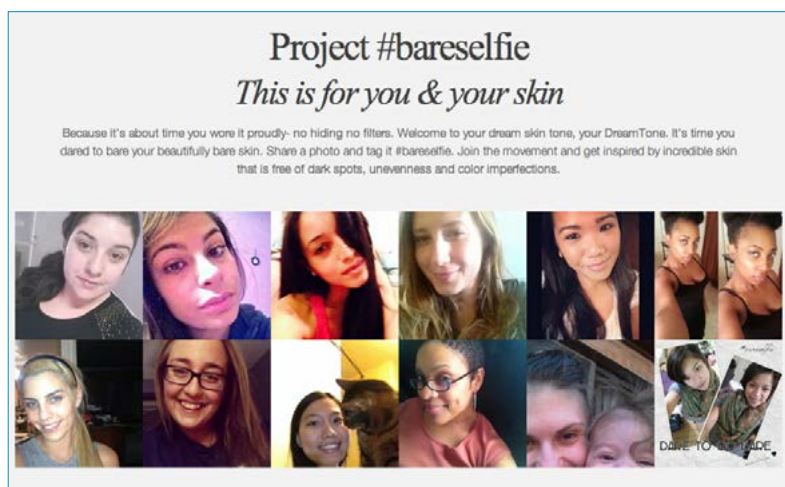


NYX

The “Boldly Social Internet Retailer” **NYX Cosmetics** puts the spotlight on its customers by collecting and showcasing curated customer photos and videos on its homepage, product detail pages, category pages and galleries. By putting customers front and center, NYX is creating an inspiring and relatable shopping experience and seeing a 2.8x conversion rate increase.

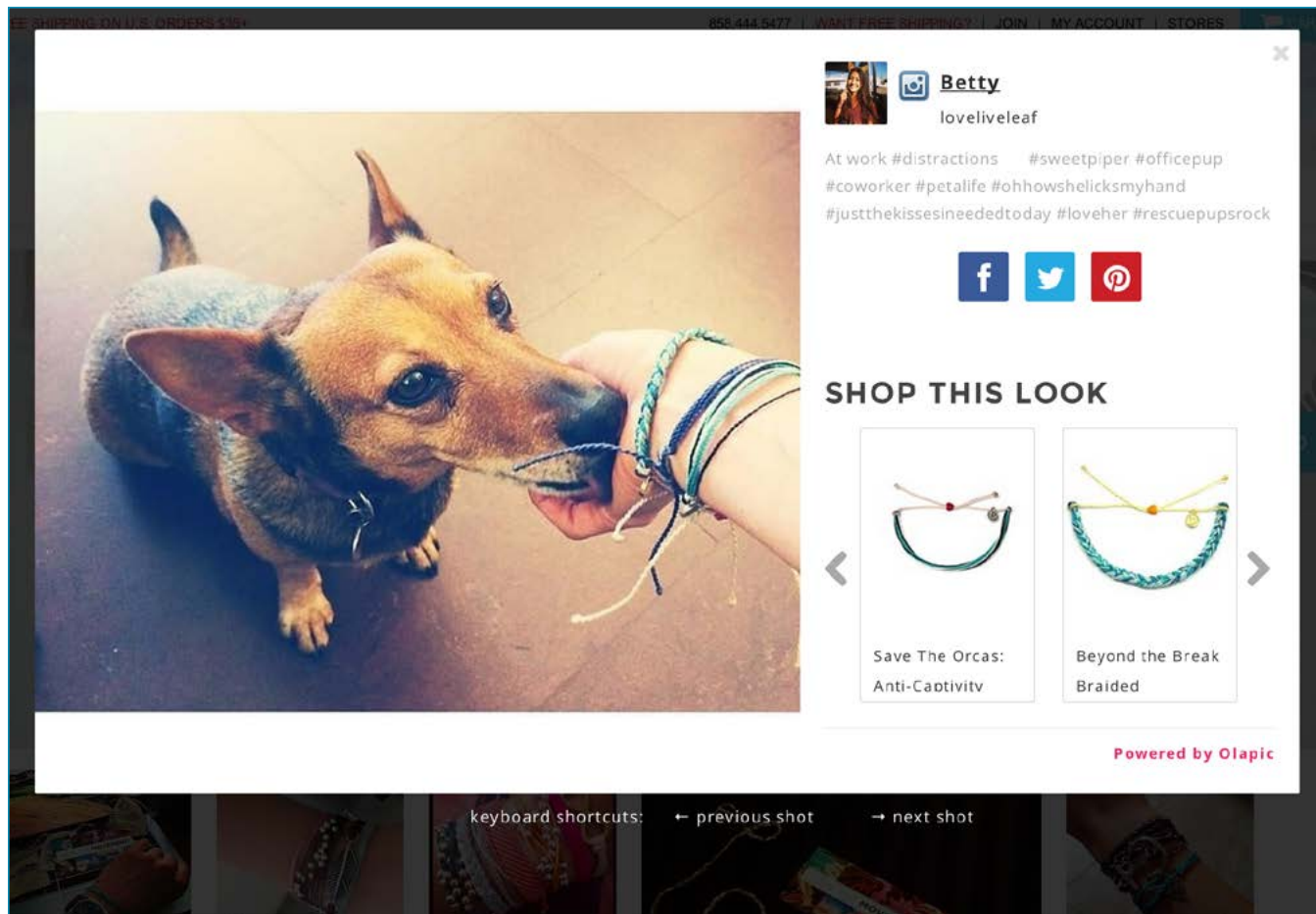
Lancôme has rolled out two major campaigns and several smaller contests. Project #bareselfie complemented the release of the DreamTone serum product line by encouraging women to post pictures of themselves without makeup. The Lancôme Définicils Gallery encouraged women to post photos and videos of the places they take their Définicils mascara. The brand chose a favorite uploaded photo or video each day and awarded the winner a year's supply of the product.

Lancôme has seen a steady increase in online traffic, broadening the brand's appeal while building new and meaningful stories around its products. Though initially meant to facilitate engagement, Olapic analytics showed that visitors who engaged with customer photos in the gallery were at least twice as likely to convert as those who did not.



Lancôme #bareselfie

Accessories brand **Pura Vida** worked with Olapic to place customer photos on their homepage, in a gallery, and on product detail pages. The conversion rate was a remarkable 25% for visitors interacting with photos in the gallery. When visitors clicked on a photo on a product detail page, the result was also impressive: they were twice as likely to convert as those visitors who did not interact with photos.



Pura Vida

A RAPID (AND WELCOME) EVOLUTION



Visual commerce isn't a single feature; it isn't a trend. What we're experiencing is a major, irreversible step in the evolution of shopping.

Consumers have welcomed its emergence as a departure from the old model of “flawless” lifestyle and studio photography. They value authenticity and rich visuals. They want to participate in and be recognized by the brands they love.

Brands and retailers also have a lot to be excited about when it comes to visual commerce. Quality content creation, while a priority for marketers, is notoriously difficult and expensive at scale. Customer photos, on the other hand, are everywhere. Their proliferation is unstoppable. They generate incredible results, and we're only just getting started in unlocking their true potential.

“Five years from now, people are going to look back and think, ‘We only looked at one photo before we bought something? That makes absolutely no sense.’”



Pau Sabria
CEO & Co-Founder, Olapic

**WHAT'S
YOUR
VISUAL
COMMERCE
STRATEGY?**



REQUEST YOUR VISUAL COMMERCE ANALYSIS

Schedule a 30-minute, no-obligation analysis with one of our visual commerce experts to:

- Learn which photos are the most likely to convert to product sales for your brand
- See the inside of our proprietary visual commerce platform
- Understand if Olapic is the right fit for your brand

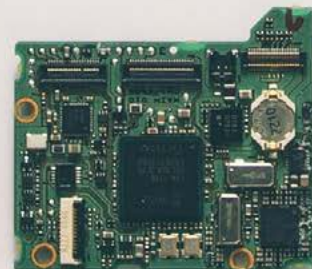
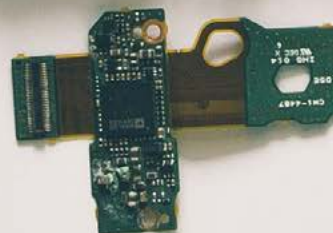
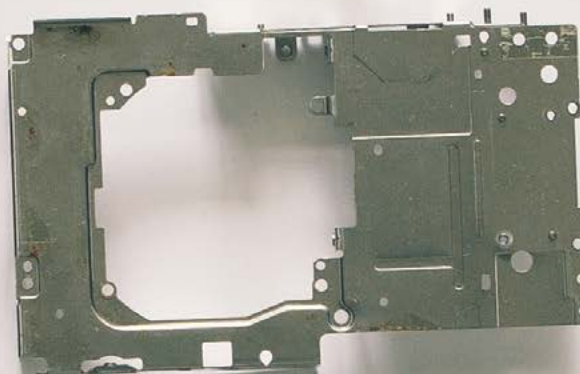
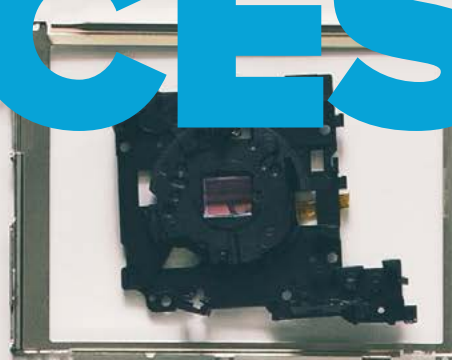
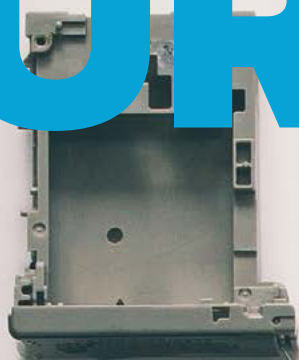
Sign up here: bit.ly/olapicanalysis



ABOUT OLAPIC

Olapic is the missing link between customer photos and product purchase. We increase sales and engagement for 100+ brands and retailers by integrating customer photos into the shopping experience.

Olapic is headquartered in New York City with offices in Cordoba, Argentina and London. For more information, visit olapic.com or email info@olapic.com.



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