

# HOME DECOR ECOMMERCE



THE DEFINITIVE ECOMMERCE CATALOG  
TO SELLING FURNITURE AND HOME DECOR  
IN AN OMNICHANNEL WORLD

**Absolunet.**





## FURNITURE + HOUSEWARES

*Probably the most omnichannel sector in retail*

Every year, the share of furniture and housewares sold online increases. Yet eCommerce sales are only a fraction of the digital customer experience. Few sectors have seen the number of touchpoints grow and evolve as quickly as home decor.

From the consumer's perspective, there is no difference between a retailer's various channels and the overall brand experience. Consumers want to interact with your brand on multiple devices, jumping from one channel to another, fluidly.

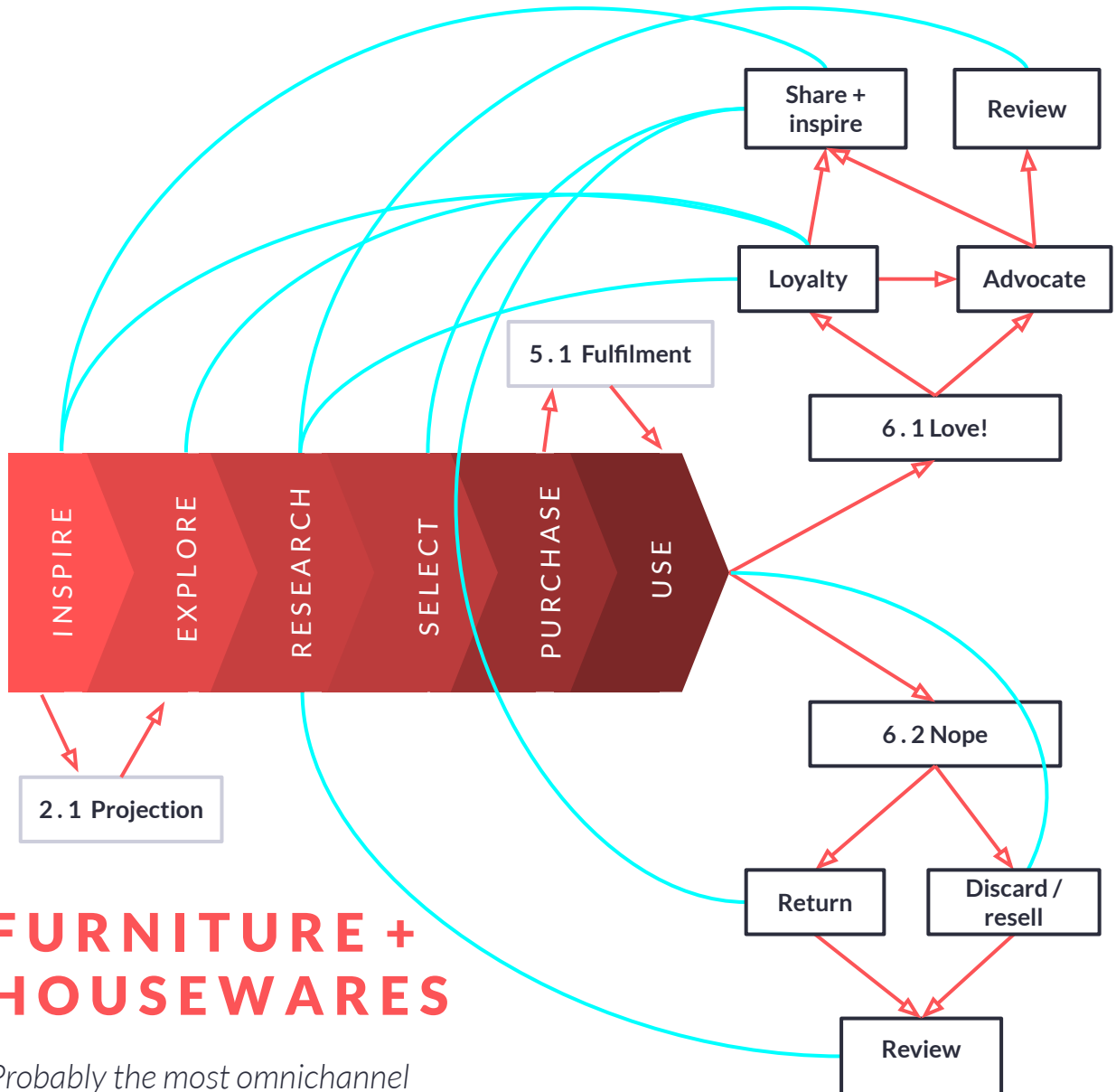
**The challenge for merchants:** adapt to evolving consumer behavior with the right strategies and digital tools to profitably support the customer journey. Meld the in-store experience with the online one, and vice-versa.

**Here is what you need to know to apply your existing know-how to digital and convert today's consumers into *recurring* customers.**

AN ECOMMERCE  
GUIDE TO  
CONNECTING  
WITH DIGITAL  
CONSUMERS

**Absolunet.**

# CUSTOMER JOURNEY & CHAIN OF INTERACTIONS



## FURNITURE + HOUSEWARES

*Probably the most omnichannel sector in retail*

In red, above, the path to purchase. In blue, the dynamic elements that influence every step of that customer journey.

Every year, the share of furniture and housewares sold online increases. Yet sales are only a fraction of digital's influence and importance. Read on.



# INSPIRE

STEP 01 / 06



# INSPIRE

From nothing  
To something

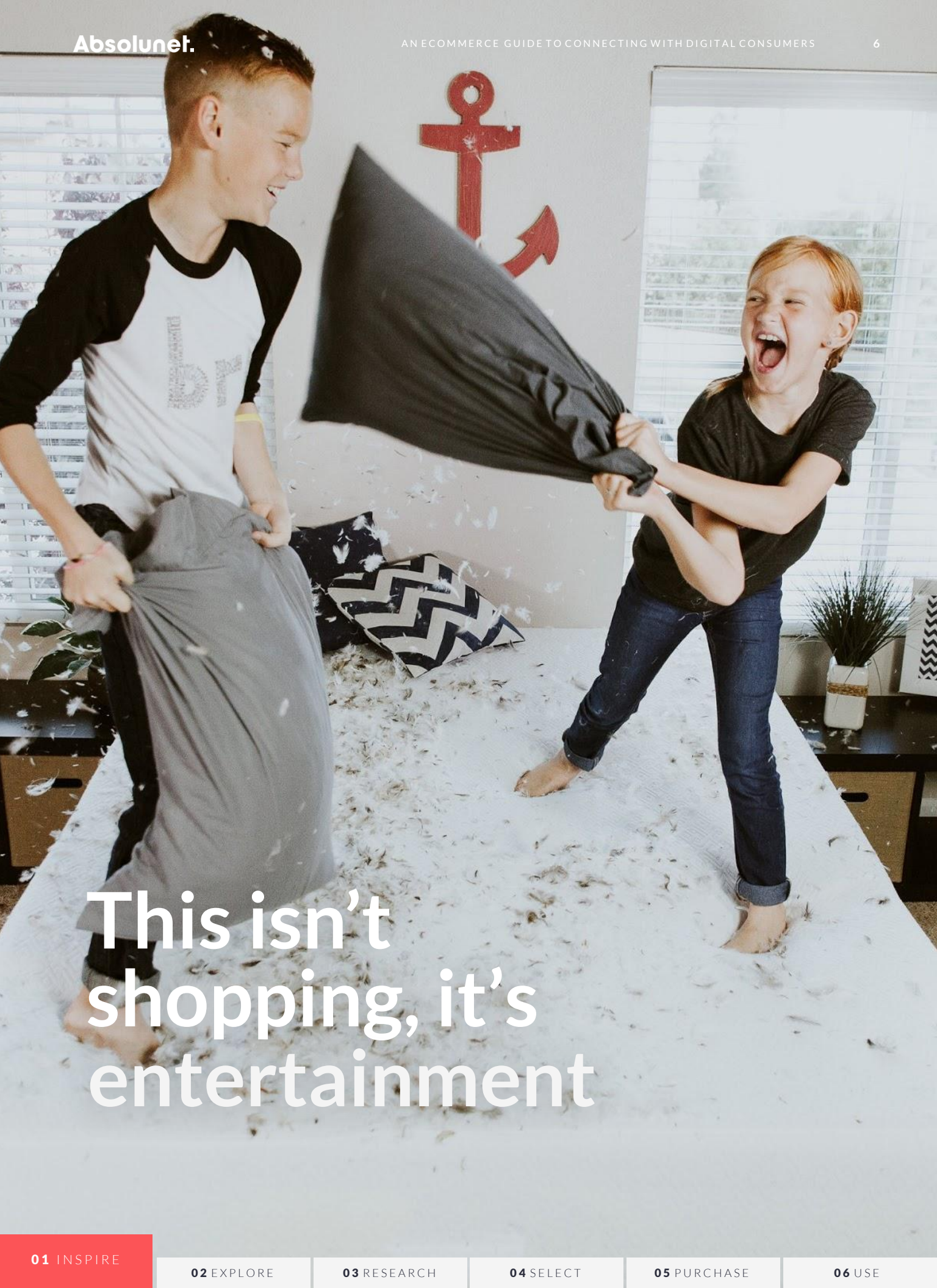
## WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*This is the spark, the moment of inspiration, that magical instant when I'm browsing my social feed while waiting in line for my latté. Then, I see something amazing, somewhere I'd like to be: a room, a place, a projection of how the space I live/work/eat/sleep in could be truly awesome.*





This isn't shopping, it's entertainment





## Your Objective Here

Get noticed and get the click.

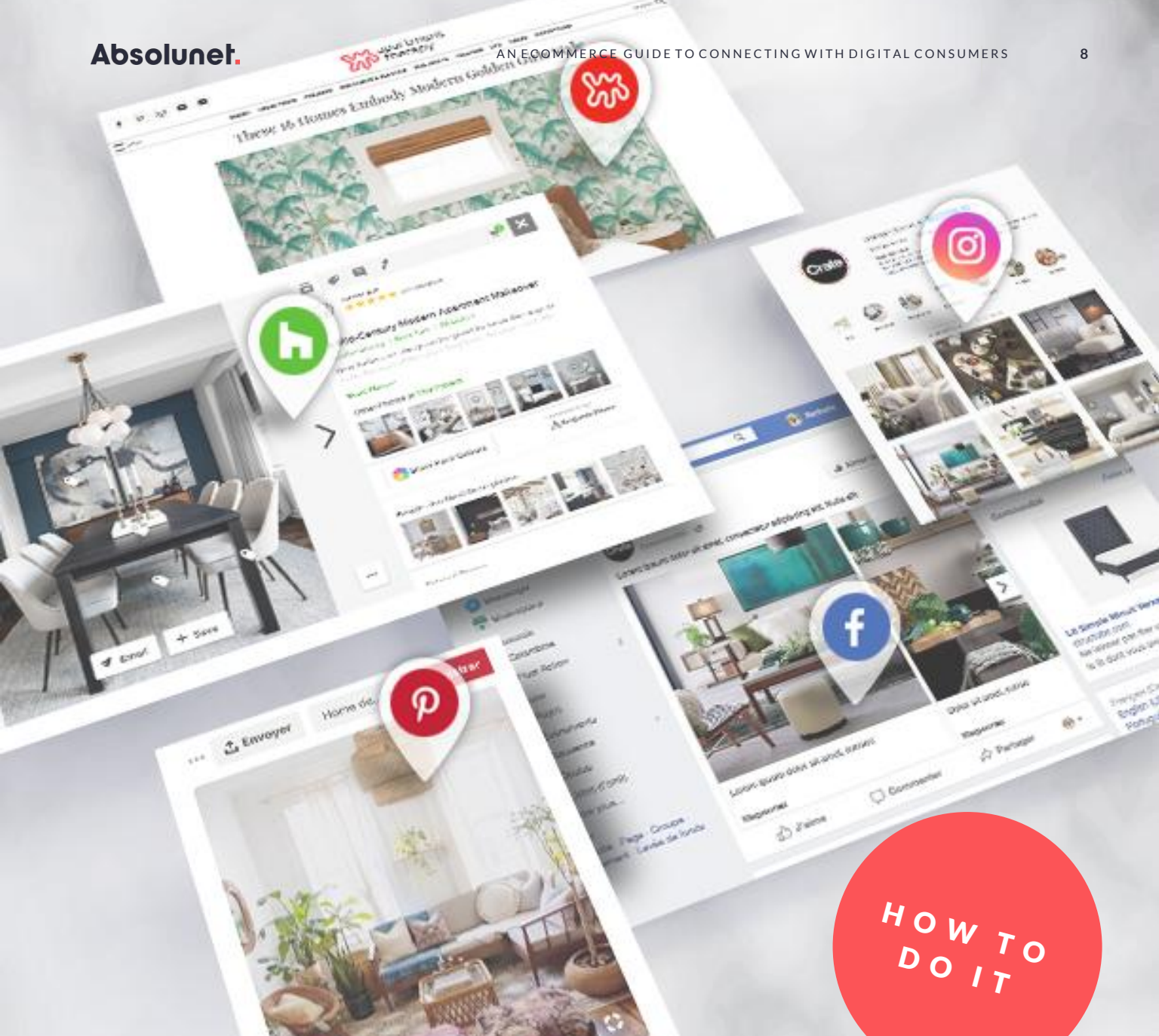
Think catalog: entice and direct the consumer to phase 2 (exploration) by spicing up their digital day with something intriguing.

## Keys to Success

Gorgeous, authentic and inspiring visuals. Think beautiful, catalog-like layouts. This isn't about product shots; the consumer is not looking for *stuff*.

They are looking to be inspired. **It's the same kind of aspirational mindset we have when thinking about a vacation.** Content must be compelling, and easily seen.





1

### Rich visual ads

Flex your artistic / design / merchandizing muscle. Beautiful layouts and rich environments are the way to go.

2

### Search Engine Marketing (SEM) + Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Drive traffic to your website using paid online advertising.

3

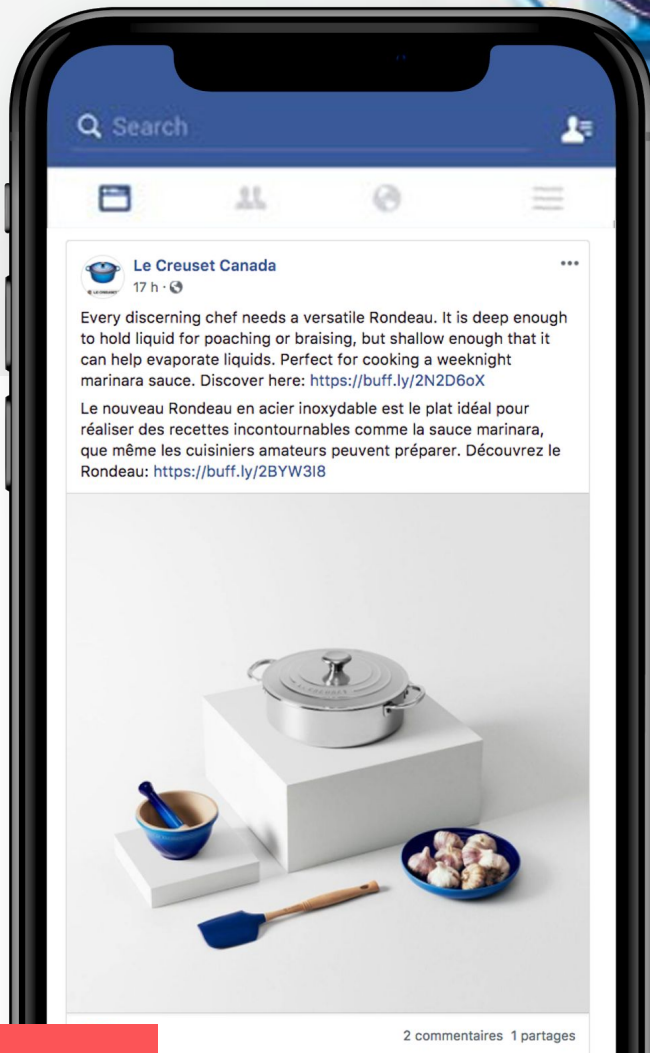
### Landing pages

Keep the experience with landing pages on your social platforms or your website.





HOW TO  
DO IT



## INSPIRE

### Who Does it Well?

#### Le Creuset.

Best known for its colorful enameled cast-iron cookware, the premium French brand brings color and a “joie-de-vivre” to social networks, inviting consumers into their colorful, delicious and lively environment with pictures of their products in use.

You can almost smell the deliciousness on your Instagram feed.



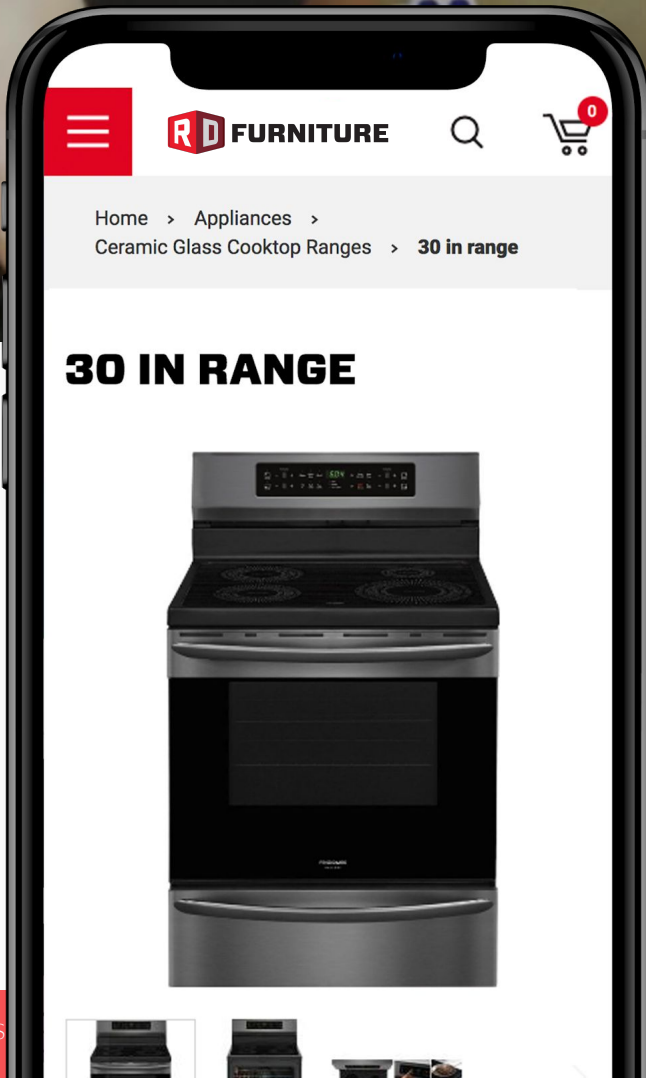
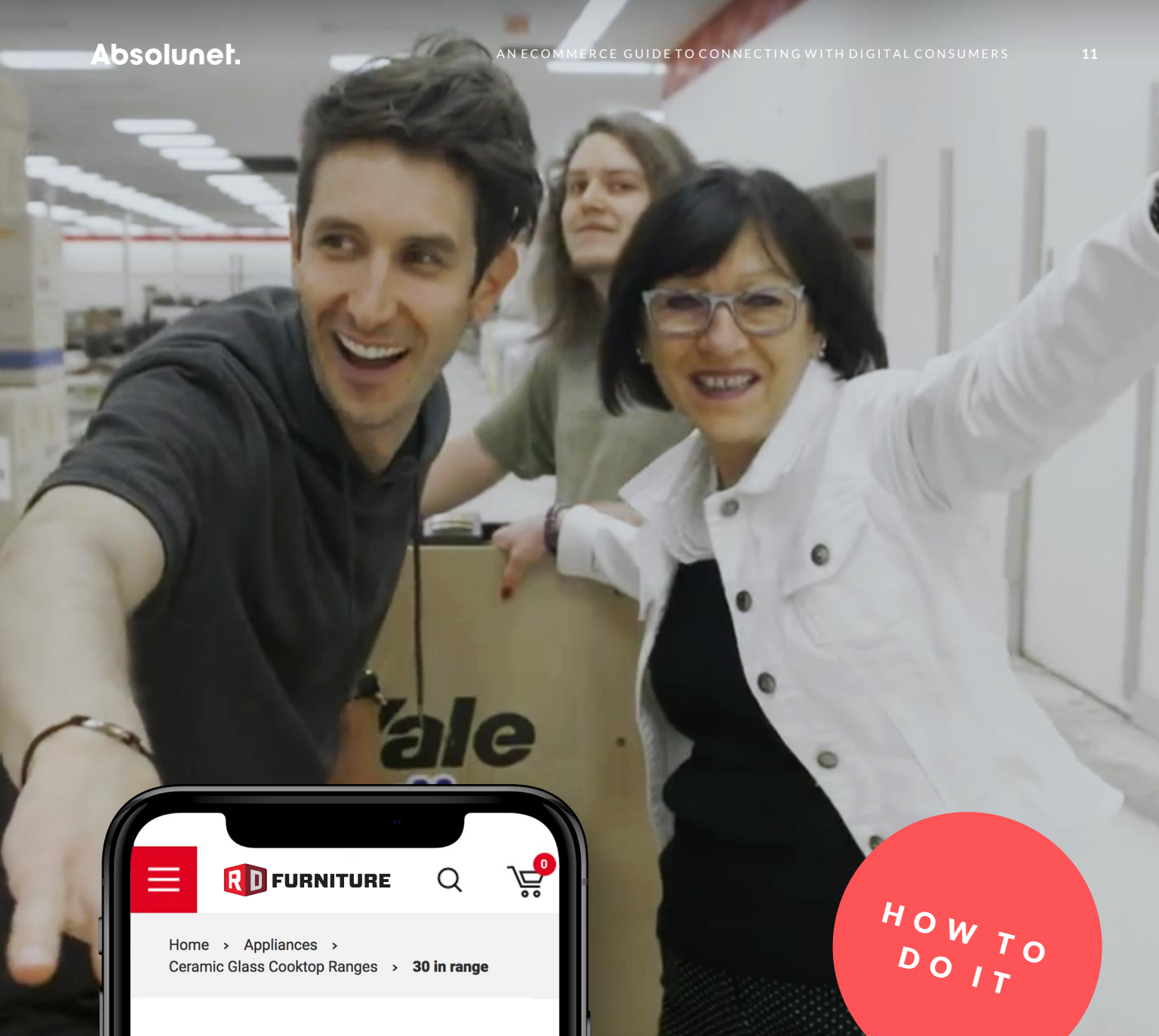
HOW TO DO IT

INSPIRE

### Who Does it Well?

The IKEA catalog was doing “inspire” way before any of us had the Internet, providing rich, contextual room shots for the products - including people in those rooms. Their successful digital campaigns extend the IKEA promise.





HOW TO DO IT

INSPIRE

Reverse Application

RD Furniture, a mid-range furniture discounter, does the exact opposite, to their advantage. They use video and social to proudly display their ugly, vacant department stores where zero dollars are invested in decor, thereby passing the savings to consumers in a large-scale pop-up operation.

A. RD Furniture is an Absolunet client.

# EXPLORE

STEP 02 / 06



# EXPLORE

## Going Deeper Into the Rabbit Hole



### WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*I'm seriously intrigued and inspired. I want more. I can picture myself relaxing in that kitchen/living room/bedroom/yard/office. I'm clicking to find more inspiring images and settings along the same lines; I've gone from passively noticing to actively consuming home decor and furniture content.*

*Cooking videos with the product I just saw, multiple colors/fabrics - how does the product look in another setting? I'm curious, and browsing (shopping) for ideas.*

*Take me from one idea to the next.*



Table  
**\$59.99**

## Your objective here

Take the consumer from passive (idea shopping) to active product search (phase 3).

Engage then re-engage the consumer with your content.

## Keys to success

Be present across channels and devices and engage the consumer with a rich selection of relevant visual stories to peruse.

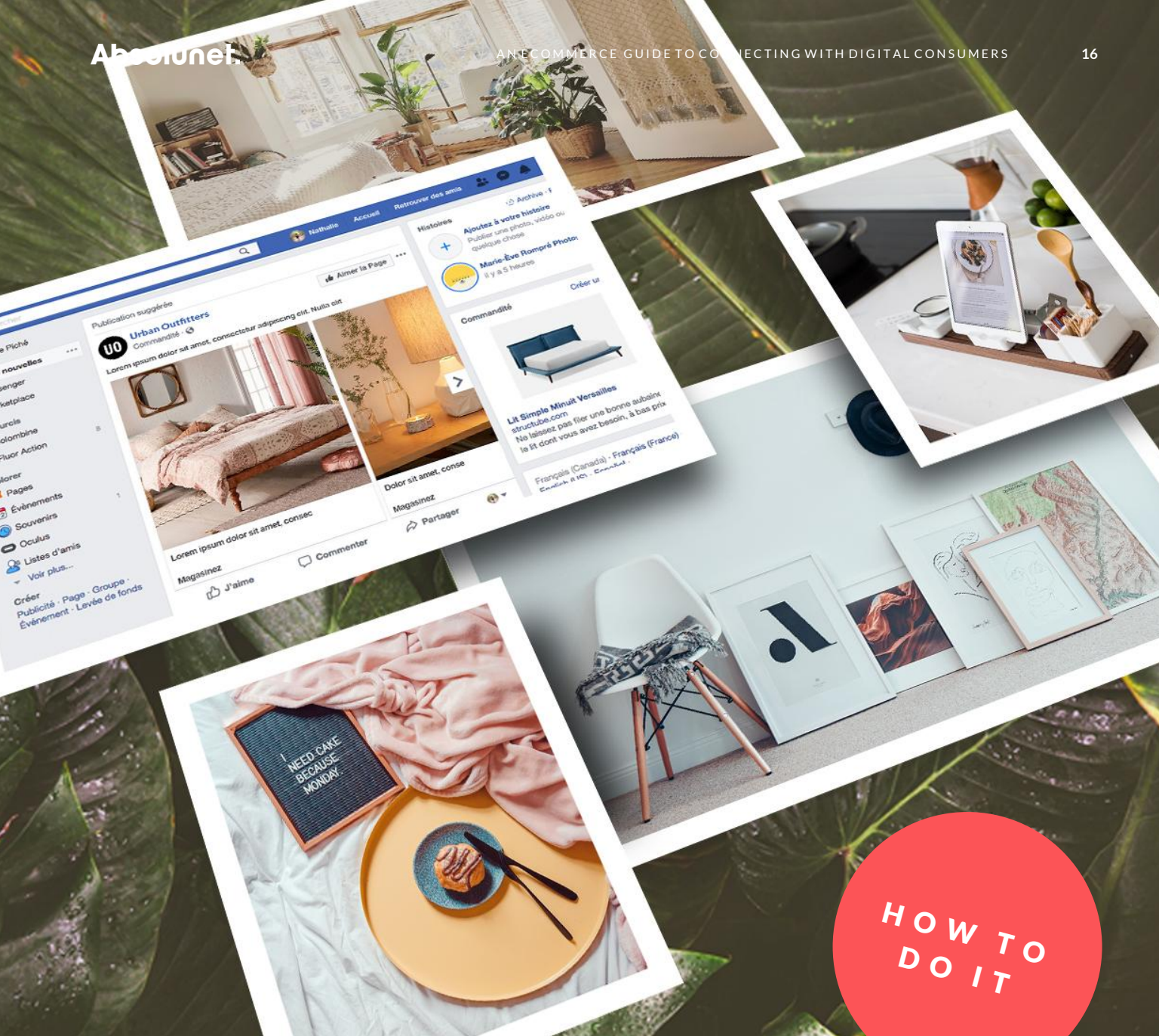
Mix organic, promoted and shared content in a targeted manner. The more fluidly you help the user transition from one idea to the next, the higher the chances that your products and brand will be top of mind as the user goes into the next phase; **research**.





Remember, you don't get a second chance to make a first (digital) impression.





HOW TO DO IT

# 1 Content strategy

Lookbooks, shop the room, related content, etc.

You've earned the consumer's attention, make sure you do something with it and give them different "roads" to explore. Don't just show product, show amazing spaces (and make them clickable, should they want to see how much that item costs).

# 2 Placement

Targeted visual ads and retargeting.

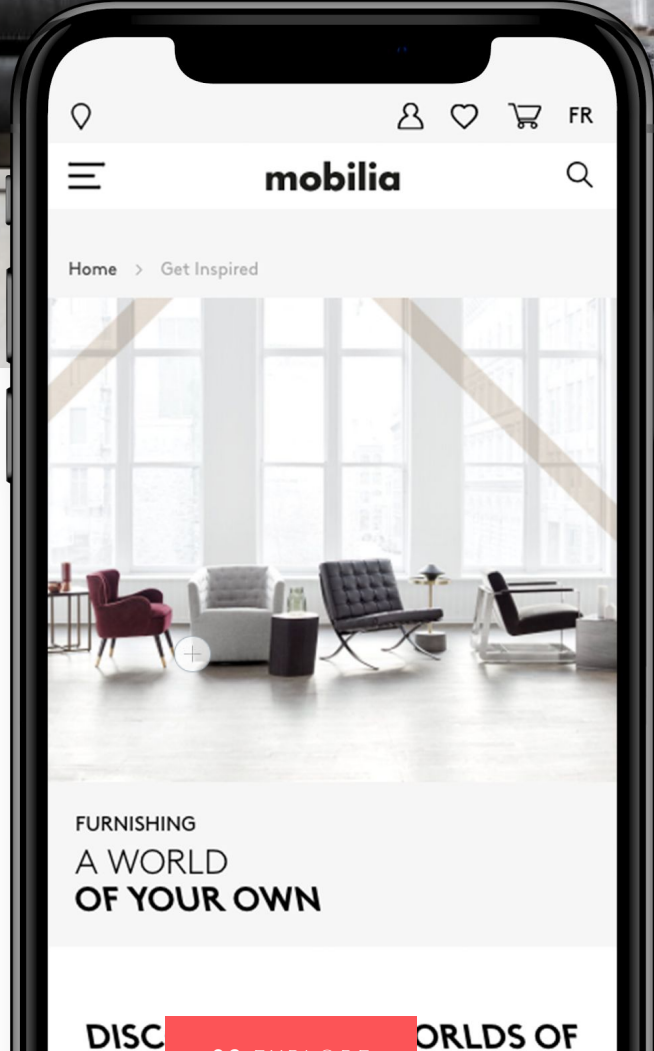
Once the consumer leaves your site, you can remind them of the items explored with a retargeting ad campaign (on Google, Instagram, Facebook, etc.).

**Extra points:** did they subscribe to your newsletter? An automated campaign can work wonders.





HOW TO DO IT



EXPLORE

## Who Does it Well?

Mobilia curates their furniture and furnishings into 4 distinct “worlds of style”; Natural, Euro, Wow and Spontaneous. By inspiring and guiding consumers through the world that most reflects their ambitions, Mobilia helps the consumer define their vision and find the products that make it real.

A. Mobilia is an Absolunet client.



HOW TO  
DO IT

## INSPIRE

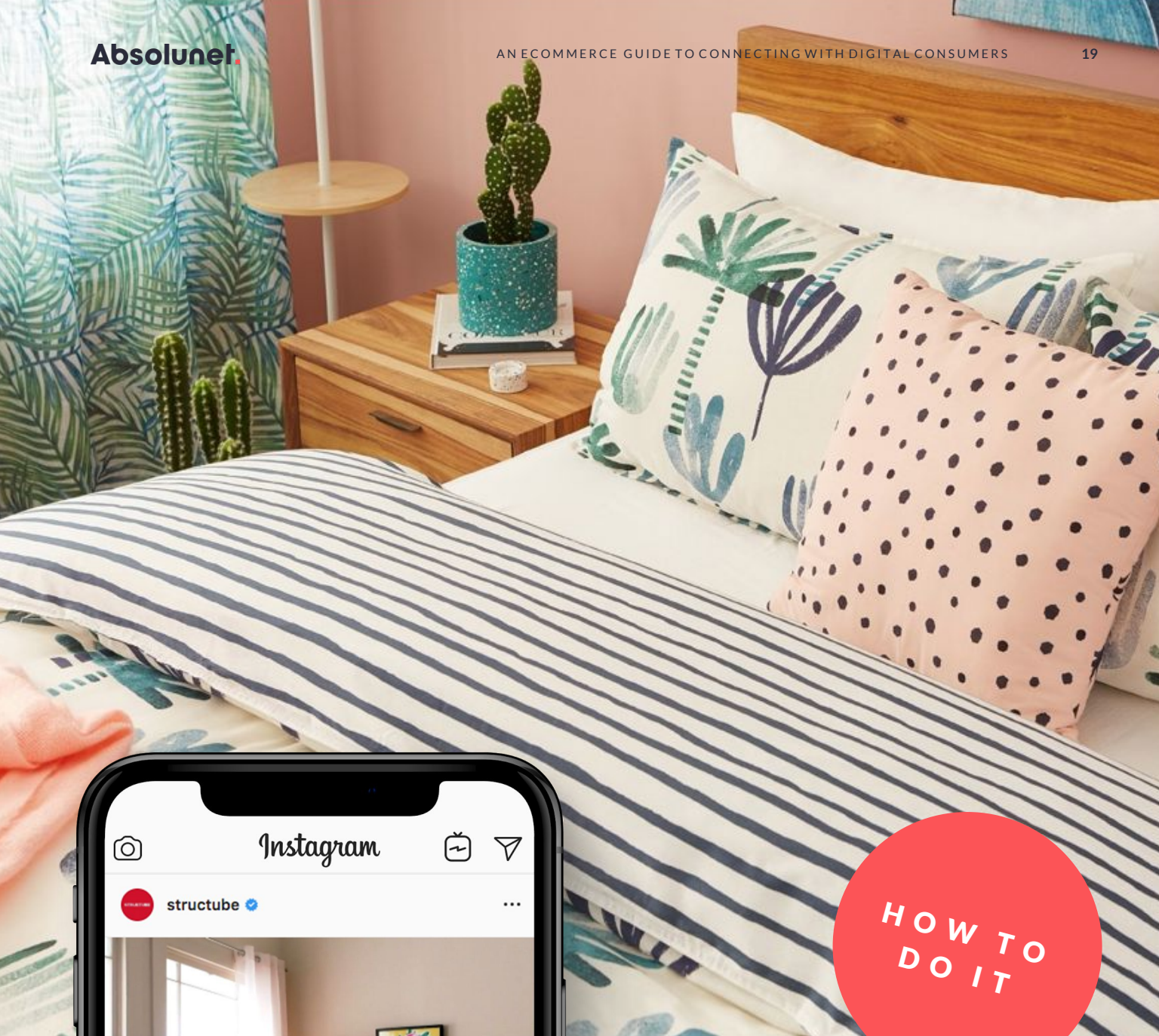
### Who Does it Well?

Crate & Barrel uses gorgeous, in situ product photos and clear product information.

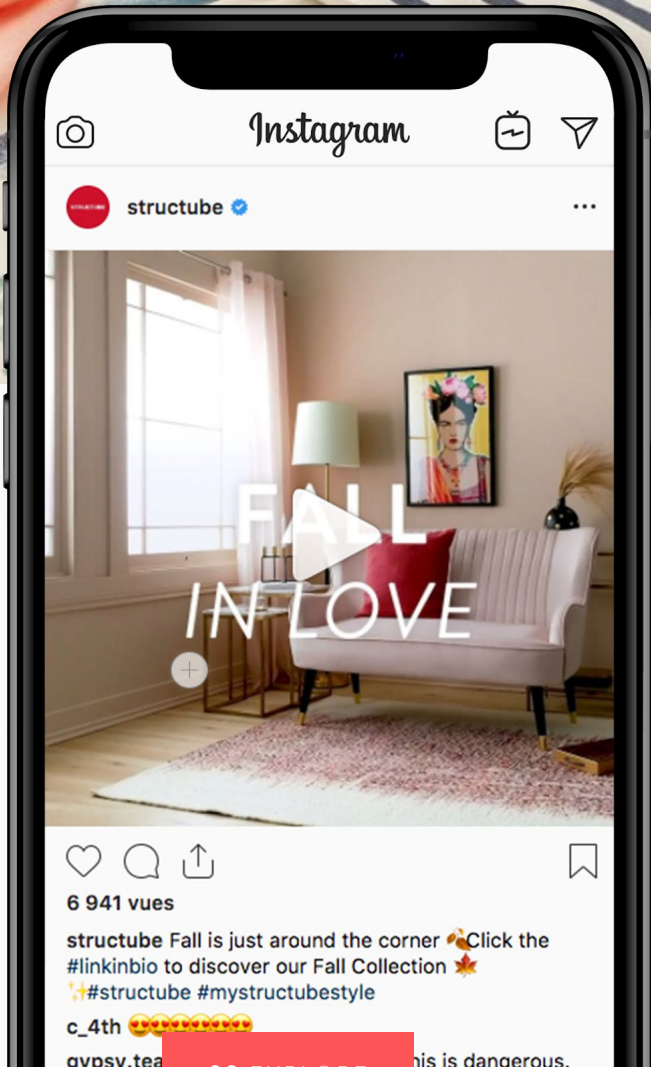
Accompanying products are unobtrusively presented to the consumer during the path to purchase.

Images: Crate & Barrel





HOW TO DO IT



EXPLORE

Who Does it Well?

Canadian furniture powerhouse **Structure** has content-rich channels filled with contextual rooms and relatable layouts. By combining video, photography and product shots, they create ideas, stimulate curiosity and drive *microconversions*. That, and their #MyStructureStyle Instagram hashtag has thousands of user-generated posts and millions of likes.

A. Structure is an Absolunet client.



# RESEARCH

STEP 03 / 06



# RESEARCH

From Passive  
To Active

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*That's it: I'm upgrading my space. Time to find the products and pieces that will occupy my home.*

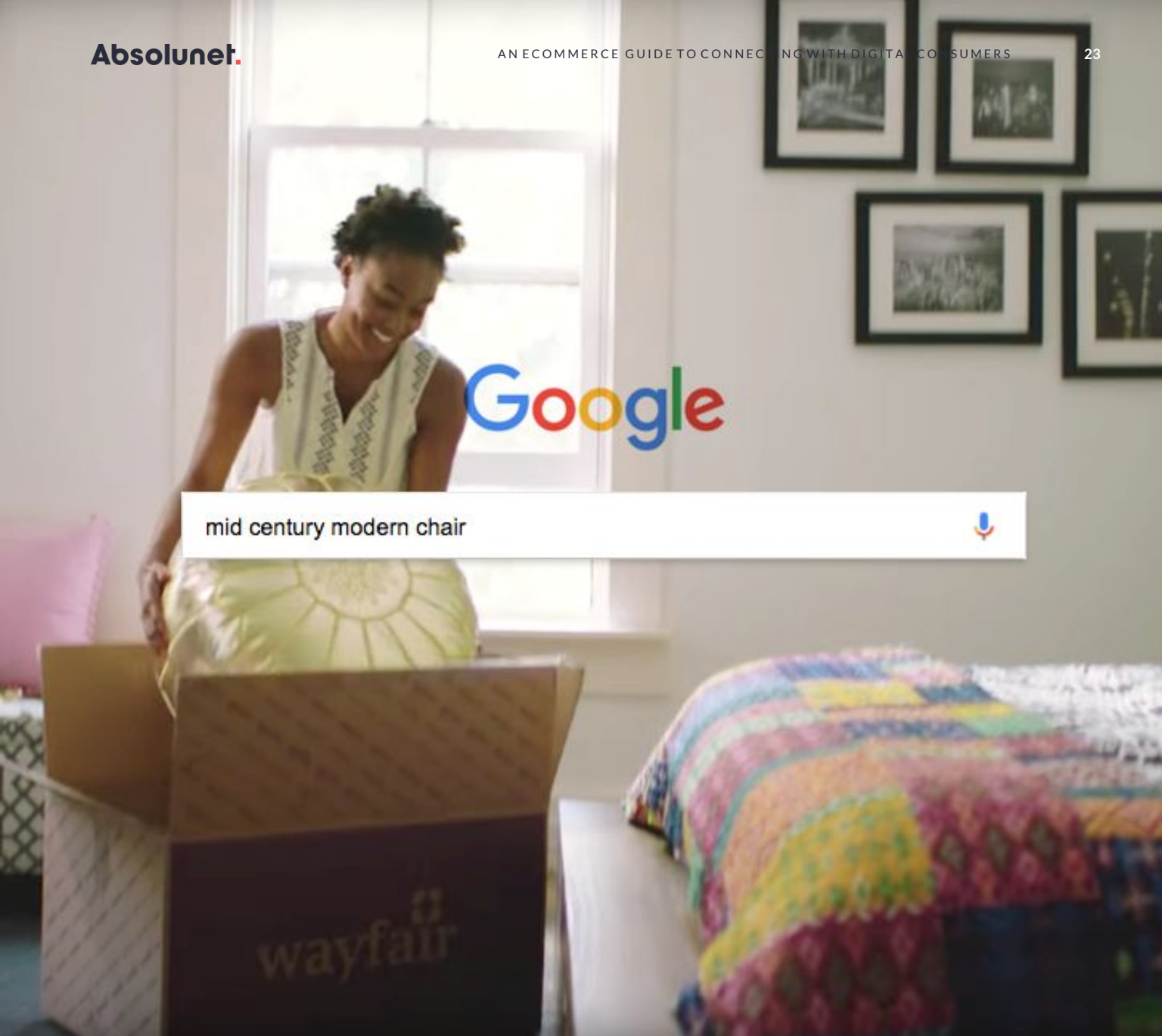
*How much does it cost? Where can I find it? I'm visiting sites and stores, reading reviews, taking measurements, budgeting and getting opinions and feedback.*



A blue upholstered armchair with wooden legs is the central focus of the image. The chair is positioned in a living room with a wooden floor and a white bookshelf in the background. The text 'How did Wayfair get so big so fast?' is overlaid on the lower left portion of the chair.

# How did Wayfair get so big so fast?





## How Wayfair got so big so fast: Branded vs. Category Search

Wayfair snaps up category search terms, purchasing 13% of shopping ads for furniture keywords in 2017, up from 6% in 2016. What is a category search term? “Leather couch” (category) vs. IKEA couch or Kitchen Aid mixer (branded). Consumers shopping for products will almost certainly find a Wayfair ad among their search results.

Wayfair has added TV ads to their mix to position them as a deal-driven brand/shopping destination.

**How do you beat Wayfair + Amazon** (who is pursuing a private-label approach)?

**Be amazing, not generic.** Niche + expertise + depth (ex: kitchenwares, great brands and competent service, as well as stores are key assets). Choose your SEO battles wisely.



## Your Objective Here

Help the consumer find the perfect product(s).

## Keys to Success

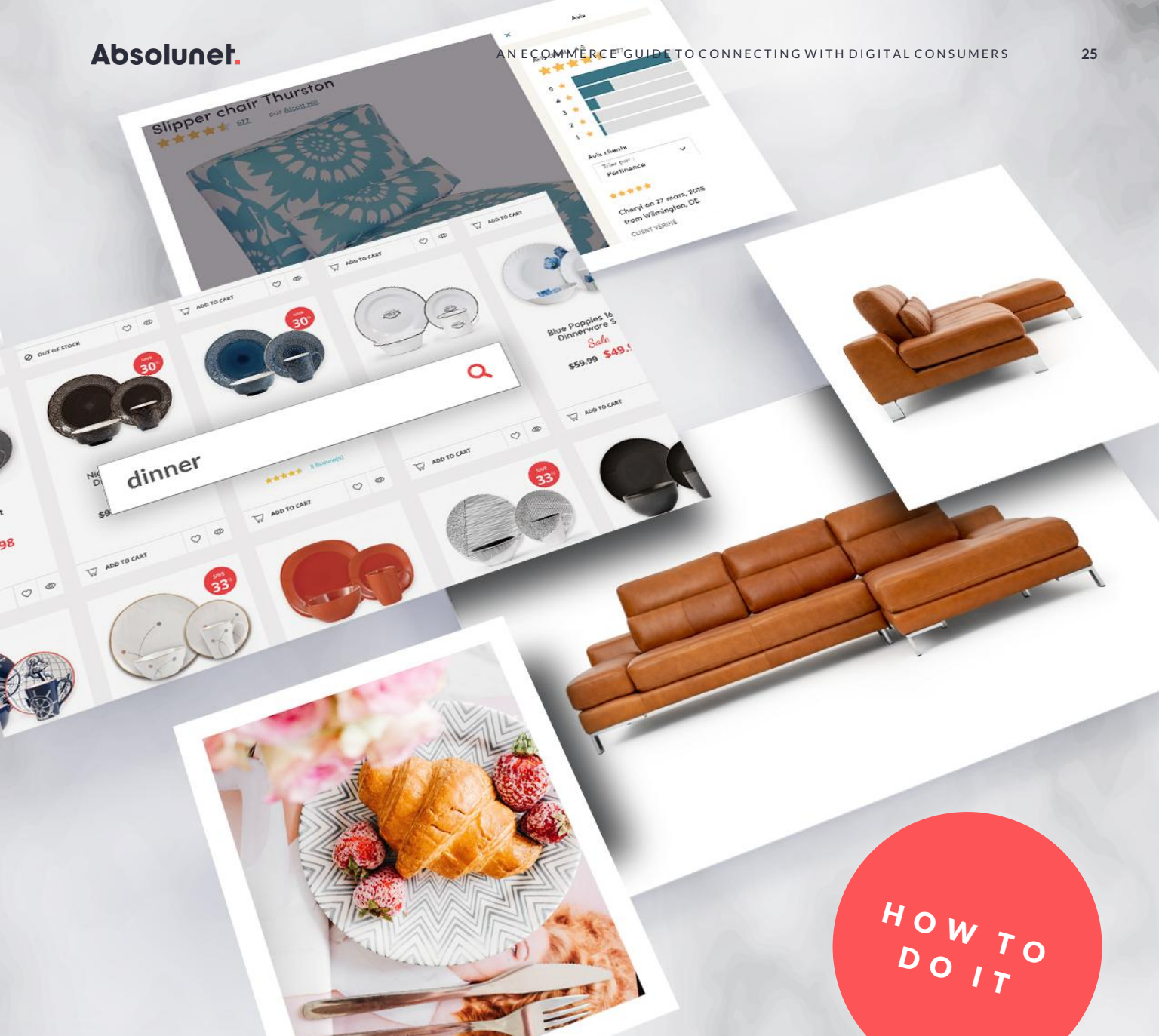
Be findable (platform Search, SEO/SEM), provide answers (product information + reviews) and options (merchandising).

This starts online. Your chances of success multiply if you can get them to visit a store.

Help the consumer find the answers to their questions and concerns by showing up in search results and by providing in-depth and compelling product information. They want to know if it fits, how much it really costs, if the quality is there, bang for the buck, what others think, and more.

The consumer is choosing a product, and this is an opportunity for a merchant or brand to become top of mind.





1

### Product information

When they are considering a product, make sure in-depth, quality information is there to help them choose with confidence.

2

### Platform search

Your platform's search capabilities will directly influence sales. The better the results and experience, the more the customer will engage. Virtually all platforms have search out-of-the-box, though more advanced (and AI-powered) solutions can be integrated.

3

### Reviews

Consumers increasingly rely on reviews to make up their minds (over 60% of consumers, in fact).

4

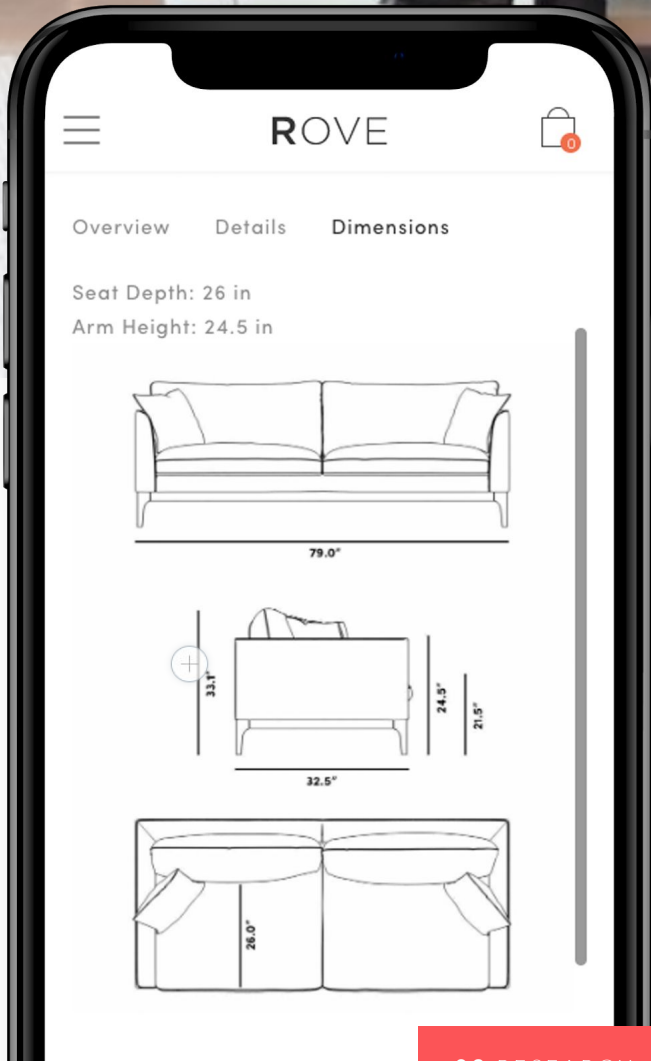
### Merchandizing

Use your Product Information Management solution to tie products to possible upsells and cross-sells. Personalization tools are also great here.

5

### SEO + SEM

Make sure your products and pages are search-engine-optimized, then use ads (sponsored results) to multiply your odds.



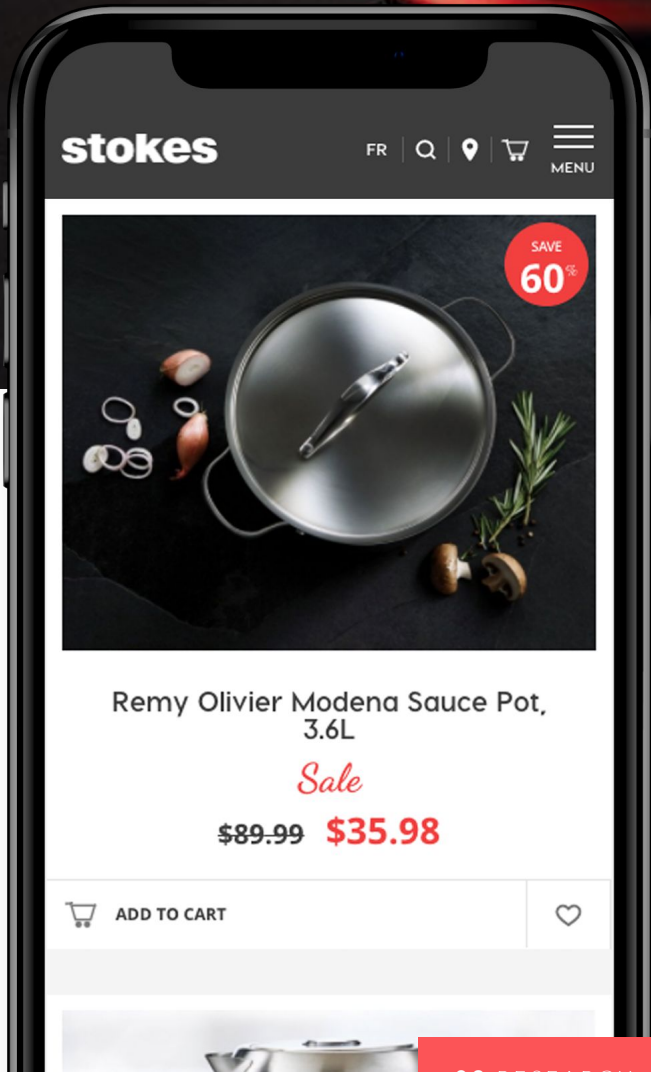
RESEARCH

## Who Does it Well?

Rove Concepts provides detailed diagrams with measurements on their product pages. They go so far as to provide a measurement for the space between the sofa legs and height from floor to bottom of couch.

Image: Rove Concepts





Images: Stokes

RESEARCH

### Who Does it Well?

Stokes provides intuitive navigation that matches the consumer's context (entertaining, dining, cooking) to products (wine glasses, pots and pans, coffee and tea sets). Combined with the Dynamic Yield personalization engine, this pairing drives conversions and other KPIs upward.

**A.** Stokes is an Absolunet client.



HOW TO DO IT



**GRAYDON SHAGREEN SHELVING**  
 C\$4595 - C\$5695 REGULAR  
 C\$3446 - C\$4271 MEMBER

A celebration of simple forms and luxe materials, our collection is inspired by the sumptuous refinement of 1930s Paris. Understated silhouettes are clad in rich shagreen-embossed leather, an exacting reproduction of the texture and subtly complex pattern of natural stingray hide.

**SHOP THE ENTIRE COLLECTION** ▶

**DETAILS -**

**HIDE DIMENSIONS -**

45½" Shelving Overall: 45½"W x 18"D x 92"H  
 Distance Between Fixed Shelves: 15"

60" Shelving Overall: 60"W x 18"D x 92"H  
 Distance Between Fixed Shelves: 15"

**FINISH OPTIONS**



Image: Restoration Hardware

**RESEARCH**

**Who Does it Well?**

RH (Restoration Hardware) masters this step by giving consumers the height between the shelves, down to the quarter inch.

Better still: the consumer can order a sample piece of shelf (for 20-something dollars) to see and feel the wood, the finish, etc., before making their choice.



# SELECTION

STEP 04 / 06

# SELECTION

## Choosing a Winner

### WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*I'm narrowing down my options, zeroing in on the pieces of furniture / home decor I will purchase.*

*I'm double-checking my measurements, going deep into online reviews, visiting in-store to touch and feel and see how I can interact with it physically.*

*Which one best meets my criteria? Best fits my space? Makes my home truly awesome? I'm very excited yet at the same time a little apprehensive. Can I really trust Amazon for furniture? **It's as much about getting it right as it is about not getting it wrong.***





This Danish inspired mid-century modern chair will add style and comfort to your dining space.

## Your objective here

Inspire confidence and survive the elimination round.

The consumer is choosing both product and merchant, and will use trust (an intangible asset) as their criteria.

## Keys to success

Be easy to do business with and easy to buy from. Be transparent, provide the consumer with information, address their concerns and close the deal. Give them a reason to buy this specific product or set of products. Be helpful, knowledgeable and trustworthy.



# 1 Product information + intuitive design.

Your eCommerce platform, along with the quality and depth of your product content (which should be syndicated across multiple platforms, by the way) will go a long way in making sure that the consumer finds answers and sees you as the most viable merchant.

A consistent experience across platforms (omnichannel) will secure your position in the consumer's eyes.





HOW TO DO IT

SELECTION

### Who Does it Well?

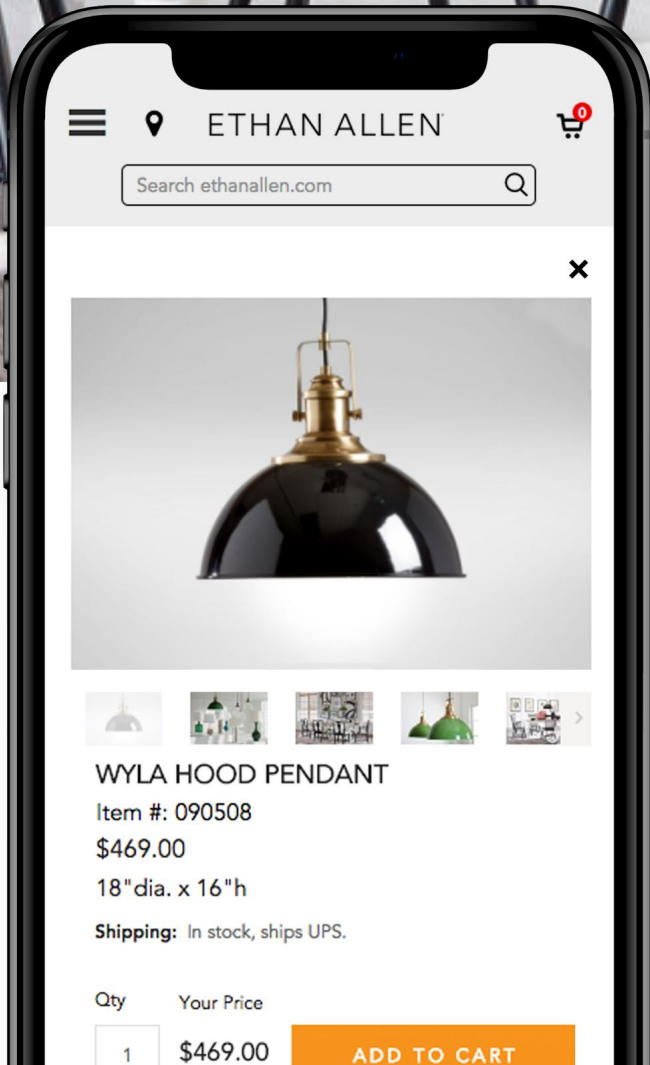
Bath Depot provides in-depth product information, multiple product photos, descriptions, item measurements and downloadable owner's manuals. The knockout punch? A list of nearby stores with "Demo in store" and "current inventory", which have increased in-person visits and purchases.

A. Bath Depot is an Absolunet client.

Images: Bath Depot

zmags

HOW TO DO IT



SELECTION

Who Does it Well?

Ethan Allen masters “shop the room”, making it easy to add multiple items to cart directly using the “Quickviews” functionality. Customers can immediately add to cart without exiting the experience. Ethan Allen makes full use of the Zmags merchandizing (and content creation) platform - even their PDF catalogs are shoppable!

Images: Zmags + Ethan Allen



# PURCHASE

STEP 05 / 06

image: @thevancouveriteblog

# PURCHASE

The  
transaction

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*I've made my decision. I'm getting this/these specific items from this store - and I'm ready to pay. Should I get it in store or have it delivered? Does Amazon sell this brand for less? (last-minute double-check). I can barely wait!*

image: @thevancouveriteblog





image: @thevancouveriteblog

## Your objective here

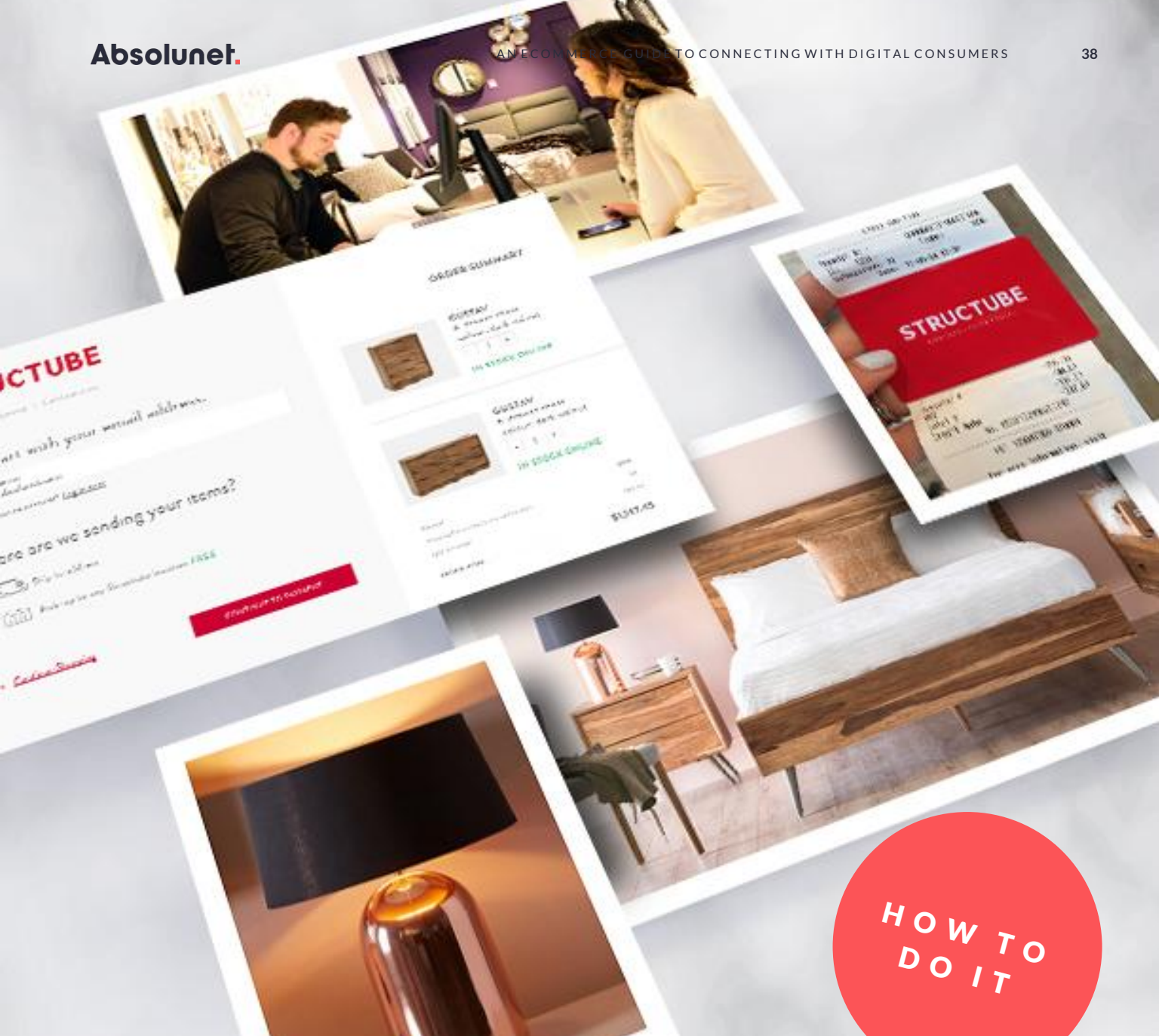
**Don't mess it up.** Close the sale.

A fluid, frictionless experience will set you apart. Be transparent, set expectations and delight.

## Keys to success

The decision to purchase has been made and you have been chosen. Don't give the consumer an opportunity or reason to buy from your competition.

A frictionless customer experience at checkout is key. This is also a great opportunity for cross-sells and upsells. Make sure your information is accurate and up-to-date about selection, available inventory, shipping delays, etc.



HOW TO  
DO IT

# 1

## Omnichannel works when your systems are well integrated.

Your eCommerce platform, POS, CRM and ERP - as well as your OMS - must all be properly integrated to provide a seamless, frictionless purchasing experience which, as you know by now, absolutely extends to the in-store experience, including over the phone.

In short, be cohesive, integrated and easy to buy from.



**A.** Structube is an Absolunet client.



HOW TO  
DO IT

Images: Structube

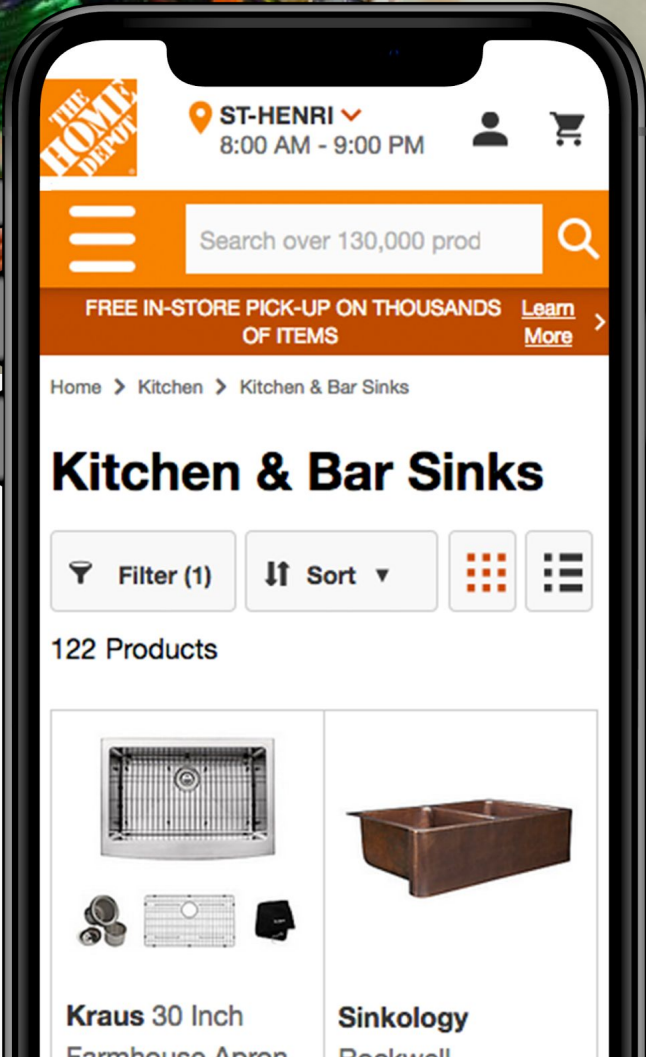
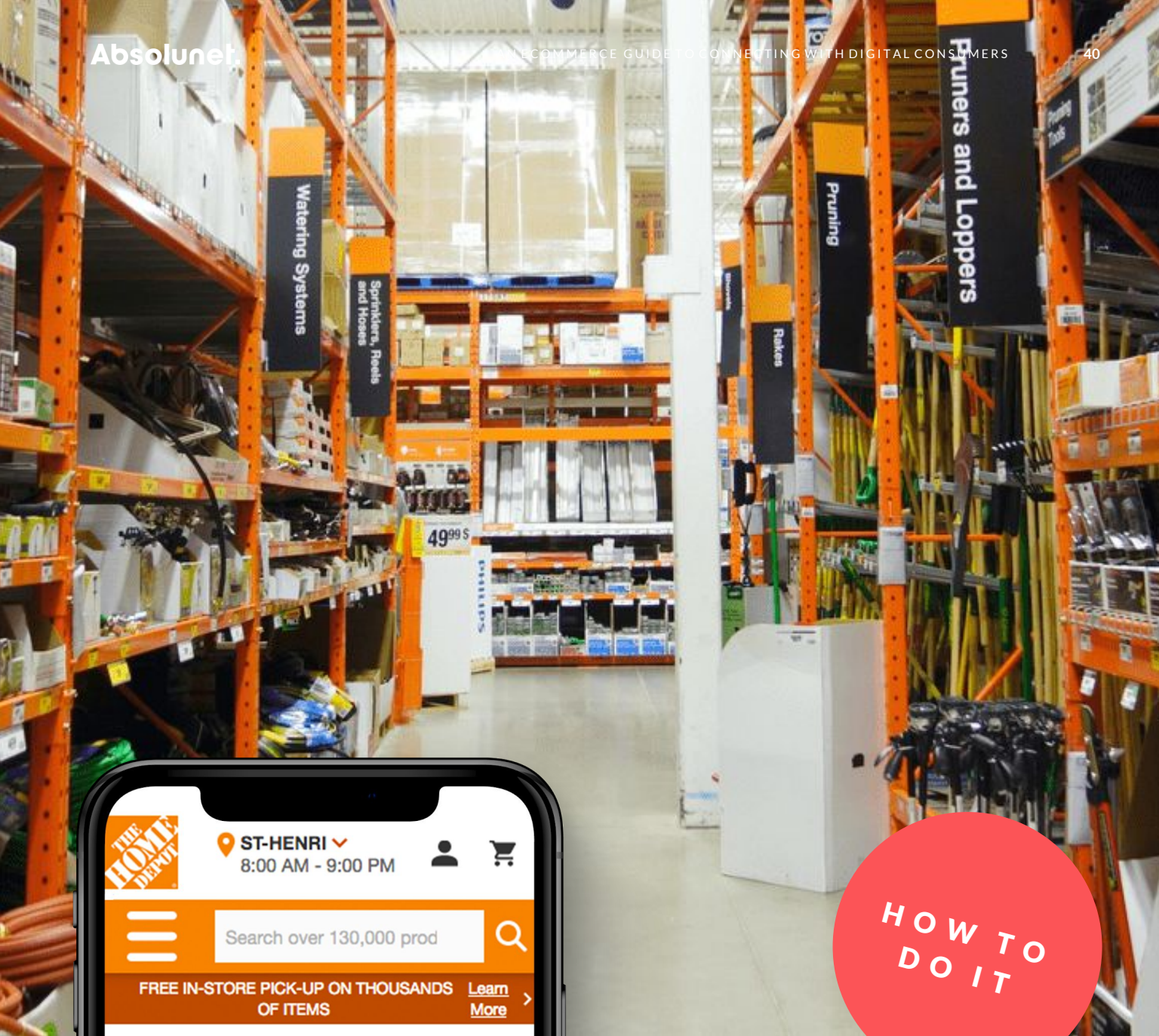


## PURCHASE

### Who Does it Well?

Structube TRIPLED online orders overnight when they activated the “ship to store” feature (**BOPIS**; “Buy-online-pickup-in-store”). It turns out many consumers prefer to schedule a time to pick up items instead of waiting passively for delivery. Their new “ship to warehouse” feature has also immediately impacted sales. Omnichannel indeed.





PURCHASE

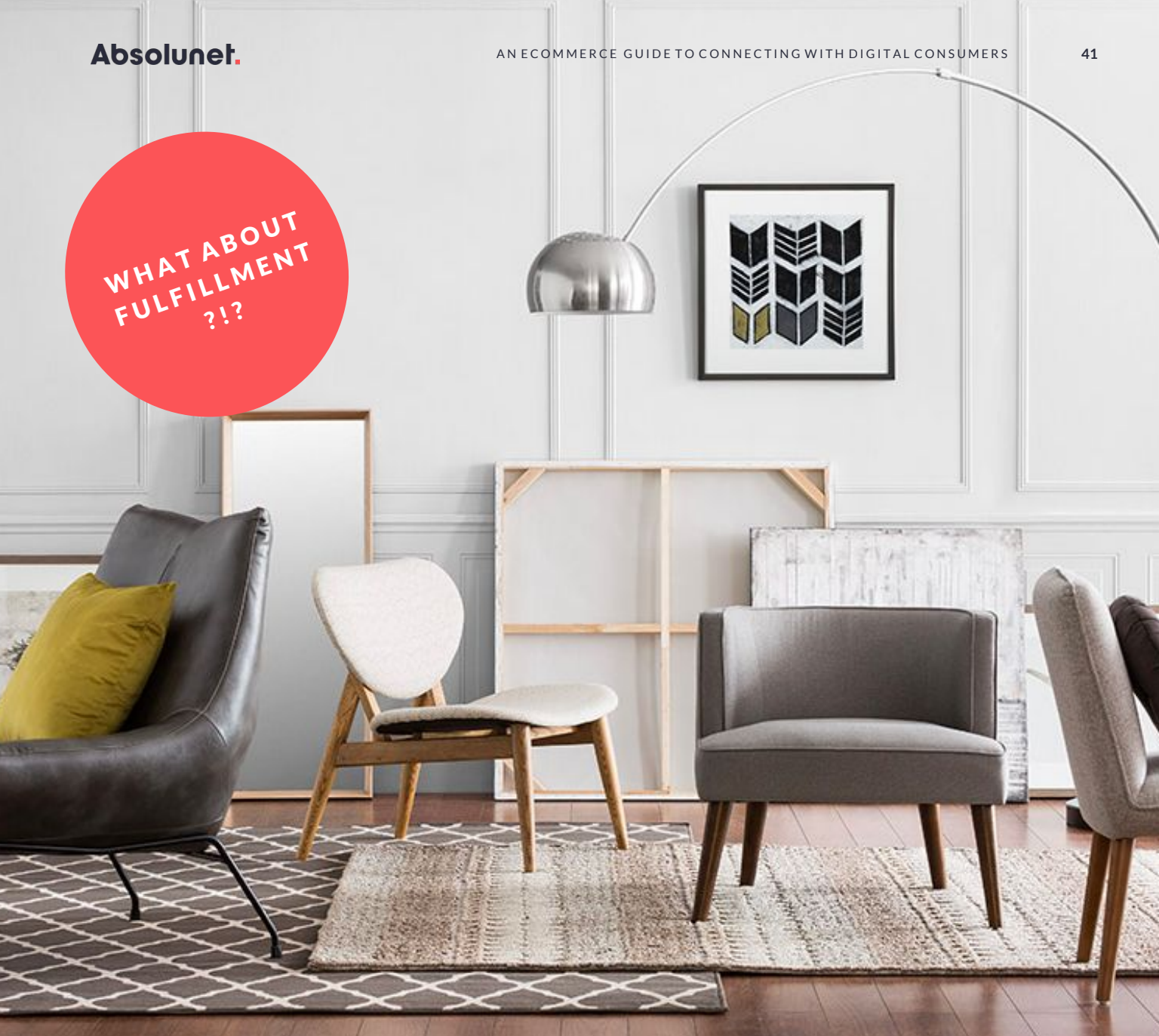
### Who Does it Well?

Nearly half of Home Depot's orders are picked up in store, and the home improvement (and now home decor) merchant is investing more than ever in its digital experience. Interestingly, by measuring sales per square foot, including digital - Home Depot is eschewing the dated practice of measuring eCommerce sales as a distinct store and instead, understanding that today's home decor consumer sees all channels as brand interactions.

Images: HomeDepot + 360 commerce



WHAT ABOUT  
FULFILLMENT  
?!?



## Step 5.1: Fulfillment

Before we move on to the next phase, **USE**, which belongs to the consumer, phase 5.1 is **fulfillment**: what happens the second after the payment is made all the way until the customer has the item in their possession.

Getting this right and being transparent is crucial, as fulfillment can make or break your reputation. Your Order Management System (OMS) should provide automated tracking numbers and links, order status updates, and more. Systems like Shipstation and Dotmailer are often integrated with Magento to achieve this.

Remember how **Structube** tripled their online orders when they activated the ship to store (BOPIS) feature on Magento? (It was 2 pages ago.) It turns out users prefer to pick up their bulky pieces of furniture in store, on their terms and as their schedule permits, instead of waiting at home to receive a delivery which they may have to return. Make the buyer feel in control of the purchase process.

05 PURCHASE

05.1  
FULFILLMENT



# USE

STEP 06 / 06



# USE

The ultimate  
interaction

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

*from the consumer's perspective*

“

*I have my loveseat / dining room table / coffee table / kitchen mixer / food processor / wall art / rug or whatever it is I have purchased in my home and in my day-to-day.*

*I either love it, have already moved onto my next area of interest or I don't like it.*



## Your objective here

Keep your customer engaged.

## Keys to success

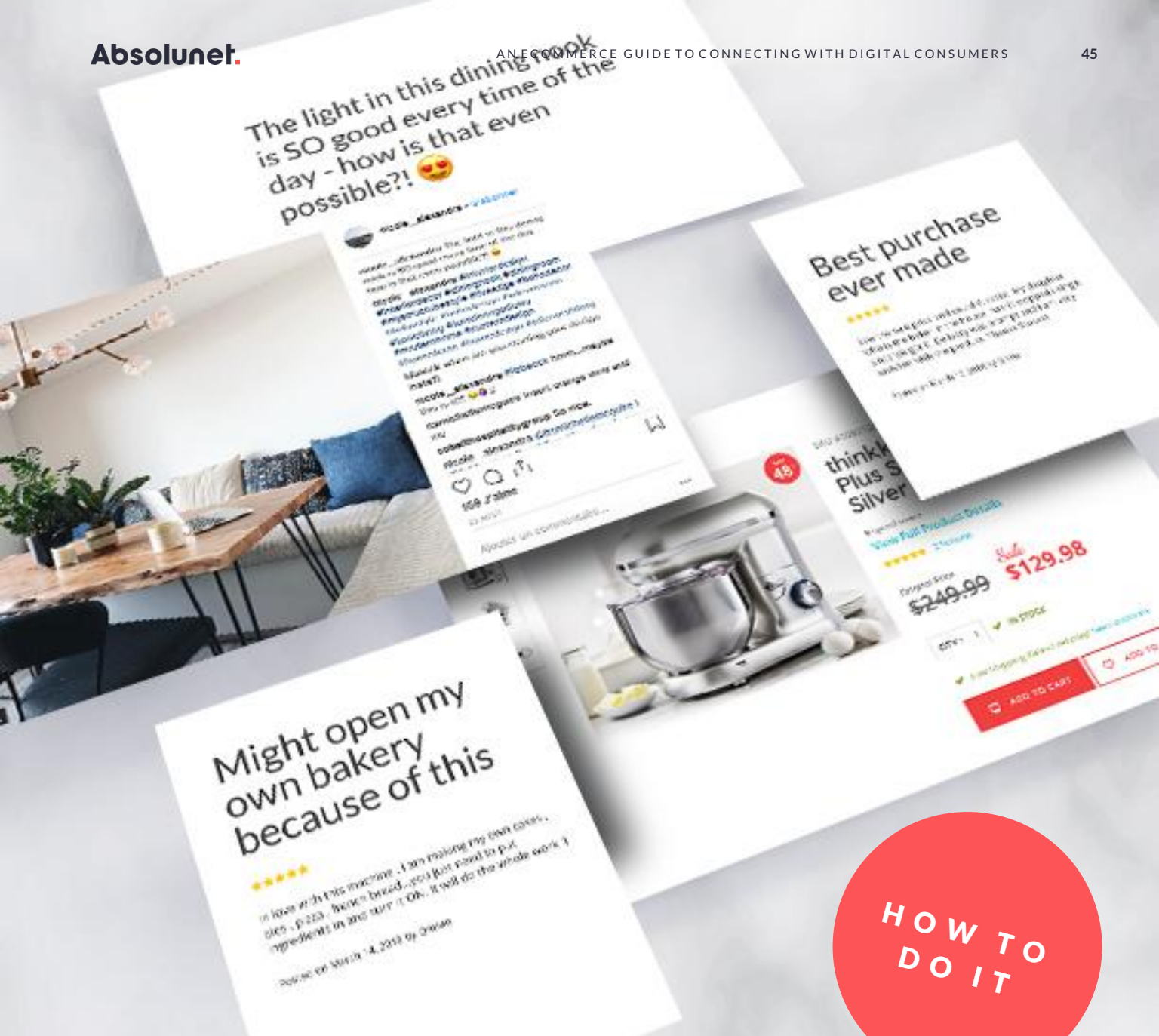
Follow up with the consumer. Automate your communications to invite the consumer back onto your platform; ask for a review by email,

run a user-generated-content (UGC) inviting them to share what they love about the new product, use creative #hashtags, reward loyalty and advocacy and further drive their relationship with you as a brand.

If the product doesn't meet the consumers expectations, make sure your return policy and its execution are fluid and transparent; this interaction is a great way to cement your relationship with the customer, just as much as it is an opportunity to lose them if done poorly.

Image: IKEA





## Marketing and CRM Automation.

# 1

Use automated marketing - especially by email - to create the post-sale interactions that will help future consumers connect with you along *their* customer journeys and path to purchase.

Automated emails, connected with your CRM and analytics environment will allow you to better understand each customer at every interaction.

The more data you accumulate, the better you will be able to wield AI as it becomes available to you.

A system for customer reviews, both positive and negative, can be one of your biggest assets to ensure future purchases. **Interestingly**, a product with only a negative review will convert better (30% more, in fact) than a product with no reviews at all. Go figure.



4.3



55 reviews



USE

### Who Does it Well?

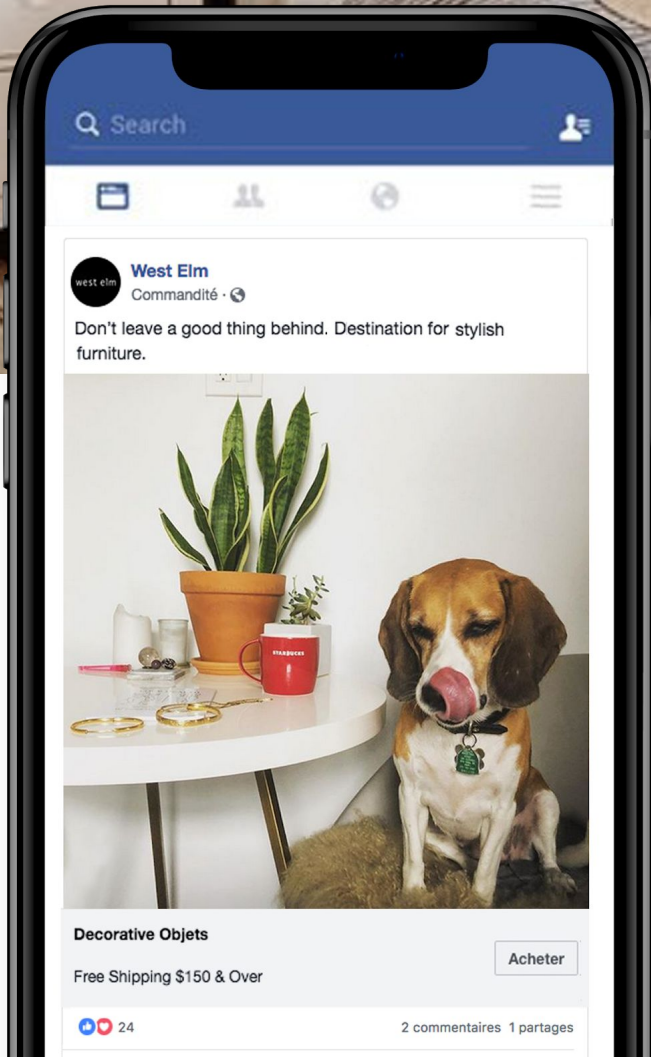
Electrolux, one of the world's biggest appliance manufacturers, collects and syndicates reviews (which are, in fact, product content) across platforms to its retailers using BazaarVoice. Users who register their product receive an automated email requesting a review - Why? Because nearly 60% of appliance shoppers read reviews online before purchasing in-store.

Images: BazaarVoice





HOW TO DO IT



USE

### Who Does it Well?

West Elm clients share pictures of their decorated homes on Instagram and Pinterest, using the #hashtags in West Elm's CGC (consumer generated content) campaigns. The retailer uses many of these pics directly on the product pages because, as many furniture and home decor brands and retailers know, **more pictures usually generate more sales**. The pictures are so authentic and charming that the retailer has even used CGC in ads.

# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## 6 keys to omnichannel growth

Here's what you need to remember about the home decor consumer's path to purchase, how it affects you and how, in turn, you can master omnichannel and grow.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Be beautiful and inspire.**  
In home decor, what people look for hasn't really changed. How they discover, interact and purchase has, though. A lot.
- 2 Product information wins the day**  
...and reduces returns. The closer consumers get to purchasing, the more product information and details matter - including pics, measurements, reviews, etc.
- 3 If you ain't omnichannel, you're losing.**  
Develop a digital strategy and choose the right channels. Outcomes, objectives, options, priorities, finance... An experienced partner makes a difference here.
- 4 Build the omnichannel infrastructure you need, incrementally**  
Foundational elements first. Strong fundamentals make growth and agility possible.
- 5 Embrace the digital shift without forgetting your roots**  
eCommerce is not a distinct store; it is a channel consumers use to interact with your brand AND your stores. **Also:** change management matters: retailers will need to onboard their store staff.
- 6 Execute, measure, optimize.**  
You're only as good as your last sale, and digital interaction. Be agile and use the "Google approach" to get a little bit better with every single interaction.



## THIS IS THE MOST OMNICHANNEL SECTOR IN RETAIL

**The catalog has gone digital, but the basics have remained unchanged; beautiful, contextual photography, detailed product information, a great in-store experience and outstanding customer service still define you as a brand and as a retailer.**

From inspiration to research to purchase, all the way to everyday use, consumers will interact with your brand in both passive and active ways. Their customer journey is everything but linear.

Though you can't decide how each customer journey will unfold, you can influence the path to purchase and create a strong brand imprint, catered to each customer and interaction.

By being present across channels and platforms, as well as being ready to jump from phase 3 to phase 5 at any time, you are meeting the digital consumer where they are and providing interactions that are actually helpful to them - and to your bottom line.



# Absolunet.

## About Absolunet, the North American eCommerce Agency

Absolunet helps North-American manufacturers, distributors and merchants bridge the gap between how they sell and what customers expect in the digital economy.

Absolunet is an eCommerce agency and integrator with 250+ people obsessed with delivering results, creating ROI-producing (and award-winning) eCommerce experiences since 1999.

Known for its annual [Top 10 eCommerce Trends report](#), Absolunet is a certified [Adobe Gold Partner](#), specialized in [Magento](#) and Magento's 2018 Spirit of Excellence award winner. Absolunet is also an [inRiver PIM Platinum partner](#) and inRiver's partner of the year 5 years running.



## About Magento Commerce

Magento Commerce, part of Adobe Experience Cloud, is the leading commerce solution for merchants and brands across B2C and B2B industries and was recently named a leader in the 2019 Gartner Magic Quadrant for Digital Commerce.

Magento Commerce boasts a strong portfolio of cloud-based omnichannel solutions that empower merchants to successfully integrate digital and physical shopping experiences.

Magento is the #1 provider to the Internet Retailer Top 1000, the B2B 300 and the Top 500 Guides for Europe and Latin America. Magento is supported by a vast global network of solution and technology partners, a highly active global developer community and the largest eCommerce marketplace for extensions available for download on the Magento Marketplace.

More information can be found at [www.magento.com](http://www.magento.com).

**Absolunet.**

# Let's talk.

We help brands and merchants bridge the gap between how they sell today and how their customers buy in the digital economy.

To leverage our extensive eCommerce and digital experience in the furniture, housewares and home decor industry, get in touch.



**Charles Desjardins**

Partner, Executive Vice-President,  
Absolunet  
+1.877.979.2276 ext. 2301  
[cdesjardins@absolunet.com](mailto:cdesjardins@absolunet.com)



**Peter Dalfen**

Director of Sales,  
Absolunet  
+1.877.979.2276 ext. 2849  
[pdalfen@absolunet.com](mailto:pdalfen@absolunet.com)



**Marc-André Huras**

Director of Sales, Retail + B2C  
Absolunet  
+1 877 979 2276 ext. 2557  
[mahuras@absolunet.com](mailto:mahuras@absolunet.com)