Content Commerce Trend Report
The widespread adoption of eCommerce amid the pandemic has created a new playing field for advertisers. As they take stock of how to reach consumers inundated with messages and overwhelmed by choice, it's important to focus on building trust aligning with content that reaches high-intent audiences. When done right, the opportunity is great: Future saw sales double in the early months of 2021 from where they were a year prior.

Drawing on Future’s network of 180+ sites that reach over 300M people monthly, this report takes a look at eCommerce trends throughout the first third of 2021 with a focus on content commerce's impact. The popularity of content commerce between both publisher and advertisers is unlikely to slow throughout 2021, even as vaccination rates increase and consumers return to work at their offices.

Online shopping is here to stay.
Ecommerce sales continued their strong performance throughout Q1 as Future saw tremendous year-over-year lift in both total sales order value (SOV) and total transaction volume. SOV growth in particular was strong, with the total SOV doubling in North America, currently $4.9m.

**During Future’s FY2020, the company drove $960M in SOV for affiliate partners via HAWK it’s proprietary price comparison platform.**

Future’s continued growth in content commerce shows the power of this strategy for connecting consumers to the products they want through engaging, compelling, high caliber journalistic content.

The top performing articles of the quarter reveal that consumers are “best obsessed”—that is, they want to read content that helps them find the “best” choice for the item they’re looking for, whether that’s a laptop, VPN, or gaming chair.

The variety of high-performing articles also shows the evolution of content commerce. It’s no longer a tool used simply to reach prospects at the point of purchase, but an incredibly efficient way to move customers throughout the purchase funnel, giving them options at every stage and helping them reach the point of conversion.

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<th>Sales order value growth (YTD 2020 vs 2021)</th>
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<th>Total transactions (YTD 2020 vs 2021)</th>
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The Impact of Buyer’s Guides

Buyers guides - designed to help consumers make informed purchase decisions - remain the strongest drivers of conversions, but their true strength isn’t just as a single type of article designed to drive sales. It comes from the interconnected nature of content, allowing a prospect to move across the funnel - from a piece of news to a review that is linked within the article, to a buying guide linked within that review.

Publishers and their affiliates need to not only look at the content that results in conversions but in the circle of virality around the content, which moves prospects across a content ecosystem and gives them everything they need to make a purchase decision. Publishers must remain editorially balanced as trusted sources for recommendations and insights to guide high-intent audiences.

Buyer’s Guides Account For 60% of Sales Order Value Annually

This article alone sells the equivalent of over 8+ mattresses a day.

Advertisers see the value of aligning with high intent audiences.
Evergreen eCommerce is an incredibly important piece of the content-commerce puzzle. With more competition than ever before, retailers can’t rely solely on the dozen or so tentpole sales events. Brands need to sell year-round. And leverage digital word of mouth generated by editorial recommendations and reviews.

Evergreen commerce content continues to drive revenue years later. Content investments compound over time through strong SEO and domain authority.

Future’s content analysis shows that content written in previous years still drives conversions. In Q1 2021, **49% of all sales order value came from articles created before 2020.** With small tweaks and SEO adjustments, a piece of content that is several years old can continue to drive sales and be valuable for consumers and advertisers.

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Are buying guides published before 2021.
Consumers Are ‘Best’ Obsessed And For Good Reason!

A scan of the top performing articles, as determined by SOV, shows a common keyword in headlines: “best.” Clearly, consumers are driven by a desire to invest their money on the very best product, whether that’s a laptop, biking shoes, a telescope, a new washing machine or mesh router.

These consumers are inundated with choices, and it’s clear that they are seeking the help of a trusted source. Journalism offers validation and cuts down on the noise. When complemented with advertising, it can lead audiences to the best choice faster and more effectively.

Publications that make recommendations based on editorial insight and qualified testing build consumer trust, which is the valuable asset that retailers tap when they leverage content commerce across the consumer journey.

The best Roku device to buy in 2021
By Phil Nicholson 3 months ago

The best gaming chairs in 2021
Best laptop 2021: our pick of the 15 best laptops you can buy this year
By Matt Hansen 15 days ago

Online user has questions
They go to Google and ask for answers
Future sites answer questions through editorial

What is the best price?
How can I?
How does it work?
Where to buy?
Should I buy?
What is the best?
Is it worth it?
Does it work with?
Do I need?
This or this?
Best deals on ___?
Help me setup
How do I make it better?
The past year marked a radical shift in how many consumers lived their lives. Commutes and offices were out, and working from home was in. As a result, many needed to find products that were going to help them remain productive and professional while they adjusted to a period of working from home. This trend continued in Q1 2021, as the top item categories are clearly tied to the digital essentials of remote working.

Notable product category growth, global (year-over-year April 2020-2021)

- **Auto** +243%
- **Photography** +179%
- **Clothing** +174%
- **Wellness** +98%
- **Headphones** +76%
- **Computing** +60%

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**Top-selling products: Adapting to the way we live now**

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**The 36 Best Swimwear Brands of Summer 2021**

Your next go-to suit is on this list.

**tom's guide**

**Best exercise bikes for home in 2021**

The best exercise bikes for cycling at home

**bestWebcam**

**Best webcams 2021: top picks for working from home**

Great news for folks who are still looking to buy the best webcams. Although these peripherals have experienced massive shortages in the middle of this pandemic due to high demands, dwindling supplies, and production issues, they are now readily available again. Logitech, Cisco, and Microsoft have replenished their stocks, which means that you can pretty much buy these from any store, online or otherwise.

There's a huge surge in demand for the best webcams due to the mix of folks working from or really just being stuck at home. PC users need these peripherals.
Laptops, headphones, computer storage, and other accessories, like comfortable gaming chairs and webcams, were among the top items across markets, showing that people were looking for the very best in gear to stay productive and unwind when they were off the clock. Consumers want their dollars to work harder than ever for them.
Even as consumers buying patterns shift according to their evolving needs, the data shows that they still value content that helps them make informed decisions and purchase the very best for their dollar.

Content commerce is a leading example of this, and one that advertisers should consider when determining how best to reach audiences in the new normal.

**Key Takeaways:**

Advertising aligned with commerce content is clearly an effective way to reach high-intent audiences, particularly as consumers are spending more time researching and making purchases online.

Consumers want to get the best products they can for their buck. This makes buyers guides a valuable content type that drives conversions.

Purchasing patterns show that consumers are embracing technology in all aspects of their lives, from gaming hardware for greater entertainment at home to photography equipment that lets them capture their adventures outside of it.