At the pet retailer Pets Place, your furry best friend is the star of the show. And stars should be seen and heard. With Flowbox, Pets Place has found a smart way to integrate their customers’ animal photos with both online and offline marketing activities. The result? Proud pet owners and increased online sales. A win-win.

CHALLENGE

With new players entering the market, Pets Place knew they needed a strong online presence to stay ahead of competition. Stock photos were used frequently on the website and user-generated content was more of an exception than a standard element. Scaling up and utilizing UGC in a more strategic way was difficult without the right tools. Stefan de Koning explains:

“We used to have only a little bit of user-generated content on our site before, maybe one or two items, but it wasn’t a big part of our digital marketing until we started using Flowbox.”

Got an animal and a smartphone? Chances are you’ve got a lot of photos of your furry friend. And if you have an Instagram account, maybe one or two of them have ended up in your feed. For the Dutch market-leading pet retailer Pets Place, the vast source of dog and cat photos in social media is a goldmine. And since recently, they can utilize the source in the best way possible.

“With Flowbox, we are a step ahead with UGC compared to our competitors. There are so many people posting photos and videos with their pets on Instagram, and now we have the possibility to share their content with the rest of the world,” says Stefan de Koning, social media and content marketer at Pets Place.
SOLUTION
To find out if Flowbox would generate real results and be worth the investment, Stefan and his colleagues decided to do an A/B test. Initially on the start page only but later also on the product pages.

“My expectations have definitely been exceeded. I thought people would interact by viewing, clicking and liking the content but I didn’t expect it to generate direct profit on a large scale.”

Customers tagging their photos with @petsplacenl have a chance of being discovered and can get featured on the website, on display screens in physical stores and in other channels. To encourage further engagement, each month three of the best content creators can win a gift card.

“We’ve seen that it’s generating a lot of great content. We’re also planning a campaign where you can make your pet famous. If a customer is featured on the inspiration page ten times, they’ll get extra exposure and can put an overlay on their photo to show they have a special pet.

RESULTS
Since using Flowbox, both engagement and conversions have increased. The number of Instagram followers has grown from 1700 to over 5000 since the Flowbox implementation 8 months ago, and the source of content in social media is constantly expanding.

“Our community is growing every week. Before we used Flowbox we got maybe 30 tags per week. Last week we saw 350 hashtags,” says Stefan de Koning.

He thinks it’s important to keep encouraging people to share content and remind them where and how to tag their pictures.

“We try to push the message in different channels, both online and offline, in newsletters and in social media. And we also post content to teach our followers to create higher quality UGC, for example articles with tips on how to take good photos of your animal and how to get featured on our inspiration page.”

With almost two hundred stores in the Netherlands, Pets Place is now taking the step towards integrating UGC further in the physical world. Customers can be inspired by UGC flows on displays in the shops, and flyers will be distributed to promote the Pets Place community further.

“Using Flowbox has given us the opportunity to use UGC in a bigger way. It’s easier and faster to get good content since we don’t have to spend time asking our customers for permission manually,” says Stefan de Koning.

The results of the A/B test show a significant increase in online sales when UGC is shown. The revenue from the start page is 5% more since implementing Flowbox and 7.4% more on the product pages.

“There is a clear difference with and without UGC. People want to see how our products look in other people’s homes with other animals. People believe other people, and they inspire each other. We see it in the conversions,” says Stefan de Koning and adds:

“People share everything online today, I think content marketing will become even more important, going forward.”

BEFORE AND AFTER FLOWBOX
The results of the A/B test:
+5% revenue on the homepage
+7.4% revenue on product pages

Instagram engagement 8 months after implementation:
1600% increase in brand related tags on Instagram per month (from 80 tags to 1280 tags)
294% increase in Instagram followers (from 1700 to 5000) followers

Flowbox was founded in 2016 but the journey began 10 years ago with the content marketing company Smart Media. Flowbox is a product created from the challenges and needs of real life companies. Smart Media clients needed technology that would make life easier for marketers and that would turn likes into results. So we created Flowbox. With more than a decade at the heart of content marketing, we truly know what matters for our customers.

PHOTO (LEFT TO RIGHT): @WOKKEL.EN.NIBBIT @CARLOS_FIDEL_CATSTRO @DOBERMANN_TIMBER @SPACETHEPOMSKY

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