ASOS Case Study: Build a Successful, Scalable, and Sustainable Brand Advocacy Program

How did a leading global brand inspire organic advocacy among their most ardent customers with lean marketing practices?

What business challenge did Asos face?

ASOS is a leading online fashion retailer and premier fashion destination for millennials across the globe. Generating $1.35M in revenue, sales growth is + 40% year-over-year and marketing spend remains steady at 5% of sales cost. Since the company’s founding in 2000, social engagement has been core to their brand strategy. Through consistent content marketing and social media efforts, ASOS has developed an emotional connection and earned credibility among twenty-something fashion lovers around the world.

ASOS’s objective was to expand social engagement among their most social fans. The challenge was to inspire authentic, positive social mentions, sustainable advocacy, and drive web traffic through the voice of the brand’s fans.

“Using Traackr meant easy discovery of our biggest fans and influencers, and the information to personalise our conversations with all of them. As a ‘customer-obsessed’ marketing team, that was hugely valuable to us.”

—Hannah Craik, ASOS Head of Social Media

Overview

ASOS a leading online fashion retailer and global fashion destination for twenty-somethings wanted to cultivate advocacy and grow positive brand mentions among their most ardent fans.

Challenge

Manage personal relationships authentically, sustainably and measurably.

Solution

Create a structured brand advocacy program targeting socially active influential fans and leverage Traackr to engage the right people, at the right time, with the right content; and measure the results.

Results

769 active brand advocates

ASOS recruited the most high-reach, high-value customers among 3K+ applicants to their program

7,500+ positive brand mentions in 3 months

ASOS suggested ongoing activities and engagement opportunities to members and achieved entirely positive mentions

12M+ direct reach

Brand mentions drove reach, resulting in a 600% rise in spontaneous quotes & 800% growth in website traffic referrals
What solution was applied?

To generate brand advocacy among their top fans the ASOS team crafted the #AccessAllASOS program. This high-touch brand advocacy program provides its members with exclusive benefits and insider access to special events, collection previews, and retail discounts.

To recruit participants, ASOS created a rich landing page and promoted the program across their social channels, pulling 3,000 initial applicants. In order to select the most relevant, high-reach, and high-yield participants, the team imported them into Traackr for qualification. Traackr’s powerful search technology surfaced applicants’ social footprint and ranked them according to the relevance of their content, audience reach, and demonstrated ability to engage their audiences. ASOS then leveraged Traackr’s network visualization feature to identify key people from top applicants’ networks and invited them to the program. ASOS needed to ensure enough pilot members in order to understand whether they could inspire advocacy at scale while maintaining intimacy and quality engagement. Their recruitment efforts yielded 769 active members, over 50% more than required or expected.

To activate their advocates, ASOS provided #AccessAllASOS members with ongoing opportunities to engage with the brand. To fuel their strategy, ASOS marketing used Traackr to monitor members’ content and gain key insights across all social channels. For initial engagement, the team sent each member a personalized welcome gift along with a handwritten note. This resulted in a wave of content published by Insiders on Instagram and Twitter. ASOS followed up with a series of invitations for members to participate in original, relevant, and socially-shareable events. For example, with their Swap Shop event, ASOS facilitated a clothing trade between members, also offering a selection of hot items directly from asos.com. This was followed by a styling challenge that encouraged Insiders to style and share the pieces they gained. Throughout the program, the ASOS monitored social mentions, and used Traackr to engage with Insiders in real-time and manage correspondence details in one place.

What resulted from the initiative?

In 3 months time, the 769 Insiders recruited to #AccessAllASOS generated 7,500 pieces of content and 200 blog posts. Each mention expressed positive sentiment toward the ASOS brand, without exception. The audience reached on Twitter and Instagram alone is estimated at 12 million.

The impact of brand advocacy extended beyond the structured program. The number of spontaneous mentions of ASOS rose by 600%, while the amount of web traffic referrals grew 800%. Thrilled by these results, ASOS has decided to double the size of #AccessAllASOS and to expand the program internationally.

“Discovery was the easy part! The real challenge was the ongoing management of Insiders. With Traackr alerts, trending content or tailored reports, our ongoing conversations, content and events were the best they could be."

—Hannah Craik, ASOS Head of Social Media

Keys to Success

Shift focus from short-term campaigns to long-term programs
Influencer Marketing works optimally when approached as an ongoing practice as opposed to a one-off project. ASOS not only provided ongoing opportunities for their Insiders to engage, but they also continually found ways to keep each conversation going. By leveraging pre- and post-event periods, they invited these influential fans to engage on a deeper level. Successfully managing impactful relationships with influencers requires a behavior of cultivating intimacy and collaboration over time.

Build personal relationships with the people who matter
Buyers increasingly turn to friends, experts, and other trusted people in their networks when making purchase decisions. ASOS realized the opportunity they had created for themselves: after successfully earning the trust and credibility of their customers, they seized the opportunity to activate advocates among their most socially active fans. From the start, ASOS targeted their most high-yield, high-value customers and throughout the program remained relentless about delivering personal, relevant opportunities for their fans to speak openly and transparently about the brand.

Inspire advocacy by earning trust not paying for exposure
Relationships offer the most high-risk, high-yield opportunity for marketers today. ASOS exemplifies the way empowered consumers have shifted marketers’ roles away from controlled message delivery and toward facilitating brand experiences. Because the #AccessAllASOS program required neither financial transaction nor commitment from participants, there was never a guarantee that Insiders would reciprocate the gifts, perks and invitations they received with social content—let alone, positive mentions. However, in the 3 months that they piloted the program, their risks yielded 75,000 unanimously positive mentions and the lasting impact has extended well beyond the program’s end.

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