

Case Study 5:

UGC is no longer optional — brands that don't lean into it will get left behind in 2026

JWB&CO / 2025



User-generated content (UGC) is a new way to tell your brand story in an authentic way. It is marketing gold. Tap into an almost endless supply of relatable on brand content that keeps your school fresh, credible, and engaging in the eyes of today's consumers. Here's to letting your students, parents, teachers, staff, alumni and principal do the talking in 2026!

In the new world of AI consumers are becoming ever more doubtful and circumspect of the genuineness of what they are observing. In other words credibility is being eroded at an alarming rate.

What can be done to change this?

We have all seen plenty of AI generated images and ads which look very ordinary, not overly compelling and generic in messaging and visual appeal. This ubiquitousness of AI is making everything homogeneous. There is no individuality or differentiating of your brand of education or product. This leads to a lack of cut-through, confusion and your brands ability to resonate with the customer.

Digital marketing expert Dr Dave Chaffey notes, "As AI-generated content floods the web, trust is the new currency. Customers look for authenticity before buying." .. or applying or signing-up.

How to be authentic and genuine?

Humanising delivers the authentic touch. Those who can focus

on generating real unpolished authentic curated content: copy, images and video from their community of micro influencers [students, parents, teachers, school leaders, alumni, staff...] will make significant leaps forward in building a very strong robust brand. Your key messages will be heard and shared. This type of micro influencer also will add to your cut-through on search engine and social media algorithms.

But we are already doing this!

All schools do excellent social posting of events that happen throughout the day, week, month and year of the school. This is all great for potential parents to see the school in action which too is authentic, but that is where it stops. Can we do this better?

But this is not what we are talking about.

What then are we talking about?

Creator driven partnerships and relationships or 'strategic influencer marketing' focus on building authentic, long-term partnerships with your creators [students,

parents, teachers, school leaders, alumni, staff...] who genuinely love your school or product. This level of passion and love will shine through. This builds trust with their audience and yours as well and allows for more integrated, co-created content that feels less like an advertisement.

How do you do execute?

Create an orchestrated plan to adopt/partner with: students, parents, teachers, school leaders, alumni, staff... who are given specific brand guidelines for content generation. The guidelines would include what to shoot, how to shoot, what copy topics or brand benefit topics to include, frequency and so on. This ensures the content that comes back is accurate and on message and brand.

This is all then reviewed and curated and pushed out across each individual partner socials as-well-as the school's. The content is also re-purposed for PPC advertising across Google and Meta. Copy can be used for: billboards, Google and Meta

messaging, print ads, radio ads and so on.

Benefits to you the marketing team of one or two and the school or product.

By working in this manner you are creating a ready to use funnel of on brand authentic persuasive messaging and visuals.

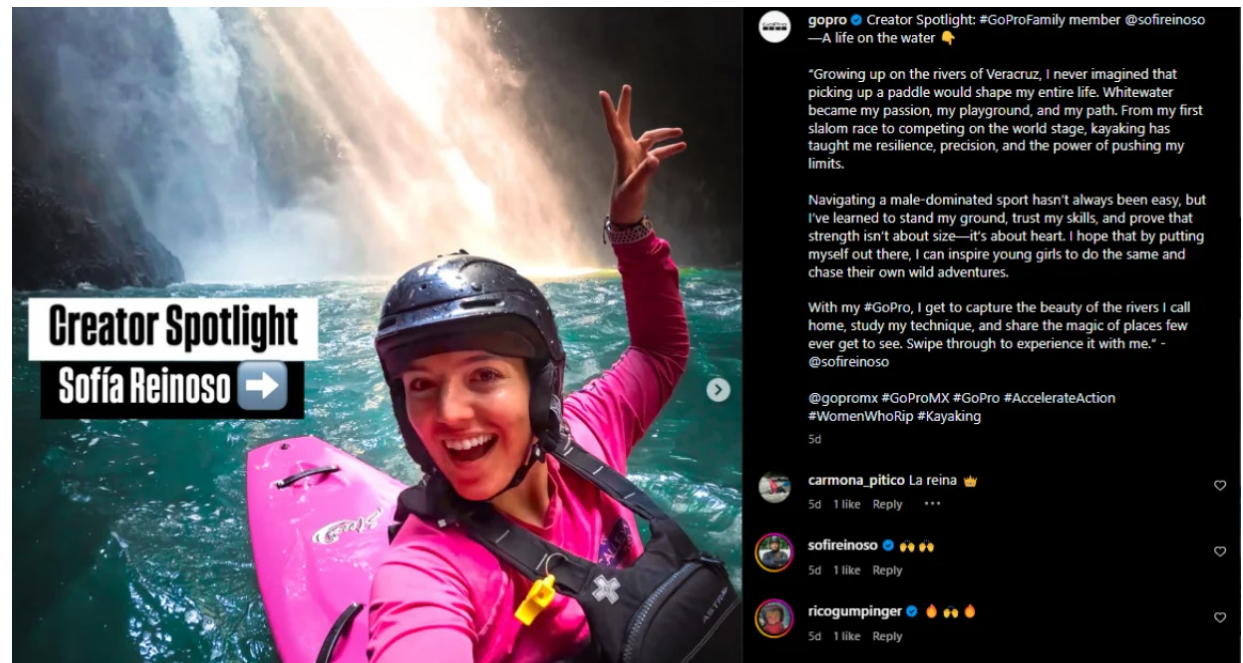
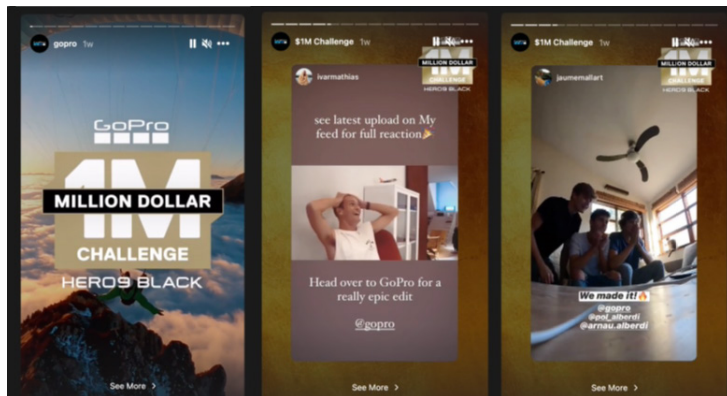
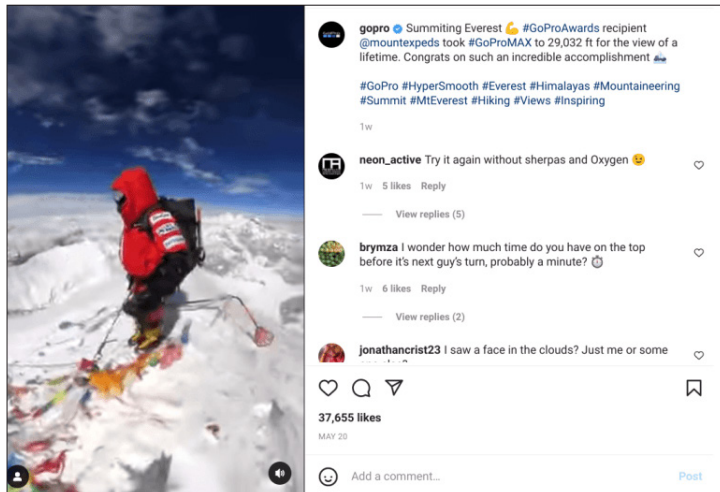
The ultimate goal is to garner authentic and genuine content from people who love your brand of education or product. They are basically video reviews .

Turning interactions into enrolments or sign-ups.

"In 2026, conversion is all about friction reduction and social proof" as said from leading digital marketing expert Dr Dave Chaffey. Reduce steps in your online form, sign-ups or check-out, relentlessly. Dr Dave goes onto say, "Every second shaved off increases conversion rates."

Source: Dave is co-founder of Smart Insights and creator of the Smart Insights RACE planning framework.

GoPro example



Some stats to further cement the need to humanise our marketing.

60% of consumers regard UGC as the most authentic form of marketing content.

84% of people are more likely to trust a brand if it uses UGC in its marketing campaigns.

92% of consumers trust recommendations from other people more than any other source.

93% of consumers find UGC very helpful when making a purchase decision.

55% of shoppers hesitate to buy a product without UGC (reviews/photos) present.

53% of shoppers say UGC gives them more confidence in purchase decisions than professional photography.

40% of shoppers will not purchase if there is no UGC on the product page.

25% of search results for the world's biggest brands are links to UGC.

77% of shoppers are more likely to buy a product they discovered through UGC.

85% of consumers say they turn to visual UGC (photos, videos) over branded content when making purchase decisions.

42% of B2B buyers agree that peer reviews / UGC play a greater role in their purchase decisions.

6 in 10 consumers say UGC is the most authentic marketing form.

75% of marketers consider UGC more cost-effective than influencer / pro content.

31% of consumers find UGC ads more memorable than branded ones.

67% of retailers plan to increase investment in UGC.

Only **16%** of brands have a dedicated UGC strategy.

Source: 70+ Powerful UGC Statistics (2025) + Actionable Insights to Leverage Them, Bill Nash is the CMO of Marketing LTB

Authentic proof

Christopher Houlihan, Chief Executive, Mercy Education Limited

I am writing this letter to recommend to you the excellent support and service of Joe Brooks and his team from JWB&Co which was received in their provision of marketing consultancy and project planning for a major change in one of Mercy Education's school's operations. The school, St Aloysius Girls School, after providing an excellent Catholic education for girls, will open its doors to boys for the first time in Year 7 and progress to become a fully co-educational school by 2028.. The simultaneous marketing campaign instilled confidence in the community of the new direction of the school and has engendered significant interest that is now being realised in increasing enrolment enquiries and widespread acceptance of the school transitioning into co-education.

Joe's theme which anchored the marketing project of 'Life is Co-Ed and so are we in 2023' has captured the imagination of the community and the College will build on this to provide a strong foundation for families choosing to send their sons and daughters to St Aloysius College. Joe's work has been instrumental in setting this foundation.

I have no hesitation in recommending Joe and JWB&Co to you for your consideration.

Mary Farrah, St Aloysius Girls College, Principal

JWB&CO have delivered an outstanding campaign for the College moving to co-education in 2023. Their expertise, passion and knowledge displayed flexibility in drafting and editing, all ensuring the very best possible outcome was delivered. They worked very closely with the leadership team, taking the team through every step of the process and ensuring that their voice was both heard and a clear understanding of the information was best implemented. I have enjoyed working with the JWB&CO team, their expertise and professionalism in communication is second to none and I recommend them unreservedly.

April Honeyman, St Columba's Girls College, Principal

I have know Joe Brooks for approximately 15 years during which we have worked together on the creation and development of a College prospectus for two very different Catholic girls' schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. In both schools, the development was not only the prospectus, but also a variety of accompanying materials including: letterhead, envelopes, report covers, cards, signs for buildings and advertisements. The whole process was aided by Joe's ability to listen to the basic tenants of the College's point of difference in a crowded market place and to turn these into creative and innovative designs. This ability, along with his personal qualities and attributes, particularly, his skill in engaging persons from all manner of diversity, resulted in a distinctive product of which we were very proud. I would have no hesitation in recommending JWB&CO.

Suzy Chandler, Fintona Girls' School, Principal

JWB&CO have delivered a first class service. They have worked with me and the Marketing Manager to understand the nature of Fintona Girls' School and produced marketing material that reflects our ethos, the students and the community. JWB&CO's creative is modern, vibrant and sends a clear and accurate message regarding the School whether it is about Open Days, VCE results or other initiatives we are undertaking. JWB&CO are very easy to work with and readily fits in with ideas and expectations around deadlines.

David Baker, Former Principal Gippsland Grammar School, Principal of Woodleigh School

During my time as Principal, I have worked with Joe to identify our points of difference and develop a positioning statement for the School. This was a very pleasing and engaging process, in particular, Joe's creative influence was critical in this process. JWB&CO were able to take these ideas and statements to produce a comprehensive and unique marketing program that clearly articulates the ethos of Gippsland Grammar. Joe and his team are very easy to work with, they are timely with regard to meeting deadlines and professional in all that they do. Their creative attitude has ensured that our School branding is significantly unique within the independent schools' market whilst also accurately representing the culture of our school. I highly recommend JWB&CO for your next marketing and branding initiative.

Joanne McKenzie, Beaconhills College, Head of Admissions and Marketing

Absolutely love working with Joe Brooks and the JWB&CO team. Responsive, creative of course, full of energy and zest. I don't hesitate to throw them a variety of creative design challenges and have been thrilled with the results. From our International prospectus, to our College magazine and bus branding all have been delivered on time and on-brand.

Johann Hudson, Christ Church Grammar School, South Yarra, Registrar & Executive Assistant to Principal

On behalf of my team I would like to commend you and your team on the past year working together [2019-2020]. We have learnt so much and we have been guided expertly by yourselves with our marketing and social media. My thanks for your continual advice and guidance and also your support in our enrolment processes and our marketing plan moving forward. We are currently sitting at 30% up on last year's new enrolments in a horrid Covid year, which is contributed to your advice. Thanks again and we look forward to working with you in the future.

Nicole Roache, The Geelong College, Marketing Manager

We loved working with Joe and the JWB&CO team on our current prospectus. They were intuitive to our needs and that of our target audience, innovative and the finished product is a truly beautiful reflection of who we are as a school.

About

JWB&CO is a full service end-to-end brand and marketing studio specialising in education for over 28 years.

We build brands in education. This in turn builds enrolments and community. Our track record over the past 28 years bears this out.

We provide strategic branding, marketing and creative solutions from strategy to execution on time and on budget.

Joe, has a BFA in Visual Communications and graduated Cum Laude from the Maryland Institute College of Art in the USA, he is the studio creative director and has lectured at Swinburne University in branding, placemaking and design. He also is a certified instructor and holds a current Certificate Four in Training and Assessment.

Some of the schools we have and are working for and branding campaigns we have created:

Fintona Girls School

"Great things come in a small package", prospectus and rebrand campaign

St Aloysius, College North Melbourne,

Launching their NEW Co-ed School ad campaign to market, "Life is co-ed and so are we in 2023", prospectus and rebrand campaign

Christ Church Grammar School, South Yarra,

All creative, brand and communication management, strategy and execution, prospectus and rebrand campaign

Brighton Grammar School "We teach boys",

prospectus and rebrand campaign

Loreto Mandeville Hall

"Madeline", illustrative approach, prospectus and rebrand campaign

Marymede Catholic College

"A Complete Education", prospectus and rebrand campaign

MLC, Sydney

"Why zig when you can zag", prospectus and rebrand campaign

Ringwood Trade

Branding elements including environmental signage - internal and external

Hume Anglican Grammar

Masterplan, placemaking signage

PLC, Sydney

Prospectus and rebrand campaign

Kincoppal Rose Bay, Sydney,

Prospectus and rebrand campaign

CLC Eltham

"Girls flourish here", prospectus and rebrand campaign

CBC St Kilda

"Cultivating boys character", prospectus and rebrand campaign,

OLSH, Adelaide

"For all girls", prospectus and rebrand campaign

St Columba's College Prospectus and rebrand campaign

Siena College

Prospectus, ad campaign and rebrand campaign

Geelong, Grammar Market research and rebrand positioning, omnichannel ad campaign

Geelong College

Prospectus, prospectus and rebrand campaign,

Gippsland Grammar School

All creative, brand and prospectus, website, communication management, strategy and execution

Sacred Heart College Geelong

Fundraising document for new College Library, prospectus and rebrand campaign

Beaconhills College

Magazine redesign and ongoing design, prospectus and rebrand campaign

Cornish College

Brand and marketing

Ringwood Secondary College

Branding elements including environmental signage - external

Melbourne Girls Grammar

Branding and advertising

University of Melbourne

Centre of Indigenous Health

Swinburne University

Development Office capital campaign

SCECGS Redlands

Development collateral

Launceston Grammar

Development of multiply ad campaigns and comms

Bunbury Church Grammar Grammar

Development of multiply ad campaigns and comms

Flinders Christian Community College

Development of multiply ad campaigns and comms

St Mary's College, Windsor

Prospectus and rebrand campaign, development of omnichannel ad campaigns and brand communications

DOSCEL [Diocese of Sale Catholic Education], St Josephine Bakhita Catholic Primary School Principal and Minx architects

Placemaking and wayfinding signage program from design to fabrication and installation.

Thank you from
the JWB&CO team.