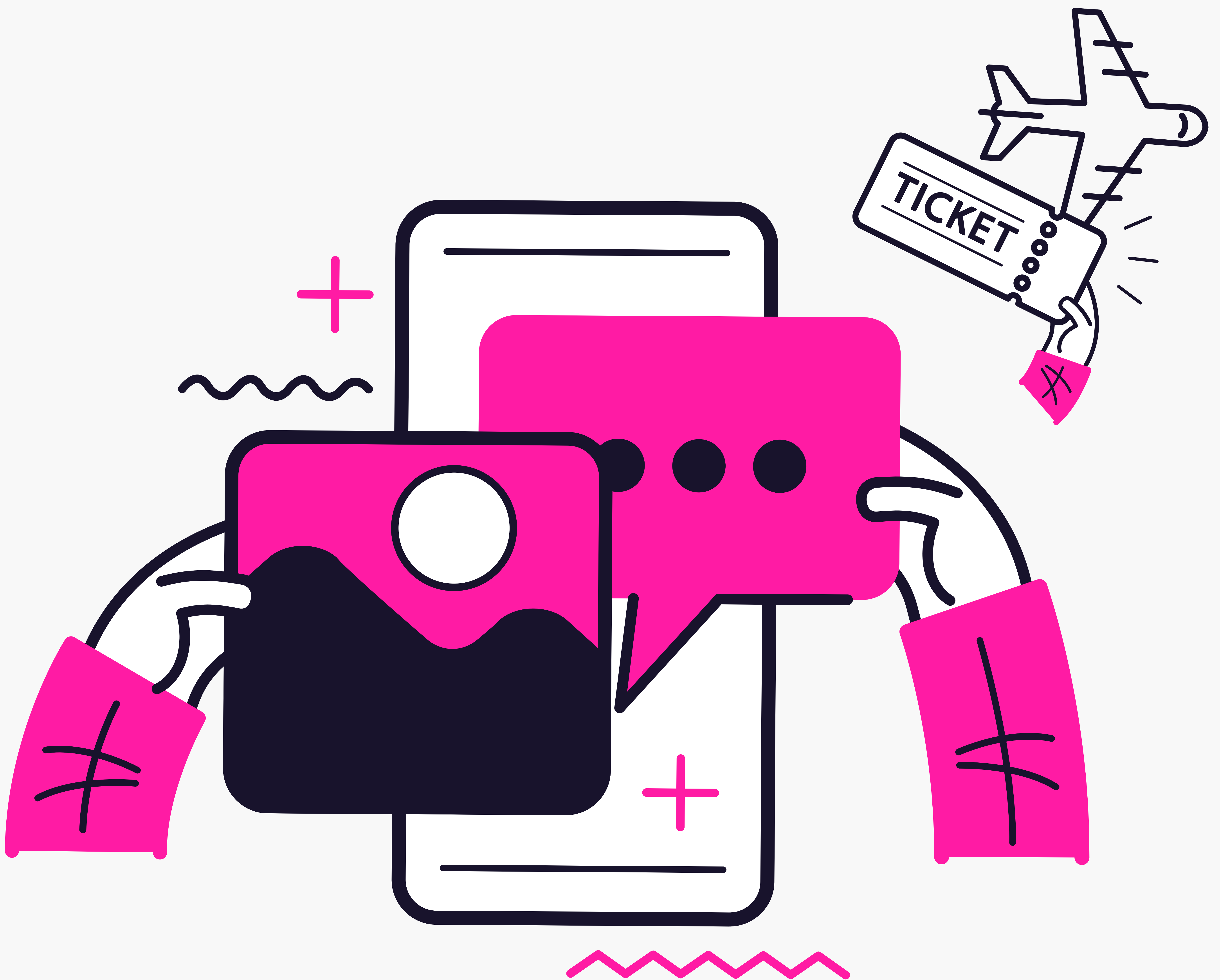


# How user-generated content (UGC) is evolving travel marketing in 2023



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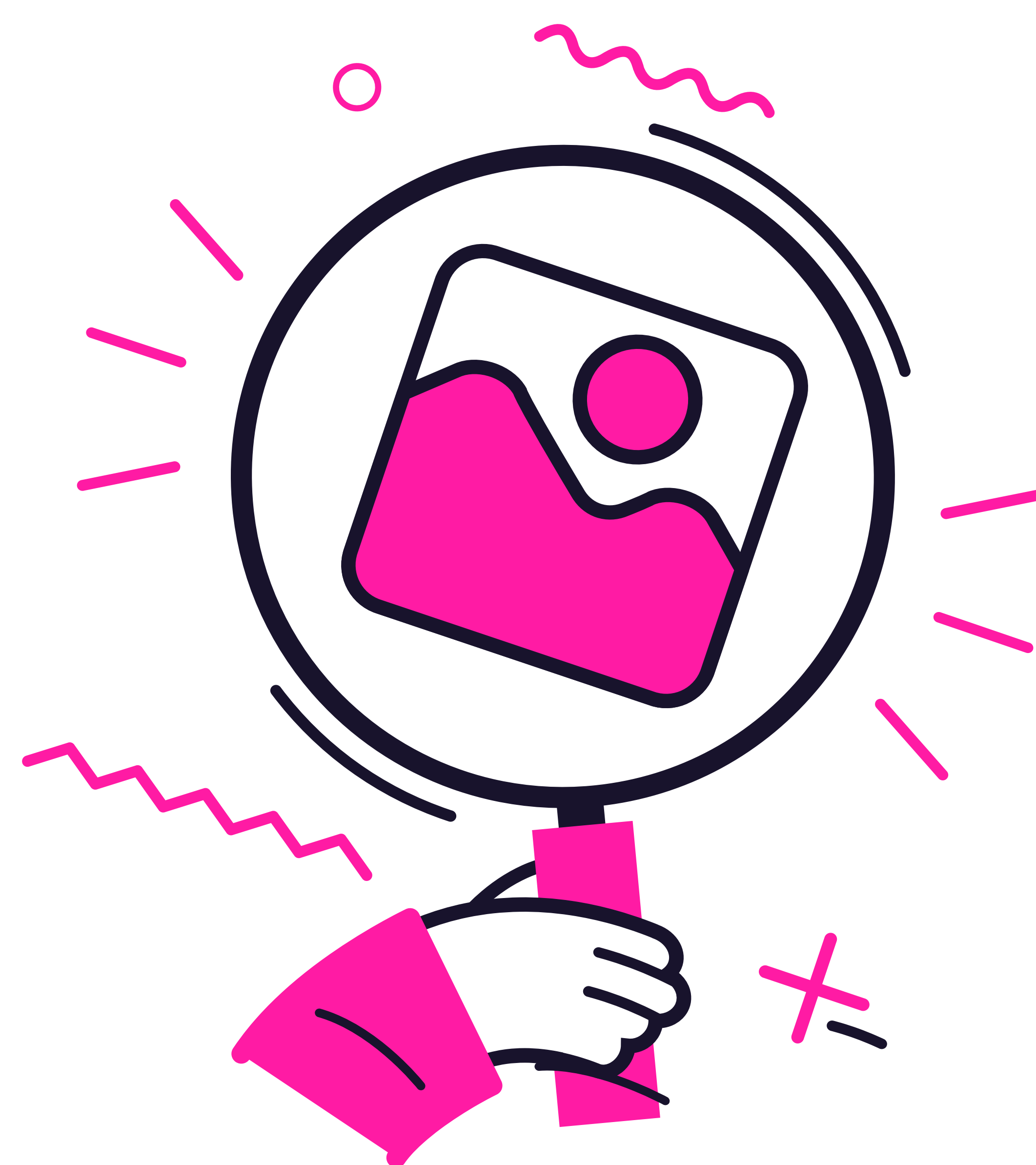


# Introduction

Nowadays, everyone does their research before they book a vacation—after all, their resources are unlimited. But that also means travelers are going beyond brand content and reviews; they are looking at the photos and videos that other people, *just like them*, have posted online. This authentic visual-user generated content (UGC), which is shared on various social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram, has become central to how travel brands are marketing themselves. In other words, UGC has become a key method of turning lookers into bookers.

UGC provides social proof while also saving brands money, as they can supplement professional photo shoots with a continuous stream of authentic, quality visuals that keeps their marketing content fresh and engaging.

So, how exactly is UGC evolving travel marketing in 2023? And what are the wider benefits it brings to this industry as a whole? Let's look at 6 different ways that UGC is bound to impact your marketing strategy this year and beyond!



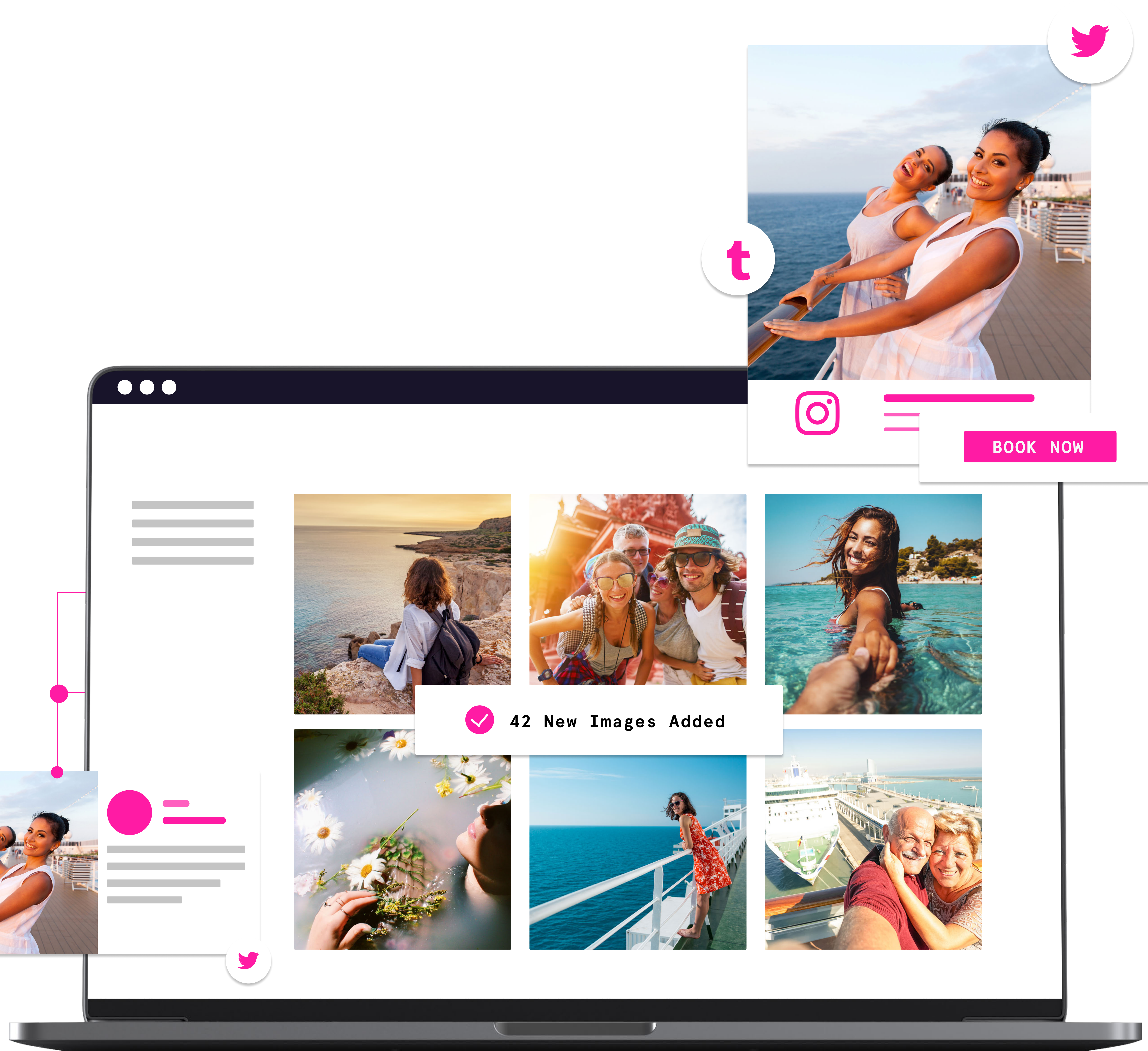


# AI drives efficiency and saves travel marketers time

All industries are seeing a growing use of artificial intelligence (AI), and visual UGC is no exception. AI within visual UGC platforms can help marketers choose the best images to use, based on what has previously worked in marketing.

marketing team time—especially for bigger travel brands with lots of content and multiple locations to search through—and increases effectiveness as you can use the most meaningful shots in campaigns.

It can also automate the collection and management process, such as by identifying what is in an image or video, and the exact location. This saves the

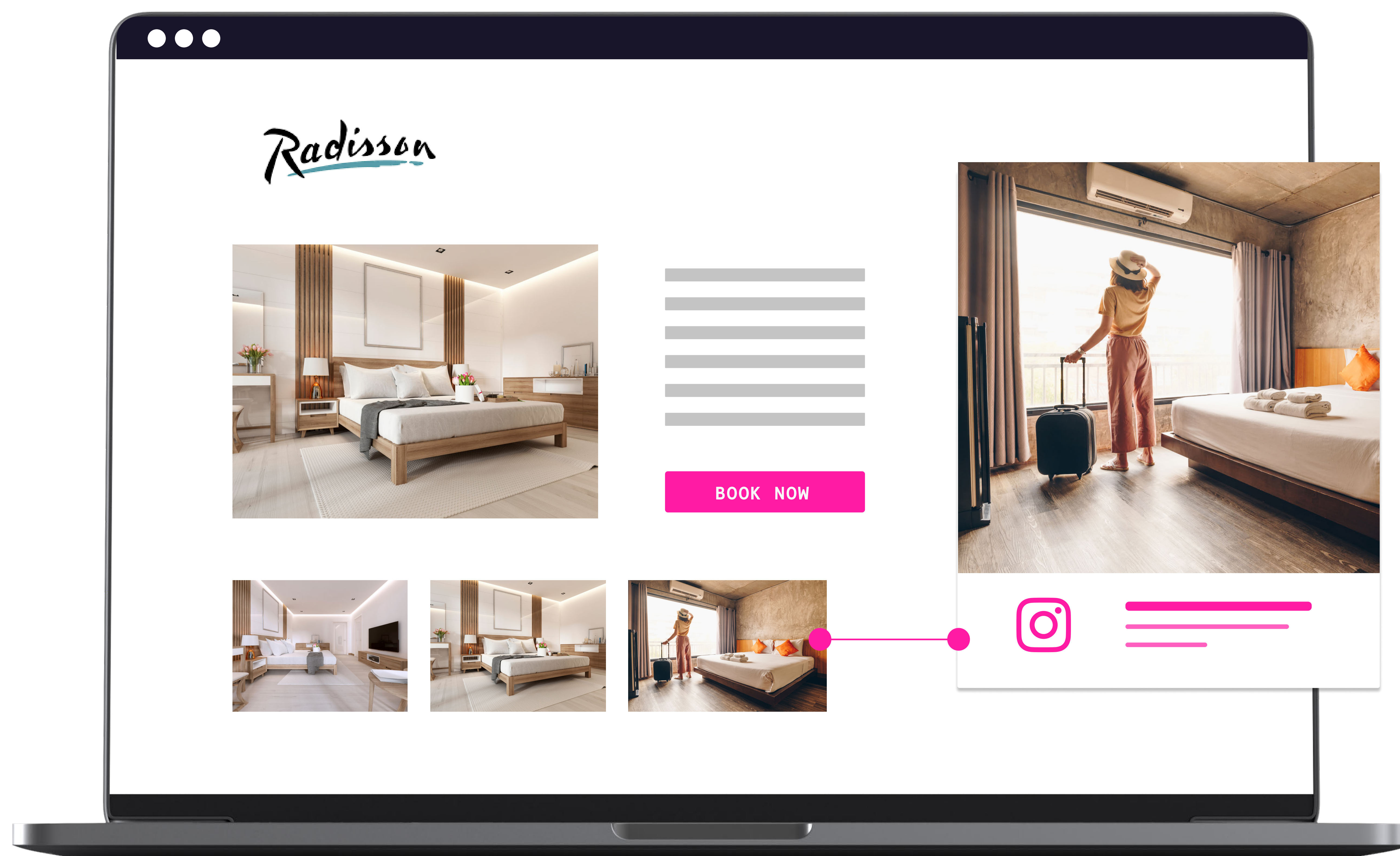




# Shoppable UGC smooths the path to booking

Travelers have to worry about packing, getting to the airport, and a whole bunch of other things—so travel brands can start them off on the right foot by making the path to booking simple and straightforward! How? Well, you can integrate visual UGC into the customer journey by making it “shoppable”. For example, when displaying UGC on a website or on social channels, you can let people click on a customer’s photo of a particular room in a hotel or a trip that they went on, allowing them to instantly find out more or to book their stay.

**By making the process easy and quick, people are more likely to engage or book a trip having seen UGC of other travelers.**

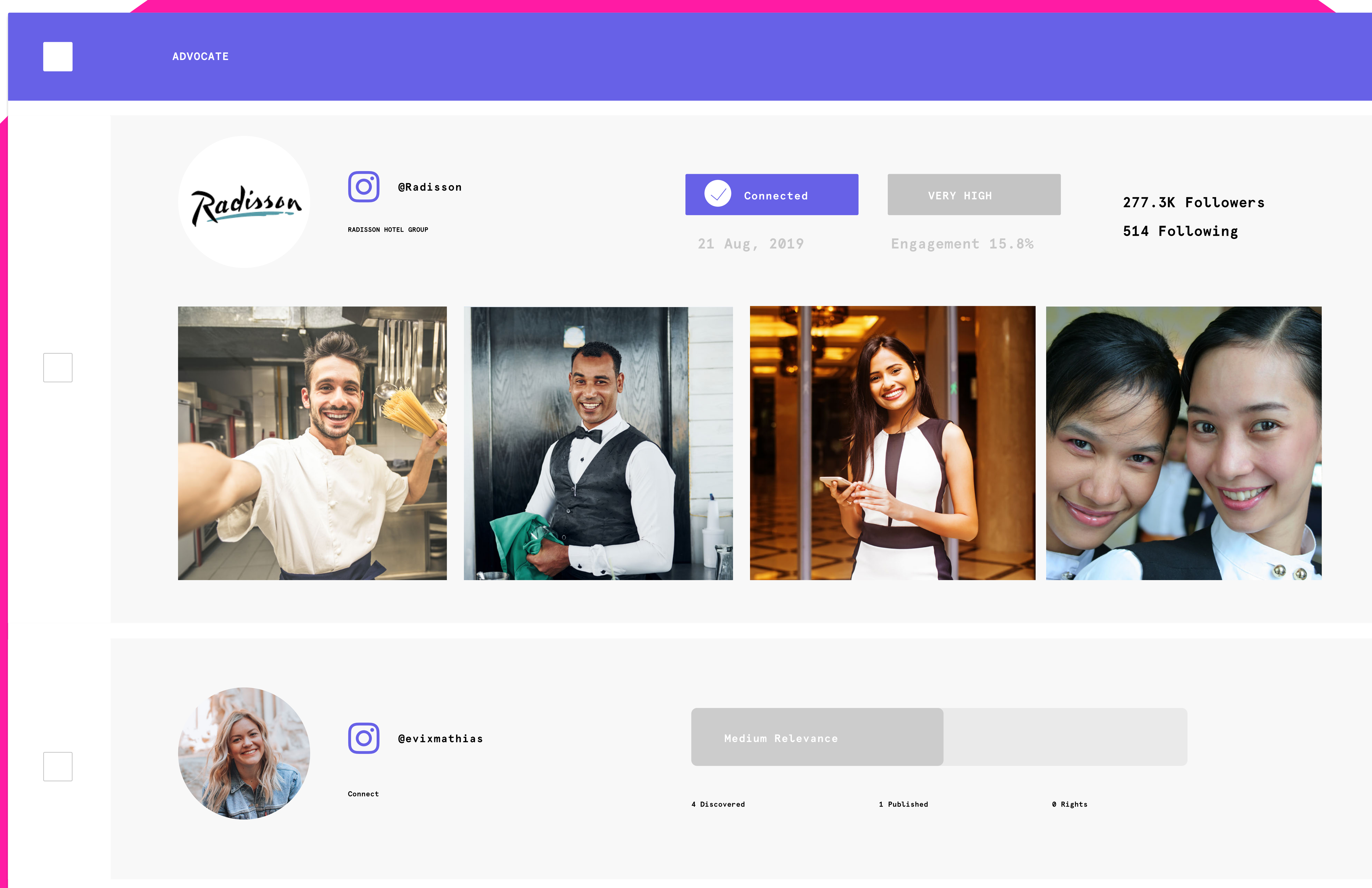




# UGC builds your travel brand and helps team retention

Unfortunately, the hospitality and travel sector struggles with staff turnover and difficulties with hiring new members for their team. Standing out from your competitors is therefore crucial for recruitment. By collecting and sharing visual UGC from staff and customers, you can build your employer brand and authentically show what it is like to work in a hotel or resort.

**Visual UGC can be fed into recruitment channels like website pages, Instagram, or Facebook accounts, to give an up-to-the-minute impression of the brand. This engages prospective staff and also aids retention.**



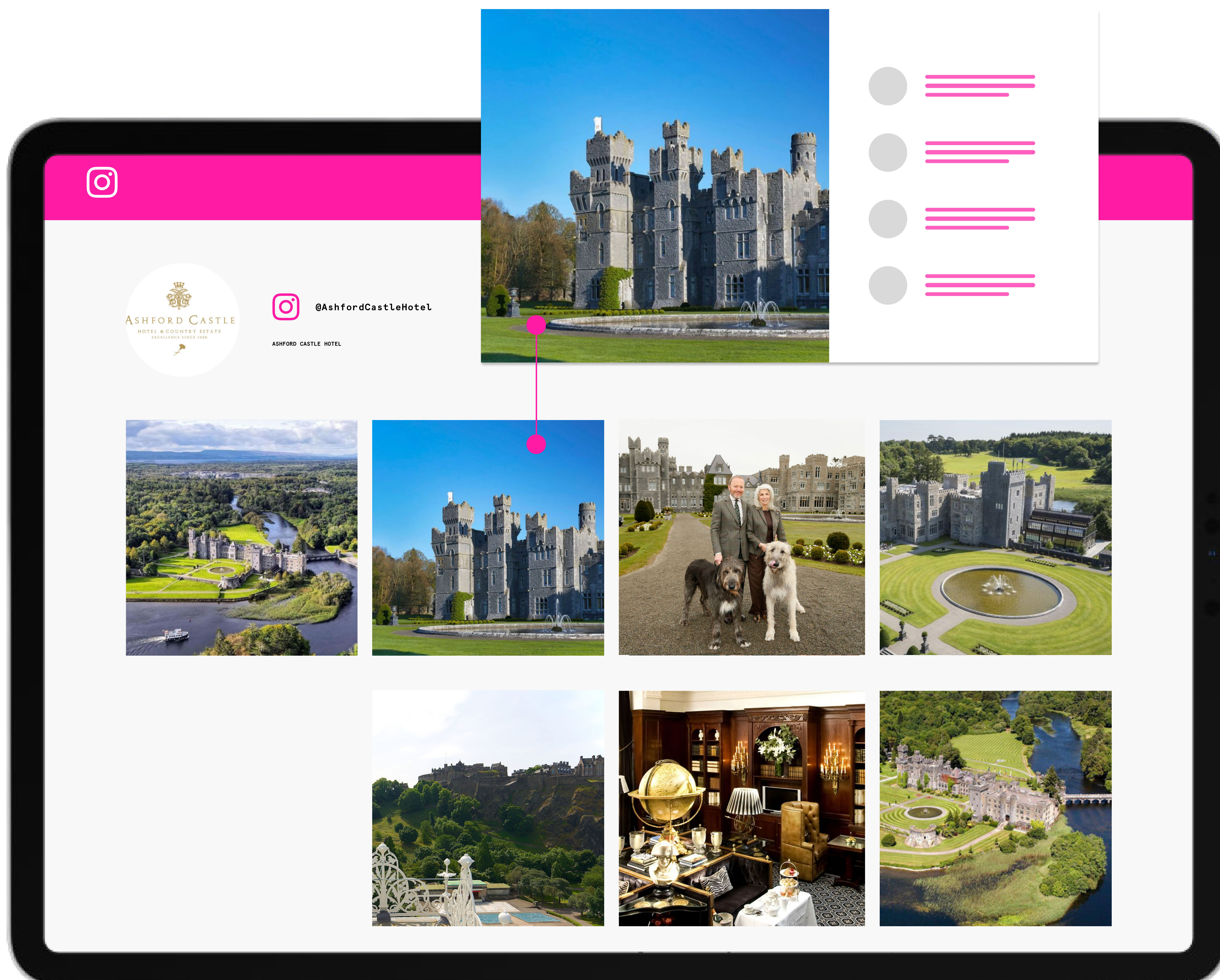


# UGC is a source of travel business intelligence

Increasingly, travel brands are turning to UGC as a source of business intelligence to find out what their customers are truly interested in. By looking at visual UGC, you can see the types of images they're posting and what they particularly engage with at your hotel/resort. Think of it as informal market research! You can see what trips or local attractions they're visiting (which can potentially open up partnership opportunities) and what parts of the experience they like. Looking at the type of images they post can also help steer your own photo shoots!

**For example, guests at Ashford Castle Hotel, in Ireland, were mostly posting images of the rugged exterior of the property rather than the interiors. When Red Carnation, the hotel owner, switched its own content creation strategy to increase the focus on external shots, engagement increased.**

This type of insight is particularly useful for central marketing teams who may not be able to regularly visit every property or resort that a brand runs.

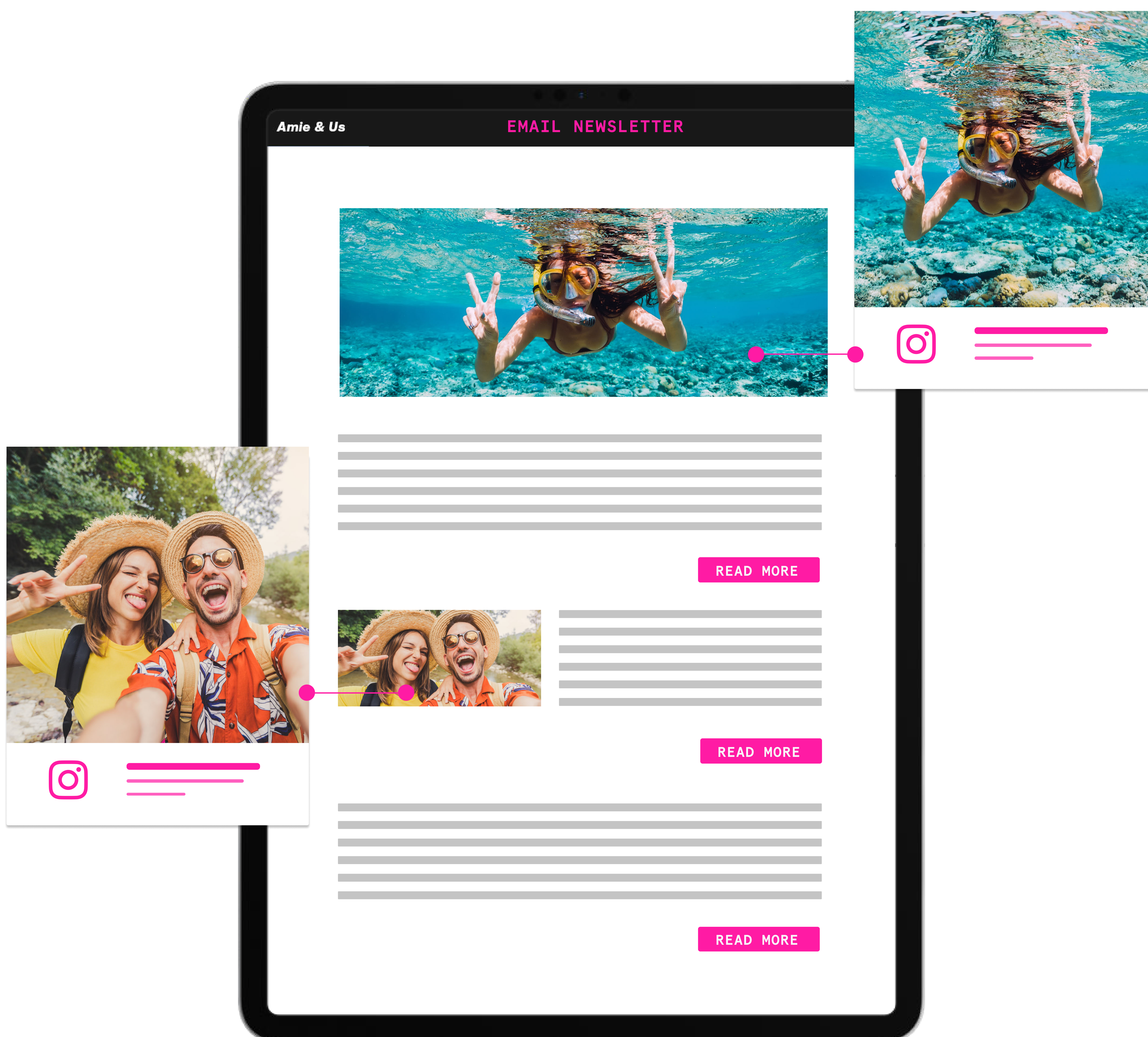




# More travel companies are embracing authentic content

We are also seeing more travel companies embracing authentic content not only on their social channels, but also throughout their marketing strategy as a whole. With authenticity and fresh content key across all channels, brands should use UGC in advertisements, email marketing, and printed brochures.

Make sure you are getting the necessary permissions from creators to do this, and make it easy for them to share high quality images as those taken directly from social media are not likely to have sufficient resolution for other channels.



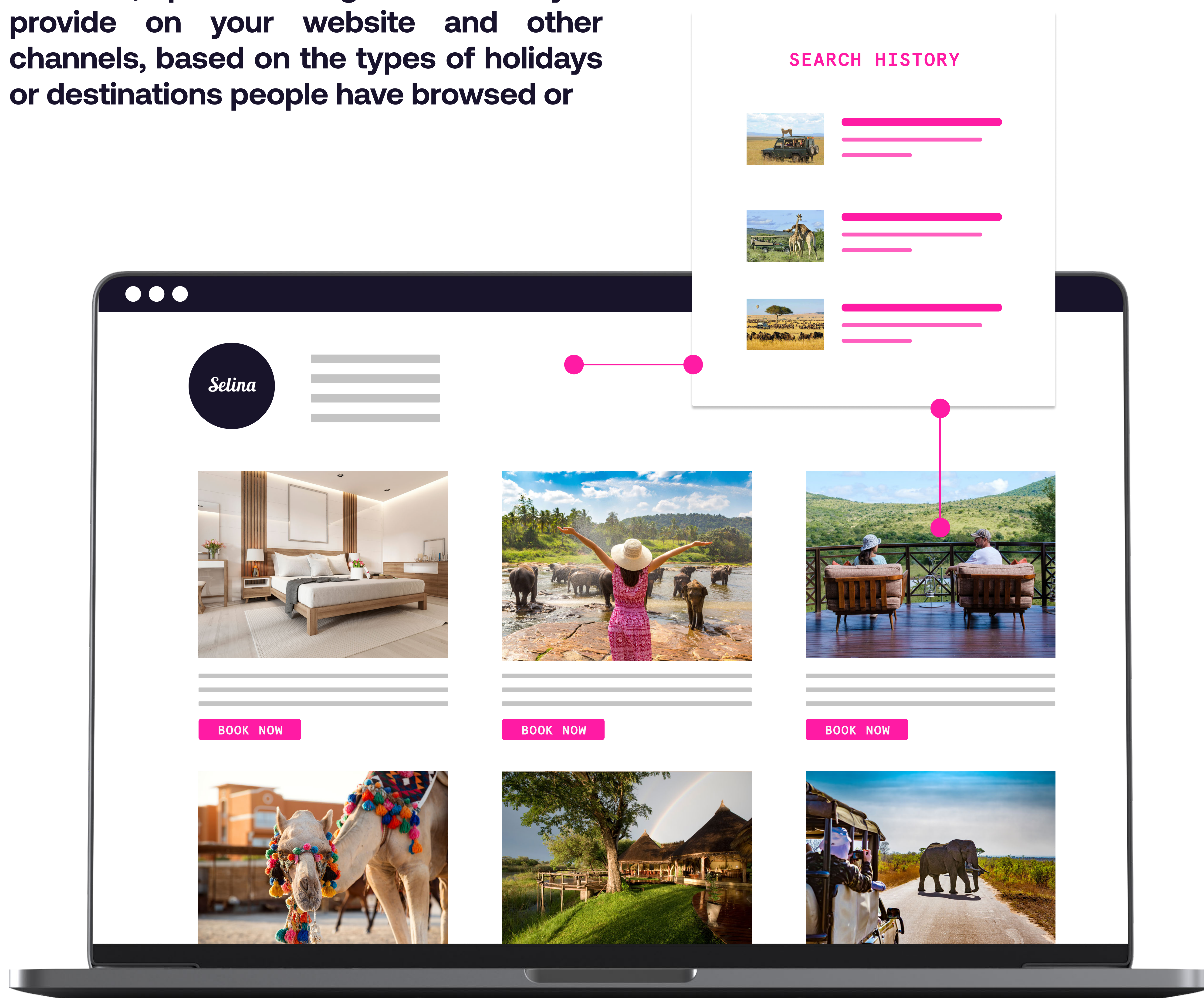


# Personalize UGC to your travelers' experiences

With consumers responding positively to UGC, and it being used in more and more places within marketing strategies, it's important that the content is relevant to consumers' interests and on-site behavior. For instance, if someone is browsing content about your safari holidays, showing them UGC from one of your ski breaks is not going to be particularly impactful.

**gone on before, can make all the difference.** You can also include UGC of products that are complementary to what they've already browsed or booked, such as showing relevant hotels for someone who is researching beach travel destinations, or things to do in Barcelona to those who've already booked a flight to Spain.

**However, personalizing the UGC you provide on your website and other channels, based on the types of holidays or destinations people have browsed or**





## Conclusion

There's no denying the impact and influence of visual UGC in marketing strategies, and its importance will only continue to grow within the travel industry. Given how consumers engage best with authentic, real-world images and videos, and how the cost of brand's own content creation continues to soar—well, UGC seems like the solution!

If you want to inspire shoppers, fans, and advocates at every touchpoint with authentic content that's proven to perform, we can help.

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