The Complete Guide to UGC for Amusement Parks

CrowdRiff

Hello!

An amusement park is such a visually stimulating place. With so many bright colours and smiling faces, It's really the perfect scene for a photo opp. This is why your visitors are taking and sharing hundreds of photos and videos of your park online every day.

Today, visuals like these have more influence over people's decisions than any other content type. That's why we built CrowdRiff: to help attractions and travel brands discover the best visuals, and deliver them throughout their marketing to inspire more visitors.

We put together this ebook to provide helpful information on user-generated content marketing, acquiring the rights to UGC, as well as a selection of examples from leading amusement parks around the globe.

Many of the UGC images that you'll see here were sourced from social media and rights-approved through CrowdRiff.

I hope this gives you a better understanding of what CrowdRiff does, and the value it can bring to your amusement park.

Any questions? Want to be featured in a future article or ebook?
Shoot us an email at **marketing@crowdriff.com**

joonhao

What is UGC
And why should you use it?

On any given day, there are hundreds of photos and videos being shared on social media by the people who are visiting your amusement park. From selfies taken on a rollercoaster to family photos in front of the midway, a wide variety of visuals are being created by your visitors at a volume unmatchable by your team.

These user-generated visuals are a powerful influencing factor in someone's decision to spend a day at your amusement park. Using them in your marketing is compelling because you're letting happy customers tell your story for you, using their positive experiences as word of mouth marketing.

How does it work?

Using User-Generated Content can seem daunting. We hear a lot of the same concerns from marketers about how and when to use UGC. When a visitor posts a photo on social media that you would like to repurpose in your marketing materials, you definitely need to follow the proper guidelines for using the photo. Luckily, we've done the research and outline all rights requirements later in this guide.

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Why Should I Use UGC In My Marketing?

There are countless benefits, but these are the top reasons that attraction marketers should invest in UGC
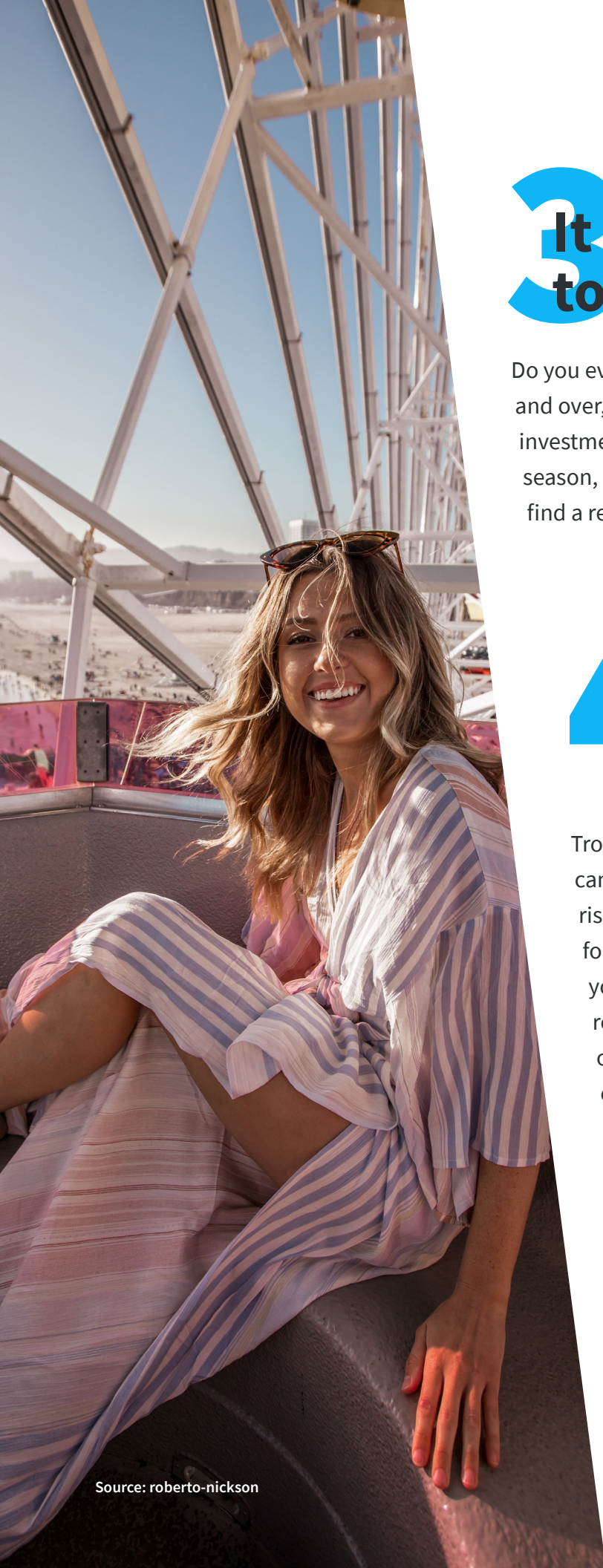
1 It saves you money

Using photos created by visitors means you can avoid the cost of professional production. There's no need for actors, equipment or staging when you can get help from your visitors who are taking photos anyway. Interacting with these guests also doubles to help you create organic brand advocates. Once you get enough of these, you can reduce your spend on influencer campaigns.

2 It makes your brand feel more authentic

Using visitors' photos in your marketing materials makes your brand feel more authentic and relatable. Additionally, people trust social proof and word of mouth more than branded content. According to a Nielsen survey, 92% of consumers trust word of mouth and UGC more than other forms of traditional brand advertising[1]. Seeing real people having fun at a park is more likely to resonate with your target audience than images that are clearly stock photos.

taryn_goodwin

[1] Source: https://www.nielsen.com/content/dam/nielsenglobal/apac/docs/reports/2015/nielsen-global-trust-in-advertising-report-september-2015.pdf

3 It gives you access to fresh content

Do you ever feel like you're using the same photos over and over, year after year? An investment in UGC means an investment in continuously fresh content. No matter what season, event, or park attraction you're showing off, you can find a recent, relevant image for it in a UGC library.

4 It helps you connect with millennials

Troves of UGC are shared by guests through the lens of a camera. And the popularity of these visuals continue to rise alongside social media usage. By asking your visitors for rights to their images, or featuring their content on your website or social channels, you're developing a relationship with them. This increases their likelihood of returning to, or at least speaking positively on and offline about, your attraction.

Source: roberto-nickson

"Instead of having two or three or four key marketing images that we've agreed to and people see over and over, it allows us to pull real images of real people to show what otherwise would look staged."

Pete Owens
Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations
The Dollywood Company

How to Use UGC to Drive Visitors

In this section, we've covered some of the leading UGC strategies that we've seen within the attractions industry. From digital to OOH and in-park, there's something new in here for amusement parks of all sizes to try.

Source: tim gouw

1 Include More UGC in Your Social Strategy

Social media is a place to show off your park's personality. What better way to showcase the best of your amusement park than re-posting photos from guests having fun? Here are a couple of ways that you can bring your social feeds to life with visitor content (responsibly, and legally, of course).

Re-post visitor photos on your own Instagram or Facebook account

Let's say a visitor posts a really cute photo of their kids playing at your playground that you'd like to share on your own social accounts. You can repost it, as long as you get their permission to do so. The easiest way to do this is to leave a comment asking them to re-share the photo on your own feed. Make sure you give them a specific way to say "yes!"
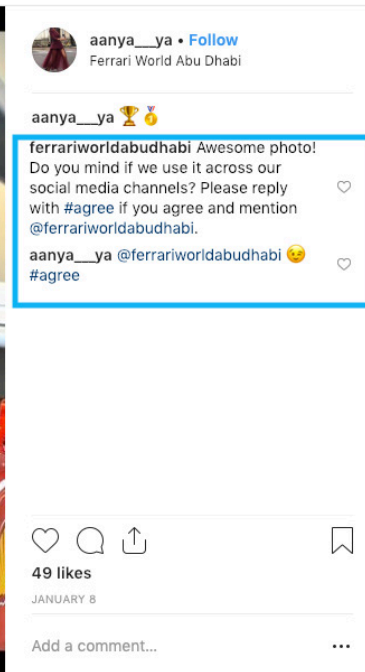
💡 Spotlight

Ferrari Land gets a lot of its social content from visitors, which helps them show off the diversity of visitors and attractions at their park. They leave comments asking visitors if it's okay to share their photos on the park's social accounts by replying #agree, then proceed to re-share on Facebook and Instagram, with appropriate credit.

thequietmummyadventures

Re-post visitors' Instagram stories to your own story

If a visitor tags you in their story, you can repost it to your own story directly from your Instagram inbox without asking for permission. You can edit the post a little, adding stickers and text before you share to your own followers. This not only gives you fresh, real-time content to share, but helps you create return customers; by engaging with your visitors online, you're building a relationship with them. Over time, these small interactions can turn a one-time visitor into a lifelong fan.

Bonus Tip

Tweets or captions from guest photos work as excellent forms of social proof. Follow the same rights guidelines to collect these quotes to use on your website, ads, or other marketing materials.

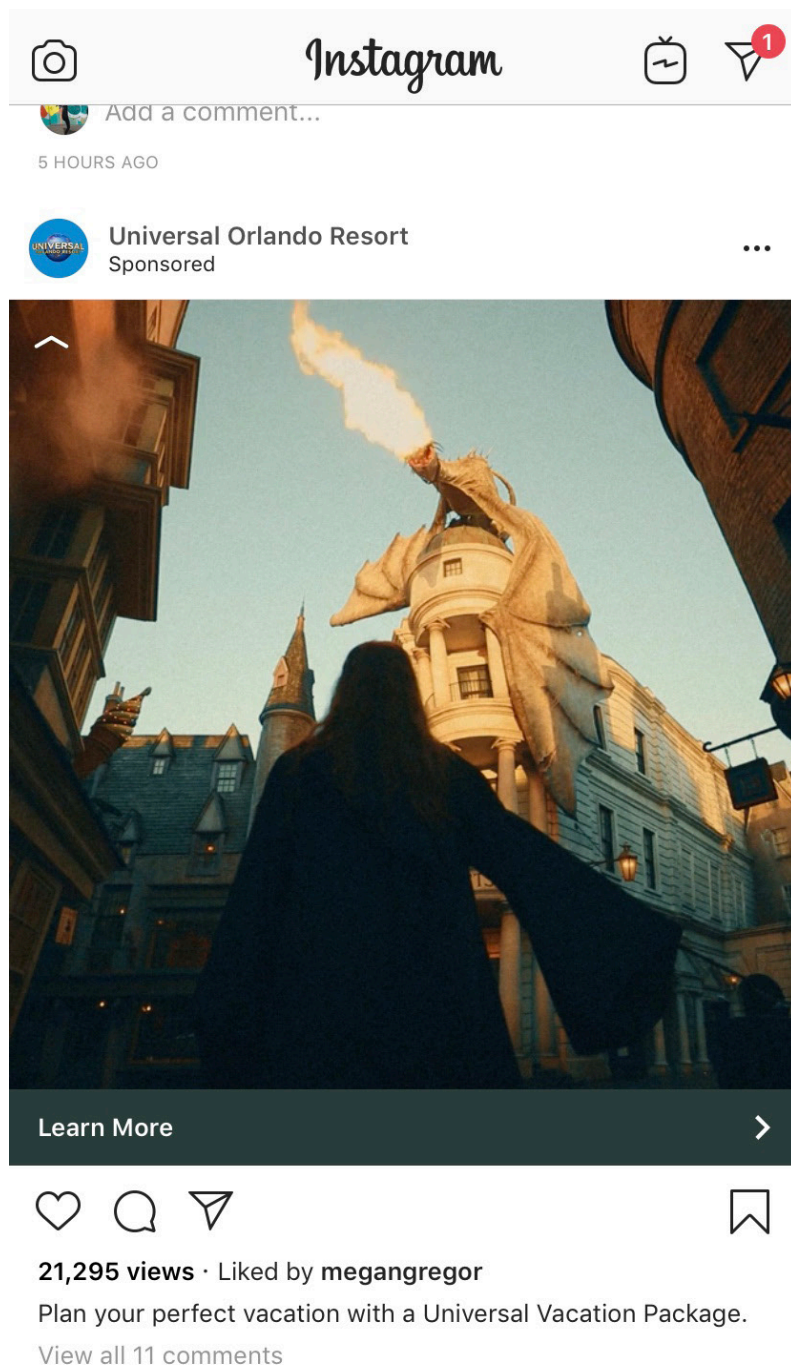# 2 Use Authentic Content in Your Digital Ads

If you have to spend time sourcing — or possibly creating — visual content for your digital ads, then you might as well take the time to find content from real visitors. Here are a couple of ways that you can enhance your digital ads with UGC.

Use UGC in your social media ads

If you have invested in social media ads, you don't need to be told that ads need to look more like users' actual posts than ads. Users have become fatigued by ads in their social feeds, and often tune them out. You can fix this by using UGC in the ads so that they look more authentic.

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💡 **Bonus Tip**

Try experimenting with a variety of UGC ad formats; Test photos with ad copy written on top vs. unedited photos with the ad copy in the caption. You could also use UGC videos as Instagram story ads.

Create UGC Video Ads

If you're considering experimenting with video ad content, then UGC is the perfect place to start. Video content is more engaging, and performs higher; Marketers who use video get 66% more qualified leads per year, and achieve a 54% increase in brand awareness[1].

💡 Spotlight

In celebration of Mickey's 90th birthday, Disney Parks' #shareyourears campaign promised to donate $5 for every photo posted with the hashtag in collaboration with Make a Wish. Disney Parks collected UGC from people posting in support of the initiative, and made these images into a video that was chock full of UGC featuring fans with their own versions of the iconic mickey ears.

[1] Source: https://optinmonster·com/video-marketing-statistics-what-you-must-know/

meridyeverafter

A simple approach is to combine a bunch of UGC images in a video, with text and music edited in, and a strong call to action at the end. This allows you to show off a variety of content in one ad piece to appeal to your diverse audience, and put a spotlight on more of your amusement park's offerings.

Once you have requested the rights to images from social posts, you can use them in your video . If you can, try to add photo credit notes to the photos to give an appropriate shoutout to the photographer, and further emphasize to viewers that the photos are coming from real park visitors.

These type of ad videos are great to repurpose as content on YouTube and your social media accounts. Facebook now supports video header banners, so try using these UGC videos to make your park's Facebook page more engaging.

Video marketers get

66%
more qualified leads

54%
increase in
brand awareness

3 Feature UGC in Your Out-of-Home Ads

Putting UGC where people least expect to see it will increase its novelty and impact. Anywhere that you would normally buy ad space is a good place to put UGC in the spotlight; billboards, airports and public transit are all great places to catch the eyes of both tourists and locals.

There are so many opportunities to be on your audience's mind with out-of-home (OOH) advertising. This is prime real estate to use authentic user images instead of branded graphics or professional photos.

If you want to include UGC in out of home ads, you will need to get rights to the photos before you use them. When you ask for permission for OOH ads, make it clear what you intend to use the photo for, since OOH campaigns can seem a little more high stakes for UGC legal conflicts.


Source: HaulerAds

💡 Bonus Tip

If you're worried about backlash, or require a more rigid rights approval process, you could send the visitor to a terms and conditions agreement page when asking them for permission. You can read more about how CrowdRiff facilitates this later in the guide.

4 **Include More UGC on Your Website**

This is the most common use case for UGC in amusement park marketing. Your website is the go-to place for your audience to learn more about your park. It's also arguably the easiest place to use UGC images, because you can link back to the original digital post, meaning you don't need to ask for the photographer's permission. Here are a few different ways that amusement parks can feature UGC on their websites.

Source: kyle-hinkson
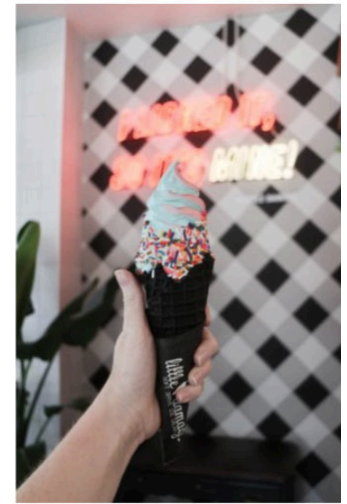
Featured UGC Galleries

Create a gallery of UGC images to give your website visitors an immediate taste of the variety of activities at your park, and showcase the diversity of people who visit your amusement park. Potential guests should be able to see themselves, and their interests, reflected on your website. Because UGC is produced so often, you can easily update galleries with fresh content to keep your website dynamic with a small amount of effort.

However, it's important to note that you may or may not require photo rights to create galleries, depending how you create them. CrowdRiff embedded galleries, for example, don't require rights approval because they link back to the original post. If you're simply reposting visitors' photos to the website in a grid, you need permission. That's just one more way CrowdRiff makes website re-vamps easier and stress free!

Pro Tip

Don't limit these visually powerful galleries to your homepage — embedding multiple galleries across all of your site's pages are a great way to feature as much visual content as possible. Each part of your park's experience that has its own webpage deserves to have it's own story, and UGC is the best way to visually tell those stories through the eyes of your customers.
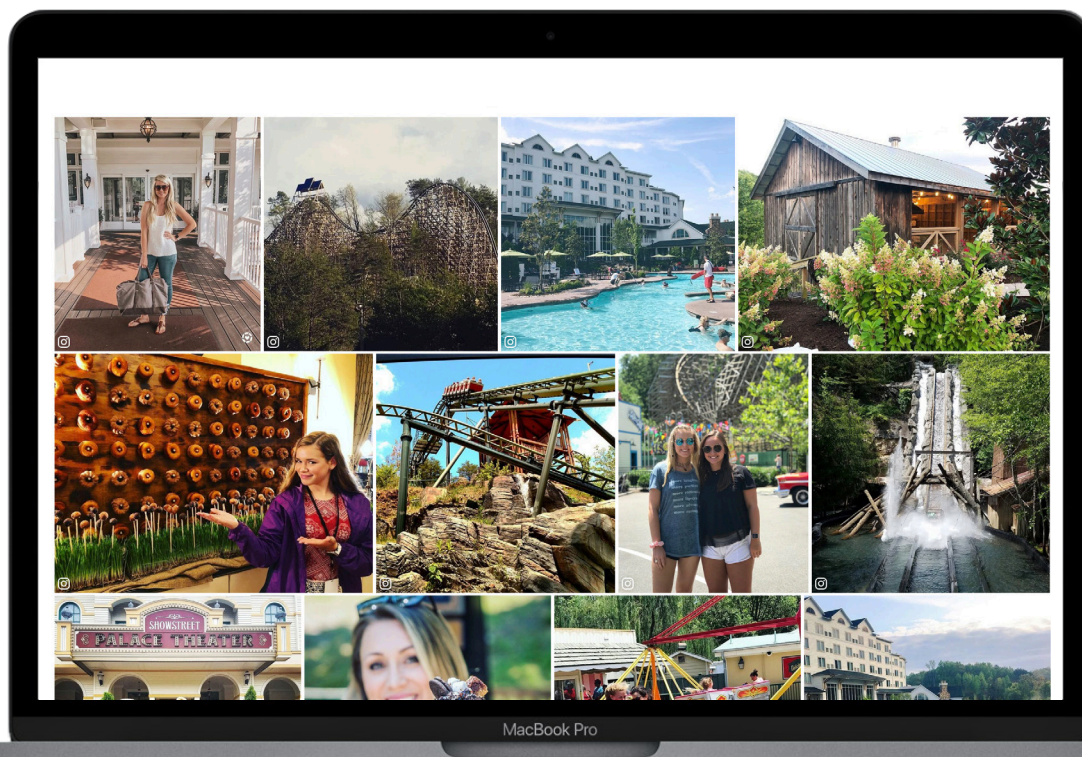
Visual Calls to Action

Imagine this: a site visitor sees an awesome picture of your park's roller coasters, and when they hover over the picture, there is a 'buy tickets' call to action. You've managed to act on their buying intent as soon as it's developed, so your UGC investment has (literally) paid off! By attaching the CTA to exciting images, you are persuading site visitors to make a purchase right then and there.

This past summer, Dollywood updated its website to incorporate more social media photos, through CrowdRiff galleries. The new photo galleries on their website demonstrate the full range of experiences available, through the eyes of the visitors that enjoy them. Not only that, but the images also act as catalysts for ticket sales; Dollywood uses CrowdRiff call-to-actions, which embed links over imagery that lead to the ticket sales page. Since then, the park has sold over $90,000 in tickets through the gallery CTAs!

"Just from our home gallery, clicks converted to nearly 100 transactions within a 60-day period that accounted for almost $30,000 in revenue. It's just by using UGC to push them further down the funnel more quickly."

Pete Owens
Vice President of Marketing and Public Relations
The Dollywood Company

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5 Host Influencer Meetups and Events

Hosting meetups with established influencers is a great way to bring attention to your amusement park. Having a group of influential people — like members of the American Coaster Enthusiasts, for example — posting on their social media about their experience at your park is very powerful. Not to mention that it produces a gold mine of content that you could later get rights to re-purpose!
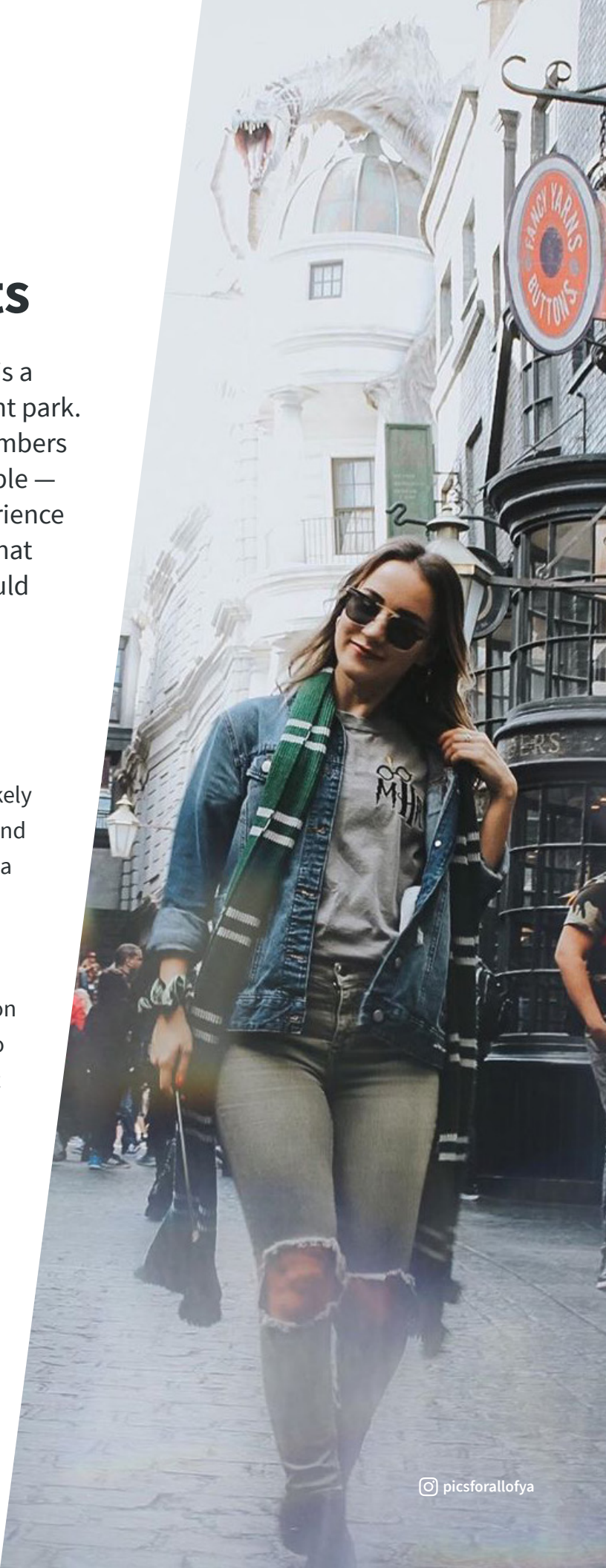
The "Instameet"

In 2018, influencer marketing increased in popularity considerably, seeing growth of almost 40%, and will likely keep growing as Instagram becomes an ever-present and popular feature in our digital lives. These meetups are a fun way to get you and yourpark involved.

An "Instameet" - an event where select social media superstars come together at a specific time and location to network, shoot, and share content - is a great way to facilitate the creation of UGC, and generate social buzz for your theme park.

Universal Orlando has successfully hosted several Instameets; their hashtag #uoinstameet has close to 1500 search results on instagram.

Since the park is usually extremely busy, it would be impossible for the photographers to capture these quality photos without the coordinated Instameet.

picsforallofya

Here's how to Coordinate an Instameet

Create a hashtag for the event

This will be important so you can track and find the photos later, but also so that their followers will associate the photos with your park. That being said, it's fine to just use your park's standard promotional hashtag for these events if you wish.

🄾 Tiffany.noelani

🄾 emcapps

Pick a date and create an itinerary

When planning, here are some things to keep in mind:

1. What are the events or attractions you want the Instagrammers to be sharing photos of? What's the most unique thing about your park that you want to show off?
2. What are you going to let them experience that they could only experience by attending? Consider including special one-time access points, behind the scenes tours, or special guests in your itinerary to encourage attendance.
3. 3-4 hours is easily long enough to host an instameet. If you go over, then great! That means that attendees are having fun and want to spend more time in your park.

eddie_lammm

Create your guest list and send out invites

Pick 'Instagram influencers' who are popular amongst your targeted audience.

You can invite people by sending a direct message or commenting on their photos from your Instagram business account. Make sure to let attendees know what activities you'll be doing at what time, what they need to bring, and any other important details. If the event seems disorganized, they may not want to participate.

💡 Bonus Tip

Establish a RSVP deadline, and make sure you follow up closer to the date. You can likely expect a ~50% attendance rate if your event is free.

Pick a date and create an itinerary

As you're setting up for the day, keep in mind that you need to give attendees a reason to be posting all day. Create selfie spots, schedule in photo stops at behind-the-scenes spots, and offer to take photos for them during the day. And of course, make sure you share your hashtag with them at the beginning of the day and along the way!

Additionally, make the effort to create relationships with the attendees, and get feedback on the meetup, the park, and even your social media efforts -- they may have some cool ideas and input for you. These are very important people to get in your inner social circle!

6
Photo Contests

Word of mouth marketing is powerful; people are 4x more likely to make a purchase if referred by a friend. Running a photo contest engages your audience, and encourages them to post about you on their social accounts, which creates that word of mouth referral. The engagement boost from a successful contest can:

- Increase exposure for your branded hashtag
- Encourage travelers to share visuals on social media with their friends, family, and followers.
- Generate hype around your theme park
- Grow your following and gain momentum on different social media channels

How to Run
an Effective
Photo Contest

Create a theme and prize

What is the photo contest centered around? Don't get too specific , as that may limit participation, but having a theme makes the activity more fun and challenging.

Set a goal for yourself

This will help you measure the ROI of your efforts -- this could be to increase hashtag use by X%, gain X new followers, or boost engagements (likes and comments) by X%.

Set a unique hashtag

If you already have one that you are trying to increase exposure for, use that!

andrepp5

Brand and promote your content

Design visual assets for your website and social channels, and of course promote it in the park on your screens and posters - post and promote often and everywhere leading up to the contest!

Share the rules of your contest

It's important to check with your legal team to make sure your guidelines are foolproof, but don't forget to keep it easy for your followers to understand.

Engage with the contestants & community

Comment on and like posts that are submitted and engage with followers and influencers.

Pick a winner!

The easiest way to do this is to look at the number of likes or comments...but don't feel pressured to pick a winner based on the numbers alone. If a particular image catches your eye but didn't get a lot of engagement, it can still be your winning photo.

7 On-site Marketing with UGC

Getting people to visit your park is only half the battle. How do you get them to come back? The value of turning a one-off day trip into an annual tradition can't be understated. On-site marketing plays an important role in the development of your relationship with park visitors, and UGC can help further that development.

Put up digital display boards with real-time photo updates

Guests love to see themselves being featured on screen. It makes them feel excited, and shows that the park is making an effort to connect with them. If there are families with children posting photos, little kids particularly like to see their photo up on the big screen.

💡 Bonus Tip

Try creating live photo galleries that are populated with photos that guests are posting with your hashtag throughout the day. By encouraging guests to post with your hashtag, that will also get them sharing photos to their social networks of themselves enjoying their day at your park.

b_wilderness

yuliana1092
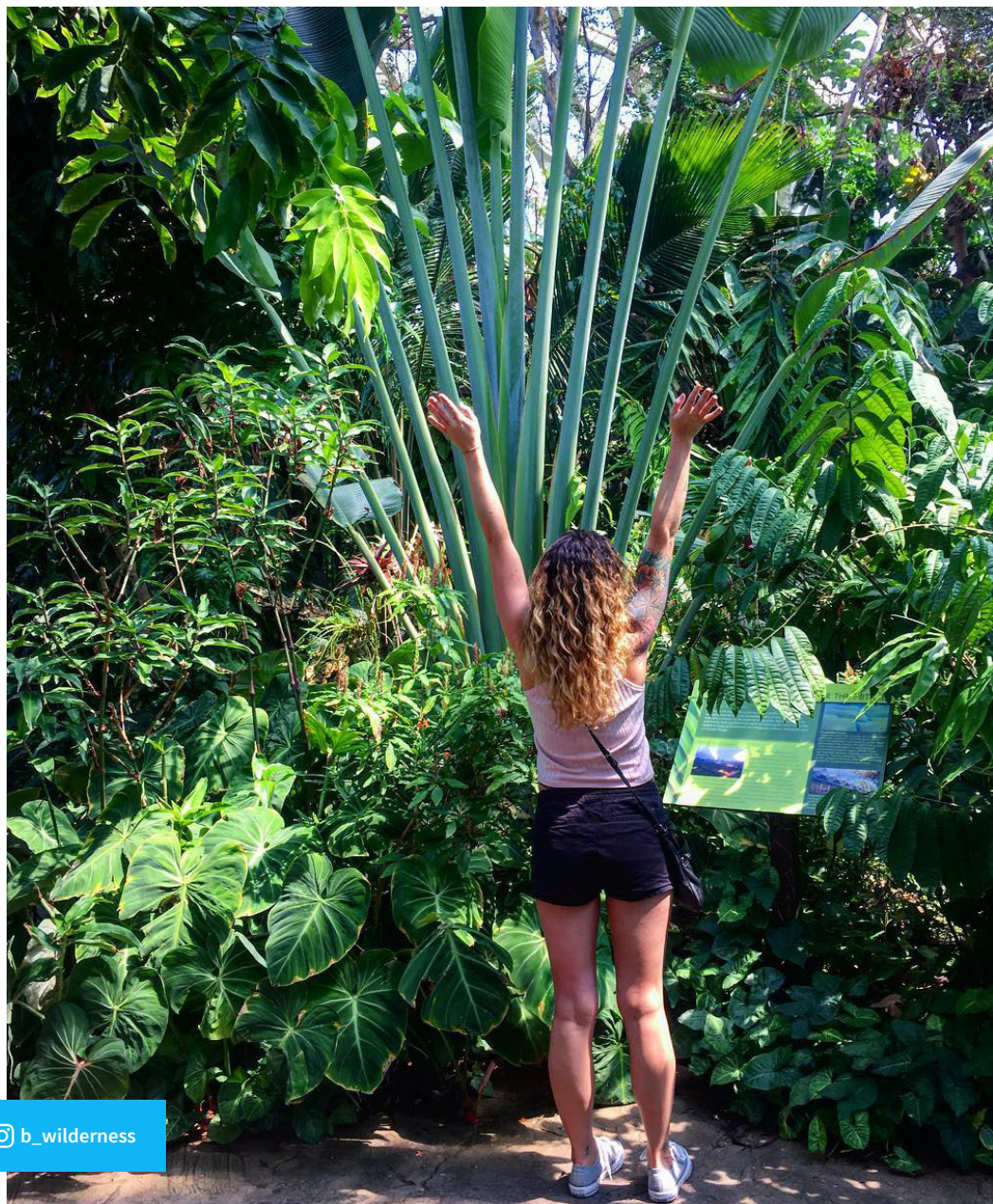
Create photo opp spots

What better way to incentivize guests to take photos than to create special photo spots? Find the best views, statues, signs or characters for guests to pose and take photos with. A fun way to encourage fun pictures (the sillier the better!) is to feature some previous pictures at the photo opp spot to inspire guests. Don't forget to have a sign promoting your hashtag so that you can track, engage with, and potentially get rights to, those photos.

⚡ Spotlight

Hobbiton Tours uses their iconic movie sets as photo opps, where dozens and dozens of visitors line up to take photos everyday.

Your theme park's branded materials

Everything your visitors leave the park with is marketing collateral that you're arming them with. They might bring home a park map or brochure to give to their neighbors, or perhaps pin their tickets on their kitchen bulletin board as a reminder of the awesome day their family shared at your park. Using UGC will help better remind them of the moments they created at the park.

⊙ __thescene

8 Use UGC to Work With Local Partners

Your theme park is likely part of a local network, and the more that you work together with the rest of your partners, the more exposure you will have. Local media outlets, visitor centres, neighbouring attractions and the hotels in your area are the perfect places to market your attraction.

Since there are likely many partners in the area who are trying to grab visitor attention, make your marketing materials stand out by using UGC to catch visitors' eyes. Work together with your partners to come up with some creative ways to showcase your theme park.

Here are a few ideas:

- Ask to have your digital gallery of UGC incorporated into the slideshow on a visitor centre or hotel's TV screen.
- Create colorful posters, brochures, and cut out displays that feature UGC photos
- Ask to hang up framed UGC photos -- add the photo credit and a small park logo so that visitors know that the images are associated with your park.
- Include UGC images in any ads that you place in local guides or hotel information books.

9 Give Virtual Tours of Your Property Built with UGC Video

Virtual tours are becoming extremely popular on attraction websites. They give potential visitors an additional view of your park and the activities inside it, which gets them excited about their visit. Instead of producing content for these video tours in-house, you could create them using videos taken by former guests.


endlessly_jetlagged

Repurpose guest content

f you've hosted an influencer meetup, there's likely great content you could repurpose from the event. Or, better yet, make your next instameet or photo contest into a challenge for participants to produce their own virtual tour of your property.

Similar to what we said about UGC galleries on your website, you could choose to create one longer video that shows off your whole park, or create smaller ones for individual events, attractions or promotion specific web pages. The more visually inspiring your pages are, the more users will want to experience what they are seeing online for themselves.

Bonus Tip

Try gathering all of the videos (Instagram Stories, YouTube, etc.) that guests have posted at your park, and stitch them together to create a UGC virtual tour.

julie_viva
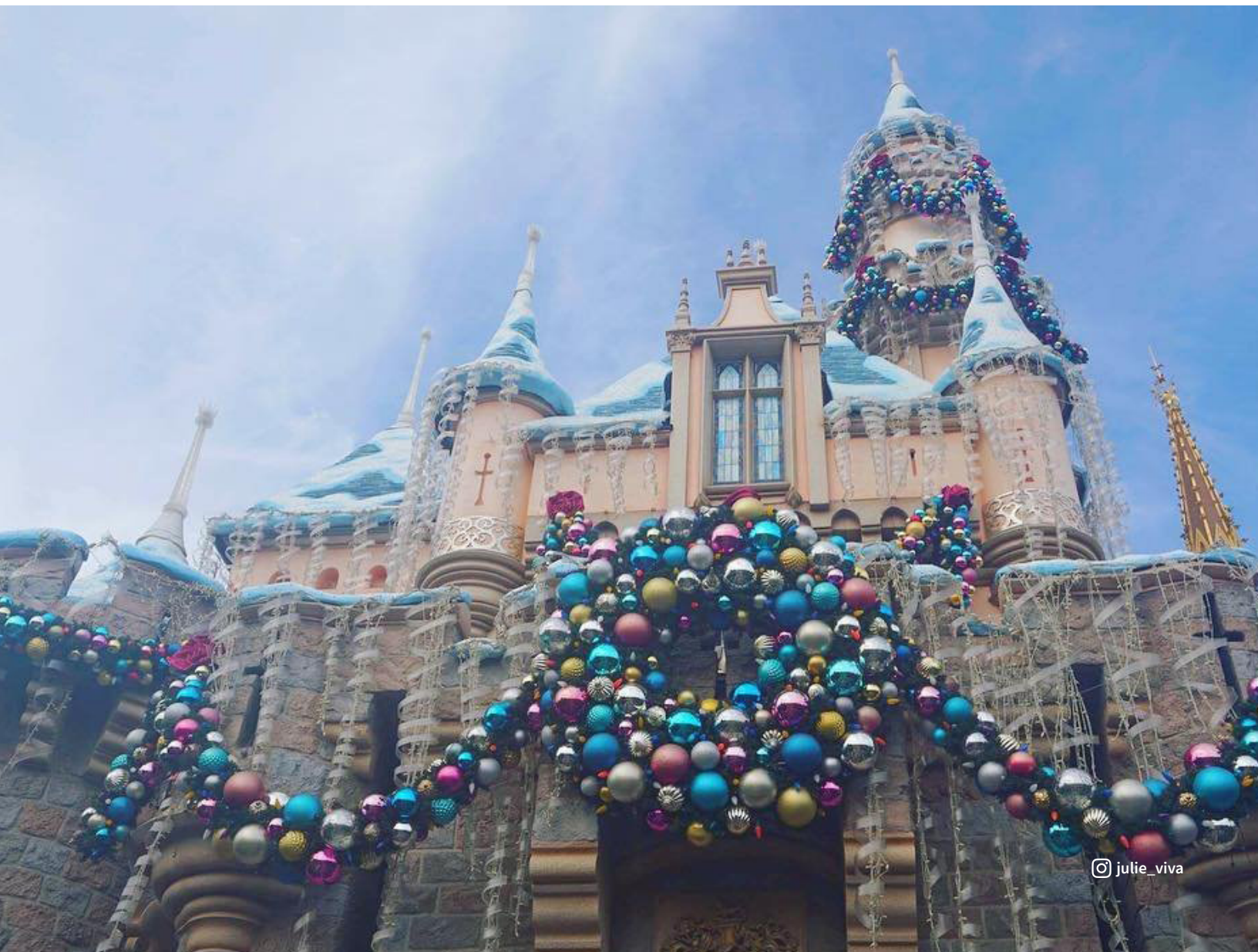
When Do You Need Rights?

When it comes to using visuals from social media in your marketing, it can be tricky to figure out what's allowed, and what isn't. Here are CrowdRiff's guidelines on when you do and don't need to ask for permission to use a visitor's images in your marketing -- better safe than sorry!

When you don't need permission:

Embedding a tweet or Instagram photo on your blog or website. You don't need permission to post if you use the embed code provided by the social network.

Displaying content through an API partner, like with Crowdriff galleries. Since CrowdRiff uses Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook's API to display photos and abides by all of their separate terms and conditions, you don't need explicit permission to display photos.

Source: robert-ramirez

When you do need permission:

Ask yourself: Am I taking the photo off its social network without a link back?

You need rights if you're:
- Reposting a photo to your own Instagram account
- Using the photo in digital or print ads
- Displaying the photo on your website without a link back to the original photo
- Displaying a modified version of a photo

How to Ask for Rights to UGC

Commenting on a user's photo is the best way to ask them for rights to the photo. Using this method, CrowdRiff customers have a 65% success rate when requesting permission to use visitor photos.

When crafting your comment, keep these tips in mind:

- Start with a compliment to show your appreciation for their work
- Tell them how or where you'll be using the photo
- Give them an explicit way to say 'yes' to agree

💡 **Bonus Tip**

If you need to have the users agree to specific terms and conditions when you ask for their permission, you can choose to link your Terms & Conditions in your profile, and direct people to that link when asking for rights.

Source: hello-i-m-nik

emcapps

How CrowdRiff Manages User-Generated Content Rights

Attractions use CrowdRiff to automate the rights request process, shaving hours of manual searching off the work week.

We keep track of your requests. When you're manually requesting rights to UGC, it's extraordinarily hard to keep a record of which photos you've requested and who has responded. CrowdRiff automates all of that.

We retrieve the high-resolution version of any photo immediately after someone gives you rights. No more emailing back and forth - when they approve, you get the photo instantly.

We take a screenshot each time someone responds with "yes", and archive it so that you can have a record of every interaction.

What is CrowdRiff?

CrowdRiff is an AI-powered visual content marketing platform that enables marketers to discover, collaborate on, and deliver top-performing visuals across every channel.

Attractions large and small use CrowdRiff to:

- Automatically source new guest photos in real-time from social channels.
- Expand their image libraries by getting rights to UGC.
- Deliver impactful imagery across their website, social channels, print materials, digital ads, and more.
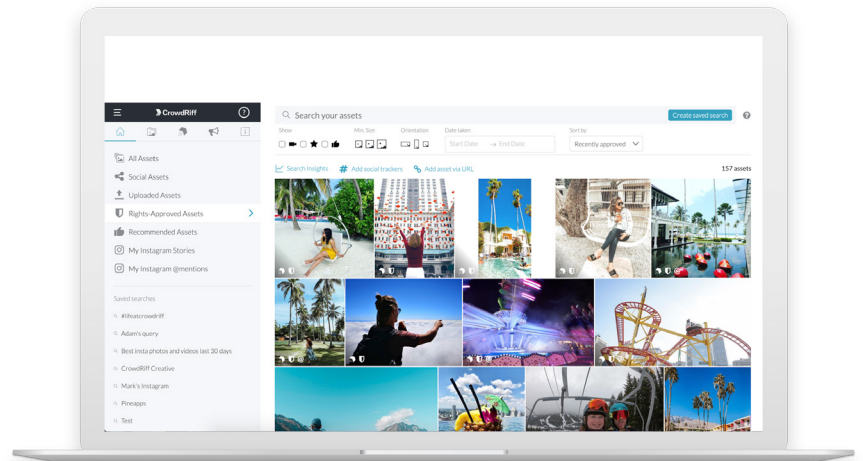
Discover the most engaging social media photos from your attraction

We work with over 500 leading travel and tourism brands worldwide. Let us show you what CrowdRiff can do for you.

To learn more, visit:
https://crowdriff.com/attractions/