

Case Study

COTTON:ON + DASH HUDSON

The Aussie Aesthetic: Visual Appeal Through AI



Australian apparel retailer Cotton On is taking the aesthetic and laid-back lifestyle of its homeland and making it accessible to the global market. Because, who wouldn't want to live like an Aussie?

Cotton On's preferred place to spread the good word about its apparel is on Instagram. But with over 3.5 billion likes happening across Instagram each day, the social team at Cotton On knows it takes more than just a pretty picture to rise above the noise and outperform competitors. The brand's social media team had strong instincts about what images worked, but wanted to be confident in its decisions, and create compelling content faster. So Cotton On revolutionized the way it creates and shares content—with the magic of Dash Hudson's Vision.

Serious Data

Dash Hudson's visual intelligence technology, Vision, collects and analyzes all of a brand's photos from social and from within its own content management system. Vision is then able to see what items, colors, and visual elements are actually inside an image—not unlike how the human eye sees a photo. It then determines, based on a brand's recent performance, what types of photos its consumers care about most. This means that brands can know if a photo—be it a product shot or fresh from a photo shoot—will perform before it's posted or used in a campaign.

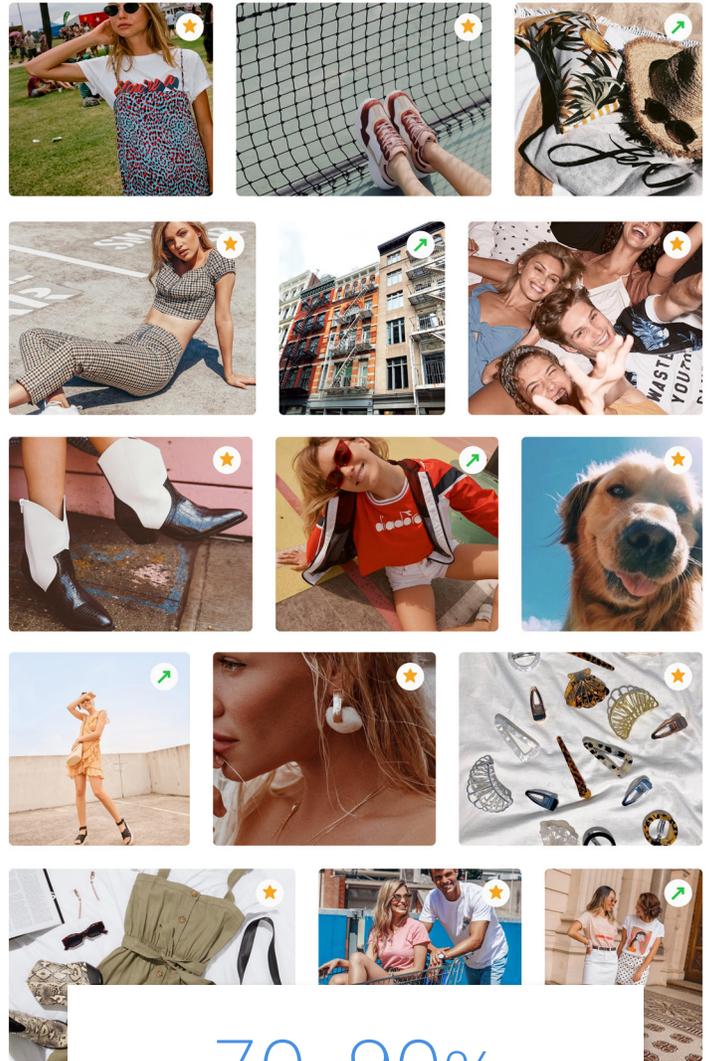
As it sought to expand its global audience, Cotton On invested in innovation to get ahead. Cotton On uses Vision as an ongoing feedback loop. Both the software and the social team are always learning. With an algorithm that identifies and adapts to what resonates with Cotton On's unique audience, Vision has become the brand's secret weapon. The technology empowers Cotton On to understand if a photo will perform before it's even posted, enabling the team to develop a data-backed creative strategy. For Cotton On, it has significantly improved the brand's engagement on Instagram.

How Vision Recommends Images

01. Vision analyzes all of your photos.
02. Vision learns what types of photos your audience cares about most.
03. It reveals insights tailored to your unique brand.
04. You simply search for or upload photos. We do the rest.
05. You get evidence-based recommendations about what will work for your brand on social.

“ We’ve seen a big increase in engagement using Dash Hudson. The user interface makes it so easy to judge why you had a great week, and how you can repeat that success. It also reveals what those moments were that lead you to such an incredible engagement rate. It makes it so easy to take the learnings and put them into action.

Mariah Fox,
Global Social Media Manager at Cotton On



70–90%
Above Average Performance
Ratings by Vision

Create Better Content

The accuracy of Vision’s predictions for Cotton On have been so on point, that the social team uses the visual cues to guide the creative team in their creation of new content. Each time the brand shoots a campaign, the team uploads the images into Dash Hudson to see Vision predictions in real-time. In this way, the team can make adjustments to their shooting style to align with the tastes of their audience on social.

Before implementing Vision feedback, about 15% of the images Cotton On posted from campaign shoots performed above the brand’s average engagement rate. After bringing the technology on set, 70–90% of photos created were above average performers. This means the team saved time and money on set, while curating a trove of high quality content to use on Instagram.



Spot on Content Performance

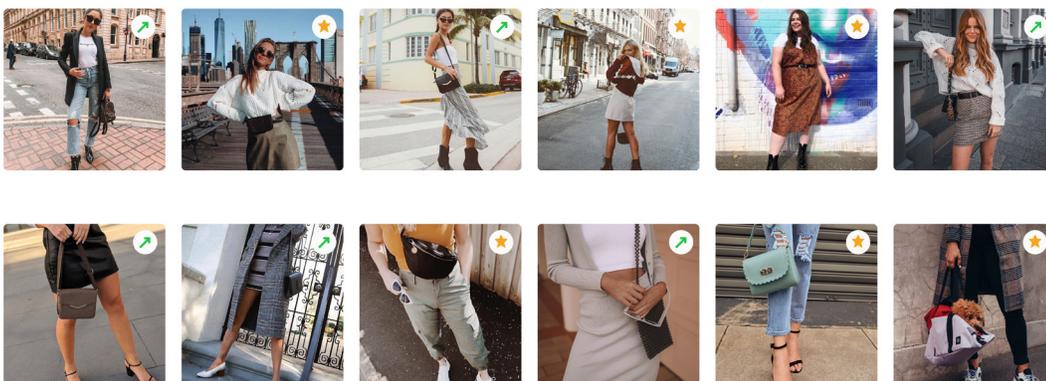
Vision also provides Cotton On with insight into which earned content and influencer photos will perform well on the brand's Instagram. When posting earned content on a branded feed, it's critical to get the aesthetic right. For the social team at Cotton On, Vision acts as a gut-check to help ensure their owned, earned, and influencer content is always spot on and will engage their audience.

Spoiler alert: Cotton On fans love influencer imagery—but choosing which influencers to collaborate with is essential. Vision provides insight into which influencer images will resonate with Cotton On's followers on Instagram.

“ We ran all of our assets through Vision, and saw that it really rated influencer visuals higher. While this is something we felt to be true, when the data clearly tells you something, you can't argue with it.

Mariah Fox,
Global Social Media Manager at Cotton On

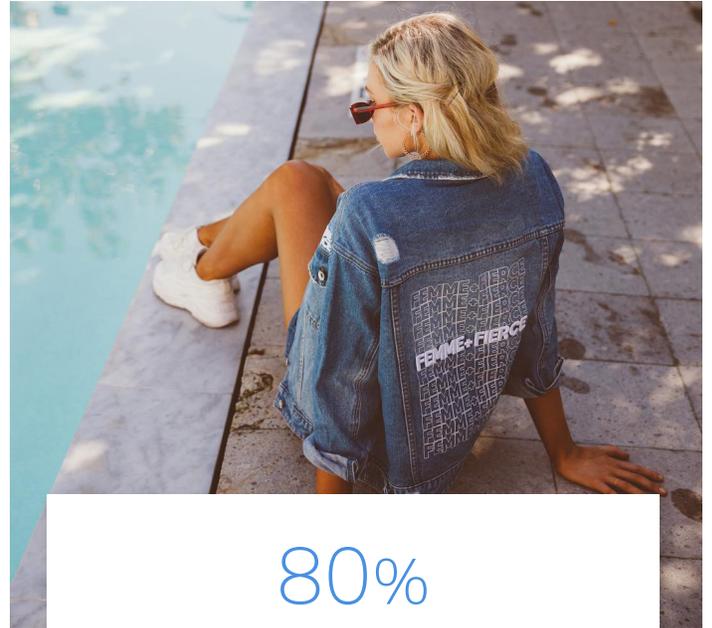
UGC Segments





Level-Up Your Email Marketing

The insights Cotton On has gained on its organic content have spilled over into other key areas of the company's marketing strategy. Since the team knows which influencer content will perform, they started leveraging this in their email marketing campaigns—featuring only images that were predicted to perform above average. Vision-approved influencer images now make up 80% of the visuals used in Cotton On's email marketing campaigns. Cotton On has seen that these images consistently outperform in terms of both click-throughs and conversions.



80%

of Influencer Images Used in Cotton On's
Email Marketing are Vision-Approved

The (New) Cotton On Way

Embracing new technology has enabled the team at Cotton On to take a data-driven approach to their creative and drive performance across channels. They're now able to better engage their audience by serving them up more of what they love. Multiple teams at Cotton On are now using Dash Hudson to create their own channel strategies, and the social team has become a hub for brand assets and innovation within the organization.

“**Vision is changing the way we do things in head office. We now say that if Vision says it's not going to perform highly, we're not posting it.**

Mariah Fox,
Global Social Media Manager at Cotton On