

↑Huckberry

A DEEP DIVE INTO THEIR MARKETING

by



STACKED MARKETER

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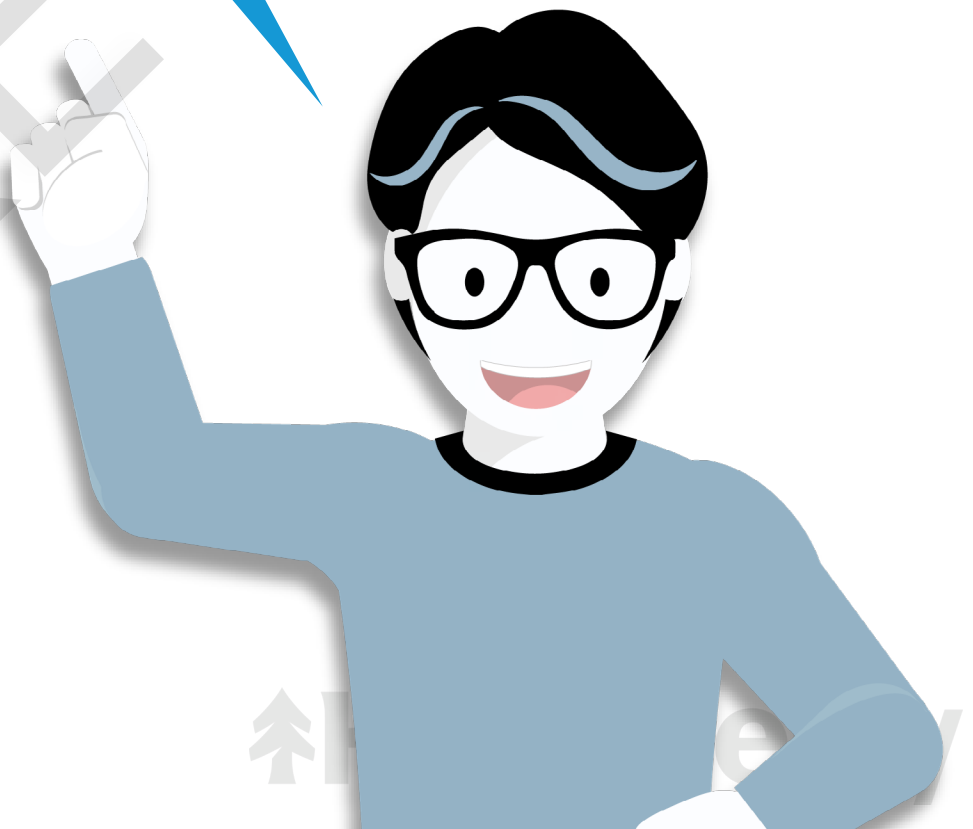


Who this deep is for:

Writers, marketers, and e-commerce store owners who want to learn:

1. How to bring in loyal customers with top-shelf content
2. Why you can succeed with SEO-focused content in e-commerce
3. How transparency and good copywriting can create a conversion machine

This deep dive serves as a case study for all three.



BRANDING AND POSITIONING

Huckberry is an odd brand. And we mean odd in a good way, of course. But it's odd in that its positioning is a mix of many classic personas. The brand is a great case study in selling everyday products to an audience with a specific set of interests.

Huckberry is outdoorsy but it's not REI or Patagonia. It's streetwear but it's not high fashion. It's travel-friendly but not travel-obsessed. It's quality, yet it's not expensive. It's thoughtful without making activism its defining trait.

Huckberry is just... Huckberry, and it's one of the most interesting online apparel stores.

Who buys from Huckberry

Because Huckberry does such a good job with branding, it's easy to figure out who's buying from them (or at least, who they want to be buying from them). Huckberry customers are:

- Well-traveled or people who want to be.
- Adventurers, mainly in the outdoors. Think fly fishermen and backpackers.
- Fashion-minded.
- Fans of people like Anthony Bourdain and Ernest Hemingway, people who traveled and wrote and weren't pretentious about it.

There are other pieces to this puzzle. But, Huckberry's branding is perfectly-suited for the person who fits into the above category.



Why Huckberry is interesting to its customers

While many of the clothes on the website are standard modern fashion--[basic pants](#) and [simple t-shirts](#)--it's Huckberry's branding that makes it so interesting to its target customers. Here's how:

- **Social media** is outdoor and lifestyle-focused. [Take a look at their Instagram](#) and you'll see exactly what we mean.
- **Emails include thoughtful content about travel and living.** Scroll down to the email section of this deep dive to see our breakdowns.
- **Content is well-written and focused on travel and the outdoors.** [This article](#) about one-bag travel is a great example (and a great ad for a Topo Designs travel bag).

The bottom line: To reach (and keep) its ideal customers, Huckberry creates a culture of top-notch content that its customers want to consume. This is different from how most marketplaces approach marketing. And, it works.

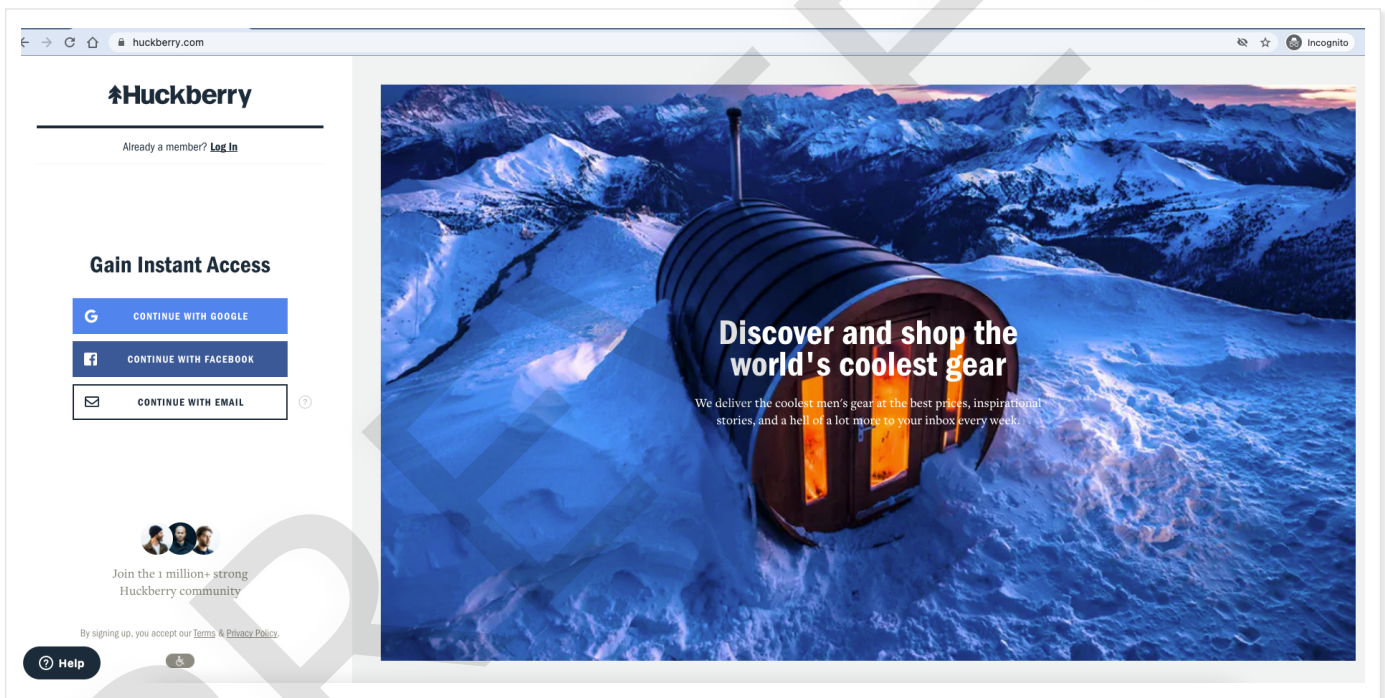
The Crew's Insight: Content is still king, if you want it to be. By creating a culture of content that's laser-focused on the stuff your audience loves, you can draw in customers without aggressively selling to them. This creates an implicit level of trust in your products that wouldn't have existed otherwise.



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WEBSITE

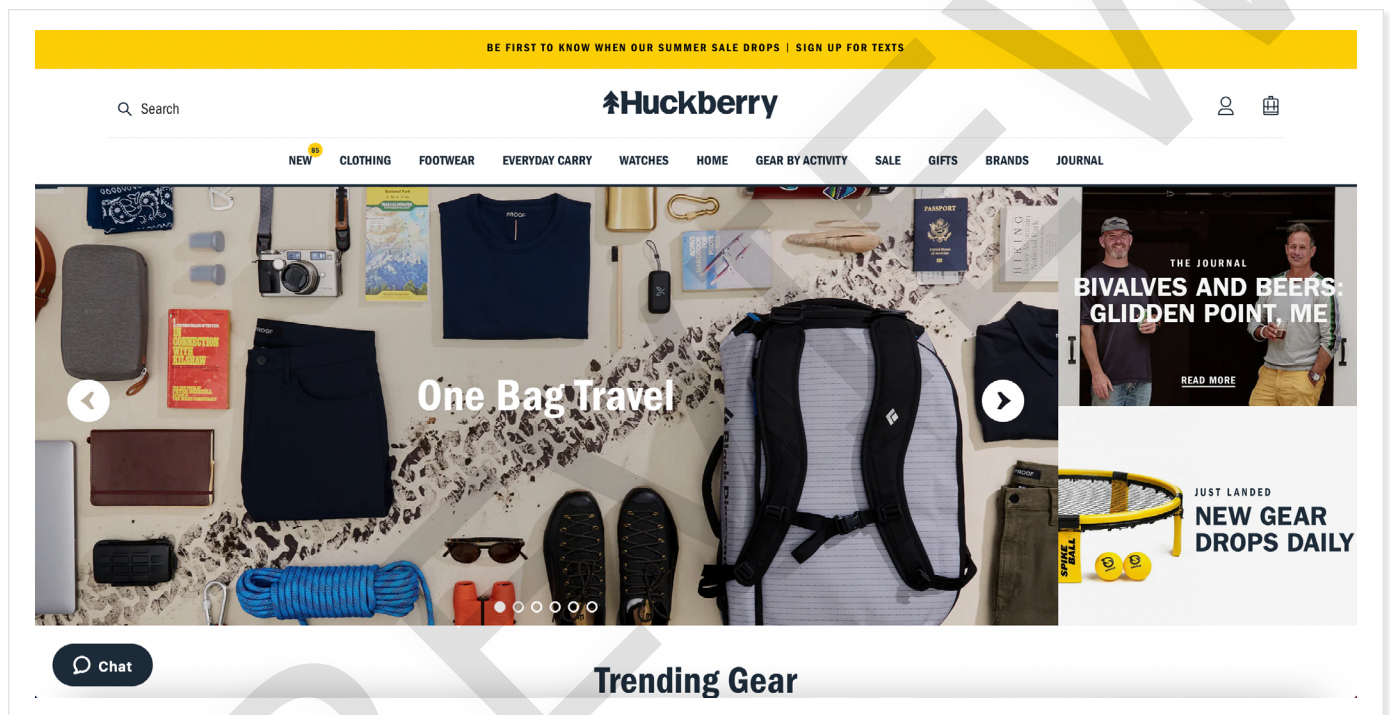
Here's something different: **When you go to Huckberry's website as a new user, you are greeted by a page asking you to create an account!**



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Social proof: Yes, all the way at the bottom, you'll find social proof. It's a carousel-style panel with quotes from brands like Men's Health and Men's Journal.

Now, for a visual analysis. Let's begin with the first thing you see:



This homepage panel is revealing of Huckberry's entire strategy: You're not seeing products. You're seeing content. And if you're the type of person that enjoys this type of content, that's a breath of fresh air for an e-commerce site.

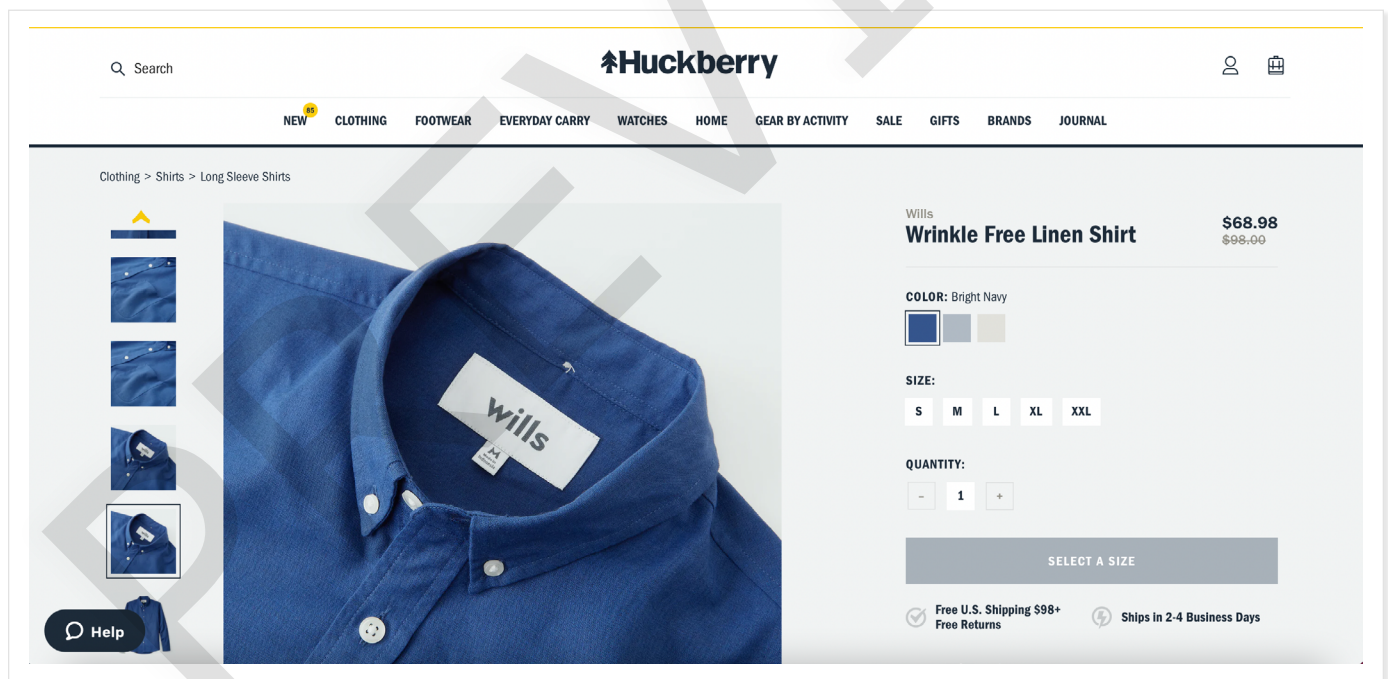
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Product Pages Teardown

All Huckberry product pages are structured more or less the same:

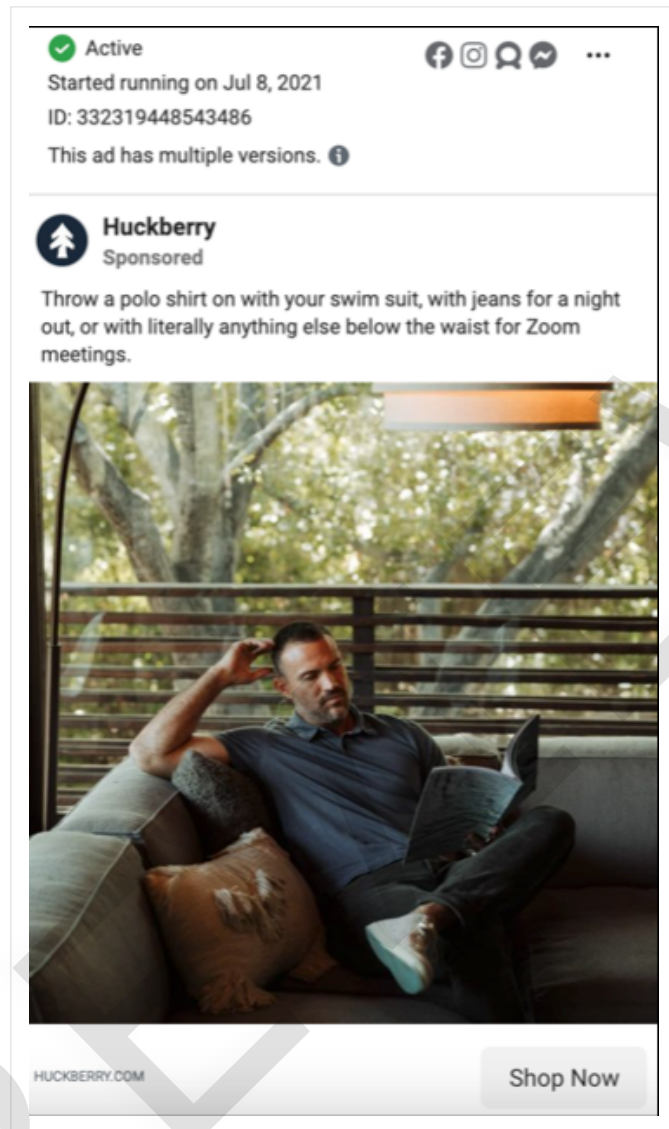
1. Product image on the left, product price, color options, and CTA on the right.
2. Product description and material details below the fold.
3. Shipping and return information below the product description.
4. Reviews
5. Carousel with from the selected brand
6. 6. Carousel with suggested products
7. Carousel with recently viewed products

Let's take a look at one in action.



This is a textbook product page structure. Most successful e-commerce sites structure their pages something like this. It's simplistic and it works.

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Whether by itself, in a video or in a carousel, a lifestyle photo is the core for Huckberry's Facebook Ads strategy.

The style is different compared to what we're used to, not just from other brands we've analysed but also compared to what we see other fashion brands do in our own Facebook feeds.

Our first thought about this style: Almost all these ads make us think there's a story to read if we click through. It doesn't feel like a shopping ad, it makes us curious to learn more. Plus, many of the photos look good.

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ORGANIC SOCIAL MEDIA

We will rarely judge a brand harshly when it comes to their organic social media. **Just about all platforms have moved towards a “pay to reach your audience” model** (except TikTok, perhaps).

That said, Huckberry’s pretty good! Above average, we’d say... Now, it’s not something easy to replicate (we’re not even sure if it’s worth trying to replicate it)...

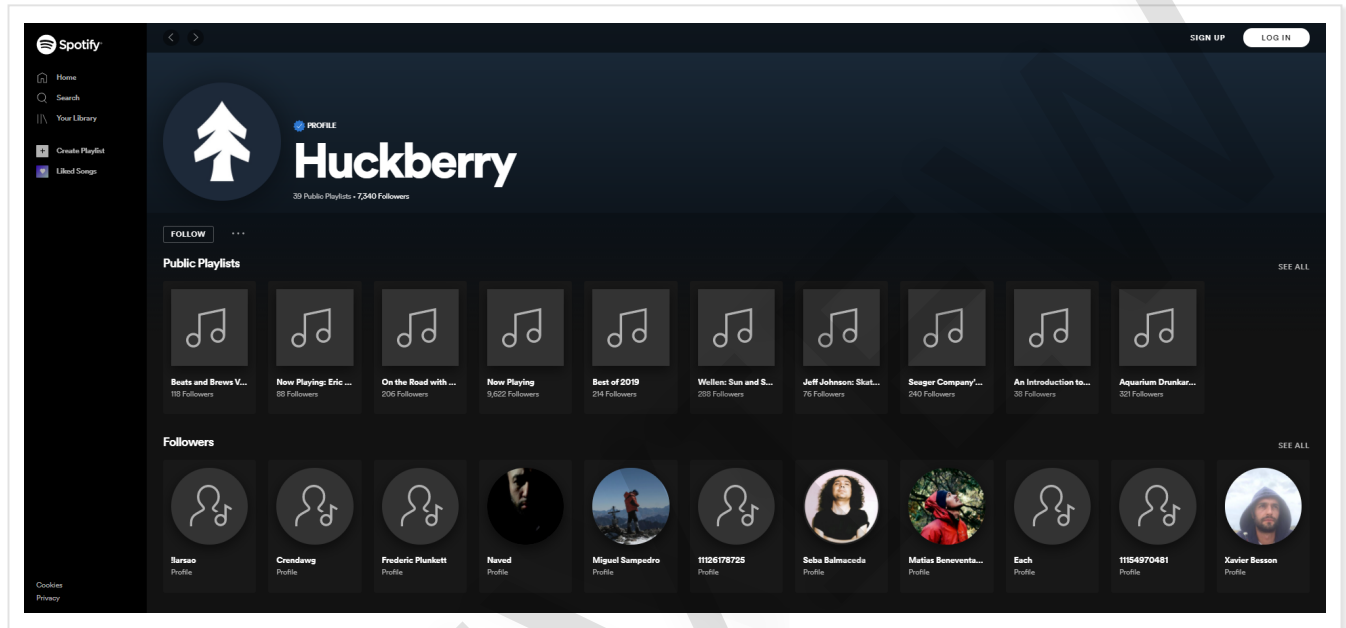
What are Huckberry’s main social platforms?

- [Instagram](#) - 417,000 followers, clearly their top platform.
- [Facebook](#) - 255,000 likes, not bad but it doesn’t seem Huckberry’s main focus is here.
- [Twitter](#) - 39,600 followers, but mostly reposting.
- [YouTube](#) - 4,000 subscribers.
- [Spotify](#) - Over 7,000 followers. It might not be that interesting for finding new users but Huckberry curates Spotify playlists, which should help their branding and retention.

With Instagram being their top platform, it only makes sense to start with that.



SPOTIFY



Great idea, great for retention, for branding, and for that community feel. For a lifestyle brand such as Huckberry, curating Spotify playlists seems like a great idea.

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OK, we have a pattern. There are some flexible parts but we're confident in building out the structure of a typical Huckberry newsletter for you to swipe and use in your own email marketing plan for e-commerce.

- It starts with a quote that helps the reader get into the right mood.
- Then the newsletter has a featured product or collection where there's a good mix of pictures and text to explain the story behind the product.
- Then there's a section of 2-3 products or collections based on season that come from a mix of categories: they can be clothing, apparel, accessories, household and more.
- Very often there's a small "The Journal" section recommending an older blog post.
- Then there are 1-2 more products or collections recommended, also based on season or theme.
- Then we have a recurring structure that is much more content focused:
 - The Journal - A link to a piece of long-form content from Huckberry's blog.
 - Trending Gear or Don't Miss - A collection of trending products.
 - Diversions - A list of reads, podcasts and videos Huckberry recommends, from all over the web.
 - See You Out There - A cool photo that fits well with Huckberry and the readers they have.

And that's how Huckberry created a lifestyle magazine in the form of the newsletter. Of course, the structure is just one part. What Huckberry does very well is their storytelling and their visuals. **Everyone can replicate the structure but not the other factors.**



SEO & CONTENT

Many e-commerce sites don't put much effort into SEO and content: They focus all of their efforts on advertising. This isn't true with Huckberry, who's creating some of the best content in the outdoor lifestyle game.

First, let's break down their SEO efforts. Then, the types of content they create and why it works.

SEO breakdown: Does Huckberry get organic traffic?

Branded traffic: As a well-known brand, a large portion of Huckberry's organic traffic is branded. Ahrefs estimates that the term "huckberry" gets searched 61,000 times per month. That's a lot of traffic.

Unbranded traffic: This is where Huckberry is doing a great job. Huckberry uses the Journal section of their site (which is, really, just a blog) to post all of their content. And some of that content is designed to perform well in organic search. For example:

11 Best Men's Slip-on Shoes for Summer is one of the top-performing organic articles on the Huckberry blog. It ranks #2 for "mens slip on shoes" at the time of this writing.

Other articles that perform well are:

- [*Robert Landsburg's Brave Final Shots*](#)
- [*The Best Men's Short Sleeve Buttondown Shirts for Every Occasion*](#)
- [*Siberian Bear Hunting Suit from the 1800s*](#)

You'll notice that the content is above is varied. You have top-funnel content, like the bear hunting suit article and the piece about photographer Robert Landsburg. But some of the best-performing posts are also lower-funnel: The blog posts about slip-on shoes and short sleeve buttondowns.



Closing Thoughts

Content-driven commerce? That's what Huckberry does, right?

In a time when paid social is dominating the e-commerce landscape (usually, for a good reason), Huckberry's content focus stands out.

This strategy has its pros and cons.

It's likely Huckberry's growth will always be slower than what some VC-backed direct-to-consumer brands achieve by spending all their funding money on Facebook Ads.

But it's also likely to be more stable, more consistent, and with fewer weaknesses against changes in social media platforms and their algorithms.

The overall steps are clear (though harder to execute with a similar quality as Huckberry):

- Find a niche you like creating content for.
- Create plenty of high-quality content for that niche.
- Don't neglect the SEO angle on your content.
- Promote the content with some paid social, collabs, and more.
- Gather readers on an email list to have better, more predictable distribution.

The tricky part is the quality.



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