

# How Overstock Uses Paid & Earned Media To Drive Brand Engagement

A Customer Success Story with Overstock; Industry: E-Commerce

Since their beginnings in 1999, Overstock has evolved from a fledgling startup to a billion-dollar online retailer and blockchain company. Overstock sells a wide range of products including home decor, furniture, bedding, and many other goods that are both closeout merchandise and new merchandise.





# Challenges

Recent Nielsen studies show that people trust earned media more than paid advertising. At the same time, in today's highly fragmented media ecosystem, it is getting harder and harder to obtain earned media. You can't always control what your press coverage says, where it appears, who and how many read it. Even your best press coverage still has a short shelf life and may not get to your target audience at scale.

Wouldn't it be powerful if your PR team, which generates your company's most valuable content, had the same control, predictability, measurability and optimization in the earned media process that exist in all other forms of marketing? This was the sentiment of Overstock, a long-standing customer of Onclusive, who identified that some of its strongest brand messaging was in the form of earned media. Overstock's biggest challenge was not just raising these key messages above the industry noise, but also making the most noise possible during big sales events -- in other words, amplifying the content that really resonated with customers to influence more of their target audience.

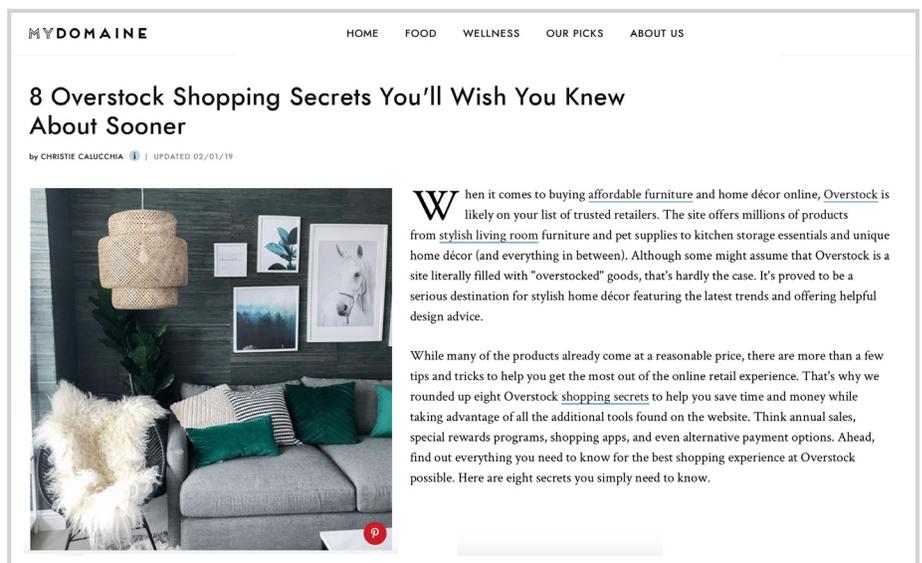
# Solution

Until recently, there has not been a mechanism to "target" press coverage to a very specific audience. Today, Onclusive has an innovative solution to control the distribution, targeting and results of your content by fusing your communications strategy with paid media. The goal is to combine the credibility of earned media with the reach and frequency of digital advertising. First, Onclusive uses AI and machine learning to identify the right story, where and with whom to tell the story. Then, advanced advertising technologies are applied to deliver your most valuable content to its intended audience and measure the impact it is having on your business.

To reach their communications objectives, the Overstock team wanted to expand the readership of its two best stories of 2019:

## 8 Overstock Shopping Secrets You'll Wish You Knew About Sooner (MyDomaine.com, June 30, 2019):

This article, chosen for its strong Power of Voice™ (Onclusive's proprietary content quality metric), focused on messaging that was more instructional than inspirational, to help customers become Overstock power users. Overstock wanted to turn this high-value article into evergreen content.



## Shop Overstock's Biggest Sale In History For Just 36 Hours (CNN, October 6, 2019):

The second campaign promoted Overstock's big fall sale called "Customer Day". This article ran on CNN.com resulting in global media coverage in a Tier 1 outlet, and featuring several key messages and links back to the Overstock website. It needed to reach the largest yet highly targeted audience immediately prior to and during the event as a way of maximizing awareness and traffic during the 36-hour event period.



### Shop Overstock's biggest sale in history right now

Julianne Ross, CNN Underscored  
Updated Tue October 8, 2019



Overstock is celebrating its 20th anniversary with its biggest sale ever, [during which you can find better deals than even on Black Friday](#). You can expect to see major savings on [more than 1.3 million products](#) across all categories.

With [free shipping on orders over \\$45](#) (with many items offering free two day shipping) and [double rewards points for Club O members](#), Overstock is pulling out all the stops. And it's not just markdowns on old inventory either; deals cover thousands of exclusive private label products and new arrivals.

So knowing that there's probably no better time to finally purchase that rug you've been eyeing or splurge on a new recliner, we're helping you get started on shopping with a quick round up of products that have caught our eye so far. Overstock has even [curated categories like "Mega Deals,"](#) which features some of the steepest savings across categories to ["Customer Favorites" so you can quickly skim the most popular products.](#)

In both cases, the articles were delivered precisely to Overstock's target audience of US females, 24-54, with \$100k+ household income using native and social media advertising platforms, enabling Overstock to achieve significant reach and frequency with virtually no wasted impressions.

## To measure the effectiveness of these promoted articles, Overstock tracked two key metrics via the Onclusive platform:

### Reader Engagement

- How much active attention readers paid to the articles, how much time they spent reading and how far down the article they got, using proprietary tracking technology.

### Brand Impact

- How these articles influenced the readers, shaped their opinions about Overstock, and raised awareness of the Customer Day event, using a targeted survey with three sequential questions.
- Secondly, how earned media drove sales during a specific, time-based event, and which messages served as an effective call to action, using PR Attribution™.

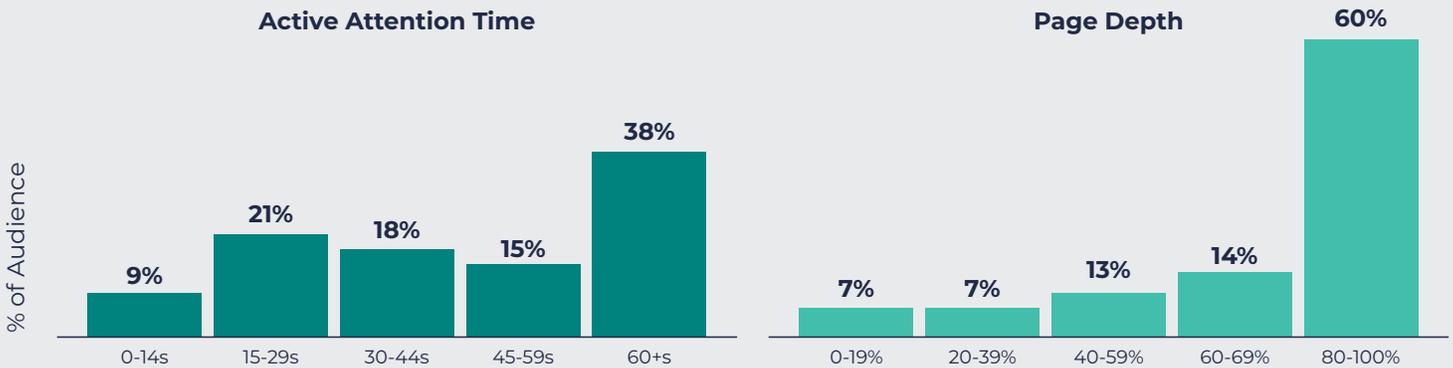
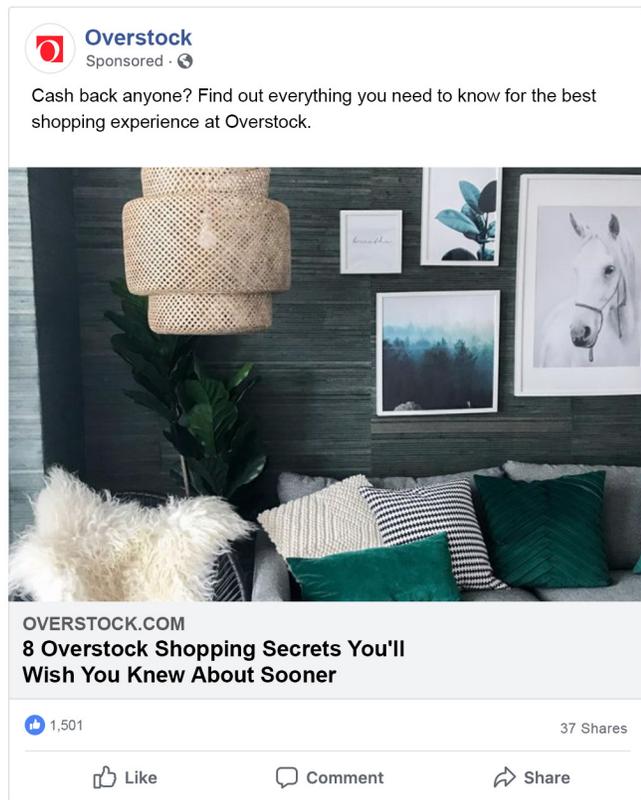
# Results

Overstock used Onclusive's content amplification solution to expand the readership of these articles amongst their target audience, and analyze reader engagement, brand impact and outcomes from this amplified content, with the goal of continually optimizing this process towards future business goals.

## 8 Overstock Shopping Secrets You'll Wish You Knew About Sooner

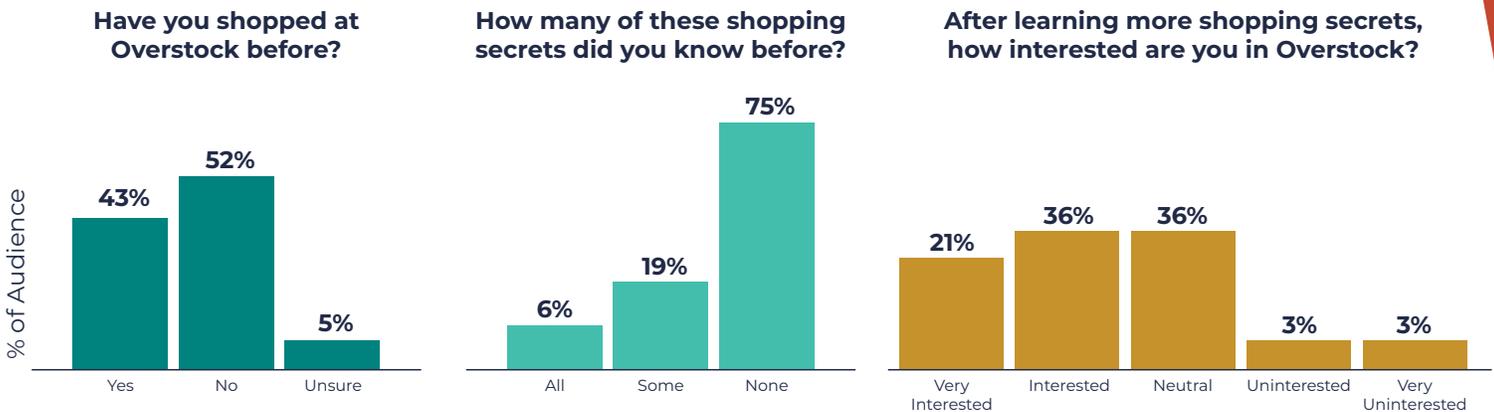
**Very high reader engagement and message resonance:**

Average active attention was 57 seconds with 60% of the readers completing the article.



**A positive shift in shopping affinity among existing and potential customers:**

The majority of readers didn't know about these shopping secrets before, and 57% became "very interested" or "interested" in Overstock.



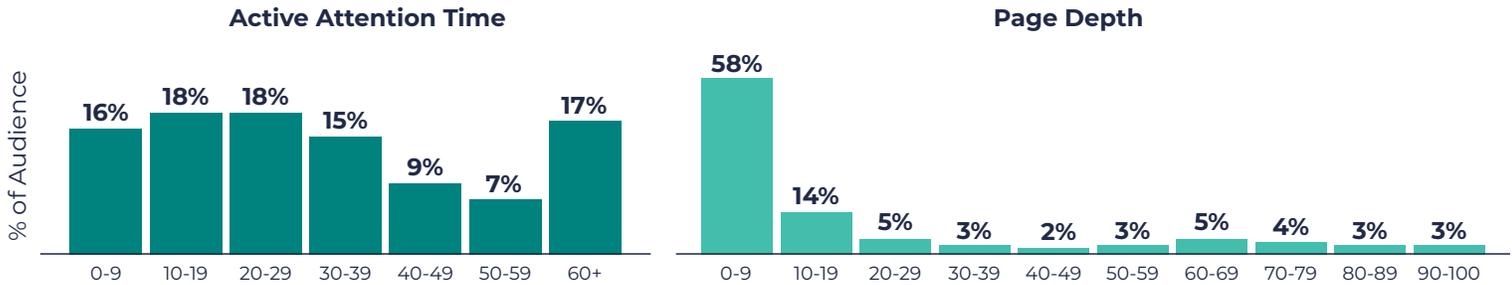
## Shop Overstock's Biggest Sale in History For Just 36 Hours

### Thousands of additional readers with impressive total reader engagement:

3,740 new unique readers found this promoted article, with 1 day and 16 hours of combined active attention.

### Success driving website traffic and sales at the exact right time:

While the average active attention was only 32 seconds and less than 50% of the readers got further than the first two paragraphs, hyperlinks back to the Overstock website sale pages early on in the article resulted in a large volume of click-throughs and onsite shopping activity.



### Proof that PR influenced consideration for the Overstock brand:

54% of the readers were brand new Overstock shoppers, with 91% learning about the Customer Day for the first time and 83% becoming interested in shopping at Overstock.



## Key Takeaways

1. Now you can control the distribution, targeting and results of your earned media content.
2. Expand your readership by converting your best articles into ads, delivering your winning story directly to your exact customer, at exactly the time and scale you desire.
3. Paid media amplification can turn press coverage into evergreen content, making your best articles relevant for weeks, months, and sometimes even years after their original publication date.
4. Prove reader engagement by measuring active attention and article depth.
5. Quantify the influence of your PR and showcase the real sentiment of your earned media readership using brand impact metrics.



## QUOTE

“With Onclusive’s content amplification solution, we shifted the opinions of our target audience in a very positive way using two very different campaigns and messages. We loved sharing these results with our leadership, and the marketing team was so impressed that we’re looking at a larger content amplification initiative in 2020. Third-party recommendation is crucial to helping people form their opinions of a brand, and now we’re able to target it really tightly to a very specific audience that we know we can successfully influence with our campaigns.”

**—Mark Delcorps, Senior Director of Public Relations, Overstock**

# Onclusive

Onclusive is the data science company for communications. We connect content to business outcomes for the first time, and leverage artificial intelligence to reveal which communications strategies drive actual brand engagement. The result is thousands of high-performance campaigns around the world. Onclusive developed the Power of Voice™ metric as a way to measure the quality of a brand’s media coverage in relation to its competitors, and invented PR Attribution™ to measure the real impact that content is having on a company’s bottom line. Onclusive was founded in 2011 and is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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