POWER
REVIEWS

The Ultimate Guide to the Perfect Review

...and how to cultivate more of them

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE:

REVIEWS = TRUST
TRUST = SALES

Why does the concept of "the perfect review" even matter at all?

Like anything else, it all comes down to the bottom line. User-generated review content fuels customer purchase decisions. Reviews convert browsers into buyers. Without them, you are leaving dollars on the table.

WHY?

It all comes back to **authenticity.** Before making a purchase, consumers want validation for their decisions from a trusted source. Most shoppers arrive at your site with at least some degree of purchase intent. Customer review content delivers the verification necessary to push them over the finish line.

COST IS STILL KING, BUT REVIEWS ARE A CLOSE SECOND WHEN IT COMES TO DRIVERS OF BUYING DECISIONS.

95% of shoppers consult customer reviews before making a purchase.
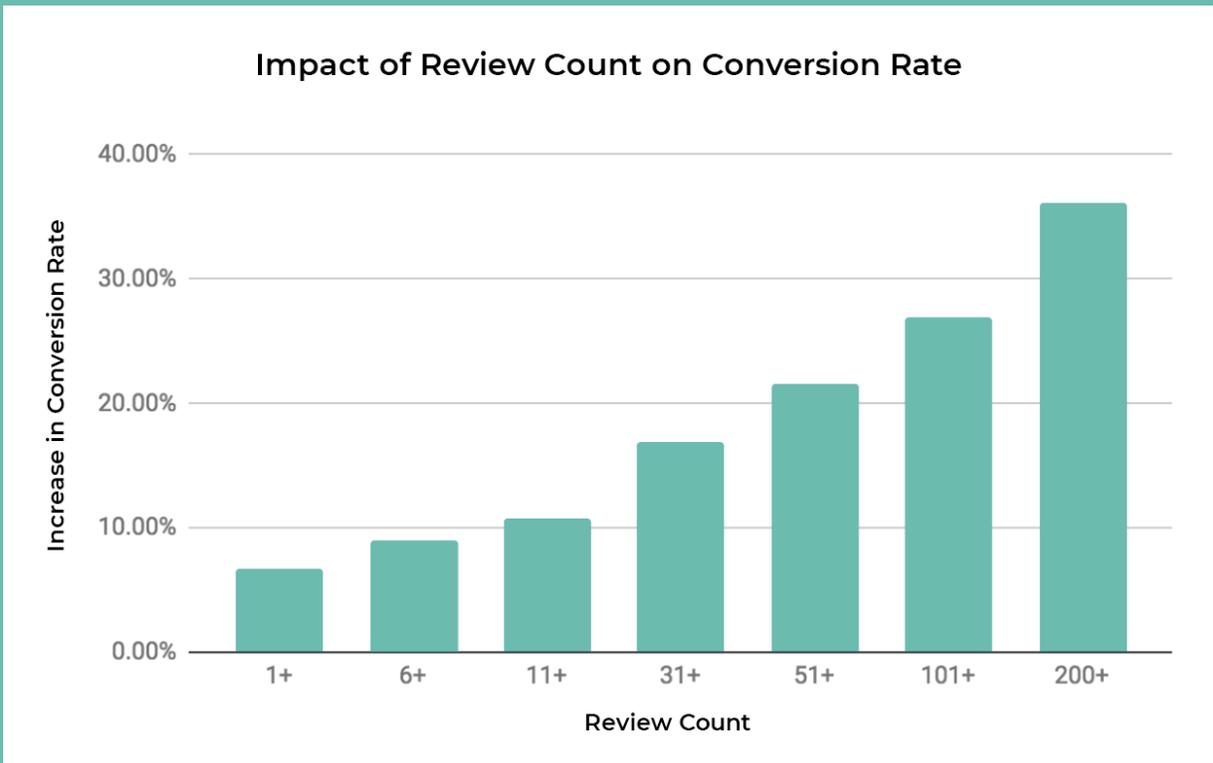
86% of consumers say authenticity is important when deciding what brands they like and support.

85% of shoppers seek out negative reviews prior to purchase.

(Source: Power of Reviews Report)

Impact of Review Count on Conversion Rate

Increase in Conversion Rate vs. Review Count

Based on a PowerReviews study of 168k products, 28 million orders, 321 million page views.

According to our extensive ratings and review data (we analyzed 168k product pages, 28 million orders and 321 million page views), we found that the more reviews displayed for a product, the higher the conversion rate. But, even a small volume of reviews has an impact.

To illustrate this point, a jump from zero to one customer review results in a 7% increase in conversion levels for that product on average. This increases steadily until you hit 50 reviews, which we consider the sweet spot. At this point, the lift in conversion rate is 21% on average.

But quality is absolutely critical. Shoppers can only consume so many reviews so it's important they find the information they need.

The Perfect Review: At a Glance

When thinking about the concept of "the perfect review", always remember the purpose of any user-generated content. Reviews are simply a vehicle for building trust with customers by delivering an authentic depiction of your products. But what exactly makes a "perfect review"?

INFORMATIVE TITLE

Shoppers want the information they need fast. Titles need to grab attention quickly.

CONTEXTUAL MEDIA

Everyone has heard the saying "a picture is worth 1,000 words". When it comes to reviews, this is unmistakably true. Authentic imagery and video "out in the wild" adds unrivalled credibility.

RELATABLE STORIES AND USE CASES

Shoppers want a vivid illustration of what the product will do for them and how it will perform. Real-life accounts of use cases add value and color critical to the buying decision.

LENGTH

Reviews longer than 500 characters are proven to generate a greater number of conversions.

PROFILE INFORMATION

Specific demographic detail about the reviewer. Take location as an example. The term "weather resistant" means something completely different in California or Arizona than it does in, say, Michigan or New York City. Make this information easy to filter and aggregate, enabling shoppers to find people and use cases most similar to theirs.

RATING

The perfect review will have a high average rating. High ratings translate to more sales. However, an artificially-inflated rating will only lead to consumer backlash.

VERIFIED BUYERS

Reviews from verified buyers are more reliable and are valued significantly higher by consumers than non-verified reviews.

A Sample Perfect Review

Informative Title

Verified Buyers

Relatable Stories

Length

Better than shirts double the price, super happy with fit for my long arms

Verified Buyer

I'm 6"1' and was looking for a slim fit shirt that looks great for work at a good price. I have especially long arms (35 inches) and most shirts come up short. But this shirt fit like it was tailored for me. The quality is also fantastic, I have bought shirts for double the price that have not felt as good to wear.

I work in a "business casual" office, but my coworkers definitely dress to impress so looking good is important. I was super happy to get a number of compliments the first couple of times I wore it from my work friends.

I was looking for a good fit and durability. I will be wearing it probably once every week so it needs to hold up. It has been through the laundry five times and the quality is as it was when I bought it. I certainly have not noticed any worsening in the fabric. Durability is as good as any item of clothing I've ever owned; only thing that seems iffy is the buttons on one cuff, but that's not a huge deal.

Although I originally bought it for work, I would definitely wear it socially – it would work just as well for a nice dinner or drinks. Overall I'm super pleased with the purchase. I will definitely be buying more of these shirts in different colors.

Pros

👕 Fit   🔨 Durability   ✔ Quality $ Price

Cons

🚚 Shipping

★★★★★

Customer Image
Uploaded 2.19.2020

Size: L (Male)

Color: Blue

Date Reviewed: 2.19.2020

Location: Portland, OR, USA
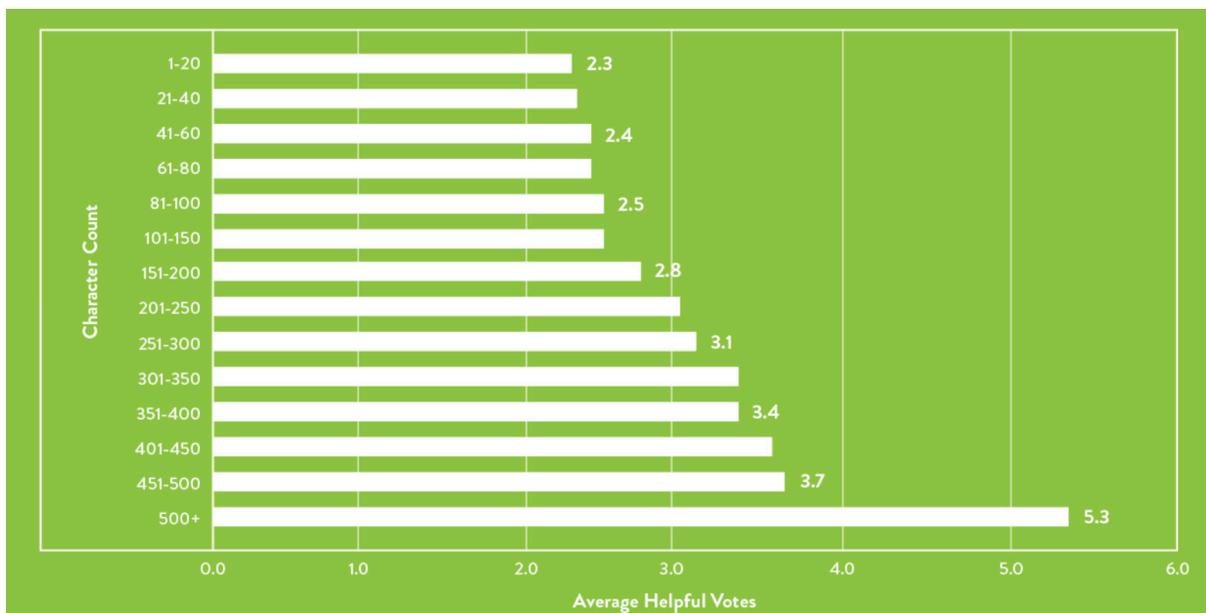
Rating

Contextual Media

Profile Information

Key Elements of a Perfect Review

Review length:

The longer the better

<u>Our research proves</u> that longer reviews provide exponentially greater value - without fail. Based on the number of "helpful" votes provided by shoppers to existing reviews, a review of 500+ characters is 2.3 times more valuable than a review of 20 characters or fewer. Why? Longer reviews provide consumers with the ability to provide the relatable use cases and stories that resonate with buyers.
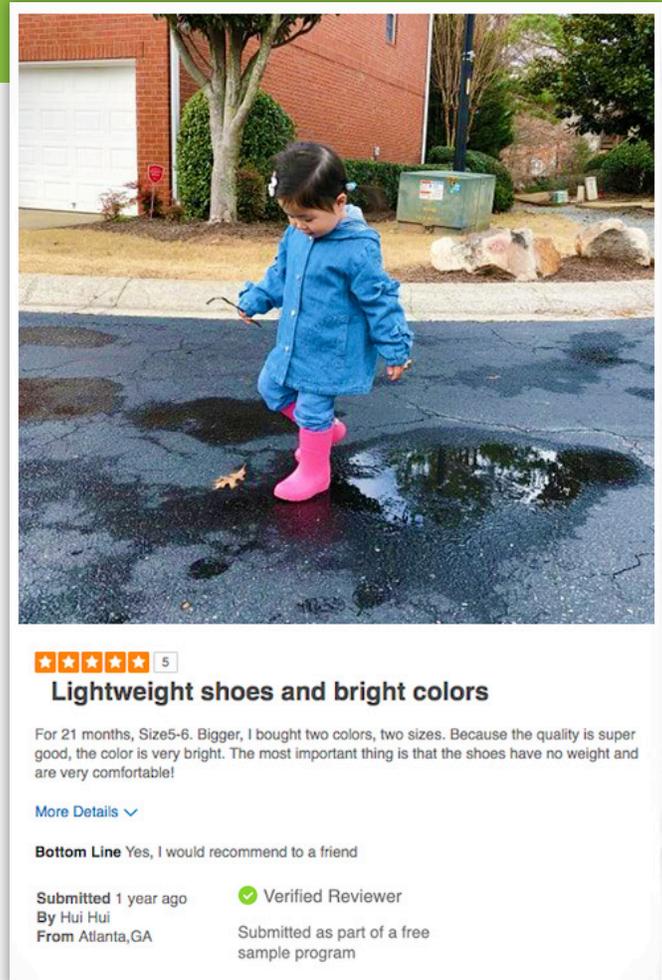
Imagery and video:
Buyers love visual media

More than half of consumers under 30 say customer-generated visual content is MORE important than the glossy photos produced by a brand or retailer.

Imagery and video provide exceptional real-life examples of the product in actual everyday use. Does it look, feel and smell as described? Is performance in line with, worse or better than expected? Visual media enables each of these questions to be answered with precision and in great detail. In doing so, it generates exceptional authenticity and trust.

To give you an idea of volume you should be aiming for, our research shows that customers EXPECT at least three to five authentic customer images on each product page.

★★★★★ 5
Lightweight shoes and bright colors

For 21 months, Size5-6. Bigger, I bought two colors, two sizes. Because the quality is super good, the color is very bright. The most important thing is that the shoes have no weight and are very comfortable!

More Details ⌄

Bottom Line Yes, I would recommend to a friend

Submitted 1 year ago
By Hui Hui
From Atlanta,GA

✅ Verified Reviewer

Submitted as part of a free sample program

A review voted as "helpful" by consumers is
4x more likely
to include imagery or video.

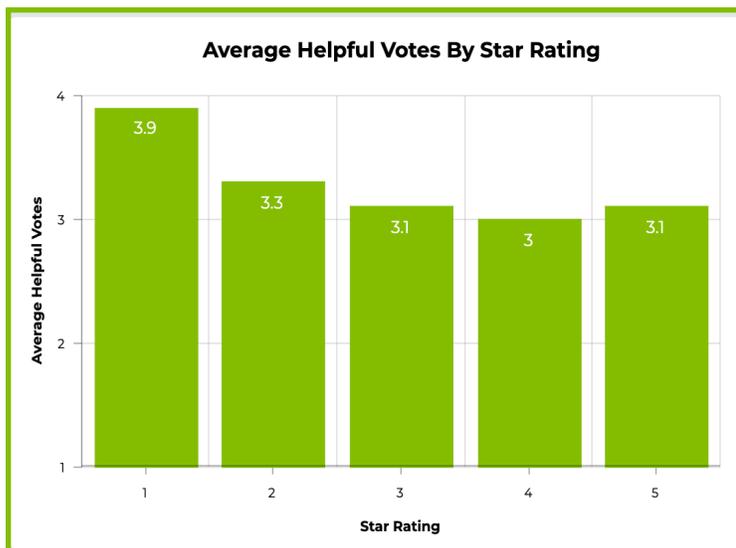*(Source: Analysis of reviews voted as "helpful" by PowerReviews analysts)*

88%
of consumers specifically look for visuals submitted by other consumers prior to making a purchase.

(Source: PowerReviews Snapshot for Ecommerce)

Rating:

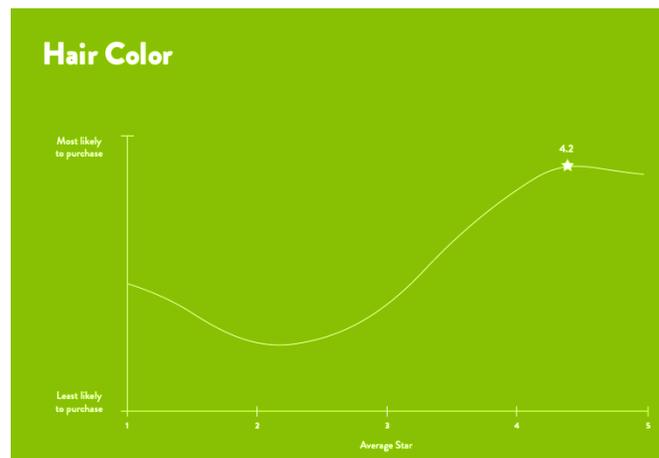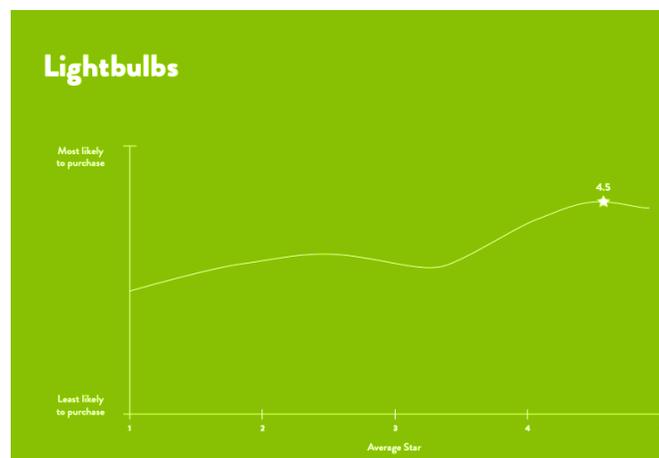## Consumers value authenticity over best scores

While there is a clear and direct correlation between average rating and conversions, reviews considered the most helpful by consumers tell a very different story. In fact, **our research shows** one and two star ratings are deemed the most helpful by consumers.

This makes sense, given time and time again shoppers are proven to value authenticity over every other quality when it comes to user-generated content. An artificially-inflated product rating or overly positive set of reviews will only lead to consumer disappointment and distrust.

Add in purchase levels and this trend is clear-

ly evident. There is such a thing as "too good to be true" when it comes to product ratings. As is shown by **analysis of our data by Northwestern University Spiegel Research Center** on two random product groupings, there is a drop off in conversions once the average rating rises above around 4.5.

(Source: Northwestern Study Volume 1: From Reviews to Revenue)

Profile information:

Let shoppers find people and use cases similar to themselves

When shoppers browse your site and start to read reviews for particular products, they are looking to validate a potential purchase. Ideally, they like to know people like them were happy with what they bought. The same goes for the specific usage or deployment of the product. Specific examples include size and gender for clothing or location for outdoor furniture.

The more vivid, relatable and relevant your review content is, the more likely it is to resonate and push consumers over the line to purchase.

47%

of users engage with tags
on best uses,
pros/cons and other descriptors of the reviewer that are queryable.

(Source: Baymard Institute)

Embrace negative reviews:

Although negative reviews should never be your aspiration, they are a helpful tool to allow consumers to identify the products that best fit their needs. Why? Negative reviews provide authenticity. Another **one of our research projects found** that nearly half (44%) of Generation Z shoppers wouldn't trust a product's reviews if there were no negative reviews present.

When analyzing your product portfolio holistically, you should also recognize that negative reviews allow you to identify very precise insights to improve.

6 STRATEGIES FOR CULTIVATING MORE *PERFECT* REVIEWS

Ask for more:

Get creative in how you solicit more reviews

User reviews have multiple different uses and contexts, which explains why more reviews leads to more sales.

KEY TIPS

1. **Put in the legwork:** A review button on the product page and a post-purchase email are the minimum requirements; aim to do more.

2. **Send TWO follow up emails:** Studies show that up to 80% of reviews originate from post purchase emails.

3. **Optimize your review form:** Enable your customers to provide content for multiple product purchases without leaving the window or refreshing the page.

4. **Consider offering sweepstakes:** Although not appropriate for all brands, they work great in the right circumstances. However, be transparent when this has been offered.

5. **Consider SMS collection:** Quicker, easier and resonates with younger demographics who are not as wedded to email.

6. **Prioritize higher priced products:** Reviews help consumers overcome perceived risk, and more expensive items are by their very nature higher risk purchases.

7. **Keep at it:** Building an engaged community takes time. Incentives as simple as rewards points are often enough to keep customers singing your praises.

CASE STUDY: LEADING APPAREL BRAND

CHALLENGE
Generate more reviews.

SOLUTION
Adding a second follow up email post-purchase, enabling the ability to review multiple products in the same form, and adding a sweepstakes entry.

RESULTS

·   Initial jump from 1,000 to 10,000 reviews per month

·   Continue to generate 8,000 reviews monthly

·   These new techniques led to increased review completion by 300% and review volume by 147%.

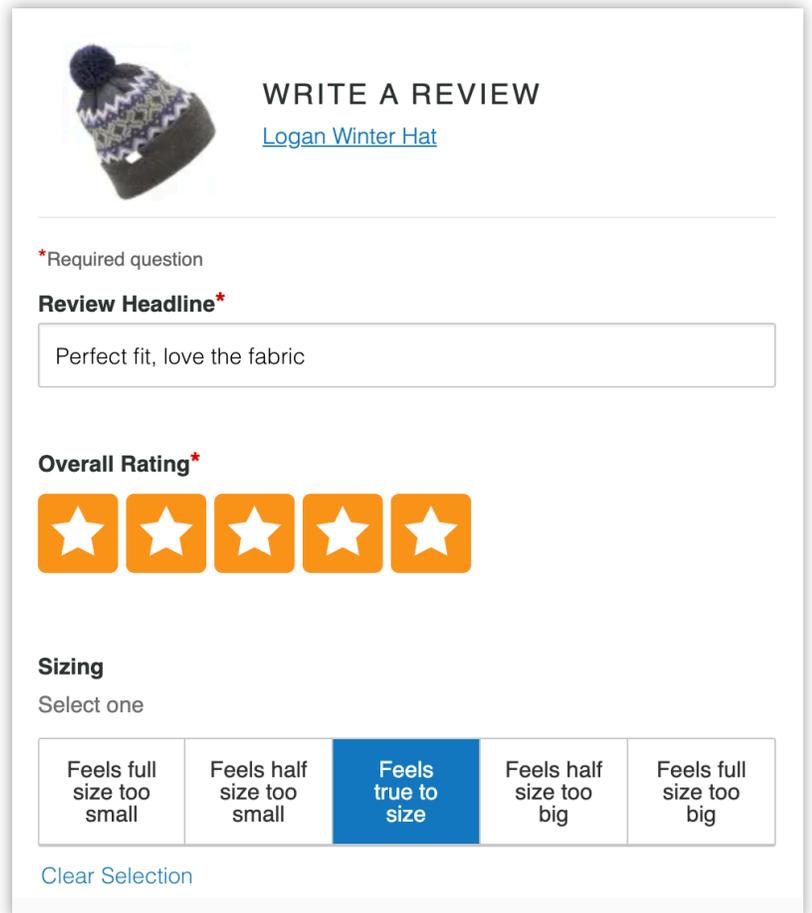# Ask the right questions:

Get conversion-driving information

Tag your reviews with automated follow up questions that address key known issues and questions.

Prospective buyers look for patterns when reading reviews. By providing them with those patterns in an easily summarized way, you make finding the information they need much easier.

KEY TIPS

1. Focus on questions that you know will address key known customer issues (e.g. sizing for clothing). Also consider asking for specific demographic information (e.g. location, gender, age etc.) or invite customers to submit their perceived pros and cons.

2. Limit to two open-ended text-based questions: reviewer and shopper fatigue is real.

3. Only make these follow-up questions available to verified buyers to ensure authenticity.

4. Ensure this information is easily filterable and searchable for shoppers on your product pages. Use review snapshots at the top of the page to make a few things really clear, such as ratings distribution (in a clickable format), pros/cons, keyword filters and sorting buttons. Providing this information up front makes product returns less likely.

5. Remember that shoppers are seeking negative content, so don't shy away from it.

WRITE A REVIEW
[Logan Winter Hat](#)

*Required question

Review Headline*

Perfect fit, love the fabric

Overall Rating*

⭐⭐⭐⭐⭐

Sizing
Select one

| Feels full size too small | Feels half size too small | Feels true to size | Feels half size too big | Feels full size too big |

Clear Selection

Implemented correctly, 92% of reviewers will answer follow-up questions generated by contextual tagging. *

(Source: PowerReviews analysis of review data.)

Encourage quality:

Generate longer, in-depth review content

Consumers place a higher value on longer reviews. So you should be doing everything you can to generate the most in-depth and informative content possible. Often, reviewers have the inclination and motivation to leave detailed reviews, they just aren't always sure how to. Most consumers are not professional writers or product experts so need guidance.

Comments*

I'm 6"1' and was looking for a slim fit shirt that looks great for work at a good price. I have especially long arms

Minimum recommended characters left 72.

Comments*

I'm 6"1' and was looking for a slim fit shirt that looks great for work at a good price. I have especially long arms (35 inches) and most shirts come up short. But this shirt fit like it was tailored for me. The quality is also fantastic, I have bought

Keep it up! Your review is above the rest.

By submitting, you represent that you have read and agree to our **Terms** and our **Privacy Policy**.

Submit Review

powered by POWER REVIEWS

KEY TIPS

1. Before requesting the written review content on the submission form, prompt with suggested descriptive words. By the time users reach the comment section, they will have a far more vivid thought process in their head about the content they want to provide.

2. Structure this by highlighting relevant descriptive words under section headings such as "Best Uses", "Pros" and "Cons".

3. Include a character counter that tracks the reviewer's comment length as they type and encourages them to keep writing.

(Right) Room&Board incorporates a number of sections - each including a range of descriptive words - before the comment field.

Your Rating*

⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐ ⭐

Pros
Select all that apply

Comfortable fabric	Comfortable sit
Cushions hold shape	Great design
Well made	

Add your own +

Cons
Select all that apply

Cushions lose shape	Poorly made
Too deep	Uncomfortable fabric
Uncomfortable sit	

Add your own +

Best Uses
Select all that apply

Accent	Formal
Informal	Large spaces
Lounging	Primary seating
Small spaces	Watching TV

Add your own +

Ask for visual content:

Customer-submitted imagery and videos add exceptional authenticity

Shoppers love video and imagery of your products "out in the wild". These have a significant impact on performance of your product pages, particularly from an SEO perspective, boosting traffic and sales.

BREAD REVIEW SNAPSHOT

4.8

9 Reviews

WRITE A REVIEW

KEY TIPS

1. Ask for customers to submit imagery and videos as part of your review solicitation process.

2. Pull imagery into your product pages from other sources - most notably, social media. Niche industries in particular attract a ton of highly valuable social content.

3. Display this imagery and video content prominently on your product pages and make finding it easy.

Just one image added to a product page boosts traffic by 18% and conversion by 69%. *

(Source: PowerReviews analysis of review data based on representative sample of 7,800+ products across 50+ retailers.)

CASE STUDY: CANYON BAKEHOUSE

CHALLENGE
The gluten-free bread maker had excellent review volumes and coverage but had a notable image deficit.

SOLUTION
The company was consistently being tagged on social media with it's bread highlighted in melty grilled cheese sandwiches, avocado toast and so on. It began leveraging the PowerReviews Social Curation solution to showcase this imagery on the product pages of its website.
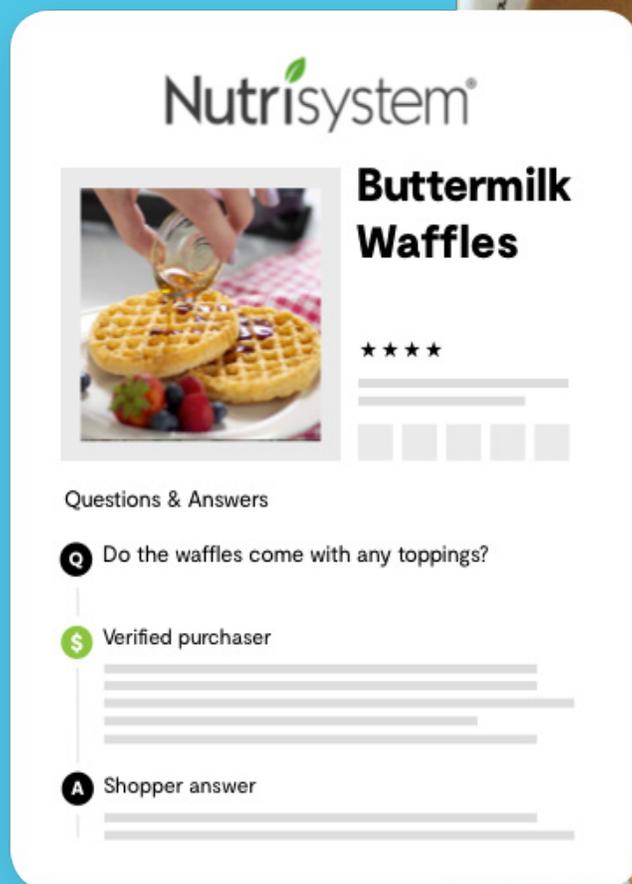
RESULTS
More than 3,600 images were pulled through in just the first 10 months, generating a stunning 77% increase in pageviews.

Add Q&A content to each product page:

Directly address barriers to purchase

While technically outside of what constitutes review content, customer Q&A has a significant impact on the performance of a product page. Why? You directly address real-life concerns that are preventing shoppers from buying, while showcasing your engaged customer community - a great way to build trust.

Nutrisystem®

Buttermilk Waffles

★★★★

Questions & Answers

Q Do the waffles come with any toppings?

$ Verified purchaser

A Shopper answer

KEY TIPS

1. Enable customers to both ask and answer questions to realize full community-building potential.

2. Strategically position Q&A content on the page: You can enhance overall page flexibility and appeal by leveraging Q&A to complement other forms of UGC throughout your site.

3. Present this Q&A content in an easy-to-follow and bulleted list so shoppers can find information they're looking for quickly.

.

Adding Q&A to a product page increases traffic 88% and sales 6x. *

> Not only does [Q&A] provide a better shopping experience for shoppers, but it also helps us reduce operational expenses.

KRISTINA CERMINARA

MANAGER,

ONLINE OPTIMIZATION,

NUTRISYSTEM

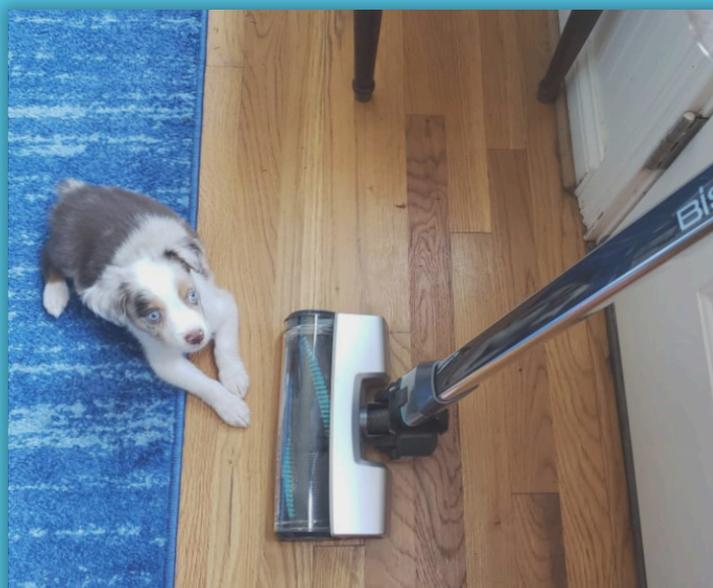**(Source: PowerReviews analysis of review data based on representative sample of 7,800+ products across 50+ retailers.)*

Run targeted review generation campaigns:

Drive sales with more customer-generated content

Higher review volumes lead to higher sale volumes. But how can you boost the number of reviews on your site quickly and impactfully? Sampling campaigns - sending a product to a group of people who agree to write a review in exchange - can be very effective.

Pet Hair Doesn't Stand A Chance

★★★★★

Read review

"Works great for households with pups!"

Bottom Line Yes, I would recommend to a friend

Was this review helpful to you?

👍 2   👎 0

KEY TIPS

1. Think carefully about the most effective use case for a sampling campaign (e.g. product launches).

2. If you do want to use sampling to launch a product, time all parts of the process with pinpoint precision so that you're ready to sell when the item goes live.

3. Ensure your target persona is on point and you can effectively execute against it.

4. Stringently assess your distribution channels and vendors.

CASE STUDY: BISSELL

CHALLENGE
Bissell wanted to launch its latest product line complete with pre-existing customer endorsement and validation.

SOLUTION
A sampling campaign to target pet owners frustrated by other vacuums.

RESULTS
Review coverage reaches 90% across its product catalog with over 2,000 customer-generated images collected. As you can see from this image, many of these included dogs - a vivid illustration of the value proposition the company sought to communicate.

Conclusion

The perfect review is made up of a number of elements, which combined add up for significant impact. Specifically, the best reviews include an informative title, relatable stories and use cases, are 500+ characters in length, include customer-generated visual media, demographic profile information, come from verified buyers and have an average rating of around 4.5. Perfect reviews are extremely valuable because they are proven to boost interest, page views and conversions.

Best of all, there's a number of strategies you can implement to encourage your customers to provide this high-quality user-generated content in larger volumes. These range from very tactical elements incorporated as part of the review request process to full-on content generation campaigns.

So, leverage the perfect review as a critical weapon in your arsenal to enable you to achieve your key business objectives.

CONTACT US

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PowerReviews helps leading retailers and brands generate perfect reviews in larger volumes to significantly increase sales, while enabling you with the analytics to optimize product quality performance.

Request a Demo →

POWER REVIEWS