

MARKETING

89pc of consumers consult reviews before purchasing: Bazaarvoice

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Bazaarvoice found that product reviews are the most consulted medium consumers utilize before a purchase. Image credit: Glenn Carstens-Peters

By KATIE TAMOLA

With the current expansive shopping landscape, reviews and ratings are becoming increasingly important in consumers' shopping journeys.

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New data from ratings and review provider Bazaarvoice spotlights the instrumental role reviews play in a consumer's consumer journey, with 89 percent of respondents saying they always or mostly consult ratings and reviews before making a purchase. Consumers are looking for specific features reflected in their reviews as well to reflect that the feedback and suggestions are authentic and resonant to their needs.

"No matter how a brand collects reviews, they absolutely should never ask for or incentivize positive ones," said Keith Nealon, CEO of Bazaarvoice. "They should always empower their customers to provide honest, authentic feedback, even if it ends up being negative.

"Negative reviews, while not exactly fun to have, are necessary and they often provide you with insights that enable you to make improvements to your product or customer experience," he said. "They also ensure that your customers can trust your reviews, because if your website only had positive ones, it would be very suspicious."

The findings are based on the Bazaarvoice and Influencer survey of more than 30,000 global members of the Influencer community from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France and Germany in May 2021.

Behind the review

Several luxury brands have presences and platforms that feature reviews and ratings of their offerings, ready at the fingertips of consumers. Reviews are crucial, whether shopping online or in-store.

Product reviews are the most consulted medium consumers utilize before a purchase, followed by 65 percent of consumers consulting social media or family/friends, 58 percent consulting influencers and 51 percent going directly to brand websites.



Eighty-five percent of consumers said they consult online product reviews on their phones while shopping in store. Image credit: Treasure Data

Seventy-eight percent of respondents said that product reviews were the most influential for their purchase decision. Eighty-five percent said they consult online product reviews on their phones while shopping in store.

Consumers are looking for quality in their products, but also in their reviews. They are searching for authentic, timely and realistic feedback on a product.

Seventy-one percent of respondents agree that the number of product reviews is more important depending on how expensive a product is, and close to a third agree that the product needs more than 100 reviews to be considered credible. Time frames are key too, as 61 percent of consumers strongly agree that recent reviews written in the past three months are more reliable than older reviews.

The new standard for shoppers in trusting reviews relies on sentiment, visuals and authenticity.

When shopping for a product, 93 percent of consumers would rather purchase a product with both a lot of positive and a lot of negative reviews, versus 7 percent who would rather purchase a product with no reviews. Eighty-nine percent of consumers said they would rather purchase a product with 50 reviews and a 4.5-5 star rating versus 11 percent who said they would rather purchase a product with 200 reviews and below 3-star rating.

Eighty-two percent of consumers said that a product needs to have an average of 4 or 5 stars before they consider purchasing it. Fifteen percent of consumers said a product needs to have three stars before purchasing it, 2 percent said they only consider buying products rated 5 stars and, 1 percent said 1-2 stars is okay.

Sixty percent of consumers believe that the ideal review is between 3-4 sentences, while 23 percent like their reviews at least a sentence long, 10 percent look for a paragraph or more and 7 percent say a few words will suffice.

Over a third of respondents consider reviews with photos more credible than those without, with 66 percent saying they like to see the product in a real-life context and 47 percent saying the photos reassure them that the person who wrote the review is real.

Trusted reviews

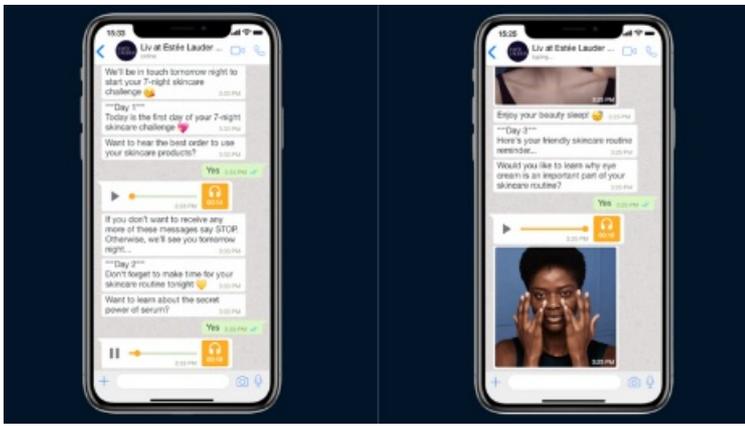
Consumers trust reviews based on disparate factors including relatability, demographics and more.

Seventy-one percent of respondents said they are looking for perspective from someone who has similar interests or needs as them, while 62 percent strongly agree that they are more likely to trust that a review is authentic when the reviewer shares their name, age, location or other information, versus when the review is anonymous.

Regardless of who pens the review and why, the role of reviews in the shopping landscape cannot be ignored.

Consumers are increasingly putting a great deal of importance on ratings and reviews. In another recent study from Bazaarvoice, 47 percent of consumers list product reviews as the top thing they want to see from a brand's website experience, and ratings and reviews are one of the most important factors influencing consumer's product discovery process at 47 percent, after 67 percent of consumers ranking price the most important factor ([see story](#)).

Technological features like chatbots, which can help connect consumers to reviews, can also be beneficial.



The Estée Lauder chatbot on WhatsApp. Image credit: Rehab Agency

According to a survey from cloud search technology program Lucidworks, more than half of consumers in the United States and United Kingdom say they use chatbots often or all the times when shopping online. However, consumers are actively seeking more fluent chatbots that can provide additional capabilities beyond service and support, including product recommendation and identification ([see story](#)).

Luxury brands can help generate positive reviews by continuing to reach out to their consumers and meeting them where they are, authentically.

"One of the best and most surefire ways to gain reviews is by simply asking for them," Mr. Nealon said. "Most shoppers don't organically leave a review unless they've had a negative experience, that's why it's important to be proactive and reach out to customers yourself."

"Shoppers with a positive experience are far more likely to share about it if asked," he said. "You can do this in a variety of ways by sending emails to your customers, asking them to review a product after they purchased it and more."