

A GUIDE TO BETTER RETAIL SALES

How Brands Can Use Reviews to Impact Sales in a Big Way



INTRODUCTION

How can any brand selling through retailers hope to compete in the crowded online environment of e-commerce, and make any discernible impact on sales? At times, it can feel like an insurmountable challenge filled with enterprise-level Goliaths standing in your way. Or, at the minimum, another task to add to an already overflowing to-do list.

There are, of course, traditional marketing methods to help address these issues like digital display advertising such as banner ads, search engine keyword buys, and the co-opting of social media, but these options have their own disadvantages and limitations for smaller sized businesses. Most of these options are either too time-consuming, budget-intensive, or just don't move the needle in a noticeable way.

Brand Edge is the most effective way for brands to drive channel sales through consumer reviews. Brand Edge makes it simple to collect consumer reviews and distribute them to retail e-commerce sites.

IF YOU CAN'T BE FOUND, YOU DON'T EXIST.

For any brand attempting to increase its online sales, it is imperative that consumers are able to discover their products. Brand Edge is able to do this by feeding search engines with the fresh and relevant content they crave, allowing consumers to find your brand when searching online.

With 60% of consumers beginning their shopper journey by using search engines to find the right product, ranking high within search results is paramount. Brand Edge can boost search ranking with little to no effort on the brand's part. Once reviews are collected and published to retailer sites, they automatically begin to positively impact a brand's SEO. Comparatively one could opt to buy search terms to boost search rankings, but keyword research and the creation of impactful marketing copy can be time consuming. Also competing with every other business that is bidding on similar in-demand keywords can be expensive, as high as \$60 per click² in some cases. Other options of raising awareness such as display advertising or the co-opting of social media often fall on deaf ears as consumers have now put on blinders to these forms of advertisements. Brand Edge provides a seamless and cost-effective option for businesses to be found by using ratings and reviews that requires minimal time and effort, and is virtually self-generating. This is great news for those marketing leaders wearing multiple hats within their organization.



TIME TO SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM THE HERD

Once found, how can a brand begin to build consideration for its products over the competition? Leveraging the true voice of consumers through reviews is one of the most efficient ways to build consideration due to the amount of trust shoppers put into authentic ratings and reviews.

According to a 2014 Nielsen study, **92% of shoppers** surveyed said they trust the opinions of people—even people they don't know—more than any other forms of advertising, such as digital display advertising. This trust is a powerful motivator that helps your brand build preference and funnel shoppers toward you. For instance, lets examine a common shopping scenario. While browsing on a retailer site, a consumer has narrowed their search down to two competing products. One product has 10 reviews averaging four stars, while the other has none. The product with review content will be inherently more credible and trusted because other consumers have used it and left their honest opinions. The product without reviews exists as an unknown quantity that introduces doubt into the mind of consumers. Simply having reviews associated with your product can be the differentiator that separates you from the competition, and sways a consumer one way or the other.

Reviews also impact broader initial searches within a retailer site by way of sorting filters such as "highest rated product" or "most reviewed product". With all the choices consumers have today, they depend on these qualifiers to cut through the clutter. Analysis of a major pet supply retailer site revealed that the "top rated product" category consistently outperformed others. So from the onset, ratings and reviews can help ensure that your brand is included in initial consideration on through to the final purchase decision.

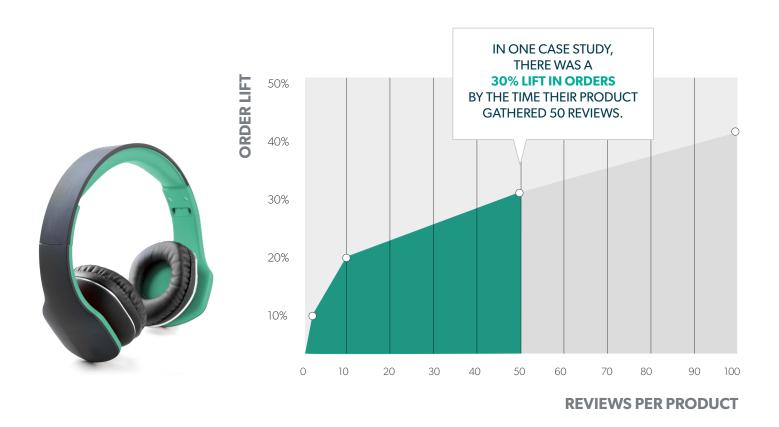


WHEN IT COMES TO SALES, MORE IS MORE.

The more ratings and reviews your brand can collect on its products, the more results you will see.

Ratings and reviews give consumers the confidence to purchase. It is often the last thing a shopper reads before making a purchase decision, making it the perfect opportunity for your brand to influence shoppers. Even a single review has an impact and can produce a 10% lift in sales conversion. As you add more ratings and reviews, you can see your brand's sales multiply. Other tactics such as social media marketing fall far short of this ROI. A recent study highlighted that only 37% of marketers³ feel like they can measure the results of their social media marketing strategy, and another 28% admit they do not even know how to measure its impact.

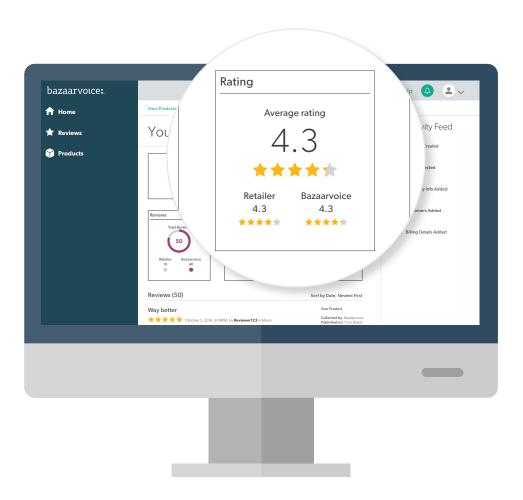
Not only do reviews impact online sales, but they impact in-store sales as well. 39% of in-store buyers read online reviews before purchase, ⁴ and <u>75% of store shoppers</u> use their mobile devices while shopping in stores. ⁵ So while Brand Edge is a predominantly focused on e-commerce and online purchases, its influence extends into the brick-and-mortar shopping experience.



A FOUR-STAR REVIEW IS THE SECRET TO A FIVE-STAR PRODUCT.

Ratings and reviews not only serve as a driver of sales and influence with consumers, but also are an invaluable source of insights that can help businesses to improve their products and marketing strategy. The content within product reviews operates like an always-on 24/7 focus group, made up of real consumers. Being able to see how your customers perceive a particular product and dive into why they gave a product a certain rating allows a brand to measure and track its overall brand health over time.

Understand how people buy, the qualities they value most, and how your brand can be better. Through insights from reviews, you'll create more targeted advertising, nurture advocates, make better products, and boost sales.



CONCLUSION

People love to talk about what they buy, and when they do this influences other shoppers to purchase. Brand Edge captures these conversations and allows your brand to share them with in-market consumers through retailer partner sites where they're proven to increase sales, decrease product returns, and build trust in your brand.

Because brands that sell through retailers have fewer direct conversations with consumers, building relationships can be challenging, but it is more critical than ever. Brand Edge enables businesses to engage directly with consumers in a way that was never possible before.

To find out how easy it is to start collecting and distributing product reviews with Brand Edge,

visit brandedge.bazaarvoice.com

RESOURCES

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ABOUT BAZAARVOICE

Bazaarvoice helps brands and retailers find and reach consumers, and win them with the content they trust. Each month in the Bazaarvoice Network, more than one-half billion consumers view and share authentic consumer-generated content (CGC), including ratings and reviews as well as curated visual content across 5,000 brand and retail websites. This visibility into shopper behavior allows Bazaarvoice to capture unique first-party data and insights that enable our targeted advertising and personalization solutions.

Headquartered in Austin, Texas, Bazaarvoice has offices across North America and Europe. For more information, visit **www.bazaarvoice.com**.

