

**“A must-read for any website executive
looking to gain a serious advantage.”**

DR. ROBERT CIALDINI AND BAS WOUTERS - THE CIALDINI INSTITUTE



REPUTATION

KING

HOW TO BECOME
**THE MOST TRUSTED
ONLINE BRAND**
IN YOUR INDUSTRY

SCOTT BRANDLEY ★ DJ SPRAGUE

Reputation King – How to Become the Most Trusted
Online Brand in Your Industry

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For more information on Reputation King, and/or the additional bonus content provided as a companion to this book, please visit reputationking.com/bonus

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WHAT THE EXPERTS ARE SAYING



Reputation management meets social proof and authority – a must-read for any website executive looking to gain a serious advantage.



Dr. Robert Cialdini and Bas Wouters, Authors, Speakers, and Co-founders of The Cialdini Institute.

Reputation King is a must-read for ecommerce professionals, offering a deep dive into the nuances of online reputation management. The book provides a sophisticated blend of theory and case studies, showcasing the pivotal role of online reviews in shaping brand perception. A comprehensive guide, meticulously structured to help industry leaders harness the power of consumer feedback for business growth.



Martin Greif, Author of *True Connections*, Speaker, and President of SiteTuners.

“

*Reputation King by Scott Brandley and DJ Sprague is **a must-read for anyone in ecommerce.** It masterfully guides readers through the crucial steps of building and maintaining a trusted online brand.*



Roger Dooley, Digital Marketing Expert, Author of *Friction* and *Brainfluence*, Forbes Columnist - Brainy Marketing.

*This book sets the stage for why building trust with your prospects is critical, and it provides some clear and innovative strategies to build it. **For any marketer struggling to get or convert traffic to your online presence, this book should be on your “must-read” list this year!***



Natalie Henley, Speaker, Owner of Volume Nine Digital Marketing Agency.

”



*If you're an ecommerce executive, then add **Reputation King** to your shopping cart. This is the right book to help you manage, optimize, and leverage your online reputation right now. Scott Brandley and DJ Sprague have the experience and expertise to know exactly what works to maximize trust, authority, and online visibility.*



Greg Jarboe, Co-founder of SEO-PR, Co-author of *Digital Marketing Fundamentals*, and Contributor to Search Engine Journal and Search Engine Watch.

*In **Reputation King**, Scott and DJ unlock the secrets to becoming one of the most trusted brands online, by revealing powerful reputation-enhancing strategies. Packed with compelling stories, eye-opening stats, and real-world examples, this book is your roadmap to building a top-tier brand that customers can't help but rave about. **If you're serious about boosting conversions, attracting high-quality leads, and building lasting loyalty, this is the only guide you need.***



Kaushal Thakkar, Founder & Managing Director of Infidigit, Forbes Author, and Podcaster.



“

*The explosion of artificial intelligence-powered new media channels means everyone can be a (potentially loud) public voice, sharing what they love and hate about everything they consume. **Scott and DJ expertly guide you through the opportunities and risks inherent with online reputation, offering strategies that ensure your company's products are seen in a positive light.***



David Meerman Scott, Marketing Strategist, and Bestselling Author of 13 books Including *The New Rules of Marketing and PR*.

This book unveils the hidden truth about the review industry, exposing both the benevolent forces promoting genuine customer feedback and the manipulative players behind fake reviews and online extortion. It's not just about collecting more reviews; it's about wielding them strategically to build trust, gain customer insights, and achieve lasting success in ecommerce.



Mitchell Levy, Global Credibility Expert, Serial Silicon Valley Entrepreneur, Author of 60 books, including *Credibility Nation*.

”



*Reputation King is a must-read for any ecommerce leader looking to elevate their online presence. **Sprague and Brandley masterfully combine behavioral science with practical digital strategies**, offering a comprehensive roadmap to build trust, influence, and a resilient brand in today's competitive market.*



Michael Brenner, CEO of the Marketing Insider Group, Author of *Mean People Suck* and *The Content Formula*, and Forbes Top CMO Influencer.

*That classic New Yorker cartoon: “On the Internet, nobody knows you’re a dog” is out of date. Today, everybody can tell if you’re a dog, a skunk, a snake, or a wolf in sheep’s clothing. **Want to know how to create a trusted reputation online? Brandley and Sprague have you covered.***



Jim Sterne, Founder of the Marketing Analytics Summit, and Co-founder of the Digital Analytics Association. Speaker and Author of over 12 Books.



“

*As a Traffic expert, I'm always on the lookout for groundbreaking strategies. Reputation King delivered just that, showing how a positive online presence can supercharge your ads and drive meaningful traffic. **An enlightening read I highly recommend!***



Kasim Aslam, CEO of Solutions 8, Speaker, Author of *The 7 Critical Principles of Effective Digital Marketing*, and *You vs. Google*.

*Your online reputation is essential to your search and marketing strategy. **Don't miss the opportunities in this book to leapfrog your competition** with organic visibility, amplified by authentic social proof that Google and customers love!*



Dale Bertrand, MS, SEO and AI Expert and Consultant, President of Fire&Spark, and Global AI Speaker.

”

“

*Reputation King is an essential guide for navigating the complexities of online reputation management. **This book not only offers compelling evidence but also provides a comprehensive process for building and maintaining a trustworthy presence, both online and offline.***



Douglas Karr, Author of *Corporate Blogging for Dummies*, Speaker, Podcaster, and Publisher of Martech Zone.

*Reputation King is an insightful guide for ecommerce and SaaS professionals, offering effective strategies for building and managing a strong online reputation. **A must-read for businesses aiming to excel in the digital marketplace.***



Scott Baradell, CEO of the Idea Grove Agency and Author of *Trust Signals: Brand Building in a Post-Truth World*.

”



Reputation King is a fantastic roadmap to better master the art of online reputation and search management. Scott & DJ have done a remarkable job of capturing relevant behavioral design principles and presenting takeaways that empower marketers to navigate and win inside today's digital landscape.



Eric Dahl, Marketing Strategist, EricDahl.io and Partner, DavisDahl.com.

Reputation King excels in delivering practical, actionable advice, complemented by real-world examples from the battlefield. A must-read for those aiming to grow their online presence and become the most trusted online brand in their industry.



Matthew Capala, MBA, Author of *The Psychology of a Website*, and Founder of Alphametic.





*Reputation King illuminates the often-overlooked power of online reputation and social proof with clarity and depth. This book is not just about the mindset; it's a treasure trove of tactical insights for practical application. **If you want to position your website for success, this book is a no-brainer.***



Ryan Levander, Owner and Head of Analytics and Optimization at Rednavel Consulting, Certified Behavioral Design Coach, and SEO Specialist.

Online reviews can make or break your business. Reputation King shows you how to get a lot of them quickly and salvage a damaged reputation on review platforms. Absolutely essential reading for any online business!



John Weiler, Author of *Instant Credibility Online*, *Reinvent Your Business Online*, and *The Website Homepage Blueprint*.



“

*In today's digital world “Online Reputation” is more important than ever. Unfortunately simply “doing the right thing” is not enough anymore. You must commit to a calculated strategy to protect and elevate your personal or brand's reputation. **Reputation King provides a comprehensive strategy based on facts and years of industry experience.***



Marc Hardgrove, CEO of Next Net Media, THE HOTH, Authority Builders, LinkBuilder.io, and Copymatic.

*Social proof fuels decision-making shortcuts. Ratings, reviews, and reputation fuel social proof. Discover how to maximize each in this powerful, practical guidebook—and **gain the advantages that await you.***



Nancy Harhut, Chief Creative Officer of HBT Marketing, and Author of *Using Behavioral Science in Marketing*.

”



*One of the most overlooked aspects of marketing an ecommerce brand is the reputation of the brand and founder. It creates a whole new marketing channel that produces scalable sales. **Reputation King is a FANTASTIC resource** that shows you exactly how to do this, and having watched many brands being built, I can attest that these authors lay out the right way to do it.*



AJ Wilcox, Host of the LinkedIn Ads Show Podcast, Founder b2linked.com, Speaker, and LinkedIn Ads Coach/Trainer.

***Your Reputation is critical—not just for conversion, but for getting the customer to click in the first place.** Sprague and Brandley do a terrific job at showing all the places where your reputation can surface to customers, as well as a deep dive into the issues regarding open vs. verified review platforms.*



Michael Cottam, SEO Consultant, and Founder of RealtyRemotely.com.





*Verified Reviews have had a massive impact on click-through rates and conversion rates for our clients across many verticals. Scott and DJ do an excellent job laying out the data, the options available, and the reasons why every business owner and marketing manager **MUST** focus on their online reviews.*



John Horn, CEO of Stubgroup, Digital Marketing Expert, and Podcaster.

*In this age where most purchase journeys begin online, what a potential customer finds in that first blink of an eye is critical. **Reputation King** is a terrific roadmap for curating that moment that matters and ensuring that what a customer finds online is not unmanaged or left to chance.*



Eric Schulz, MBA, Marketing Executive for Proctor & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and Disney, Author of *Marketing in the Digital Age*.





I finally comprehend the world of online reviews and a lot more even though I have been a digital marketer for over 2 decades! The ramifications of your online reputation are clearly explained. Sales results, financial performance, SEO, and advertising metrics are influenced by the online reputation of a company. This clearly written book is a must-have resource!



Loren Plect, MBA, President of Abecta Marketing, LLC, and Abecta Furniture.

*Reputation King offers excellent insights and strategies for building and maintaining your digital reputation. It's practical, covering trust systems, how they work, and strategies for building your reputation. Most importantly, you'll learn how to avoid accidentally trashing your reputation. **The mix of popular psychology strategies with real-world tactics makes this a practical book on the most central factor in behavior change.***



Brian Cugelman, PhD, Senior Behavioral Scientist, Professor, and Founder of The Behavioral Design Academy.





Reputation King reveals deep insights for building the next generation of leading brands online. A top resource for online marketers.



Derrick Daye, MBA, Brand Strategist, Founder of Branding Strategy Insider, the Blake Project, Speaker, and Consultant.

*As someone who has been in traffic generation for over 20 years there are not many books that feel original - and yet familiar - like “Don’t Make Me Think”, “Made to Stick”, “Influence”, and “Good to Great”, yet DJ Sprague and Scott Brandley’s book “**Reputation King**” manages a great balance of “what we know” and “what we should do” to provide valuable information and insights on the importance of reputation and brand that deserves to be on every marketer’s bookshelf.*



Grant Simmons, Author, Speaker, and Experienced SEO Strategist for Challenger Brands, Fortune 500 Enterprises, and Silicon Valley Startups.





*Reputation King is an up-to-date, comprehensive, and practical guide to optimizing “social proof” leveraging both on-site and off-site tactics. **A must-read for ecommerce leaders looking to “own” their brand reputation online.***



Linda Bustos, Ecommerce Expert, and Founder at Ecom Ideas.

*Wisdom is the application of knowledge, and in Reputation King, DJ Sprague and Scott Brandley share deep wisdom with readers. They clearly show how the application of Cialdini’s principles of ethical influence can do wonders for your organization’s online presence and reputation. **This is a must read for anyone transacting business online.***



Brian Ahearn, CMCT, Chief Influence Officer at Influence People, and Faculty Member of The Cialdini Institute.





A practical manual for everyone interested in their online reputation. Highly recommended. Reputation King is packed with insights, case studies, examples, and recommendations, Within this book, you will find strategies to overcome negative reviews on open review sites without paying their ransom and methods to capture positive reviews from verified customers to build online trust and improve your search engine rankings and revenues.



Mark Gibson, Sales and Marketing Scale-up Consultant.

If you don't have a proactive strategy for managing your brand's reputation you're playing Russian roulette with your business. DJ Sprague and Scott Brandley are the top guys I know in the space who get it when it comes to creating a killer reputation for your brand online.



Jason Fladlien, Author of *One to Many*, the Best-Selling Book on Webinars.





*Branded search is such an important asset for any brand, and unfortunately most often an overlooked one. Consumers check any brand or product before taking an action which means that organic search is a crucial part of most buyer journeys. **This book does an incredibly good job of educating business owners on how to take control of and improve their online reputation. It is definitely a must-read for any business executive.***



Ann Smarty, Co-founder of Smarty.Marketing, Speaker, and SEO Columnist.

*Reputation King by DJ Sprague and Scott Brandley is **an essential step-by-step practical “boot camp”** for building and armoring your business’ online reputation to thrive in the sink-or-swim, bare knuckle, kill or be killed, fight club of both Google and Bing organic search and the hairy world of Online Reviews.*



Chris Abraham, CEO, Gerris Corp, SEO, and Online Reputation Management (ORM) Expert.



FOREWORD

“Transform your business, captivate your customers, and lead your market. The journey begins here.”



Bas Wouters, International Bestselling Author of *Online Influence*, and Co-founder & CEO of The Cialdini Institute.

Imagine making one change to your website and having it instantly skyrocket your leads by 34.3% and boost your revenue by \$3.1 million. This isn't just a dream. These are the results my company actually experienced by applying just a single strategy taught in this book.

Today's business landscape is fiercely competitive, and the secret to standing out lies in mastering the science of ethically influencing customers, both on your website and in search engines.

While many businesses continually struggle in the dark, a select few have learned how to unlock the power of influence to generate a treasure trove of traffic and sales, but they tend to closely guard what they know in order to maintain their competitive advantage.

However, occasionally you'll find people like Scott and DJ, who truly understand Behavioral Science and are on the front lines every day, testing, executing, and implementing cutting-edge strategies and tools on a massive scale across thousands of websites.

They are not just practitioners, but pioneers in online reputation management; bringing their clients out of the darkness and helping them to shine in the crowded spaces of Google and Bing.

In fact, it was their relentless pursuit to help their clients stand out that ultimately caused our paths to cross in the summer of 2022.

Back in 2020, I published my bestselling book *Online Influence*, where I unveiled the secrets of designing online behavior by crafting the perfect prompt, enhancing ability, and turbocharging motivation at crucial moments online to maximize sales.

After reading it, they reached out to me and we quickly became friends. There was no doubt that our life's missions were very closely aligned.

Then in 2023, I became business partners with Dr. Robert Cialdini, New York Times bestselling author of the book, *Influence*. In his book he teaches the seven universal principles of persuasion, and how they can be ethically used to help grow and scale businesses.

In Dr. Cialdini's other masterpiece, *Pre-Suasion*, he reveals how preparing your audience to be receptive before they encounter

your message can also be a game-changer. In the digital realm, this translates to creating search results so compelling that they build trust and persuade consumers into buying before they even visit your website.

Scott and DJ were huge fans of Dr. Cialdini and had been implementing his teachings and principles for years prior to us ever meeting, so you can imagine both their shock and delight when I told them that not only were Dr. Cialdini and I good friends, but we had become business partners. Since then, they have joined our world-class team of experts at the Cialdini Institute and have created a certification course in Online Reputation Management that complements and expands on the teachings found in this book.

The reason I tell you all of this is because there are very few people who truly understand the psychology behind persuading consumers to buy online, who also have the ability to execute these techniques and strategies in the real world at scale.

Scott and DJ are two of these incredibly rare individuals.

If you're in ecommerce, consider this book not just recommended but essential reading. Your brand's reputation is your identity in the digital world. This book doesn't just teach you how to manage it; it redefines the very essence of effective online reputation management in the digital age.

Transform your business, captivate your customers, and lead your market. The journey begins here.

INTRODUCTION

“Companies can no longer hide behind a veneer of shiny branding campaigns, because customers are one Google search away from the truth.”

–Chris Brogan & Julian Smith, Trust Agents

Scott recently woke up in a hotel room on a cool spring day in New York City. He was scheduled to give a keynote at a conference for ecommerce and SaaS founders that morning.

He left his hotel and started walking the few blocks to the conference when he unexpectedly found himself right in the center of Times Square, where Broadway, 7th Avenue, and 45th Street all converge. It was as if the world stopped and he was in the middle of it, completely mesmerized by the incredible scale of it all. The view was breathtaking, with massive skyscrapers surrounding him as far as he could see in every direction! It was a testament to the ingenuity and magnificence of what people can truly accomplish when they have a vision.

There was no doubt that the architects for each building had honed their craft. They spent decades studying, researching, and analyzing every detail of their creation, from the concrete foundation to the penthouse suite. And they dedicated their lives to building a legacy that would stand the test of time.

So, here's the million-dollar question.

As one of the architects in your business, what is the legacy that you're currently building? And what steps are you taking to ensure that it lasts?

If you don't quite know how to answer these questions, here's where we can help.

While we don't know much about building architecture, we do know a lot about how to help your company build an outstanding online reputation and become a highly trusted, leading brand that can stand the test of time.

In fact, we wrote this book specifically for ecommerce and SaaS CEOs, executives, managers, and marketers who are serious about:

- Improving and expanding their company's online reputation
- Increasing their brand and product visibility in search results
- Getting significantly more free and paid website traffic, and
- Boosting their online conversion and sales to record levels

If these are important areas in your business that you need help with, then there are 4 things you need to know:

1. **This is the right book, right now.** As two of the foremost experts on reputation management strategies and behavioral science, we specialize in helping ecommerce brands to

effectively manage, optimize, and leverage their reputation to maximize their trust, authority, and online visibility.

We know exactly what works because we, together with our amazing team, run and operate one of the oldest, largest, and most trusted online reputation companies in the world, Shopper Approved. We are literally in the trenches every day, working with thousands of ecommerce companies—from startups to billion-dollar brands—helping them to actively improve and enhance their online reputation.

2. **Everything is backed by research.** In addition to our decades of hands-on reputation experience, the strategies contained in this book are backed by Google’s own extensive research. They are also heavily influenced by the works of world-renowned behavioral scientists and thought leaders, including Dr. Robert Cialdini, Dr. BJ Fogg, Dr. Daniel Kahneman, Bas Wouters, Alex Hormozi, and Marcus Sheridan. And they are supported by dozens of relevant statistics and research studies conducted by some of the top industry leaders, universities, and subject matter experts, including Harvard, Edelman, PwC, McKinsey, Niel Patel, Forbes, Deloitte, Forrester, and more.
3. **Traditional reputation management strategies are becoming outdated.** Strategies like public relations, press releases, social media curation, and unfavorable content suppression and removal are not nearly as effective or relevant as they used to be.

In today's digital world, there are only a handful of online reputation strategies that are consistently proven to really move the needle. If you know what these strategies are and how to use them, the impact is so significant that everything else pales in comparison.

Here, we only talk about the reputation factors that we believe to have the highest likelihood of impacting your customer's decision-making process in search, and on your website, with the least amount of time and effort.

- 4. We're here to help you succeed.** We know that your time is valuable, so we've done our best to condense everything we know from over 40 years of combined knowledge and experience into a highly entertaining and educational read that you can knock out in one sitting.

We've also added 91 helpful diagrams and screenshots of real-world examples, along with extra bonus content and exclusive video discussions of each chapter to help show you exactly what success looks like, so that you can share it with your team.

We truly believe that this book contains some of the most important, actionable steps you need to know to significantly improve your company's reputation, visibility, traffic, and sales—helping you to create a lasting legacy and establish your brand as the Reputation King in your industry.

Let's begin.

1

YOUR REPUTATION IS KILLING YOU!

“Your first goal is to establish credibility and trust.”

–Steve Krug, Don’t Make Me Think

When it comes to ecommerce success, your reputation is one of your most valuable assets.

In many ways, it’s like a two-edged sword. Respect and nurture it and it can bring you incredible wealth and success. But ignore or neglect it, and it can quickly destroy everything you’ve created.

Ultimately, there are 3 reputation problems most ecommerce companies face that, if left unresolved, can have significant consequences.

Problem 1: They Unknowingly Allow Bad Actors to Manage Their Reputation

With technology and social proof replacing traditional word-of-mouth, consumers rely heavily on your online reputation when deciding whether to buy from you.

In a perfect world, your online reputation would be a direct and honest reflection of your business, making it easy for customers to trust you.

But unfortunately, in the real world this is not the case.

In the real world, your reputation is a commodity, and there are dozens of highly influential websites—from which hundreds of millions of consumers get advice—that are highly motivated to damage and even destroy your online reputation for their own financial gain.

Not only that, but the larger and more successful your company becomes, the more these websites work against you.

Most businesses just don't understand how they can have a bad reputation when they've tried so hard to do things right.

And unfortunately, most businesses don't realize the extent that these websites are actually hurting their reputation, and don't know how to fight back even if they do; so they often find themselves feeling incredibly frustrated. In their minds they've

invested years of hard work and effort, and have poured their hearts and souls into building and running a good, honest company. They just don't understand how they can have a bad reputation when they've tried so hard to do things right.

And, because everything online is so visible and public, a bad reputation, if unremedied, can lead to a variety of unexpected challenges and business problems, including:

- Lower employee morale
- Lower customer loyalty
- Higher pay-per-click (PPC) costs
- Lower click-through rates
- Lower organic search results
- Lower website conversion rates
- Lower average order value (AOV)
- High customer acquisition costs (CAC)
- Low customer lifetime value (LTV)
- Lower customer satisfaction
- Higher return rates, and
- Lower overall sales

And to add further insult to injury, a bad reputation can also have negative repercussions for investors and shareholders, along with lower market valuations and higher costs of capital. ¹

Problem 2: They Don't Know How to Fully Leverage Their Reputation in Search

Let's talk about Google for a minute.

If you want to have a thriving business online, not only do you need a great reputation, but you also need to show up prominently in search results so that potential customers can find you.

The importance of search visibility is supported by the largest study on brand trust of its kind. A global survey of 16,000 adults found that “search engines rank as the single most trusted online source for consumers.” ²

In other words, consumers trust search engines to display the most trusted content and relevant answers to their questions at the top of the search results. And if Google doesn't trust it, then neither do they.

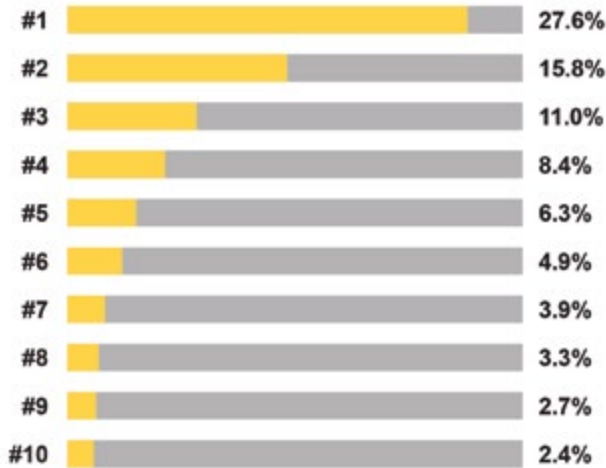
1 “Reputation and Its Risks.” Harvard Business Review, 1 Aug. 2014, hbr.org/2007/02/reputation-and-its-risks.

2 “Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: In Brands We Trust?” Edelman, www.edelman.com/research/trust-barometer-special-report-in-brands-we-trust.

If you don't show up on the top half of page one, you've lost before even getting started.

It's not surprising, then, that nearly 70% of all internet traffic goes to the top five organic listings on the first page of a Google search, with the number one listing getting over ten times more traffic than the number ten listing.³ This means that if you don't show up on the top half of page one, you've lost before even getting started.

GOOGLE ORGANIC CLICK-THROUGH-RATE BREAKDOWN BY POSITION



CTR breakdown based on ~4 million search results.

Source: Backlinko

³ "We Analyzed 4 million Google Search Results. Here's What We Learned about Organic CTR." Backlinko, 28 May 2023, backlinko.com/google-ctr-stats.

This is why, according to Marketing Sherpa, companies with an average of \$1 million in revenue spend 81% of their marketing budget on SEO and PPC, and larger brands with \$100 million in average revenue spend more than 39% of their entire marketing budget on SEO and PPC. ⁴

This amounts to investing anywhere from several thousand to several million dollars per month in organic (SEO) and paid (PPC) traffic strategies, depending on the size of the company, because ranking at the top of search is that important.

Think of it this way...The top search results for a question, solution, category, or product create top of mind awareness, familiarity, and trust at the moment of truth.

With so much time and money being dedicated to SEO and PPC, it begs the question, “How does your reputation impact the effectiveness of these efforts?”

“Is it even worth investing time and money into SEO and PPC if you have a bad reputation?”

It’s an interesting dichotomy.

On the one hand, if you’re in this situation then you’re probably aware that you have a reputation problem that negatively impacts consumer trust; but on the other hand, you need more traffic and conversions for your business to survive, so what can you do?

⁴ “How Much Should I Budget for Ecommerce, SEO and PPC?” Smart Insights, 4 Nov. 2016, www.smartinsights.com/managing-digital-marketing/planning-budgeting/much-budget-ecommerce-seo-ppc/.

It's like trying to chop down a big tree with a blunt axe. You can do it, but it's going to be really painful and take a lot of additional time and effort. However, if you first sharpen your axe—or in this case, focus on improving your reputation—your hard work and effort are much more productive and profitable.

Fortunately, there are several highly effective, low cost, and easy strategies that can greatly improve your online reputation while simultaneously amplifying and enhancing your SEO and PPC efforts. Even better, you'll generate a significant amount of trust, authority, and additional traffic and sales.

We're going to be sharing these strategies with you, but before we do that, there's a third reputation problem that we need to address...

Problem 3: They Don't Know How to Fully Leverage Their Reputation on Their Website

When managed properly, your reputation should naturally and seamlessly extend beyond the visitor's search results and onto your site.

Unfortunately, this is something that many companies tend to overlook.

It's very important to display specific types of reputation-based trust signals and content throughout your site in ways that naturally motivate and encourage visitors to move towards the checkout page.

The trick is knowing what to display, and where and how to display it to establish the trust necessary to convert as many of your visitors as possible into happy, paying customers.

As you can imagine, this is an ongoing process, requiring various aspects of behavioral design and psychology, along with continual experimentation and testing. But over the years, we've been able to research, assemble, and test several highly compelling trust signals that apply to virtually every ecommerce website in one way or another.

The 3 Goals of This Book

Now that you understand the main reputation problems that most businesses face online, here are three ways this book can help you resolve them:

- 1. We teach you how to take back control of your reputation and build an amazing online presence in the process.**
- 2. We show you how to leverage your reputation in Google and Bing to get the most brand visibility, authority, trust, and search traffic possible.**
- 3. We show you how to leverage your reputation on your website to generate higher conversion rates and more revenue.**

If you truly embrace and implement the proven principles and concepts that we share in this book, your company will join the

ranks of the Reputation Kings: scrappy innovators and savvy business owners and executives who know how to improve, manage, and leverage their reputation to become the most trusted and profitable online brand in their industry.

**EXCLUSIVE
BONUS CONTENT**

At the end of each chapter, we include a link to additional bonus content, full color images, and exclusive videos where we discuss each chapter in detail. **Scan the QR Code or go to:**
reputationking.com/bonus



2

SOCIAL PROOF AND THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL

“Your goal is to achieve brand trust.

*Brand exposure is meaningless without trust. Without trust,
nothing else you can do with your marketing budget matters.”*

–Scott Baradell, Trust Signals

Social Proof is Your Reputation Leverage Point

If your reputation is the foundation for your online success, then ratings and reviews are surely the bedrock of your reputation.

In fact, ratings and reviews are one of the most powerful drivers of consumer behavior and decision making online, and have been discussed, evaluated, and proven in countless books, articles, and studies over the years.

Two of our favorites include Dr. Robert Cialdini's book *Influence, The Psychology of Persuasion*, and Google's ebook *Decoding Decisions - Making Sense of the Messy Middle*. These two resources provide fascinating insights into how and why people buy, while effectively demonstrating the incredible amount of leverage that ratings and reviews have on the decision-making process.

In his first edition of *Influence* back in 1984, Dr. Cialdini famously coined the phrase "social proof" as one of the main types of persuasion. By definition, social proof is a phenomenon where people tend to copy the actions of others, especially groups, when unsure of how to act in a certain situation. In today's digital world, social proof has become virtually synonymous with online ratings and reviews, because they are used so extensively, and give consumers the ability to make decisions based on the actions of previous buyers.

In *Decoding Decisions*, Google refers to ratings and reviews as "the gold standard of social proof." In their ebook, they conduct a massive social experiment with real in-market shoppers simulating 310,000 purchases, where they created 31 fake products across 31 different categories, put them up against 31 well known and liked products, and then tried to get people to switch using different behavioral science and persuasion strategies. Out of the 6 different strategies tested, they found ratings and reviews to be the most powerful factor in influencing consumers to switch to the fake products, "having either the

largest or second largest effect in 28 of the 31 categories” tested.⁵

In 2021, Power Reviews found similar results when they surveyed 6,538 consumers throughout the United States and discovered that:⁶

- 98% said that reviews were an essential resource when making purchase decisions (compared to 89% in 2018).
- When stack-ranked against other high-impact decision factors, ratings and reviews took the #1 spot—beating out price, free shipping, brand recognition, and even personal recommendations from family and friends.

One of the main reasons for this is because reviews very closely mimic word-of-mouth advertising. As humans, we’re much more likely to believe what other people say about a company or product—especially if we have no personal experience with the brand.

Another reason for this is that ratings and reviews are a universally recognized form of trust currency, because they can be so easily found, measured, quantified, and compared to other similar businesses or products. This allows consumers to shortcut their decision-making process to make quick, reliable decisions with minimal risk and without a lot of effort.

⁵ Decoding Decisions - Think with Google, www.thinkwithgoogle.com/_qs/documents/9998/Decoding_Decisions_The_Messy_Middle_of_Purchase_Behavior.pdf.

⁶ Team, PowerReviews. “Survey: The Ever-Growing Power of Reviews.” PowerReviews, 12 Nov. 2022, www.powerreviews.com/insights/power-of-reviews-survey-2021/.

System 1 and System 2

Dr. Daniel Kahneman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics and author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, attributes this rating and review shortcut to what he has identified as “System 1” thinking.

He states that our brain’s decision-making process is made up of two different systems: System 1 and System 2.

System 1 decisions tend to be fast and make up the bulk of our daily choices (about 95–98%), whereas System 2 decisions tend to be much slower because they require a lot more time, thought, evaluation, and consideration.

One of the huge benefits of ratings and reviews is that they allow us to turn what would normally be long and difficult System 2 decisions into fast and easy System 1 decisions, which becomes increasingly more efficient and economical, saving us time and energy as our busy lives become more and more hectic.

Really, you can thank companies like the Better Business Bureau, eBay, Amazon, Yelp, Tripadvisor, and Google for this System 1 dependency. Over the years, each of these companies has played a progressive role in teaching us to rely more and more on social proof to make ever faster and easier decisions.

Nowadays, virtually every major search engine and online retailer has embraced reviews. And while they have helped consumers to make better choices, in many ways they have also

become a real challenge for business owners—especially when it comes to trying to effectively manage their reputation.

This is primarily due to the proliferation of open review platforms, and a dirty little secret we call “Open Review Syndrome.”

Open Review Syndrome

Most people don’t realize it, but there are two types of review platforms online: open review platforms and verified review platforms.

Open review platforms are just what they sound like—they are open to virtually anyone who wants to leave a review about any business online, regardless of whether that person is an actual customer (unverified), and regardless of whether they were asked to leave a review (uninvited).

In theory, giving everyone a voice sounds like a great idea, but in practice it’s one of the worst ideas ever.

First, it makes open review platforms highly vulnerable to manipulation and fraud. For example, in 2022 alone:

- Trustpilot removed 2.7 million fake reviews (nearly 6% of their annual total)⁷

⁷ Trustpilot Transparency Report 2022, cdn.trustpilot.net/trustsite-consumersite/trustpilot-transparency-report-2022.pdf.

- Tripadvisor removed 1.3 million fake reviews (4.3% of their annual total) ⁸, and
- Amazon (which also allows open reviews) reportedly blocked over 200 million fake reviews! ⁹

Now, these numbers on their own are very concerning, but with the meteoric rise of AI, this problem will only get worse and much harder to detect in the future.

Second, open reviews negatively skew the true reputation of virtually every company online. Why every company? Because open review platforms actively create profile pages of every website they can find. Their goal is to show up in search results for each company and get people to visit their open review platform and leave uninvited reviews for those companies.

Through our own research of evaluating over 20,105 passive reviews across ten highly trusted household brands, we were able to determine that, on average, open review platforms passively collect 1 positive review for every 10 negative reviews—confirming that upset customers are much more likely to actively

⁸ Transparency Report 2023, www.tripadvisor.com/TransparencyReport2023.

⁹ “Amazon’s Latest Actions against Fake Review Brokers: 2 Fraudsters Found Guilty of Facilitating Fake Reviews in Amazon’s Store.” US About Amazon, 28 June 2023, www.aboutamazon.com/news/policy-news-views/amazons-latest-actions-against-fake-review-brokers#.

search out a platform where they can leave a bad review than happy customers are to leave a good review.¹⁰

Every open review platform that exists is engineered to continually break down and destroy your online reputation

What this really means—and this is very serious—is that every open review platform that exists is engineered to continually break down and destroy your online reputation, and no matter how good your company is or how hard you try to do what’s right, the game is always rigged for you to lose.

We call this Open Review Syndrome, and it directly affects every online business, big or small.

The reality is that, whether you like it or not, every single day for the rest of your life, your upset customers have an open invitation to degrade, deride, and disparage your company in an attempt to damage the brand you’ve worked so hard to build—and every single day, open review platforms are providing them with the public stages and megaphones to do it.

But that’s not even the worst part.

¹⁰ Based on Trustpilot data over a 12 month span from August 1, 2022, to July 31, 2023, and Sitejabber data over a 12 month span from September 23, 2022, to Sept 22, 2023, for the following national brands: Nike, Lowes, Best Buy, Verizon, Walmart, Amazon, HP, Netflix, Home Depot, and AT&T. The total number of 1-star reviews totaled 1,881, and the total number of 5-star reviews totaled 18,224, creating a 10 to 1 ratio (rounded to whole numbers).

You see, open review platforms know that the game is rigged. In fact, their entire business model depends on you getting bad reviews. They know that if you get bad reviews and they publicly display those reviews in Google, that you're going to do almost anything to make them go away. And surprisingly, they are more than happy to help you do that...for a price.

This is when they come in and “make you an offer you can't refuse.”

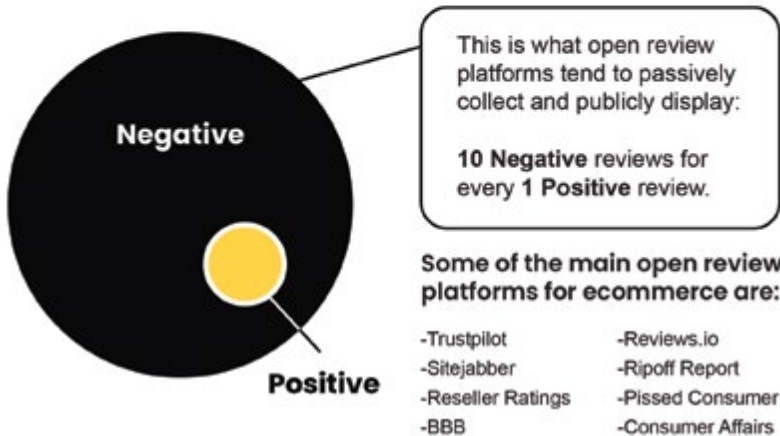
You think we're joking, but we're not. Open Review Syndrome is real, and it affects every ecommerce business, both big and small.

Third, because open reviews negatively skew the perception of every online brand, they cause each consumer that reads reviews on open platforms to unknowingly make buying decisions that are often inaccurate or misleading, to the point where those consumers start to trust the skewed reviews more than the actual truth!

Now, just to be clear, we are not saying that consumers having a bad experience should be silenced or suppressed. Not at all. The consumers are not the problem here; the problem is how open platforms are choosing to collect and publicly display unverified reviews.

VERIFIED VS OPEN REVIEW PLATFORMS

Every open review platform is in the business of damaging your reputation. They make money when you lose. Your true reputation is invisible unless you actively collect reviews with a verified review platform.



Open review platforms generate 10 negative reviews for every 1 positive review

By focusing on just the tiny fraction of your entire customer base that's had a bad experience and displaying their reviews as if they're an accurate representation of your brand's overall reputation, open review platforms deceptively make it appear to the public that you are a horrible, uncaring, unreliable company who can't be trusted.

If they wanted to do the right thing, they would add a big disclaimer right next to your reviews stating that the ratings and reviews on their website are not an accurate representation of your brand, but then they would lose all the perceived

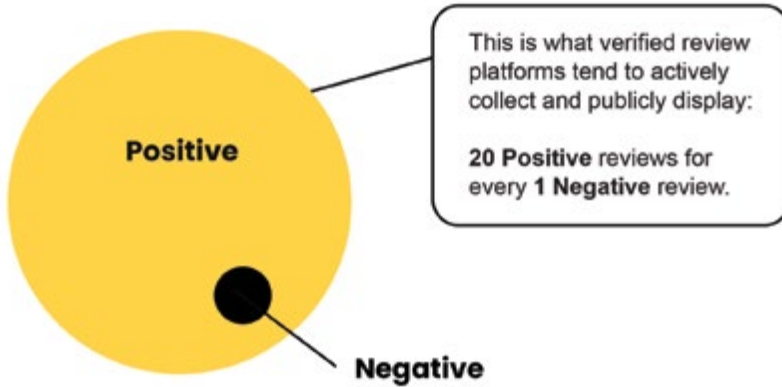
trust and credibility that they've worked so hard to create for themselves.

Fortunately, there is a solution to the open review problem that puts business owners back in full control of their online reputation. But before we get into that, there is another type of review platform that you need to know about: verified review platforms.

Verified review platforms differ from open review platforms in two very important ways. First, they strive to only allow customers who have made an actual purchase from a company to leave a review; and second, they actively invite every paying customer to leave a review, whether positive or negative. And while every customer doesn't leave a review, over time enough customers do that it creates a normalized, holistic star rating that accurately reflects a company's true reputation.

VERIFIED REVIEW PLATFORM

Verified review platforms actively attempt to collect reviews from as many of your actual paying customers as possible, creating the most accurate, holistic, natural representation of your actual reputation.



Verified review platforms generate 20 positive reviews for every 1 negative review

Ultimately, the difference between the two review platforms comes down to this:

Open review platforms passively collect one positive review from virtually anyone for every ten negative reviews (creating a highly skewed, false representation of a brand's true reputation).

Verified review platforms actively collect twenty or more positive reviews from actual customers for every one negative review (creating a much more accurate representation of a brand's true reputation).

As you can see below, there is a huge swing in negative to positive review ratios when comparing the two platform types.

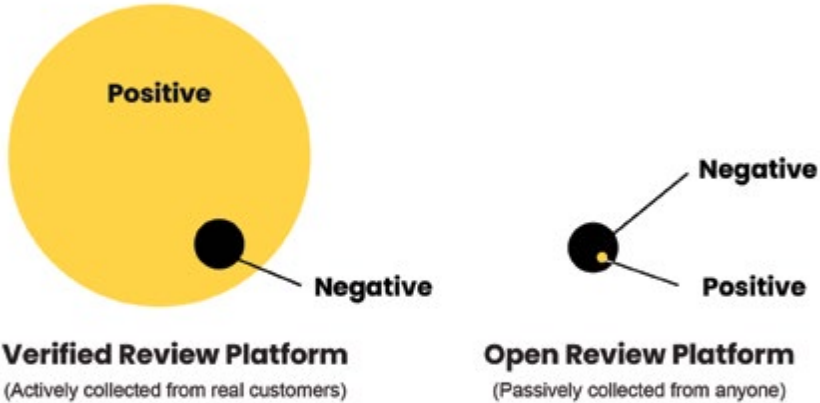


Verified review platforms generate a higher ratio of positive to negative reviews

There is also a massive disparity in the scale of reviews collected between the two types of review platforms as shown here:

DISPARITY IN SCALE

This illustration compares the huge disparity in the number of reviews typically collected between verified and open review platforms.



Even though the open review platform collects a fraction of the number of reviews, they receive virtually the same amount of publicity and visibility in organic search, and are therefore perceived to be just as relevant and important as the verified review platform's reviews.

Open review platforms generate a higher ratio of negative to positive reviews

As you can clearly see, there is a very stark difference between the two types of review platforms, and any company or brand who is serious about their online reputation should actively seek out and work with a verified review platform. But while verified reviews can be truly game-changing for a brand, there is still a serious problem—every open review platform is still out there, constantly working against you, 24 hours a day, in a never-ending effort to try to send your brand to reputation hell.

The Downward Reputation Spiral

Imagine that one day you go online and do a search for your brand, and to your shock and horror, you find several negative reviews about your company on various open review sites.

You have two choices.

You can cave in and pay these open review platforms to help you “fix” your damaged reputation problem that they themselves created and perpetuated. Or you can ignore it, cursing the open review platforms for allowing people to post bad reviews and damage your brand, but not doing anything to resolve it.

This is a real dilemma that virtually every online business faces at some point. And as your company grows and your sales increase, more customers will eventually have bad experiences and look for outlets where they can publicly share their frustrations.

It isn't personal, it's just math.

For example, if you process 1,000 orders a month, and 5% of your customers have some kind of an issue with their experience, product, or order, that creates 50 opportunities for those upset customers to make their way to one or more open review platforms to tell the world about what a horrible experience they had, and how you're a scam and can't be trusted.

Over the course of several months or years, these bad reviews add up, and before you know it, your reputation is in shambles

and your credibility is gone. We call this the downward reputation spiral.



*Open review platforms and unmanaged reputations
create a downward spiral*

Of course, you know that what these sites are saying isn't true, but no one else does. And because perception is reality, all that potential customers must base their buying decisions on are the bad reviews they see about your company online.

Unfortunately, if you decide to pay their ransom, you only temporarily solve the problem, because over time, bad reviews

will start to show up on other open review platforms. After all, upset consumers don't care where they post their complaints, only that they're posted. And if they're upset enough, they will post on multiple sites to ensure that their grievances are heard.

Alternatively, if you ignore these bad reviews, your company's star rating will continue to drop over time, until it naturally levels out somewhere between 1.2 and 1.7 stars, depending on the negative to positive review ratio.

Social Influence Bias

At this point, you get to experience a second unexpected blow to your reputation, social influence bias, which is a psychological phenomenon that occurs in both positive and negative environments.

The idea behind it is that when someone sees a large group of people behaving in a certain way, they are much more likely to follow the same behavior. This is also known as the bandwagon effect or herd mentality.

What this means is that if your company has a low overall star rating with a lot of negative reviews on an open review platform, then additional reviewers are much more likely to also leave negative reviews, even if they originally were considering leaving a positive one—further damaging your reputation and validating the justified behavior of the group.

So, What Can Be Done?

Well, the good news is that regardless of how many negative reviews you currently have on open review platforms, or how badly your reputation might be damaged by them, it can usually be fixed in a relatively short amount of time.

Or, if your reputation is good but you don't have a lot of search visibility or traffic, there are highly effective ways to expand on what you've built so far.

Ultimately you just need to know how to play the reputation game at the next level, which is what we're all about.

So, sit back and buckle up because you're about to go pro!

LEARN MORE ABOUT OPEN REVIEW SYNDROME

Join us as we discuss Open Review Syndrome and how it affects businesses online. We have A LOT more to say about this topic and we don't hold anything back!

**For instant access, scan the QR
Code or go to:**
reputationking.com/bonus



3

HOW TO ENGINEER AND BUILD A GREAT REPUTATION ONLINE

“Reputation is the ultimate currency.”

–Gary Vaynerchuk

To build anything of value, you first need a plan. A house, a car, a plane, a business, and even a reputation all requires one. Without a plan, things quickly fall apart.

If you don't have a reputation plan, you are basically giving permission for people you don't know to leave slanderous, scathing reviews about your company on various open review platforms, that are publicly displayed for all of your future potential customers to see, which over time can destroy your credibility and trust, and put your business at serious risk.

DJ experienced the intense pain of this scenario first-hand when he took over the marketing department of a large corporation

who had allowed open review platforms and social influence bias to completely infiltrate and destroy their online reputation.

DJ's Billion Dollar Story

Over the course of DJ's career, he has had the unique opportunity to work directly with some of the biggest brands and sports franchises in the world, including Kodak, Toyota, Hyundai, NASCAR, the Utah Jazz, J.D. Power and Associates, and over 800 automotive, marine, and RV dealerships across the US and Canada.

In 2015, DJ was approached by a billion-dollar national used car franchise—the largest of its kind in America—to become their Chief Marketing Officer.

As you're probably aware, the used car business is particularly susceptible to bad reviews, and this company was no exception. Unfortunately, their negative ratings and reviews had added up over the years across multiple open review platforms because they had never developed a reputation management plan or strategy to address them.

One of the first things that DJ did after he was approached by the company was to go online and see what their reputation looked like.

He turned them down flat within minutes.

Having been on the marketing, PR, and reputation side of the automotive industry for many years, he was fully aware of the

incredible damage that a negative reputation like theirs was likely having on their brand, and how difficult it would be to move the sales needle.

To their credit, they didn't take no for an answer and made him another offer, promising to give him full control of the company's reputation management strategy, along with access to any resources or tools necessary to help them turn their reputation around if he would reconsider taking the position.

With that promise in hand and always up for a challenge, he took the job.

As DJ started to dig into the processes and policies of the company, he discovered that no one in the organization was taking ownership of the brand's online reviews, nor was anyone identifying and resolving common customer concerns at scale.

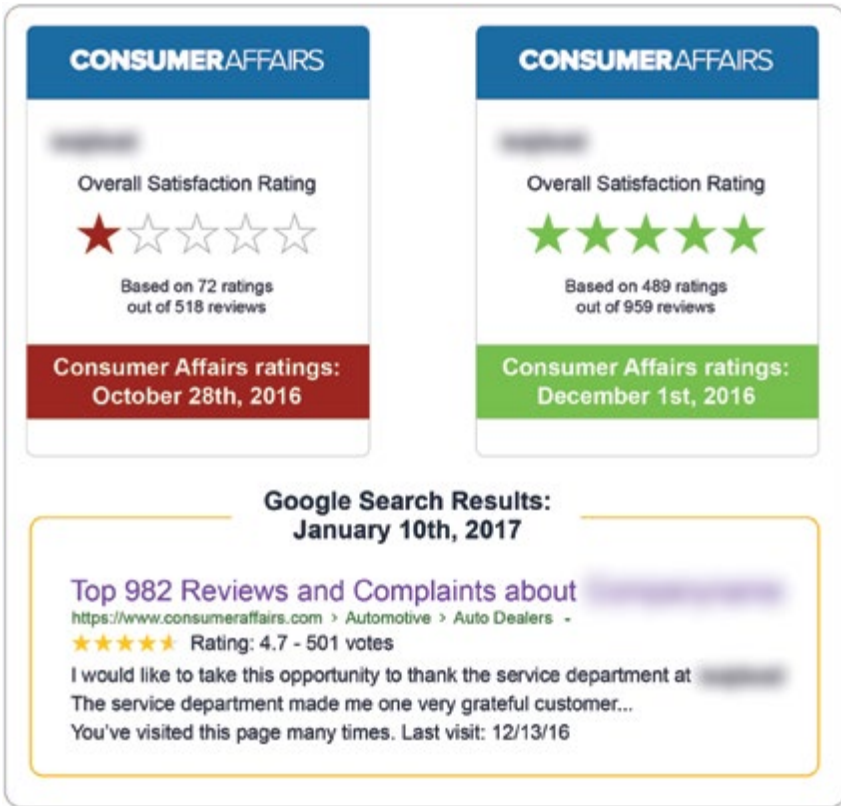
With over 100 franchise owners and nearly 200 locations in 34 states, the task ahead of him almost seemed insurmountable. They had hundreds of negative reviews across six open review platforms, averaging a 1-2-star rating. Turning their reputation around was going to require a very focused and unified effort across every location and state, with a highly coordinated, laser-targeted effort to address each review platform, one at a time.

DJ and his team began implementing a company-wide reputation plan where, instead of letting customers passively leave reviews on their own, every salesperson would actively invite each customer to leave a review immediately after they made a purchase, and before they left the dealership.

They then concentrated all their collection efforts on a single review platform until it reached at least a 4.1 overall star rating, then they would move on to the next one. These were targeted in sequence based on the review platform's visibility in Google, its overall star rating, and the total number of reviews the platform displayed.

To say that things turned around quickly is an understatement.

One of the first platforms they targeted was ConsumerAffairs, which had a 1-star rating. However, after just one month, that rating skyrocketed to a 4.7, which not only showed up directly on ConsumerAffairs, but also on page one of Google search results!



ConsumerAffairs results - before and just 30-days after

One by one, DJ and his team focused on each of the six open review platforms until their reputation was the highest in the industry across the board, with each platform averaging 4.2 stars or higher.

In just a matter of months, DJ and his team had done something truly incredible. They had fully reversed the company’s downward reputation spiral, and completely transformed the image and trajectory of a billion-dollar brand.

The Shopper Approved Story

This next story hits a little closer to home, but we feel like it is important to share with you.

Even though we operate one of the oldest and largest online review platforms in the world, we learned the hard way that we are just as susceptible to Open Review Syndrome and social influence bias as any other website, and that not executing a reputation management plan can be very dangerous.

Over the years, we've collected well over 100 million ratings and reviews for tens of thousands of websites around the world. However, because we're a verified review platform, occasionally, upset customers of our clients would go online to complain about the service or products they bought from them, and would ultimately see a large number of positive reviews on our platform, next to a small number of negative reviews on various open review platforms, and instantly assume that our reviews were fake.

Keep in mind that these were not our customers, but because they were upset with their purchase, and chose to believe the open reviews over our verified reviews, they would go out of their way to leave 1-star ratings on Trustpilot about how Shopper Approved was a scam.

At first, we were upset. We couldn't believe that anyone would ever question our integrity! We tried and tried to get Trustpilot

to remove these blatantly false reviews, but our requests continually fell on completely deaf ears.

Over time these 1-star ratings grew and grew, and our overall star rating on Trustpilot got lower and lower, until it eventually reached a point where the number of 5-star ratings and the number of 1-star ratings were almost equal, with virtually no 2-, 3-, or 4-star reviews in between. It was the strangest looking rating chart you've ever seen.

All the 4 and 5-star ratings were from our actual clients who loved our services, and all the 1-star ratings were from our client's customers who had a chip on their shoulder. And the more 1-star ratings we got, the shadier we looked, which led to more baseless accusations and more 1-star ratings.

It was at this point that we realized that even though it wasn't necessarily our fault that we had 1-star ratings, no matter how much we complained about it or refused to accept it as a matter of principle, it wasn't going to change. The reality was that we needed a reputation plan for our own business, or we would slowly die.

Just like DJ did with the car dealerships, we started to actively invite our clients to leave reviews on Trustpilot, sharing their first-hand experience working with us, whether good or bad. We also wrote a post in the "About Us" section of our Trustpilot page explaining why we had such a bizarre rating chart. The post is still there to this day, but the chart looks significantly different. We now have a 4.8-star rating on Trustpilot, making Shopper

Approved the highest-rated online review platform on Trustpilot. (We also hardly ever get 1-star ratings anymore from our client’s upset customers claiming that we’re a scam, which confirms that social influence bias works in your favor when you have a good rating.)

From there we moved on to other open review platforms like Google Business and the BBB, as well as specialized open review sites for software companies, like Capterra and G2.

Today, because we created a reputation plan and diligently stuck to it, we are officially the #1 highest rated online review platform in the world, and the undisputed Reputation King in our industry. We earned it, we own it, we have the social proof to back it, and now we get to leverage the crap out of it in search, on our website, and on all our marketing assets (including this book).



Shopper Approved is the highest rated online review platform in the world

For us it was a difficult and long uphill battle because we had to do it all manually. Fortunately, as you will read a bit further on, there are now innovative software tools that allow you to send your customers to leave reviews on various open review platforms automatically, which makes managing and leveraging your reputation significantly faster and easier.

We wanted to share this story to show you that it's never too late to turn things around, and that even if open review platforms have beaten you up and dragged you down, you can still go from the bottom to the top if you have a great company and a good reputation plan and strategy.

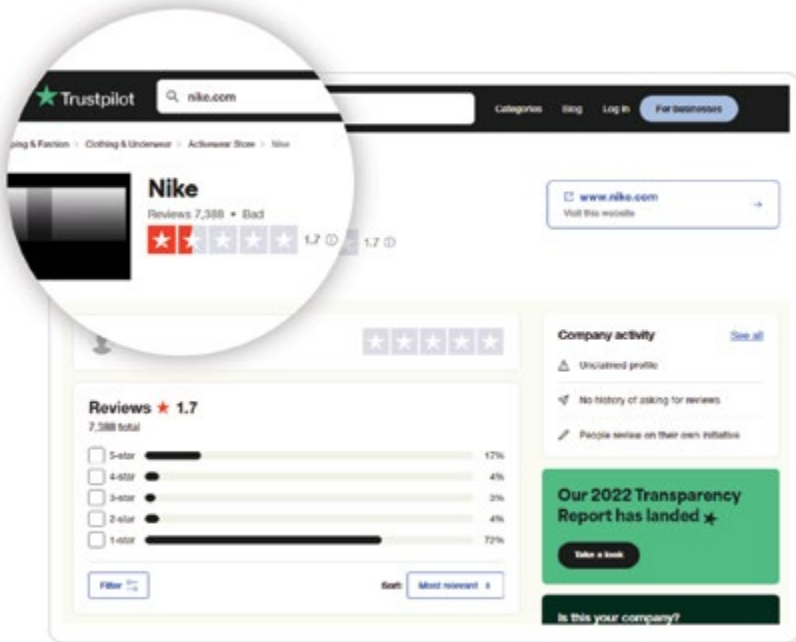
Re-examining the Ratios

In the previous chapter, we discussed the open review platform's positive to negative ratio (1 to 10), compared to the verified review platform's positive to negative ratio (20 to 1), but let's dive in a little deeper to better understand the real effects that these ratios have on your business.

First off, just because a company passively gets one good review for every ten bad reviews on an open review platform, does not mean that they're a bad company—it just looks like they are. But unfortunately, because they look like a bad company, their business will very likely suffer accordingly.

However, if a company were to make an active effort to try to collect reviews from every paying customer, the real numbers would end up being much closer to twenty good reviews for every one bad review, making their overall rating significantly higher, and much more credible and trustworthy.

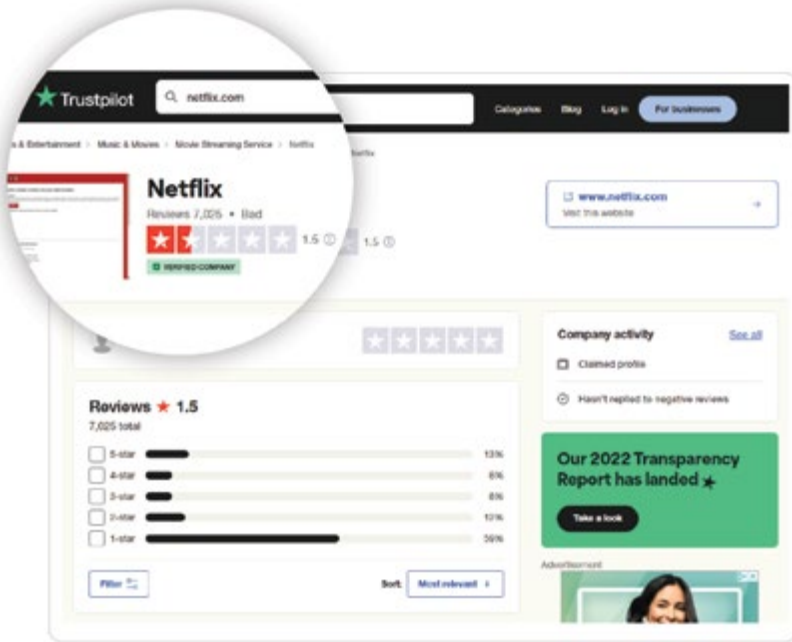
To illustrate the significance between open and verified review platforms, let's look at Nike.



Screenshot of Nike.com's reviews on Trustpilot - taken October 2023

On Trustpilot, Nike currently has a 1.7-star rating, with 1,179 5-star reviews and 5,079 1-star reviews. If we run simple math using the 20 to 1 ratio, we find that, if Nike were to actively collect reviews on a verified review platform, then instead of only having 1,179 5-star reviews, they would have collected approximately 107,419 5-star reviews, putting their overall rating at 4.8.

Now, let's look at Netflix.



Screenshot of Netflix.com's reviews on Trustpilot - taken October 2023

Netflix currently has a 1.5-star rating on Trustpilot, with 860 5-star reviews and 3,906 1-star reviews. Again, if we ran the math using the 20 to 1 ratio, had they actively collected reviews on a verified review platform, they would have collected approximately 78,120 5-star reviews to offset their 3,906 1-star reviews, putting their overall rating at 4.7.

As you can see, these ratings are much more in line with what we would think that these companies' actual star ratings should

be, given their success, the exceptional quality of their products and services, and their market share.

Hopefully you're starting to see just how painfully inaccurate and misleading open review platforms can be, and the incredible amount of damage they can inflict on good, trustworthy businesses of all shapes and sizes.

Fortunately, this doesn't have to be the case for you.

Up to this point, we've talked a lot about what happens if you allow open review platforms and a small percentage of upset or angry customers, competitors, and even non-customers to essentially hijack and ruin your online reputation.

Internally, we refer to most open review platforms as “glorified complaint boards,” because that's what they really are. The problem is that they typically try to hide their true identity under the guise of an honest review site advocating transparency, and in so doing, end up harming hundreds of thousands of businesses' online reputations, and misleading hundreds of millions of consumers in the process.

The Positive Reputation Spiral

So, how can you possibly win against such a formidable foe? Well, it turns out that open review platforms have a fundamental flaw. And once you know it, you can effectively and ethically leverage it to take back control of your reputation.

You see, by virtue of their own business model, they must allow ratings and reviews from everyone—especially from your customers who have actually bought your products or services. If they don't, they break the very cardinal rule that allows them to exploit you in the first place.

(In chapter 5, we show you exactly how to benefit from this hidden chink in their armor.)

By leveraging this strategy and others that we have to share, you can turn your reputation around in record time, leverage it virtually everywhere online, and effectively create an upward reputation spiral that will transform your brand in ways you've never imagined.

MANAGED POSITIVE REPUTATIONS CONTINUE TO SPIRAL UP. PEOPLE FOLLOW THE HERD OF POSITIVITY.



A managed reputation creates an upward spiral

As your reputation improves and expands, it creates an effect that is almost like magic, because everything else in your business starts to invisibly improve as well. Here's a list of some of the high-level benefits of a positive, well-executed reputation:

- Improved Employee Morale and Better Talent
- Higher Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction
- Better Organic Search Results
- Lower PPC Costs and Higher Click-Through Rates
- More Pre-Converted Customers

- Higher Sales and Higher Average Order Value (AOV)
- Lower Customer Acquisition Costs (CAC)
- Less Discounting and Higher Prices
- Higher Customer Lifetime Value (CLTV)

Let's discuss each of these benefits in more detail.

Improved Employee Morale and Better Talent

When a company has a great reputation, it becomes part of their culture, and their employees feel empowered to do their part to maintain and improve it.

It also attracts better, more talented employees, which makes your team more productive, and continues to accelerate and improve your business.

Employee costs and turnover are also lower with a great reputation.

Higher Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction

Every customer wants to feel like the companies they buy from care about them, and they often determine this by reading ratings and reviews to see how you've treated your past customers.

If they see that you have a great reputation with good reviews, and that you respond to negative reviews to help resolve your

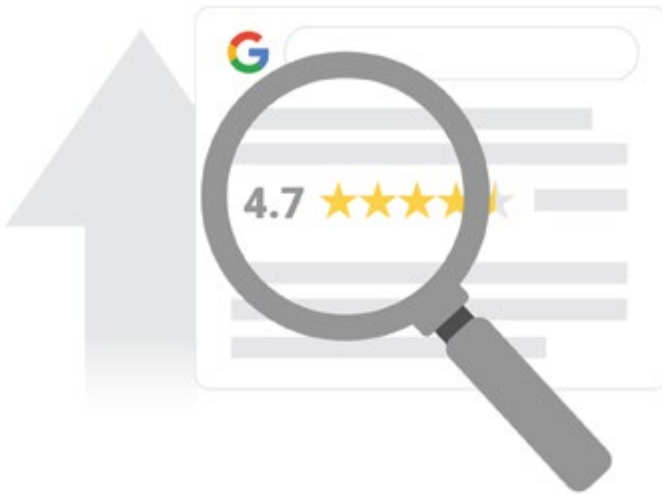
customers' issues and concerns with full transparency, they are much more likely to trust you and buy from you.

Better Organic Search Results

In 2014, Google released the E-A-T update to their Search Guidelines, expressing their preference for websites and content that focus on Expertise, Authority, and Trustworthiness. In 2022 they expanded their acronym to E-E-A-T, adding Experience to the list. Is there any doubt that Google wants to feature companies that actively strive to promote these attributes? ¹¹

There are many trust signals that Google looks at to measure trustworthiness. One of these is online reviews from a Google Review partner, of which the quality, quantity, recency, and distribution of reviews also matter.

¹¹ Google, developers.google.com/search/blog/2022/12/google-raters-guidelines-e-e-a-t.



*Google looks at trust signals to rank websites
in search*

Not only do ratings and reviews help you in search (because both Google and consumers care about them), but star ratings can show up in organic search results in various ways, helping you to stand out from the competition.

Lower PPC Costs and Higher Click-Through Rates

Statistically, adding stars to paid ads can increase the click-through-rate (CTR) by 10-35%, which increases your Google Ads Quality Score, allowing you to lower your bid rate. This additional discount allows you to buy more traffic at the same budget, increasing the ROI on your ad spend.

More Pre-Converted Customers

As you start to show up more prominently in search results for your company, category, product, and competitive search terms, and consumers see consistent star ratings in paid and organic listings across multiple review sites, they are going to be positively influenced or pre-suaded toward your product or brand before they even visit your website.

Then, once they do visit your site and see similar trust signals and social proof, they will naturally convert at a higher rate, provided that their website experience is consistent with their search experience.

Higher Sales and Higher Average Order Value (AOV)

The more a potential customer trusts you, the more items they are likely to buy (quantity), and the more often they will buy from you over time (frequency). This increases both your average order value (AOV) and your customer lifetime value (CLTV), which leads to higher overall revenue, profits, and valuation.

This can add up significantly over time. For example, a survey conducted by Invesp found that consumers are willing to spend up to 31% more money on a business with excellent reviews.¹²

¹² "The Importance of Online Customer Reviews [Infographic]." Invesp, 20 July 2015, www.invespcro.com/blog/the-importance-of-online-customer-reviews-infographic/.

Lower Customer Acquisition Costs (CAC)

As your reputation grows, so do your organic search results and traffic. The more organic traffic you get, the less paid traffic you need. And because of your great reputation and the higher conversion and average order value you gain from that, the lower your customer acquisition cost (CAC) becomes, which drives advertising and marketing efficiency—and profits go up!

Less Discounting and Higher Prices

Believe it or not, most shoppers are not looking for the cheapest or the best possible product. Most shoppers are “satisficers.”

Satisficers are looking for good quality products at reasonable prices, with low risk and minimal effort. More than just the lowest price or the very best quality, they just want to feel confident in their decision, which once again comes back to trust.

In a recent study by Salsify of over 1,800 online consumers, nearly 90% stated that they were willing to pay more for something when it comes from a brand they trust.¹³

This is further backed in a survey by PwC, where 91% said they would buy from a company that gained their trust. Of that group, 14% said they would buy significantly more. Alternatively, 71%

13 Salsify. “Consumers Will Pay a Premium for Brands They Trust, Salsify Finds in New Consumer Research.” PR Newswire: Press Release Distribution, Targeting, Monitoring and Marketing, 2 Mar. 2021, www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/consumers-will-pay-a-premium-for-brands-they-trust-salsify-finds-in-new-consumer-research-301238179.html.

of those surveyed also said they would buy less if a company lost their trust, with nearly three-fourths of that group saying they would spend significantly less.¹⁴

Because brands with a great reputation build more trust and confidence and reduce risk, they can sell their products at higher prices and margins, and rely less on expensive promotions, discounts, or incentives to drive sales.

These higher prices can have a huge impact on the bottom line. In fact, according to a study done by McKinsey, just a 1% overall price increase—provided that volumes remain stable—can generate an 8% increase in operating profits.¹⁵

Higher Customer Lifetime Value (CLTV)

When people trust a brand, they are more likely to make repeat purchases, which further lowers customer acquisition costs, and increases customer lifetime value (CLTV). In addition, they are much more likely to recommend the brand to others, give it the benefit of the doubt, and defend it against criticism. This helps to generate new sales and build customer retention and loyalty, which are critical for long-term success.

And the list of positive benefits goes on and on.

14 PricewaterhouseCoopers. "Trust: The New Currency for Business." PwC, www.pwc.com/us/en/services/consulting/library/consumer-intelligence-series/trust-new-business-currency.html.

15 Marn, Michael V., et al. "The Power of Pricing." McKinsey & Company, McKinsey & Company, 1 Feb. 2003, www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/growth-marketing-and-sales/our-insights/the-power-of-pricing.



A good online reputation improves all aspects of your business

As you begin to experience this positive reputation shift, it's like a breath of fresh air, and it really starts to feel as though the world is conspiring with you to help you win!

Using Social Influence Bias for Good

In the last chapter, we discussed how bad reviews on open review platforms lead to more bad reviews thanks to social influence bias, but fortunately, as we demonstrated in our Shopper Approved story, the opposite is also true—great reviews lead to more great reviews!

One of the additional benefits of getting more positive reviews on open review platforms is that you'll naturally get even more people to write better reviews about you.

Surprisingly, this holds true even if they went there for the specific purpose of leaving a bad review.

This is because people are conditioned to go along with the group's overall opinion. So, for example, if an upset customer goes to Trustpilot and they see that you have a 4.6-star rating and hundreds of great reviews, they will immediately consider themselves to be an outlier and will very likely soften their tone and leave a better star rating than originally intended. Or they may choose not to leave a review at all and try to work things out with you instead, giving you the benefit of the doubt.

Reputation by Design – The Secret to Maximum Visibility

Also in the last chapter, we shared how the secret to designing or engineering a great reputation and becoming the undisputed leader in your space really comes down to knowing how to play the game at a higher level, and then focusing on the right strategies and tools to win.

In our experience, the two most effective ways to do this are :

1. **Having great ratings and reviews that show up everywhere possible in search results and on your website.** And...
2. **Providing helpful, search-optimized content that not only shows up on your product pages, but at the top of organic search results when people search for answers to questions about your company, competitors, category, and products.** (This isn't what you think it is.)

Throughout the remainder of this book, we're going to share with you everything we know about these two strategies, the tools and ideas behind them, and how to leverage them in every way you possibly can to help you take your reputation to the next level.

Let's Start with Reviews

There are three different types of reviews specific to ecommerce that are critical for your success. Each review type shows up in different locations online and on your website, and helps you to establish, build, and leverage your online trust and reputation in different ways.

The three types of reviews are: seller ratings (also called company, website, or merchant reviews), product reviews, and video reviews.

These three review types are so important in their own unique ways, that we dedicate a future chapter to each one.

Knowing Which Review Platforms Matter

There are currently over one hundred online review platforms, but only twelve of them actually matter, because in order for your reviews to show up prominently in Google Ads and Google Shopping, your review platform must be both a Google Seller Ratings Partner and a Google Product Reviews Partner.

All other review platforms, no matter what features they have or how amazing they are, will never be able to get you any significant results in Google or Bing, because they just don't have the right connections, but they're not going to tell you that.

Below is a list of the twelve major online review platforms that, as of November 2023, have both Google Seller Ratings and Google Product Review partnerships in the US market:

- Bazaarvoice
- Google Customer Reviews
- Okendo
- PowerReviews
- ResellerRatings
- Reviews.io
- Shopper Approved
- Stamped.io
- Trustpilot
- TurnTo
- Verified Reviews
- Yotpo

Bing also has a review partner program. With nearly 10% of all search volume online, Bing is a great but often overlooked advertising and traffic resource. There are currently only two review platforms that have both Bing Seller Ratings and Bing Product Review partnerships:

- Bazaarvoice
- Shopper Approved

Open and Verified Review Platforms

Strategy-wise, you need to know which review platforms are open review platforms and which are verified review platforms.

Out of the twelve major Google review platforms, the following are open review platforms:

- ResellerRatings
- Reviews.io
- Trustpilot

While we don't recommend you signing up for these platforms due to the whole "actively trying to destroy your reputation" thing, it is important that you know who these companies are, because they have a lot of leverage in search and can become valuable assets if you know how to use them to your advantage.

Some of the other big players in the open review space that do not have both Google Partnerships but still have a lot of influence in search include:

- Sitejabber ¹⁶
- Better Business Bureau (BBB)
- Google Business
- Facebook

Platforms that Publicly Display Your Reviews

You need to know which review platforms publicly display your reviews on their platform in addition to your website (we call this review display page a review certificate or a microsite). This is important because having this certificate is the only way that your seller ratings can show up in Google organic search results with star ratings displayed.

Out of the twelve major Google Review Partner platforms, the following publicly display a review certificate on their platform:

- Google Customer Reviews (seller ratings)
- ResellerRatings (seller ratings)

¹⁶ As a side note, if you do ever decide to pay for an open review platform, your best option is Sitejabber. In our observation, their passive review ratings tend to be higher and more vetted than Trustpilot's.

- Reviews.io (seller ratings, product reviews, video reviews)
- Shopper Approved (seller ratings, product reviews, video reviews)
- Trustpilot (seller ratings)

Platforms That Redirect Your Customers to Open Review Platforms

Some review platforms have a special feature that allows you to redirect a percentage of your customers to leave reviews on open review platforms after they buy.

This is a very important part of taking back and managing your own reputation!

By sending a percentage of your actual customers to leave reviews on various open review platforms, you essentially turn each of those review platforms into a source of verified reviews—taking away the platform’s ability to manipulate and damage your brand. And because you’re using a trusted third party to do it, it’s completely honest and ethical.

Out of the twelve major Google Review Partner platforms, only the following three sites have a review redirect/reputation management feature:

- Reviews.io
- Shopper Approved

- Verified Reviews

Platforms That Collect Video Reviews

You need to know which review platforms collect video reviews. This is very important because, as you will learn in future chapters, video reviews are one of the most search-optimized, watched, and trusted forms of social proof online. While different review platforms have different video strategies, they are most often used on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram, or are syndicated to YouTube and Google.

Out of the twelve major review platforms, the following six platforms collect video reviews as one of their primary features:

- Okendo
- PowerReviews
- Reviews.io
- Shopper Approved
- Stamped.io
- Yotpo

Okay, Now Let's Talk About Helpful Content and Q&A

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the second thing you need to do to be highly successful online (especially when it comes to your online reputation) is to provide helpful content to your audience. One of the easiest, most effective ways to do this is to answer their questions using a Q&A tool, but not in the way that you think.

Most review platforms and businesses tend to look at Q&A as a basic support tool that you add to your product pages to answer general questions about product specs or features.

They've all completely missed the boat.

In our experience, Q&A is one of the most underrated and misunderstood SEO, traffic, conversion, and reputation tools online, and in this book, we are going to tell you why and show you how to optimize and leverage it to become the leading expert in your space.

Surprisingly very few companies are optimizing and leveraging Q&A, but Google absolutely loves it and generously rewards those who do it right with considerable visibility, authority, trust, and traffic.

Out of the twelve major review platforms, the following nine have some type of Q&A solution. However, most of them are not search-optimized (we explain why in Chapter 8):

- Bazaarvoice
- Okendo
- PowerReviews
- ResellerRatings
- Reviews.io
- Shopper Approved
- Stamped.io
- Verified Reviews
- Yotpo

So, What Does All of This Mean?

It's simple: **Search Visibility = Popularity & Trust**

Because consumers have been trained to trust the answers and websites that show up prominently in search, then the more visible you are in search, the more popular and trustworthy you are perceived to be.

By adding consistently positive star ratings to your search results, or by having your Q&A showing up prominently, you amplify that trust, which makes consumers even more likely to trust you and visit your website.

Then, once they're on your website, if you display your ratings, reviews, and Q&A in certain ways and in specific locations,

shoppers will also be much more likely to buy from you—increasing nearly all of your sales metrics.

Once you are on the positive side of the reputation spiral, everything changes for the better. But that doesn't just happen. It must be strategically designed and executed.

HOW TO ENGINEER A GREAT REPUTATION

There's a lot more to unpack here that we didn't have space to add to the book, so we recorded a special video where we go into more detail about what it takes to build a great online reputation. **For instant access, scan the QR Code or go to: reputationking.com/bonus**



4

THE CONVERSION PATH – THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

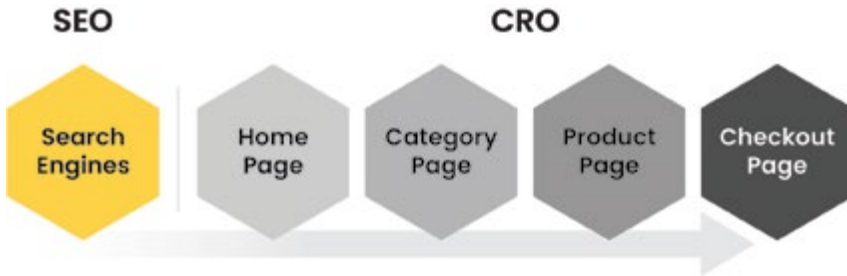
*“If you don’t know where you’re going,
any road will get you there.”*

–Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*

Improve Your Online Reputation from Search to Checkout

The conversion path is a similar concept to what you might know as the buyer’s journey or conversion funnel, but what makes the conversion path different is its deliberate, strategic intent to continually leverage your reputation and social proof using proven principles identified in the field of psychology and behavioral design.

The conversion path starts the moment a potential customer does a search online, it touches virtually every step they take along the way, and ends when they reach your checkout page and buy.



The conversion path represents your customer's journey from search to checkout

There is basically one way to optimize the conversion path, and that is to identify and eliminate any friction points along the path that might stop consumers from moving forward.

Friction is the enemy of conversion

Friction is the enemy of conversion. Friction includes things like:

- Lack of visibility in search
- Bad first impressions
- Lack of trust, credibility, and likeability
- Uncertainty
- Lack of social proof

- Negative social proof
- Unnecessary effort and cognitive load
- Competing or confusing prompts
- Lack of motivation
- Poorly written copy or value props
- Bad site design and UX
- High perceived risk of buying
- Security and privacy concerns
- Can't find answers to their questions

Think about it.

Why would someone who doesn't know you ever consider you in search if you don't stand out as an authoritative or trustworthy brand in some way? After all, there are nine other companies on the same results page, not including the 3–5 sites who are paying for ads, so why would anyone give you a second glance?

Or, why would someone who lands on your homepage visit any of your product pages, or even scroll down the homepage for that matter, if they didn't immediately perceive you as a trustworthy, credible brand who they believe can solve their problem?

These are very real, relevant questions that are extremely important in the customer's conversion path, but are often neglected or even completely ignored.

Maybe that's why, statistically, 90% of websites fail within a year ¹⁷, and 98.1% of all website visitors don't convert, ¹⁸ despite the huge amounts of time and resources spent in driving visitors to their site.

It's a massive challenge, both on the search engine side (to increase visibility and traffic) and on the website side (to increase conversions).

On the search engine side, failure to establish trust and credibility can often be attributed to a lack of visibility and social proof—*friction*.

On the website side, failure to establish trust and credibility can most often be attributed to lack of social proof, poorly designed webpages, lack of helpful content, poor value proposition, high perceived risk, and an inefficient checkout process—*friction*.

Think of the conversion path as a chain of events and impressions, that when linked together cohesively, work at peak efficiency. The chain, however, is only as strong as its weakest

17 Startup Genome. "The State of the Global Startup Economy." Startup Genome, startupgenome.com/article/the-state-of-the-global-startup-economy.

18 "Ecommerce Market Data and Ecommerce Benchmarks." Ecommerce Market Data and Ecommerce Benchmarks for August 2023, www.irpcommerce.com/en/gb/EcommerceMarketData.aspx. Data measured from 8/2022-7/2023

link; so, for the chain to be its strongest, each individual link must be put under the microscope, examined, and tested.



Example of how friction at any point along the conversion path creates abandonment due to a weak link in the chain

One of the easiest and most effective ways to reduce friction and strengthen the chain is through social proof, which is most often displayed as ratings and reviews.

A recent meta-study of over 6,700 ecommerce experiments found the top five strategies at increasing revenue to be (in order of revenue lift):¹⁹

- 1. Scarcity (limited supply)**
- 2. Social proof**
- 3. Urgency (limited time)**
- 4. Cart abandonment recovery**
- 5. Product recommendations**

¹⁹ What Works in Ecommerce - a Meta-Analysis of 6700 Online Experiments, fs.hubspotusercontent00.net/hubfs/215600/Qubit%20meta%20analysis%20%5Bacademic-paper%5D.pdf.

The unique thing about social proof in this list is its versatility. Unlike the other four strategies, it can be used to directly impact virtually every step in the conversion path.

The Bridge Between SEO and CRO

For example, social proof in the form of ratings and reviews has the unique ability to impact both search engine optimization (SEO) in Google and Bing, and conversion rate optimization (CRO) on your website.



Ratings and reviews can directly improve both traffic and conversion

While there are many ways to leverage ratings and reviews on both the traffic side and the conversion side, very few companies understand the connections between SEO and CRO, and even fewer know how to maximize them.

The Power of Compounding Your SEO and CRO

Another way to look at the chain analogy we just discussed is through the perspective of a sales funnel.



The average website has just a 1.9% Conversion Rate

In a typical sales funnel, a certain amount of traffic goes in the top and a few sales come out of the bottom (approximately 1.9% on average). One of the main reasons why the bottom is usually much smaller than the top is because of various friction points created throughout the user experience (UX), or the Conversion Path.

You can increase traffic to your website, or you can increase conversions on your website. The trick is to figure out how to do both at the same time.

There are two levers that you can potentially pull here; you can increase traffic to your website, or you can increase conversions on your website. The trick is to figure out how to do both at the same time.

One of the fastest and most effective ways to increase quality traffic at the top of the funnel is to improve your online visibility through search engine optimization (SEO) by improving your reputation in Google and Bing.

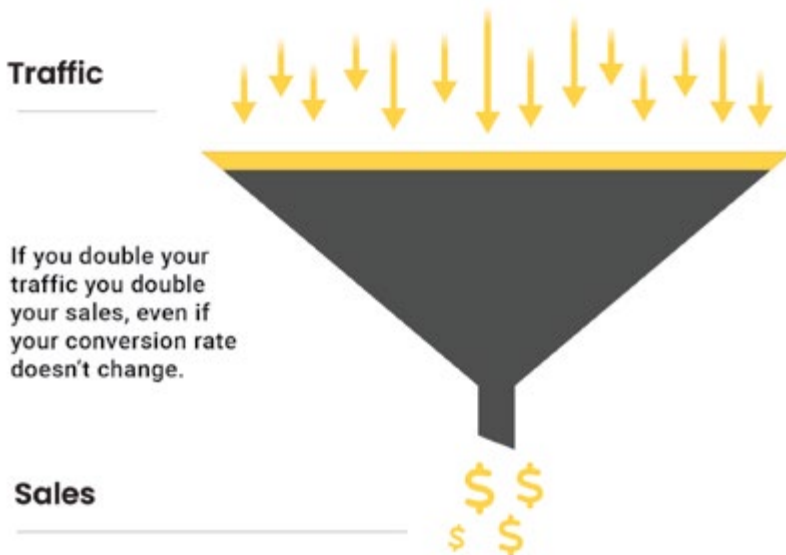
- Better search visibility for your brand and products creates more brand awareness, trust, authority, credibility, and social proof—all the things that you need to motivate someone to visit your website.
- This also significantly lowers the friction created around uncertainty.

One of the fastest and most effective ways to increase your website sales and conversion at the bottom of the funnel is to display social proof in different ways, in strategic places, and on specific pages of your website.

- This creates reputation consistency as they move from the search engine to your website. It lets them know that others have trusted you and they can too, which activates System 1 thinking (quick and easy decision making).
- Just like in search, this further reduces friction, encouraging more visitors to ultimately reach your checkout page and buy.

But here's where it gets exciting!

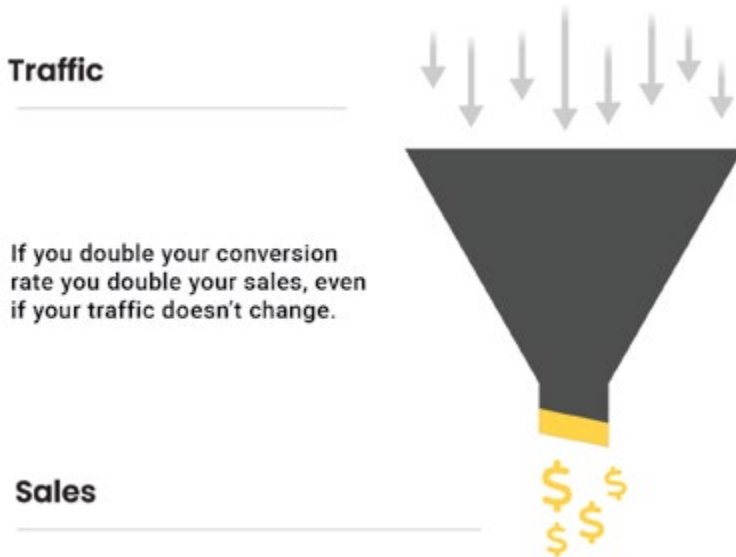
Let's say you really put a solid effort into improving your SEO and your reputation in search, and over the course of 6–12 months you were able to double your traffic.



More traffic to your website generates more sales

If this new traffic is high-quality, with commercial or transactional intent, this one change could effectively double your sales, even if you changed nothing else on your website to increase the conversion rate.

Alternatively, if you did nothing to increase your online traffic, but focused on leveraging your reputation, social proof, trust signals, and other behavioral design principles on your website, you would also have the potential to double your sales.



A higher website conversion rate generates more sales

However, if you were able to do both at the same time—double your high-quality traffic and double your conversion rate—this would not only double but quadruple your sales!



More traffic and higher conversion rates combined compound your sales

It's the best possible version of double dipping!

Now, obviously this is an example, but being able to leverage your reputation on both the traffic side and the conversion side does give you the real ability to create true compound growth, which can bring incredible results over time.

How Does My Reputation Impact the Conversion Path?

Ultimately, different tools and strategies impact your conversion path at different points.

Here's a high-level view to give you an idea of just how much of an impact your reputation can have, and where you can potentially leverage each tool and strategy. The benefits have been grouped by whether they affect traffic or conversion.

Seller Ratings (a.k.a. company, website, or merchant reviews):

Traffic (SEO) Benefits:

Improved search rankings create more online visibility.

- The Google E-E-A-T guidelines mean that Google loves brands and content with high-quality trust signals (experience, expertise, authority, and trust). And according to Google, trust is the most important component.²⁰
- Google also loves user-generated content (UGC) like ratings, reviews, videos, images, and Q&A, because user-generated content is often seen as more trustworthy and transparent.

²⁰ [Static.Googleusercontent.com, static.googleusercontent.com/media/guidelines.raterhub.com/en//searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf](https://static.googleusercontent.com/media/guidelines.raterhub.com/en//searchqualityevaluatorguidelines.pdf).



Trust is at the center of Google E-E-A-T

Here are some of the places your seller ratings can display to help you generate more traffic:

- Google Ads
- Google organic search results (if your review platform has a dedicated review certificate)
- Bing Merchant Ratings
- Google Shopping
- Dozens of open review platforms, including Google Business, BBB, Facebook, Trustpilot, Sitejabber, Reviews.io, and many more

Conversion (CRO) Benefits:

Seller ratings can improve your conversion rates when they appear on your website. The best places to display reviews are:

- At the top of homepages and landing pages in the form of a featured aggregate rating (we call this the Trust Bar™).
- Near the middle of homepages and landing pages in the form of written customer reviews.
- In the bottom footer of every page in the form of a small ratings widget.
- On the shopping cart by the Checkout button in the form of a written review.
- On product pages (as a temporary substitute for product reviews when a product hasn't collected enough reviews).

Product Reviews:

Traffic (SEO) Benefits:

The more product reviews you have and the higher the star rating (between 4.1 and 4.7 is ideal), the more trustworthy your products appear to be and the more likely consumers will click on them.

Here are some of the places your product reviews can appear to help you generate more traffic:

- Google organic “product search” results (from product reviews on your website)
- Google organic “product search” results (from product reviews on your review platform’s site—if your platform can display product reviews)
- Google Shopping paid ads
- Google Shopping free listings

Conversion (CRO) Benefits:

Product reviews can improve your conversion rates when they appear on your website. The best places to display product reviews are:

- Category pages (under each product)
- Product pages (aggregate star rating)
- Product pages (detailed reviews)

Video Reviews:

Traffic (SEO) Benefits:

YouTube videos display quite prominently in Google (Google owns YouTube), and when videos are search-optimized, they perform even better.

Visually, videos stand out in search because they include a thumbnail image in addition to text.

Videos displayed in places like YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram have the ability to attract a lot of attention, because people are much more influenced by others who have already purchased the product they're interested in buying.

Here are some of the places your video reviews can appear to help you generate more traffic:

- YouTube
- Google organic search results (pulled from YouTube)
- Google's video tab
- Google organic search results (if the platform you use displays your video reviews on their website)

Conversion (CRO) Benefits:

Video reviews can improve your conversion rates when they appear on your website's product pages. They are often displayed as part of a carousel, but can also be embedded next to the customer's written product review. (A recent Marketing Sherpa article showcased one of our clients who increased their conversion rate from 1% to 4% by simply adding video reviews to their home page.)²¹

21 content: MarketingSherpa, design: Scott McDaniel. "Strategies for Boosting Conversion Rates across Industries: 3 Ways to Improve Your Marketing Conversion Rate." MarketingSherpa, 7 Sept. 2023, www.marketingsherpa.com/article/case-study/strategies.

Search-Optimized Q&A:

Traffic (SEO) Benefits:

Because Google is a massive Q&A engine at heart, it loves to display accurate, informative answers to consumer questions. When a question is answered in a way that is both search-optimized and customer friendly, Google is more likely to feature it and rank it higher in organic search.

Here are some of the places your Q&A can appear to help you generate more traffic:

- Google Featured Snippet – this is the top listing on the page (often referred to as position zero), and, according to Neil Patel, it gets 35.1% of the traffic. ²²
- People Also Ask organic search results
- Google organic search results

Conversion (CRO) Benefits:

Q&A can improve your conversion rate on your website. The best places for Q&A include:

- Homepage and landing pages (at the bottom)
- About Us page
- Contact Us page

²² Neil Patel. "What Are Featured Snippets? How to Get Them." Neil Patel, 18 Aug. 2022, neilpatel.com/blog/rank-google-featured-snippets/.

- Individual product pages

As you can see there are many different ways to leverage each of these tools and strategies to maximize your online visibility and reputation.

The Aggregation of Marginal Gains

If you've ever read the book *Atomic Habits*, then you're probably familiar with Dave Brailsford and the British Cycling team.

Before Brailsford was hired as their performance director in 2003, Britain was considered one of the worst cycling teams in the world, only winning a single gold medal since 1908 and never winning the Tour de France (in over 110 years).

Brailsford had a unique strategy where he believed that if you broke down everything that goes into riding a bike, and then improved it by just 1%, when you added up all the pieces you would see a significant increase.

And so that's what they did. They started to examine everything from bike seats, to tires, to grips, to heated shorts, to workouts, to hand washing. They even went so far as to examine the mattresses and pillows that each rider slept on.

Over time, all these tiny changes added up to considerable gains. Between 2007 and 2017, the British Cycling team went from being one of the lowest-ranked teams to being the highest-ranked, most successful racing team in history, winning 178

world championships, 66 gold medals, and five Tour de France victories.

Moral of the story: the secret to winning comes from the aggregation of small, marginal gains over time.

In the world of online reputation management, it starts with the accumulation of one, then ten, then one hundred, then thousands of four and five-star seller ratings, product reviews, video reviews, and search-optimized Q&A's being added to your website.

Then, as these growing assets are properly optimized and syndicated, you start to see them appear in search results. First one, then ten, then one hundred, then thousands of listings prominently displaying throughout Google and Bing.

And before you know it, you are the highest-rated and highest-converting brand in your space—with everyone else scratching their heads wondering how you did it.

It's Not About the Tools—It's About the Strategy

As clearly shown in the British Cycling example, it's not the tools that make you a winner. After all, they had access to the best bikes, technology, and racetracks in the world, long before Dave Brailsford came along.

It's the strategy and the execution that continuously drives the incremental gains behind the tools that makes all the difference!

After decades of combined experience and being deeply rooted in the ecommerce and review industries, we have found that very few, if any other review, SEO, or CRO companies truly understand how to leverage your reputation to maximize both your traffic and your conversion. Even traditional reputation and PR companies don't understand it, nor do they have the software technology necessary to take advantage of it.

In the following chapters we deep-dive into the four reputation strategies you need to understand and leverage to thrive online, namely: seller ratings, product reviews, video reviews, and search-optimized Q&A.

WE LOVE THE CONVERSION PATH!

The conversion path is a concept that, if truly understood, can completely change how you look at your online reputation, SEO, and even CRO. We recorded a special video for you all about it.

For instant access, scan the QR

Code or go to:

reputationking.com/bonus



5

SELLER RATINGS

“If you are in a competitive industry, great online reviews are not just nice to have, they are a requirement!”

—Tom Kenemore, Fans on Fire

What Are Seller Ratings?

Seller ratings (sometimes known as company, website, or merchant reviews) are reviews collected about your website, or more specifically, the overall experience that a customer has with your company.

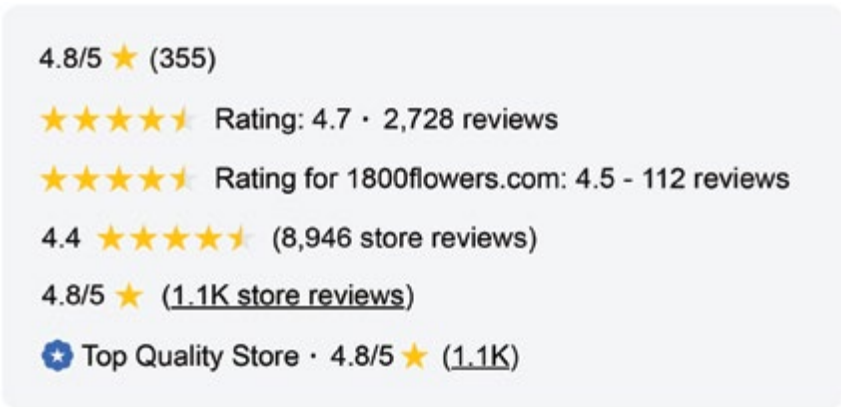
They are really a reflection of the customer’s entire interaction, including the usability and navigation of your site, your inventory and selection, your return policy and guarantees, the efficiency and ease-of-use of your shopping cart, the security of your checkout process, your product delivery speed, and even the overall quality and satisfaction of the product itself.

Seller ratings are critical because they appear in more locations and search results online than any other type of review

Seller ratings are critical because they appear in more locations and search results online than any other type of review, and are the only reviews that quantify and illustrate your brand's online reputation.

A typical seller rating in Google displays your overall numerical star rating, a visual star rating, and the total number of reviews collected in the past twelve months. These three data points are what make seller ratings a vital part of the decision-making process for consumers.

Here are some of the different ways that seller ratings are currently displayed in Google:



Some of the different ways that Google displays seller ratings

For review platforms that are Google Review Partners, seller ratings are often called Google seller ratings, because the review platform can directly syndicate your seller ratings into Google Ads and Google Shopping, driving more clicks and traffic to your site.

If you recall, certain review platforms can also display your seller ratings in Google organic search results via a dedicated certificate page. This is helpful because brands themselves can't collect or display seller ratings in their own search listings (whether paid or organic); they must go through Google or a Google Review Partner.

In addition, when properly displayed for maximum results, your seller ratings can and should be the first reviews people see at or near the top of your website's homepage or landing page.

Why Are Seller Ratings Important?

Seller ratings are easily the most misunderstood and overlooked type of reviews, yet they are equally as important as product reviews, because they often appear very early on in the discovery phase and are usually the first thing that consumers come across in search, whether that be in paid ads or in Google Shopping.

Another one of the places that seller ratings are prominently displayed is in Google organic search results for popular high-level brand search terms like “abc reviews,” which can be either a huge asset or a major liability, depending on if you’ve taken an active or passive role in managing your reputation on open review platforms.

What consumers find out about you during these preliminary searches determines whether they continue down the conversion path with you, or whether they go in another direction, with a brand that looks more credible.

And if you don’t have any seller ratings, then you are automatically at a disadvantage because all other variables being equal, your competitors with Google and Bing-qualified seller ratings will get better search rankings, higher trust, and more clicks and sales.

How Do Seller Ratings Benefit Me?

Being able to trust your website is very important to both Google and the consumer, and your seller ratings are a significant part of the formula that shows them you are a trusted, reputable brand.²³

Not only do seller ratings improve trust and credibility, but they also significantly improve your click-through rate. On average you can expect a 10-35% improvement in your Google Ads click-through rate when you have review stars in your Google Ads, Google Shopping, and organic search listings.^{24 25}

Seller ratings can also increase your conversion rate. One such study, for example, found that, “For text ads where a seller rating is displayed, we see a 24% higher click-through rate (CTR) and a 26% higher conversion rate.”²⁶

As an additional benefit, when people click on your ads more frequently, Google gives your ads a higher relevance score, which means that you can typically reduce your bid rate and get the same ad positions for less, reducing your cost per click

23 Other types of trust signals that Google looks at are things like your backlink profile, page load speed, mobile responsiveness, social media signals, quality content, site structure, your website traffic volume from direct and organic search, bounce rate, time on page, conversion rate, domain age, etc.

24 Berger, Aaron. “Google Customer Reviews: Receive and Share Customer Feedback While Earning Seller Ratings.” Google, Google, 3 Apr. 2017, blog.google/products/ads/google-customer-reviews-receive-and/.

25 “Do Review Stars on Google Help Click-through Rate? [Original Study].” RSS, speero.com/post/do-review-stars-on-google-help-click-through-rate-original-study.

26 “Google Seller Ratings: A Paid Search Home Run.” Metric Theory, 18 Aug. 2020, metrictheory.com/blog/google-seller-ratings-a-paid-search-home-run/.

and overall customer acquisition costs. Many websites justify collecting seller ratings for this benefit alone.

But improved search rankings, higher click-through rates, lower cost per click, and higher conversion rates are just the beginning.

Your seller ratings also help to answer the first question consumers typically ask themselves when searching online: “Can I trust this website?”

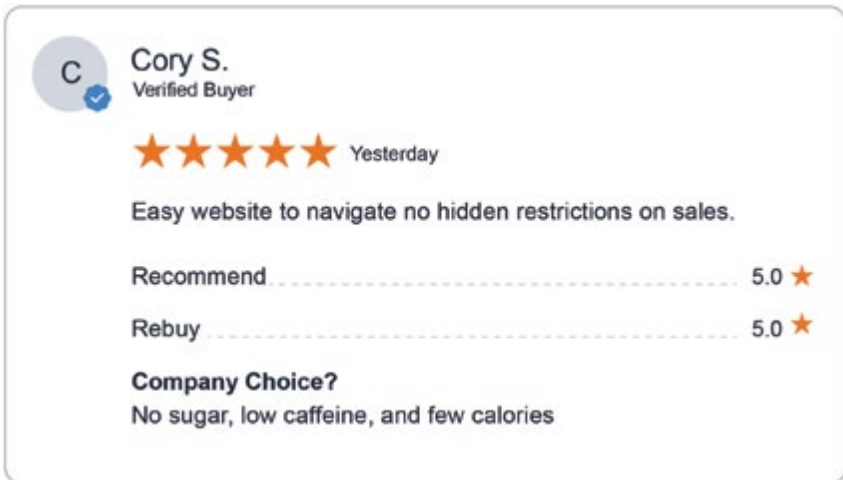
If you have a great, consistent seller rating profile across multiple review platforms, as well as in Google Ads and Google Shopping, people are much more likely to trust your brand

If you have a great, consistent seller rating profile across multiple review platforms, as well as in Google Ads and Google Shopping, people are much more likely to trust your brand and continue down the conversion path to a sale.

Another unique benefit of seller ratings is that they can often be collected immediately after a purchase, directly on your thank you page as part of the customer’s initial shopping experience (depending on the review platform). Then, once they get their order, they receive a follow-up survey and can add to their review experience to create a comprehensive picture of their overall journey with your brand.

We find that when seller ratings are collected as part of the transaction, these initial surveys are completed between 20-30% of the time, which is up to ten times more than other types of review collection. And while these initial surveys cannot be syndicated directly to Google like the follow-up survey is, they can still be syndicated to Bing, they can show up on your review platform (if they provide a dedicated review certificate page), and they can be very helpful in troubleshooting shopping cart and checkout problems.

They can also be used to collect buyer intent, which can help to educate future shoppers about why other customers chose to buy from you. Here's an example of buyer intent from a review of G Fuel—a supplement for online gamers. You can see that in addition to the seller rating, they also added why they chose G Fuel in their response to the “Company Choice?” prompt.



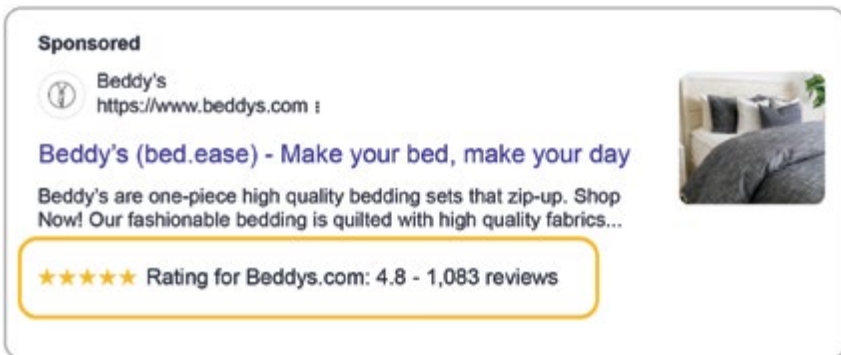
Example of a Google seller rating and review

This type of buyer intent can be very persuasive because it makes the company and/or their products more relatable to the potential customer, especially if they relate to the reasons why existing customers bought.

Where Do Seller Ratings Show Up in Search?

Assuming that you are using a review platform that is a Google Seller Ratings Partner and that displays your seller ratings on their platform (we call this a review certificate), your seller ratings are likely to be displayed in the following places:

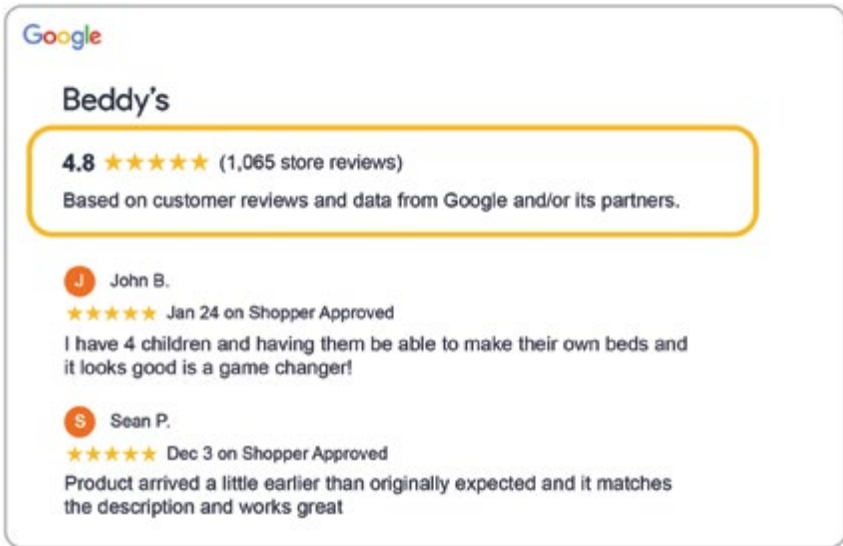
Google Ads



Example of a Google Ads listing with review stars

Your seller ratings can be displayed as part of your Google Ads campaign. You have quite a bit of control over where these ads show up, depending on the keywords you want to target.

Google Seller Ratings Page




Google Seller Ratings page

Your Google Seller Ratings page is a repository of all seller ratings for your company that have been collected by multiple Google Seller Rating Partners—if you happen to use more than one review platform (which most companies do not). This is the master list and the source for the numbers (star rating average and total reviews) that Google uses for your Google Ads and Google Shopping listings.

Google Shopping

Product Reviews

Seller Ratings



Mason Sage & Olive Zipper Bedding | Beddy's Minky

4.6 ★★★★★ 30

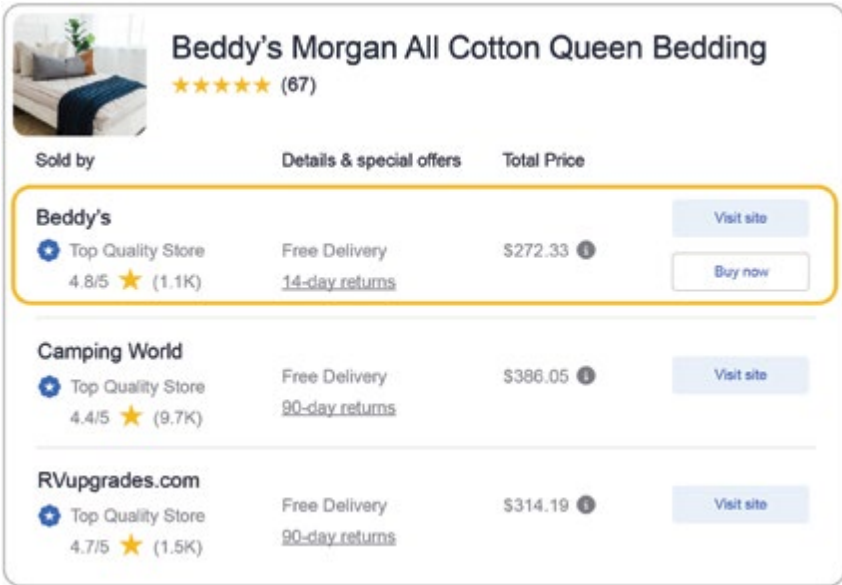
\$279.95
Beddy's
Delivery by Wed, Aug 2

4.8/5 ★ (1.1K store reviews)

Google Shopping result showing both product reviews and seller ratings

Your seller ratings show up in multiple areas in Google Shopping—all free and organic. The image above shows a listing with both product reviews and seller ratings in the same listing.

This is the best-case scenario because it provides the most social proof possible and shows trust in both the merchant and the product.



The image shows a Google search result for 'Beddy's Morgan All Cotton Queen Bedding'. The product has a 4.8/5 star rating from 1.1K reviews. Below the product name, there are three vendor options, each with a 'Top Quality Store' badge, 'Free Delivery', and a 'Visit site' button. The first vendor, 'Beddy's', has a 4.8/5 rating (1.1K reviews) and a price of \$272.33 with a 14-day return policy. The second vendor, 'Camping World', has a 4.4/5 rating (9.7K reviews) and a price of \$386.05 with a 90-day return policy. The third vendor, 'RVupgrades.com', has a 4.7/5 rating (1.5K reviews) and a price of \$314.19 with a 90-day return policy.

Sold by	Details & special offers	Total Price	
Beddy's Top Quality Store 4.8/5 ★ (1.1K)	Free Delivery 14-day returns	\$272.33 ⓘ	Visit site Buy now
Camping World Top Quality Store 4.4/5 ★ (9.7K)	Free Delivery 90-day returns	\$386.05 ⓘ	Visit site
RVupgrades.com Top Quality Store 4.7/5 ★ (1.5K)	Free Delivery 90-day returns	\$314.19 ⓘ	Visit site

Google search results showing multiple vendors who sell the same product, and the Top Quality Store badge

This is a comparison chart that displays in Google search if the product you are selling is also sold by other vendors. Seller ratings are particularly important in this scenario, because they give the consumer a second variable to consider other than just the price.

Obtaining a Google “Top Quality Store” badge is another significant trust signal that boosts your conversions, and it’s only available to those sites that collect Google verified Seller

Ratings, either directly through Google, or a Google Seller Rating Review Partner.

Bare Home 4 Piece Bed-in-a-Bag Set Gray ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (2,184)

Buying options

\$75.99
Free Delivery by Mon, Feb 5 [Visit site](#)

Houzz
★ Top Quality Store · 4.6/5 ★ (531)

\$56.99
Free Delivery [Visit site](#)

Amazon.com - Seller

\$67.00
Free Delivery [Visit site](#)

Bed Bath & Beyond
★ Top Quality Store · 4.2/5 ★ (70) [Buy now](#)

Product description page in google search

This is a product description page in Google Shopping, with three different vendors on the right-hand side. Houzz and Bed Bath & Beyond have seller ratings and Amazon doesn't. Even though Houzz is more expensive, they have the most social proof (the highest star rating and the most reviews), making them appear to be the safest and most preferred option.

Bing Merchant Ratings



The screenshot shows a Bing Merchant Rating for Mountain Crest Gardens. At the top left is a small circular logo with a tree. To its right is the text "mountaincrestgardens.com" and a green link "https://www.mountaincrestgardens.com" followed by "55K Facebook followers". Below this is a blue underlined title "Mountain Crest Gardens | Explore Hundreds Of Varieties". Under the title is a line of text starting with "Ad" in a circle, followed by "Browse Our Extensive Selection Of Different Succulents Plants, Perfect For Any Occasion! Explore Hundreds Of Varieties At The Ultimate Online Succulent Store." At the bottom left of the ad is the rating "5/5" followed by five red stars and "(68K reviews)".

Bing Merchant Rating example

Seller ratings also show up in Bing Merchant Ratings. With over 900 million searches per day, Bing can be a great way to expand your market and reach a new audience, in a less competitive environment and for a lower cost-per-click (CPC) than Google.

Google Business



Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business)

Your Google Business Profile (formerly Google My Business) is very important for SEO and credibility, as many studies show that a high percentage of consumers look for and see your seller ratings on your Google Business Profile during the natural course of online research.

If you use a review platform with a review redirection tool, you can automatically and seamlessly send a portion of your

customers to leave seller ratings on your Google Business Profile as well.

Your Own Website's Dedicated Review Page



Dedicated review page showing in organic search results

A dedicated reviews page exists on your website as a subfolder and is typically accessed from a “Reviews” link in your footer navigation.

While this listing does not have stars displayed in it, it tends to show up quite high in search for “abc reviews”, pushing down potentially less-desirable results. This page is created by adding a snippet of code to your website that displays your seller ratings directly on your own reviews page on your website. It’s a fast and simple strategy to help improve SEO search results for your brand.

Google Organic Search Results



Shopper Approved review certificate

If your review platform displays your reviews on its website (like the image above), then your seller ratings will also be displayed in organic search results. In Google, your review certificate page will look like the search result here.

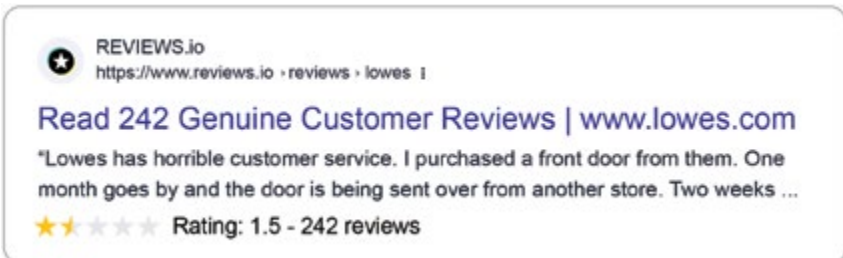


Shopper Approved
<https://www.shopperapproved.com> · reviews · Beddy's

Beddy's Reviews
 3 days ago - Amazing. Life changing. Fantastic. I will never go back to regular sheets and blankets. Especially not for bunk beds. These are amazing and ...
 ★★★★★ Rating: 4.8 - 47,269 reviews

Positive verified review certificate page in organic search results

If you are using a verified review platform to actively collect and display your reviews, this listing will likely be positive. However, if you have passive reviews on any open review platforms, you will also likely display other results that are negative, similar to this Lowes rating from Reviews.io:



REVIEWS.io
<https://www.reviews.io> · reviews · lowes

Read 242 Genuine Customer Reviews | www.lowes.com
 *Lowes has horrible customer service. I purchased a front door from them. One month goes by and the door is being sent over from another store. Two weeks ...
 ★★☆☆☆ Rating: 1.5 - 242 reviews

Negative open review certificate page in organic search results

This is where reputation management software can be invaluable in repairing and dramatically improving your online reputation by sending a portion of your reviews to various open review platforms around the web, giving you a consistent rating no matter where consumers come across your brand.

At Shopper Approved, we not only pioneered this reputation management strategy, but we have fully embraced it, because we know just how transformative and powerful it can be.

We call it Review Destinations.

How Review Destinations Works

Below are the ratings of a real-life, \$500 million dollar household brand, that is a client of ours but did not initially use Review Destinations. We'll call them Client A.



Shopper Approved	4.6	1,545,153
Influenster	4.1	4,745
Consumer Affairs	2.2	1,441
Trustpilot	2.9	13,902
BBB	3.0	1,045
Sitejabber	2.5	810

Customer's Perceived Average Rating:	3.2
Customer's Confidence in the brand:	Mixed
Customer's Probability of Buying:	Lower

A list of a website's reputation search results without Review Destinations

As you can see, Client A has a great Shopper Approved rating with a 4.6 rating and over 1.5 million reviews, but because of the negative nature of open review platforms, they have mixed ratings everywhere else. This inconsistency creates cognitive dissonance and leads consumers to incorrectly assume that they are a bad company that can't be trusted.

But here's the rub.

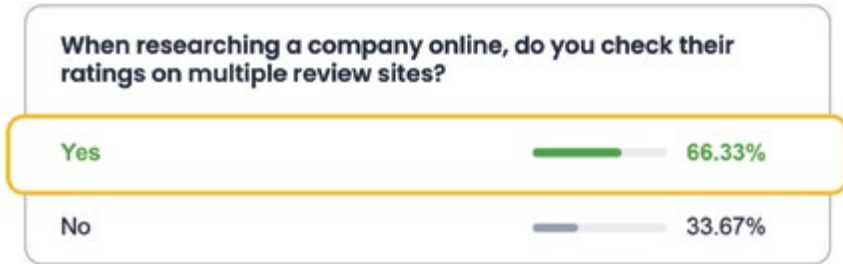
All of the 1-star ratings for this company combined add up to **less than 1% of their total 5-star ratings!** One percent! But because of Open Review Syndrome and open review platforms publicly displaying and magnifying their bad reviews, Client A appears to be a questionable company.

Be honest, if you saw these ratings online, would you buy from them?

If you said "No," it turns out that you're not the only one.

We recently did a national survey and discovered that **two-thirds (66.33%) of online consumers look at a company's ratings on multiple review sites before making a purchase.**

This tells us that most shoppers are aware that there are multiple review platforms, and they use those platforms to triangulate the overall reputation of a brand to determine if they are trustworthy.



Over 66% of people look at multiple review sites when shopping

We also wanted to find out if consumers would give a company the benefit of the doubt if they had a good rating on one platform and a bad rating on another. Surprisingly, 69.17% said they would still trust the company.



Over 69% of people trust in the review site with good ratings

We then asked them what would happen if they looked at three review sites; one with a good rating and two with bad ratings. This small difference caused nearly one third of the audience to change their vote, with 64.67% stating that they would trust the bad ratings.

If a company has a good overall rating on one review site, but a bad overall rating on 2 other sites, which site(s) do you trust?

One review site with good overall rating  35.33%

Two review sites with bad overall ratings  64.67%

If a company has bad ratings on multiple sites, nearly 65% believe the bad ratings

To further understand how they processed this conflicting information (good ratings on some sites, and bad on others), we asked them the follow-up question below, and found that while 23.17% tend to give bad ratings more weight, the majority (64.17%) try to average out the good and bad ratings before deciding if a company is trustworthy.

You're researching a company and they have mixed reviews across multiple review sites. How do you decide if they're trustworthy?

I tend to average out the good and bad reviews, and then make my decision  64.17%

I tend to give the bad reviews more weight in my decision  23.17%

I tend to give the positive reviews more weight in my decision  12.67%

Over 64% of people average a company's reviews across multiple review sites

With that in mind, let’s look at another real-life example that we’ll call Client B. Client B is also a Shopper Approved client, and actively uses Review Destinations to distribute their reviews across multiple sites.



A list of a website’s reputation search results with Review Destinations

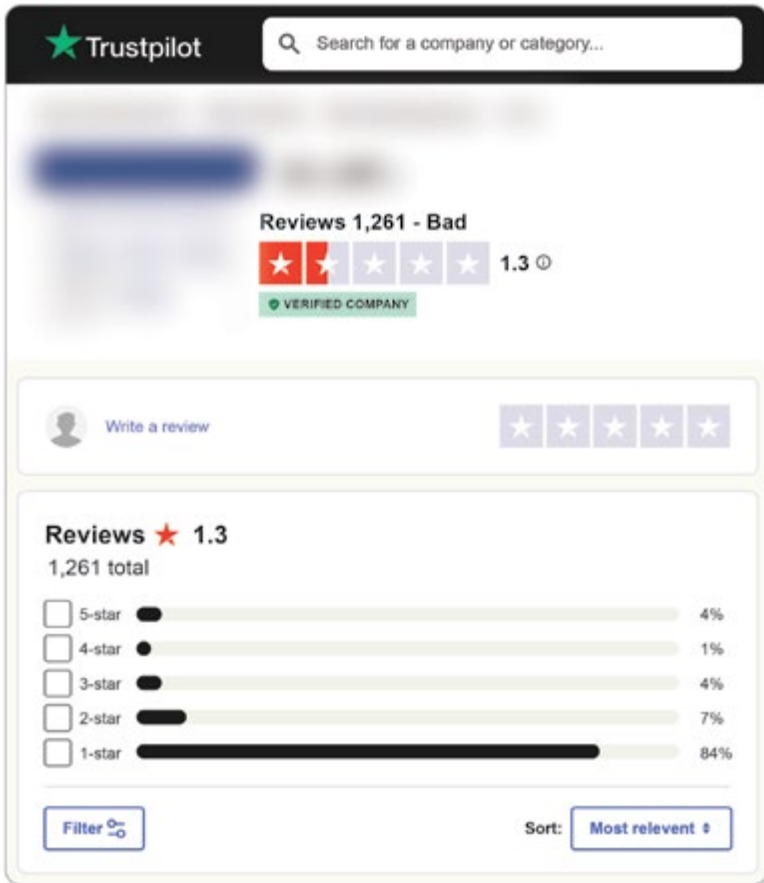
Over time, we have redirected a portion of their customers to leave reviews on various open review platforms, which has dramatically improved and normalized their ratings and reputation across the web, making it easy for customers to trust them and buy from them.

(As a side note, Review Destinations worked so well for this company that the owner publicly claimed that it was one of the factors that helped them make the Inc. 5000 fastest growing companies in America *5-years in a row*, and it also contributed to their very lucrative exit to a larger brand. The company that acquired them was so impressed by their outstanding reputation and growth that they hired Shopper Approved to take over the review campaigns for all their other major brands.)

The Reputation Turnaround of a Large Consumer Brand

Another one of our clients, who is also a very well-known consumer brand, also faced an online reputation challenge to their growth and conversion.

Before we started actively sending their customers to Trustpilot to collect reviews, they were getting pummeled with negative reviews due to Open Review Syndrome and social influence bias, giving them a 1.3-star rating as you can see in the following example.



*Screenshot of one of our client's reviews on Trustpilot
- taken March 2023*

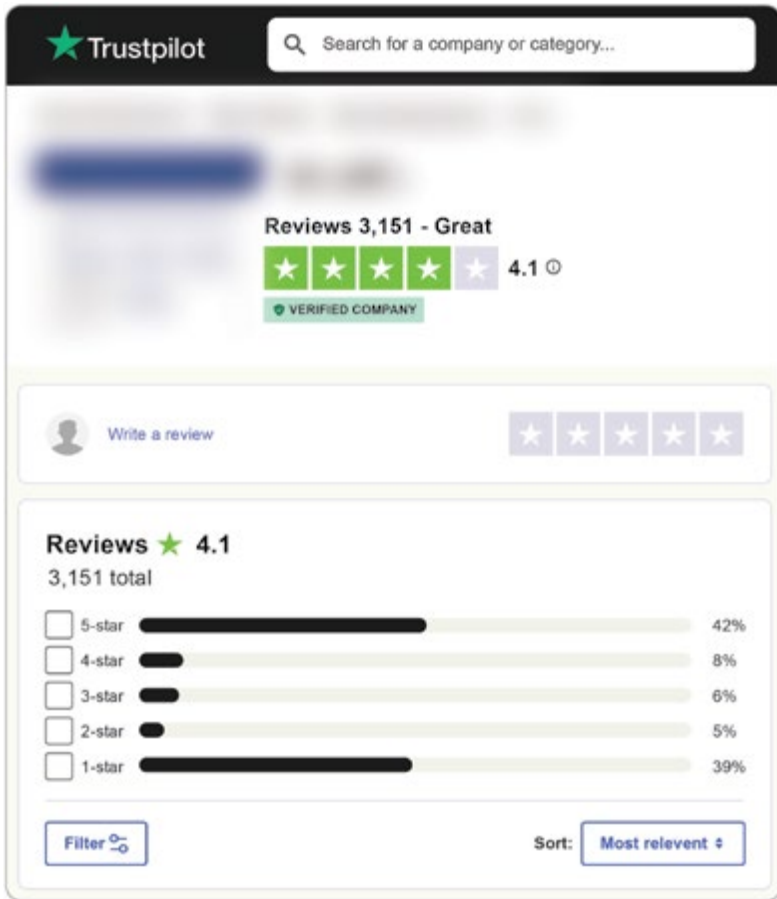
Then, at the beginning of April 2023, we recommended that they use our Review Destinations tool, and we started to redirect a small portion of their clients to leave reviews on Trustpilot. Below is a chart from Trustpilot showing when we started actively sending customers. (Notice the massive negative to positive review ratio change.)



Screenshot of Trustpilot's stats page - taken November 2023 (star rating notations added)

After just 7 months of using our tools and strategy to send a fraction of their customers to leave reviews on Trustpilot, they went from a 1.3-star rating to a 4.1-star rating! And we project that over time this number will continue to increase until it eventually normalizes at around 4.7-stars.

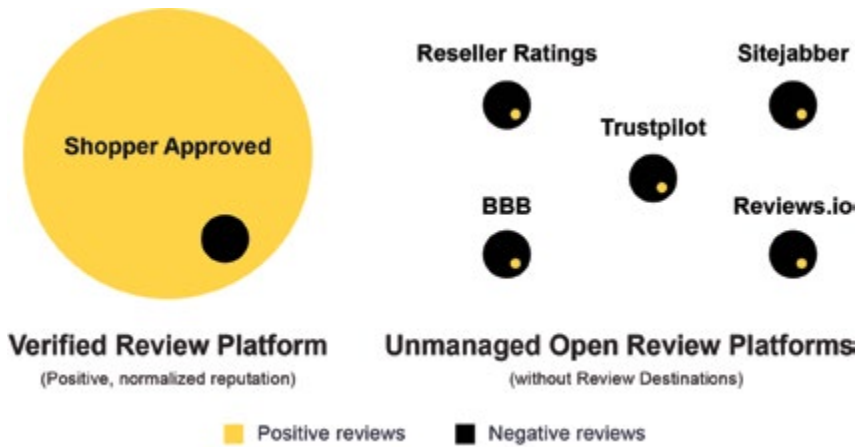
The interesting thing about this chart is the fact that even though they've collected several hundred additional reviews each month over the past 7 months, the number of new 1-star ratings remained virtually the same. This effectively demonstrates that most of their customers are very happy with their purchases—the exact opposite of what Trustpilot had been erroneously displaying for years. It also shows the impact of positive social influence bias at work.



*Screenshot of the same client's reviews on Trustpilot
- taken November 2023*

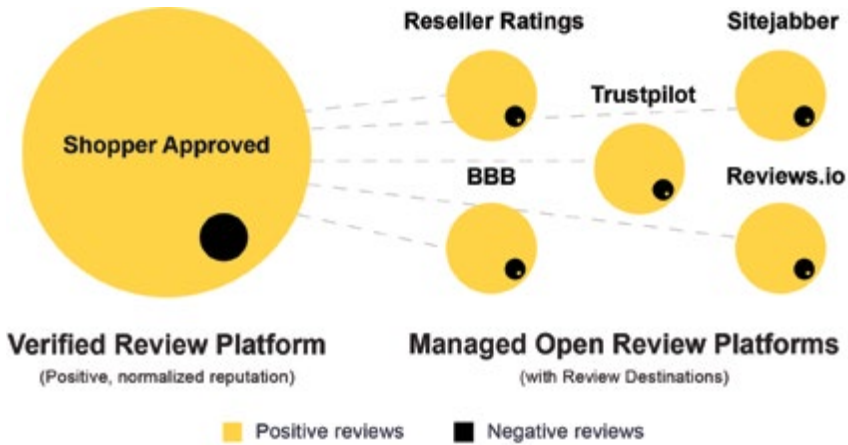
Bottom line, Review Destinations is an incredibly powerful tool that can completely transform your online reputation if you embrace it, just like DJ did back before any technology existed to simplify and automate the process. However, nowadays, fixing and managing your reputation is as simple as clicking a button.

The reality is that most ecommerce companies have either a bad, mixed, or lackluster reputation portfolio, and it's causing serious damage to their brand in the form of lost trust, less traffic, and lower conversions. But fortunately, with your newfound knowledge you can turn a situation like the illustration below, where you have negatively skewed reviews across multiple open review platforms...



The disparity between open and verified review platforms can lead to a bad reputation

...into a series of automatically and actively managed open review platforms that become normalized over time to reflect your company's true online reputation:



A managed reputation can turn open review platforms into powerful assets

With this ability to effectively manage your reputation across the web, you can literally turn around and/or significantly improve your ratings on virtually any open review platform that currently shows up in search for your brand.

You can also send your customers to leave reviews on open review platforms that don't currently display ratings about your brand

And not only that, but as a Reputation King power move you can also send your customers to leave reviews on open review platforms that don't currently display ratings about your brand, leveraging their domain authority, credibility, and social proof to continue to build and expand your reputation and online visibility.

Where Do Seller Ratings Show Up on My Website?

Once a potential customer has clicked on a link in Google or Bing, you have a second chance to reinforce and solidify the trust and credibility you created in the search results by strategically displaying seller ratings on your website.

Keep in mind that this has to be very carefully and tastefully done, but in working on this over the last thirteen years, we have pretty much got it down to a science. The overall formula for seller ratings is this:

- Homepage/landing pages: Trust bar at the top of the page, review widget halfway down the page.
- Every page: A small trust badge in the footer.
- Shopping cart pages: A single review widget by the checkout button.

You want to subtly but continually remind your website visitors that many other people who are just like them also trust you.

The basic idea here is that you want to subtly but continually remind your website visitors that many other people who are just like them also trust you. This removes doubt and friction and replaces it with trust and confidence.

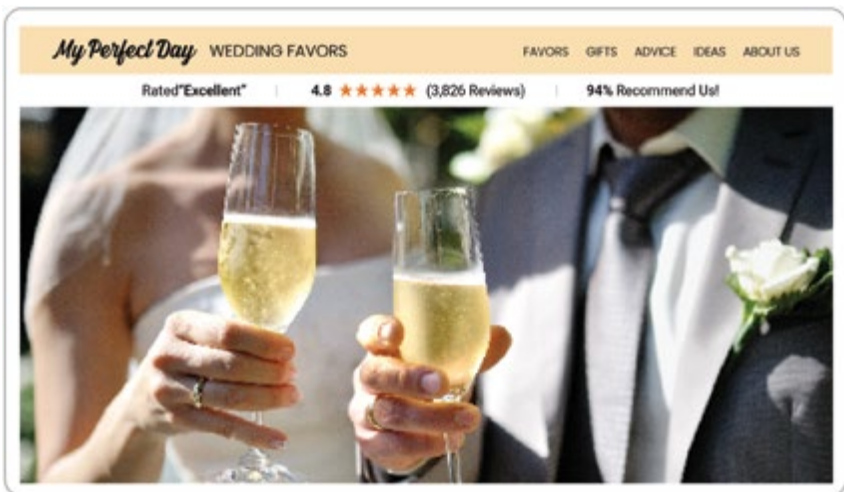
Here's what these areas look like on a website:

The Trust Bar

One of the first places that you should consider showing off your seller ratings is at the top of your homepage and landing pages.

This is a pivotal moment in the conversion process because it's the point where every single visitor makes a split-second decision about the trustworthiness of your site.

To help address this, we have created what we call the Trust Bar to quickly display your seller ratings and other important trust signals. You can see an example of the Trust Bar in the following image:



The Shopper Approved Trust Bar

The reason there are three trust signals in this example is because they each reinforce a different type of social proof:

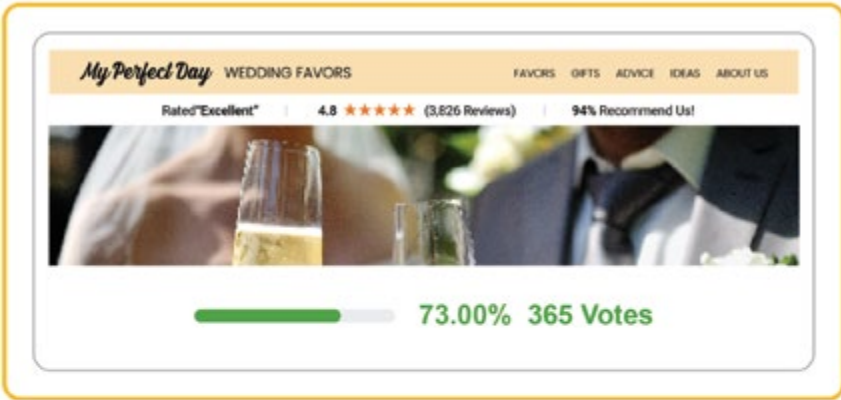
Remember that most customers want to buy from you—they just need a reason to justify it, and social proof is a powerful influence in that justification

- **Rated “Excellent”** – Instead of numbers, this expresses your social proof in words, which complements and supports the overall star ratings. It also implies that there is an impartial third party involved, adding more credibility.
- **4.8 ★★★★★ 3,826 Reviews** – This is the seller rating, and while the customer most likely saw this rating in the search results before they reached the website, showing it again creates consistency and reinforces their perception of what they hoped to find. Remember that most customers want to buy from you—they just need a reason to justify it, and social proof is a powerful influence in that justification.
- **94% Recommend Us!** – This is the voice of existing customers recommending your business to future customers. It’s the closest thing to a word-of-mouth recommendation that you can get online.

When you combine all three trust signals together, you are showing potential customers that they are in the right place and that they can trust you.

In a national survey that we conducted, we showed consumers a homepage with the Trust Bar and an identical homepage without it and asked them which one they were more likely to buy from.

Which website homepage are you more likely to buy from?



73% of people are more likely to purchase from a website with the Trust Bar

Of the 500 consumers surveyed, 73% stated they were more likely to buy from the website that displayed the Trust Bar than from the site that didn't.

We also asked them if they thought that seeing a company's overall star rating at the top of their homepage would increase their trust in that company.

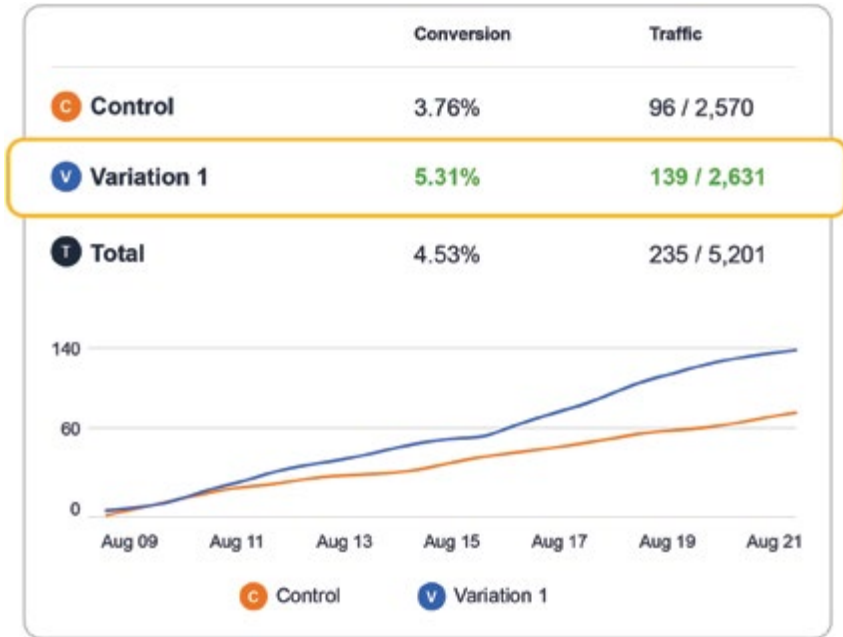


87% of people trust a site more when their overall star rating is displayed at the top of the homepage

87% said yes.

Once we validated our hypothesis with a consumer survey, we started a series of A/B tests of the Trust Bar on live websites with our clients and have had some great results. Our first client completed a split test in August 2023 and showed a 41.14% increase in conversion, with a 99.55% confidence interval!

This test only took two weeks to complete, and in that time, the Trust Bar variant received 43 additional purchases over the control.

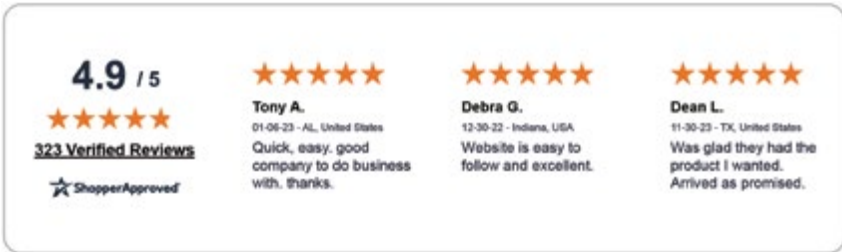


The Trust Bar increased their conversion rate by over 41%

If the Trust Bar had been on the entire time (instead of 50% of the time during the test), they would have received 86 additional orders during the two-week test period.

If you multiply that out over the course of a year, just adding the Trust Bar to their site should **generate an additional 2,236 orders!**

Seller Rating Review Widgets



Seller rating review widget

Review widgets are a different way to display seller ratings, because they display written reviews instead of aggregate ratings. This is often the first time in the conversion path where potential customers get the opportunity to read what your past customers have said about their experience with your brand.

Seller rating review widgets typically take on a supporting role, and as a result, are often found “below the fold ” or lower down on homepages, landing pages, secondary pages, and shopping cart pages. They are not usually displayed on category pages and product pages.

There is one exception to this rule. Seller ratings can temporarily appear on a product page while you are initially collecting product reviews, serving as a type of trust surrogate.

One nice thing about seller rating review widgets is that you can handpick which reviews you want to display, allowing you to put

your best foot forward; although it doesn't hurt to throw in a few 3- and 4-star reviews to show transparency, and increase trust.

Research shows that people trust a brand more when they have some critical reviews mixed with the positive. If a consumer only finds 5-star reviews on a brand's website, they are more likely to assume that the reviews are being manipulated, and therefore discount their value and lower their trust in your brand. There is an entire body of research around the optimal star rating for credibility (it's somewhere between 4.1 and 4.7, depending on the study).

Review widgets help to keep users on your page engaged in your content, which brings them one step closer to conversion.

Here's an example of what a review widget looks like on a shopping cart page.

Your Bag
3 Items | Total \$89.97

Bear
Dimensions: 13"x8"x6"
Weight: 2lbs
\$29.22

Cow
Dimensions: 13"x8"x6"
Weight: 2lbs
\$29.22

Dog
Dimensions: 13"x8"x6"
Weight: 2lbs
\$29.22

Estimated Total: \$89.97
Taxes and shipping calculated at checkout

GO TO CHECKOUT

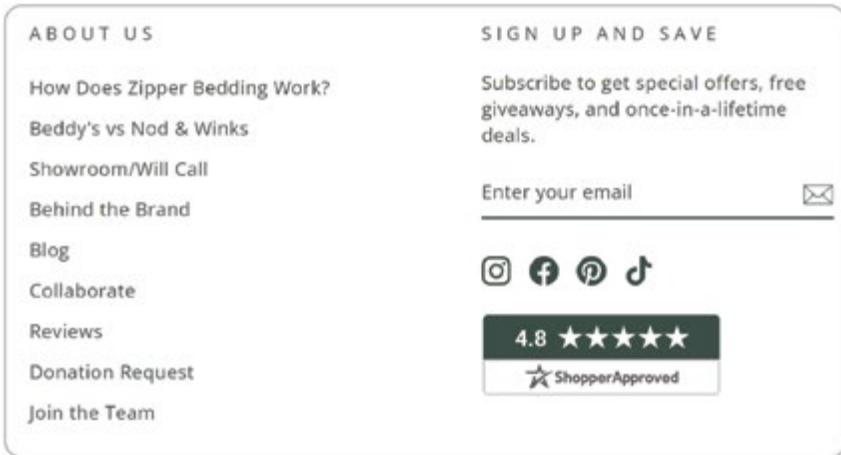
amazon pay PayPal G Pay

"My daughter sleeps with her super sized animals every night. She absolutely loves them!"
Sean H.
★★★★★

Review widget on a shopping cart page

Because it's located right next to the checkout button and (hopefully) creates an emotional response, it reinforces their decision to continue to the checkout page. This review should focus on a core attribute, feature, benefit or emotion that matters to the buyer, so make sure that you take the time to find a review that will have an impact.

Seller Rating Review Seals



Seller rating seal in the footer navigation

A review seal is a great way to subtly remind your visitors that you are a trusted, reputable company. It also gives them a fast and easy way to see all your ratings and reviews. They simply click on the seal, and it opens a review page on the review platform you're using (if they host your reviews on their platform).

Where Else Can I Display Seller Ratings?

Because your seller ratings and reviews represent your overall brand, they are very universal, and can be leveraged on all different types of media and marketing collateral.

This includes digital ads, email signatures, flyers, packaging inserts, receipts, social media, signage, job listings, trade show banners, articles, press releases, and more.

The reason why this is so important is because displaying social proof like seller ratings helps to set you apart from everyone else. And because the praise comes from a trusted third party, consumers are much more likely to believe it when they read it.

SELLER RATINGS ARE A GAME CHANGER!

So many companies screw up their seller ratings, but those who do it right take their brand to the next level! We recorded a special video where we do a deep dive into seller ratings. **For instant access, scan the QR Code or go to:**
reputationking.com/bonus



6

PRODUCT REVIEWS

“In online environments, reviews are the most important form of social proof.”

–Bas Wouters & Joris Groen, *Online Influence*

What Are Product Reviews?

Product reviews are reviews written about specific products and are usually written shortly after someone receives their order.

Product reviews can be found throughout the entire conversion path, with high-level aggregate data being primarily used in search, and more in-depth written review content being used on website product pages to help potential customers in their research as they get closer to making a final purchase.

In search, product reviews typically consist of an overall numerical rating, visual stars, and the total number of reviews. This makes it difficult to distinguish between product reviews

and seller ratings—because the two look virtually identical—but each one shows up in different search results and locations, helping to maximize your brand visibility.

In search, product reviews show up in Google Shopping and Google organic search results for both paid ads and organic listings.

Product reviews—when coded with the proper rich snippets—can display in organic search results under both the brand’s URL and the review platform’s URL (if the review platform allows it), which can effectively double a company’s search listings and social proof. Seller ratings on the other hand, only show up in organic search results under a review platform’s URL, not the brand’s URL.

On your website, product reviews can also show up on your category pages under each product listing, and on your individual product pages (which helps to make the final conversion and drive the sale home).

Why Are Product Reviews Important?

Product reviews are critical for several reasons.

First, product reviews provide a consistent feedback loop, allowing you to understand what people like or dislike about certain products, why they buy them, how they use them, and how they can be improved to better meet expectations and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Second, product review star ratings are one of the best ways to draw attention to your paid product ads, Google Shopping listings, and organic search listings. Adding product reviews in these places can boost click-through rates.

Third, they help to establish trust and credibility in your products through social proof.

And fourth, they significantly improve conversion rates by providing consumers with the insights they need to feel comfortable buying from you. Product reviews provide critical information that helps consumers to answer questions that they may have about various product attributes, features, quality, and performance. It also helps them to better understand what people do and don't like about the product, why they bought it, and how they use it. This user-generated content is often the most sought after and persuasive content on your site and should not be underestimated in its value to the consumer.

In a national survey we conducted in 2021, we asked 600 online consumers how often they read product reviews when searching for a product. Nearly seven out of ten (69%) said they read product reviews most or all the time.

How often do you read reviews when searching for a product online?



69% of consumers read product reviews most or all of the time

We also asked how much product reviews influenced their buying decisions. 68% said that product reviews have a high or very high influence.

How much influence do product reviews have on your buying decisions?



68% of consumers said product reviews have a high or very high influence on buying decisions

With numbers like these, there's no question that product reviews are critical to your short and long-term success.

In fact, they are so important that they transcend online shopping and directly impact brick-and-mortar retail shopping. One study revealed that over 80% of retail shoppers use their smartphones to look up product reviews while they are in a physical store.²⁷

This online/in-store hybrid shopping experience allows consumers to find answers to questions and even do feature and price comparisons before making an in-store purchase. (This is another reason that having a robust and searchable Q&A tool is important, but we will discuss this a bit later on.)

Without product reviews it's very difficult to sell anything online, because today's consumers demand to see them. They want to benefit from previous buyers' experiences, as well as the transparency, product insights, and choice validation that reviews provide.

While seller ratings address the first question consumers ask, which is "Can I trust this website?" product reviews address the second question they ask themselves: "Can I trust this product?" It's a one-two punch that consumers are looking for to mitigate their risk and make an easy, fast decision based on social proof and unbiased feedback and validation in the form of ratings and reviews from previous buyers.

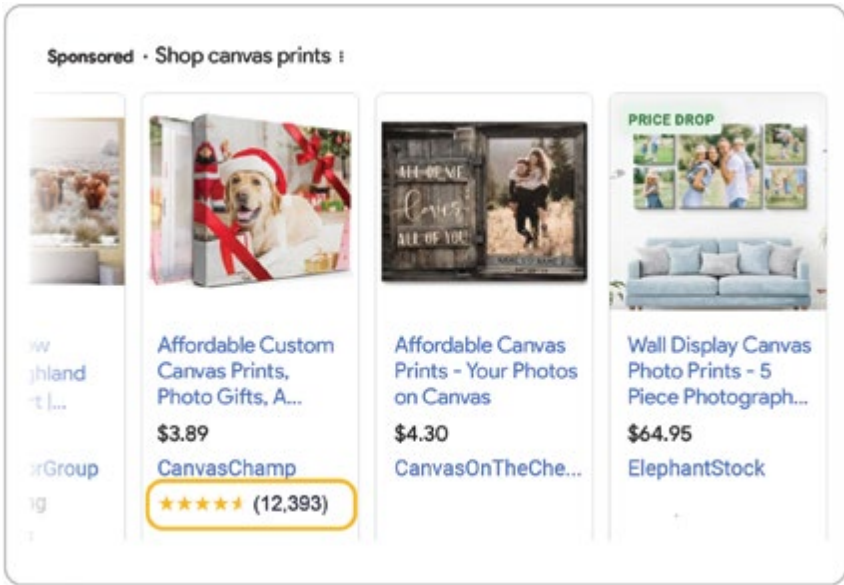
27 Justin Smith, CEO. "Mobile Ecommerce Stats in 2023: What Percentage of eCommerce Sales Are on Mobile Devices?" OuterBox Solutions, Inc., 17 Mar. 2023, www.outerboxdesign.com/web-design-articles/mobile-ecommerce-statistics.

Where Do Product Reviews Show Up in Search?

As we mentioned, specific product name searches tend to occur further down the conversion path, which means that the consideration set (their short-list of more serious options) is generally smaller, purchase intent is higher, and conversion rates are generally better, so you really want to do your best to stand out.

Here are all of the places where your product reviews are likely to be displayed in search:

Google Shopping Paid (Sponsored) Ads



Google Shopping sponsored product ad with star ratings

Google’s paid Shopping Ads always appear with the “Sponsored” designation above the listing, and these are currently displayed at the top or to the right of the main search results page, and at the top of the Google Shopping results page when you select the “Shopping” tab.

Similar to paid seller ratings, you have more control over paid product reviews and where you want them to appear in search results, based on your bid rate.

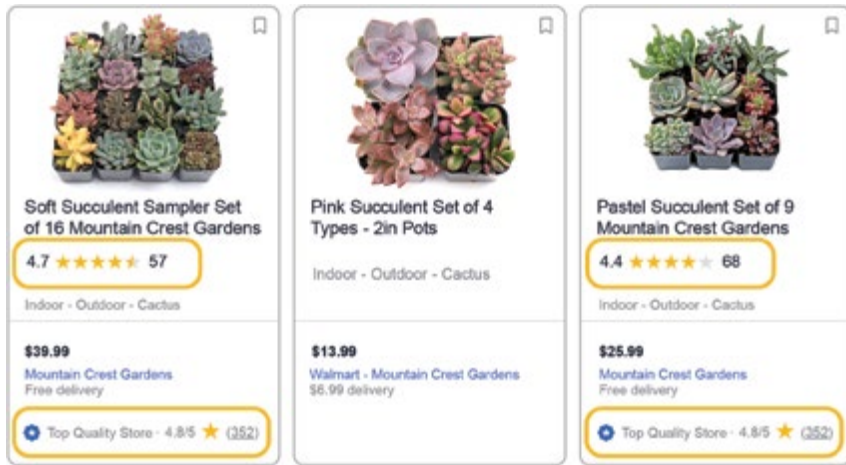
In the previous example, you can see that out of the four companies paying to advertise, only CanvasChamp has product reviews in their ads, making them completely stand out from the rest.

Google Shopping Organic Listings

Google Shopping is very similar to Google organic search in that it uses algorithms to try to display the most relevant products to the consumer.

That means that there is SEO involved, which is why you need to make sure that your product pages are search-optimized, and that your Google data feed is always accurate and up to date. It also means that your product reviews and your seller ratings play an important role, both behind the scenes for search results, and visually in the display.

This is where the reputation management strategy really comes into play.



Google Shopping organic listings with product reviews and seller ratings

We briefly pointed this out in the previous chapter, but here you can see that both Mountain Crest Gardens listings have product reviews at the top and seller ratings at the bottom. Compare this to Walmart’s listing in the middle with no ratings.

You’ll also notice that Mountain Crest Gardens has a “Top Quality Store” badge (previously known as “Google Trusted Stores”) next to their seller ratings. This special badge was created by Google based on the seller ratings and has been tested and proven to increase trust and clicks, but it must be earned. Once you earn it as a brand, it automatically displays on all of your listings.

According to Google, “Our tests show that participating in this program can help merchants big and small. For example, Wayfair, the largest online-only retailer of home goods and

one of the top 50 largest online retailers as ranked by Internet Retailer, increased sales on its site by 2.3% with Google Trusted Stores. And Beau-coup, a specialty online favors and gifts retailer, saw an 8.6% increase”²⁸

(Side note: In our internal research we have found that many of our clients receive the “Top Quality Store” badge.)

The less your potential customers need to think, analyze, compare, and invest time and effort to address their uncertainties and questions, the more likely they are to buy from you

This is important because it goes back to System 1 thinking. You should always be asking yourself, “What can I do to eliminate friction, boost confidence, and make the decision process as simple and automatic as possible?” The less your potential customers need to think, analyze, compare, and invest time and effort to address their uncertainties and questions, the more likely they are to buy from you.

Consider the Mountain Crest Gardens search listings in the previous example in this context.

If I’ve never heard of Mountain Crest Gardens before and I do a search for “succulents” and the listing on the left catches my eye,

28 Fallows, Tom. “Connecting Shoppers and Great Stores Online.” Google, Google, 7 June 2012, blog.google/products/shopping/connecting-shoppers-and-great-stores/.

then in less than a second, I know with a high degree of certainty that I can trust this company to deliver a high-quality product.

I know that because:

- Mountain Crest Gardens showed up on page one of the search results, so Google must trust them
- 352 customers who have bought from this company had a great experience (4.8/5)
- Google trusts it so much that they designated it as a “Top Quality Store”
- 57 customers who bought this specific product loved it and gave it 4.7 out of 5 stars

Plus, they have nice clear graphics. I’m sold!

The idea here is that you always want to stack the deck in your favor by leveraging ethical persuasion techniques with decision-making aids and attractive design. It’s all part of behavioral psychology.



Soft Succulent Sampler Set of 16
Mountain Crest Gardens

4.7 ★★★★★ 57

16 unique, premium tender succulents. Great assortment of colors & forms. Fully rooted. Name tags included. Easy to grow & low maintenance year-round.

Indoor - Outdoor - Cactus

[View product details](#)

\$39.99
+\$2.46 est. tax
Mountain Crest Gardens
Free delivery

Top Quality Store - 4.8/5 ★ (352)

Google Shopping detailed product view with product reviews and seller ratings

Above is a detailed view of what a consumer would see if they wanted to learn more about a product before visiting the website. Note the product reviews at the top and the seller ratings at the bottom.

WARMIES - Alligator
★★★★★ (319)

Sold by	Details & special offers	Total Price
Warmies.com Top Quality Store 4.8/5 ★ (13K) 1 more offer	\$8.00 delivery by Aug 29 30-day returns	\$40.16
Walmart 2 more offers	Free delivery	\$31.64
Lil Tulips	Delivery by Tue, Sep 5 14-day returns	\$51.50

Google Shopping multiple vendor product page with product reviews and seller ratings

The example above is a product page with multiple vendors selling the same product. You'll notice that the product reviews are aggregated at the top of the page, but the seller ratings display next to individual vendor.

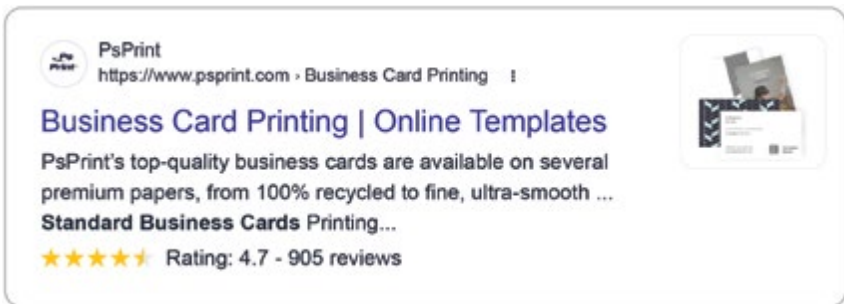
One of the benefits of selling a product with multiple vendors is that you get to leverage the product reviews of other vendors on Google Shopping. However, that also makes it so that everyone has the same number of product reviews, which makes seller ratings even more important because it gives you a way to separate yourself and add another layer of trust, just like in the example above.

You'll also notice that Walmart and Lil Tulips don't have a seller rating or a "Top Quality Store" badge, making Warmies stand out as the more trusted choice.

Google Organic Search Listings

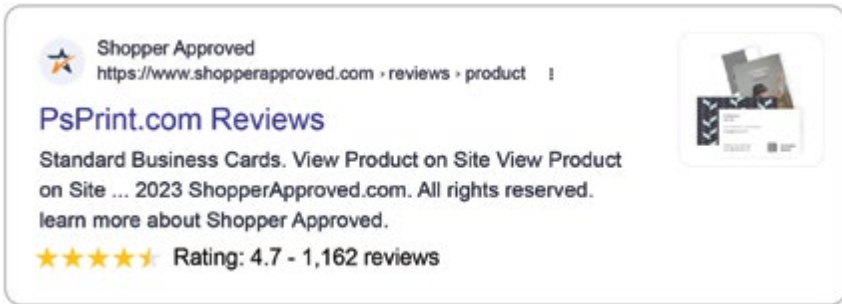
Product review stars and product images can also appear in organic search listings for free.

Organic product listings really stand out and get noticed when your product reviews are displayed under them. Sometimes Google even adds a photo, like the example below.



Website's Google organic product listing with product reviews

And if your review platform also displays your product reviews on their website, you can often get a second listing like the following image, increasing your credibility, visibility and opportunities for more traffic.







Review platform's Google organic product listing with product reviews

If you are selling the same product as multiple vendors, or selling your product on multiple websites, Google sometimes adds a vertical sidebar with the total product reviews, offering additional pricing information, and breaking down the vendors:

Beddy's Franklin Luxe Twin Zippered Bedding

★★★★★
(40)

Details
Reviews
Stores

↕ Typically **\$201-310**

<p style="margin: 0;">Beddy's</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Franklin Luxe Gray & Choc...</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 12px;">\$19.95 delivery by Wed, Feb 28</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">\$201.47</p> <p style="margin: 0;">\$310</p>
<p style="margin: 0;">Walmart - Beddy's</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Franklin Luxe Gray & Choc...</p> <p style="margin: 0; font-size: 12px;">Free delivery</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">\$229.95</p>

Google sponsored product ad with aggregate product reviews

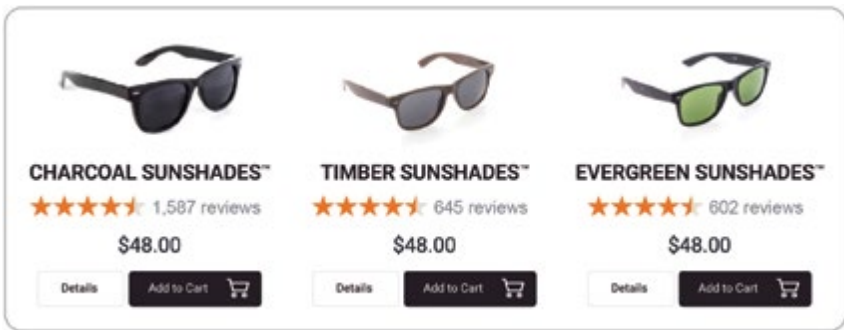
Remember that we're focusing on strategy here. The goal is to leverage your reputation for maximum online visibility, clicks, and conversions, and the best way to do that is to pursue both sponsored and organic product search results, with the added

power of star ratings in every listing to gain maximum visibility and clicks.

Where Do Product Reviews Show Up on My Website?

Once a visitor lands on your website, there are two critical pages on your website where product reviews must appear: The product category pages, and individual product pages. If you do not display product reviews on these pages, it will create a tremendous amount of uncertainty (friction), and you will lose a lot of potential sales.

Product Category Page

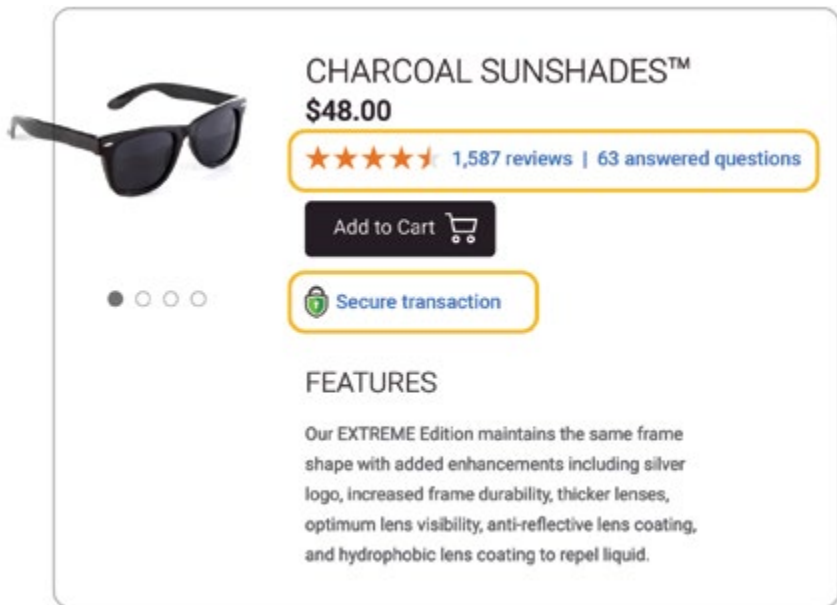


Website category page example with aggregated product reviews

Product category pages are pages where you display your similar products next to each other so your visitors can quickly compare them without having to go to every individual product page. By

adding your aggregated product review data under each product, you can continue to facilitate System 1 thinking by helping them to make decisions as quickly and easily as possible.

Product Page



Website product page example with aggregated product reviews, Q&A, and website security

Your product detail page is often the most important page on your website. Every single step along the conversion path, if done properly, leads potential customers to this page. This is the moment of truth when they decide whether to buy your product, so anything you can do to establish trust, value, differentiation, and ethically influence their decision is really going to pay off.

At Shopper Approved, we have researched, designed, and tested what we believe to be the optimal trust/social proof configuration for ecommerce product pages. We call it the Traffic & Conversion Suite.

The Traffic & Conversion Suite is a set of tools designed to look and function similar to an Amazon product page, which includes product reviews, product Q&A, and a website security seal . The reason this configuration is so effective is that consumers are very familiar and comfortable with this layout, and anything you can do that is already familiar to consumers lowers friction in their shopping experience.

During our research, we showed 600 consumers a product page with the Suite and an identical page without it, and **91% of the adults surveyed preferred the Traffic & Conversion Suite page.**

Coincidentally, the largest online marketplaces also use a similar design and tool configuration, including Amazon, Best Buy, Walmart, Home Depot, Lowes, and more. In other words, these assets, configured in this way, have been exhaustively tested and proven to work, and have now become the de-facto product page design that consumers are used to, comfortable with, and confident in.

Providing consumers with the Traffic & Conversion Suite reduces their cognitive load, while providing them with instant access to the information they need to make an informed decision, in the exact location they need and expect to see it.

The “Traffic” part of the suite comes from the search-optimized content that is added to the page every time a new product review or Q&A is created.

This user-generated and user/brand-generated content can help to boost your product pages in both Google search and Google Shopping. As we will show in Chapter 8, it also creates dozens, or even hundreds of search-optimized Q&A listings in Google—all of which help to boost your product’s visibility, credibility, and trust—ultimately generating more qualified traffic to your site.

The “Conversion” part of the suite comes from having all the verified reviews and helpful Q&A content on your product pages to help potential customers overcome uncertainty and justify their reason for buying.

Another key ingredient on the conversion side of the suite is the website security seal. This addresses and resolves the third and final question that consumers ask themselves, which is “Can I trust this transaction?” This secret conversion weapon is overlooked by virtually every company online—except for Amazon.

Under almost every “Buy Now” button on Amazon, they have a “Secure Transaction” link. Why? It’s likely because they know that security concerns are one of the main reasons why people abandon their shopping carts and decide not to buy. But you’re probably thinking, “They’re Amazon for Pete’s sake! Everyone knows they’re secure.” And yet they still do it; because people

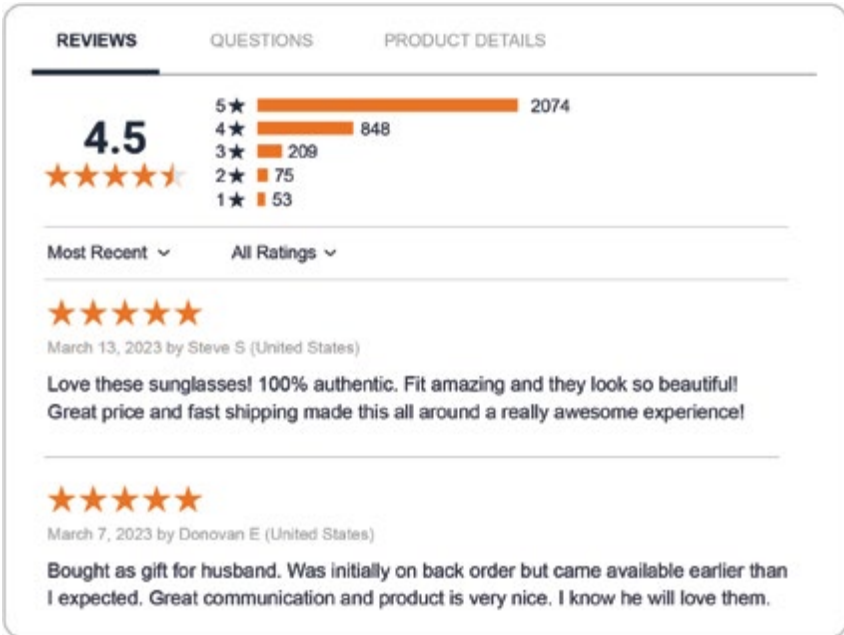
need that little added assurance—which means you should do it too.

Most website owners think that new customers will inherently know that their shopping cart includes website security, vulnerability scanning, and SSL encryption, but customers don't know that. How could they? They've never been to your website before, and they are constantly bombarded with news of companies being hacked.

This is another Reputation King power move, because it's an instant way to borrow a trusted third party's credibility and leverage it to boost your sales. In fact, in independent testing by Conversion Fanatics, **Trust Guard seals** (the website security seals that are featured in the Shopper Approved Traffic & Conversion Suite) **were proven to increase conversion rates by 19.2%.**

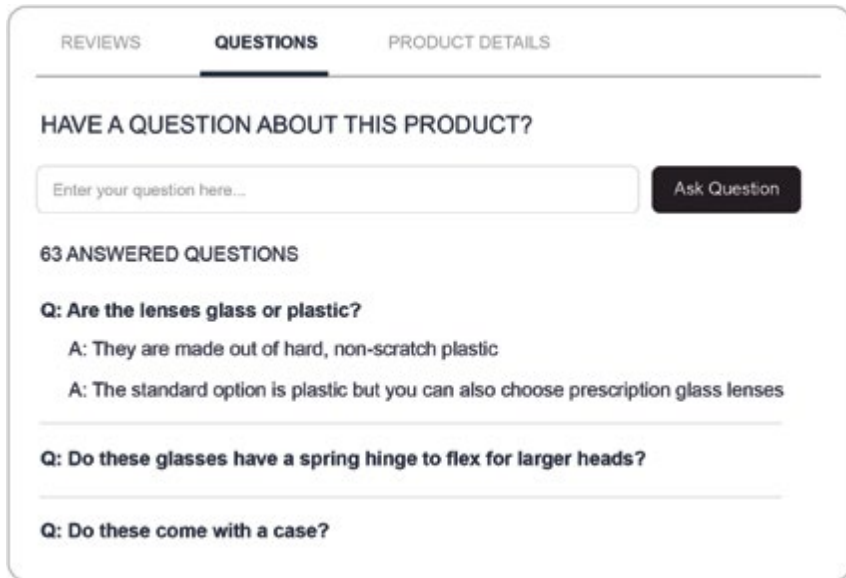
Long story short, adding a website security seal next to the Buy Now button on your product page can be one of the fastest and easiest ways to increase your sales.

As the customer scrolls down the product page, they come to the full product review and Q&A widgets, which display a wealth of information to help them finalize their decision.



Example of a product review widget further down the product page

Potential customers can read in-depth reviews and do as much research as they like—all while remaining on your product page.



Example of a Q&A widget (more details in Chapter 8)

Where Else Can I Display Product Reviews?

If your review platform allows you to display your product reviews on a dedicated certificate page on their website, you can benefit from the additional search listings mentioned earlier in the chapter.

Here is a product review category page on a review platform that lists your products. It is very similar to a category page on your website.

ShopperApproved




steel-toe-shoes.com Reviews

[Visit website](#)

Overview Company Reviews **Product Reviews**

Top Rated Products

Shopper Approved collects reviews from customers who have made a verified purchase

 <p>Men's Reebok Allow Toe Mid Athletic Metguard Work Book RB3400</p> <p>★★★★★ 271 Reviews</p> <p>Go to product</p>	 <p>Men's Florsheim Steel Toe Wedge Sole Work Shoe FS2630</p> <p>★★★★★ 148 Reviews</p> <p>Go to product</p>	 <p>Men's Rockport Steel Toe Casual Work Shoe RP5700</p> <p>★★★★★ 142 Reviews</p> <p>Go to product</p>
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Product reviews can appear on various review platform certificate pages


The following image shows an individual product review page on a review platform. It includes all your reviews about each individual product. These pages are search-optimized to show up in Google and Bing, and are endorsed by the review platform, adding trust and authority.

ShopperApproved

steel-toe-shoes.com Reviews

[Visit website](#)

Overview Company Reviews Product Reviews


 **Men's Reebok Alloy Toe Mid Athletic Metguard Work Book RB3400**

[View product on site](#)

4.6
OVERALL STAR RATING

5 stars		201 (74%)
4 stars		48 (18%)
3 stars		15 (6%)
2 stars		2 (1%)
1 stars		5 (2%)

Filter All 5★ 4★ 3★ 2★ 1★

 **Men's Reebok Alloy Toe Mid Athletic Metguard Work Book RB3400**
[See more product reviews](#)

★★★★★
James M - 1 day ago

I am diabetic and am in steel toe shoes 12 hours a day. These are by far the best pair of whoes I have ever owned. I will continue to purchase my work shoes from STS

Example of a product review page on a review platform's certificate

Another place you can display your product reviews is on Walmart.com, if your review platform has a partnership with them. Walmart.com is the second largest ecommerce platform in the US, averaging over 120 million shoppers per month.

Walmart

Hoey
Hoey Wireless Earbuds, Bluetooth 5.1 Headphones with Mic, IP7 Waterproof Ear Hooks
 ★★★★★ (4.7) 2489
 Now \$21.85 ~~\$38.00~~
 Price when purchased online
 Add to cart

Customer ratings & reviews
4.7 out of 5
 ★★★★★ (4.7) 2489

5 stars	2126
4 stars	95
3 stars	177
2 stars	25
1 stars	85

Most helpful positive review

★★★★★ Verified Purchase
Good earbuds band for your...
 Excellent battery life, sounds pretty good.
 Christopher

VS

Most helpful negative review

★★☆☆☆ Verified Purchase
I didn't like it
 One of the ears is not charging properly
 Moren

Example of product reviews being displayed on Walmart.com

One of the great things about walmart.com syndication is that you can upload all your existing product reviews at once, helping to instantly boost your product listings and stand out. You also get a Verified Purchaser badge next to your customer’s reviews for added credibility.

Other places that you can also leverage your product ratings and reviews include social media ads, influencer posts, online retargeting ads (for those who visited specific product pages but didn't buy), cart abandonment emails, product print ads, product press releases, and more.

LET'S TALK PRODUCT REVIEWS, SHALL WE?

Join us as we break down product reviews in more detail in an exclusive video interview we recorded, that's only available as part of this book. **For instant access, scan the QR Code or go to:**
reputationking.com/bonus



7

VIDEO REVIEWS

“What you say to customers is advertising. What they say to their friends is the truth. Businesses should be seeking advocates of their brand at all times.”

—Stacey Kehoe

What are Video Reviews?

Video reviews are either about the website or brand and the customer’s overall shopping experience, or about a product or service they purchased from the website. These are typically recorded on the customer’s mobile phone and uploaded to the review platform. From there, they can also be shared to your website, YouTube, Facebook, and other social media sites.

Video reviews are important because video consumption continues to explode online, with the average person now watching seventeen hours of video per week! ²⁹

In the two-year period between 2015 and 2017, over 50,000 years' worth of video reviews were watched on YouTube

And one of the things consumers love watching are video reviews. Not only are video reviews watched by 25% of consumers every week, ³⁰ but Google reported that in the two-year period between 2015 and 2017, over 50,000 years' worth of video reviews were watched on YouTube from mobile devices alone. ³¹

This makes video reviews some of the most valuable SEO, reputation, and sales assets online.

Having video reviews is like having a small army of salespeople actively promoting your brand and products for you 24 hours a day—for free.

29 "Video Marketing Statistics: New Data for 2023." Wyzowl, www.wyzowl.com/video-marketing-statistics/.

30 Tiushka, Nazar. "140+ Video Consumption Statistics: Trends, Social Media, Revenue, Mobile Viewing & Popularity Facts." MarketSplash, MarketSplash, 19 July 2023, marketsplash.com/video-consumption-statistics/.

31 "Product Review Video Watch Time Statistics - Think with Google." Google, Google, www.thinkwithgoogle.com/consumer-insights/consumer-trends/product-review-video-watch-time-statistics/.

The problem is that just like seller ratings and product reviews, most companies miss the boat on how to collect and fully leverage video reviews.

When we talk about video reviews, we're not just talking about collecting a few video testimonials or putting a little video montage of a few happy customers on your homepage, although that can be very powerful.

We're talking about actively inviting every existing customer to record a video review about their brand or product experience, optimizing each video for SEO, visibility, and traffic, and then leveraging them on your website to improve authority, trust, engagement, and conversion.

Why are Video Reviews Important?

Video reviews have some unique characteristics that make them a very valuable part of your online reputation and growth strategy. For example:

- Each video can be a stand-alone asset. This means that they can each get their own dedicated video page on YouTube. Over time, each video can get hundreds or even thousands of views, all of which add up to bring you more brand recognition, visibility, trust, and traffic.

Think of each one like a little traffic and reputation generator. They improve your reputation because your existing customers are telling others about how great you are; they also generate high-quality traffic because they convince new consumers to buy from you.

- You can cherry-pick which videos to use. Unlike seller ratings and product reviews, video reviews are completely unregulated by search engines, so you can decide which videos you post and syndicate.
- You can learn from them. When an unhappy customer leaves a video review, it gives you the opportunity to empathize with them on a personal, intimate level that doesn't happen with a text review. It also gives you the ability to visually see any product flaws or problems they point out and to try to resolve any issues internally, without making the video public.
- You can incentivize video reviews. The good news is that video reviews are incredible assets that provide long-term dividends. The bad news is that they're harder to get. But unlike seller ratings and product reviews, you can incentivize customers to record a video review. Incentives may include discount codes, free samples, loyalty points, or special offers.

- Consumers love to watch them. Product video reviews are the #5 highest-viewed category on YouTube. In addition, unboxing videos are #8 and video testimonials are #12.³² Video reviews also rank incredibly well in Google and have a high click-through rate—generating 41% more clicks than plain text listings.³³
- They create a personal, emotional connection that text can't replicate. They also have a high level of credibility and trust. Video allows your customers to see and hear the reviewer, which makes it more entertaining, engaging, and authentic.³⁴
- Your customers are promoting you. This is often the best kind of recommendation you can get; happy customers in front of a camera telling other customers why they chose you, what they love about you and your products, and why they recommend buying from you.

32 "24 Most Popular Types of YouTube Videos in 2023." Visme Blog, 7 July 2023, visme.co/blog/types-of-youtube-videos/.

33 Kakkar, Deepasha. "How Videos Generate Quick SEO Results." Search Engine Watch, 2 Mar. 2020, www.searchenginewatch.com/2018/02/19/how-videos-generate-quick-seo-results/.

34 "Council Post: Build a Trusted Brand through Video Testimonials." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 24 July 2020, www.forbes.com/sites/theyec/2020/07/27/build-a-trusted-brand-through-video-testimonials/.

- They're easier to rank in Google. Because Google owns YouTube, and because so many people are consuming video, Google displays more video in organic search than ever before. According to Forrester Research, video is fifty times easier to rank for in Google than text-based content alone.³⁵

Video reviews also improve conversions. Research shows that 62% of consumers watch product video reviews before making a purchase,³⁶ and video testimonials can increase conversion rates by 25%.³⁷

In other words, if you want to have an excellent reputation and grow your business, you need to take video reviews very seriously.

Imagine the compounding effect that adding seller ratings, product reviews, and video reviews together can have on your search visibility, credibility, and reputation.

35 Elliott, Nate. "The Easiest Way to a First-Page Ranking on Google." Forrester, 18 July 2017, www.forrester.com/blogs/09-01-08-the_easiest_way_to_a_first_page_ranking_on_google/.

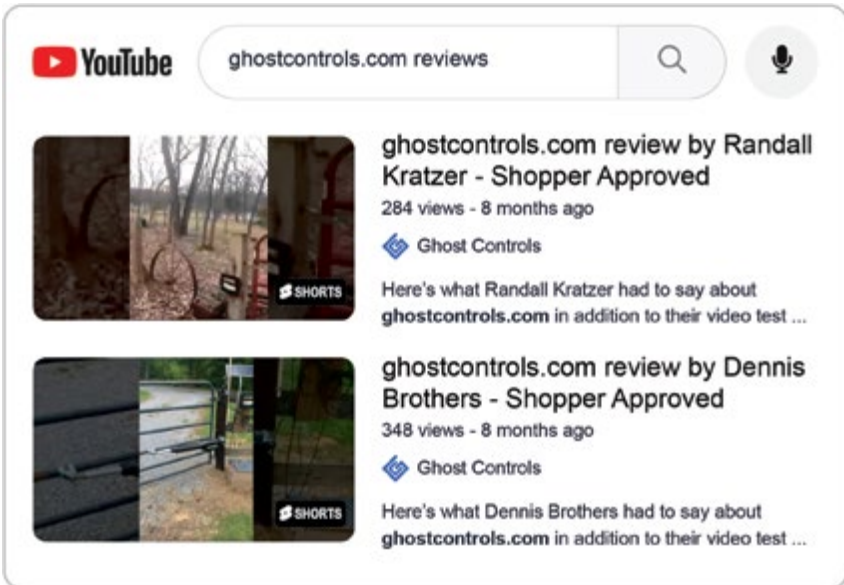
36 How Video Helps Increase Ecommerce Conversion Rates, www.business2community.com/video-marketing-articles/how-video-helps-increase-ecommerce-conversion-rates-02152070. Accessed 28 Sept. 2023.

37 Locke-Paddon, Lauren. "The Impact of Video Testimonials on Marketing." Video Testimonials for Everyone, Video Testimonials for Everyone, 3 Feb. 2023, vocalvideo.com/resources/impact-of-video-testimonials-on-marketing/.

Where Do Video Reviews Show Up in Search?

When you syndicate your video reviews to YouTube, not only are they available in YouTube search results, but they also show up in Google and even Bing search results, generating multiple search listings, which can cumulatively drive thousands or even tens of thousands of highly qualified, new potential customers to your site each year.

YouTube Search Results



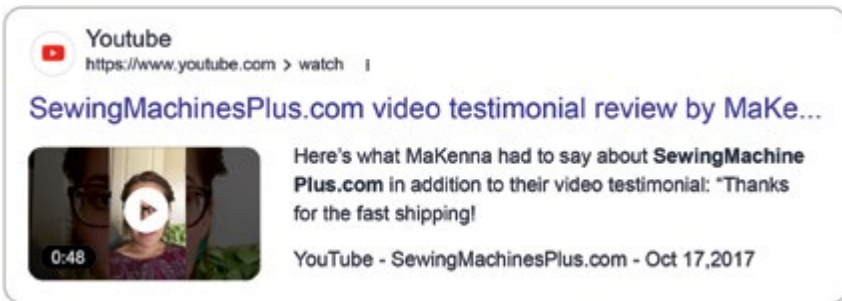
Example of video reviews in YouTube search results

Once you approve a video review, it is automatically syndicated to YouTube, where people can find it if they search for reviews

about your brand. Over time, each video can be watched hundreds or even thousands of times.

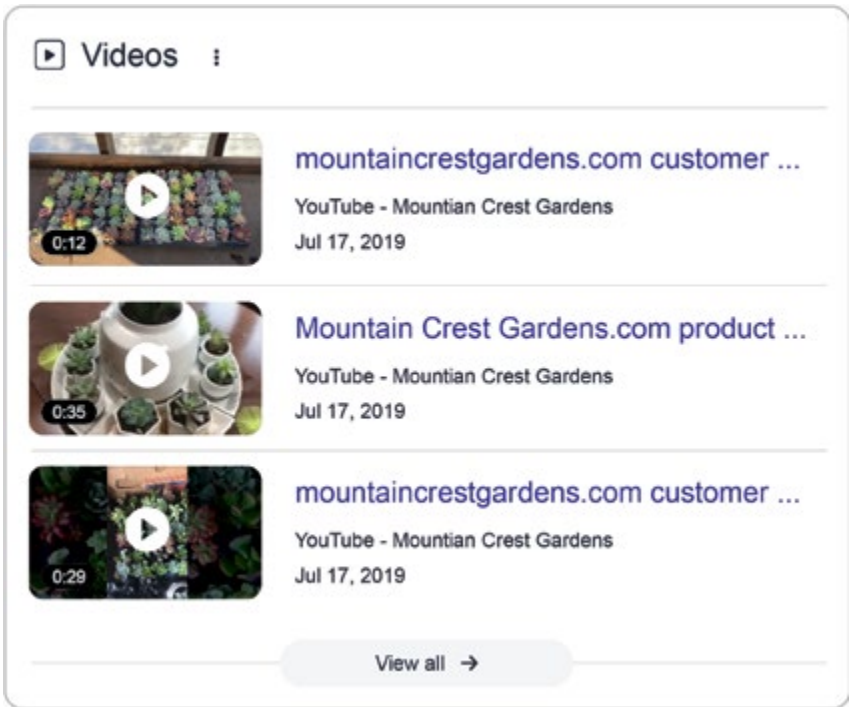
Google Search Results

Once your videos are on YouTube, Google and Bing index them and display them in organic search results. Sometimes they add them as single listings like this:



Example of a single YouTube video review in Google organic search results

And sometimes they add them as multiple listings like this:



Example of multiple YouTube video reviews in Google organic search results

They also show up in the Videos tab at the top of Google, so people who prefer videos can watch more of them.



Example of video reviews displaying in the Google Videos tab

In addition to maximizing your exposure in search results, video reviews can also be used in your social media ads, organic social media posts, Google Business Profile, BBB profile, Yelp profile, and more.

Review Certificate

If your review platform displays your video reviews on their website, they can also show up in Google search results as part of your review certificate page:

GFUEL [Visit site ↗](#)

[Overview](#) [About](#) [Reviews](#)

Reviews 443,837

4.7 ★★★★★

See all customer videos

Filter Reviews

<input type="checkbox"/> 5 ★	<div style="width: 81%;"></div>	360K+ 81%
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 ★	<div style="width: 13%;"></div>	59K+ 13%
<input type="checkbox"/> 3 ★	<div style="width: 3%;"></div>	17K+ 3%
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 ★	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	3K+ 0%
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 ★	<div style="width: 0%;"></div>	3K+ 0%

All Ratings

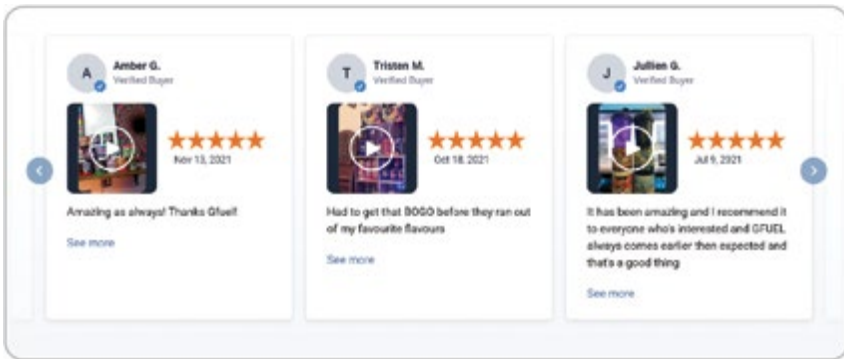
Sort by

Most Recent

Example of a review certificate page

Where Do Video Reviews Show Up on My Website?

A video widget can be used in any number of places on your website, and on virtually any page. However, brand-based video reviews are best displayed on homepages and secondary pages, and product video reviews are best displayed on product pages, where they can do wonders to validate and support potential customers' buying decisions.



Example of a video review display widget on a webpage

As with seller ratings and product reviews, once they are available on your website, video reviews can improve your customer engagement, time on page, average order value (AOV), and most importantly, your conversion rate.

You can also place video testimonials in your email marketing campaigns, shopping cart, exit pop-ups, order confirmation emails, cart abandonment emails, and more.

VIDEO REVIEWS ARE A GAME CHANGER

There is literally nothing more powerful than having your happy customers tell new potential customers how amazing you are. We recorded a special video where we discuss the future of video reviews.

**For instant access, scan the QR
Code or go to:**

reputationking.com/bonus



8

AI-POWERED SEARCH- OPTIMIZED Q&A

“You must be present to win.”

–Alex Rodriguez

How Do You Win Online?

That’s an age-old question, and one that Google recently discussed in *Decoding Decisions*. In order for your brand to take market share away from a competitor, “...you have to be present when consumers are deliberating. This might seem obvious, but it’s such a fundamental point that we don’t want its importance to be mistaken. ...there is surprising power in just showing up at the right moment.”³⁸

In other words, being visible in search results is an absolute precursor to any online success. If you don’t show up when

38 Decoding Decisions - Think with Google, www.thinkwithgoogle.com/_qs/documents/9998/Decoding_Decisions_The_Messy_Middle_of_Purchase_Behavior.pdf.

people are looking for your solution, products, product category, or competitors, you do not exist.

So, What Does Online Visibility Have to Do With Q&A?

Quite frankly, an AI-powered, search-optimized Q&A strategy may be the most overlooked and least utilized tool in the world of reputation management, SEO, and conversion. This is because having your products, solutions, and related questions appear at the top of organic search results is both the cheapest and most effective way to get visibility and traffic, and one of the fastest ways to build trust.

Most businesses have no idea of the incredible power that Q&A has, or how to leverage it, and so they simply use it to answer basic customer questions on product pages. This gives any business that leverages Q&A as a strategic SEO tool a huge competitive advantage.

There are two reasons why search-optimized Q&A is so important to your reputation:

#1 – Answering Questions Helps You to Become a Helpful, Trusted Resource

One way to craft a powerful reputation is to answer as many questions as you possibly can that your audience has either asked in the past, is currently asking, or might ask in the future about your company, competitors, industry, product categories, and individual products.

Let's face it, anyone can throw up a website and offer products for sale. But the company that offers relevant and informative answers about those products will be seen as the smartest, most helpful, and generally most trusted resource in their space.

In his landmark research and book *How Customers Think*, Professor Gerald Zaltman of Harvard University found that people describe their favorite and most trusted brands with one or more of three core metaphors:

- Being a helpful resource
- Nurturing
- Supportive

These ideas seem to closely align with Google's vision. Their 2022 Helpful Content algorithm update and guidelines make it very clear that they are looking for websites that are willing to step up and add value and substance in the form of helpful,

informative, and supportive content that answers customer questions.

#2 – Answering Questions Helps You Rank in Google, Making You an Authority

As a rule of thumb, a significant portion of your reputation management strategy should be to show up at the top of search results with the best, most accurate and most helpful answers to your customers' questions. After all, that's why they are using a search engine to begin with.

When it comes to search results, you must be present to win. And if you're not in the top five organic search results when people have questions about anything related to your industry, products, competitors or brand, then you have about zero chance of being considered as a viable option.

If you're like most people, including your competition, you probably haven't given Q&A much consideration as a key SEO and reputation strategy. But if you consider that Google is a huge question and answer engine, then doesn't it make sense that they would want to display the best answers to consumer questions at the top of their search results?

Well, according to Google's recently published "E-E-A-T" guidelines (experience, expertise, authoritativeness, and trustworthiness), that's exactly what they want, and they've made it very clear that they are willing to put the content that meets those criteria front and center.



AI-powered and search-optimized Q&A can improve both SEO and conversion

Once again, we find ourselves living in a unique space that bridges two worlds—SEO and traffic on one side, and conversion and sales on the other. All you have to do is make the right connections on both sides, and incredible things start to happen.

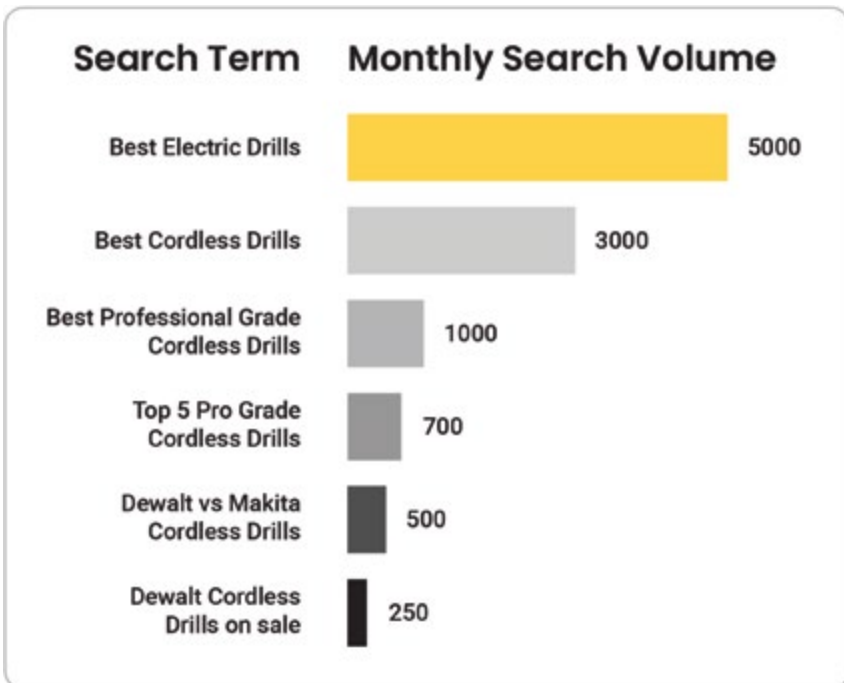
As you create more search-optimized Q&A, you will start to see your answers show up more frequently and more prominently in Google, which builds your reputation and authority and generates more qualified traffic to your site.

Then, once shoppers are on your site, you can display your Q&A on different pages to help guide them further down the conversion path, which drives more sales.

So, now that you see the connections that search-optimized Q&A can make to help build your reputation, while simultaneously driving more traffic and conversions, you have some unique new opportunities that you can capitalize on.

Opportunity #1 – You Can Leverage Q&A to Target Different Categories and Keywords

Knowing that consumers do different types of searches based on where they are on the conversion path, you can start to come up with answers to common questions at each stage of the journey—from more broad “best” “how to” and “what is” searches, to category searches, down to detailed product features and specs—just like with traditional SEO.



Consumers move along the conversion path as their research gets more and more specific

Like traditional SEO, non-branded search terms are more difficult to rank for, such as “Best Cordless Drills”, but you can generate a lot of traffic and exposure when you do break through.

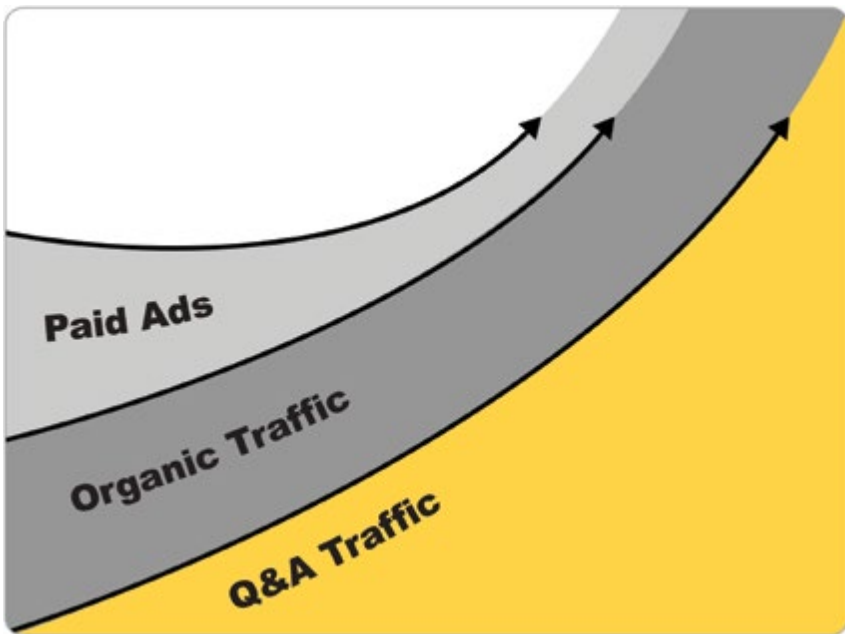
The initial focus with search-optimized Q&A is to provide targeted answers to specific longtail search questions (usually consisting of three-to-ten-word phrases) that occur a bit further down the conversion path. These keywords are less competitive, easier to rank for, and more transactional based, which means they are ideal for providing helpful, informative answers. They also have the highest buyer intent, which means more potential conversions.

Ultimately, you can turn anything into a question and an answer. For example, in the previous graphic, the keyword “DeWalt cordless drills on sale” could easily be turned into a question by saying something like, “How often do DeWalt cordless drills go on sale?” or “Do DeWalt cordless drills go on sale?” or “Where can I find a DeWalt cordless drill on sale?”

Once you dominate the more specific, product oriented, longtail search terms, you can move up the funnel and start creating questions and answers for more non-branded, industry, and category search terms. We have found great results with this strategy.

Opportunity #2 – You Can Save Money on Paid Traffic

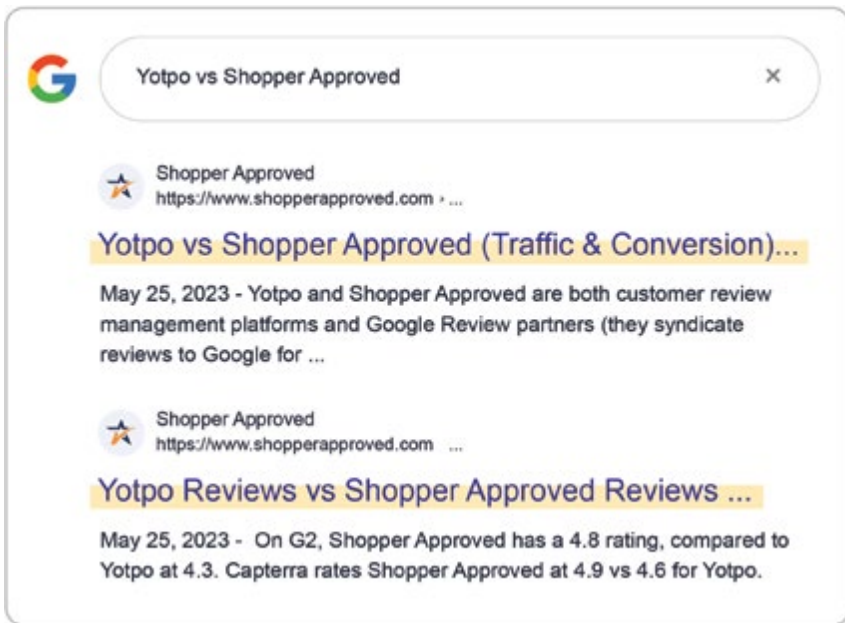
Paid traffic is a necessary evil that seems to keep getting more expensive over time. Fortunately, search-optimized Q&A can help mitigate that problem.



Search-optimized and AI-powered Q&A is a new 3rd source of traffic

As you create more questions and answers, you will see more of your Q&A listings showing up in search results, creating more and more visibility, and ultimately becoming a long-term, dependable source of free traffic. This allows you to spend less on ads over time.

For example, as you can see in the following screenshot, by writing some creative Q&A and then optimizing it for search, we have managed to capture organic positions 1 and 2 for a valuable “competitor vs” search term. And we did it without paid ads. Not only will this save us thousands of dollars per year in ads that we no longer need to bid on, but it will generate thousands in new revenue.



Example of search-optimized Q&A displaying in the top two organic search results

We’ve seen clients get anywhere from several thousand, to hundreds of thousands of additional free, qualified visitors every month to their websites using the strategies we’re sharing

here. And with the development of new AI tools and features, generating search-optimized Q&A is easier than ever before.

Opportunity #3 – You Can Use Q&A on Other Pages of Your Website, Not Just Product Pages

Most people only think about adding Q&A to their product pages, but Q&A is great to add to any page where people might feel uncertain, unclear, or have questions.

Uncertainty is often the primary driver behind high bounce and cart abandonment rates

Uncertainty is often the primary driver behind high bounce and cart abandonment rates. Fortunately, an easy way to reduce uncertainty is by providing quick and easy answers to questions or concerns that a potential customer might have.

Here's a list of some of areas that consumers are uncertain about that many companies don't properly address:

- Website/brand legitimacy (Is your company legit?)
- Website security (identity and credit card theft concerns)
- Privacy protection (opt-ins and spam)
- Shipping costs

- Order tracking
- Delivery times
- Return policy
- Return shipping costs
- Critical reviews (especially any lack of responses from your company)
- Pricing transparency
- Financing options
- Guarantees and warranties
- Inventory and product availability
- Product vs competition comparisons in terms of features, specs and cost
- How popular is the product?
- Product specifications
- Product details
- Product fit and/or compatibility with related products or accessories.

With so many of these concerns going largely unaddressed, or difficult to find in search, or on the website, it's no wonder that

the average cart abandonment rate is 70.19% ³⁹, and the average ecommerce site-wide conversion rate is only 1.9%. ⁴⁰ There is just too much uncertainty and friction for most consumers to complete their purchase.

Fortunately, many of these concerns can be easily addressed and resolved by simply adding Q&A at the appropriate locations on your website.

For example, we highly recommend adding searchable Q&A to the bottom of your homepage, where you can address some of the more high-level questions and concerns about the brand. Another great place to address your brand's legitimacy is by adding Q&A to your "About Us" page. And, if you have any dedicated pages that specifically discuss your privacy policy, return policy, warranties, or guarantees, those are great places to add Q&A as well.

Just to give you an idea of how valuable and simple this can be, we went to ChatGPT and randomly asked the question, "What are some questions that a consumer might ask about product returns?"

In ten seconds, it responded with the following twenty questions:

- What is your product return policy?

39 "49 Cart Abandonment Rate Statistics 2023 – Cart & Checkout." Baymard Institute, baymard.com/lists/cart-abandonment-rate.

40 "Ecommerce Market Data and Ecommerce Benchmarks." Ecommerce Market Data and Ecommerce Benchmarks for August 2023, www.irpcommerce.com/en/gb/EcommerceMarketData.aspx. Data measured from 8/2022-7/2023.

- How long do I have to return a product after purchase?
- What are the conditions for returning a product?
- Is there a specific process I need to follow to initiate a return?
- Do I need to provide a reason for the return?
- Can I return products purchased both online and in-store through the same process?
- Is there a restocking fee for returning products?
- Do I need to have the original packaging and receipt to return a product?
- Can I return a product that has been used or opened?
- What options do I have for returning a defective or damaged product?
- Do you offer a refund, or only store credit, for returns?
- How long does it take to process a return and receive a refund?
- Do you provide a prepaid return shipping label, or do I need to cover the shipping costs?
- What if the product I received is different from what I ordered?
- Do you offer exchanges for different sizes, colors, or variations of the same product?

- Are there any products that are not eligible for returns, such as clearance items or personalized products?
- What happens if I return a product without following the correct return process?
- Can I return a gift that was purchased for me?
- Is there a time limit for returning products during special sale events, like Black Friday or holiday sales?
- Do you have a customer service or support team available to assist with product returns?

These are all great questions, and potential friction points that every one of your potential customers may be wondering, and the answers to them in search, and on your product pages would very likely increase your conversion rate for anyone who reads them.

But these questions were missing an important SEO variable—the company name. So, we then asked ChatGPT to do the following: “Take the questions above and add the business name, ACME Corporation, into the questions.”

It shot back the list of questions...

- What is ACME Corporation’s product return policy?
- How long do I have to return a product to ACME Corporation after purchase?

- What are the conditions set by ACME Corporation for returning a product?
- Is there a specific process I need to follow with ACME Corporation to initiate a return?

You get the idea.

When your company name is added, all these questions and answers can not only be added to your website, but they can now also show up in a Google search—effectively doubling their utility and value.

Here's another pro tip for your team to really kickstart your Q&A:

As we just showed you, you can use ChatGPT to come up with all kinds of great questions. Some other questions we asked were:

- What are some questions that a consumer might ask about online privacy?
- What are some questions that a consumer might ask about a company online?
- What are some questions that a consumer might ask about guarantees?
- What are some questions that a consumer might ask about return shipping?

You can even tell ChatGPT what business you're in, and then ask it to provide you with an initial answer as a starting point, and then simply customize its responses to fit your particular needs. For example, we asked it:

- I'm in the SaaS industry and sell email marketing software. What are some popular questions that potential consumers might have?
- I sell fire pits online. What are some popular questions that potential customers might have?

It will surprise you how good the questions that it generates are.

Here's another pro tip when your team has a short answer to a question: Use ChatGPT to help you make your short answers longer (40-60 words) to optimize them for featured snippets and People Also Ask.

For example, if you're trying to answer the question, "How long do I have to return a product to ACME Corporation after purchase?" your answer might only be "30 days," but you can ask ChatGPT to extend your answer using a command like this:

"Answer the following question: 'How long do I have to return a product to ACME Corporation after purchase?' using the answer of '30 days,' but make the answer between 40–60 words."

When we added this to ChatGPT, it responded with the following answer:

"You have a window of 30 days from the date of purchase to return a product to ACME Corporation. This time frame ensures

you have sufficient time to assess your purchase and decide if it meets your expectations. Please initiate the return process within this 30-day period to be eligible for a refund or exchange.”

It literally took a two-word answer and turned it into a beautifully written answer with 55 words—and it includes the company name as well. It reads and sounds like you took a lot of time and effort to write it, which both Google and potential customers will greatly appreciate.

Q&A Conversion Statistics

So far in this chapter, we’ve shared with you several tips and strategies on how you can optimize and leverage Q&A, but we thought it would be good to also show you what’s possible when you really embrace this strategy.

On average, Q&A has had a tremendous impact on our clients. Here are some powerful statistics to really drive home the incredible value of Q&A:

- One of our clients, an online pest control company, increased their organic traffic by 400% with search-optimized Q&A—driving hundreds of thousands of unique visitors to their website annually.⁴¹

41 Bamrough, Dax. “How Q&A Doubled Traffic for Epestsupply.” Ecommerce Growth Tools by Shopper Approved, Shopper Approved, 28 July 2023, results.shopperapproved.com/blog/how-qa-doubled-traffic-for-epestsupply.



Q&A traffic of our pest control client (above), grew from 0 to almost 600,000 visitors/year

- Another of our clients, a company that sells DIY manuals, generates 40% of its total search traffic from search-optimized Q&A—driving over 400,000 visitors to their website each month. They have also reported a 497% increase in conversion rate when visitors engage with Q&A.
- Another of our clients, an RV parts dealer, consistently converts 75% of their shoppers who use the Q&A tool to ask a question, with a two-times higher customer lifetime value (CLTV).⁴²

⁴² Sprague, Duane “DJ.” “How Q&A Generated a 75% Conversion Rate for RVUpgrades.com.” Ecommerce Growth Tools by Shopper Approved, Shopper Approved, 21 June 2023, results.shopperapproved.com/blog/how-qa-increased-conversion-rates-by-75-for-rvupgrades.com.

- A recent study found a 177.2% lift in conversion among consumers who interacted with Q&A on the product page.⁴³ Another recent study found very similar results with a 157.1% lift in conversion when visitors interact with Q&A.
- 99% of consumers read Q&A at least occasionally, and 72% read Q&A regularly.
- 98% of consumers who read Q&A also read ratings and reviews.⁴⁴
- 73% of consumers are “extremely” or “highly likely” to visit a website that answered their product question in search.
- 80% of consumers click on the first organic search result that answers their product question.⁴⁵

Hopefully, you’re starting to get an idea of how important a search-optimized Q&A strategy can be for your online reputation, traffic and sales.

Just like ratings and reviews, Q&A does take time and effort to build, but thanks to modern software and AI capabilities, you can get better and faster results with much less time and effort.

43 Hutt, Steve, et al. “How User-Generated Content Impacts Conversion: 2023 Edition.” eCommerce Fastlane, 29 Mar. 2023, ecommercefastlane.com/how-user-generated-content-impacts-conversion-2023-edition/.

44 Team, PowerReviews. “The Conversion Impact of User-Generated Content: A Complete Breakdown.” PowerReviews, 20 Sept. 2022, www.powerreviews.com/insights/2021-ugc-conversion-impact-analysis/.

45 Sprague, Duane “DJ.” “The ‘traffic & Conversion Stack’ Ecommerce Survey.” Ecommerce Growth Tools by Shopper Approved, Shopper Approved, 28 July 2023, results.shopperapproved.com/blog/the-traffic-conversion-stack-ecommerce-survey.

Where Does Search-Optimized Q&A Show Up in Search?

Search-optimized Q&A is very different from traditional Q&A because there is a lot more strategy and behind-the-scenes technology working to try to increase the chances of each question and answer being discovered, indexed, and displayed in Google Featured Snippets, People Also Ask, and organic search results.

Traditional Q&A is often little more than a glorified posting script that you add to product pages. It might look nice, and if it's searchable it does help with conversion, but there's little else going on.

Search-optimized Q&A takes a different approach, which is a combination of art and science.

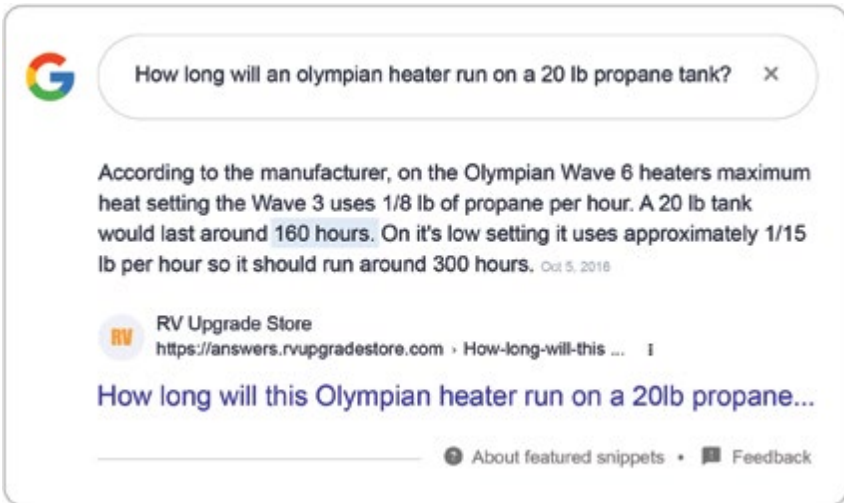
The art involves adding things like your company name and product keywords, writing responses that are between 40-60 words long, and referencing established experts or manufacturer guidelines.

The science involves things like automatically generating dedicated sub-folders for each question and answer, adding keywords into the title tags, adding schema markup (also called structured data) that classifies the page content and makes it easier for Google to display the content (for SEO purposes), internal deep linking to keyword related articles on your blog, creating topical site maps, and adding your product feed with

photos and links to relevant product pages so when your answers do show up in search, consumers can go directly to your related product pages to buy.

All of that might sound a bit complicated, but don't worry, it's easy once you get the hang of it, and a lot of it is automated.

Google Featured Snippet Results



Example of how Q&A appears at the top of search in a featured snippet

This example shows the featured snippet results generated by our search-optimized Q&A tool for one of our clients, RVupgrades.

Getting displayed as a Google Featured Snippet is like striking search engine gold

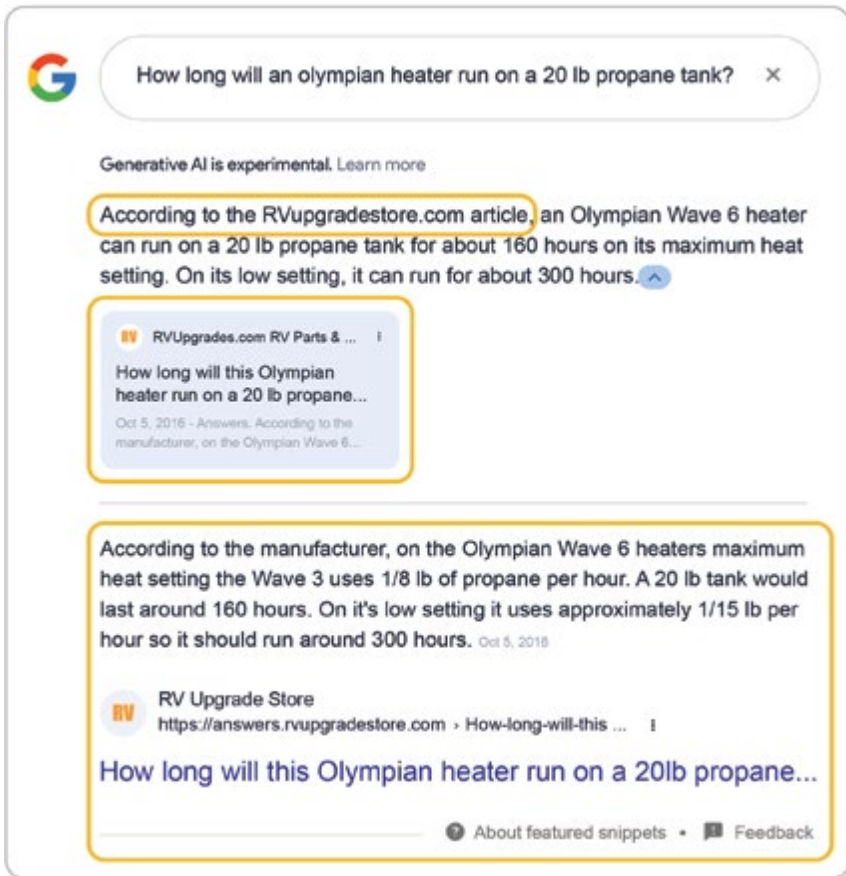
Getting displayed as a Google Featured Snippet is like striking search engine gold. It shows up higher than the first position organic listing on a search results page and is highlighted as the recommended answer to the searcher's question.

Statistically, featured snippets get 35.1% of all clicks on a page.⁴⁶ And the best part is that you don't have to spend thousands of dollars on SEO and backlinks to get it. Your answer can start to display as a featured snippet within a few days or weeks—even with no backlinks.

The downside is that Google decides which answer they display. But you can significantly improve your chances of showing up in the snippet by creating multiple question and answer variations, referencing experts or sources, and linking to related blog articles.

Google has also recently introduced AI into their search results, which at the time of this publication, is further enhancing the power of featured snippets.

⁴⁶ Neil Patel. "What Are Featured Snippets? How to Get Them." Neil Patel, 18 Aug. 2022, neilpatel.com/blog/rank-google-featured-snippets/.



Example of AI and traditional search results combined

Here is the same question shown in the previous graphic, but asked using the new Google AI assistant. As you can see, not only does RVupgrades still have the featured snippet below the AI result, but they are also directly quoted as the official answer, along with a blue answer box highlighting their dedicated Q&A page. This gives them 3 listings instead of 1, and positions them as the expert answer to this particular question.


People Also Ask

People also ask

How do product reviews affect conversion rates? ▾

Does having seller ratings increase conversion rates? ▲

Seller ratings can have a positive impact on conversion rates. Star ratings provide easily grasped social proof to potential buyers, increasing trust in the seller and the products they offer. Mar 9, 2023

 Shopper Approved
<https://www.shopperapproved.com> · [faq](#) · [Does-having ...](#)

[Does Having Seller Ratings Increase Conversion Rates?](#)

How do reviews help conversion? ▾

Example of a result in Google's People Also Ask enhanced search feature

If you don't get the featured snippet for a particular keyword or answer, don't worry, you still have two more chances.

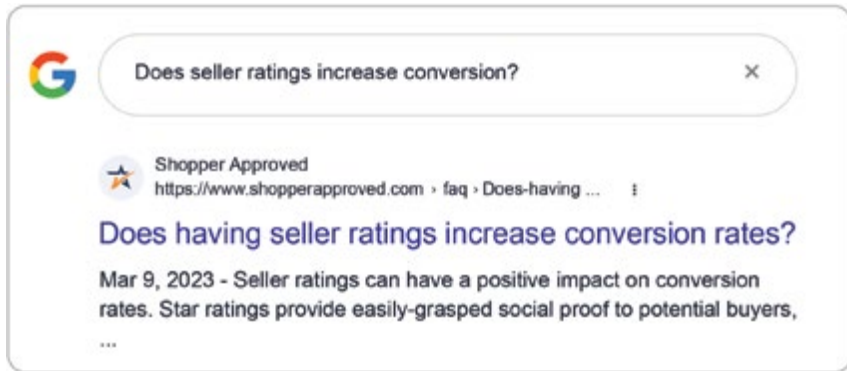
Your second opportunity to show up is in the People Also Ask section of the search results page, which displays answers to other related questions.

In the example above, you can see that Shopper Approved shows up as a People Also Ask answer for a question about reviews increasing conversion rates.

People Also Ask is a very popular section, and if your answer is helpful and relevant to what people are searching for, there's

a good chance that they will click on it. There is also a good chance that you will show up for more than one answer.

Google Organic Search



Example of a search-optimized Q&A listing in the #1 organic search position in Google

If your answer doesn't make the featured snippet or the People Also Ask widget, then you still have a high chance of showing up in other organic search results. The screenshot above is a search-optimized Q&A listing that shows up in the first organic search position, also known as position one.

For our clients, it's quite common for search-optimized Q&A to show up prominently in one or more of these organic search results, especially for longtail product specific keywords.

In our experience, there are few SEO experts or agencies, if any, who can ethically and sustainably achieve these kinds of search results in such a short amount of time with such minimal effort.

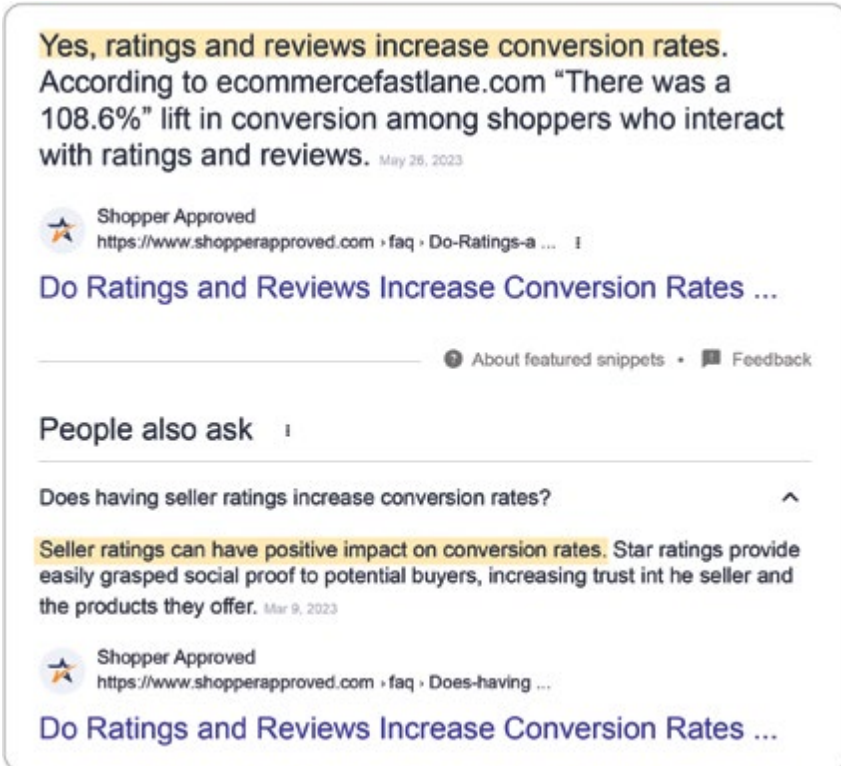
But by combining the power of search-optimized Q&A with a consistently helpful content strategy that expertly answers questions that consumers are asking about your products, brand, and industry, in Google’s eyes you start to become the “WebMD” of your space, and they reward you handsomely for your efforts. This is truly the next level of reputation management.

(And, if everything we just shown you hasn’t impressed you, it is quite common for two or three of these Q&A strategies to show up on the same search results page at the same time.)

The screenshot shows a search results page for Shopper Approved. At the top, there is a logo for Shopper Approved and a URL: <https://www.shopperapproved.com>. Below this, there are three search results, each with a question in blue text and a snippet of text below it. The first result is "How is Shopper Approved different than Yotpo?", with a snippet: "Shopper Approved's strengths: Shopper Approved is known for their SEO benefits, and their ability to collect more reviews than other leading review ...". The second result is "Is Yotpo better than Shopper Approved?", with a snippet: "7 days ago - Yotpo and Shopper Approved are both customer review management platforms, but they have different strenghts and weaknesses.". The third result is "Is Shopper Approved better than Yotpo?", with a snippet: "1 answer Yes. GetApp, G2, and Capterra users gave Shopper Approved higher ratings than Yotpo. Shopper Approved includes video tutorials, response management and ...".

Example of Q&A producing three organic search results in a cluster

Here's an example of Google displaying Q&A both in the featured snippet and in People Also Ask:



Example of Q&A in the featured snippet, and People Also Ask result

Top 10 Keyword Analytics



When keyword rankings increase, so does traffic

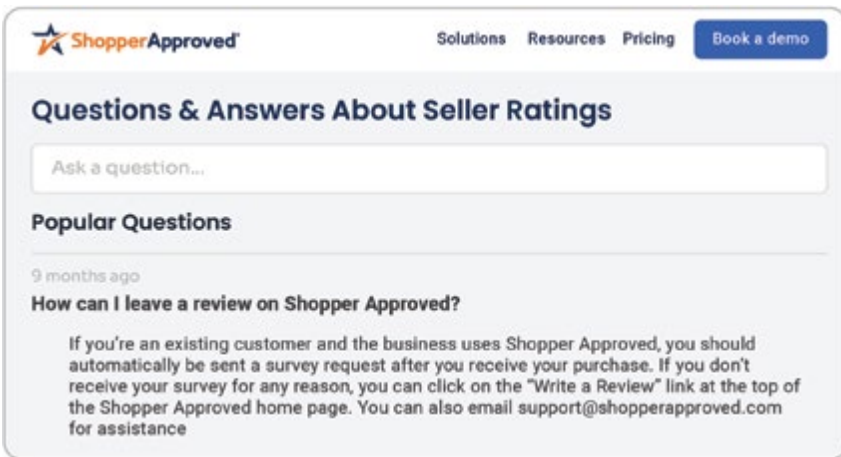
Okay, this isn't public facing data, but it is related to search results, so we're including it here in the traffic section. At Shopper Approved, we like to "walk the walk" as they say by testing and proving the traffic and conversion strategies we teach. So, on April 4th, 2023, we launched our own search-optimized Q&A campaign, and within five months, we went from zero to seventy featured snippet results, generating a 431% increase in page one premium position keywords and a 378% increase in organic traffic. Not too shabby.

And we did this with very little effort, using short content (40-60 words per answer), with zero blogs and zero backlinks or content promotion.

Where Does Q&A Show Up on My Website?

While Q&A widgets were built to show up on product pages, we highly recommend displaying targeted Q&A on any page where potential customers might have specific questions, such as your:

Homepage/Landing Pages



Example of Q&A displayed on a website

This Q&A section is found at the bottom of all landing pages on the Shopper Approved website that talk about seller ratings. As you can see, the title says, “Questions & Answers About Seller Ratings,” and the questions and answers are also about seller ratings.

Not only does this make the Q&A section relevant for visitors, but it also tells Google that these answers are topically related to seller ratings (either the Shopper Approved product or topic).

Product Pages



RVupgrades.com

Home > Appliances > Air Conditioners

Coleman Mach 9330C755 Heat-Ready Air Conditioner Cool Control Kit

★★★★☆ 8 reviews | 45 answered questions

Price: **\$78.89**

Quantity in Stock: 18

Availability: In Stock

Qty:  Secure transaction

Add To Cart

Example of aggregated Q&A displayed on a product page

Here's an example of the aggregated Q&A-answered questions showing right next to product reviews. You can see that they have answered 45 questions about this product. This is a powerful combination and is typically found right under the

product title. Also note the secure transaction badge next to the Add To Cart button.

The screenshot shows a product page for 'RVupgrades.com'. At the top left is the logo with a motorhome icon. Below it is a 'Q&A' section with a 'Have a Product Question?' heading and a text input field containing 'Ask a question...'. Underneath is a 'Recent Questions' section. The first question is dated '15 days ago' and asks: 'Will the 9330c755 control board work with a/c only? I do not have a heating coil in my unit.' The answer begins with 'Follow' and states: 'Yes, it can. To determine the right fit for the Coleman Mach 9330C755 Heat-ready Air Conditioner Cool Control Kit, we require your model number. This kit works with both non-ducted and lateral ducted systems and can be controlled using a wall thermostat. Please provide us with your model number for compatibility assessment.' At the bottom of the screenshot, the product name 'Coleman Mach 9330C755 Heat-Ready Air Conditioner Cool Control Kit' is displayed next to a price tag of '\$78.89' and an 'Add To Cart' button.

Example of expanded Q&A section displayed on a product page

If you click on the Answered Questions link at the top of the page, or if you scroll down, you reach the full questions and answers section where you can read each question in detail. This is where most Q&A platforms end, but search-optimized Q&A also creates a unique web page for each question.

The screenshot shows a website interface for RVUpgrades.com. At the top left is the logo with a motorhome icon and the text "RVUpgrades.com". Below the logo is a search bar with the placeholder text "Ask your question here..." and a red "ASK" button. To the right is another search bar with the placeholder text "Search" and a red "SEARCH" button. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a question: "Will the 9930c755 control board work with a/c only? I do not have a heating coil in my unit." Below the question is the product name "Coleman Mach 9330C755 Heat-Ready Air Conditioner Cool Control Kit", a "Comments (0) | New Comment" link, and a "Do you have the same question? Follow this Question" link. Below this is a red button labeled "ANSWER THIS QUESTION". The right column is titled "Related Product" and features a product image of a control kit. Below the image is the product name "Coleman Mach 9330C755 Heat-Ready Air Conditioner Cool Control Kit" and a description: "The Coleman Mach 9330C755 Control Kit is a heat-ready cool control kit for non-ducted or lateral ducted RV Air Conditioners with a wall thermostat. An electric heat strip can also be used with this kit." At the bottom of the product section is a red button labeled "VIEW PRODUCT". Below the question and answer is a "Comments (0) | New Comment" link, a thumbs up icon with the number "1", a thumbs down icon, and a "Report" link.

Example of a dedicated Q&A page with a link to the related product on the right

This dedicated Q&A page includes the full question in the URL, the full product name, the product image, description, a link to the actual product, and more. This gives Google two chances to find the information—on the actual product page itself, and on the dedicated Q&A page. It also displays the actual product the Q&A is about, along with a link to go buy it.

What Is the Difference Between FAQ and Q&A?

On the surface, one would think FAQ and Q&A are essentially the same thing because they both answer questions that shoppers have, but beyond that basic similarity, they are very different in their functionality and value.

FAQ

- Is usually a static list of questions and answers provided by the brand
- Offers a single answer to each question
- There is no interactive or searchable functionality
- The content is not typically structured for search optimization

Q&A

- Offers the ability to provide more than one answer to a single question, giving the search engines multiple options, and the brand a shot at multiple page one listings
- Is interactive and searchable
- Both the company and customer community can provide answers
- Customers can ask questions, and then get an email once the answer is created

- Has reporting that tracks how many sales were made based on interactions with each Q&A, the most popular Q&A, and more
- Is search-optimized with:
 - Dedicated sub-folders for each question and answer
 - Structured content for featured snippets
- Can leverage the power of AI to:
 - Provide recommended questions and answers based on what people are searching for in Google
 - Scan manuals, help docs, user docs, and product spec sheets to find recommended answers
 - Recommend questions and answers based on what it finds on marketplaces for the same product

SECRET WEAPON: AI- POWERED SEARCH- OPTIMIZED Q&A



AI-powered Q&A is developing and improving rapidly, so scan the barcode below to stay up to date as we add the latest capabilities and features in the bonus section of this chapter. And be sure to watch the exclusive video we made for you where we discuss the innovative ways we're currently using AI. **For instant access, scan the QR Code or go to: reputationking.com/bonus**

9

HOW TO BECOME A REPUTATION KING!

*“Regard your good name as the richest jewel
you can possibly be possessed of.”*

–Socrates

What Is the Positive Impact of Having a Great Reputation Management Strategy?

As we mentioned at the beginning of this book, the better your reputation is, the more positive effects it will have on almost every aspect of your business.

Hopefully, the past few chapters have given you a new perspective on just how important it is to invest in your online reputation for the sake of the future success of your brand.

A great reputation, driven primarily by ratings and reviews and search-optimized questions and answers, will significantly

improve your key performance indicators (KPIs), including traffic, conversion, average order value, net profit, bounce rates, return rates, PPC and organic click-through rates, customer acquisition costs, customer satisfaction, lifetime value, improved employee satisfaction, and more.

And, over time as you fully embrace reviews and search-optimized Q&A, you will eventually become the trusted authority in your space—and you will have done it in a completely honest and ethical way.

How about instead of trying to continually game Google, we just give them exactly what they're asking for on a silver platter?

Ever since the World Wide Web was created, people have continually been trying to beat the system. How about instead of trying to continually game Google, we just give them exactly what they're asking for on a silver platter? Honest, authentic ratings and reviews, and helpful, objective Q&A at the industry, brand, category, and product level?

And how about we display those reviews and Q&A in as many strategic locations online as possible, so we get more chances for potential customers to see them online, and come to our website already pre-suaded and ready to buy?

Trust is powerful. Credibility is invaluable. And reputation is a combination of both.

Remember, customers not only prefer, but are willing to spend more with a reputable, trustworthy brand because they are seen as less risky, and people are generally risk averse.

With a more trusted and reputable brand you can reduce or eliminate the need for steep discounts just to compete. Instead of a race to the bottom with price wars where everyone loses, you can start to charge higher prices, or at least maintain your current pricing, while increasing your total number of sales.

Gone are the days of getting bad reviews on open review platforms and feeling powerless to stop them. Gone are the days of wishing there was some way to show up and rank high in Google in a meaningful, authoritative way. Just be a good, honest company, provide Google with the type of content they want (user-generated content and search-optimized Q&A), and do so consistently and strategically over time, and you will undoubtedly win the reputation game.

And not only will you win, but you'll do it with resilience and confidence—bouncing back faster when unforeseen challenges arise.

According to research by Deloitte, “Companies with well-defined, effective reputation management practices are often able to build their reputation resilience and shape business outcomes in good times and bad.

“...A brand’s reputation is among its most important—and most vulnerable—assets today, but cultivating reputational resilience with a cohesive and technology-enhanced strategy can

enable companies to both prepare for crises and create enduring value.”⁴⁷

We wholeheartedly agree with this statement.

Why Is It Important to Have Both the Right Tools and the Right Strategy?

You might be surprised to hear that there are over 8,000 apps in the Shopify marketplace alone, yet it’s estimated that between 90-95% of Shopify sites still fail within a year.⁴⁸

How is that even possible?

How can over nine out of ten websites fail when they have every app imaginable to help them succeed—all at the click of a button?

It’s because even the best tools, without the right strategy and proper execution, have little to no value.

Tools are simply instruments that are designed to perform a certain task; and not all tools are created equal. For example, if you were putting a roof on a house, you could use a rock, a hammer, or a nail gun to secure the shingles to the roof. All three

47 “Building Reputation Resilience for CMOS.” Deloitte United States, 17 Mar. 2020, www2.deloitte.com/us/en/pages/chief-marketing-officer/articles/wsj-cmo-today-building-reputation-resilience.html.

48 Skeldon, Paul. “90% of Ecommerce Start-Ups End in Failure within the First 120 Days.” Internet Retailing, 8 June 2022, internetretailing.net/90-of-ecommerce-start-ups-end-in-failure-within-the-first-120-days-19930/.

tools can do the job, but the nail gun is by far the fastest and most effective option.

But even with a great tool, you still need a good strategy to ensure that it's being utilized to its full advantage. If you owned a nail gun, it would be worthless or even reckless if you just randomly shot nails all over the roof, or you didn't have an air compressor, or the right nails, or if you didn't educate yourself on how to properly and safely use it.

And even then, you still must do the work. After all, you don't get a new roof just by owning the nail gun.

Ultimately, you need to have the right tools, strategy, and execution to succeed.

Case in point...

Seller ratings are practically worthless if you don't know what to do with them...

You need to be actively collecting as many seller ratings as you possibly can because quantity and recency are incredibly important variables that consumers look for.

- You need to be syndicating them to as many places in Google and Bing as you possibly can.
- You need to use them to build trust and credibility with stars in your paid ads, targeting competitive keywords and your competitor's brands.

- You should be sending a percentage of your customers to leave seller ratings on open review platforms to eliminate Open Review Syndrome and normalize your true reputation across the web.
- You need to leverage them on your website to get people to immediately trust you and let down their guard.

Only posting product reviews on your product pages is a low-down dirty shame...

- You should be attempting to collect a product review every time you collect a seller rating in the same survey. If you don't, you're missing out on a golden opportunity to strike while the iron's hot.
- You need to syndicate them to Google and Bing, so they show up in paid, organic, and shopping listings. Too many businesses don't do this, and they really miss out—especially since Google made Google Shopping free.
- You should be implementing schema markup (structured data) so that your review stars show up in your product page organic search listings.
- You need to add aggregate review data to your website's category pages. This is an easy win that's often overlooked.
- You need to leverage all of your product reviews on your review platform's website so that you get a second chance for your products to show up in organic search results.

And only limiting Q&A to your product pages is a huge missed opportunity...

- You need to be answering every question you can think of that a customer would ever ask and continually strive to become the “WebMD” of your space.
- You need to include your category, product, brand, or industry name in every question and answer (in an appropriate, non-distracting manner) so that Google can properly index them and know what to do with your Q&As in search. You also need to make sure you are leveraging schema markup (structured data) to maximize your chances of becoming a featured snippet.
- You need to make sure that each Q&A is optimized for search by at least writing 40–60 word answers, referencing an authoritative source when possible, linking to an appropriate internal asset or article that expands on the answer or provides the solution, and making sure that you’re providing honest, objective information—even if it helps a competitor.
- You need to be taking advantage of AI to help you come up with helpful questions and answers so that you can improve, enhance, and speed up the process.
- You need to leverage AI to convert your existing blogs, product pages, manuals, support and help docs, and even product reviews into Q&A.

- You need to include images and video in your answers when available and appropriate.
- For really important Q&A, you should try to provide multiple answers to a single question if possible. Some short, 40–60 word answers; some long, 200–300 word answers; and “listicles” or bullet point list-style answers.

It’s the strategy and execution that makes all the difference! And while it may seem that there are a lot of things to do and several steps involved, this is where having the right software tools to help you can enhance, automate, and optimize your time and effort.

What If My Competitor Already Has a Great Reputation?

If your competitor already has a great reputation, unless they’re one of our clients, then it’s highly unlikely that they’re aware of many of the tools, expert insights, and strategies that we’ve shared with you in this book.

Knowing what you’ve learned from this book gives you a significant advantage that, over time, will help you to surpass your competition as the trusted leader in your space.

It also helps that you now see the world differently:

- You now know that traffic and conversion are not separate ideas and directives but are directly and inseparably connected. The conversion path is the key because you now know that you can literally guide, pre-suade , and impact consumer decisions from their very first search, clear down to your checkout page.
- You now know the importance of eliminating friction and how it is the secret to keeping more of your traffic engaged along the conversion path.
You now know how to take back control of your reputation by sending a portion of your customers to leave reviews on open review platforms.
- You now know how to maximize your seller ratings, product reviews, and video reviews—both in search and on your website.
- And you now know the true power of search-optimized Q&A.

With all of this insider information, how is your competitor ever going to keep up with you?

You have the knowledge advantage. Now you just need to leverage it.

What Will Happen If I Don't Make My Brand's Reputation a Priority?

Ultimately, if you don't prioritize your online reputation, over time Open Review Syndrome, social influence bias, and lack of search visibility and social proof will result in the downward spiral effect we discussed in Chapter 2, creating a cascade of negative side effects that lower virtually every KPI related to your brand.

Eventually, you may reach the point where potential new customers lose trust and stop buying from you, leading to a loss of sales, ultimately causing you to go out of business.

But this doesn't happen overnight. It's a long and painful process, often involving large amounts of stress and anxiety, cutbacks, layoffs, high-interest loans, low employee morale, price cuts, and discounts (to try and bolster your diminishing sales).

Fortunately, you can turn your reputation around at any point in time by simply being aware of the warning signs and following the advice and strategies we've shared with you in this book.

THE IDEA BEHIND REPUTATION KING...

How did we come up with the name Reputation King? It's a fun story that we share in a special video we made for you as part of the bonus content for this book. **For instant access, scan the QR Code or go to:**
reputationking.com/bonus



10

YOUR FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

“There really is nothing as powerful as a good reputation.”

–Giuliana Rancic

The Power of Positive Change

Now that you’ve read this book and you know what’s possible, consider what your company could look like just one year from now if you truly embraced and implemented what you’ve learned.

Imagine your brand being viewed as the most trusted experts and advisors in your space, and having hundreds or even thousands of amazing customer reviews, photos, and videos showing up all over Google, Bing, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Walmart, and Instagram. Imagine doing a search for your company and seeing 4- and 5-star overall ratings displayed across every major review platform, along with niche platforms specific to your industry.

Imagine having beautifully crafted, AI assisted answers showing up at the top of hundreds of search results for questions that consumers are asking every day.

Finally, imagine being the #1 most trusted brand in your industry, and proudly sharing that incredible accomplishment with your new potential customers and the rest of the world.

As you embrace and implement the ideas, tools, and strategies we've shared with you in this book, you will see incredible things like these happen in your business:

- Search listings will increase
- Featured snippets will increase
- People Also Ask appearances will increase
- Search rankings will increase
- Traffic will increase
- Trust and authority signals will increase
- Star ratings will increase
- Review quality, volume, and frequency will increase
- PPC click-through rates will increase
- PPC costs will decrease
- Time on site will increase
- Bounce rate will decrease

- Cart abandonment rate will decrease
- Conversion rate will increase
- Average order value will increase
- Support costs will decrease
- Product returns will decrease
- Customer satisfaction will increase
- Employee morale will increase
- Cost-per-conversion will decrease
- Sales will increase
- Repeat purchases will increase
- Net profits will increase
- And much more

Watching all these wins stack up is incredibly exciting and empowering, because over time this positive compounding truly starts to make a difference in your life, your employee's lives, and your customer's lives, and isn't that what it's really all about?

It all comes down to getting great seller ratings, product reviews, and video reviews, building a consistent, positive reputation across the web, and providing helpful questions to customer questions both on your site and in Google. These are the few things that, when focused on and properly leveraged, can help

your company to truly become the undisputed Reputation King in your space.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this book. It's been a privilege to share our years of experiences, thoughts, and ideas with you.

We hope that we've sparked new insights and inspiration for you and your business.

If what we've shared resonates with you and you'd like to continue the conversation, here are some options, depending on where you're at and what your needs and goals are.

LET'S CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

If you like what we've shared with you here and would like to discover additional ways that we could work together, **Simply scan the QR Code or go to: reputationking.com/bonus**



Here are some of the ways we can interact after you scan the code:

We can provide you with helpful feedback and advice

If you just want to see where your brand exists in the world and would like some helpful advice on how you could improve your website and search results, we can help. In addition to being experts at what we do, our employees are also certified by the Cialdini Institute and have a deep understanding of behavioral design. We are happy to provide you with fresh eyes and a fresh perspective on anything related to your website or search, all at no cost or obligation. We love helping people, and this is a way that we can create goodwill and friendships, whether or not we ever do business together.

We can answer any additional questions you might have

If you like what we've shared so far and have additional questions, or you'd like to see a live demo, we are happy to connect you with one of our helpful account executives. They can answer any questions or even show you the ins and outs of our software and how we can help you achieve the types of results we've shared in this book – whatever you need.

Or, if you would prefer to watch a pre-recorded demo instead, there is also an option to do that.

We can discuss speaking opportunities or potential partnerships

If you would like one of us to speak at your event, be on a podcast or webinar, or are interested in potentially working together on a project, once you scan the QR code, you'll find instructions on how to contact us directly.

Thanks again and we look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,



Scott Brandley
CEO
Shopper Approved



DJ Sprague
CMO
Shopper Approved

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First off, we would like to acknowledge our dedicated and talented team for all of the hard work and effort that they put in every day to help our clients. It is truly a pleasure and an honor to work with such great people.

Second, we would like to thank our families for their ongoing love and support.

Third, we would like to thank our wonderful clients who have continually encouraged us to keep thinking outside the box and pushing the boundaries of possibility. We love you and are so grateful to be on this incredible journey with you.

And finally, we would like to truly thank all of our friends and mentors who have encouraged us, inspired us, and taught us valuable business and life lessons along the way.

CLIENT QUOTES & RESULTS

Shopper Approved is the #1 Most Trusted Review Platform in the world according to all of these leading review and reputation sites:



We welcome you to visit any or all of them and read the hundreds of raving reviews that our clients have written about us. However, if you want to save some time, we've added a few of them below, along with some of the results they've received:

Within 14 months after implementing Shopper Approved, ContractorTrainingCenter.com experienced:

- 100% increase in organic traffic
- 52% increase in Google Ad click-through rate
- 70% increase in website conversion rate

In a market research survey Contractor Training Center conducted, they found that their “extensive collection of trustworthy customer reviews was one of the several driving factors” for why customers chose them.

- Contractor Training Center

“After hitting our 100th review our Click-through Rate doubled from .7% to 1.4%.”

- Logical Position, Google Ads Agency for Revolve LED

With the help of Shopper Approved, S&S Fire Pits is now enjoying a 6.2% click-through rate on Google Ads, which is bringing more high-intention traffic to their site. That has given them an impressive 360% rise in their conversion rate, from a starting point of just 0.36%. S&S Fire Pits’ average order value is also 30% higher than it was before.

- Smart Marketer, Ad Agency for S&S Firepits

“We doubled our business in less than a year... all we’ve done is add Shopper Approved.”

- Mike Simonson

“We have seen our click-through rate increase by 20% and our conversion rate increase by 19% from using Shopper Approved.”

- Kay Perry

“With the help of Shopper Approved, we are setting new records consistently, and close to doubling our sales revenue!”

- Justin Smith

“We now have more and better reviews than any of our larger rivals. With the Shopper Approved Reputation Management Software we distribute our reviews on other 3rd party review sites, allowing us to collect more reviews and display them in more places, which improves our click-through, traffic, and conversion rates. We owe our success and Inc 5000 Fastest-Growing Company award in large part to Shopper Approved.”

- Nelson James

“A solid service for building up your reputation as an ecommerce store.”

- Christian Nelson

“A game changer for my business. For an ecommerce business, establishing customer trust fast is essential. Shopper Approved has done this for me and then some. In addition, they have really helped my business stand out within our space.”

- Frank Avinger

“Great platform. Helps potential customers choose our business.”

- Eric Field

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Scott Brandley

Scott is the CEO of Shopper Approved (shopperapproved.com) and Trust Guard (trustguard.com).

Over the course of his 26-year career online, Scott has helped to architect and build over 40 different software products and services.

In 1997, Scott started Specialties Online with his dad, Dave Brandley, selling religious products, jewelry, and apparel. They sold this company in 2004 and started to delve into the world of online software, becoming pioneers in the SaaS industry.

In 2006, one of Scott's first software companies became a driving force behind StomperNet (one of the largest internet launches in history).

Also in 2006, Scott launched Trust Guard, a website security company that has helped to actively protect thousands of businesses, and hundreds of millions of consumers around the world from hackers, viruses, malware, and other vulnerabilities for over seventeen years.

In 2010, Scott and his team launched Shopper Approved, an online rating and review platform that quickly became one of the fastest growing, privately held companies in America, and has been featured nationally on the Inc.500, the Utah 100, and the Utah Fast 50 charts. Shopper Approved is one of the oldest, largest, and most trusted online review platforms in the world, famous for their innovative tools and strategies, thought leadership, and incredible customer support.

In addition to building and running software companies, Scott is the author of multiple books. He is also a Cialdini Certified Ethical Influence Practitioner and Coach and has received behavioral design certifications from the Mindworx Academy and the Online Influence Institute.

He also runs a religious weekly podcast called Latter-Day Lights, has a love/hate relationship with golf, and enjoys spending time with his family.



DJ Sprague

DJ is a conversion rate expert and a Cialdini Certified Ethical Influence Practitioner and Coach. He's also received behavioral design certifications from the Online Influence Institute, the Behavioral Design Academy, the Mindworx Academy, and the Interaction Design Institute.

DJ has over 30 years of experience in enterprise sales, marketing, advertising, and PR, on both the agency and the client side.

On the agency side, he worked on national PR campaigns for Hyundai Motor America; and customer research, surveys, and database marketing for Toyota North America, and was a ghostwriter, researcher, and consultant to J.D. Power and Associates and many of their clients. His agency also contracted with over 800 automotive, marine, and RV dealers throughout North America to conduct CSI surveys (Customer Satisfaction Index).

On the client side, he began his B2B sales and marketing career with Eastman Kodak and later served in various executive

positions in marketing, advertising, and PR with NASCAR, the NBA, and MLS.

As CMO of a billion-dollar national auto franchise, he leveraged the power of social proof and online reviews to improve SEO and accelerate growth, as he developed and managed a comprehensive online reputation management strategy that spanned nearly 200 websites in 34 states.

As the CMO of Shopper Approved, he works with ecommerce websites to improve their SEO and CRO, while researching, developing, and testing new products and conversion tools. His webinars and ebooks have been featured on Search Engine Journal, Search Engine Land, Search Marketing Expo (SMX), Practical eCommerce, and more.

As a national speaker, he has presented for the National Automobile Dealers Association, regional Broadcaster Association conferences, and several trade and business associations, receiving the Speaker of the Year Award from The Executive Committee (now Vistage).

He holds a master's degree in integrated marketing communication, graduating with the highest academic honors (Phi Kappa Phi and Beta Gamma Sigma), and received the "1st Place Gold Award" in the global Marketing Edge integrated marketing competition. As a lifelong learner, he has also earned several graduate certificates in internet marketing, SEO, business administration, behavioral design, and corporate law.