

Shoppers Have High Expectations for Retailers' Responses to Reviews

It's not just user reviews that cloud consumer perception

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Consumer perception isn't formed just by [strangers' experiences with a product](#)—shoppers are also evaluating retailers on how responsive they are.

It's a known fact that user-generated reviews are integral in the path to purchase. According to [Murphy Research](#), online consumer reviews are one of the the most influential sources of information while shopping, second only to a recommendation from friends or family.

Influential Sources of Information When Shopping According to US Internet Users, Jan 2018

% of respondents

Family member or friend recommendation	52%
Online consumer reviews	47%
Expert in the product category	35%
Retailer website	29%
Brand website	27%
In-store signage or displays	25%
Social media	22%
Store employees	22%
TV programs or ads	21%
Online blogs or articles	20%
Direct mail or catalogue	19%
Email from brand or retailer	19%
Digital ads	18%
Newspaper articles or ads	17%
Magazine articles or ads	16%
Radio programs or ads	14%
Outside billboards or signs	13%

Note: n=2,789 ages 18+; very/extremely influential

Source: Murphy Research, "2018 Shopper Trends Report: Understanding Shopper Behavior in an Omnichannel World," March 30, 2018

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And nearly three-fourths (74%) of US consumers feel that reviews are either very or moderately important, according to an October 2018 survey by marketing tech company **Uberall**. Roughly one in five consumers said they always check reviews when deciding where to shop, and an additional 57% occasionally did.

The study also found that, while consumers expect to see online buyers' honest opinions, they also have high expectations for retailer involvement. A majority (65%) thought brick-and-mortar merchants should respond to online reviews — all reviews — regardless of tone or content.

Fewer (18%) thought retailers should respond only to negative reviews, while 6% thought they should respond only to positive ones. Just 10% thought retailers should never respond to a review ever.

For these shoppers, generic responses won't cut it. Seventy-eight percent expected a response with a least some degree of personalization, and 29% wanted responses to be very personalized.

The increasing expectations for personalization can be tricky for retailers. **Most are making it a priority** but are still finding a balance between "just right" and "too much." This survey didn't get into what

types of personalization shoppers wanted from a response.

Hypothetically, responses could include anything from addressing the reviewer by name to referencing past purchases to commenting on a user's Instagram account.

Similar to personalized product recommendations, **getting it right can boost engagement and sales**, while missing the mark can drive shoppers away. It's no wonder retailers often choose to sit on the sidelines when it comes to user reviews.