

# Don't Be Scared of Amazon Reviews—Do Something Valuable with Them

There's a wealth of resources in the reviews section

**INTERVIEW | JULY 2018**

**Patricia Orsini**





An interview with:

**Rob Gonzalez**

Co-Founder, Executive Vice President of Business Development  
Salsify



Brands might work hard to make their product detail pages appealing on Amazon, but all bets are off once they scroll down to the customer reviews section. While it can be frustrating to have no control over product reviews, there are ways brands can leverage consumers' opinions and questions—the good and the bad—to their benefit, and even reduce negative reviews in the future. eMarketer's Patricia Orsini spoke with Rob Gonzalez, co-founder and executive vice president of business development at ecommerce product management consultancy Salsify, about why brands should embrace the reviews section.

**eMarketer:**

How has ecommerce changed the relationship between brands and consumers?

**Rob Gonzalez:**

Ecommerce, in so many ways, is personal. Brands can interact directly with consumers, and platforms like Amazon give them an ability to do that.

Historically, brands have conducted customer panels and customer research, but abdicated the consumer relationship to distribution channels—they called Target their customer, and they called Amazon their customer. Now, brands can talk directly to the people that are using their products. That's a huge opportunity for them to do all kinds of things differently, including how they handle product reviews.

“Brands can respond to reviews—it's a chance to have a dialogue with somebody who's upset about your product and learn something from it.”

**eMarketer:**

Aside from wanting to get as many good customer reviews as possible, what are the other opportunities surrounding reviews on ecommerce platforms like Amazon?

**Rob Gonzalez:**

Reviews are awesome for a brand in a lot of different ways. From a market-research perspective, reviews are extremely underutilized. It's candid feedback directly from your market that you don't have to pay for. Too few brands see reviews as providing them with useful data.

They're also underutilized from a brand loyalty perspective. Brands can respond to reviews—it's a chance to have a dialogue with somebody who's upset about your product and learn something from it. Negative reviews in particular are great market signals.

**eMarketer:**

When you say brands can learn something from it, what actions have you seen them take in response to negative reviews?

**Rob Gonzalez:**

Brands are asking, 'Do I need to change my product, and how?' or 'Do I need a new product?' There are startups that look at all of the negative reviews in a category, like consumer packaged goods [CPG], and they create a product in response to those reviews. There are product launches that started with solving for the negative reviews.

Reviews are also an untapped resource for helping to improve product pages on Amazon and other ecommerce platforms. If a reviewer says the product wasn't as described, the brand can redo the bullet points in the product description to give consumers the information they're asking for. And that could help put the product higher in search results.

“There are product launches that started with solving for the negative reviews.”

**eMarketer:**

Have brands actually put these best practices to use and enhanced their product in ecommerce channels?

**Rob Gonzalez:**

This is one of my favorite examples—as an experiment, a brand took text from some of the five-star reviews it received, and used those blurbs as feature bullets in the description of the product at the top of the page on Amazon. They found that those changes helped increase search ranking and conversion rates on their products.

That makes you wonder, why don't more brands do that? You could also put a quote from one of your 5-star reviews in the product image gallery. This is just another example of how reviews are an untapped resource for interacting with your consumer.

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