eMarketer

Consumer Trust Relies Heavily on Reviews and Brand Honesty

ARTICLE | **SEPTEMBER 05, 2019**

Rimma Kats

In yet another sign that online reviews can make or break the path to purchase, June 2019 research from Trustpilot found that consumers would lose trust in a brand not only if they saw negative reviews—but also if the brand went one step further and deleted them.

For a majority (95.0%) of the digital shoppers surveyed worldwide, that type of behavior played a big role in their distrust of a company, as did not having any reviews at all (cited by 81.0%).

When asked what factors would lead to an increase in brand trust, three of the top 10 factors centered around reviews. Nearly all respondents said positive customer reviews increased their trust in a brand, while 80.1% said they trusted companies that have a lot of customers reviews. Interestingly, if a company responded to negative customer comments, that would drive up trust for 79.9% of those surveyed.

Leading Factors that Increase vs. Decrease Trust in Brands Among Digital Shoppers Worldwide, June 2019
% of respondents

Increase trust

Company has a good online reputation
95.6%

Company has positive customer reviews
93.7%

Quick customer service
92.9%

Company has the highest quality goods
86.1%

Company is transparent about how it sources its products
80.5%

Decrease trust

Company deletes negative customer comments/reviews
95.0%

Company has negative customer reviews
88.8%

Website URL is not secure
88.4%

Company has no customer reviews
81.0%

Website seems outdated
77.0%

Note: ages 18-77 who shop online at least once per year; top 5 shown
Source: Trustpilot, "The Value of a Trustworthy Brand Reputation," July 21, 2019

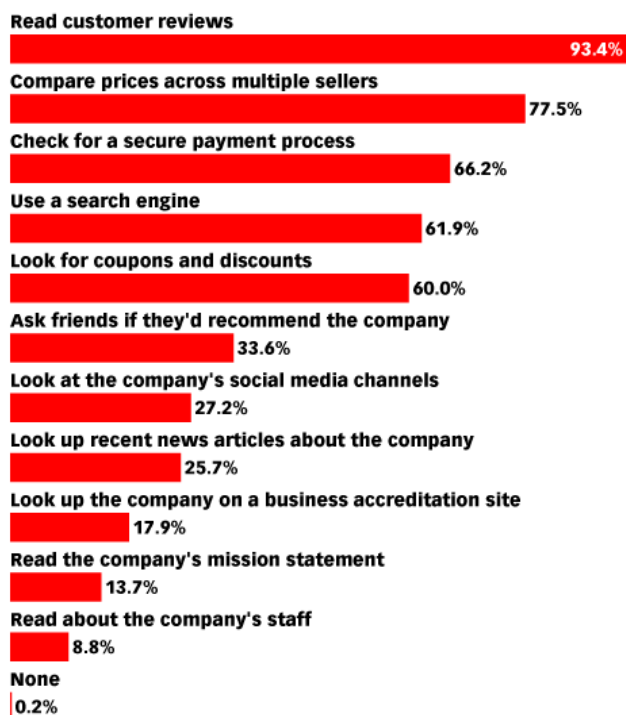249484   www.**eMarketer**.com

There's no denying that shoppers can be picky. In fact, a November 2018 study from tech provider TurnTo found that if US internet users were looking at two similar products—with a price difference of $2— 73% would be more inclined to buy the pricier product with a higher rating. And if they didn't see a review or a rating on the retailer's site? Some 76% would be less inclined to buy anything at all.

Reviews are also a key way shoppers get to know a brand, according to Trustpilot. When asked how they familiarize themselves with an online company they haven't heard of, most of those digital shoppers polled said they read customer reviews.

How Do Digital Shoppers Worldwide Research an Unfamiliar Digital Retailer Before Making a Purchase?
% of respondents, June 2019

Read customer reviews	93.4%
Compare prices across multiple sellers	77.5%
Check for a secure payment process	66.2%
Use a search engine	61.9%
Look for coupons and discounts	60.0%
Ask friends if they'd recommend the company	33.6%
Look at the company's social media channels	27.2%
Look up recent news articles about the company	25.7%
Look up the company on a business accreditation site	17.9%
Read the company's mission statement	13.7%
Read about the company's staff	8.8%
None	0.2%

Note: ages 18-77 who shop online at least once per year
Source: Trustpilot, "The Value of a Trustworthy Brand Reputation," July 21, 2019

249485   www.**eMarketer**.com

To put that in perspective, for new customers on a path to purchase, reading reviews took precedence over looking at a brand's social media channels, comparing prices and searching for coupons.