

Amazon sellers pressure disgruntled product reviewers

Article

The news: Some third-party sellers on Amazon are resorting to **aggressive tactics** to get customers to edit or remove negative product reviews, **per** The Wall Street Journal.

The problem:

- Some buyers reported receiving emails from sellers whom they had not given their email addresses to (Amazon's Buyer-Seller Messaging feature obscures customers' contact information).
- Sellers are **not technically allowed to engage with customers outside of the Amazon interface**. The company's seller code of conduct **specifically prohibits** any "attempt to influence customers' ratings, feedback, and reviews" and states that sellers cannot "contact customers except through Buyer-Seller Messaging."
- Even so, sellers use many methods to **gather customer data**, including through services that extract email addresses or match them to shipping information. **Amazon employees have also allegedly taken bribes** in exchange for sharing proprietary data with sellers.

Some sellers offer consumers full refunds, gift cards, and **other incentives** to tweak or delete their negative reviews. By investing in these tactics, sellers raise their average rating, a key to surfacing in more consumers' Amazon searches.

Why it's worth watching:

- Trust in product reviews is a **critical factor in Amazon's success**; any erosion of that trust could have an impact on the company's bottom line.
- While Amazon does much to clamp down on review fraud, it's clear that **it needs to do more to disincentivize this seller behavior**.