

/ Buyer's Roadmap

Ratings & Reviews


Solution Purchase Guide

How to select the right platform to gather and leverage voice-of-customer feedback



Jenn T
★★★★★ 1 month ago
Easy checkout, fast delivery, and great customer service. Couldn't be happier with the experience!
👍 3


lockwoodandalice.com
Ad www.lockwoodandalice.com
Trend-Setting Styles - Clothing for men and women that balance everyday comfort with on-trend style.
★★★★★ Rating for lockwoodandalice.com: 4.5 - 1,254 reviews

 **Robert S**
★★★★★ Verified Purchase
Exactly what I was looking for!
Reviewed in the United States on September 17
Color: White | Size: 12
...to size and are super comfortable after a few weeks of daily wear.
...ful

Introduction

Ratings & Reviews Matter

Customer reviews drive conversion, retention, and long-term brand trust. Ratings & Reviews are the lifeblood of every business. Here's why:

1 They Influence Purchase Decisions

Shoppers rely heavily on peer feedback when deciding what to buy. According to [our July 2024 Social Proof survey of over 500 shoppers](#), 92% read reviews at least sometimes before making a purchase, and 74% read them "always" or "often." Positive reviews increase confidence, while detailed feedback (both positive and negative) helps set realistic expectations.

2 They Impact SEO and Search Visibility

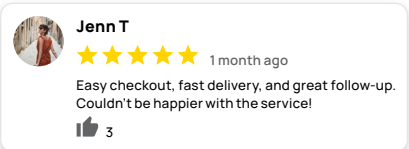
Search engines favor fresh, relevant content. User-generated content (UGC) and consumer-generated content (CGC) from reviews keeps product pages active and rich with keywords, which can help you earn valuable "rich snippets" in search results. This boosts your organic visibility without extra ad spend. When reviews are syndicated to platforms like Google, your paid search ads (SEM) can feature a star rating, making your listing stand out and more clickable.

3 They Improve Trust and Brand Credibility

Ratings and reviews offer social proof at scale. Seeing that other real customers had good experiences builds the confidence buyers need to commit, especially for higher-ticket or unfamiliar products. With authentic (especially verified) ratings and reviews, shoppers are put at ease right as they pull out their cards to buy.

Types of Reviews

An effective ratings and reviews program doesn't stop at a single feedback format. To get a comprehensive view of performance, consider multiple review types:

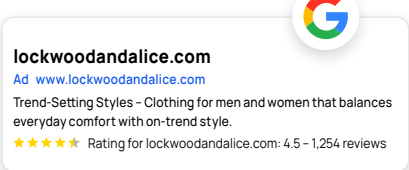


Jenn T
★★★★★ 1 month ago
Easy checkout, fast delivery, and great follow-up. Couldn't be happier with the service!
👍 3

Service Reviews

Experience-level feedback on overall service quality, covering order processing, communication, shipping, and post-sale support.

This answers the question:
Did this shopper enjoy the shopping experience?

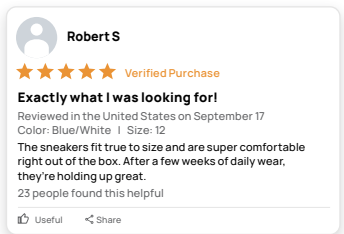


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Seller or Store Ratings

Aggregated ratings that appear in search results (e.g., Google Seller Ratings) and influence click-through rate before a shopper even visits your site.

This answers the question:
What do shoppers in general think about this merchant?



Robert S
★★★★★ Verified Purchase
Exactly what I was looking for!
Reviewed in the United States on September 17
Color: Blue/White 1 Size: 12
The sneakers fit true to size and are super comfortable right out of the box. After a few weeks of daily wear, they're holding up great.
23 people found this helpful
👍 Useful ↗ Share

Product Reviews

Item-specific feedback on quality, fit, durability, aesthetics, and more. They live on product detail pages and are critical for conversion.

This answers the question:
Did this shopper like what they bought?

A robust solution should support all three review types, allowing you to gather and use feedback across the entire customer journey.

92% of shoppers read reviews at least sometimes before making a purchase

Use Cases & Goals

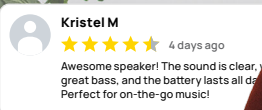
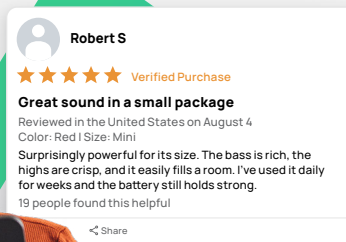
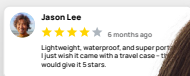
Putting Ratings & Reviews to Work

Gathering reviews is a key first step, and you should get as many as you can, but your platform should give you the tools to leverage those reviews in ways that truly move the needle across the board.

1. Boost Conversion

High-quality, verified reviews can increase conversion rates by helping shoppers cut down on the risks that are part of any purchase. Reviews give shoppers the social context of real human voices and perspectives that help mimic decision-making in a social context. That can be reassuring. Even if the reviews aren't globally positive, just seeing them adds a sense of social connectedness to the shopping experience.

- Photos, videos, and other UGC matter. According to our recent study of over 500 consumers, **91% of shoppers** read or watch customer-generated content before purchasing.
- **According to Northwestern's Spiegel Research Center**, adding reviews lifts purchase likelihood by +190% for lower-priced items and +380% for higher-priced items.



91%

of shoppers read or watch customer-generated content before purchasing

2. Improving Organic Traffic

Written reviews generate an ongoing pulse of new, keyword-rich content for your site. Website content doesn't change daily or weekly, but customer feedback is constantly refreshed, extending the long tail of discoverability. Search engines interpret this activity as a signal of relevance, which helps businesses climb results pages and stay there.

- Long-tail terms from real usage naturally emerge (“held up on a rainy hike,” “quiet enough for a small apartment,” “excellent packaging and response times”). These aren't the phrases marketers typically think to optimize for, but they're often the exact words buyers use when searching.
- Properly-formatted ratings are primed to surface directly in organic search snippets. The visible star ratings draw the eye, creating click-through advantages even when you're not the top-ranked result.

The net effect is that reviews widen the funnel by making your site discoverable to more shoppers at the very moment they are looking to shop.

3. Gaining Customer Insights

Reviews serve as an unfiltered lens into customer perception. Aggregating this commentary reveals both strengths and weak points that internal teams can act on before small issues become systemic.

- Repeated references to packaging, sizing, or checkout issues often point to overlooked friction.
- Unexpected praise (say, about sturdiness or customer service) can be recycled into product copy and brand messaging to better match what buyers actually value.
- Negative reviews, when read in aggregate, often contain specific, actionable detail. That candor becomes free market research, shortening the loop between problem detection and resolution.

Used well, reviews can be an operational feedback loop that helps align what you sell (and how you sell it) with your customers' needs.



4. Fueling Retargeting and Ads

Social proof has a lifecycle well beyond your website. Ratings and reviews provide an authenticity to your ad creative that branded language alone can't match. Retargeting ads that highlight a recent positive review often outperform those with generic copy because they expose shoppers to the experience of their peers. Your best reviews can be recycled and put to work at the very top of your funnel.

- These visual cues of trust quickly communicate value and reduce reliance on discounts as the primary lever to bring shoppers back.
- Reviews provide an endless source of authentic messaging. Use specific quotes in your email marketing, social media posts, and homepage banners to create campaigns that resonate on a personal level.

Marketing is a massive beneficiary, but keep your other departments in mind as well. Ratings and reviews should serve as a shared resource for your entire team. Ecommerce, UX, and Customer Support can also benefit from the insights they provide.

Ratings and reviews provide an authenticity to your ad creative that branded language alone can't match.

Key Solution Features to Evaluate

What To Look for When Selecting a Ratings & Reviews Platform

When comparing platforms, look beyond the surface claims. The right tool is one that consistently captures authentic feedback and deploys it in ways that can power your growth strategy.



Customer Journey Coverage

The ideal solution gives feedback at every point in the customer journey, from pre-purchase through post-fulfillment. Any KPI can be helpful, but the same KPI from multiple touchpoints in the same journey offers layers of nuance that are hard to beat. The customer experience isn't singular. It's a chain of smaller experiences (like checkout or unboxing), and every one of them matters.



Syndication Across Marketplaces

Reviews are most potent when they travel with your shoppers. A platform that supports syndication allows you to collect reviews once and distribute them across every relevant channel—your own site, Google Seller Ratings, Bing, and marketplaces like Amazon or Walmart. Your shoppers may not start their journey on your site, but with syndication, your best social proof follows them wherever they go.



Customizable Reviews

Reviews should look native to your site. Configurable display options like filters, sort functions, star badges, and media galleries let you test what keeps shoppers engaged without losing authenticity. Look for customizability or an API that your team can use to engineer your ratings and reviews into any configuration imaginable.



Fraud Detection & Authenticity Verification

Trust evaporates if reviews feel staged. Best-in-class solutions authenticate purchases, monitor for anomalies, and give you moderation controls that protect tone without censoring honest critique. Even better, gather feedback only from verified shoppers, so fraud is never an option.

Evaluation Criteria

How To Evaluate Your Options

Once you know the features you want, thoroughly assess each vendor against practical, results-oriented criteria.

1 Review Volume & Quality Improvement

Volume matters, but so does the usefulness of the content. The best platforms optimize both quantity and quality of reviews. Look for:

- The highest response rate you can find.
- Uplift in submission rates after implementation.
- Percentage of reviews from verified buyers

2 Platform Integrations

Your review solution should fit into your tech stack without friction. Prioritize:

- Easy installation and deployment using your in-house dev resources, or none at all.
- Native integrations with ecommerce platforms like Shopify, BigCommerce, and Adobe Commerce.
- An API to deploy review data across your site and export data to your existing BI tools.
- Plug-and-play connections to session-recording and analytics tools to analyze review impact on conversion.

Benchmarking Capabilities

Context matters. Seeing your own review data in isolation is useful, but comparing it against peers is more powerful.

- Category-level benchmarks reveal whether your ratings and review volumes are competitive.
- Industry comparisons provide external validation of performance.
- Ask whether the vendor offers anonymized benchmarks across its network, so you can measure progress against the market instead of just against yourself



In the Moment Data Collection

Feedback is most valuable when it's captured while the experience is still fresh. Platforms that enable in-the-moment collection increase both response rates and the accuracy of what shoppers share. Look for:

- Triggers tied to real events across the customer journey.
- Quick feedback that lets you take action, fast.
- Ability to collect product reviews, as well as service and fulfillment feedback at key touchpoints.



Sentiment Analysis

A good ratings and reviews platform should do more than offer raw data—it should provide clear insights. Look for a solution that offers:

- Sentiment scoring by product, category, or time period.
- Keyword analysis for trending topics.
- Comparison of sentiment before and after product changes.



Return on Investment Considerations

Measuring the Value of Your Investment

A ratings and reviews solution is an investment, but one that can generate measurable returns.

Increase in Verified Buyer Reviews

The most obvious ROI metric is the growth in authentic, verified reviews. More high-quality reviews generally correlate with higher conversion rates and an increased average order value due to upsales and cross-sales.

Reduced Returns From Informed Purchasing

Reviews set expectations. Customers who understand exactly what they're buying are less likely to return it due to a mismatch in size, features, or performance. You can track this by comparing return rates before and after implementing reviews on the same product set.

Lift in Organic Search Rankings And CTR

The constant addition of review content can improve your page relevance for a broader set of keywords, especially long-tail phrases. When star ratings appear on your search results, they can increase your click-through rate without increasing your ad budget.

Final Thoughts

The platform you choose should do the heavy lifting. It should collect verified reviews at scale, syndicate them everywhere your shoppers are, and surface insights that drive real improvements in your shop performance.

When you find a platform that checks all of those boxes and backs that with hands-on customer support, you've found your solution.



/ We Can Help

Build a Winning Customer Experience Strategy

Deepen customer trust at every stage of the shopping journey, from browsing to post-purchase, with tools that help you:

- | Listen to your customers
- | Understand their needs, preferences, and concerns
- | Deliver meaningful experiences that resonate

We deliver reviews, ratings, and customer verbatims to help you build a deeper, more emotional connection with shoppers that will keep them coming back for more.

See how Bizrate Insights can work for you at
bizrateinsights.com