

How Ratings and Reviews Guide Consumers

Positive Reviews? Check. 5-Star Rating? Sold.

ARTICLE |

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Consumers can be super picky about shopping. Some will spend hours looking for the right deal, only to back out at the last-minute because of shipping costs.

Others won't even consider a product unless it's accumulated enough positive ratings and reviews—or unless their closest confidants personally recommend it.

A majority of US internet users said they primarily trust their friends, family or colleagues for shopping recommendations, according to February 2019 data from [Oracle](#). Gen Z respondents, which Oracle defines as 18- to 24-year-olds, are more likely to do so than older cohorts—but not by much.

Putting that into perspective, US internet users trust their inner circle for recommendations more than they'd trust an employee in a store, fellow online consumer or influencer.

Who Do US Internet Users Trust for Recommendations When Shopping?

% of respondents, by generation, Feb 2019

	Gen Z (18-24)	Millennials (25-39)	Gen X (40-54)	Baby boomers (55-75)
Friends, family, colleagues	93%	86%	87%	87%
Employee in a store	28%	27%	24%	25%
Fellow consumers online	31%	28%	22%	14%
Influencer	23%	21%	10%	4%

Source: Oracle, "One Size Doesn't Fit All," July 30, 2019

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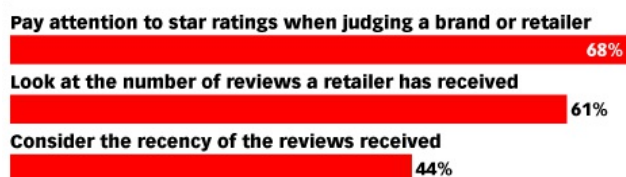
Product recommendations **certainly encourage brand discovery** and can even get **shoppers to spend more than intended**. But if a product has a low rating or not enough reviews, it can be quickly overlooked.

Nearly seven in 10 US internet users surveyed by retail operations platform **Brightpearl** and **Trustpilot**, a community-driven online review platform, said they primarily focus on star ratings when judging a brand or retailer.

The number and recency of available reviews also come into play. Roughly 61% of respondents regarded the quantity of reviews to influence their purchasing decision, while 44% focused on the most recent reviews on hand.

What Factors Do US Internet Users Consider When Judging a Brand or Retailer While Making a Purchase Decision?

% of respondents, March 2019



Note: ages 18+

Source: Brightpearl and Trustpilot, "Rise of the Review Culture," June 25, 2019

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"Consumers understand that online ratings and reviews can be gamed," said Andrew Lipsman, principal analyst at eMarketer. "They view quantity of reviews as a way of immunizing from the distorting effects of fake reviews, while also serving as a proxy for a brand having an established track record. They also know that products and experiences can erode over time, so they place additional weight on

the most recent reviews. In the absence of direct social proof from a trusted friend, applying these mental filters allows shoppers to overcome the trust hurdle.”