

## Ratings & Reviews Best Practices

1. **Reviews are extremely important to conversion metrics.** 95% of shoppers consult ratings and reviews before making a purchase. Providing product ratings and reviews helps to establish authenticity and trust, and ultimately increases conversions.
2. **Enable on-site reviews.** Look for a vendor with capabilities to build reviews widgets across your website. Assess the full stack of features including customer ability to leave reviews, internal admin's ability to review and approve reviews, automated monitoring for bad language and irrelevance, etc.
3. **Optimize for the entire reviews flow and digital ecosystem.** Follow-up emails, incentives, rewards and in-store programs to generate more reviews are required in order to create a successful reviews platform. Create a reviews ecosystem by enabling all of these digital touchpoints.
4. **Create an engaged reviews platform.** For new products, make sure you are starting the conversation by generating reviews prior to, and right after product launch. You can do this by engaging subject matter experts, verified buyers, and your online community through questions and answers on product page. Source reviews for products that don't have as many reviews by emailing customers who have previously purchased the product, and can be shown as a verified purchaser.
5. **Include verified purchaser reviews.** These reviews are generally more impactful because the new customer can trust that a verified purchaser is leaving a comment about the product, and that the review is not illegitimate, or paid. The more verified purchaser reviews, the better.
6. **Ratings volume should be in line with reviews volume by product.** To better ensure legitimacy of reviews, include ratings (can be star ratings or thumbs up and down ratings – the design is variable) alongside your reviews. Ensuring high ratings is just as important as having reviews.
7. **Create a filter or an attribute in your sorting feature to allow users to sort reviews.** Users should be able to sort and rank products by reviews and ratings. Create either a filter in your filter feature, or a sorting attribute so that users can find the highest reviewed product that fits their needs.
8. **Tie customer Q&A to your reviews capability.** This is a feature supported by most leading reviews platforms allowing customers to ask free-form questions about a product that get answered by other customers or by customer service reps. The Q&A feature tends to increase conversion, not only of shoppers who ask questions, but also of customers who answer them.
9. **Ensure that the provider is part of Google's Star Ratings program.** Google partners with a few dozen review platform providers to certify that reviews are legitimate. These reviews are then fed to Google to support the Google Star Rating feature of paid search ads. The gold stars increase click-through rates which in turn drives down cost per click.
10. **Follow-up emails and push notifications for sourcing reviews.** Include an easy-click "leave review" CTA in every follow-up purchase email, and build in push notifications into your ecommerce platform to allow users to leave reviews of past purchases on the go.

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# eCommerce Diligence™ Checklist

## Ratings & Reviews Key Questions to Ask Providers

### Company

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1. How long have you been in this business?
2. How many clients have you sold? How many have you lost, and why?
3. What type of clients fall into your “sweet spot”?
4. What peripheral or supporting services do you offer (e.g., design, customization, integration)?

### Products/Services

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1. What ROI should I expect from implementing your solution?
2. What redundancy and disaster recovery do you have in place?
3. What type of training do you provide to use your solution?
4. What skills does my organization (or hired third party) need to implement this solution?
5. What technical support services are available?
6. Are there human beings I can reach during reasonable hours (chat or phone) or do I have to wait 24 hours for an email response or callback?
7. Is your support team located in the US or abroad? What is your SLA for support issues?
8. Do you have a support knowledge base, community forum, or applications that are shared by customers?
9. What are the client support requirements?

### Features

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1. What key features are included in your solution?
2. Is there a key feature you have that none of your competitors have?
3. What features are currently missing that many of your competitors have?
4. What features are on your roadmap?
5. What features does management love? What about shoppers?
6. What is your product’s competitive advantage? Why? Price? Features? Ease of use? Flexibility? Don’t say “all”.
7. Please list the ecommerce solutions for which you have standard integrations already built.
8. Please list ones where you have built custom integrations.
9. Is your platform geared strictly to B2C sales or is there special B2B functionality available as well?
10. Do you have a management console? What can I manage with it? Is it web-based, application-based, other? Reporting and a dashboard?
11. Please describe your reporting capabilities?
12. Please provide a list of standard reports.
13. What analytics tools does your solution include?
14. How does your platform address the evolving security standards?

### Pricing

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1. What is your pricing model and what features are included? On what are they based?
2. Provide an annual estimate of cost, based on some performance metrics.
3. What ROI can I expect from your solution?
4. How do you charge for annual support? What about maintenance?
5. Are there any additional fees (e.g., implementation, transaction costs, revenue sharing)?

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