



POWER
REVIEWS

Room&Board

*How Room & Board Mines User Generated
Content to Drive Sales and Insights*

Contents



3

Introduction

Why Room & Board's online presence is key to conversion.

5

Generating Review Content

How Room & Board successfully generates reviews from online and in-store shoppers.

9

Pairing Ratings and Reviews with Q&A to Drive Conversion

The way reviews and Q&A work together to increase conversion.

15

Uncovering Insights

How UGC helps Room & Board identify ways to better serve customers.

20

Continuous Measurement and Optimization

The role testing, measurement, and optimization play in getting the best results.

24

About PowerReviews

Introduction

Room & Board has been designing modern home furnishings for more than 30 years. In every piece of furniture they offer, customers can see the principles that have guided Room & Board from the very beginning: passion for design, natural materials, and American craftsmanship designed for life.

In the three decades since Room & Board opened the doors of its first furniture showroom, the company has focused its attention on service, selection, quality, and value. Room & Board operates just 14 retail locations across the U.S., so most prospective customers don't have the opportunity to see the company's modern, American-made designs in person. That's why Room & Board's online presence is incredibly important to conversion.

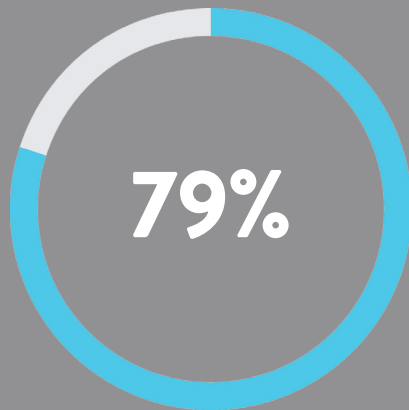
“As our online sales grew, we needed a way to differentiate ourselves from our competition, while also giving our customers the confidence they need to make a purchase—often

without ever seeing it in person,” said Kimberly Ruthenbeck, Director of Web Customer Experience at Room & Board.

Room & Board knew that differentiating themselves would take more than copywriting and photos, and they understand there's nothing more powerful than word of mouth. That's why the company made the decision to partner with PowerReviews in 2010 to implement a comprehensive ratings and reviews solution that would help the company increase conversion. After experiencing success with ratings and reviews, Room & Board added Social Answers Q&A in 2012.

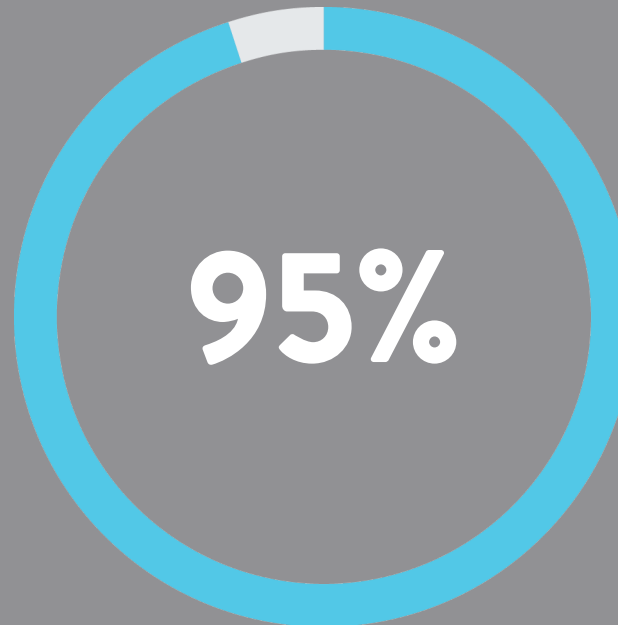
In the following case study, you'll learn how Room & Board uses ratings and reviews and Q&A to unify the voice of the consumer online and in-store to increase conversion and improve products and the consumer experience.

Room & Board by the numbers



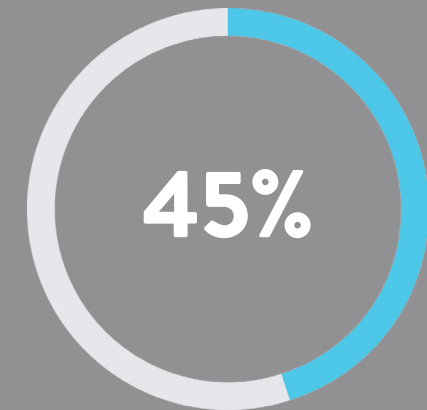
REVIEW COVERAGE

79% of products on Room & Board's website have reviews or Q&A.



CONVERSION IMPACT

In 2015, the conversion rate from consumers who either read reviews or Q&A was 95% higher than the site average.



SALES INFLUENCE

Reviews and Q&A have influenced 45% of online and offline sales for Room & Board.



Part 1: Generating Reviews



Generating Reviews

Room & Board understands that ratings and reviews are a powerful tool for increasing conversion, which is why they wanted to ensure they had adequate coverage before pushing reviews live on their website in 2010.

Generating a Large Volume of Reviews for Initial Launch

In addition to having a database of email addresses for consumers who have made a purchase online, Room & Board also collects email addresses from more than 95% of shoppers who make a purchase in-store.

Prior to pushing reviews live on their site, Room & Board sent a post purchase email to all shoppers who had made a recent purchase. As a result of sending this post purchase email to previous customers, Room & Board collected 5,000 reviews from past purchases, allowing them to launch reviews on their site with a significant amount of review content already available to shoppers.

“Soliciting reviews from multi-channel customers has given us the opportunity to generate a wide spectrum of reviews, which has had a great influence on in-store and online shoppers”



Collecting Reviews Today

Unlike many other companies that only actively request reviews from those who purchase online, Room & Board continues to generate a high volume of content by collecting reviews from both in-store and online shoppers. The company feels that asking for reviews—regardless of the purchase channel—provides an opportunity to increase review coverage and helps future consumers make smart purchase decisions.

“Soliciting reviews from multichannel customers has given us the opportunity to generate a wide spectrum of reviews, which has had a great influence on in-store and online shoppers,” said Ruthenbeck.



Part 2: Pairing Ratings and Reviews with Q&A to Drive Conversion



Pairing Ratings and Reviews with Q&A to Drive Conversion

While reviews have proven to be incredibly valuable to the brand, Room & Board also recognized that their consumers had questions while they shop. After seeing great results with ratings and reviews from PowerReviews, Room & Board made the decision to implement Social Answers Q&A.

Adoption of Q&A

Shortly after implementing Q&A, it became a key tool in the purchase journey. In 2015, Room & Board received an

average of 480 questions from consumers each month. The company noticed that the majority of questions are posted on Sundays, likely from people who visit a store over the weekend and have a few remaining questions before making the final purchase.

“Although Q&A has lower engagement than ratings and reviews on our site, we found that those who engage with Q&A convert at a higher rate, spend more time on the site, and view more pages on our site,” said Ruthenbeck.

In 2015, the conversion rate from consumers who either read reviews or Q&A was 95% higher than the site average.



Driving Engagement and Conversion Online

Room & Board has found that having Ratings and Reviews and Q&A on their website has had a big impact on conversion. Rather than competing against each other, these two solutions work together to drive big results.

In 2015, the conversion rate from consumers who either read reviews or Q&A was 95% higher than the site average.

In fact, reviews alone have influenced 30% of both online and offline sales for Room & Board. Combined with Q&A, that number jumps to 45%.

“It’s really a multiplier effect to have both ratings and reviews and Q&A on our site,” said Ruthenbeck.

“The biggest thing we hear from our Design Associates is that ratings and reviews create a deeper engagement with customers. They come to the store with more questions and more confidence.”



Driving Engagement and Conversion In-Store

Ratings and reviews and Q&A aren't just used by online shoppers. These solutions are also influencing shoppers who go to a store to make a purchase. Because the company collects email addresses, they're able to determine what percentage of people read reviews and then make a purchase in-store. Of those customers who make a purchase after reading reviews or Social Answers Q&A, 46% do so in-store.

“The biggest thing we hear from our Design Associates is that ratings and reviews create a deeper engagement with customers,” explained Ruthenbeck. “They come to the store with more questions and more confidence.”



Part 3: Uncovering Insights from Ratings & Reviews and Q&A



Uncovering Insights from Ratings & Reviews and Q&A

In addition to increasing engagement and conversion, ratings and reviews and Q&A have helped Room & Board identify ways to better serve their customers.

Identifying Content Gaps

Room & Board's best selling category is bedroom. However, the company found that this category was generating the highest number of customer questions, up to 60 questions per item.

"It made us rethink how we're selling items in this category," said Ruthenbeck. "We started to realize how hard we were making it for consumers to buy a bed."

Room & Board noticed similar themes in the questions that were being submitted in the bedroom category and saw this as an opportunity to add additional data points and images to the product pages in this category. As soon as they made these updates, they immediately noticed that the number of questions posted in this category decreased.



Modifying Merchandise Assortment

Ratings and reviews have also helped Room & Board determine what products to offer to its customers. The company analyzed their review content and noticed that several customers identified high price as an issue. With this input, the company made the decision to change their rug assortment to include more options at lower price points.

“Ratings and reviews and Q&A give us feedback that we can act on to improve our products and our customers’ experience,” said Ruthenbeck. “This is feedback we wouldn’t get any other way.”

“Ratings and reviews have provided us with an amazing body of information for us to improve our business.”




Improving Products

Room & Board also uses the insights gleaned from ratings and reviews and Q&A to identify ways to improve their products. For example, the company noticed that they had an average star rating of 3.7 for one of their upholstery products. After digging into the reviews, Room & Board noticed that several shoppers had negative feedback about the cushioning in the upholstery. The company shared this information with their

merchant, who then changed the cushioning for the product. As a result, the average star rating for the item rose to 4.3 stars.

“Ratings and reviews have provided us with an amazing body of information for us to improve our business,” said Ruthenbeck.



Part 4: Continuous Measurement and Optimization



Continuous Measurement and Optimization

Room & Board recognizes that companies shouldn't take a "set it and forget it" approach to ratings and reviews and Q&A. Instead, it's key to constantly test, measure, and optimize in order to get the best results.

"One of the biggest mistakes brands and retailers make with reviews is putting them on autopilot. If you're not regularly making strategic changes, you're leaving opportunities on the table," said Ruthenbeck.

Optimizing Post Purchase Emails

The majority of Room & Board's reviews are generated as a result of a post purchase email, and the company regularly analyzes the performance of their post purchase emails to identify areas for improvement that would help them generate more reviews. In addition to testing timing and cadence, the company also makes regular updates to the design of the email. As a result of recent optimizations, Room & Board has increase their conversion rate of post purchase emails sent to reviews written by 80%.

**“Adding staff reviews offers
another layer of validity for our
customers.”**



Generating Content for Items With Low Coverage

Room & Board recognized that there were products on their site that had high traffic, but a low volume of reviews—or none at all. In order to build consumer confidence and increase conversion, Room & Board implemented an initiative to send special email requests to get reviews for items in high traffic categories with low review coverage, as well as new products. The company also has plans to test promotions to create excitement, particularly for new products.

Adding Staff Reviews

Room & Board recognizes that their own staff are incredibly knowledgeable about the company's products. By inviting their staff to write reviews, the company has been able to generate a higher volume of accurate, quality reviews.

“Adding staff reviews offers another layer of validity for our customers,” said Ruthenbeck.



Why PowerReviews

“Partnering with PowerReviews has not only increased our conversion rates and traffic, it’s also allowed us to help our customers make more informed decisions when they shop with us. Over the six years we’ve been PowerReviews clients, we’ve been able to continuously improve, using best practices and having a Client Success Director who is responsive and eager to work with us.”

-Kimberly Ruthenbeck, Director of Web Customer Experience, Room & Board

About PowerReviews

PowerReviews works with more than 1,000 global brands and retailers to increase conversion and improve products and the customer experience with ratings and reviews and Q&A software. Ratings and reviews solutions from PowerReviews are essential for consumers as they search and shop online and in-store, and they are proven to increase online site-wide sales up to 17%.

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