POWER REVIEWS

shopify plus

The Ultimate Ratings and Reviews Buyer's Guide for Shopify Plus Merchants

Choosing the best ratings and reviews partner for your Shopify Plus store

INTRODUCTION

Whether you're new to ratings and reviews or have plenty of experience collecting user-generated content (UGC) for your Shopify Plus store, searching for a new technology provider can seem like an overwhelming experience. This is especially true when you don't know what factors to consider or which questions to ask.

The first step to structuring the criteria for choosing a UGC vendor is to identify the challenge you're trying to solve. This will help you determine what factors are important to your business. Then, you can begin your search to identify a partner who has solved this challenge for other retailers and brands, including other merchants that use Shopify Plus.

To help you along the way, PowerReviews and Shopify Plus have partnered up to create a comprehensive ratings and reviews Buyer's Guide, built specifically for Shopify Plus merchants. Use this guide as your go-to ratings and reviews evaluation tool, detailing the criteria you should evaluate through every phase of your buying journey. This includes specifics on technical capabilities and the questions you should ask potential partners during the vendor evaluation process.

After reading this guide, you'll walk away with a clear roadmap for evaluating and choosing the right user-generated content solution (and partner) for your Shopify Plus store. Let's get started.

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1 BEFORE YOUR PURCHASE

The Changing Expectations of Shoppers

Today, consumers have come to expect comprehensive and readily available product information as they browse and purchase products. <u>Research shows</u> that 43% of consumers cite poor product descriptions as their top irritation when researching products online, and the top post-purchase complaint for 48% of consumers is that a product didn't meet expectations.

While brand-provided product information has its role to play, consumers are increasingly turning to the opinions of other consumers when browsing for products. <u>PowerReviews research</u> found that virtually all shoppers—95%—consult ratings and reviews while shopping. And 86% consider reviews an essential resource when making a purchase decision.

In addition, many consumers are now looking for more than text-only reviews. <u>Nearly three quarters of shoppers</u> say they are more likely to buy a product that has reviews that feature photos and videos in addition to text. This means it's more important than ever to find a partner capable of collecting various UGC types to ensure you offer your customers the content they expect.

> 86% of consumers say reviews are an essential resource when making purchase decisions.

How Reviews Impact Your Business

Reviews aren't just beneficial to consumers as they search for products that meet their needs. They are also good for your business' bottom line—serving as a valuable tool to drive traffic, conversion and sales for your Shopify Plus store.

Reviews Drive Traffic

Today's consumers have nearly limitless options when it comes to researching and purchasing products. And in a vast majority of cases, they're not starting their search directly on a brand or retailer site. **Research shows** that more than a third of shoppers choose to start the purchase journey on a search engine, compared to 21% that start directly on a brand or retailer site.

Ratings and reviews help ensure your product pages are displaying in search engine results by improving relevance and freshness of content with keyword-rich, permanent assets on those product pages. Products experience an average 108% traffic lift when one or more reviews are added.

Reviews Increase Conversion

Today's information-hungry consumers want to learn everything they can before making a purchase. And if you give shoppers all the information they're looking for—including the opportunity to hear from previous customers through ratings and reviews—they're more likely to convert.

At PowerReviews, we've found that when a product without reviews adds one or more reviews, the conversion rate increases by an average of 65%.

Reviews Increase Sales

Businesses that add reviews can also expect a boost in revenue. On average, PowerReviews customers see a 92% sales lift on a product once it generates at least one review.

Reviews Impact In-Store Sales

Reviews also impacts in-store sales. A recent Harvard Business Report[1] study found that conducting prior online research on a retailer's website led to 13% greater in-store spending among omnichannel shoppers. And savvy retailers are following the lead of Amazon by displaying reviews in store to give shoppers the information they need at the moment of purchase.

Reviews Inform Product and Website Improvements

In addition to driving traffic and conversion, product reviews can help you gather actionable insights about your products. For example, you can learn what features customers love and potential issues that can be fixed by working with the manufacturer of a product.

InStyler, a leader in hair tool innovation and PowerReviews customer, noticed that several reviews for a comb attachment mentioned that the teeth of the comb had broken off, something the company didn't notice when developing the product. As a result of this feedback, the company completely reworked the comb attachment.

Reviews can also be a great source of insight into ways to improve the content of your website. Room & Board, another PowerReviews customer, analyzed review content for their rug collection and noticed that several customers identified price as a negative. Armed with this information, Room & Board enhanced their product descriptions so customers could understand more about the quality of the rugs and why they were priced at the point they were.

1. Harvard Business Review, A Study of 46,000 Shoppers Shows That Omnichannel Retailing Works, 2017.

QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL VENDORS

- [ ] Do you have proven, documented case studies on the success and value your platform and services have driven for customers?

- [ ] Have you worked with other brands and retailers that use the Shopify Plus platform?

- [ ] Do you have consumer preferences and data on the impact of UGC?

- [ ] Do you have benchmarks of comparable clients to help us understand where we rank?

- [ ] Describe your SEO strategy for UGC. How does your solution support this strategy?

- [ ] How do you document and share best practices with your clients?

- [ ] Do you conduct original research on UGC trends and best practices?

- [ ] How does your solution support rich media content collection?

- [ ] Describe how we can leverage data and reporting to help us improve our business.

Making the Switch to a New Ratings and Reviews Partner

Perhaps you understand the value of ratings and reviews and are actively collecting and sharing user-generated content on your website. But you're not seeing the business impact you expected from the reviews you've generated and you feel like you've outgrown your current solution. Or maybe your consumers are looking for new ways to share feedback and your solution provider isn't innovating or sharing best practices.

If this is the case, it may be time to consider switching to a new ratings and reviews partner that better suits your business needs. While it may seem like an overwhelming task to evaluate and implement a new provider, if you choose the right partner the reward will definitely outweigh the risks.

When it's Time to Switch

How do you know when it's time to consider a new ratings and reviews provider? Here are some of the most common signs that it might be time to make a move.

- You need to improve review coverage (the number of products that have reviews).
- You need to improve review depth (the number of reviews per product).
- Adding reviews to your site isn't having a positive effect on the growth of your business.
- Your provider isn't innovating with new features and functionality.
- New enhancements are hard to implement.
- Your partner's client support isn't available or responsive; they aren't proactively working with your team to get the most of out of your user-generated content strategy.
- Your partner isn't regularly sharing best practices.
- You don't think of your ratings and reviews solution provider as a partner who is positively impacting your business and adding value.

2 DURING YOUR PURCHASE

Choosing a Ratings and Reviews Partner for Your Shopify Plus Store

For most businesses, the first step in choosing a new ratings and reviews provider is to document the criteria for your business needs. With more than 10 years of user-generated content management experience, we've participated in hundreds of vendor evaluations with companies across all verticals that use a variety of ecommerce platforms — including Shopify Plus. Based on these interactions, we've compiled a list of strategic, targeted questions to help businesses like yours choose the right ratings and reviews provider.

When structuring the criteria for choosing a UGC vendor, it's important to start with the problem you are trying to solve. Then, you can build out the questions to help guide your process of finding a partner who has solved these problems for similar retailers and brands.

Remember: your ratings and reviews solution provider should be more than just a vendor. They should be one of your most valuable business partners. Your client success team members should understand the specific "ins and outs" of your business, and encourage you to employ best practices or implement new technology that will help you compete and win market share against your competitors and market leaders such as Amazon.

Choosing a reviews provider for your Shopify Plus store is a big decision. When evaluating your options, be sure they offer the following:

Capability

Reasoning

Full Content Collection Suite

Full content collection capabilities allow you to collect a high volume of reviews and increase overall product coverage. Your reviews provider should offer features like a sweepstakes and the ability to collect reviews from in-store shoppers.

Mobile-friendly Collection and Display Capabilities

Your reviews provider should offer mobile optimized solutions and have a small code footprint to ensure your site runs quickly and consumers can easily access valuable content throughout the purchase journey.

Visual Content Collection

88% of consumers specifically look for visuals (such as photos and videos) submitted by other consumers prior to making a purchase. Your reviews provider should make it easy for consumers to upload conversion-lifting images and videos from their mobile devices- without going to third party sites. You can then easily showcase this visual content on your website to attract and convert shoppers.

Capability	Reasoning
Dedicated Customer Success Team	Your ratings and reviews provider should be a true business partner—committed to helping you maximize the value of your UGC.
Syndication Network Access	Your reviews provider should amplify the reach of your review content across a vast network of major retailers and search engines. That way, shoppers can find the information they're looking for about your products across the web.
Easy Implementation Process	Your reviews provider should offer an easy and streamlined implementation process that gets you up and running in as little as a day (or even an hour).
Customizable Platform	Your reviews provider's platform should allow you to make simple CSS changes or stick with a well-designed original theme for a display that seamlessly fits your brand's look and feel.
Analytics and Insights	The actionable insights gleaned from ratings and reviews are critical to business and product optimization. Your reviews provider should measure and report on the impact of the content you collect, and make it easy to access the insights that can help you improve your products and the customer experience.

- [ ] What is your overall vision and plan for success with our company?

- [ ] What support will we receive as a client? How will you ensure that we are executing at the highest level and using best practices?

- [ ] What is your overall strategy for user-generated content collection?

- [ ] What other features are available as part of your solution to move consumers through the purchase journey?

- [ ] What new features have you launched in the last year and what changes do you see happening in the industry in the next three years that will impact future functionality?

- [ ] How will your solution lead to improved business results?

- [ ] What can we expect in the first year?

- [ ] Is your solution flexible and easy to use? Will we be able to customize the look and feel of our display and adopt new features easily?

③ AFTER YOUR PURCHASE

Determining Value from Your Investment
You've successfully navigated a complex journey and identified the right ratings and reviews partner. But the work isn't over yet. After choosing your provider, it's important to continuously make sure you're getting the most out of your ratings and reviews investment.

You'll want to regularly measure the results user-generated content is driving for your business. Set regular check-ins with your client success team to discuss your results, as well as best practices that can help you improve review coverage, depth, traffic, conversion and sales.

Finally, be sure you understand your partner's long-term vision. You want to make sure your reviews provider is driving results for you today—and setting your organization up for success in the future, too.

QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL VENDORS

- [ ] **What has been the lift in my traffic, sales, conversion rates and review coverage since we implemented your solution?**

- [ ] **What is your long-term vision for user-generated content collection?**

- [ ] **What new features have you launched in the last year, how will they positively impact my business, and what's next on your product roadmap?**

- [ ] **What changes do you see happening in the industry this year that will impact future functionality and capabilities?**

- [ ] **What steps have you taken to ensure the continued growth of the syndication network in order to further amplify the reach of my content?**

- [ ] **Are there emerging consumer trends and new UGC content types I should be aware of and working to collect and syndicate?**

Get Started Today

If you're ready to get started and want to speak with a member of our team, <u>complete this quick form</u> and we will be in touch soon.

About PowerReviews

PowerReviews works with more than 1,000 global brands and retailers to deliver cloud-based software that collects and displays ratings and reviews and questions and answers on websites. PowerReviews unifies and amplifies the voice of the consumer throughout their journey, across all channels to help consumers make better purchase decisions and to help businesses drive conversion and improve products and services. Ratings and reviews are essential for consumers as they search and shop online and in-store, driving traffic on more than 5,000 websites, creating actionable insights to improve products and services, increasing conversion, and growing online site-wide sales. PowerReviews' mobile-friendly software is fast to implement and simple to customize, making it easy for brands and retailers to generate more authentic content that is seen by more consumers. The PowerReviews Open Network reaches more than 1 billion in-market shoppers every month, giving retailers and brands the power to reach shoppers wherever they are.

About Shopify Plus

Shopify Plus, a cloud based enterprise commerce solution powering the world's fastest growing brands, offers merchants a multi-channel platform with unmatched scalability so merchants can grow their business instead of worrying about their website. With ecommerce automation tools that allow merchants to automate workflows, sales campaigns, and product drops, Shopify Plus easily integrates with all major third-party systems and applications.