



Gardener's Supply Company Sows Inspired Commerce with Customer Content

Amplifying Customer Social Content to Enhance Social Proof and Increase Sales

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CASE STUDY

About the Company

Gardener's Supply Company is a 100% employee-owned company of avid gardeners providing garden-tested, earth-friendly products combined with practical information. Headquartered in Burlington, VT, the company has won many awards for its innovative gardening products, online gardening content and progressive management style. Gardener's Supply is also a Certified B Corporation and donates 8% of its profits to nonprofit organizations that use gardening to improve the world.



As a PowerReviews customer for more than ten years, Gardener's Supply had long understood the value of ratings and reviews content in driving ecommerce sales and revenue. However, the company recently began using PowerReviews solutions to amplify authentic social media content on its own digital channels with excellent results. Following this success, the company also started leveraging PowerReviews UGC Analytics platform. This has identified some extremely actionable nuggets focused on improving product quality.

Highlights

The company:

Gardener's Supply Company

Industry:

Home & Garden

Challenge:

Create a more inspired, holistic experience for customers to generate increased sales volumes.

Solution:

Use PowerReviews to amplify authentic social media content on Gardener's own digital channels with excellent results.

The Opportunity

Gardener's Supply began with a mission that's exactly the same today as it was when the company started in 1983. In the company's words: *We are in business to spread the joys and rewards of gardening, because gardening nourishes the body, elevates the spirit, builds community, and makes the world a better place.*



While this commitment has remained steadfast, how the company engages with customers has changed over the years. Gardener's has cultivated a rich digital community of gardening enthusiasts, who exuberantly share their planting, pruning, hoeing and growing experiences.

For over a decade, Gardener's has partnered with PowerReviews to collect authentic review content, foster brand loyalty and enhance customer engagement on its website. A wealth of customer content being created and shared on social channels offered yet another opportunity to tap into this rich customer feedback.

Gardener's sought a robust visual content collection and curation solution to support its multi-channel sales strategy to create a more inspired and holistic experience for its customers and greater uplift in sales.

Leveraging Rich Customer Feedback

Gardener's understood the importance of ratings and reviews for its overall customer experience and sales strategy, as well as the impact on Search Engine Optimization (SEO). However, it noticed its customers were increasingly sharing the bountiful visual harvests of their gardening pursuits with Gardener's products, via social media. Instagram is Gardener's fastest growing content channel – growing exponentially with over 75,000 followers and counting.



While copious, this content was not amplified beyond the social media channel it was created in. This represented a missed opportunity: it was not being integrated into the Gardener's website, where it could have a tangible impact on customer purchasing decisions. While the goal was to weave this rich user-generated content into Gardener's website's product detail pages, the team struggled to accomplish this with its existing social media discovery platform.

When PowerReviews introduced its social collection capabilities, featuring ease-of-use and streamlined integration with Gardener's website, the team was sold. "When we started seeing customer-submitted review images popping up on the pages so easily, we were amazed. We realized we could offer a more cohesive customer experience by integrating social image content that could live and coexist right alongside customer reviews," said Amanda Everse, SEO Manager for Gardener's Supply Company.

“PowerReviews has given us the power to embed customer feedback into our product detail pages to help our customers make informed and empowered purchasing decisions. We have seen significant uplift in how Google views the authority of our site due to the high percentage of high-quality and well displayed reviews as well as higher conversion rates.”

AMANDA EVERSE

*SEO MANAGER,
GARDENER'S SUPPLY COMPANY*

Enhancing Procurement Strategies

Working with PowerReviews, Gardeners has collected and displayed over 14,000 reviews and 1,500 images over the last year on its website.



In just a few months, the team has also amplified hundreds of images from Instagram by tapping into this large pool of visual content that many customers were already creating and sharing. The images are added to galleries displayed on Gardener's product detail pages, enriching the shopping experience with color and context from users' unique experiences.

A summary at the top of each product detail page shows the total number of product reviews collected, the average review rating, and a distinct call out such as, "96% of respondents would recommend this to a friend."

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Visual content is so key to ecommerce. Customers expect high-quality imagery and video. Gardening is very hands-on, and the content inspires customers to try and have confidence that products work as promised.

AMANDA EVERSE

SEO MANAGER,

GARDENER'S SUPPLY COMPANY

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Product Launch Success

The company has revamped its product launch strategy to ensure new product introductions can benefit from the added customer review content. Traditionally, the company's new product launches have been timed around the mailing of its seasonal catalogs. Gardener's noticed that in instances where customer reviews were collected prior to the peak sales season, new products experienced a marketable boost in overall sales.



“We’re now launching products early online in advance of being featured in the catalog. This allows us to get these products in the hands of key influencers, volunteer test gardeners, and employees to support creative visual storytelling and this has made a huge difference in sales once we get them to market,” said Everse.

Curated customer content has also helped fuel the company’s new procurement strategy. Recently, the company started adding “market available products,” warehoused and drop shipped from other vendors, to expand its offerings while reducing the risk of carrying additional inventory.

“We have been pleasantly surprised by the significant return on investment of this initiative as we have not had to design promotions or develop custom copy. This merchandise has been selling well and we know the customer feedback has made all the difference – helping [shoppers] feel confident in purchasing from us and distinguishing our offering via first-hand positive experiences,” said Everse.

Actionable Intelligence Delivering Critical Product Insight

Gardeners has also recently started leveraging the PowerReviews analytics suite UGC Analytics - to gain deeper insights on its product catalog. Immediately, it started offering significant value.

“We have worked hard - and PowerReviews has obviously helped with this - to foster and grow a loyal customer base,” says Everse. “Our customers are passionate about our products, which is obviously what every consumer business wants.

“However, what we find is that our products generate five-star ratings even when they include a description of a problem. We therefore need extra analytics capabilities to identify very specific improvements that will make a big difference overall, even when at the raw star data level you wouldn’t think there are any issues.”

This is game changing evidence to not only optimize the product catalog and drive improved customer experiences but also to take to merchants. “Our irrigation products have high star ratings but we know they have their issues on occasions, and some are more prone to leaking than others. We want to improve wherever we can.

“UGC Analytics enables me to aggregate our customers’ opinion. This has armed me with critical evidence for situations like this. I can go to our merchant and say ‘look at what our customers are saying, you need to fix this’. This insight is such a time saver for us.”

This is just one example of many. Analysis of Gardeners’ review content is enabling the company to elevate - not only the way it leverages its UGC but also - product experiences across its entire catalog.



Easy to Use and Implement

“There have been almost zero complaints from our call centers – our representatives log into the dashboard and have found it easy to access,” said Everse. “Everyone loves how the reviews are presented on the product detail page – and especially the tight integration of content from reviews and social media.

“We have a small IT team, so resource constraints are a big gating factor. This project update of adopting the new PowerReviews Dashboard and Social Connector was one of the easiest I’ve experienced in my time here at Gardener’s and in working with various vendors.”

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