2023 Brand Health Index: Beer, Wine, & Spirits Edition

90+ alcoholic beverage brands ranked by Brand Health Score, a proprietary metric based on a variety of factors related to ratings and reviews, including review recency, review coverage by product, overall review coverage, and more.

Bottoms Up: How Digital-Savvy Consumers are Driving the Future of the Beverage Industry

Historically, alcohol was an in-store purchase. Then the COVID-19 pandemic happened and everything changed, as online alcohol sales skyrocketed. The momentum hasn't slowed down since. Today, one quarter of global drinkers now order alcohol online. Industry experts predict alcohol ecommerce will grow by 66% over the next few years, reaching $42 billion by 2025.

Thanks to inflation, nearly one in four (22%) of consumers say they plan to drink from home more in 2023, with millennials being even more likely to bartend at home. Instead of drinking out, consumers are opting for their dollars toward premium beer, wine, and spirits. Ratings and reviews are particularly valuable for these beverages, with 78% of consumers saying the more expensive the product, the more they read reviews.

As in-home consumption and online purchases have become more popular, consumers increasingly expect to see reviews for alcoholic beverages. Nearly one in three (29%) shoppers say reviews are important for alcoholic beverages, a 4% increase from 2022. The top three UGC elements grocery shoppers value most include average star rating, specific review details like packaging, and volume of reviews.

Nearly all of the brands in our report had review volumes much, much lower than what consumers expect to see. At a minimum, more than half (55%) of shoppers require at least 25 reviews to feel comfortable making a purchase. In our report, 70% of brands had fewer than this amount.

Ratings and reviews are just as important for in-person retail sales, which still dominate the category. Reviews are the single-most important factor impacting purchase decisions, with 91% of consumers always or regularly seeking them out. Perhaps more critically, nearly half (45%) of consumers won't purchase a product if there are no reviews available for it. And, nearly six in ten (58%) of consumers use their phones in brick-and-mortar stores to read product ratings and reviews — a 12% increase year-over-year.

One-third of consumers say they prefer online shopping for food and beverage due to the ease of accessing product information, including reviews. It's worth noting that these online shoppers are not brand loyal, with less than 30% purchasing the same products from the same brands each time they shop. But every cloud has a silver lining, as less brand loyalty means that shoppers are increasingly open to new products. 91% of online grocery shoppers are willing to purchase new items they've never purchased previously. The presence of ratings and reviews can boost their confidence – and increase their likelihood of purchasing unknown products.

With ratings and reviews being the #1 tool for product discovery, alcohol brands have an opportunity to reach new customers and convince them to take a sip. In this report, you'll discover how consumers feel about today's top beer, wine, and vodka brands and unlock key insights you can use to maintain and grow your own market share through improved customer perception and brand positioning.

2

Methodology

Ratings and reviews are recognized as being essential to influencing and informing shoppers both on- and offline. However, what is less known is that they also contain a wealth of consumer insight on brand perception and product experience.

Analysis for this report is taken from ratings and reviews published on the websites of Walmart and Target, two of the biggest retailers in the U.S. Walmart's retail presence is undeniable, with 90% of Americans living within 10 miles of a Walmart. In a prescient pre-pandemic move, Walmart started selling alcohol for store pick-up in 29 states back in 2019. As of May 2023, consumers can now order alcohol delivery from Walmart in 23 states. Target didn't fall far behind, expanding curbside pickup for alcohol in 2021 and adding alcohol to same-day delivery wherever local laws allowed. The adult beverage category is "one of the fastest-growing divisions within [Target's] food and beverage business," according to Target executives, with stores seeing more than 450% digital growth in alcohol sales from the pandemic boom.

The raw data used to complete this analysis included roughly 20K individual reviews covering more than 90 brands on Walmart.com and Target.com. The text of the review comments were processed by the PowerReviews NLP (Natural Language Processing) engine to derive sentiment and topics from this unstructured data. We make year-on-year comparisons for the 12-month period between April 1, 2022 and March 30, 2023 (This Year) and April 1, 2021 and March 30, 2022 (Last Year). It is important to note that these time frames pertain to the date that a review was written.

We base many of our findings on the PowerReviews Brand Health Score (which we refer to throughout), a proprietary measurement framework made up of six key quality indicators of Ratings & Reviews strategy. Each indicator is weighted according to its relative importance, as outlined in the table below. All performance KPIs are based on percentile rankings relative to all other brands in the category, retailer, and time period being analyzed. This means that a brand could maintain its star rating and still see its score fall if other brands in the category were to improve and raise the overall average.

Beer

2023 has been an eventful year for beer brands, but the hoppy drink is still America's favorite alcoholic beverage, and slated to bring in $610 billion in revenue this year. According to DoorDash data, hard cider and flavored malt beverages, like White Claw and Truly, were the most-ordered type of alcohol this year. In fact, the no/low-alcohol category is expected to grow by a third by 2026, with no/low-alcohol beer and cider driving much of that growth.

Top Beer Brands at Walmart

At Walmart, the top brands represent the current tastes of beer drinkers: a mix of classic beers as well as hard seltzers and flavored malt beverages. The average rating is 4.56 stars, which is below our recommended range of 4.75 – 4.99 stars. We have found that products within this range have the highest conversion rates. (Shoppers are suspicious of perfect 5-star reviews.)

Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	Corona	76%	61%	15%	1,501	166	4.66	214
2	Smirnoff	71%	48%	23%	657	163	4.48	110
3	Coors Light	69%	57%	12%	177	33	4.94	35
4	Michelob Ultra	64%	61%	3%	76	54	4.91	76
5	Cayman Jack	61%	na	61%	30	211	4.53	30
6	Pacifico	59%	60%	-1%	59	115	4.9	20
7	Heineken	58%	66%	-8%	214	189	4.19	36
8	Busch Light	50%	na	50%	28	11	4.93	28
9	Miller Lite	50%	41%	9%	33	33	4.82	17
10	Dos Equis	49%	71%	-22%	40	165	4.58	20
11	Modelo Negra	48%	62%	-14%	14	181	4.71	14
12	Bud Light	46%	47%	-1%	36	202	4.22	12
13	Seagram's Escapes	42%	20%	22%	55	101	4.18	14
14	Yuengling	41%	38%	3%	12	72	5	6
15	Guinness	38%	56%	-18%	4	226	4.75	4
16	Mike's Harder Lemonade	36%	24%	12%	9	128	4.33	9
17	Modelo	31%	52%	-21%	14	156	4.5	7
18	Tecate	19%	56%	-37%	6	166	3.67	3

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1).
This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

Review volume is just as important as star rating — to consumers and to brands. Why? It's simple. The more reviews a product has, the higher its conversion rate. When a product goes from 0 reviews to 1, its conversion rate increases by 52.2%. Collect over 50 reviews, and the conversion rate increases by 148.7%. Reach the 100+ review range, and you're looking at increases of 251.2%. It keeps going up from there.

4

Of the top beer and hard seltzer brands on Walmart, less than a quarter have review volumes in the 100+ range across all of their beverages. On a per-beverage basis, the review volume is also low, with an average of just 35 reviews per product. Only Corona and Smirnoff have passed the 100+ range for reviews per product.

Top Beer Brands at Target

Target's beer category is smaller than Walmart's. The average rating is 4.64 stars, which is still below our recommended range of 4.75 – 4.99 stars, but higher than Walmart's average of 4.48 stars.

| Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	New Belgium	72%	6%	66%	113	165	4.9	16
2	Corona	71%	65%	6%	897	169	4.62	100
3	Heineken	63%	59%	4%	136	239	4.28	27
4	Modelo	63%	69%	-6%	167	187	4.58	33
5	Bravus Brewing	51%	na	51%	25	99	4.84	8
6	Pacifico	41%	48%	-7%	43	121	4.77	14
7	Stone	39%	64%	-25%	14	142	4.79	7
8	Guinness	38%	49%	-11%	13	210	4.69	4
9	Dos Equis	32%	66%	-34%	20	184	4.4	20

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1).
This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

Target's beer brands also have fewer reviews per product, with only one brand — Corona — pushing past 50 reviews. However, Target consumers seem to write longer reviews of their favorite beers. The average review length for a beer review on Target is 162 characters, whereas for Walmart it is only 135. Both of these are well below the recommended minimum of 500 characters, which we've found has the largest impact on conversion rates.

Ratings & Reviews:
The Great Equalizer for Niche Beer Brands

Three in four consumers rely on ratings and reviews to discover new brands — placing UGC above Google, word of mouth, *and* social media when it comes to product discovery. Plus, product reviews play a major role in the ranking algorithms of Walmart and Target.

By consistently generating product reviews, smaller craft beer and seltzer brands can stand out in the search results of retail giants and win over customers from their larger competitors.
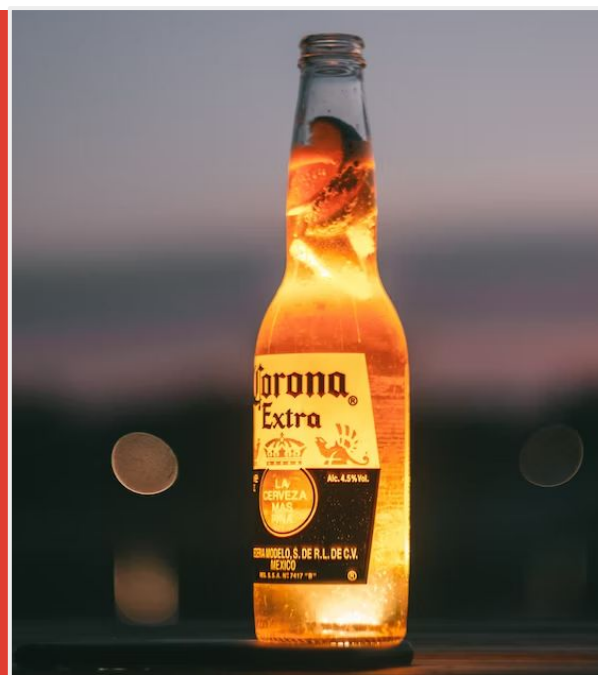
Wine and Champagne

Wine is currently the leader in alcohol ecommerce sales, although the IWSR predicts beer, cider, and ready-to-drink cocktails will catch up quickly. Still, wine sales are growing at a healthy rate and are expected to reach $333 billion this year.

36% of consumers are happy to pay a premium for wine, which may be helping sales. And the latest trends suggest red wine is becoming more popular, with 31% of wine lovers naming it their go-to summer sip, an 8% increase from 2022.

Top Wine & Champagne Brands at Walmart

Oliver Wine, Robert Mondavi Private Selection, and La Marca round out the top three wine and champagne brands at Walmart. Robert Mondavi deserves kudos for its high review volumes, with just over 500 reviews per bottle, on average.

Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	Oliver Wine	74%	56%	18%	114	160	4.72	38
2	Robert Mondavi Private Selection	72%	43%	29%	2005	219	4.52	501
3	La Marca	69%	69%	0%	77	163	4.82	26
4	Freixenet	68%	57%	11%	57	254	4.53	57
5	Black Box	61%	48%	13%	62	243	4.42	12
6	Stella Rosa	58%	71%	-13%	53	210	4.83	9
7	Menage A Trois	54%	41%	13%	60	86	4.7	12
8	Kim Crawford	54%	64%	-10%	53	183	4.7	27
9	14 Hands Winery	53%	55%	-2%	9	160	5	9
10	Melomi	52%	66%	-14%	50	168	4.64	25
11	Apothic	52%	57%	-5%	89	179	4.54	22
12	Barefoot	51%	55%	-4%	350	179	4.42	27
13	Kendall-Jackson	49%	49%	0%	29	64	4.9	29
14	Cook's California Champagne	49%	41%	8%	22	56	4.95	22
15	Woodbridge	48%	53%	-5%	77	198	4.39	19
16	Korbel	48%	35%	13%	13	191	4.85	7
17	Franzia		25%	-25%	15		4.93	8
18	19 Crimes	41%	29%	12%	31	81	4.68	6
19	La Crema	41%	52%	-11%	9	55	4.78	9
20	Andre	37%	43%	-6%	24	189	4.5	8
21	Bota Box	37%	33%	4%	38	225	3.92	8
22	Ruffino	33%	61%	-28%	7	196	4.57	7
23	Josh Cellars	32%	63%	-31%	42	80	4.45	7
24	Chateau Ste Michelle	13%	43%	-30%	11	21	4.45	4

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1). This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

Overall, Walmart's wine brands have an average rating of 4.69 stars, with 45 reviews per product. Besides Robert Mondavi Private Selection, only one other brand has more than 30 reviews per product: Oliver Wine.

Top Wine & Champagne Brands at Target

Robert Mondavi Private Selection made the top 3 wine brands at Target as well, along with Mionetto and Bar Dog.

Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	Robert Mondavi Private Selection	85%	55%	30%	1754	240	4.51	351
2	Mionetto	85%	70%	15%	99	224	4.66	50
3	Bar Dog	82%	81%	1%	267	270	4.42	89
4	Photograph Wine	80%	74%	6%	44	233	4.75	11
5	Freixenet	80%	65%	15%	63	244	4.48	63
6	Campo Viejo	78%	51%	27%	114	270	4.27	114
7	Fresh Vine	74%		74%	44	129	4.91	22
8	La Marca	73%	73%	0%	75	175	4.84	13
9	Stella Rosa	69%	81%	-12%	249	171	4.62	15
10	Barefoot	67%	62%	5%	319	171	4.48	25
11	Liquid Light	67%		67%	32	212	4.91	32
12	14 Hands Winery	65%	42%	23%	12	212	5	4
13	Apothic	61%	61%	0%	116	170	4.38	19
14	Freakshow	60%	40%	20%	19	140	5	10
15	Oyster Bay	59%	17%	42%	36	108	5	12
16	Kim Crawford	58%	82%	-24%	78	166	4.23	16
17	Meiomi	57%	65%	-8%	74	150	3.64	15
18	19 Crimes	54%	24%	30%	38	131	4.21	8
19	California Roots	52%	43%	9%	147	93	4.01	11
20	Roscato	52%	46%	6%	29	94	4.62	15
21	Ruffino	51%	72%	-21%	19	206	4.21	6
22	Mcbride Sisters	50%	39%	11%	38	130	4.05	5
23	Chateau Ste Michelle	50%	59%	-9%	21	136	4.9	3
24	Kendall-Jackson	48%	52%	-4%	6	166	5	3

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1).
This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

Target's wine brands have slightly lower star ratings and review coverage than Walmart's. On average, the top 25 wine brands at Target have a 4.5 star rating, with 36 reviews per product. However, more brands at Target have at least 50 reviews per product, including Robert Mondavi, Mionetto, Bar Dog, Freixenet, and Campo Viejo. Target's reviews are also slightly longer, at 175 characters on average.

Vodka

For decades, beer has held the top spot in American households. In the early 1990s, nearly half of Americans said it was their favorite beverage. But many Americans have been busy the past few years filling up their bar carts, and liquor's market share has risen in turn.

According to a 2022 Gallup poll, 30% of Americans now favor liquor, placing it just behind wine (31%) and beer (35%). In fact, the latest data suggests spirits may have finally edged beer out of the top spot. In June 2023, the Distilled Spirits Council reported a market share of 42.1% for spirits and 41.9% for beer. Celebrity-owned brands, no/low-alcohol alternatives, and pre-mixed cocktails with flavorful herbs and botanicals are driving this trend.

Premium spirits are also quickly outpacing their wine and beer counterparts. Premium spirit sales are up 13% this year, which is 2x higher than premium wine and 3x higher than premium beer.

Top Vodka Brands at Walmart

In what is perhaps a reflection of spirits' rising prominence in the alcohol beverage industry, vodka shoppers at both Walmart and Target had more to say than their beer and wine counterparts. Walmart shoppers wrote reviews of 175 characters, while Target shoppers wrote the longest reviews, on average, in our analysis, at 181 characters. At Walmart, the top vodka brands had an average rating of 4.77 stars, which is right in the sweet spot.

Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	Svedka	87%	64%	23%	2384	236	4.77	596
2	Tito's Handmade Vodka	63%	42%	21%	44	48	4.98	22
3	Ciroc	62%	58%	4%	40	175	4.8	13
4	Grey Goose	62%	66%	-4%	366	158	4.74	183
5	Deep Eddy	59%	69%	-10%	43	175	4.95	14
6	Smirnoff	58%	41%	17%	297	160	4.44	33
7	Absolut	42%	73%	-31%	22	213	4.73	7
8	Ketel One	38%	41%	-3%	4	232	4.75	4
9	New Amsterdam	21%	31%	-10%	11	150	4.64	3

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1).
This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

The top 3 vodka brands at Walmart were Svedka, Tito's Handmade Vodka, and Ciroc. Both Tito's and Ciroc had slightly higher ratings, but Svedka had drastically higher reviews coverage, at nearly 600 reviews per product. Grey Goose and Svedka were the only brands to pass the 100+ review threshold, with most brands having fewer than 20 reviews per product.

Top Vodka Brands at Target

The top 3 vodka brands at Target were Svedka, Skyy, and Circo. The average rating was 4.66 stars, just below the recommended range of 4.75 – 4.99 stars.

Rank	Brand	Health Score (This Year)	Health Score (Last Year)	% Change	Review Count	Review Length	Average Rating	Reviews per Product
1	Svedka	81%	66%	15%	3208	257	4.75	535
2	Skyy	60%	31%	29%	20	194	4.55	20
3	Ciroc	58%	42%	16%	9	217	4.89	5
4	Grey Goose	56%	73%	-17%	348	160	4.73	174
5	Deep Eddy	49%	55%	-6%	37	171	4.86	7
6	Ketel One	47%	45%	2%	7	191	5	2
7	Smirnoff	44%	31%	13%	85	159	4.24	17
8	Absolut	33%	69%	-36%	15	183	4.67	5

Brand Health Score: 12 months ending 3/30/2023 (Minimum products/brand: 1, Minimum reviews per month: 1).
This Year = April 2022 to March 2023. Last Year = April 2021 to March 2022.

Svedka and Grey Goose were the only two brands to have more than 100 reviews, at 534 and 174, respectively. The other vodka brands at Target had 20 or fewer reviews.

Is Your Alcohol Brand Ready for Today's Shopper?

Ratings and reviews are the #1 tool for product discovery. As online shopping becomes more important in the alcohol category, purchasing volumes will grow. So will the competition. In order to stand out, alcoholic beverage brands must be prepared with the reviews content their customers are seeking.

Nearly all of the brands in our report had review volumes much, much lower than what consumers expect to see. At a minimum, most shoppers require at least 25 reviews to feel comfortable making a purchase. In our report, 70% of brands had fewer than this amount.

The key to generating more reviews is asking for them. Here are 5 proven ways to collect more reviews:

1. **Add review forms to your product pages.** Consumers may purchase your alcohol through your website, a grocery retailer, their local liquor store, or any number of places. No matter where they buy, you can capture their thoughts by including a review form on your product pages.

2. **Follow up with purchasers via email.** Post-purchase emails are one of the most effective ways to generate new review content. Follow up with shoppers who purchase through your website and ask them to write a review. You can make it even easier by allowing them to provide a star rating and write their review directly within the email.

3. **Syndicate reviews to your retail partners.** If you sell your beverages at Target, Walmart, Albertsons, and other grocery retailers, you can generate more reviews for their product pages by syndicating reviews collected on your own website to theirs.

4. **Award loyalty points for reviews.** Do you have a loyalty program? Make reviews a point-generating activity. Reward customers with loyalty points every time they leave a review for one of your beverages.

5. **Collect reviews from verified purchasers.** The wide distribution of alcohol sales used to be an obstacle in review collection. Well, not anymore. With Receipt. Review. Collect. by PowerReviews, you can tap into a database of billions of receipt scans to generate reviews from customers at-scale and fast. Distillery Heaven Hill saw incredible results with this program, collecting 2,432% more reviews across eight products with an average rating of 4.7+ stars.

Moving forward, brands should expect consumers will be shopping differently than they have in the past, and at different retailers. To stay competitive, brands must market differently as well, with an increased emphasis on reviews.

Want to Improve How You Show Up Online?

The factors we analyzed have a huge impact on online sales likelihood. So how do you improve your ranking and show up better online. It all comes down to collecting more and better review content, ensuring you display it for maximum impact and then iterate through constant analysis. All these factors are explored in detail in our Complete Guide to Ratings and Reviews.

If you're interested in deeper benchmarking comparisons, reach out to us today.

About PowerReviews

PowerReviews (PowerReviews.com) is the Ratings and Reviews Specialist Doing More with UGC to Grow Your Business. We enable you to collect and share more and better user-generated content, display it for maximum conversion impact and analyze it to benchmark and improve product experiences.

Contact

marketing@powerreviews.com

Learn More →

POWER REVIEWS