

# The Bazaarvoice brand growth handbook

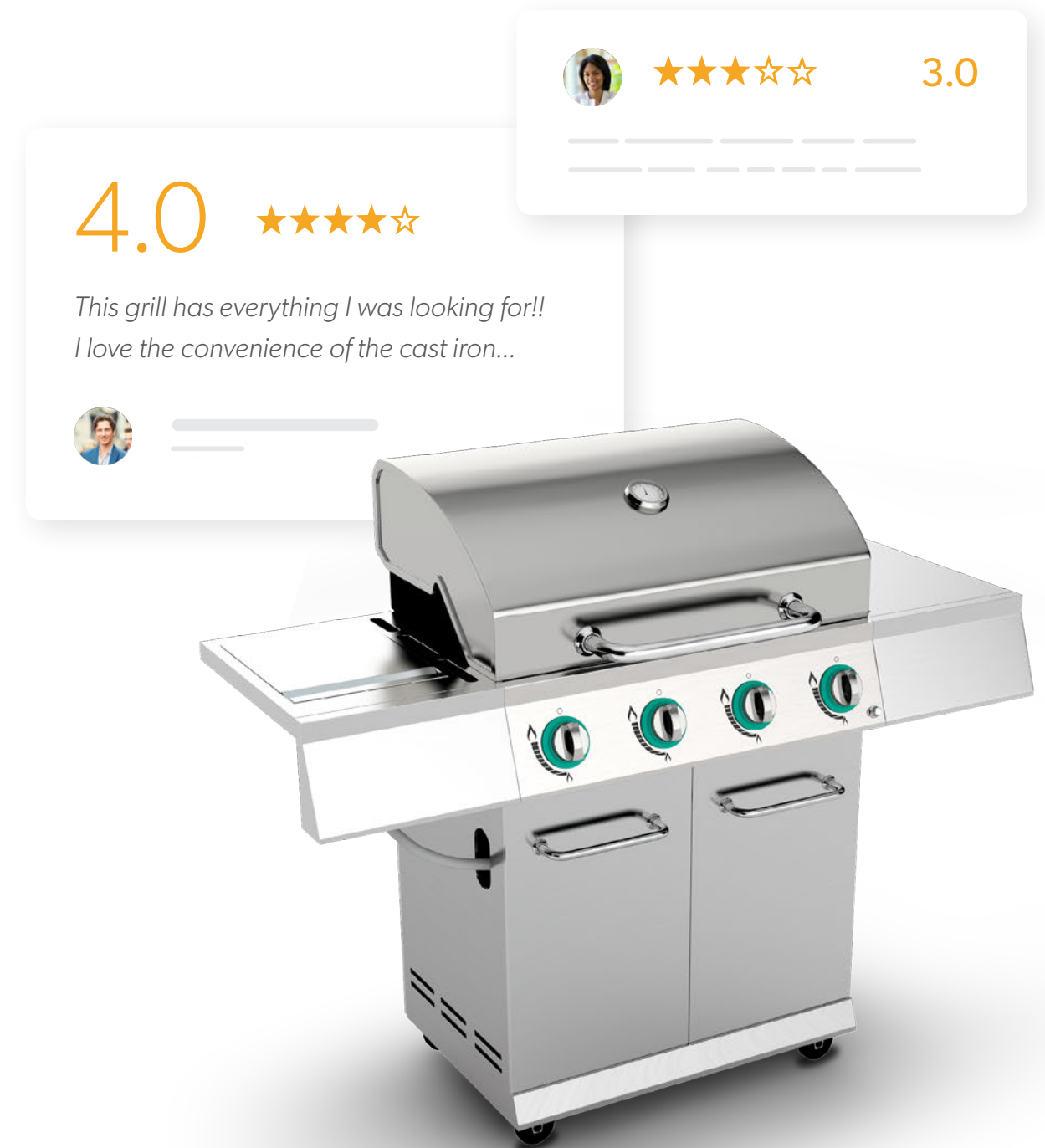
Harnessing the customer voice to drive growth

# What's inside

The “voice of the consumer” is only getting louder	2
Ratings and reviews have a direct impact on your bottom line	4
Customer feedback is more than just a marketing tool	5
Brands are still missing the mark with their review strategies	6
The bottom line	7

# The “voice of the consumer” is only getting louder

There’s a bigger conversation happening around the “voice of the consumer” these days. Thanks to data, online social forums, and the rapid evolution of e-commerce, everyday consumers have learned to communicate directly with one another online. It’s easier than ever for consumers to find, participate in, and/or even create communities of like-minded people, which typically revolve around ratings and reviews. This has transformed how product information (and sentiment) is shared and used, as well as what sources of information are to be trusted vs. not.





**Q:** *Is this shampoo good for oily hair?*



**A:** *Hi Ann! Yes, our shampoo has nutrients that treat oily hair without making it dry and brittle. Hope that helps!*



By Gloria, Brand Customer Care

Speaking of trust – in an age when consumers trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation, brands face an uphill battle in terms of the control they have over their own voice and narrative. Brands can no longer solely rely on traditional advertising to lead the conversation and tell consumers what they need and why. Instead, the voice of the consumer has grown powerful enough to also shape the voice of the brand, and brands must adapt to allow consumers to lead this conversation.

This isn't to say that brands don't have any control over their own brand voice – in fact, it's quite the opposite. But consumers no longer want brands to talk at them; they want brands to talk with them, and much of that conversation takes place in the form of ratings and reviews.

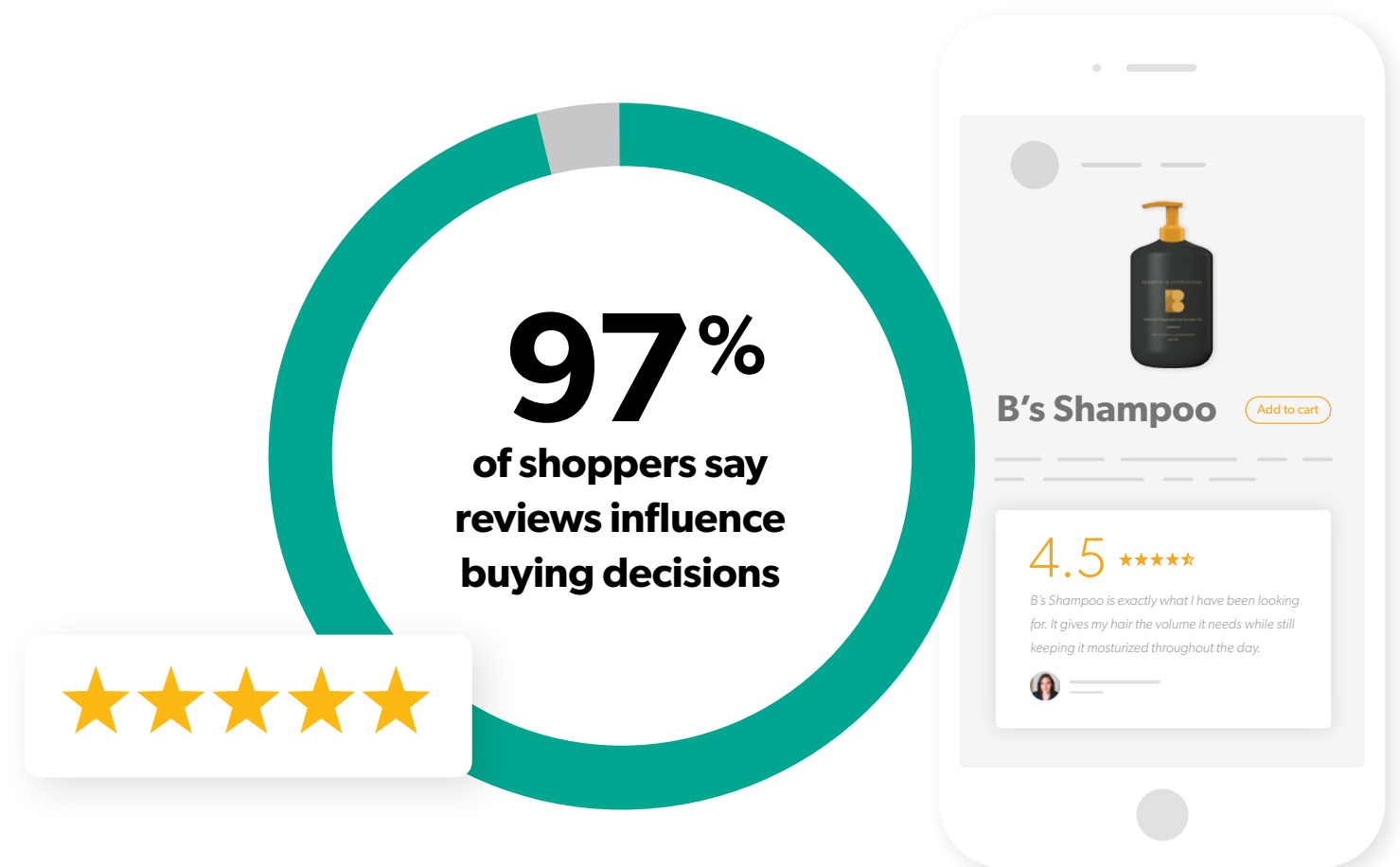
Let's dive into just how important ratings and reviews are for brand growth, beginning with how and why the voice of the consumer should act as the voice of your brand in today's retail landscape.

# Ratings and reviews have a direct impact on your bottom line

As you already know, ratings and reviews are much more than a complement to your product page – they are an essential element of it. In fact, 97% of shoppers<sup>1</sup> say reviews influence buying decisions, and consumers who engage with ratings and reviews are more than twice as likely<sup>2</sup> to convert than those who don't.

Reviews are one of the most critical components of the online shopping journey, and brands should embrace their influential power by leveraging them across all channels. Remember, it's about more than the review itself – it's about making sure that the content is available at every touchpoint along the customer journey.

Taking it one step further, brands should also think of reviews as a way to work with consumers to determine what the path to purchase should look like, and what factors, information, and platforms should be involved.



# Customer feedback is more than just a marketing tool

With how much consumers trust reviews, there's no reason why brands shouldn't trust this type of feedback as well. Good or bad, getting customer feedback in real-time can help improve products over time, identify areas of opportunity, and further showcase that you're actively listening to what your most passionate fans (and critics) have to say.

In this sense, even negative reviews can ultimately yield a positive result in the long run, especially considering shopper intent to purchase doubles<sup>3</sup> when seeing a brand's response to a negative review vs. seeing a negative review by itself.

On top of that, brands must consider the importance of reviews not only for potential customers, but for retailers as well. Shelf space is limited and the competition between brands is the highest it's ever been. Retailers have the luxury of choosing which brands they want represented at their storefronts, and reviews (including how brands publicly respond to them) play a huge part in how they decide who makes the cut.



*Poor quality. I bought these shoes for my son and the sole has already worn out.*



*Hi James! We are very sorry to hear the shoes you received are not holding up. Please contact us at 1-800-555-5555. We'd like to replace them.*



By Frances, Brand Customer Care





# Brands are still missing the mark with their review strategies

Data from Nielsen indicates that consumers' trust in traditional advertising is at an all-time low<sup>4</sup>. Meanwhile, according to the same report, consumers trust ratings and reviews more than any other form of supporting product information.

Still, many brands are stuck in their ways and spend the majority of their budget<sup>5</sup> on traditional advertising, despite knowing that collecting and leveraging reviews is a vital practice. The likely reason? Brands seem to trust reviews less than consumers do, and do not fully realize the potential of implementing a consumer-generated content strategy.

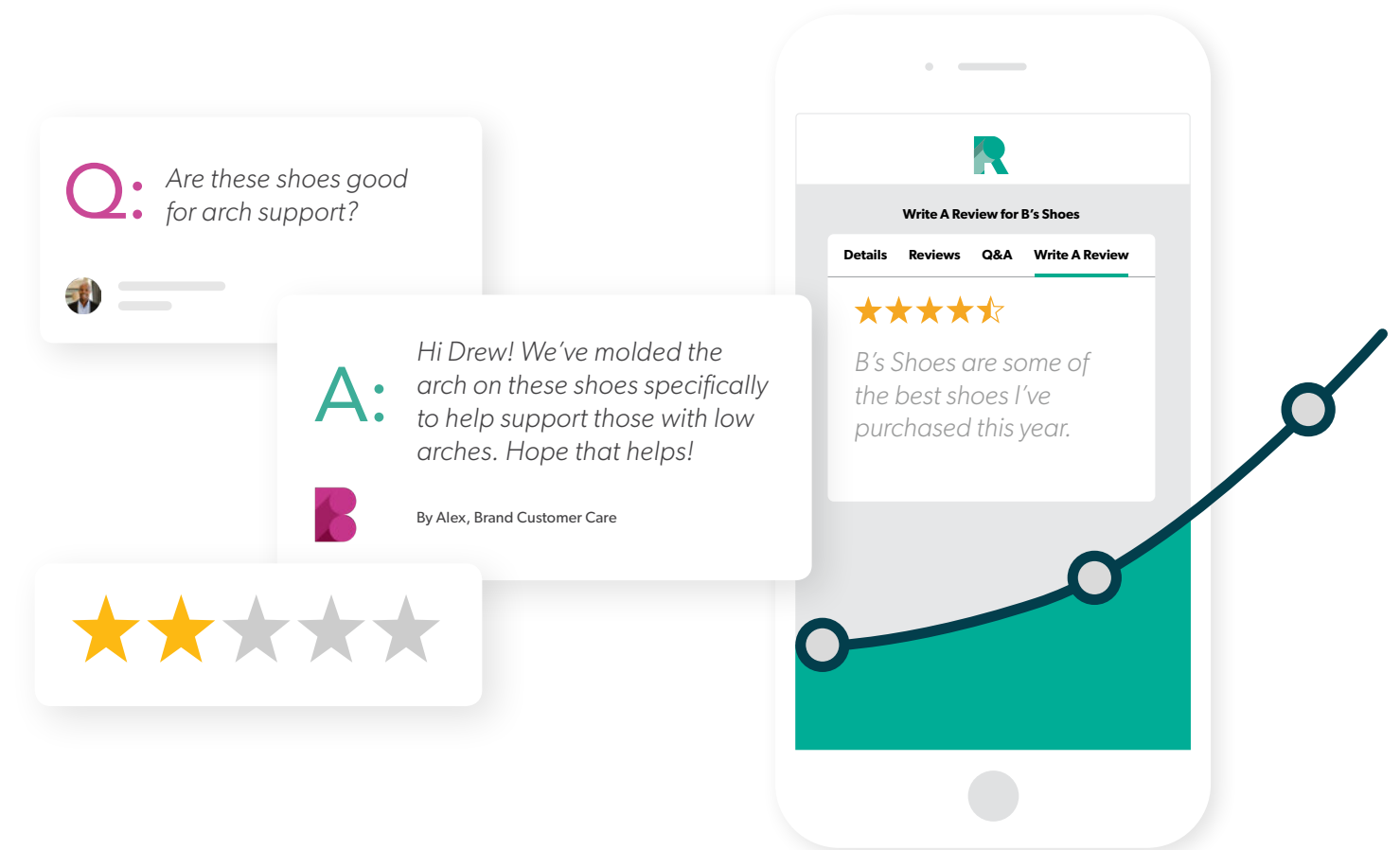
Or, perhaps they just don't know where to start, and/or have yet to implement a proper process for reviews.


# The bottom line

Earning trust, from both consumers and retailers, is the name of the game for brands in today's marketplace. Ratings and reviews are by far the best way to earn this trust and, while this content gives consumers more control over how a brand is represented and perceived, it also acts as one of the most powerful tools for brands who know how to use it. To multiply the benefit of ratings and reviews, brands should go a step further and respond to reviews and answer questions in the content.

In addition to being powerful marketing tools, ratings and reviews also bridge the communication gap between consumers and brands, and can be an excellent source of product feedback. Furthermore, retailers (and now search engines) look for review content specifically, and favor those who are displaying ratings and reviews across as many channels and touchpoints as possible. For brands who are looking to earn shelf space at retailer storefronts, reviews of high quality and quantity are essential.

Despite all this, many brands seem to trust reviews less than consumers do, and so they are still spending the majority of their budgets on more traditional advertising. This is likely due to the fact that brands just don't know how to implement a proper review collection and management strategy. Luckily, with how critical this has become in e-commerce, there are plenty of proven methods and other resources for brands just getting started with ratings and reviews.



 **Contact Bazaarvoice** to learn more about what you can do to keep ahead of these trends.



# References

- 1 Fan and Fuel, "No online customer reviews means BIG problems in 2017." December 2016.  
<https://fanandfuel.com/no-online-customer-reviews-means-big-problems-2017>
- 2 Bazaarvoice, "The impact of CGC on a business' bottom line." September 27, 2016.  
<http://blog.bazaarvoice.com/2016/09/27/impact-authentic-cgc-business-bottom-line/>
- 3 Bazaarvoice, "Connections: Best practices guide for brands responding to consumers on retail sites." 2018.  
[http://resources.bazaarvoice.com/rs/848-PGD-174/images/BV18\\_eBook\\_Connections-BestPractices-Brands\\_Premium-dV3.pdf](http://resources.bazaarvoice.com/rs/848-PGD-174/images/BV18_eBook_Connections-BestPractices-Brands_Premium-dV3.pdf)
- 4 Nielson, "Global Trust in Advertising and Brand Messages." April 10, 2012.  
<https://www.nielsen.com/us/en/insights/reports/2012/global-trust-in-advertising-and-brand-messages.html>
- 5 Internet Retailer, "2018 Best Digital Marketers in Ecommerce." January 2018.  
<https://www.digitalcommerce360.com/product/best-digital-marketers/>

# About Bazaarvoice

Bazaarvoice connects brands and retailers to consumers, so that every shopping experience feels personal. From search and discovery to purchase and advocacy, Bazaarvoice's solutions reach in-market shoppers, personalize their experiences, and give them the confidence to buy. Each month in the Bazaarvoice Network, more than one billion consumers view and share authentic content including reviews, questions and answers, and social photos across 6,000 brand and retail websites. Across the network, Bazaarvoice captures billions of shopper signals monthly - data that powers high-efficiency digital advertising and personalization with unmatched relevance.

Founded in 2005, Bazaarvoice is headquartered in Austin, Texas with offices in North America, Europe, and Australia. For more information, visit [www.bazaarvoice.com](http://www.bazaarvoice.com).

