

The Definitive Report on Modern Online Consumer Behavior

Insights from the National Leave a Review Day Survey





Online Reviews Are Shaping the Marketplace

Online customer reviews have become a powerful influence on consumer behavior, shaping not only purchasing decisions but also brand perceptions and trust.

This report explores how modern consumers evaluate brands, from the attributes they value most to the role of social media and online reviews in shaping their opinions. We uncover who consumers trust, what motivates their choices, and how they engage with brands in an increasingly digital world.

Drawing on a survey of 2,000 US consumers, we highlight who's influencing today's buyers, how reviews impact choices, and why trust matters more than ever—especially as scrutiny increases in challenging economic environments. The findings offer a clear understanding of the modern American consumer.

Read on to learn how reviews are reshaping consumer trust and what your business must do to stay competitive.

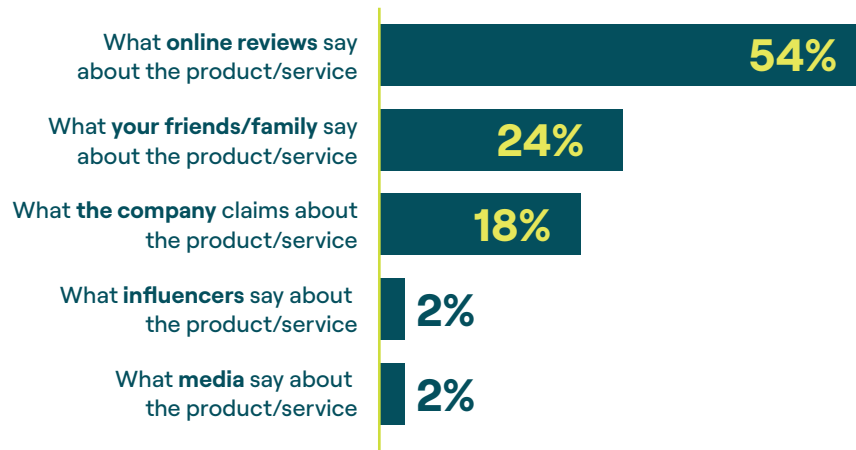
Key Takeaways from the National Leave a Review Day Survey

- When it comes to online activities, **reviews are more influential** than all company claims, influencer opinions, family/friend perspectives, and media assessments – **combined**.
- Trust in institutions—government, media, and corporations is nearly **nonexistent**.
- Consumer purchases are driven by 1- product quality, 2- customer service, 3- brand reputation and reviews.
- Elevated levels of inflation nearly **double the perceived importance of reviews** for online shoppers.
- AI is a cause for concern about the future validity of reviews.
- Younger generations in **the highly-coveted 18-49 age group are laser-focused on reviews** and social media posts about the products they're considering.
- Active review management is the key to business growth.

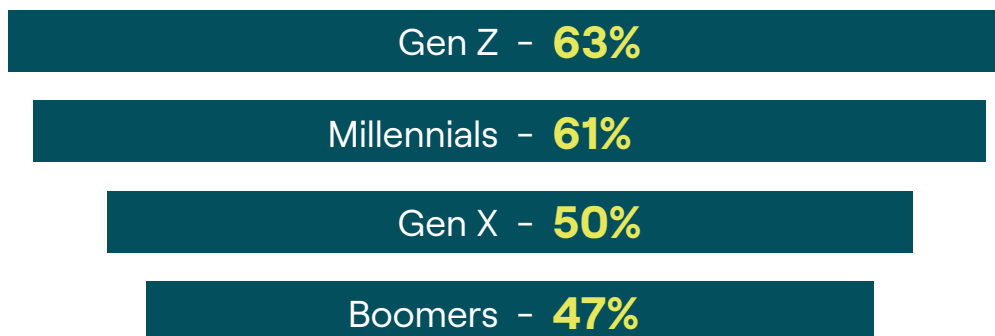
Who Are Consumers Listening to Now?

When shopping online, **reviews are more influential than everything else combined.**

Which of the following is the most important consideration for you when shopping online?



Importance of online reviews



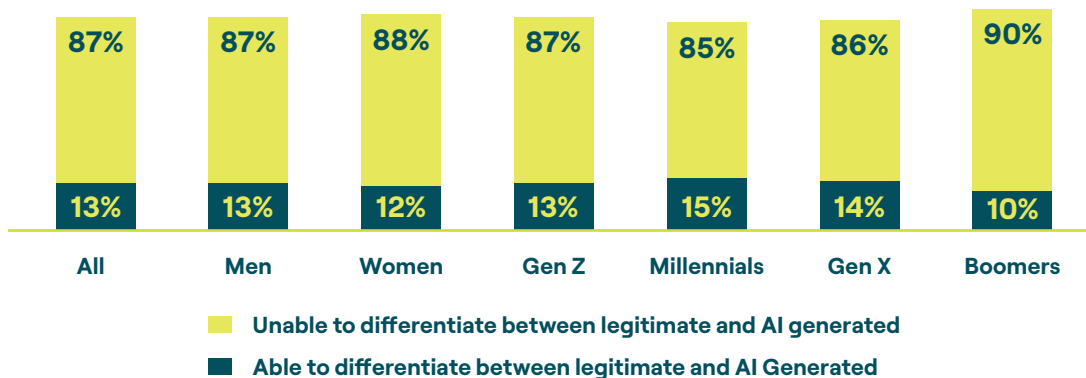
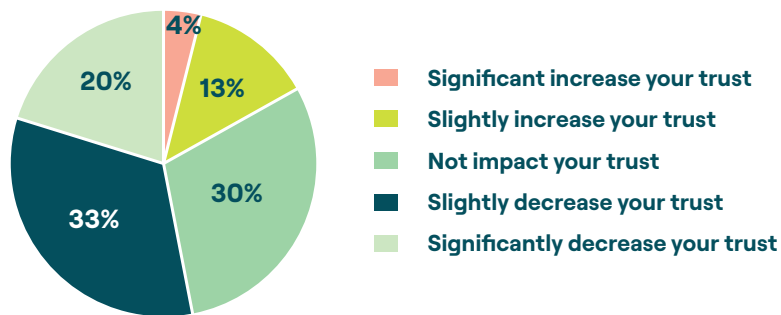
Key Findings

- **54% of consumers consider online reviews** the most important criteria for online purchases.
- Friends and family perspectives (24%) and company claims (18%) are a distant second and third.
- Influencer and media opinions are largely irrelevant as only 2% of consumers pay attention to them.
- **Younger generations place an even greater emphasis on reviews,** highlighting the future importance of reputation as these generations start to establish a majority of the buying power in the US.

Many See Growing Risk of AI-Generated, Fake Reviews

AI-generated and fake reviews were once easier to spot due to incorrect grammar, spelling, and usage. Today, as AI improves and grammar rules are becoming relaxed, well-written, coherent reviews are just as likely to be fake as poorly written ones.

How will the emergence of AI impact your trust in reviews over the next five years?



Key Findings

- **53%** express concerns that AI's involvement **might diminish future trust**.
- Yet, nearly a quarter of Millennials think AI will increase their trust in reviews.
- Skepticism is underscored by the fact that **87% are unable to accurately differentiate** between legitimate reviews and those generated by AI.
- Millennials were 50% better than Boomers in spotting fake reviews, but even then, only 15% were proficient.
- According to reputation.com data analysis, mentions of the word "AI", "Spam," or "Fake" in review responses increased nearly 25% YoY from 2019 through 2023.

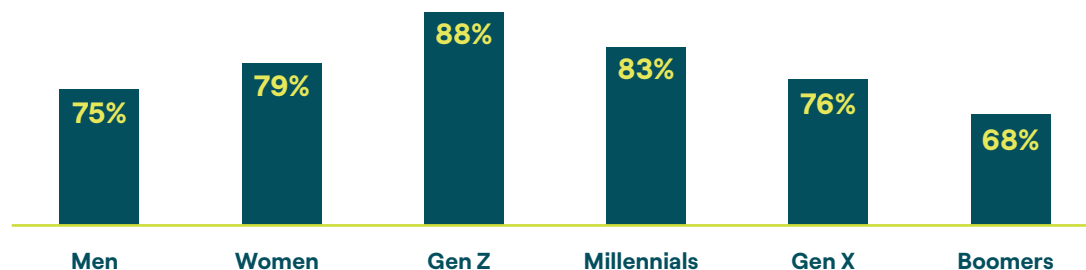
Most Consumers Find Online Reviews to Be Trustworthy – Today

Trust has shifted from company claims and influencer/media opinions to online reviews about a product or service.

I find the online reviews I read to be...



I find the online reviews I read to be completely or mostly trustworthy



Key Findings

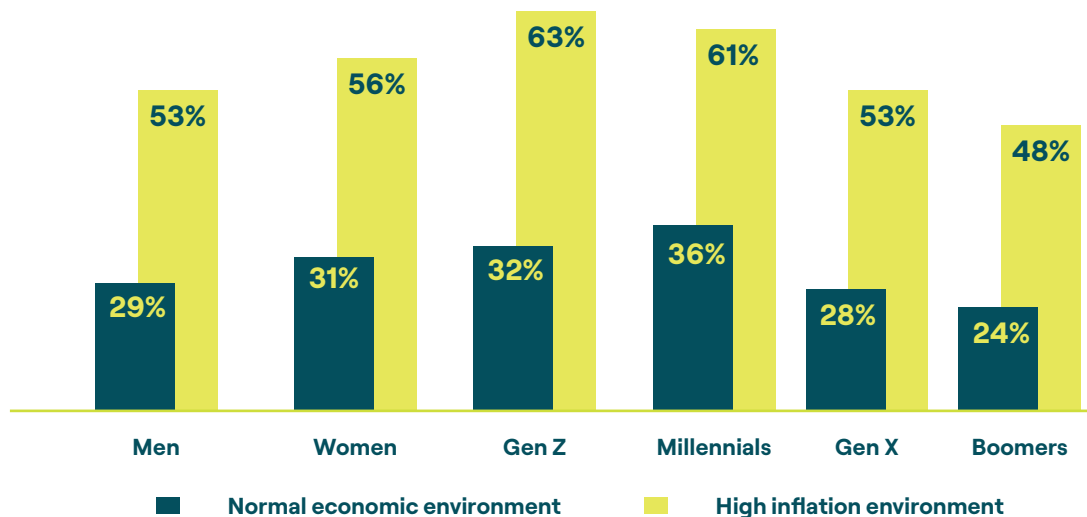
- 77% of US consumers believe reviews are “mostly” trustworthy.
- The following groups exhibit particularly high trust:
 - Gen Z – 88%
 - Millennials – 83%
 - Women – 79%
- Despite being the least likely to trust online reviews, 68% of Boomers still rely on them heavily when making purchasing decisions.
- As younger generations gravitate toward reviews, online reputation management must be a priority.

Price Inflation Increases the Importance of Reviews

The perceived importance of **consulting reviews before purchasing a product or service increases in inflationary environments** as customers become more thoughtful about their purchases.



How does the economic environment impact the importance of consulting reviews before purchasing a product or service



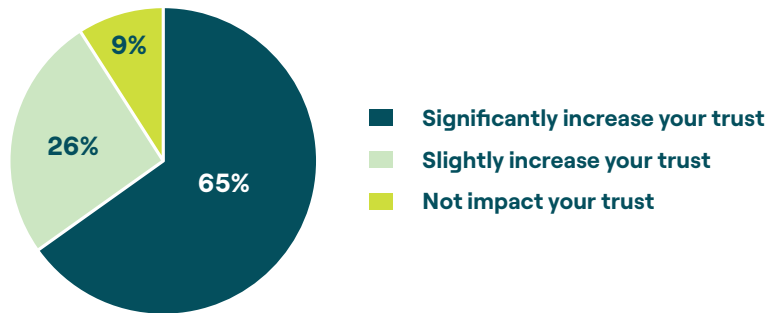
Key Findings

- The importance of consulting reviews significantly **increases from 30% to 55%** in high inflationary environments.
- This rise is seen across all age groups and genders.
- Not surprisingly, younger generations are more impacted by rising consumer prices. Review importance **jumps to 63% in Gen Z and 61% in Millennials.**

Reviews Significantly Influence Purchasing Decisions

Consumers are increasingly dependent on reviews to guide and inform their purchasing decisions.

How much influence do online reviews have on your purchasing decision?



Reviews significantly influence purchasing decisions

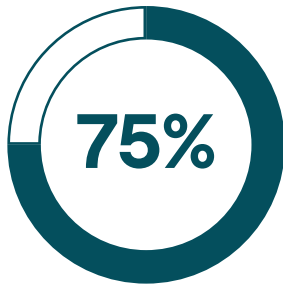


Key Findings

- 65% say reviews play a significant role in the purchase process.
- The younger the age group, the higher the reliance on reviews:
 - Gen Z and Millennials - 74%
 - Gen X - 63%
 - Boomers - 54%
- By gender, women (67%) are slightly more influenced by reviews than men (63%).
- Millennials & Gen Z are **twice as likely to depend on video reviews** than older generations (Boomers).

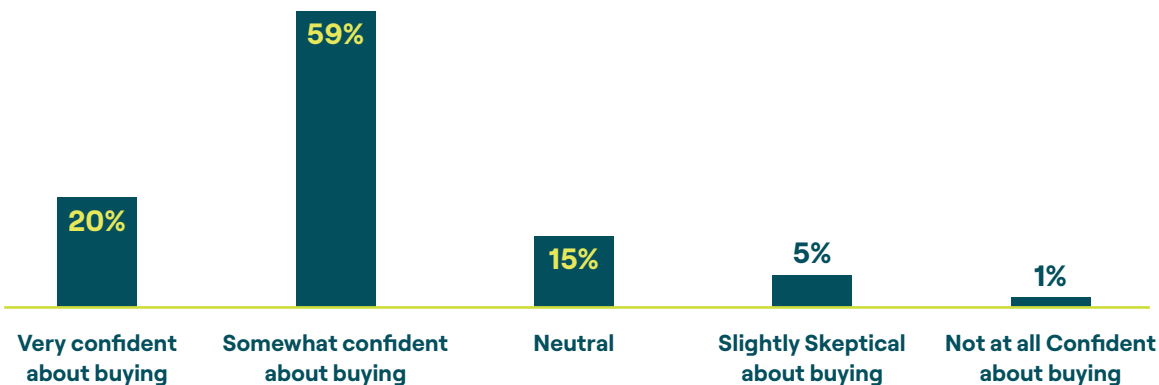
Positive Reviews Influence Purchases

Positive reviews help the vast majority of us pull the trigger on a purchase. But it's not just reviews that count—**it's the act of businesses responding to reviews** that illustrates they care about the consumer and make an extra effort to ensure satisfaction with their purchase.



of consumers say that companies responding to positive reviews is an important factor in their general purchase process

Positive reviews make me feel...

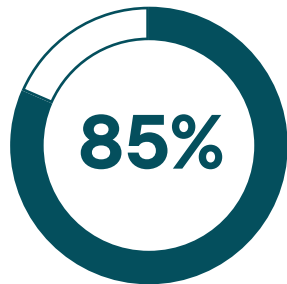


Key Findings

- Positive reviews **inspire confidence in 80%** of all consumers.
- They have the most impact on younger generations:
 - Gen Z and Millennials – 85%
- **75%** of consumers say that companies **responding to positive reviews is an important factor** in their general purchase process.

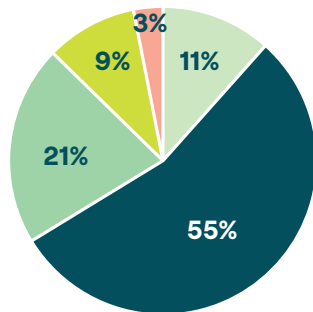
And Negative Reviews Influence Purchases Too

Negative reviews can impact the purchasing decisions of 2/3 of the public. And **half of all consumers go looking for them**. To mitigate their impact and help consumers feel more comfortable, responding to negative reviews is extremely important.

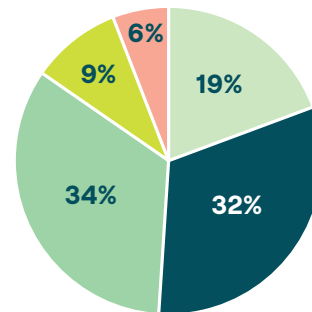


of consumers say that companies responding to negative reviews is an important factor in their general purchase process

To what extent do negative reviews typically influence your purchase decisions?



When reading online reviews, how often do you actively seek out negative reviews?



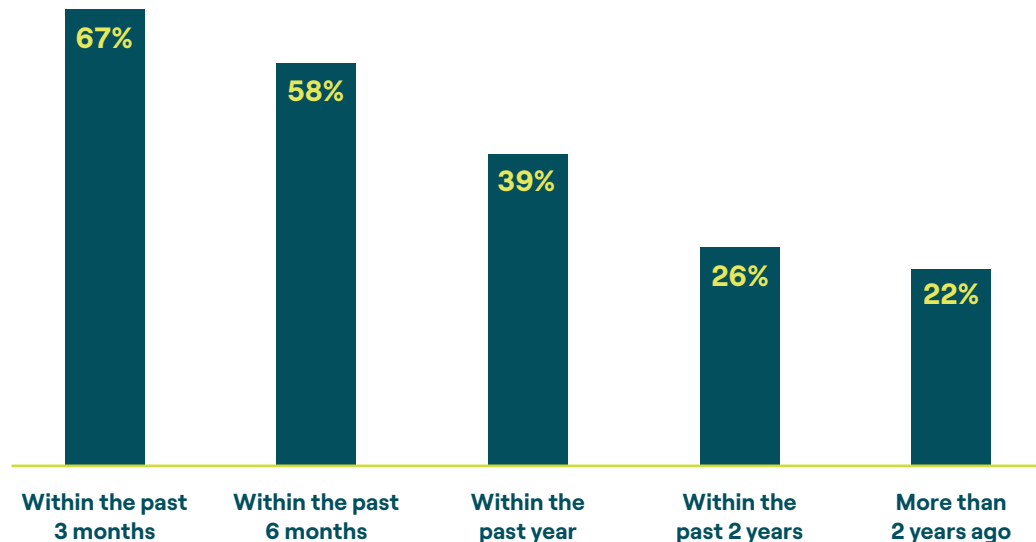
Key Findings

- Poor reviews **sway 67% of consumers away from a purchase**. Particularly:
 - Millennials and Gen Z: 70%
 - Women: 69%
- **51% of Americans actively seek out negative reviews**. Millennials are the most likely to do so at 55%.
- A whopping **85%** of consumers say that **companies responding to negative reviews is an important factor** in their purchase process.
- Research shows consumers are **33% more likely to upgrade their review** if a business responds with a personal message within a day.
- A thoughtful response can alter a customer's perception and their willingness to give the business another chance.

Reviews have a Shelf Life of One Year

New product or service enhancements are now frequent, and each enhancement can make prior reviews obsolete. As such, **consumers find the most recent reviews to be the most relevant.**

Based on posting recency, rate reviews that are highly or moderately important/relevant



Key Findings

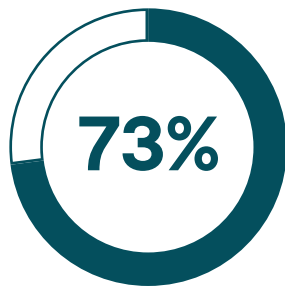
- **67%** consider reviews from **the past 3 months** to be highly or moderately valuable.
- **58%** consider reviews from the **past 6 months** to be so.
- Older reviews are deemed significantly less relevant:
 - Only **39%** find value in feedback that's **over one year** old
 - Only **22%** find value in reviews **more than two years** old

Key Takeaway

Consistently soliciting fresh reviews keeps feedback relevant and credible.

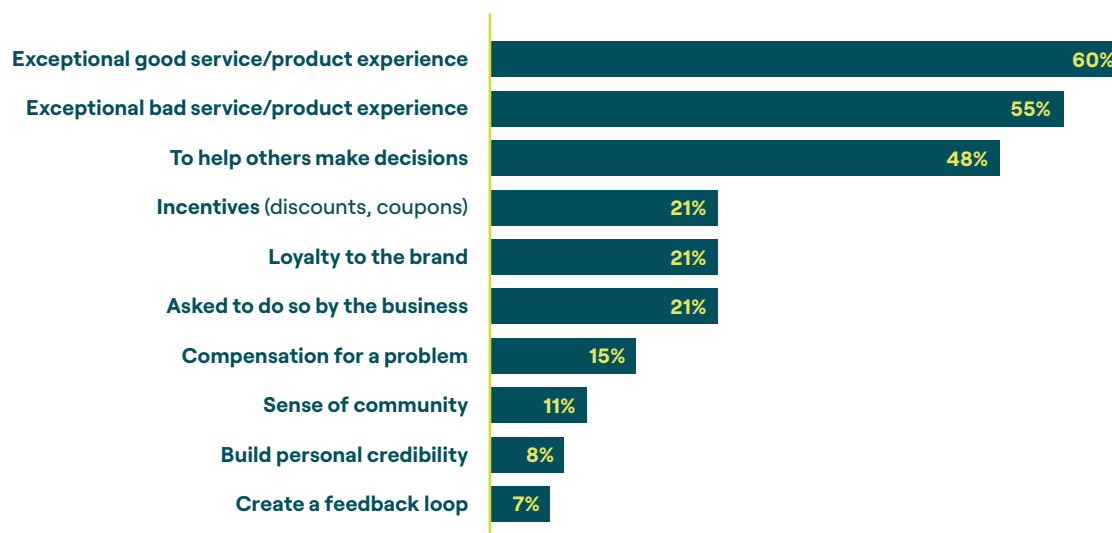
What Motivates People to Leave Reviews

Driving online reviews is crucial for building consumer trust and keeping your business competitive. It's important to understand what motivates people to leave reviews.



73% of consumers are motivated to leave a review due to exceptionally good or bad experiences with products/services

What motivates you to leave a reviews?



Key Findings

- The primary drivers for leaving reviews are exceptional experiences: 73%
 - Exceptionally **good experiences: 60%**
 - Exceptionally **bad experiences: 55%**
- Other drivers include:
 - To help others make informed decisions: 48%
 - Incentives, brand loyalty, asked by business: 21%
- Boomers are most likely to leave a review simply because they're asked to: 27%
- Younger generations are more likely to leave a review in exchange for an incentive: Gen Z: 29% and Millennials: 24%

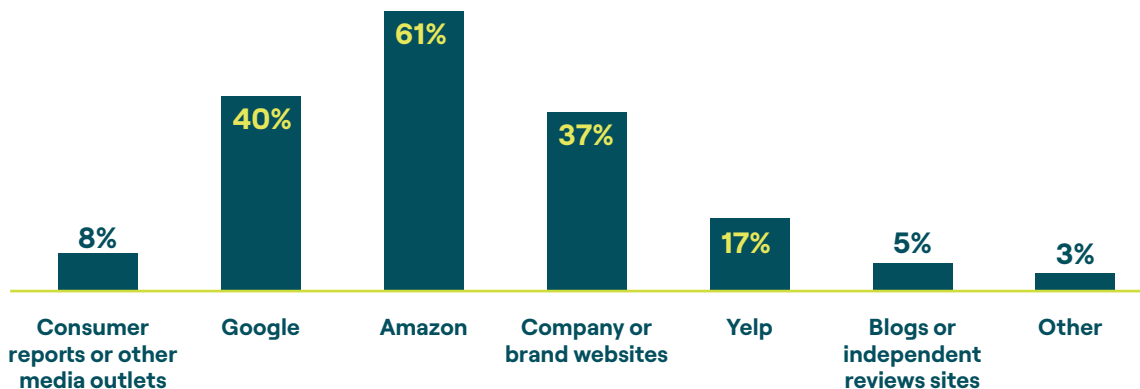
Where Consumers Are Leaving Reviews

While Amazon and Google receive the lion's share of reviews, many consumers leave reviews directly on company websites. This is likely due to an increase in review solicitation across the business world as companies are starting to understand the value and impact of reviews on business growth.

Where do you frequently leave reviews or share brand experiences online?



Which platforms do you typically use to leave reviews?

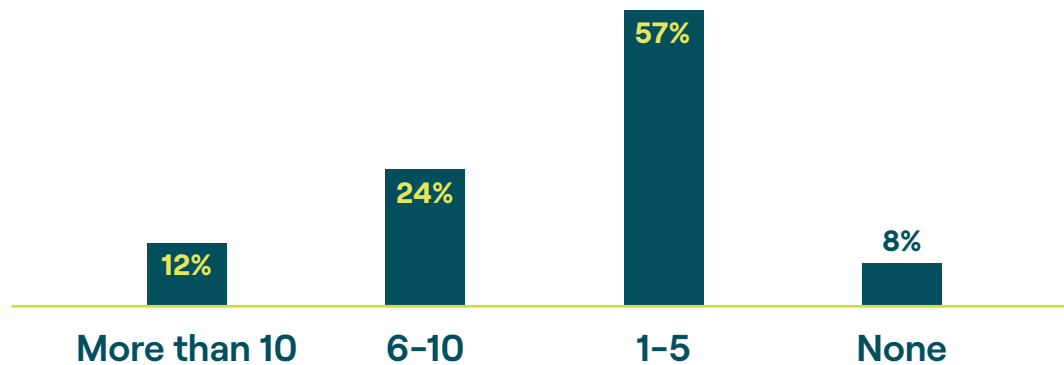


Key Findings

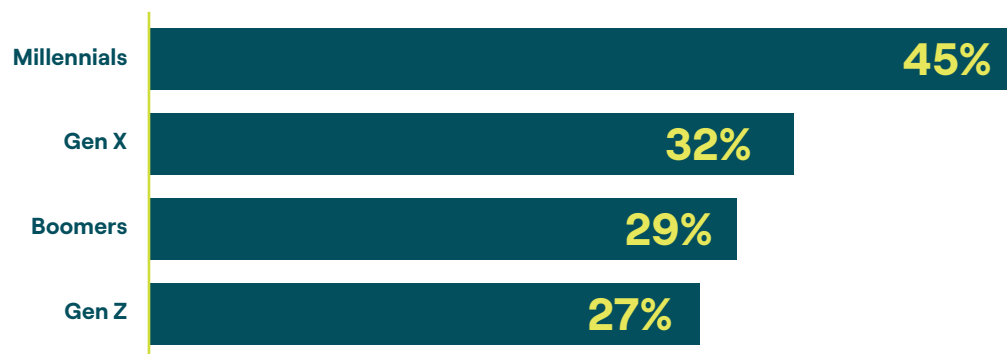
- Roughly 22% of consumers leave reviews several times a month on both company websites and review platforms. Social media lags at 16%.
- Younger generations are more inclined to use social media for reviews frequently – Gen Z: 26% and Millennials: 25%.

Many Leave Reviews; A Small Minority Sets the Tone

How many online have you left in the last 12 months?



Posted more than 6 online reviews in the last 12 months



Key Findings

- A vast majority of consumers (**92%**) have left **at least one review** in the past year.
- Only **12% of consumers**—“the vocal minority”—**regularly post reviews**. This equates to about one in ten people setting the tone for brand perception across the consumer base.
- Millennials are the most active reviewers, with 45% having posted more than six in the last year.

Key Takeaway

While it is important to actively engage the vocal minority, it is equally important to solicit reviews and opinions from the silent majority by tapping into their motivations to leave reviews.

Key Takeaways for 2025

- Consumers are becoming **increasingly skeptical of company claims** regarding products and services.
- **Reviews are one of the most powerful marketing tools available**, so businesses must prioritize generating them.
- For companies targeting the 18–49 age demographic, focusing on reviews is especially critical.
- Both positive and negative **reviews have a significant impact on purchasing decisions.**
- Companies should adopt tools and incentives to strengthen their review programs.
- Consistently soliciting fresh reviews keeps feedback relevant and credible.
- **Responding promptly** to all reviews—good or bad—**shows a commitment to customer satisfaction.**
- Review sites and businesses should consider timed removals to ensure ratings reflect current offerings.
- In challenging economic conditions, **doubling down on review management can provide a competitive advantage.**

The Reputation Platform

Ready to take control of your brand's reputation and thrive in the digital landscape?

The Reputation platform gives businesses the ability to manage and showcase customer feedback from a single platform, across all locations.

They can:

- **Generate, respond to, and engage** with customer reviews
- **Track review volume, quality, and real-time sentiment** at the brand or location level
- **Measure/report on key review metrics** with customizable dashboards and automated reporting

Businesses use the Reputation solution to enhance their online presence, gather reviews, manage social media, increase customer engagement, and use feedback to create better customer relationships — all at scale.

For more information on how Reputation can help your organization thrive, visit [Reputation.com](https://reputation.com).

Reputation is the only platform that empowers companies to fulfill their brand promise by measuring, managing, and scaling their reputation performance in real-time, everywhere. Functioning as a business' eyes and ears in the spaces where customers talk, post, review, and recommend, Reputation AI-powered product stack analyzes vast amounts of public and private feedback data to uncover predictive insights for companies to act on, and improve their online reputations. Visit reputation.com to learn more.

