

# Impact of online reviews on product sales: the role of review visibility

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# Impact of online reviews on product sales: the role of review visibility

## **Abstract**

Online consumer reviews are considered one of the most trusted sources of information for consumers along their decision-making journey (Deloitte 2014). In online environments consumers usually face information overload situations and decision aids, such as sorting and filtering, help consumers over the process by reducing the cognitive effort of managing such volume of information (Häubl & Trifts, 2000; Pang & Qiu, 2016). In our context, these types of aids affect the information presentation format of the online retailer, by changing the rank in which online reviews are presented. A study by brightlocal.com (BrightLocal, 2016) revealed that 86 percent of consumers read a maximum of 10 reviews before trusting a business and 66% a maximum of 6 reviews. In this research we explore how most visible online reviews influence product sales. Apart from traditional review characteristics, such as rating and volume, we also incorporate review content style and reviewer variables. We develop a longitudinal analysis of online reviews collected in a weekly basis from a US cosmetics website between December and February 2017.

**Keywords:** *reviews; ewom; sales*

**Track:** Digital Marketing & Social Media