

Trust in On-Line Advertising

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It's no surprise that people trust online reviews from consumers more than traditional advertisements. After all, advertisements are created by the company selling a product or service, whereas third party reviews are by people with no self-interest.

Unless, of course, the reviewer has a hidden agenda, such as a competitor writing a bad review, or someone connected to the business singing its praises. The anonymous nature of online reviews make this kind of subterfuge possible. For example, it recently came to light that authors and reviewers-for-hire are leaving fake reviews about books on Amazon. [[Forbes](#), 8/28/12]

Still, online reviews, with a 70% trust rate, rank higher than traditional broadcast and print advertisements, which 47% of people believe, according to Nielsen's Global Trust In Advertising Survey, which queried 28,000 Internet respondents in 56 countries.

But even online reviews paled in comparison to the trustworthiness most people assign to word-of-mouth and recommendations from family and friends. The Nielsen survey assigns this category 92% approval, as [reported](#) by the Denver Business Journal.

What does this mean for your business?

More potential consumers are relying on information found on the Internet, and on-line information has a greater chance to influence buying decisions. Take advantage of this fact, recognize the importance of online reviews and, if permission is granted by reviewers, use such in traditional advertisements to buoy the value of traditional ads.

Beyond this, an integrated online and social media strategy works best, leveraging consumer comments and encouraging word-of-mouth and personal recommendations whenever possible.

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