

Millennials Look To Digital Word-of-Mouth To Drive Purchase Process

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Younger consumers more likely to share purchase experiences with the masses

In a few short years, millennials—consumers currently ages 18 to 34—will account for a sizeable portion of US purchase decision-makers. Yet Bazaarvoice found these digital natives are already using and creating online content to recommend or dissuade friends, family and anonymous site-visitors from a brand, product or service.

Compared to their older counterparts, baby boomers, millennial internet users showed a greater reliance on anonymous recommendations and reviews when making purchase decisions. Bazaarvoice found 66% of boomers ages 47 to 65 turned to known parties for information and recommendations to influence their purchase decisions over user-generated content.

Millennials, on the other hand, were almost equal in their reliance on friends and family (49%) vs. anonymous user-generated content from company websites (51%) to influence their buying decisions.

Bazaarvoice defined user-generated content as any on-site content created by internet users. This included reviews, comments, stories and questions. Like with traditional word-of-mouth, internet users seek out these insights to compare products, services and even brands.

The study also found millennials more likely to share their own purchasing experiences—both positive and negative—with the masses. Aside from company websites, forty-two percent of millennial internet users said they preferred to post comments on social networking sites about positive product, brand or service experiences in order to share their experience, compared to just 17% of baby boomers.

And slightly more millennials (25%) preferred to share positive information on third-party sites such as CNET and Consumer Reports than did boomers (21%).

When trying to learn more about a brand, product or services, millennials and boomers were likely to trust user-generated content (51%) significantly more than any other form of information, including brand messaging, news articles and advertisements.

“Whatever brands do, they need to follow the general principle of transparency, understanding there’s a huge group of consumers right now who just don’t trust them,” said Lisa Pearson, VP of global marketing at Bazaarvoice in a January 30 interview with eMarketer. “There’s only upside to opening up and giving people the ability to talk about your brand. That’s going to become the expected norm.”

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