



The Value of Customer Ratings and Reviews in Advertising

The impact of Trustpilot content
on UK consumers



In partnership with



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Executive Summary

This research explores the value of showcasing customer ratings and reviews in advertising, and in particular the impact of Trustpilot content in digital campaigns. Based on a survey of 1,000 UK consumers and interviews with Trustpilot business customers, this London Research study reports on the benefits of using Trustpilot ratings and reviews to build trust and increase propensity to purchase.

The research also looks at the extent to which specific types of Trustpilot content in online advertisements influence UK consumers, including the Trustpilot logo and stars, TrustScore, the volume of reviews, and the impact of an authentic customer testimonial.

Looking at the impact of customer ratings and reviews at the broader level within the customer journey, 64% of consumers say they're 'often' or 'very often' influenced by customer reviews during the journey to purchase, and 60% say the same of customer star ratings.

Specifically in terms of the impact of Trustpilot, more than three-quarters (79%) agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand (including consumers who hadn't previously heard of

Trustpilot). A similar percentage (77%) agree a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand. Fifty-six percent of consumers say they're unlikely to buy something from a brand which has a poor Trustpilot rating.

To test the value of Trustpilot ratings and reviews in ads, survey respondents were shown a series of digital advertisements for a new mobile SIM contract, and asked which ads they would be most and least likely to click in order to buy.

Methodology

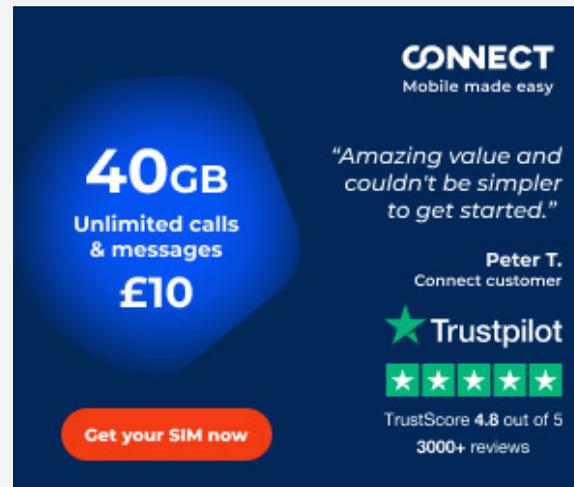
London Research was commissioned by Trustpilot to carry out a survey of 1,000 UK consumers in September 2021. The nationally-representative survey included questions about sources of information and touchpoints used during the buying process, and also questions specifically about Trustpilot. Ninety percent of respondents said they were aware of Trustpilot customer ratings and reviews.

A survey-based research technique called MaxDiff was used to quantify consumer preferences when respondents were shown different combinations from a series of 10 advertisements for a fictional company called Connect. Survey respondents were asked which online ads for a new mobile SIM contract they would be most and least likely to click in order to buy. The *Appendix* shows the 10 different ads shown to consumers, and the full results for the MaxDiff analysis (with relative levels of engagement expressed as percentages). The same research was carried out in the UK, US, Netherlands, Germany and Italy (5,000 consumers in total).

According to the research:

- 79% of UK consumers agree a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand.
- 77% agree a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand.
- An online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars is twice as persuasive as the same ad without them.
- Consumers are more than four times as likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad showing a five-star customer rating, TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer review, as an ad with no Trustpilot content.
- A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 TrustScore showing 500+ reviews is almost four times as compelling as an ad with no Trustpilot branding.
- A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 TrustScore showing 3,000+ reviews is 37% more compelling than the same ad just showing the TrustScore.
- A Trustpilot five-star advert with 3,000+ reviews performs 13% better than the one with 500+ reviews.
- A five-star ad showing a high TrustScore with 3,000+ reviews and an actual customer review performs three times as well as an ad with no Trustpilot components, even when the price is 20% higher (£12 versus £10).

Impact of Trustpilot: the anatomy of a co-branded ad



Consumers are **more than four times as likely** to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad showing a five-star customer rating, a high number of reviews, and a customer testimonial, as the ad with no Trustpilot branding.

Customer review

UK consumers are almost three times more likely to click through on a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a verbatim customer review.

Trustpilot logo and stars

An online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars is twice as persuasive as the same ad without them.

TrustScore

UK consumers are 55% more likely to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it specifies the high TrustScore behind the five-star rating.

Number of reviews

Showing '3,000+ reviews' makes the ad 37% more compelling than the same ad just showing the TrustScore.

Section 1

Introduction – Importance of Ratings and Reviews in the Buyer Journey

Consumers are right to be cautious about putting their trust in brands when they're looking to buy products and services online. According to the banking industry body, UK Finance, online scams cost consumers a British record of £754m during the first six months of 2021, up 30% from the same period in 2020. This issue is making people even more eager to ensure they're buying from a reputable business and spending their money wisely. At the same time, consumers are becoming increasingly savvy about fake reviews used by less-known brands to bolster their credibility.

Our research shows that authentic customer reviews and star ratings are now firmly established as a go-to source of information for the majority of shoppers. Sixty-four percent of UK consumers say they're 'often' or 'very often' influenced by customer reviews during the journey to purchase, while 60% say the same for star ratings (*Figure 1*).

This does not surprise Kyle Rao, President and CEO of Secure Medical. As the company behind eDrugStore.com, they are fully aware that consumers need to see that people like them have used a service before, and rate it highly.

Kyle Rao
President and CEO
Secure Medical



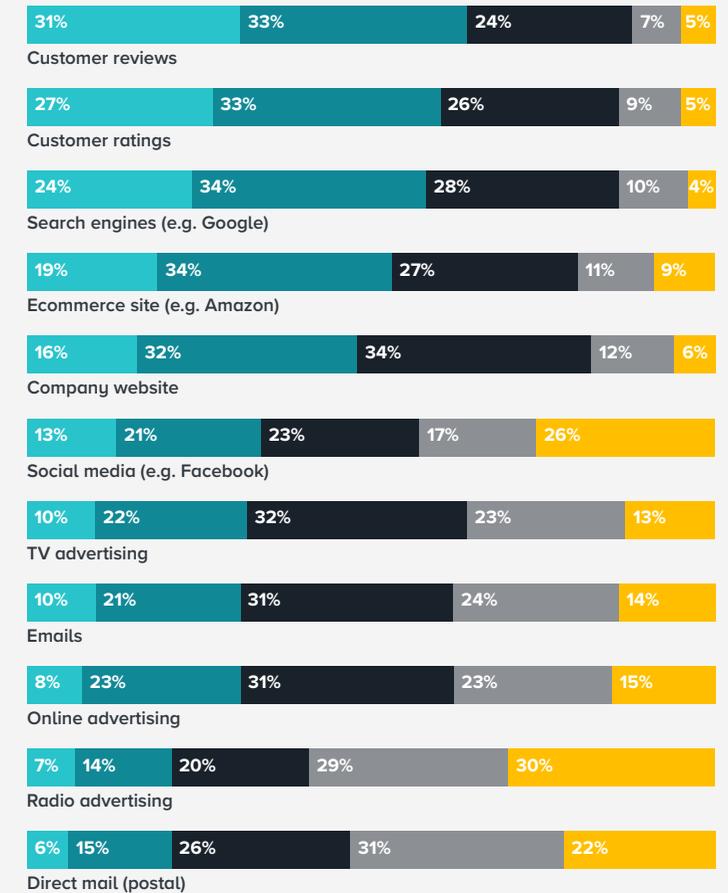
“There are a lot of consumers out there who have been burned, and so a ratings service is essential. It's helpful for a business to show they are trustworthy by putting the green stars on their advertising. We also put them at the bottom of all our emails too to remind people they can trust us. So, it helps with both winning new customers and retaining them.”

64% of UK consumers say they're 'often' or 'very often' influenced by customer reviews when buying something.

FIGURE 1

How often do the following sources of information influence your decision to buy something?

Very often Often Occasionally Rarely Never



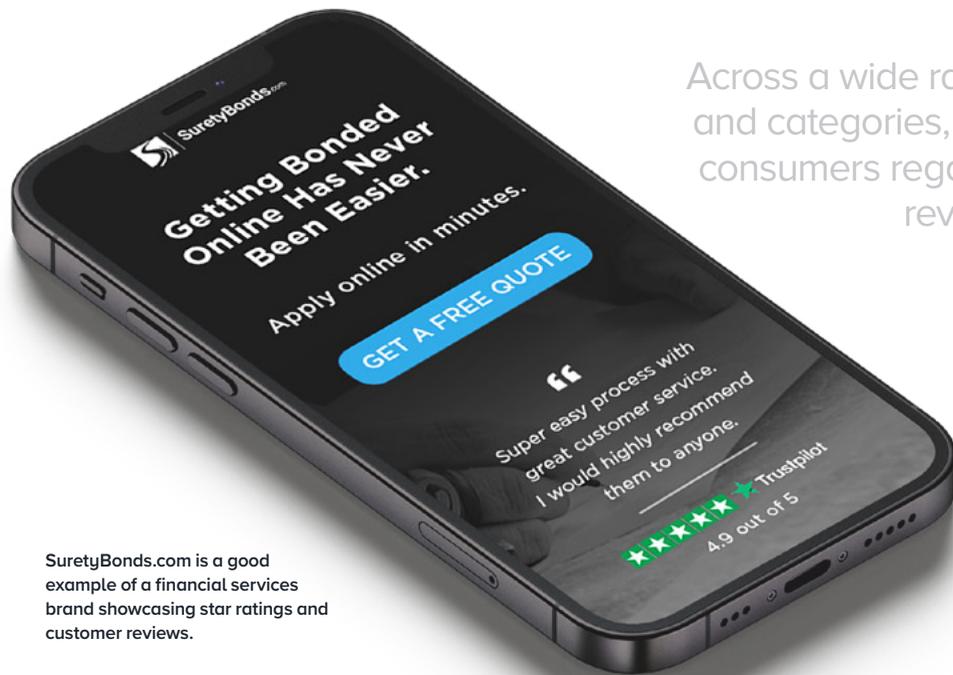
Ratings and reviews play an important role in influencing buying decisions across a wide range of categories, from electronics to travel, and property to auto rental. For every sector shown in *Figure 2*, the vast majority of consumers surveyed regard ratings and reviews as at least 'somewhat useful'.

Over the last few years the customer journey has become increasingly complex and non-linear, with consumers often engaging with multiple online and offline touchpoints - often across multiple devices - before they make a decision to purchase something.

Advertisers should strive to understand how different touchpoints and channels work together to build trust and positively impact the decision-making process during the customer journey.

After customer ratings and reviews, the next most frequently visited touchpoints in influencing a buying decision are search engines, followed by ecommerce sites, company websites and social media (*Figure 1*). Given their usefulness and popularity, savvy marketers should think about how they can harness ratings and reviews across other channels, including both online and offline advertising, as well as across their own digital properties and email campaigns.

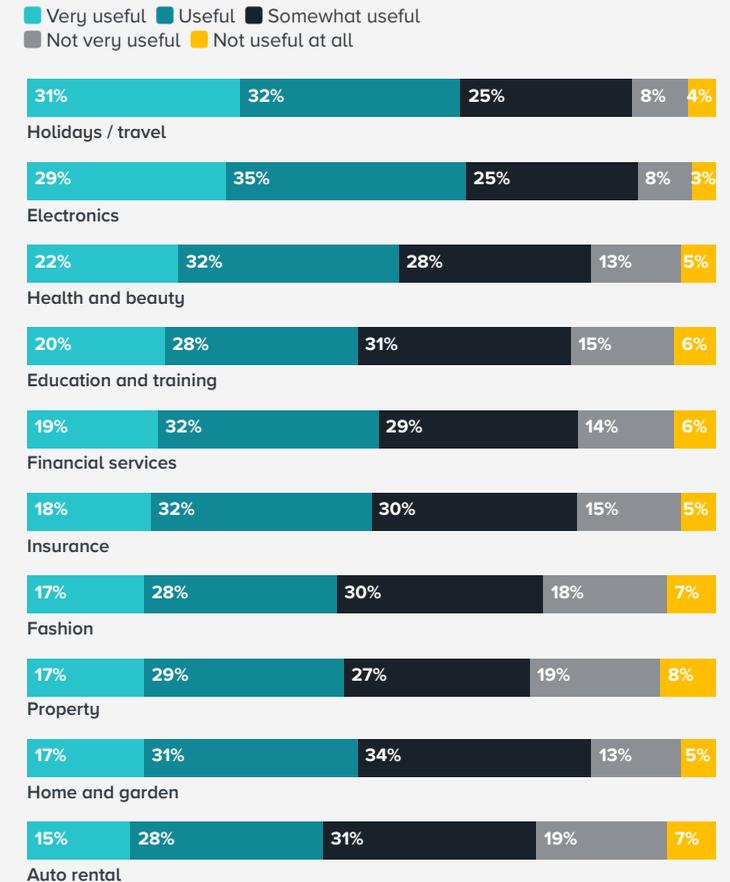
Across a wide range of sectors and categories, the majority of consumers regard ratings and reviews as useful.



SuretyBonds.com is a good example of a financial services brand showcasing star ratings and customer reviews.

FIGURE 2

How useful are ratings and reviews for influencing your decision to buy the following types of products or services?



Section 2

Benefits of Trustpilot Content Through the Funnel

The trust engendered by adding Trustpilot stars and scores to digital advertising is not just good for brand image, it is also a core component in driving sales. Seventy-seven percent of UK consumers agree a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand, including 33% who strongly agree (Figure 3). The propensity to buy something from a company is very closely linked to the level of trust in that brand. A very similar percentage of consumers (79%) agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand (Figure 4).

Brands are seeing this throughout the customer journey. For Octopus Energy Germany, a green energy supplier, adding its star rating is a way for it to build trust while also raising awareness at the top of the funnel.

Melanie Schiller
Head of Brand Communication
Octopus Energy Germany



“People know Trustpilot so it’s a good way to show we are customer-obsessed. It empowers us to not only tell customers how great our service is, but also prove it with an independent seal.”

At fashion brand Bamigo, work is under way to add the Trustpilot logo, star rating and customer reviews to all its product pages because, as the company’s Marketing Manager Freek Rijken reveals, they are proving highly effective at the purchasing end of the funnel as well as the awareness stage. He believes this is because they convey to prospects how happy existing customers are with the quality of its products and service.

Freek Rijken
Marketing Manager
Bamigo



“Trustpilot is a trusted channel where people speak about their experiences so we’ve seen it really helps with conversion rates with our video advertising on social media and in our newsletters. We’re building on that by adding it to every product page so it’s there to help people at the final stage of purchase.”

77% of UK consumers agree a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand.

FIGURE 3

To what extent do you agree that a good Trustpilot score makes you more likely to buy from a brand?

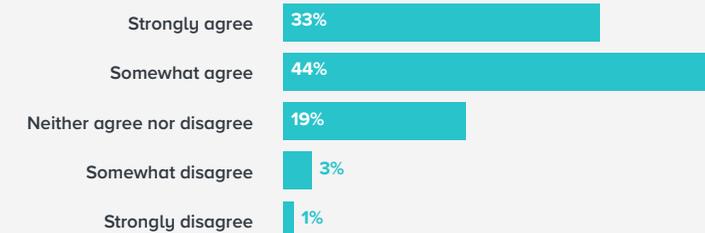
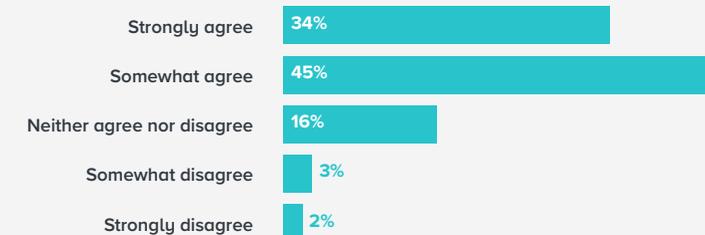


FIGURE 4

To what extent do you agree that a good Trustpilot score makes you more likely to trust a brand?



Section 3

Impact of Trustpilot

Logo with Star Rating

We have seen that consumers say they're more likely to trust and buy from a brand with a high Trustpilot rating. A key objective of our research was to understand the impact of different Trustpilot content elements, namely the logo and stars, TrustScore (out of five), number of reviews, and an actual quote from a customer.

As part of our proprietary research, consumers were shown a series of digital advertisements for a new mobile SIM contract, and asked which ads they would be most and least likely to click in order to buy.

The research found that an online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars is twice as persuasive as the same ad without them.

“People know the green stars, it helps to reassure new customers. In our advertising, adding the stars boosts clickthroughs but, crucially, they boost conversion rates and it further reduces cart abandonment when we add the stars at checkout. They make a huge difference.”

Kyle Rao
President and CEO
Secure Medical



Another finding from the research was that consumers looking to buy something are more than four times as likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, high TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial (compared with a baseline ad with no Trustpilot branding).

As well as seeking to understand the overall impact of the full suite of Trustpilot content and the logo and stars on their own, we also wanted to explore the relative impact of different content components, namely the customer review, the TrustScore at different levels, and the volume of reviews.

The Trustpilot logo and stars make an ad **twice as persuasive** as an ad without any Trustpilot content.

CONNECT
Mobile made easy

40GB
Unlimited calls & messages
£10

Making it simple to connect on the go.

Get your SIM now

vs.

CONNECT
Mobile made easy

40GB
Unlimited calls & messages
£10

Trustpilot
★★★★★

Get your SIM now

CONNECT
Mobile made easy

40GB
Unlimited calls & messages
£10

Making it simple to connect on the go.

Get your SIM now

vs.

CONNECT
Mobile made easy

40GB
Unlimited calls & messages
£10

“Amazing value and couldn't be simpler to get started.”

Peter T.
Connect customer

Trustpilot
★★★★★

- TrustScore 4.8 out of 5
- 3000+ reviews

Get your SIM now

Consumers are **more than four times as likely** to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with the full suite of components, including testimonial, high score, and high number of reviews.

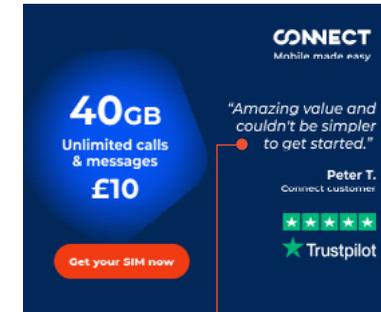
Customer Review

UK consumers are almost three times more likely to click through on a Trustpilot co-branded ad when it contains an authentic customer review.

Micael Saillen, CEO and Co-Founder at energy supplier Tate, has quantified adding a customer review as typically improving digital advertising clickthrough rates by 10% to 20%.

"People know brands say they are great in their adverts but when a company shows what people actually say about them, consumers know the advertiser is showing they have nothing to hide," he says.

"We use quotes in social media advertising and in all campaign landing pages. In our retargeting campaigns, we always use quotes because it's the extra nudge to help consumers convert. Adding a Trustpilot customer review typically improves clickthrough rates by 10% to 20%."



UK consumers are **almost three times more likely** to click through on a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a verbatim customer review.

TrustScore

UK consumers are 55% more likely to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it specifies the high TrustScore behind the five-star rating. The ad with a 4.8 score performs more than two-and-a-half times better than the ad with a 4.2 score.



UK consumers are **55% more likely** to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it shows the actual five-star TrustScore.



An ad with a 4.8 score performs **more than two-and-a-half times better** than an ad with a 4.2 score.

Number of Reviews

A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 score showing 500+ reviews is almost four times as compelling as an ad with no Trustpilot branding, according to our research.

Mike Henderson is Chief Marketing Officer at SuretyBonds.com, which has a 4.9 TrustScore. He credits adding the number of Trustpilot reviews on the company's digital advertising with delivering a 20% improvement in clickthrough rates.

Mike Henderson
CMO
SuretyBonds.com



"We always put our stars and the number of reviews on our digital advertising, as well as at the end of videos we post. It's crucial in showing people the high score is based on reviews from a lot of people. When we have space, we include a client testimonial quote as well, but we always ensure we have both the star rating and the number of reviews in every advert."

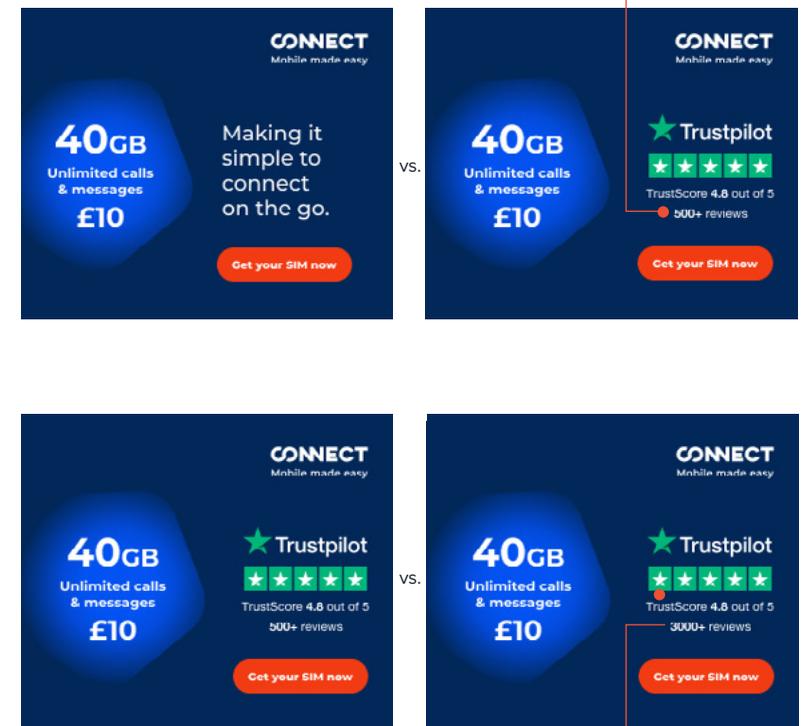
Our consumer research also shows that a Trustpilot five-star advert with 3,000+ reviews performs 13% better than the one with 500+ reviews.

According to Dan Cristo, Director of SEO Innovation at performance marketing agency Catalyst: "One of our clients in the hospitality space has an average of 2,000 reviews on each property. These are real experiences customers volunteered to share with others simply because they wanted to tell their story. This desire to share experiences with others as a way to 'pay it forward' and help others in the community is a core part of how humans socialise."

Dan Cristo
Director of SEO Innovation
Catalyst



"This 'word of mouth' was helpful before the internet, but has now been supercharged as commerce has gone global. It's that credibility and trust that is so valuable to brands, which makes ratings and reviews uniquely important."



A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 score showing 500+ reviews is **almost four times as compelling** as an ad with no Trustpilot co-branding.

A Trustpilot five-star advert with 3,000+ reviews performs **13% better** than the one with 500+ reviews.

Impact on Higher Price

The research also found that a Trustpilot ad with five stars, TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews and a customer testimonial performs three times as well as the ad with no Trustpilot content, even when the price is 20% higher.

Adding all the possible elements of a Trustpilot rating — including logo, stars, score, number of reviews and a customer quote — is certainly paying dividends at fintech business PensionBee. Its Chief Marketing Officer, Jasper Martens, reveals the company puts all elements on its digital advertising which it credits with delivering a 15% rise in clickthrough rate.

“For us the Trustpilot logo and our score are a nudge to check us out,” he says. “The number of reviews is crucial in convincing people you’re providing a good service because if you have more than 5,000 people know it’s real, it’s very powerful. Ultimately, the customer voice is the main convincer, we believe, so customer reviews are essential.”

“When we add all the Trustpilot elements to our digital advertising we see a 15% rise in clickthrough rate.”

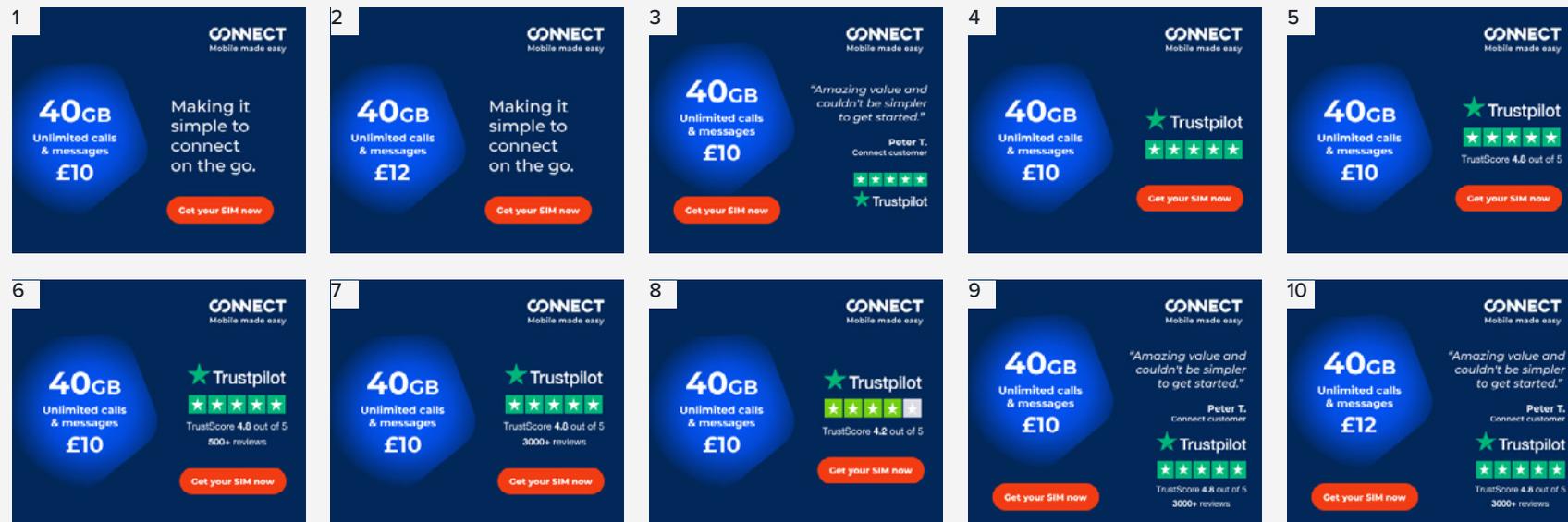


Consumers are **three times as likely** to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad showing a five-star customer rating, high number of reviews, and a customer testimonial, as the ad with no Trustpilot branding, even with a 20% higher price.



PensionBee has seen a 15% rise in its clickthrough rate as a result of adding more Trustpilot content elements to its digital ads.

Appendix



Relative levels of engagement with different ads

	UK (%)	Germany (%)	Italy (%)	Netherlands (%)	US (%)	All Country Average
9: 5 stars, TrustScore (4.8), customer review, higher number of reviews (3,000+)	16.3	12.1	14.2	14.2	14.6	14.3
7: 5 stars, TrustScore (4.8), higher number of reviews (3,000+)	16.2	12.4	14.3	14.7	13.8	14.3
6: 5 stars, TrustScore (4.8), lower number of reviews (500+)	14.4	11.7	13.2	13.4	12.5	13.0
5: 5 stars, TrustScore (4.8)	11.8	10.9	11.5	11.5	10.5	11.2
10: 5 stars, TrustScore (4.8), customer review, higher number of reviews (3,000+), higher price	11.4	10.3	10.3	10.8	12.2	11.0
3: 5 stars, customer review	11.2	10.0	10.6	10.5	11.1	10.7
4: 5 stars	7.6	9.5	8.8	8.5	8.1	8.5
8: 4 stars, TrustScore (4.2)	4.4	7.8	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
1: Baseline ad without Trustpilot content	3.8	7.9	6.1	5.6	5.9	5.9
2: Baseline ad without Trustpilot content (higher price)	2.9	7.3	5.0	4.8	5.4	5.1

About the authors



Linus Gregoriadis

Director, London Research

Linus is an experienced digital marketing analyst and business writer who co-founded London Research in 2017 as a sister company to Digital Doughnut, the world's largest community of marketers and digital professionals, and also to Demand Exchange, an advanced B2B lead generation platform. He spent more than a decade setting up and building the research function at Econsultancy, a digital research and training company now owned by Centaur Media. After leaving Econsultancy, where he oversaw the production of hundreds of survey-based trends reports, buyers' guides and best practice guides, he launched ClickZ Intelligence for B2B media company Contentive.



Sean Hargrave

Journalist and business report writer

Sean Hargrave is a journalist and business report writer covering media, advertising and marketing. He regularly writes for Digital Doughnut and sister business, London Research. He also regularly writes for The Guardian, The Telegraph and Wired on business and tech issues.

About us



London Research, set up by former Econsultancy research director Linus Gregoriadis, is focused on producing research-based content for B2B audiences. We are based in London, but our approach and outlook are very much international. We work predominantly, but not exclusively, with marketing technology (martech) vendors and agencies seeking to tell a compelling story based on robust research and insightful data points.

As part of Communitize Ltd, we work closely with our sister companies Digital Doughnut (a global community of more than 1.5 million marketers) and Demand Exchange (a lead generation platform), both to syndicate our research and generate high-quality leads.

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Trustpilot is a leading online review platform – free and open to all. With more than 100 million reviews of over 450,000 domains, Trustpilot gives people a place to share and discover reviews of businesses, and we give every company the tools to turn consumer feedback into business results.

Our mission is to bring people and businesses closer together to create ever-improving experiences for everyone. Trustpilot reviews are seen more than 2.5 billion times each month by consumers worldwide. With offices in Copenhagen, London, New York, Denver, Berlin, Melbourne and Vilnius, Trustpilot's 700 employees represent more than 40 different nationalities.

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