How to Master Post Purchase Emails

Best practices for post purchase emails that'll generate more ratings and reviews

POWER REVIEWS

Introduction

Reviews have become ubiquitous and are an expected part of the purchasing process. In fact, almost all shoppers (95%) report consulting customer reviews as they decide when, where and how to buy. Of those shoppers, nearly 1 in 4 (24%) consults reviews for every purchase they make. Among younger shoppers, those 18–44 years old, that number jumps to 30%.

If shoppers can't find user-generated content—such as ratings and reviews, photos and videos—on a brand or retailer site, they'll turn to third-party sources that make this information available. The best way to generate user-generated ratings and reviews is with post purchase emails.

What Are Post Purchase Emails?

Post purchase emails are the most effective way to generate more product reviews, which are proven to increase traffic, sales and insights. They're sent as a follow-up encouraging customers to review the products they've purchased in an easy, streamlined, mobile-friendly email. More than 60% of reviews are written as the result of a post purchase emails.

Consumer makes a purchase or receives a sample

Consumer receives an email asking them to write a review

The review goes through moderation

Review is displayed on your site

Why Send Post Purchase Emails?

Generate More Quality Review Content

Sending a post purchase email is the single most important step you can take to grow the quality review content on your site—they can generate 70–90% of your total review volume. Post purchase emails help increase product coverage (breadth) and review coverage (depth) and improve star rating distribution. Follow up emails account for nearly 70% of the total reviews collected.

Cultivate Trust and Connection with Customers

Sending a post purchase email shows your customers that you value their opinion and their business and also has the extra benefit of bringing past customers back to your site to shop again.

The following guide explores different ways to make the most of your post purchase emails.

Post Purchase Email Content

One of the biggest factors that contributes to the success of your post purchase email program is the content—the words you use to ask shoppers for a review. Read on to get tips for creating content for your post purchase emails that will drive big results.

1. Make the Purpose of the Email Clear

The purpose of the post purchase email is to solicit reviews, so make sure to include a direct call to action to write a review. The easier you make it for your customers, the more likely they are to write a review.

2. Solicit User-Generated Images and Videos

Directly ask your customers for images and videos so they're prepared to upload upon review submission. Then use leverage this visual content for your product and category pages—88% of consumers specifically look for visuals such as photos or videos submitted by other consumers prior to making a purchase. And 32% of customers would be more likely to buy clothing online if the website featured photos of real customers wearing that item (*Fluid & Olapic*).

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Make sure the entire process of submitting reviews, photos and videos can easily be completed on a small screen. And instead of requiring consumers to navigate to a third party site such as YouTube in order to submit a video, allow them to upload this content directly to your website from their phones.

3. Personalize the Email

Shoppers have come to expect personalized experiences throughout their shopping journey. Always use the customer's name in the body of the email, and consider including it in the subject line, too. Research from Experian found that personalized subject lines garnered a 26% higher open rate.

In addition, thank the customer for purchasing a specific product. And include an image and link to the product so the customer can easily write a review.

4. Optimize Subject Lines

The subject line will play a big role in whether or not the customer opens your post purchase email. So make sure it's compelling. Also, keep in mind that more than 50% of emails are opened on a mobile device. So keep your subject lines under 55 characters to avoid being truncated on mobile devices.

5. Measure, Test and Optimize

Don't adopt a "set it and forget it" mentality for your post purchase emails. Instead, build your post purchase email program, continuously measure results, and look for ways to improve.

Consider testing different elements of the email, including:

→ *SUBJECT LINES* → *HEADLINES* → *PROMOTIONS* → *THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THE EMAIL*

Room&Board

Room & Board, a contemporary home furnishings retailer and PowerReviews customer, understands the importance of ongoing optimization. In addition to testing timing and cadence, the company also makes regular updates to the design of the email. As a result of recent optimizations, **Room & Board increased the conversion rate of post purchase emails sent to reviews written by 80%**.

Post Purchase Email Checklist

- ⊘ Compelling subject line with less than 55 characters

- ⊘ Personalized

- ⊘ Mobile friendly

- ⊘ Short and sweet

- ⊘ 16–18 point font

- ⊘ Single column layout

- ⊘ Clear call to action

- ⊘ Image and link to product

- ⊘ No other marketing or sales call to action

Offering Incentives and Promotions

The presence of reviews ranks as the most important factor affecting purchase decisions, behind only the price of the product itself. But while nearly all shoppers (95%) use reviews, far fewer actually write reviews. **PowerReviews research** found that only 42% of consumers leave feedback for products they buy.

What would it take to get more of your shoppers to write reviews? Fifty-five percent of consumers who aren't writing reviews cited needing motivation to do so. Offering some type of reward or recognition in your post purchase emails can help you generate even more product reviews.

TOP 5 TIPS FOR OFFERING INCENTIVES

→ Make sure the promotion is clearly communicated in both the subject line and body of the follow up email.

→ Clearly communicate promotion rules.

→ Ensure the promotion fits your brand —incentives aren't one size fits all.

→ Test to determine which type of incentive works best for your company.

→ Appropriately badge any reviews that are written as a result of an incentive, in order to preserve the trust you've worked hard to build.

PowerReviews customers have experienced a 100% increase in review content as a result of incenting customers via a promotion.

Here are a few different types of incentives that have been successful for PowerReviews clients:

→ SWEEPSTAKES

Offer your shoppers an entry into a sweepstakes in exchange for writing a review. This is proven to increase review generation by up to 100%. If your team doesn't have the bandwidth to develop a sweepstakes, ask your ratings and reviews partner if they have a sweepstakes offering that you can leverage to generate more reviews.

→ LOYALTY POINTS

If you already have an established loyalty or rewards program, use it to encourage reviews. For example, if a customer in your loyalty program writes a review, she'll get 10 loyalty points. Once she accrues a set number of points, she'll receive some sort of promotion, like free shipping or a discount code.

→ FREE SHIPPING OR DISCOUNTS

Offer your shoppers a discount or free shipping to thank them for writing reviews. Not only will you generate more reviews, you'll also give shoppers an excuse to shop with you again.

Including a sweepstakes in your post purchase email can increase review generation by up to **83%.**

SHARE YOUR OPINIONS WITH US!

When you leave a review you could be eligible to win $1,000!

Post Purchase Email Design

Implementing some simple design best practices can help you significantly increase the performance of your post purchase emails. Read on to learn about some of those best practices.

1. Keep it Short and Simple

Keep the design of your post purchase emails clean and simple, with the important elements in the upper portion of the email whenever possible. That way, shoppers will quickly understand the call to action, even if they don't scroll through the entire email.

Avoid elements that will distract customers away from writing a review, such as banners, links to other parts of your website, or other sales or marketing calls to action.

2. Use a Large Font

Using small fonts can cause your customers to squint and struggle, and potentially miss the value of your follow up message. Because more than half of people are reading their email on a mobile device, it's important to use a readable font size. A 16 or 18 point font size will make your email easy to read—regardless of the device your shoppers use.

And remember—people are using their finger (not a mouse) on their mobile devices. So avoid tiny links and opt for larger buttons instead.

3. Choose a Single Column Format

Your multi-column email format might look beautiful on a desktop browser, but there's a good chance it'll get awkwardly broken up on a mobile device, resulting in something that's difficult to read and engage with. Use a single column layout so the email scales down nicely on mobile devices and your customers aren't forced to pinch, zoom, and scroll to see the entire message.

Hi Jenny,

Thank you for your purchase! We'd love to hear what you think.

Women's Rivno Jacket

Post Purchase Email Timing

A key factor that can make or break the success of your post purchase emails is timing. So, when's the best time to send a post purchase email? The short answer is, "it depends." The ideal timing depends on the type of product the consumer purchased.

1. Send Post Purchase Emails for Seasonal Products after Seven Days

There's a pretty short window when folks will purchase seasonal goods, such as school supplies or holiday decorations. Since we know that reviews drive sales, you'll want to get reviews for seasonal products as quickly as possible so you don't miss the season. Send post purchase emails for seasonal goods within seven days.

2. Wait 14 Days Before Sending Post Purchase Emails for Perishable Goods

Perishable goods—such as cut flowers and fresh fruit and vegetables —have a short shelf life. Send post purchase emails for these products within 14 days. If you wait any longer, the product will be out of sight and out of mind.

3. For Soft Goods, Send Post Purchase Emails after 14 Days

Soft goods are items that are immediately consumed or have a lifespan of three years or less, such as clothing and cosmetics. As with hard goods, you'll want to give your customer the opportunity to try out the product before writing a review. But don't wait too long, because the lifespan of soft goods is much shorter than hard goods and the purchase won't be top of mind for long.

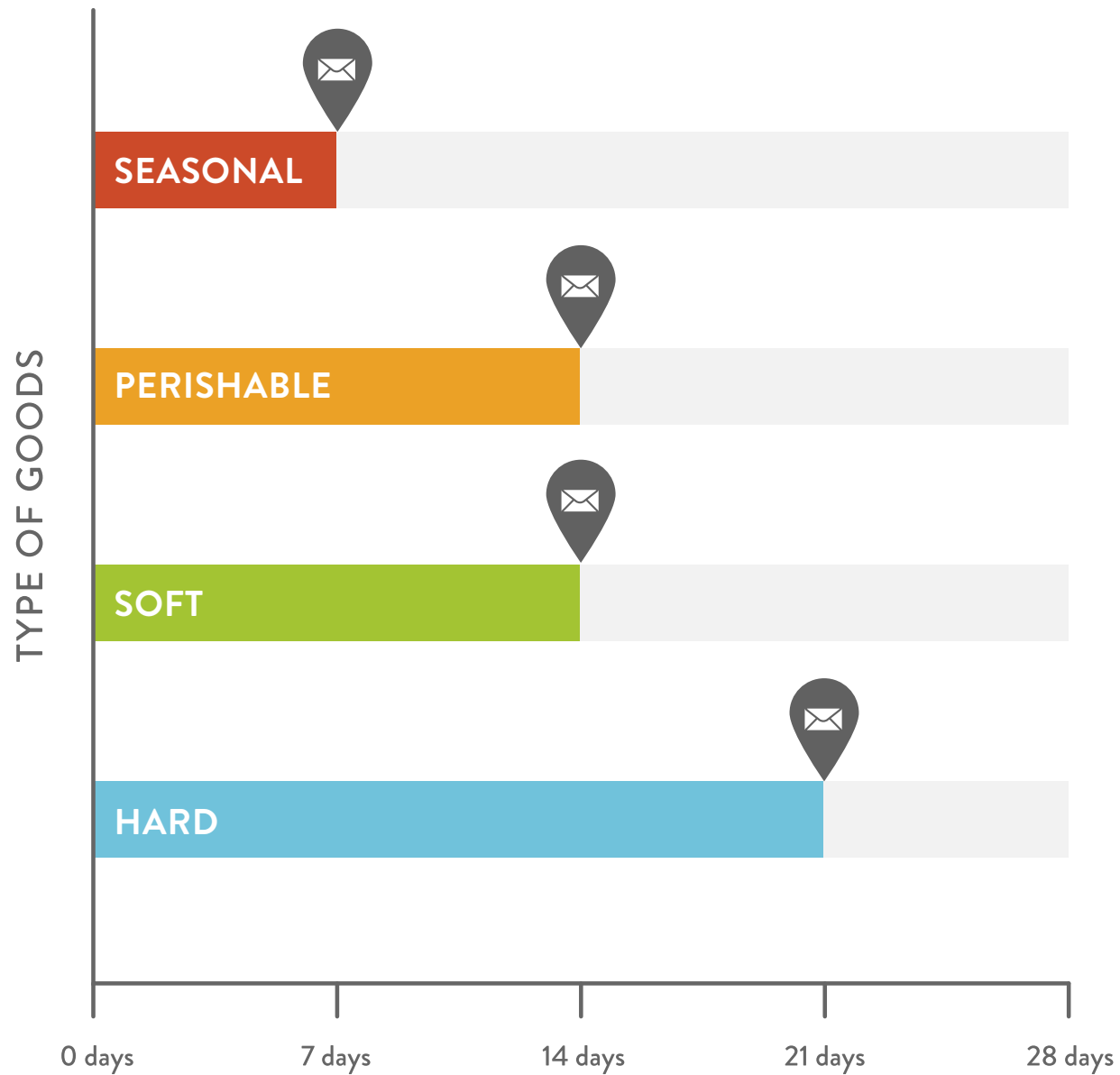## 4. For Hard Goods, Wait 21 Days Before Sending Post Purchase Emails

Hard goods are durable items that don't wear out quickly, such as refrigerators, washing machines and computers. It's a best practice to wait 21 days before sending a post purchase email for these types of products. Why so long? Let's say a customer purchases a new washing machine. If you send a post purchase email too quickly after the purchase, the customer has probably only used the machine a few times. But if you wait 21 days, the customer will have enough time to get a good feel for the washing machine so they can write a well-informed, thorough review.

5. Follow Up

If shoppers don't open your first post purchase email, don't give up! Send a follow up email around 7 days after the initial email to those who didn't open your first one.

When should I send the email?

Start Generating More Reviews

Ready to start generating ratings and reviews that'll attract and convert more shoppers?

Existing PowerReviews Customer?

Contact your Client Success Director to learn best practices for generating even more reviews.

Not a PowerReviews Customer?

Contact us to schedule a live demo today.

About PowerReviews

PowerReviews works with more than 1,000 global brands and retailers to deliver cloud-based software that collects and displays ratings and reviews and questions and answers on websites. Ratings and reviews solutions from PowerReviews are essential for consumers as they search and shop online and in-store, and they are proven to increase online site-wide sales.