



SALSIFY

CONSUMER RESEARCH 2019

# 5 New Rules to Tackle Shoppers' Rising Expectations on Your Brand

## Executive Summary and Methodology

Today's shopper relies on the product page descriptions, images, and product reviews found online to select what they need for their next meal, work day, or party. Customer loyalty is won through how convenient, reliable, and compelling you can be in that moment of digital scrolling.

Brand manufacturers know that a moment that feels like a one-to-one interaction for a consumer requires an entire team working at an unprecedented scale and speed. Where should your team focus its efforts? How can you continue to delight consumers that get to browse an endless aisle of competing products from around the world? We surveyed more than 1,000 US adults who shopped online at least once in 2018 to uncover the new rules of winning consumer attention, sales, and loyalty.

Shopper expectations for what makes a good product experience have risen. Through continuous effort and optimization, you can earn trust at every moment they engage with your product - and grow your business.

# The New Rules

- I RULE 1** .....▶ **1**  
**Show Your Shoppers You Know Them**
  - What makes consumers feel understood
  - How consumers judge your product quality
  - What consumers expect from reviews
  
- I RULE 2** .....▶ **4**  
**Answer Consumers' Questions at the Decision Point**
  - Why shoppers abandon your page
  - Who shoppers turn to for product answers
  
- I RULE 3** .....▶ **6**  
**Show Up Everywhere Your Shoppers are Going**
  - Which sellers consumers trust on Amazon
  - Where consumers plan to shop in the future
  
- I RULE 4** .....▶ **8**  
**Increase Your Content – Shoppers Want More Than You Think**
  - How many product images and videos shoppers want
  - How many product images and videos top-performers use
  
- I RULE 5** .....▶ **10**  
**The Rules Keep Changing – Seize the Opportunity to Adapt**

# Show Your Shoppers You Know Them

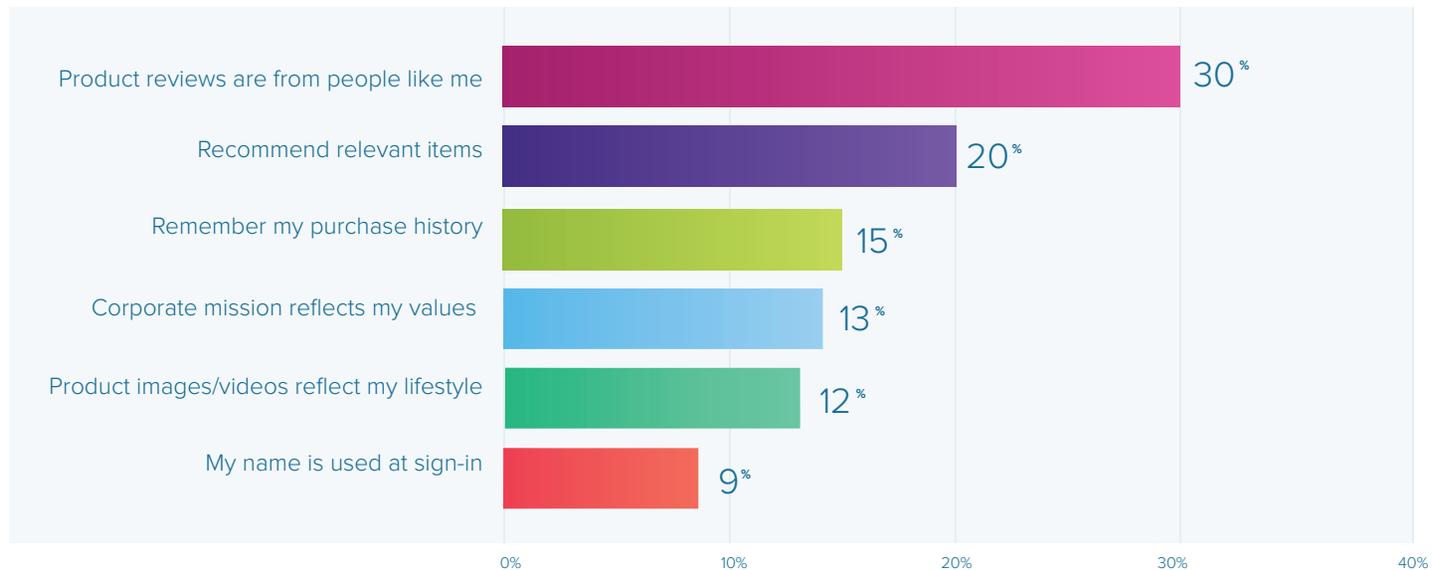
## The product page is your opportunity to help consumers feel understood by your brand

Gone are the days when [INSERT NAME] was enough personalization to grab a shopper's attention. Today's consumer is looking for relevant reviews (30%) and sophisticated product recommendation engines (20%) to help them quickly determine if the product is right for them. In fact, 15% of shoppers also expect brands and retailers to remember their purchase history.

Consumers want speed and ease to get the right product, no matter what it is they seek. What's more, at least 1 in every 10 consumers to hit your product page will scan it for images that reflect their lifestyle (12%) and proof that you're a company that aligns with their values (13%).

There is a rising consumer expectation that a brand truly knows each shopper. Consumers want a product designed to meet their exact needs and lifestyle.

### “What is a good sign that a brand or retailer understands you?”

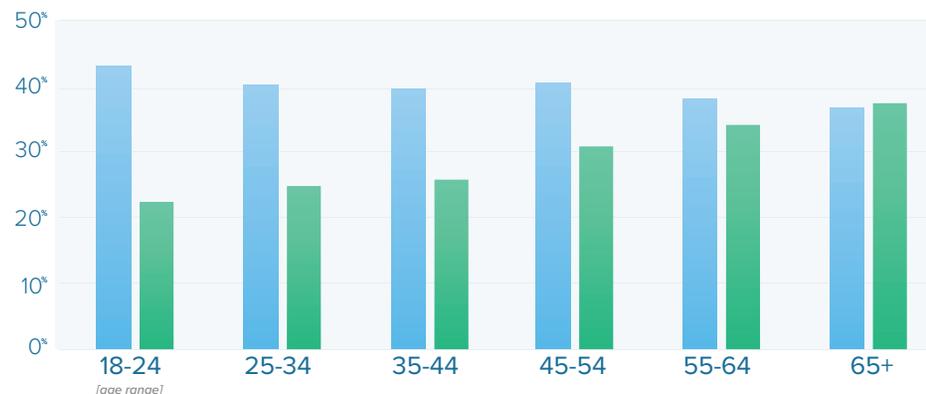


## “How do you judge a product’s quality when online shopping?”

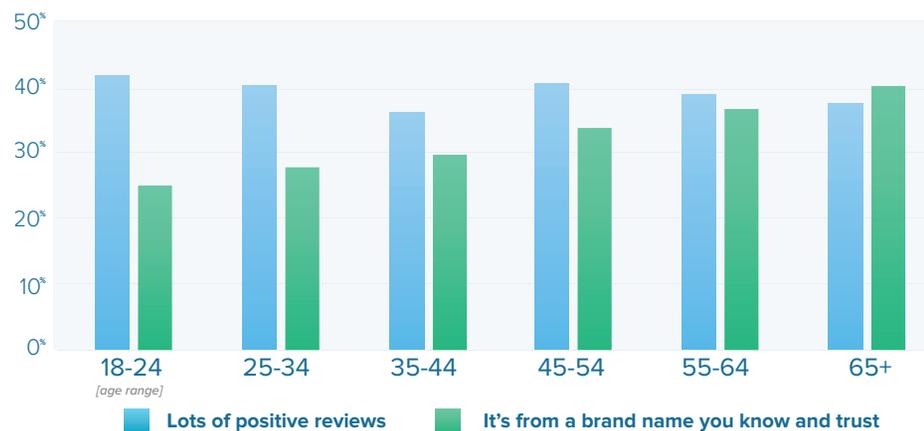
### Most consumers use reviews, instead of trusted brand name, to judge a product’s quality

Consumers under 65 rely more heavily on product reviews to determine whether the product is high quality. A recognized brand name is their secondary concern. For a marketing team, this means the investments you’ve made in advertising could be undone by a bad shipment or a verbose detractor. Remarkably, we saw the same trend regardless of whether shoppers were spending less than \$25 or more than \$50. The bottom line is your entire consumer’s product experience - from discovery to post-purchase - can have a direct impact on your brand’s image.

For Products Under \$25



For Products Over \$50



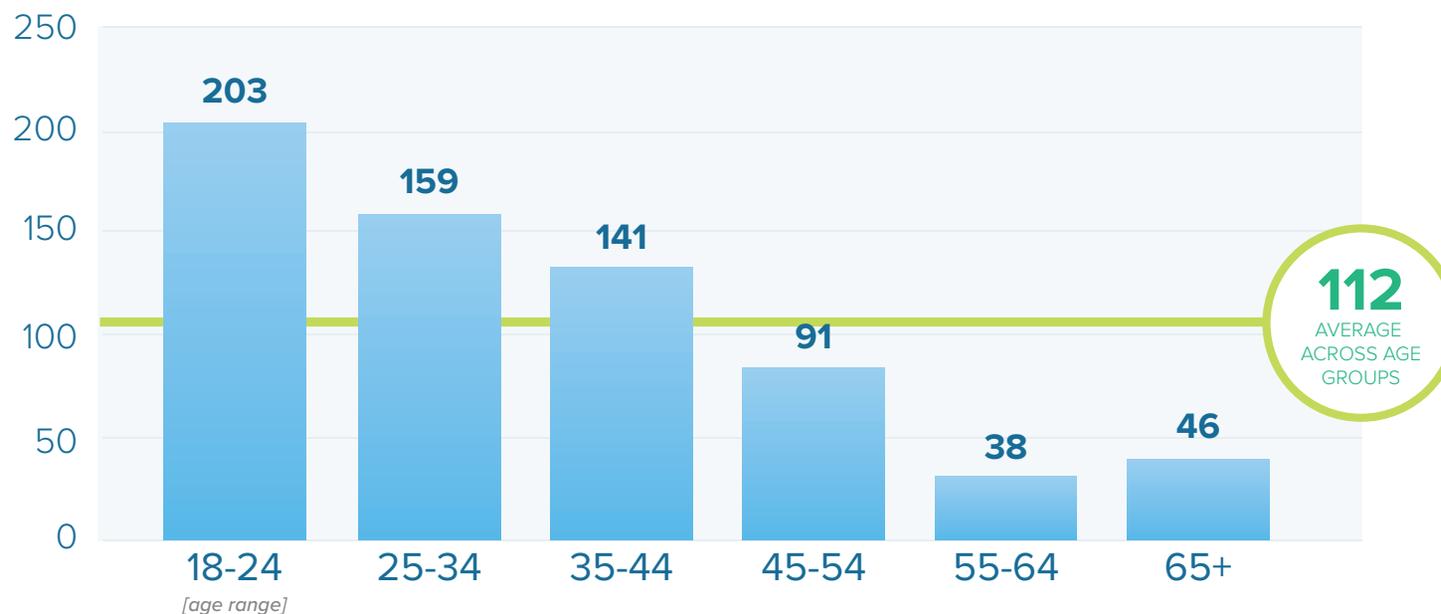
## Shoppers expect an average of 100+ reviews before buying

We asked consumers to tell us the exact number of reviews that would make them confident enough to trust a product online. The average, amongst all consumers surveyed, was 112. Across the generations, the startling trend is that the younger shoppers get, the more reviews they demand. Most 18 - 24-year-olds expect more than 200 reviews per product. Already, this group has an aggregate income of \$463 billion in the US alone<sup>1</sup>.

A large number of product reviews per page satisfies two of your prospective buyers' needs. First, the quantity of reviews demonstrates that many people purchased the product. Second, shoppers can crowdsource answers about a product's quality, uses, and results before ordering it for themselves.

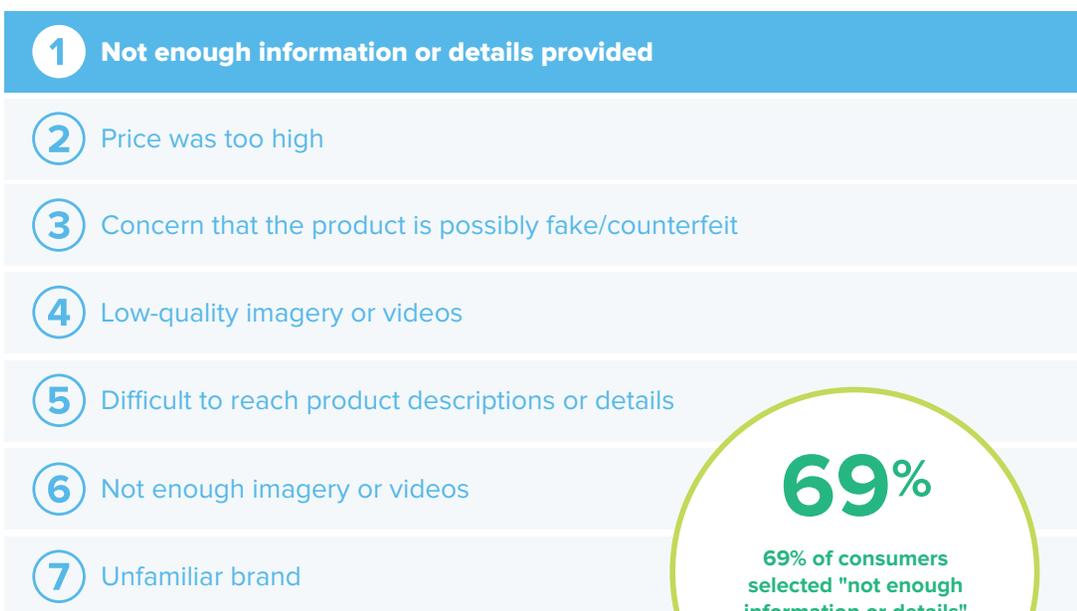
Product reviews hold an enormous benefit for brand manufacturers as well. This is direct feedback from your customer. Use it to adjust product page content, better understand what features to highlight, and develop new products for the market.

### “How many reviews do you expect when looking at a product online?”



# Answer Consumers' Questions at the Decision Point

“Why have you ever abandoned a product page on a retailer's site?”



## Shoppers abandon your page when there is not enough detail

Nearly 70% of consumers chose a lack of product information as a reason they've left a page. This exceeds the number of shoppers that used a high price tag as a deal breaker. Other popular reasons include when there is low-quality or not enough rich media. The takeaway for your team is to consider a customer's questions when designing your content. Provide packaging shots as well as images that address common questions about size, materials, or use of your product.

“Unfamiliar brand” was the least frequent reason a consumer left a product page. Consumers are more willing to take a chance on newcomer product if the product detail page satisfies their questions. Done right, this can be an enormous opportunity to launch new product lines and build an audience. It's also an enormous vulnerability for well-established brands who are not telling the full story of each of their products online.

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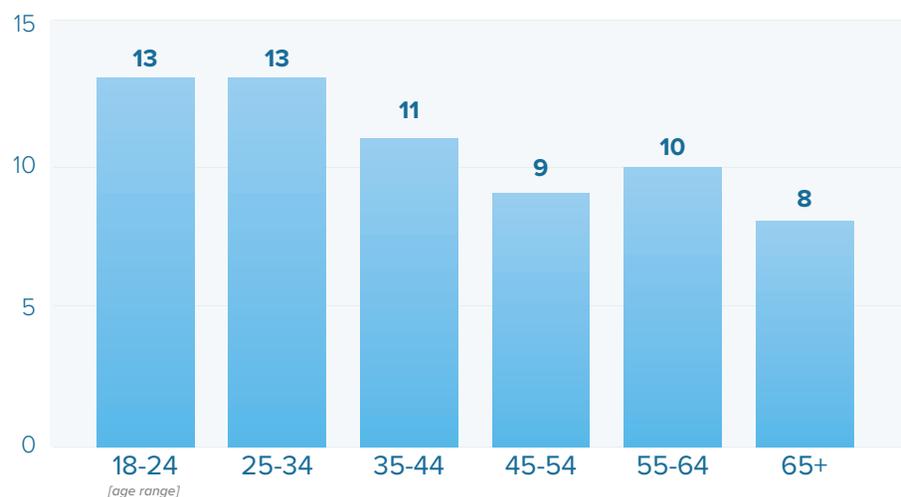
## Consumers want answers directly from your brand

Thanks to the Q&A section on Amazon and other retailers' sites, it's commonplace for shoppers to expect a dialogue with your brand. Regardless of age, most shoppers expect an average of 8-13 questions per product to be answered by the brand itself. Your team must be vigilant about maintaining all of your product pages. Consumer questions can reveal what's missing on the product page itself. The most successful brands are leveraging that feedback to make updates to the product page.

Some brands leverage on-site chat solutions to field customer questions at the moment of consideration. This provides immediate service to the customer and increases customer satisfaction. Conversations with shoppers can also enlighten your team about a shopper's mindset when they visit the product page.

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**“As a shopper, how many questions answered by the manufacturer do you expect when looking at a product on Amazon of another online retailer?”**



# Show Up Everywhere Your Shoppers are Going

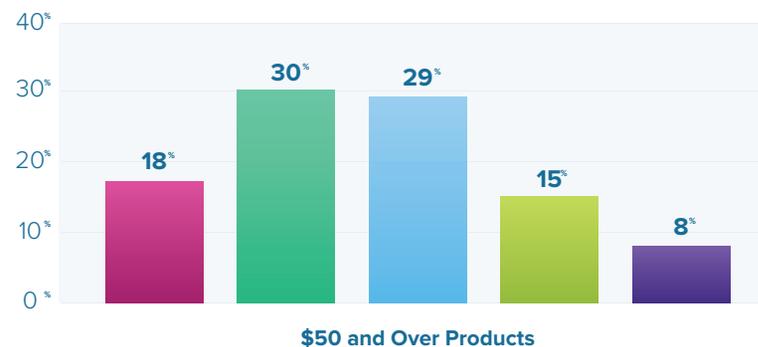
## Consumers trust sellers – regardless of brand – on Amazon

More than half of shoppers (55%) are just as likely to buy your brand's product whether or not you are the seller on Amazon. Even when asked about more expensive products, 18% of shoppers were very likely and 30% were somewhat likely to buy from a company that is not the brand manufacturer. For those of you who have unauthorized third-party (3P) sellers listing your products, this reality might feel like a new wild west.

In fact, it's more important than ever to assert your brand's voice and leadership in everything you put online. For example, you can gain an increased level of control over bad actors by enrolling in programs like Amazon Brand Registry. Today's shoppers are more swayed by the product detail itself than the brand name in the "sold by" field. Tell your full product story and demonstrate your company's values throughout your retailers' product pages. Leading brands are going beyond the above-the-fold product details to showcase a full company story. Enhanced content, that lives below-the-fold, includes branded HTML, comparison charts, 360-degree product spins, product feature hot spots, and other rich media. Use these opportunities to communicate value and quality at a glance.

**“How likely would you be to buy a brand's product on Amazon if you noticed it was being sold by a company other than the manufacturer?”**

55% of shoppers are still likely to buy a product regardless of who's selling it on Amazon



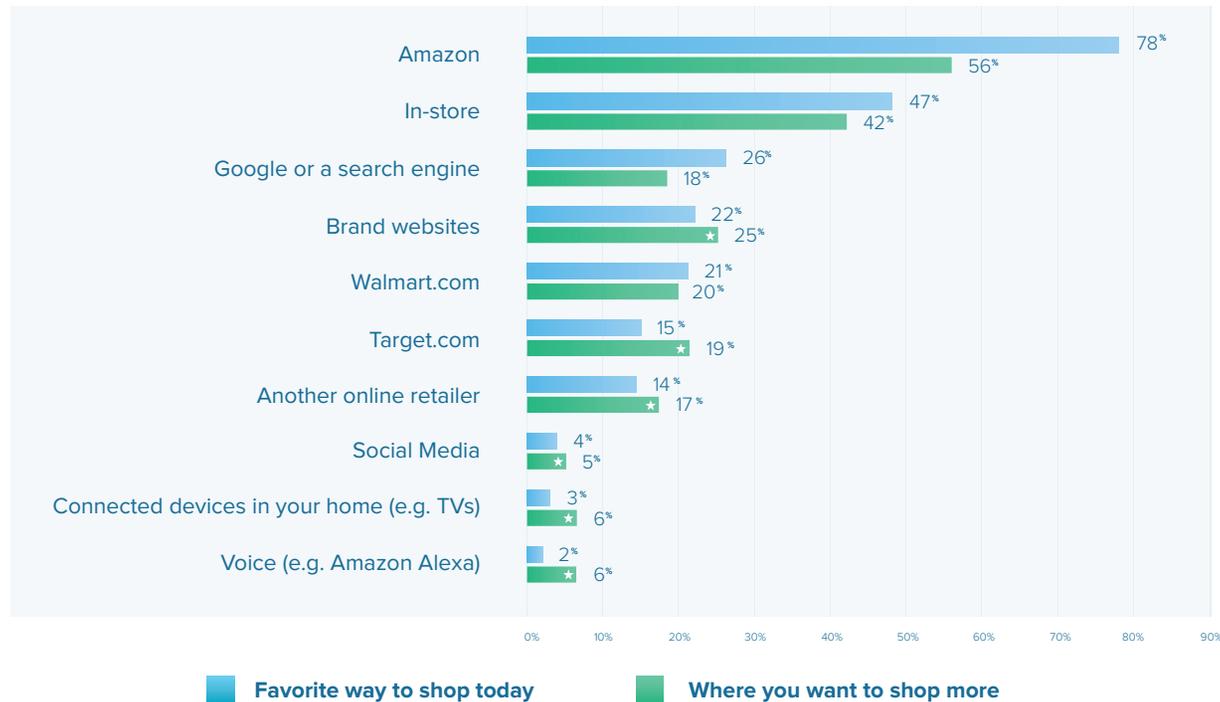
Very likely Somewhat likely Neutral/Not sure Less likely Not at all likely

## Consumers plan to shop at a broader list of places in the future

Amazon is where a majority of consumers shop today, with a whopping 78% naming the site their favorite. But based on consumer survey responses, this margin is set to close in the coming years. Just 56% chose Amazon as a place they want to buy and shop more in the future.

Making gains are brand websites, Target and other retailers, social media, IoT devices, and voice technology. Meet the demand by extending your brand's reach. A flexible source of reliable product information can help you meet the requirements of future sales channels.

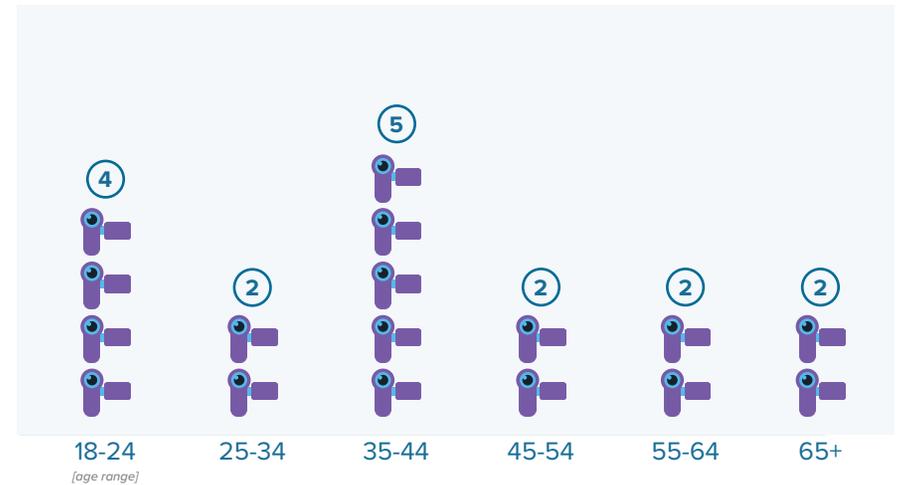
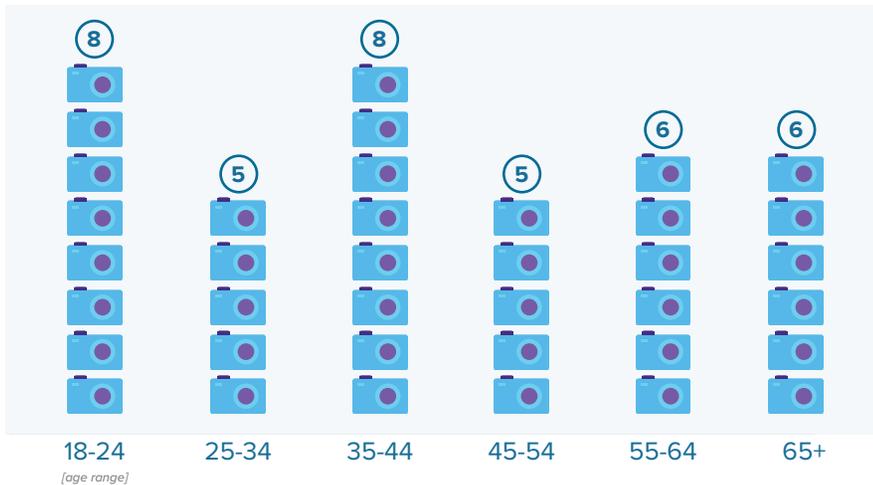
### “What are your favorite ways to buy and shop today?” vs. “Where would you like to buy and shop more?”



# Increase Your Content - Shoppers Want More Than You Think

“As a shopper, how many images do you expect when looking at a product on Amazon or another retailer?”

“As a shopper, how many videos do you expect when looking at a product on Amazon or another retailer?”



## Shopper's expectations on your rich media have multiplied

In 2016, our survey found consumers wanted an average of 3 images per product, and video content on the product page was rare. Three years later and shoppers across nearly every age group expect double the images and expect a minimum of two videos. Shoppers aged 18-24 and 35-44 are the most demanding. These two groups expect 8 images and 4-5 videos for each of your products.

## Consumer expectations for images exceed what top-performers use

We analyzed the average number of images that the top 10% of products by Amazon Sales Rank are using today in 6 key categories<sup>2</sup>. Even the best selling pages in electronics and grocery had only an average of 4 images per product. Compared with consumer expectations, even these top performers are falling short.

As a brand online, you are not simply competing with your own category of products. You are competing with every other experience your shoppers have. Anticipate what your shoppers will want from you next. Once shoppers can use AR technology to preview how a couch looks in their den, they'll want to use the same technology for all of their shopping. Look for ways to elevate your product experience.



RULE 1  
Show 'em  
You Know 'em

RULE 2  
Answer Consumers'  
Questions

RULE 3  
Show Up  
Everywhere

RULE 4  
Increase Your  
Content

RULE 5  
The Rules Keep  
Changing

# The Rules Keep Changing: Seize the Opportunity to Adapt

The retail landscape will continue to evolve fast. Consumers are leading the way because they now control when, where, and how they shop. In response, every one of your sales channels is racing to keep up. As retailers experiment, the rules and requirements for success on those channels can change on a monthly, weekly, and sometimes daily basis.

This opens up an enormous opportunity for those brands that can analyze performance and then improve on the fly. The challenge is to effectively manage product experiences across your organization for your entire assortment for every single retailer and marketplace in the entire world. Salsify works with hundreds of brands undergoing digital transformations that are set up to adapt to these rising expectations.

Brands for the first time have near complete control - within retailer guidelines - of how to present their products on the digital shelf. Test and optimize what works best with your romance copy, images, and other variables in your customer product experience.



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