



G2's **Review** Playbook

The top tool for boosting sales
and **building trust**.

Introduction

Product reviews are important. People read them, they seek them out. They depend on them to guide their purchase decisions. [Review providers](#), [UX thought leaders](#), and [consumer behavior statisticians](#) have written about and analyzed their significance for years. Simply put, peer reviews matter. A lot.

The positive impact reviews can have on your business is massive, and there's never been a better time to start integrating review collection into your overall strategy. They build trust and can benefit the entirety of your organization, from marketing and product to customer success and sales.

G2 specializes in reviews, and we've tapped that knowledge to put together our most helpful insights. Keep reading and you'll learn why reviews matter, how to collect and leverage them, why negative reviews are essential, and how you can use review trends to keep growing your business.

Contents

3

The Anatomy of Reviews

9

The Positive Side of Negative Reviews

13

Top 3 Trends in B2B Reviews

17

Reviews, ROI, and Real Growth





01

The Anatomy of Reviews

Why reviews matter, how to collect them, and how to use them.



Let's cut to the chase.

Reviews have become a staple of purchase journeys across the world and across industries. Whether you're looking for a new set of pants online, downloading an app, or researching a doctor for your next physical, customer reviews are essential. More than ever, they guide how consumers make purchase decisions.

The truth is, your customers and prospects don't trust your brand enough to convert.

At least not yet.

And it's not only our day-to-day purchases that have been impacted. Arguably, we spend even more time researching the five- and six-figure software decisions we make for our companies. In fact, [92% of B2B buyers are more likely to purchase software after reading a trusted review](#).

Some might write it off as a hot take. But, based on empirical evidence, we know that consumers seek out, and are influenced by, reviews for nearly all their purchasing choices. In this chapter, we'll unpack exactly how and why reviews take top billing when it comes to purchase influence. And we'll show you what you need to do to get on board.

You'll learn:

- Why reviews and consumer feedback are integral to purchasing journeys
- What makes reviews particularly valuable for readers and their requesters
- How you can collect more reviews
- How you can maximize review submissions
- How you can leverage those reviews for sales and marketing efforts

At G2, we're B2B software experts, so you'll primarily gain insight into B2B review strategies. But the same approaches are grounded in general consumer behavior, including the B2C world.

Let's get started.

Why Do Reviews Really Matter?

Why are consumers reliant on peer feedback? What's the real power behind capturing and promoting "the voice of the customer? What does it mean for companies to be "customer-centric"?

The truth is, your customers and prospects don't trust your brand enough to convert. At least not yet. And we've got the data to prove it.

- [Gallup](#) releases a trust and ethics report each year. It always comes to the same conclusion. [Members of congress and salespeople](#) are the professionals people trust the least. As Caponi notes in his blog, it's tough to build a relationship with a prospect or customer if they don't trust you.
- Marketing needs to focus more on building trust. [69% of people don't trust advertisements and 71% don't trust sponsored ads on social](#).



Nobody spends money unless there's a clear, believed benefit. If consumers don't trust your brand, they'll find other outlets they can trust. Customers flock to sources that provide an idea of what their product experience might look like. In fact, [91% of 18 to 34-year-olds trust online reviews](#) as much as personal recommendations.

There's been a shift in how buyers determine which sellers deserve their business and, at this point, transparency is the expectation. If receiving feedback and getting authentic customer testimonials from your audience is integral to successful strategies, reviews are the perfect place to start.

What Makes Reviews Valuable?

But why are reviews so valuable? Why are they ranked [higher than nearly all other forms of purchase information](#)?

For users

Reviews provide prospective buyers (of any type) with a huge gift: they hear directly from someone that has used or experienced what they're buying. What's more, reviews now have identifiers and filters for job title, location, company size, and more to further help buyers find feedback relevant to their specific situation.

Candid feedback breeds confidence. With an ideal mix of reviews ranging from 1 - 5 stars, your prospective buyers will feel confident when they buy and, ideally, will become longtime customers.

For companies

What makes review content valuable to your business? They can serve as a customer sentiment pulse check about both your product and any associated experiences.

- **Marketing:** Reviews are essential to your overall strategy. They can be used as automatic, trusted assets for campaigns, can inform your value proposition, and can position you more competitively.
- **Product:** They can surface valuable information usable during discovery phases. Reviews ensure you truly listen to your customers' voices when building and enhancing your products. Insight gained from reviews facilitates proactive UX updates and refinements.
- **Customer Success:** Asking for and receiving feedback adds a touchpoint to your customer engagement strategy. As such, you're empowered to pulse check customer sentiment and, as a result, can prevent churn.
- **Sales:** Having a treasure trove of customer testimonials allows you to convert prospects more effectively, driving more deals forward. Reviews cultivate critical trust with buyers, both new and existing.

From sales to product development, reviews are valuable for your entire team.

How to Collect Reviews

All review collection strategies aren't perfect for everyone. Just like differences between products, industries, and customers, review collection can't be one-size-fits-all. If you're a G2 customer, your customer success manager can help pin down a strategy that'll work best for your users. Even so, there are a few tried-and-true approaches to get you started.

Review collection can't be one-size-fits-all.



Run a campaign through your reviews provider

If you're working with a review vendor like G2.com, your customer success representative can help you set up a landing page. Then, we'll manage review collection for you. Simply provide a list of customers to reach out to and G2 will take care of the rest.

Ask for reviews within your platform or on your website

Are you using a chatbot or engagement tool? If so, take a page from successful apps and ask for feedback when someone is using your platform. Your product will be top of mind and users will be able to share more accurate feedback, ultimately helping your internal teams create a better user experience.

Pro Tip: *If your product takes time to set up and start using, don't ask for reviews immediately. Instead, wait until your customer has had an opportunity to experience your product. Resulting reviews will be more valuable to future buyers, and you'll also get a clearer idea of their experience.*

Set up automatic triggers for always-on review collection

The right timing strengthens review generation. Certain customer milestones provide better opportunities for review and feedback outreach. Work with your operations team to identify these moments. After, set up a simple, automated email campaign asking for reviews when someone meets the decided upon criteria.

Not sure when the right time is? Consider these customer milestones:

- After they implement your solution
- After a renewal or upgrade
- After record-high use of your solution
- After they've been a customer for 90 days
- After they've had their Quarterly Business Review
- After they've submitted an NPS Survey

Note: Don't just target promoters. Ask all customers for feedback if they're engaging with you. This demonstrates you care about their opinion and take feedback seriously enough to display it externally.

Leverage current marketing initiatives

Review requests don't need to be separate from initiatives you're already working on. You can find openings to ask for reviews as a supplement to existing campaigns.

There are plenty of ways you can fit review generation into projects already in motion:

- Do you have an upcoming virtual event? Set up a [virtual review booth](#) encouraging visitors to write reviews while your company and product are top of mind.
- Are you running a customer-focused webinar? Have your call to action be: "Submit a Review".
- Do you have a customer advisory board? Ask attendees to share their feedback and thoughts via reviews so others can benefit from their insights and experience. If you meet regularly, ask your board to update their reviews to ensure you have the freshest perspectives available for future buyers.

Pro Tip: *Be sure to highlight any reviews you've collected.*

Your customers will know you care about feedback and want them to be a part of an active, honest community.



Don't stop yet. This is only the beginning. There's a mountain of ways you can collect more customer reviews (and keep them flowing in). Set up a brainstorm session with your team and see what other ideas could gather customer voice content.

Maximizing Review Submission

There are many ways to collect reviews, but how and when you ask can either maximize, or tank, review volume. Here are a few quick tactics that can have a major impact on your collection efforts.

Messaging

Providing customer incentives, like gift cards, are proven to result in reviews. But don't overlook the impact well-executed organic tactics can have. Before throwing in the towel on non-incentivized review collection, perfect the messaging around why you're asking for reviews.

Give these reviewer-oriented strategies a try:

- **User Value Approach:** If your review request is related to a recent software update or migration, let customers know you want to get things right for their benefit. A better customer experience, a better overall product.

- **Good Samaritan Approach:** If your request follows a Quarterly Business Review, frame messaging around the value you place in candid customer feedback. Communicate that you're invested in all use cases and software users and that you're dedicated to ensuring potential new customers make the right purchasing decisions.

Be truthful about why feedback matters to your company and how customer input can help them personally as users as well as future customers. Paired with a memorable experience and strategic timing, you'll collect a breadth of reviews that will help future customers make better, faster decisions and enable your internal teams to create meaningful, customer-driven change.

Timing

Earlier, we covered customer lifecycle points when buyers are most likely to give feedback. But why do these specific milestones result in the most reviews? The answer's simple. At each point, your product, and any positive experience, are top of mind.

When executed poorly, timing can work against you. If implementation is a cumbersome process or if you've recently been asking a lot of customers (co-marketing, extra meetings, contract back-and-forth, etc.), requesting even more could read as inconsiderate or disrespectful. Put yourself in the mind of your customers. This way, you'll be certain to ask for reviews right when they're most likely to respond.

Action

Clearly communicate how seriously you take reviews and that feedback will be used widely. Highlight review snippets on social media or your website, respond to reviews publicly, or send thank yous to customers who provide feedback, especially if you use this feedback to improve product experience. You'll show reviewers you're not only appreciative,



but that their time spent reviewing drives real value for them and the product they use.

Leveraging Reviews

After turning on your review engine, it's time to make the most of what you've gathered. You can leverage reviews in awareness, pipeline, and revenue-driving activities. The sky's the limit when you have plenty of authentic feedback, but we've put together our best ideas to get things started:

In sales tools

- Pull quotes from reviews and highlight them in sales pitch decks. Consider identifying a quote per segment or persona. Your team can choose the most relevant use case and always have a relatable customer story on hand.
- If you're a G2 customer, create Reference Pages for your sales teams by segment. These can be shared with potential or existing customers whenever they come off sales calls or when asked about case studies.

Pro Tip: Leverage your G2 reviewers as a pool for case studies. Use reviews as a jumping-off point for qualitative studies. Upgraded G2 customers can see if reviewers are open to being references.

On your website

- Highlight reviews on your home page banner, next to your products, or on a testimonial page using G2 widgets.
- Include reviews anywhere you have a demo request form to boost prospect confidence and drive conversion.

On social

- G2 Content showcases your star rating, displays customer reviews, and shows you appreciate customer feedback.
 - If you're feeling creative, work with your team to create a mini social promo plan using reviews. On

a regular cadence, highlight reviews as images. This will build brand equity and encourage more customers to write reviews.

- Enhance your product based on review insights. And then let your network know. Highlight product innovation to demonstrate how your brand invests in customer feedback.

Leveraging reviews can significantly improve your marketing and sales efforts. Once you've started your review engine, collecting fresh content and enhancing how you amplify customer voices will become second nature.

Wrap-Up

Effective, efficient review collection drives value internally and externally. To inspire meaningful growth, create an always-on feedback loop that captures reviews, leverages reviews to create better products, uses reviews to tell your story, and closes new customers. Then, collect more reviews from new customers and keep the review, and conversion, train rolling.

Chapter 1 Highlights

- Reviews provide trust and guide purchasing patterns.
- You can leverage reviews to improve strategy across departments.
- Collect reviews using G2 as a partner, your website, or automatic platforms.
- Messaging and timing dictate successful review collection.
- Sales, your site, and your social presence stand to benefit from reviews.



02

The Positive Side of Negative Reviews

A healthy review mix means more trust and actionable product insights.



The products we buy. The adventures we experience. The food we eat. For almost everything we consume, there's a digital platform available where we can write reviews. Between the leaders in each category (Trip Advisor, Yelp!, and G2) people have left over 885 million combined reviews. Better products, more enjoyable experiences, and tastier meals are all on the other side of reviews.

But what exactly can companies do with not-so-great reviews once they receive them?

We've shown you why reviews are important and how to get them. Now, we'll cover why "negative" reviews, when handled properly, might be the most valuable ones customers leave.

"Negative" reviews, when handled properly, might be the most valuable ones customers leave.

Embrace the Bad

What would you think if you saw a product with only 5 star reviews? Would you believe every single customer had nothing but glowing feedback? Likely not. Because no matter how great a product is, humans are subjective and unique. We all have varying taste, expectations, and opinions.

Your customers are as smart as you are. When they see all 5 star reviews, they become suspicious and distrusting. Is the company paying for reviews? Are they asking their customers to write only positive reviews or 5 star reviews? Are they only asking their best customers for reviews? All these tactics are ill-advised. In fact, **95% of buyers** suspect that companies have censored or fabricated reviews when there are no negative reviews to be found.

Potential customers will trust your product, and your brand, more if you have a healthy review mix. The ideal star rating you should shoot for? Between 4.2 and 4.5. And to get there, you'll need some critical feedback. **82% of buyers** specifically seek out negative reviews when considering purchase decisions.

Sell to the right prospects

Negative reviews empower informed decisions. This may seem bizarre. But bear with us. Prospects can, and should, opt not to purchase if they read something deal-breaking within a review.

We're conditioned to want the chance to talk to any and all potential customers. But giving prospects the opportunity to hop out of the funnel if it's not the right fit saves you time and money. When your team can avoid pursuing prospects that aren't likely to convert, they can focus on engaged prospects instead.

On the other hand, prospects can also decide if the "negative" aspect of a review is something they can deal with. For example, a reviewer might comment that a CRM tool isn't the best fit for their SMB company. Maybe the tool is complex, has a lot of rules and processes in place, and demands too much time from a small team with a ton of other responsibilities. An enterprise-level prospect who reads that review will likely determine it's not applicable to them and could even see the "negative" feedback in a positive light.



Lastly, negative reviews help provide a better product and user experience. You don't know what you don't know. Reviews offer insight into what's working for users, what isn't, what might be missing, or what's making their lives harder. And who knows, if you improve based on feedback, your customers might go back and update their reviews.

What to Do With Negative Reviews

Now that we've embraced the positives of negative reviews, let's talk about what you can actually do with them. Because accepting negative reviews is only the first step. Once you put that mindset into action you'll really begin to see benefits.

Accepting negative reviews is only the first step.

Feedback gold for product teams

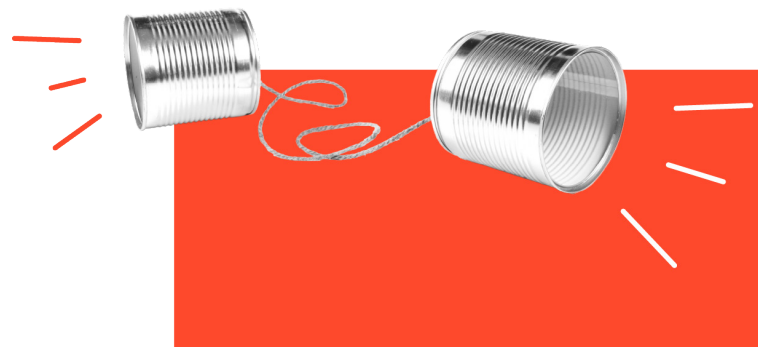
- **Improve User Experience:** If you hear repeat feedback about how an aspect of your product is difficult or confusing to use, it might be time to revisit that action or feature. For example, if users are frustrated when a file fails to upload without an accompanying explanation, an easy fix might be creating an error message detailing what went wrong. Or if you're getting comments that your tool is difficult for customers with disabilities to use, you could bring in an accessibility consultant to get your product up to [ADA](#) (or your local equivalent) compliance.
- **Improve Your Product & Build Out Your Roadmap:** Often in reviews, users provide an unofficial wishlist of features that'd make their lives easier. It could be something your competitor offers and you don't or something completely

new. Track customer input and decide if it's worth adding to your roadmap. Customers get extremely excited about new features they specifically asked for.

- **Squash Bugs:** You probably have a process in place for users to report bugs and it probably isn't via reviews. But not everyone is going to know or remember or have the time to figure out what your process is. So by staying on top of reviews, you'll have another avenue to learn about bugs. Listen to the feedback, find the bug, and then respond with a thank you for reporting and send an update when the bug was/will be fixed.

Free market research

- **Improve Your Messaging:** Different groups of people speak differently, use different cultural references and diction. When prospects feel your messaging is unrelatable, they'll assume you can't solve their unique problems. Examining the way customers write reviews can uncover new words or phrases your target audience uses on a regular basis, a pain point you weren't aware of, or a use case you had yet to consider. Equipped with this inside information, you can craft more effective messaging.
- **Enhance Buying Experience:** Reviews aren't always about the product. Frequently, the buying experience is just as important to customer feedback. If reviewers feel misled about product features and comment saying as much, you can use this information to solve any points of disconnect during your buyer journey.





User reviews are a good way to audit marketing materials, web copy, and sales scripts. Cut out buzzwords and make sure your messaging, and resulting buying experience, is smooth and straightforward.

- **A Powerful Marketing Tool:** Showcasing negative reviews about major issues you've since fixed can be a strategic marketing play. Dominos experienced **success** with this exact strategy. In **advertisements**, they used direct quotes from negative reviews. Their CEO owned up to these points for improvement, explained how they were making changes, and used marketing to demonstrate their promise was being fulfilled. Dominos took reviews seriously and provided a better experience. Back up your marketing with action and show your customers how they'll benefit.

Create answers to objections

- **Build Trust with Prospects:** Use negative reviews to prep your sales team. Build trust right off the bat by being ready to answer the tough questions. Outfit your sales reps with talking points about common issues identified in reviews. Acknowledge if issues exist or did exist, how you have or will address problems, and when issues were or will be resolved. Own critical feedback. Prove you're being proactive and your brand perception and sales numbers will benefit.
- **Get Ahead of Churn:** We've all heard it before. Getting a new customer is 5x more expensive than retaining one. Early review warning signs can help you mitigate churn risk. Keep your customer success team in the loop when reviews come in from their customers. If there's concerning review content that could impact renewal, schedule time to connect with the customer. This way, you can address the problem head-on and save the account. You might even inspire the customer to amend their review.

Wrap-Up

At first glance, negative reviews can sting. But once you look at the bigger picture and implement the strategies we've discussed, negative reviews will prove to be more helpful than harmful. Critical feedback facilitates product improvements, productive customer dialogue, and trust with new and existing buyers alike.

Chapter 2 Highlights

- Consumers trust healthy review mixes.
- Negative reviews remove disinterested buyers from the sales funnel.
- Use critical feedback to improve your product and experience.
- Customer criticism can be leveraged to fix bugs and improve messaging.
- Avoid churn and build trust by being aware of, and fixing, customer pain points.



03

The Top 3 Trends in B2B Reviews

*Keep your review strategy cutting edge
and community-focused.*



At the center of every successful tech company is one core principle: disruption. Whether it's introducing a delivery method, or data model, or feature no one has seen before, finding new ways to solve problems, create connections, and build trust drives success. But without validation, feedback, and communication, new ideas that should set you apart from competitors are only that. Ideas.

B2C companies have turned reviews into brand propelling, revenue generating engines for some time. Most B2B companies would do anything to form similar growth-fueling strategies. But B2B software reviews, relative to the industry, are still in an infancy stage.

Why hasn't tech followed the B2C review model? Up until this point, B2B's relationship with customer reviews has been limited to stripped down customer email requests. "Happy with our product? Leave a review on G2.com!" This won't cut it. Any UGC strategy should include review collection and evangelizing. Simple as that.

But if this is the new standard, what's next for B2B reviews? We'll show you exactly what's on the horizon so you can apply these principles to maximize your current UGC strategy's returns.

1. Bringing B2C Into B2B

Reviews are everywhere, from clothes to food to software. And despite there being over 1.1 million B2B software reviews on G2.com alone, the majority of other online reviews are for B2C products and services.

But B2C companies have been collecting reviews far longer than they've been online. Remember customer service calls after your cable was installed, asking for feedback? Remember filling out a note card at the doctor's office after a visit? Remember calling the number at the bottom of your receipt,

or on the back of a truck, to "let them know how they're doing?" B2C has long known the value of customer feedback and has refined and perfected review collection, use, and distribution. It's time we look at their success.

What can B2B learn from B2C?

B2B companies should prioritize user experience when collecting reviews. Trucking companies likely don't rely on back-of-truck stickers for the bulk of their reviews. But what better way to get honest, accurate, consistent feedback than meeting reviewers exactly where they are, when they're there?

What better way to get honest, accurate, consistent feedback than meeting reviewers exactly where they are, when they're there?

The truth is, no matter how good (or bad) an experience someone has with your service or product, the more you ask of them or the longer you wait between experiences to solicit feedback, the less likely you're going to get an accurate account. Or even any account at all. Just because your software isn't a big rig, doesn't mean you can't meet your customers where they are. Build your review collection engine around the needs of your customers to optimize the quality and quantity of the feedback you get.

Where exactly are your customers? They're in your application, doing their day-to-day work. They're in their email, doing their best to get to inbox-zero. They're on your website, looking at what they can do next. They're using your platform to automate their next campaign.

With in-app review collection, you can ask customers to leave reviews directly in your application. With in-email review forms, your customers don't have to leave their inbox to write reviews. With web content management tools like Drupal, you can add a review widget to your website. And with customer experience tools, you can build rules and moments that flow right into your app, pairing right alongside users as they experience your product live. You can even automate the process to ask your customers to update their reviews, allowing you to spend more time building a better product and providing prospects with recent, relevant information.

By meeting customers where they are, you'll collect more high-quality content through a seamless experience (that takes data-privacy into account). A win-win all around.



2. Building a Community

People love to feel like they're a part of something. Whether it's as simple as a friend group or something larger like a coalition to combat climate change, humans crave community. Building a community requires common goals, topics, interests, and purpose. And all this is bound by a location (physical or digital) in which the community meets.

For B2B software, it makes sense to create community online, and reviews can be the perfect entry point. Reviews allow people to talk about their challenges, needs, and ideas. Users can connect on how tools like yours help alleviate issues, solve pain points, and support them and their work. When you respond to customer reviews, you join that conversation, showing your users you care about them. Engaging and building a community in this way results in more trust amongst both customers and prospects.

On G2.com, we've added another layer to community construction: discussions. With discussions, community members can start conversations, solve problems, build relationships, and work together with people from similar backgrounds, industries, or career paths.

The more people interact within your community, the stronger the emotional connection they'll feel toward your brand and products. Communities allow participants to help each other troubleshoot, build best practices, and share ideas on how to get the most out of your tool. If you invest in community building, you'll quickly have an extension of your organization that drives ROI.



3. The Future of UGC is Reviews

While review optimization may still be in its infancy in B2B, there's certainly no shortage of software companies scrambling for as much UGC as they can get their hands on. Case studies, social mentions and retweets, and video testimonials all are worth their weight in gold to any B2B marketer. But in the same breath, marketers will tell you how challenging it is to actually collect them.

Sure, a happy customer may say anecdotally on a call how much they love your sales team and product functionality, but getting clearance from their legal team to use that company's likeness, logo, and direct quote in a promotional video is a tall order. And even if you do get the green light, the back-and-forth of collection, editing, approval, content creation, and even ownership is extremely time-consuming and resource-heavy.

Reviews are the UGC hack only the savviest companies have caught onto. And for B2B, G2 has created a well-oiled, UGC collection and distribution machine you can put to use.

Reviews as case studies

Looking to capture customer stories for a case study? Run a G2 review campaign. Not only will your customer share honestly, but they'll do it publicly, on a website that drives over 6 million monthly views. Want to share that review with prospective clients? No problem. G2 Reference Pages allow you to cherry pick which reviews make the most sense for the audience you're targeting so you can curate a relevant case study (or collection of case studies) on the fly — no approval, creative, or content writers needed.

Reviews as social interaction

Looking to build your brand through organic online interaction? Respond to reviews and discussions. It's hard work getting your customers to comment on social media, so why not meet them where they already are: your product profile. Your most

engaged customers and prospects are already waiting for you to help them solve challenges, answer questions, and get the most value out of your product and your brand right on G2.com.

Reviews as video testimonials

Looking to leverage the most powerful medium to tell your customer stories? Encourage your customers to leave video reviews on your G2 product profile. There is nothing more resource-demanding than video — unless it's done for you! By running a video review campaign, you're technically asking less of your customers than a regular 44-point question review, but in exchange, you're getting a valuable, evergreen customer testimonial asset to use in marketing and sales materials forever.

Wrap-Up

Reviews are a building block for any company's long-term success. That's not changing any time soon. But the way we gather reviews? We must constantly evolve to keep up with where and how customers want to find and leave reviews. Who knows where reviews will go next? G2 is here to keep you in the know so you can get the most out of your community and reviews to outpace the competition.

Chapter 3 Highlights

- B2B companies can learn from time-tested B2C review strategies.
- Whether it's in-app, in email, or on your website, meet customers where they are.
- Cultivate community to strengthen trust and drive ROI.
- G2 can help you put reviews to use as social tools, video testimonials, and case studies.



Reviews, ROI, and Real Growth

Purchase journeys have changed. Reviews keep you moving forward.

Whoever thought a subject as seemingly simple as reviews could be so nuanced? After reading this guide, you now wield a strong understanding of why reviews matter. You know how to collect reviews and how to leverage them (even the negative ones) into sales, product improvement, and user experience refinement. You've uncovered the importance of trust and community. And you're ready to greet future trends and stay ahead of the competition.

What next?

Time to begin collecting reviews and putting them to work. Still not sure where to start? G2 review experts are here to help, no matter the question, big or small. You can also always head to our [Learn Hub](#) for more resources on reviews and everything B2B technology.

G2 isn't only the place to buy software. Or just the place to sell software. We're the place for software insights. And we're happy to share our know-how with you whenever you need it.

[Learn More](#)