



2022 State of Reviews

Changes in Consumer
Buying Behaviour





Key Takeaways

Online reviews are a gateway between your online store and the consumer. They're the first port of call for many of today's online shoppers, used to determine whether what you offer matches up to their increasingly high demands. In a world where customer experience is key, reviews play an influential role in many purchase decisions. Brands that intend to stay competitive need to take note, and put key strategies in place to drive their online reputation.

This survey was conducted by Hotjar survey audiences 9th Jan 2022.
Audiences surveyed included 2631 consumers in the UK (age 18-99+), as well as 155 SMB business leaders in the UK, US & Australia

1

UK consumers are increasingly reliant on online reviews to inform their buying decisions.

2

Alongside a good star rating, customers look for quality and consistency in review content, with responses from the business.

3

Customers are more likely to read negative reviews than 5 star ones, responding proactively will be key.

4

Merchants need to encourage reviews with a frictionless, customer focused approach.

5

Merchants need to take control of their online reputation with effective management strategies.



Authentic reviews play a key role in customer acquisition & retention.

When it comes to reviews, consumer behaviour has shifted, and a five star rating on its own is no longer enough to impress. Customers are now approaching feedback with a critical eye, checking for authenticity, relevance and consistency. They expect quality reviews from verified sources that give real insight into a business, its products and/or services.

BOXRAW

4.9 ★★★★★

4,129 Reviews

Bloom & Wild

4.8 ★★★★★

55k Reviews

Skiddle

4.6 ★★★★★

10k Reviews



94% of UK consumers say reviews are influential in some way when making a purchase decision.

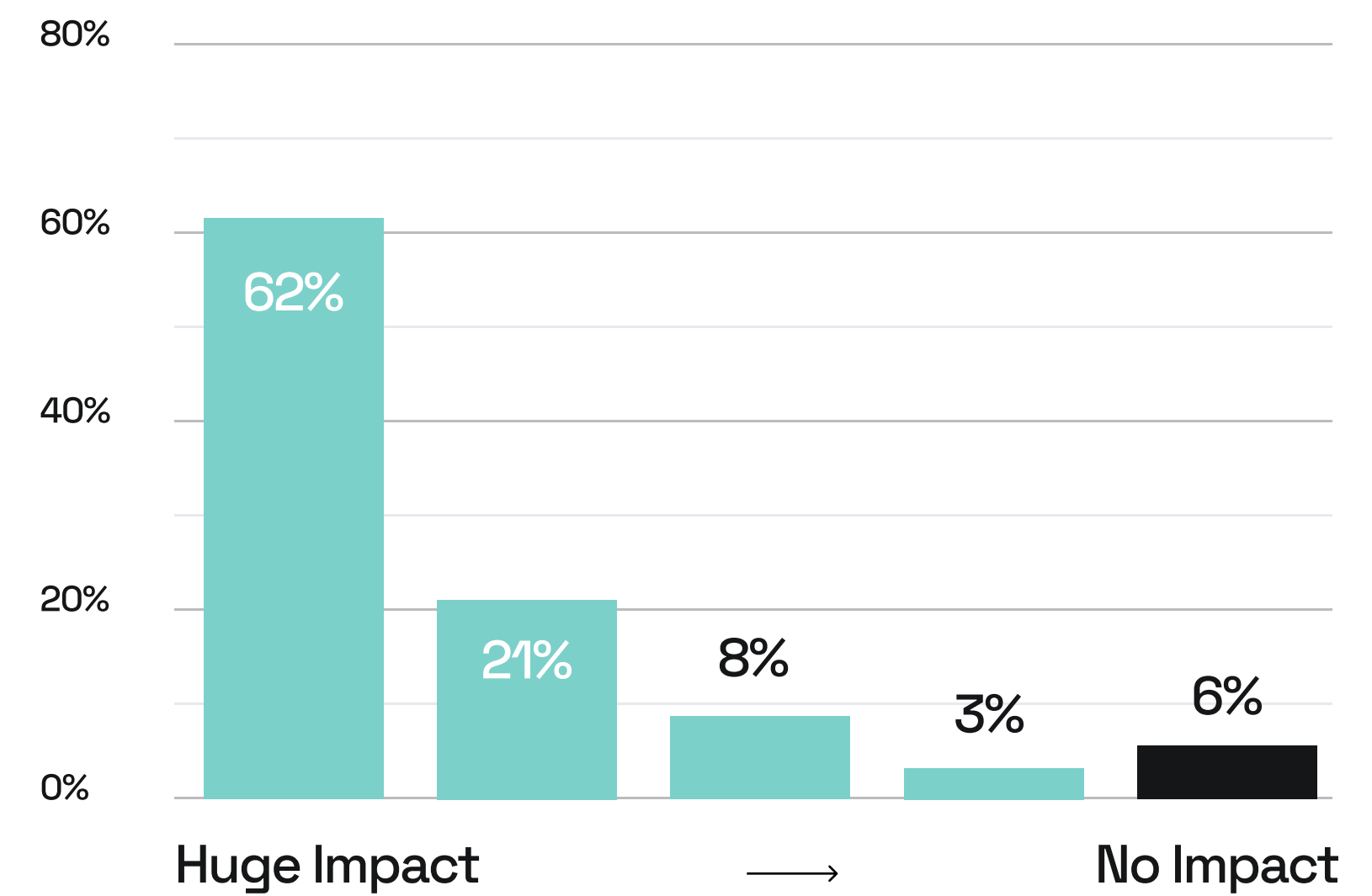


For 62% of consumers surveyed, reviews play a big role when it comes to finding online stores.



By contrast, only 6% claim reviews have no bearing on purchase decision

How big of a role do online reviews play in your buying decisions?









The Importance of Reviews

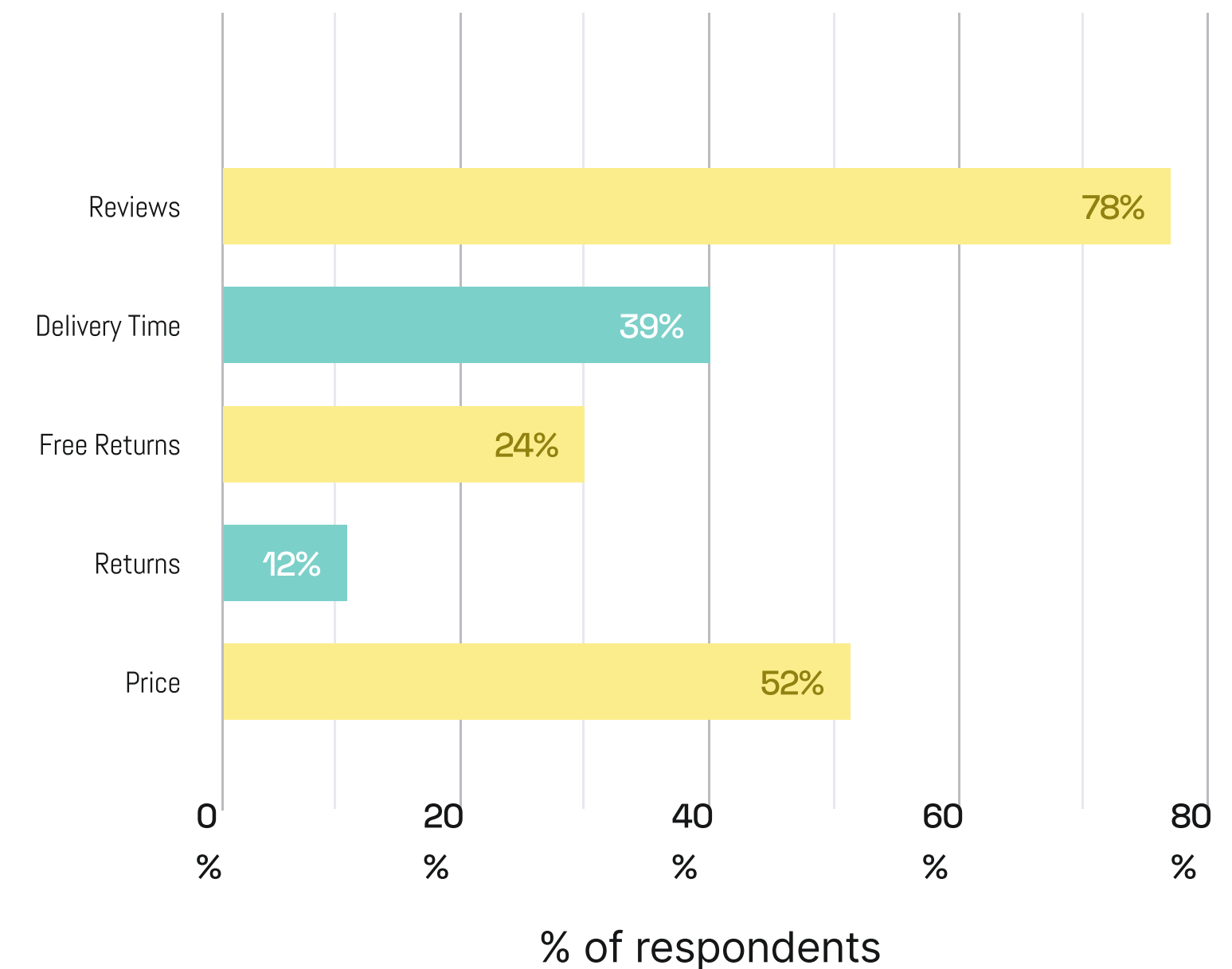
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When choosing a new online store to engage with, UK consumers consider the following as most influential:

-  Reviews (40%)
-  Delivery Time (20%)
-  Free Returns (13%)
-  Price (27%)

Based on these stats, reviews are more impactful than price, and **2x more** impactful than fulfillment.

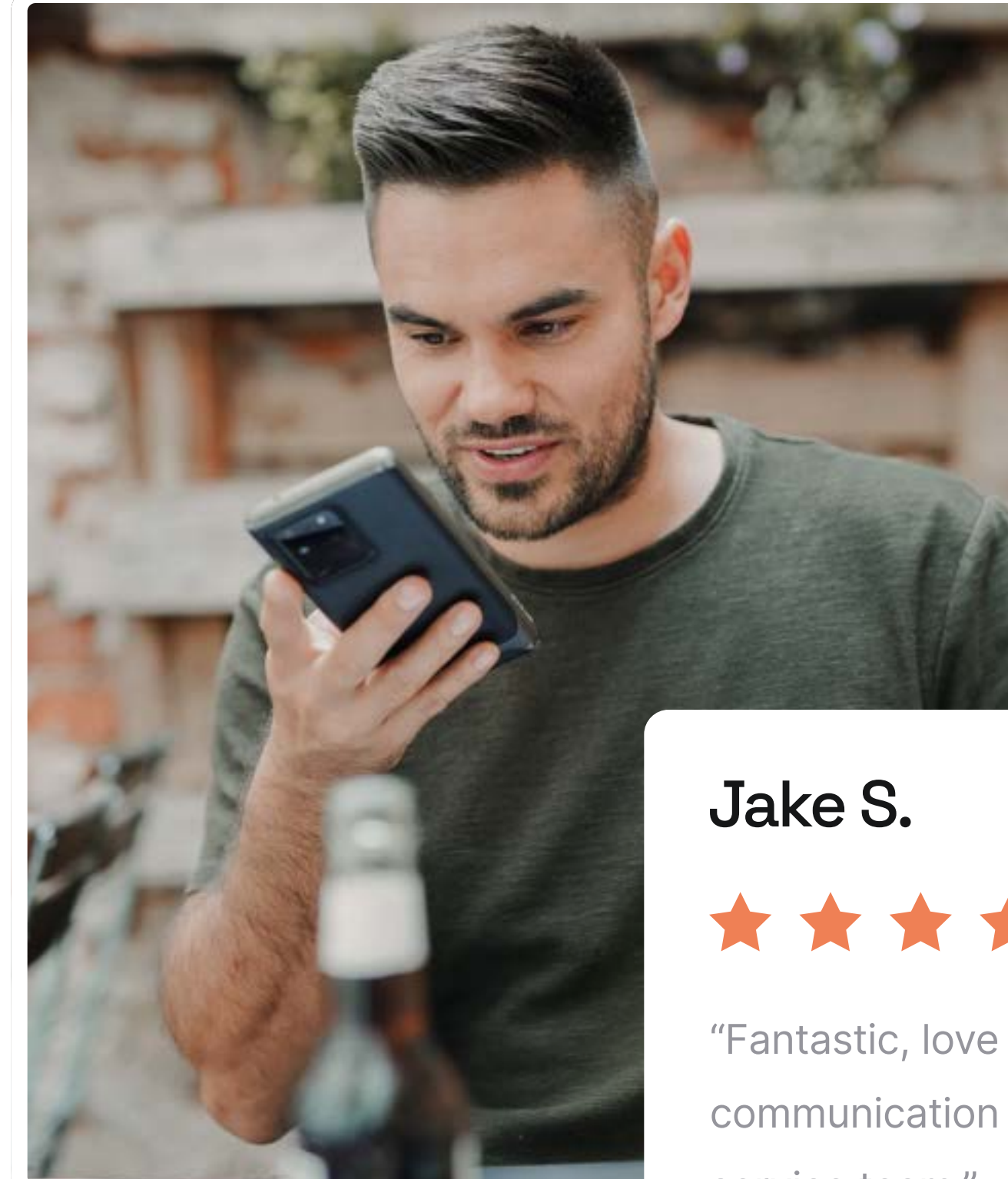
What do you consider most influential when selecting an online store? (choose three top factors)





Over half of all consumers regularly refer to online reviews.

- 18% have done so in the last **24 hours**
- 19% have done so in the **3 days**
- 25% have done so in the **last week**
- 21% have done so in the **last month**
- 17% have done so in the **last year**



Jake S.

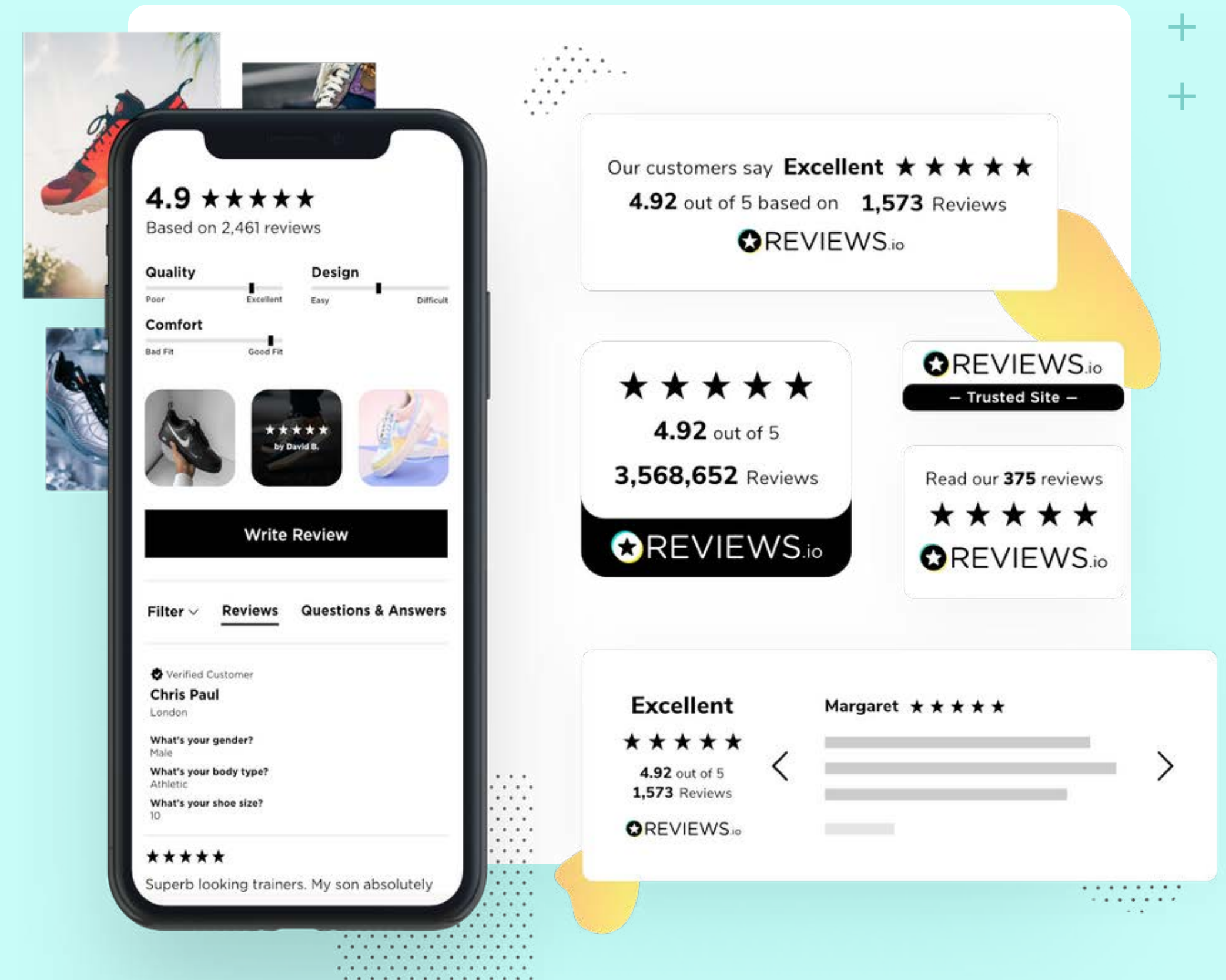


"Fantastic, love the spa and fabulous communication with the customer service team."



51%

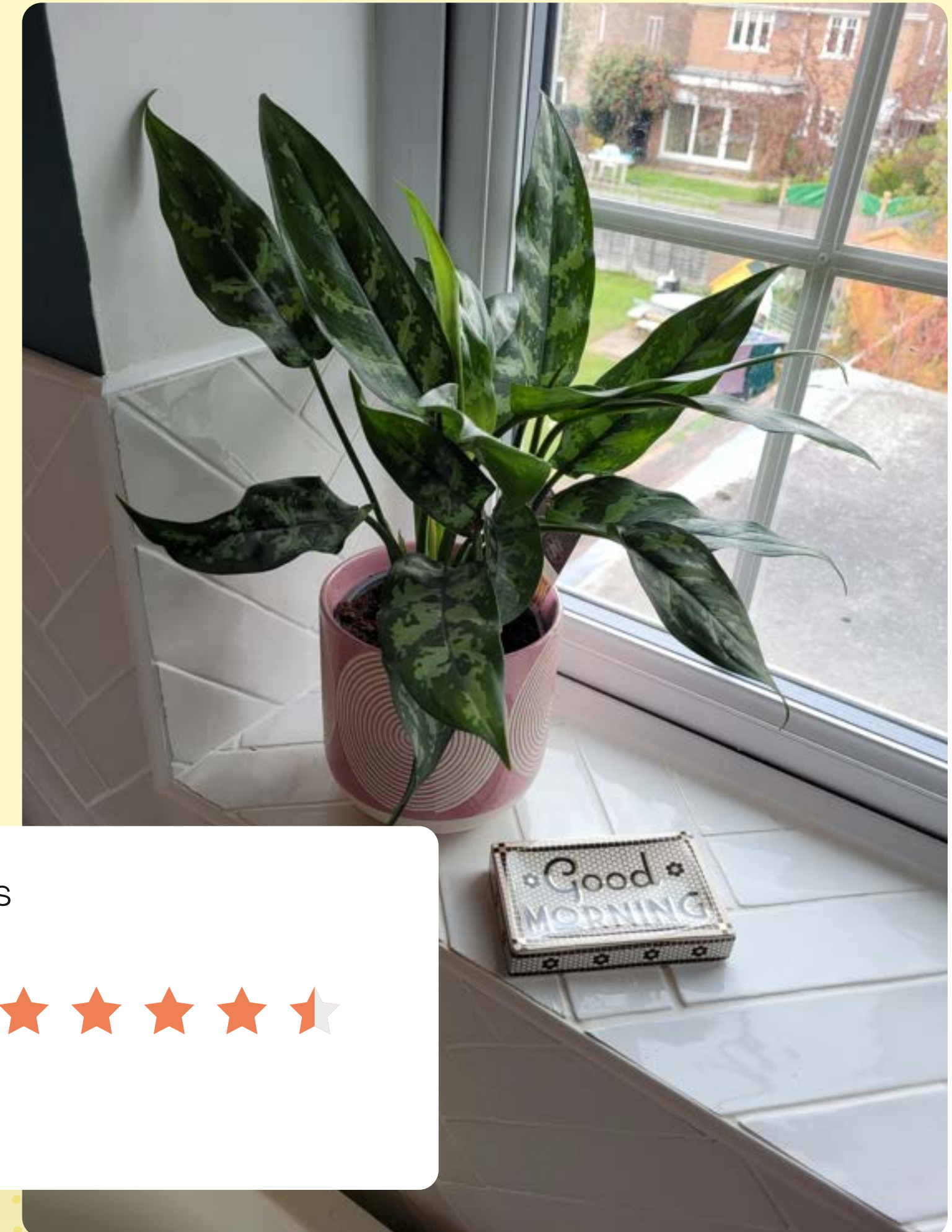
of UK consumers admit to checking online reviews whilst inside a retail store.





For consumers, it's about far more than a five star rating.

Today's savvy consumers no longer trust online stores on face value. They look for social proof before they commit, and base their purchase decisions on the experience of others. Not only that, the stats show customer feedback has become a driving force in discoverability, with more UK consumers than ever before engaging with new brands based on ratings and reviews.



Oliver Bonas

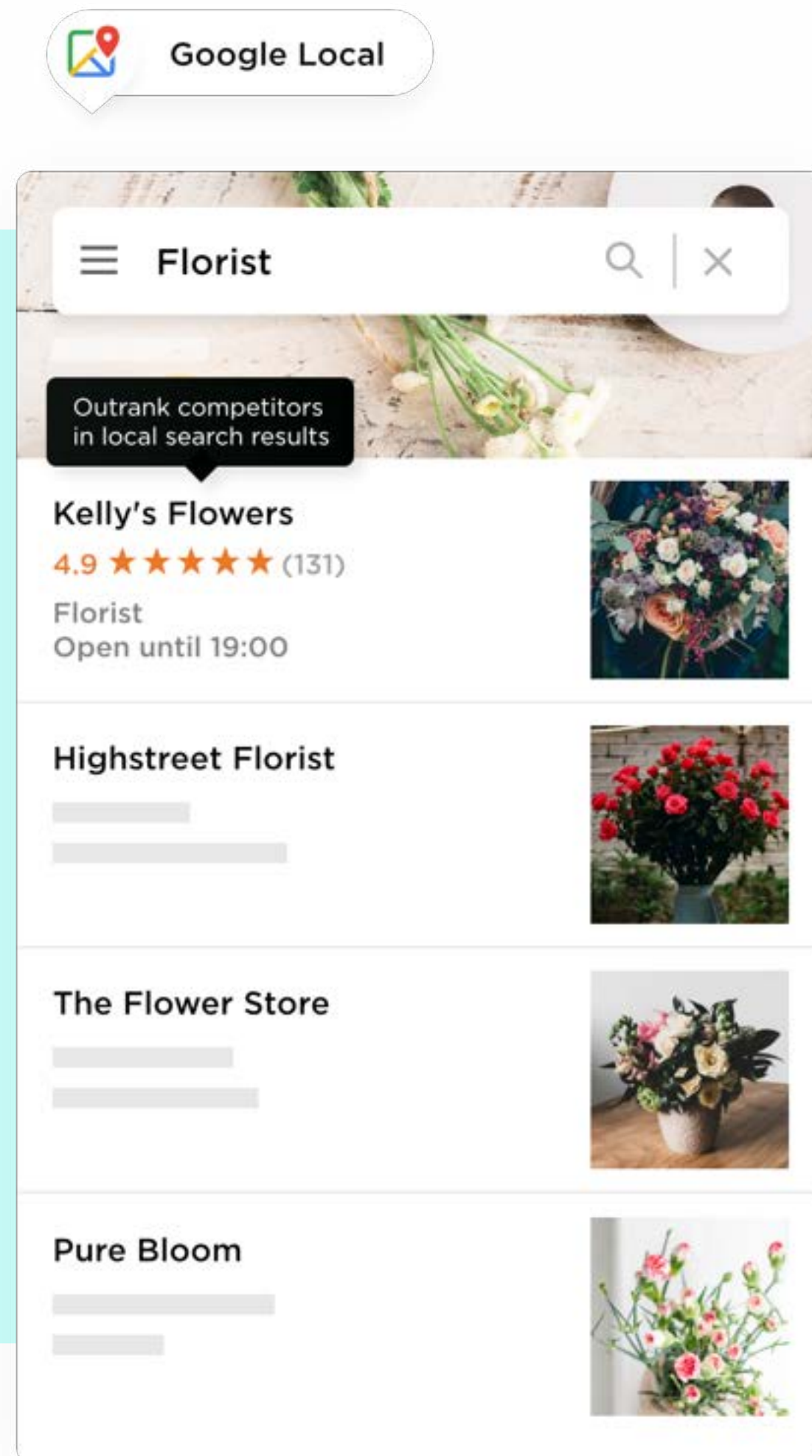
4.7 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

49k Reviews



Review Behavior and Expectations

9



Though it's only one part of a bigger picture for the consumer, your average star rating still matters.

68% of consumers surveyed said they look for an average 4 star rating before engaging with an online store.

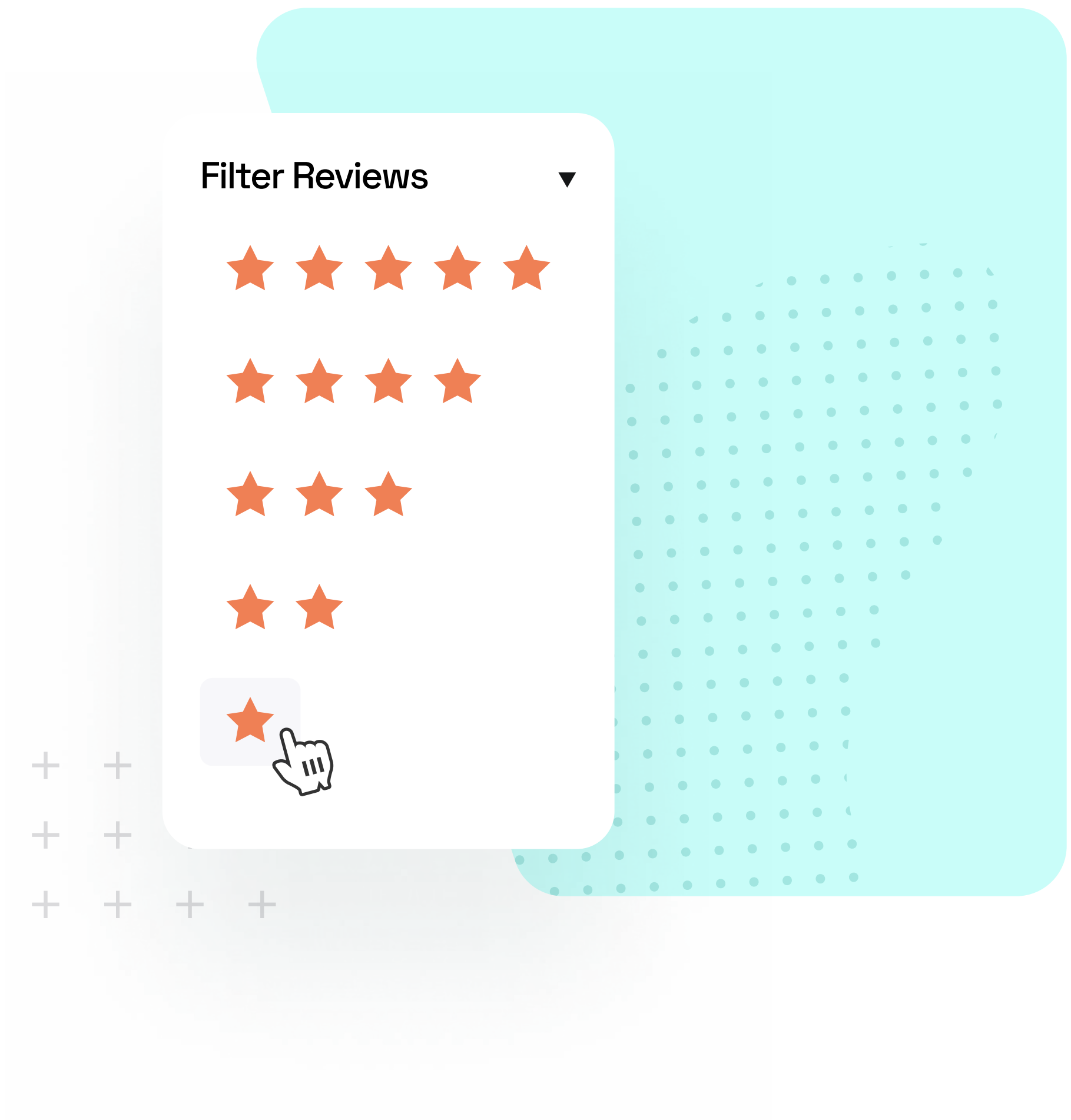
For businesses with 1 and 2 star average ratings, prospects are low, with only 3% of consumers willing to engage.



Consumers want a balanced view, and are 5x more likely to filter for 1 star than 5 star reviews.

Stats show that consumers don't trust a perfect star rating, and actively seek out negative reviews for added credibility and an indication of how businesses respond to customer dissatisfaction.

Embrace the negative review and respond as best as one could





On average, consumers see a **4** star rating as a minimum requirement before they consider a brand's products or services.



81%

of consumers at least somewhat agree that in order for reviews to be influential, they must be recent and contain relevant information.

"Relevancy and recency are important factors in review influence"

68%

of consumers at least somewhat agree that a high rating can only be trusted when backed up with review quantity.

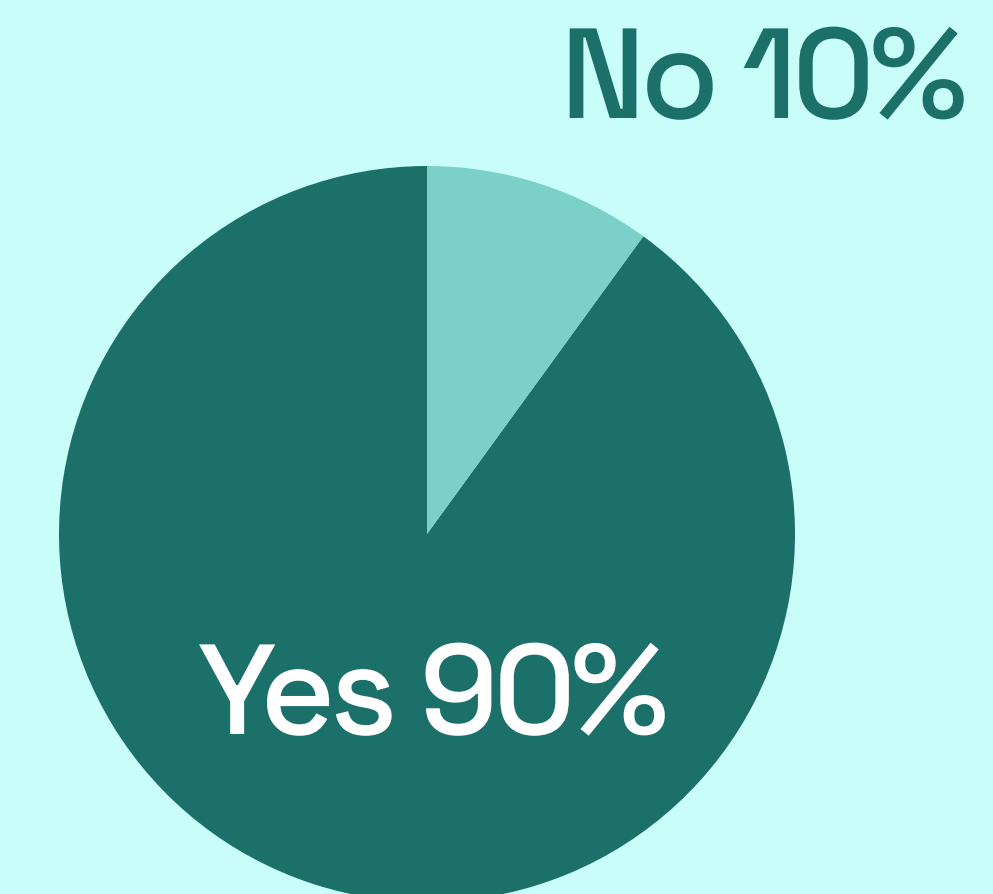
"A high rating needs a high quantity of reviews to be believable"



How a business responds to reviews matters, with 90% of consumers saying they read a brands response to negative feedback

The way reviews are handled, in particular negative reviews, gives consumers a good indication of how they're likely to be treated. Merchants that take a proactive, customer focused approach can actually turn a negative into a positive in the eyes of the consumer.

Do you read replies to negative reviews ?



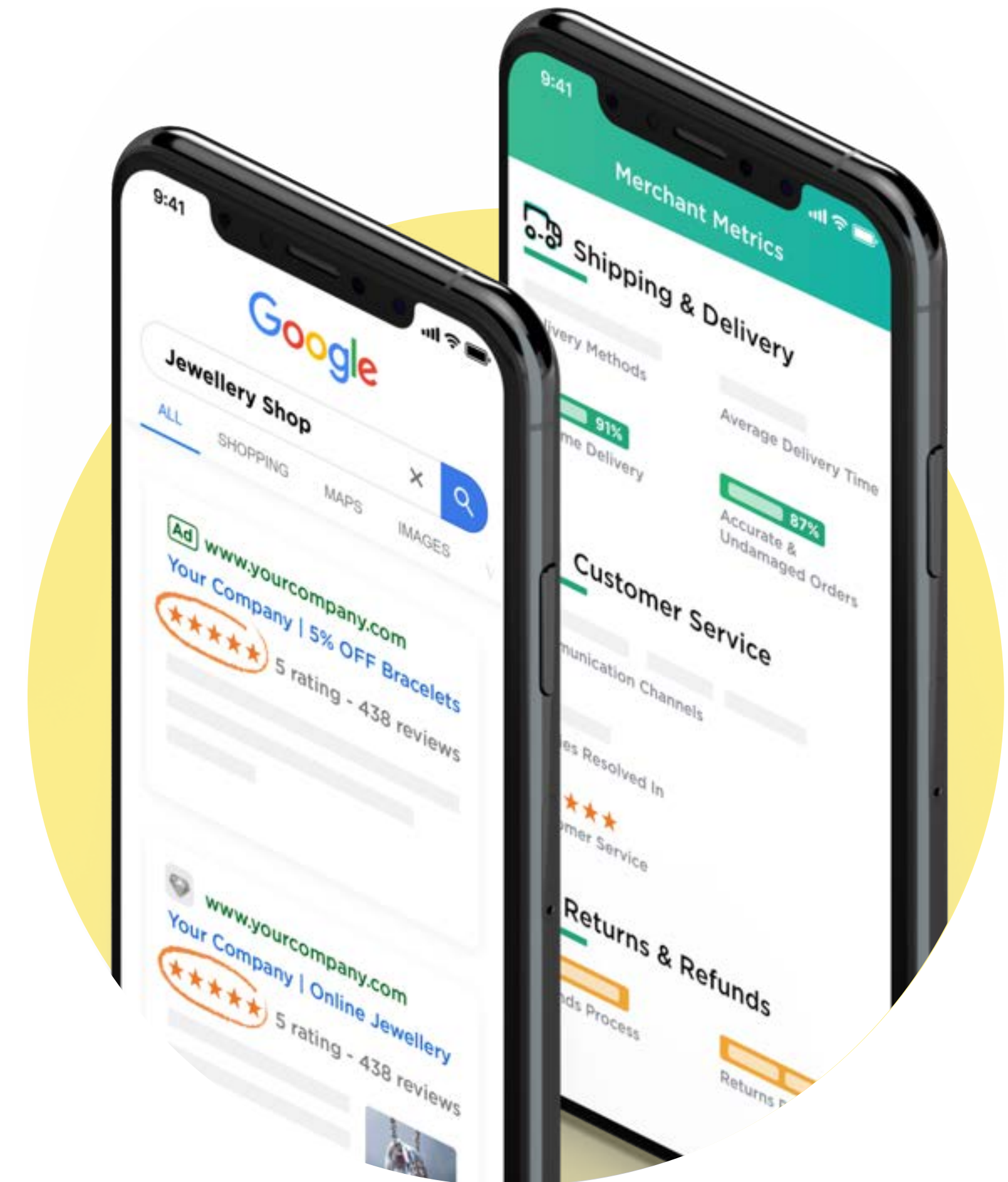


Consumers use multiple channels to research new businesses, but Google remains top of the pack.

Which sites are you looking to for reviews that will help you make a purchase decision?

The buyer journey primarily starts with the search engine giant, with 75% of consumers turning to Google for new business discovery, followed by 36% making use of social media.

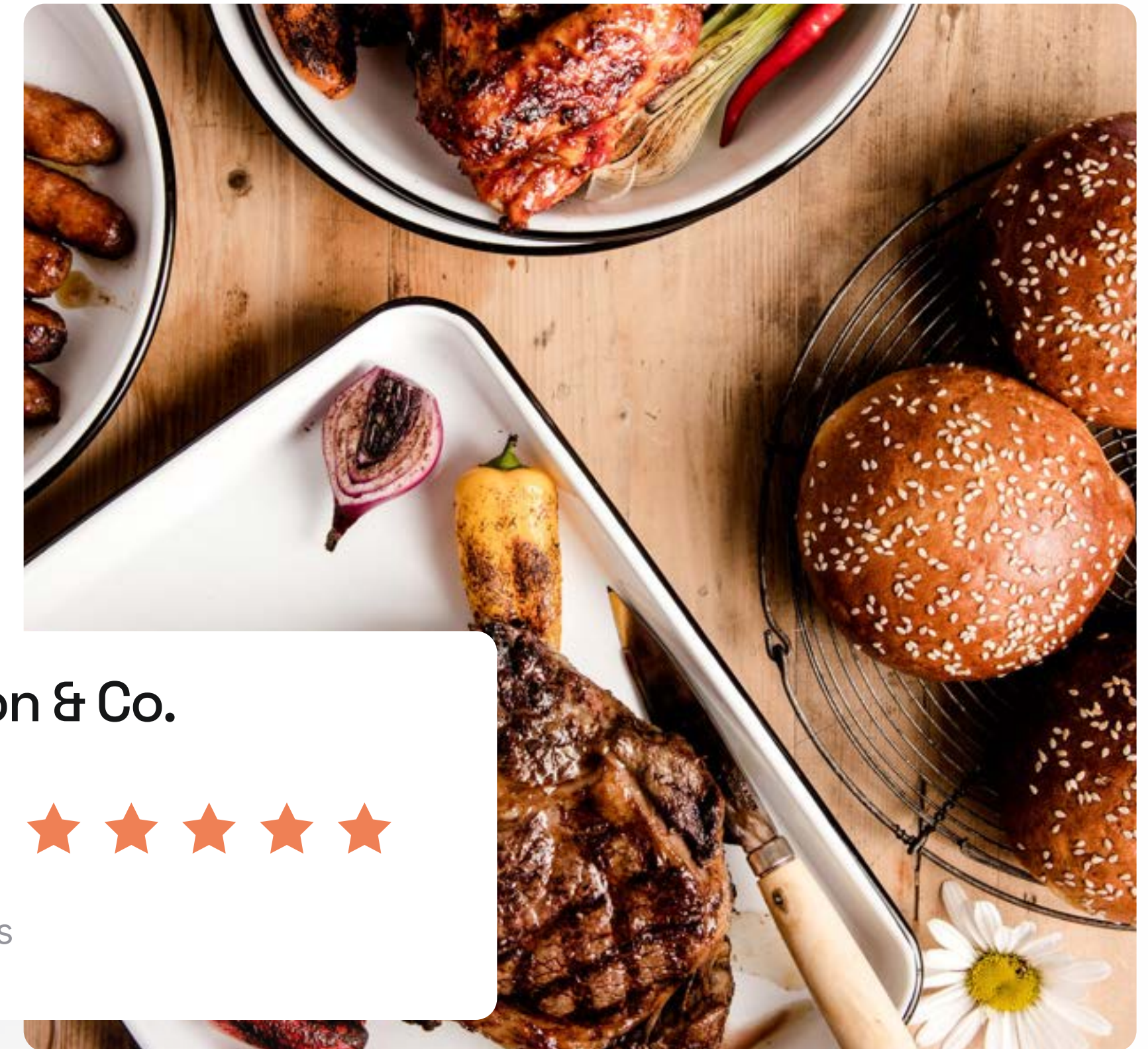
For brands, this makes working with a Google licensed review partner a top priority, as well as one that supports full online reputation management across social channels and third party collection sites.





Post COVID-19, businesses have an opportunity to win new customers online if they cater to the shift in consumer expectations.

The pandemic has had a continued impact on consumer behaviour, and the customer experience is now more important than ever before. Businesses like Farmison & Co that have adapted to the needs of an increasingly demanding market, and have social proof to back it up by way of reviews, stand to outstrip competitors that have stood still.

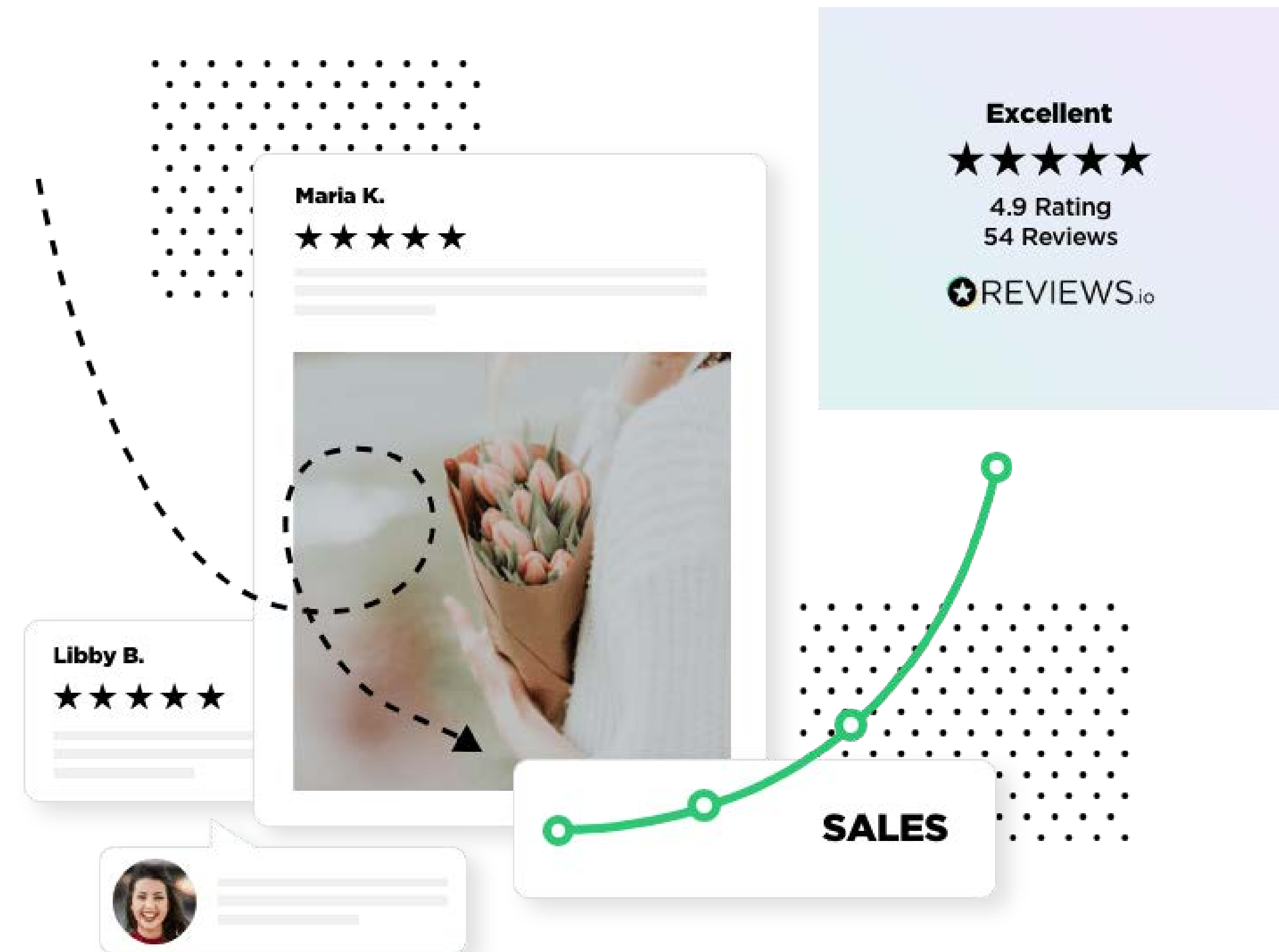




What are the top 3 most important things you look for in online business reviews?

Though expectations have changed, consumers still look for common themes in review content:

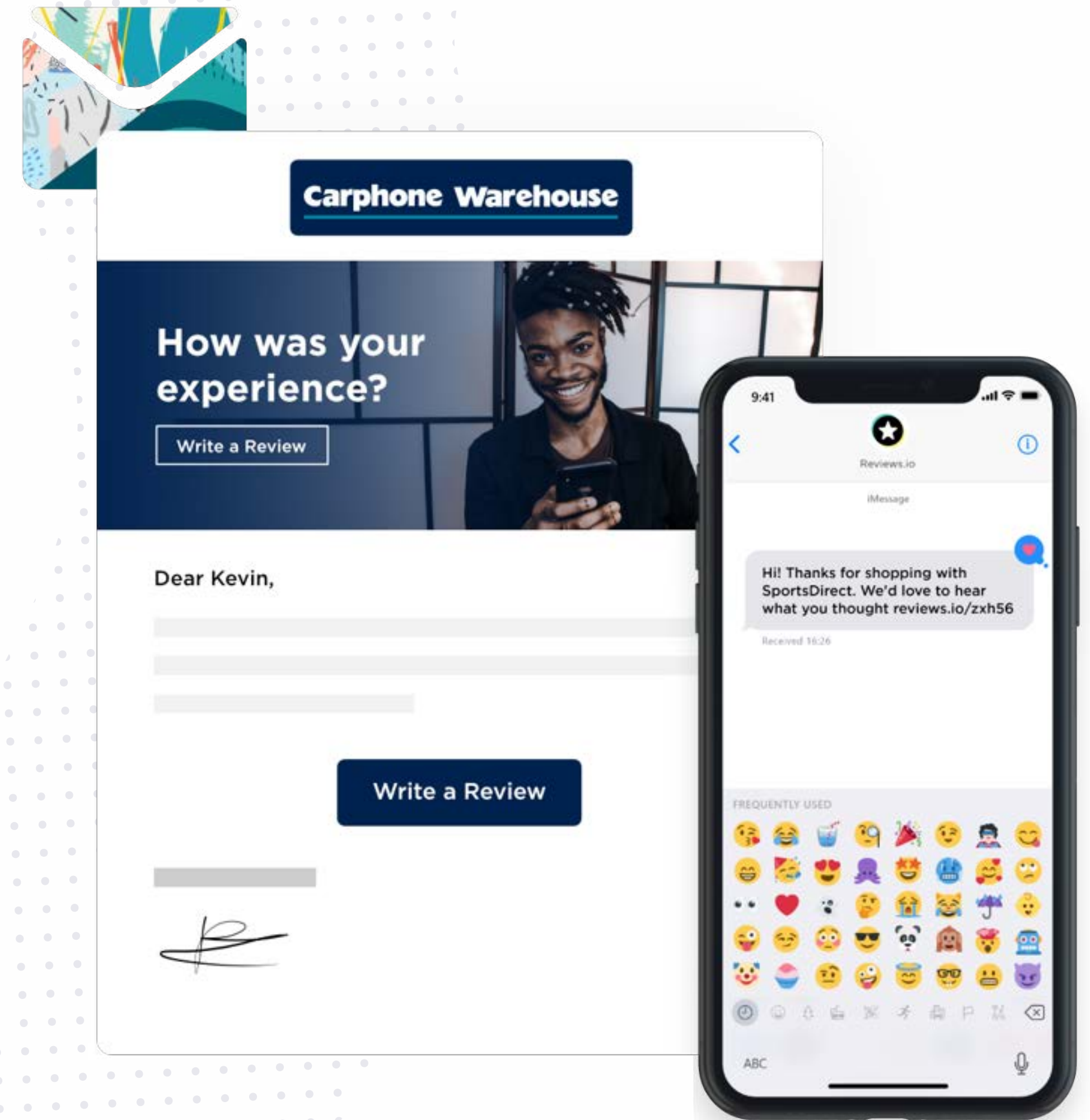
- € Good Prices
- 😊 Good Customer Service
- ✓ Quality of Service or Products





When it comes to leaving reviews, consumers need a gentle nudge in the right direction.

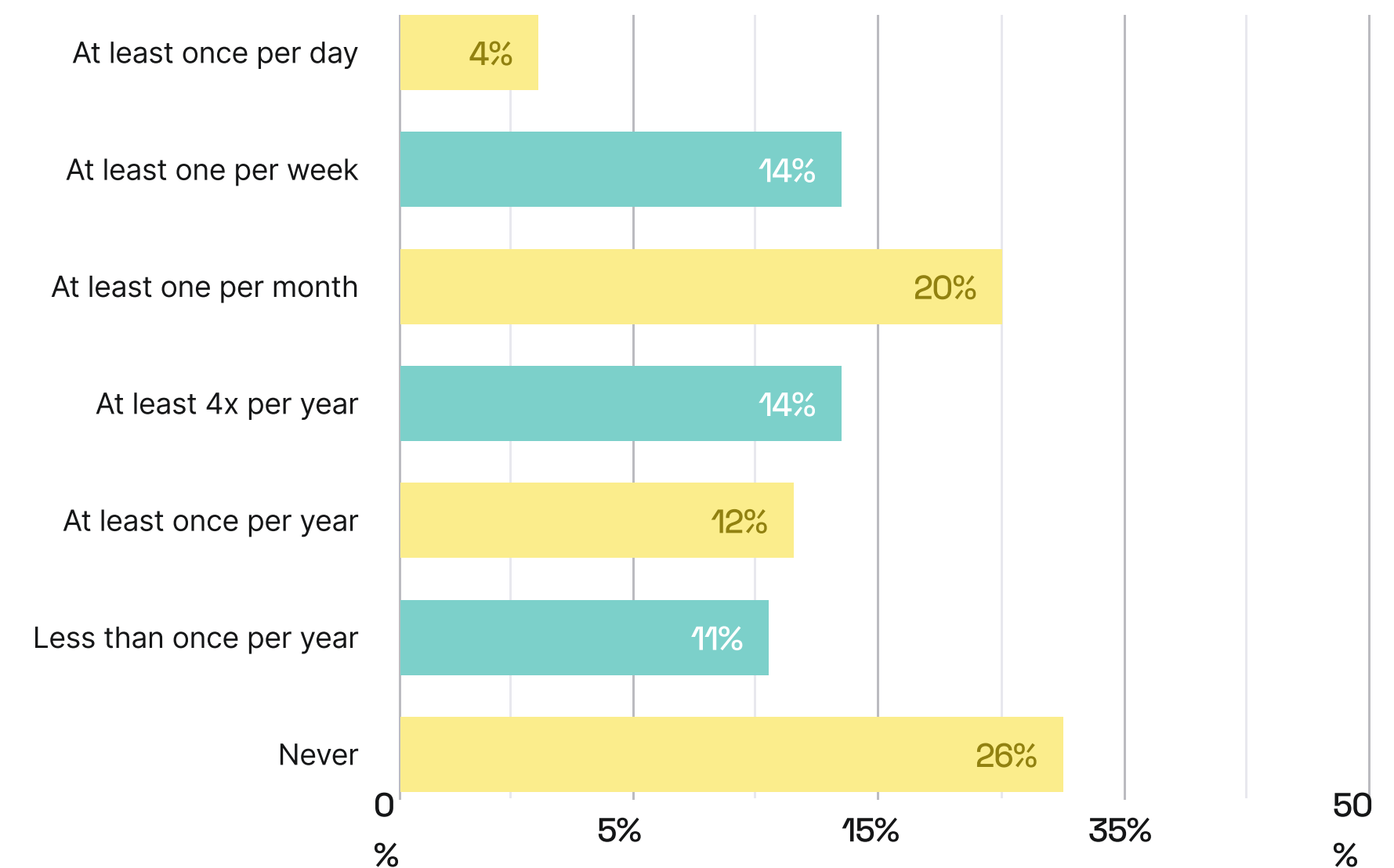
Whilst online reviews are a hugely influential part of the buyer journey, the average customer is unlikely to leave feedback without encouragement. When they do so, it's typically off the back of a bad experience. This means businesses need to focus on an effective review collection strategy, removing any friction from the process and using various methods to prompt consumer engagement.





Over half of consumers admit to only leaving online reviews four times a year or less. Out of those, **26%** have never left a review at all.

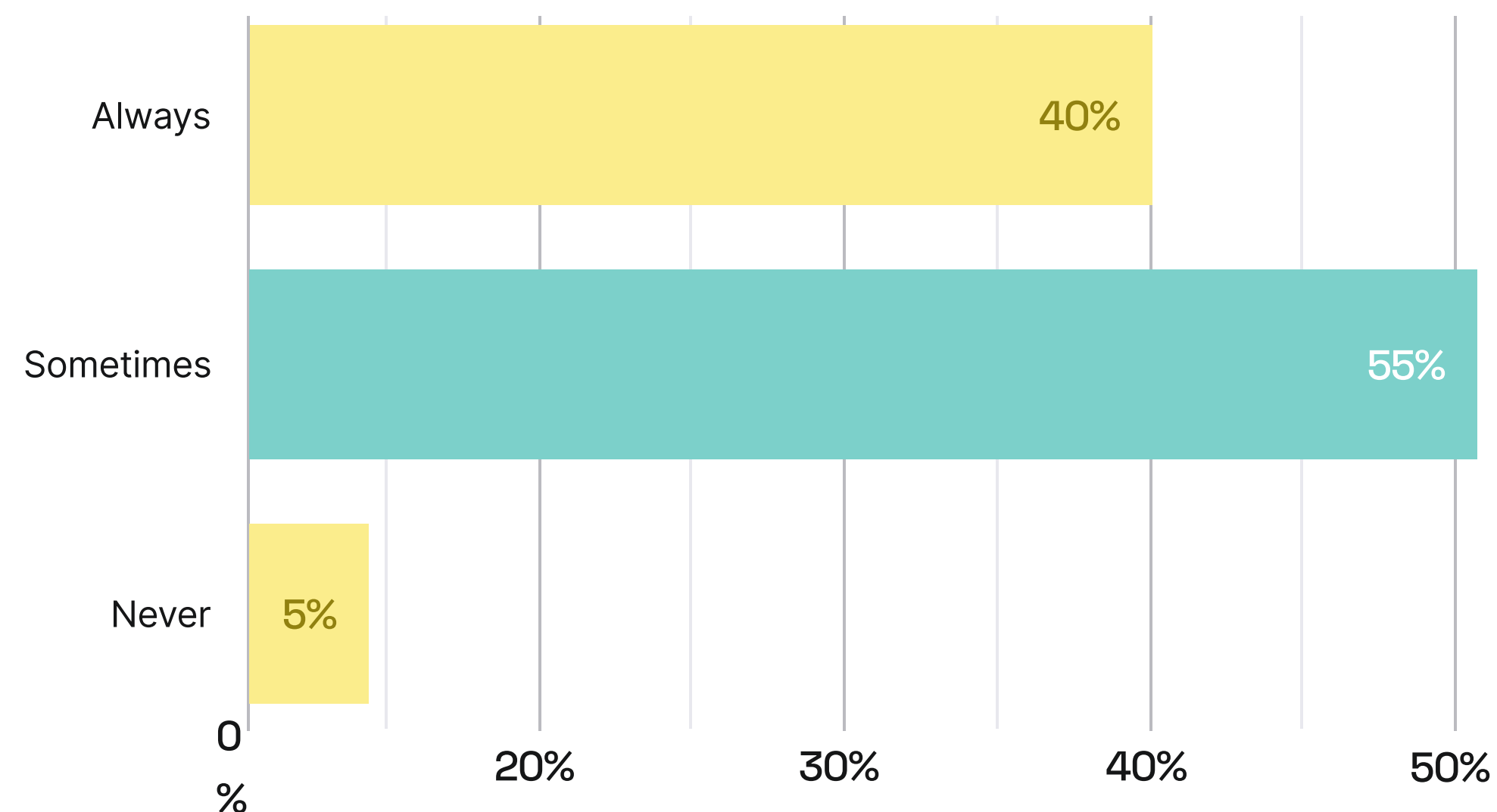
On average, how frequently do you leave an online review?





Merchants that actively encourage reviews see a greater return. Based on a positive experience, only **5%** of consumers say they never leave reviews.

After a positive experience with an online store, how likely are you to leave a review?





Stats prove that SMS review invites
are an effective method of
collection.



Email Conversion

4.3%

SMS Conversion

18.2%

Based on a global average with
REVIEWS.io customers

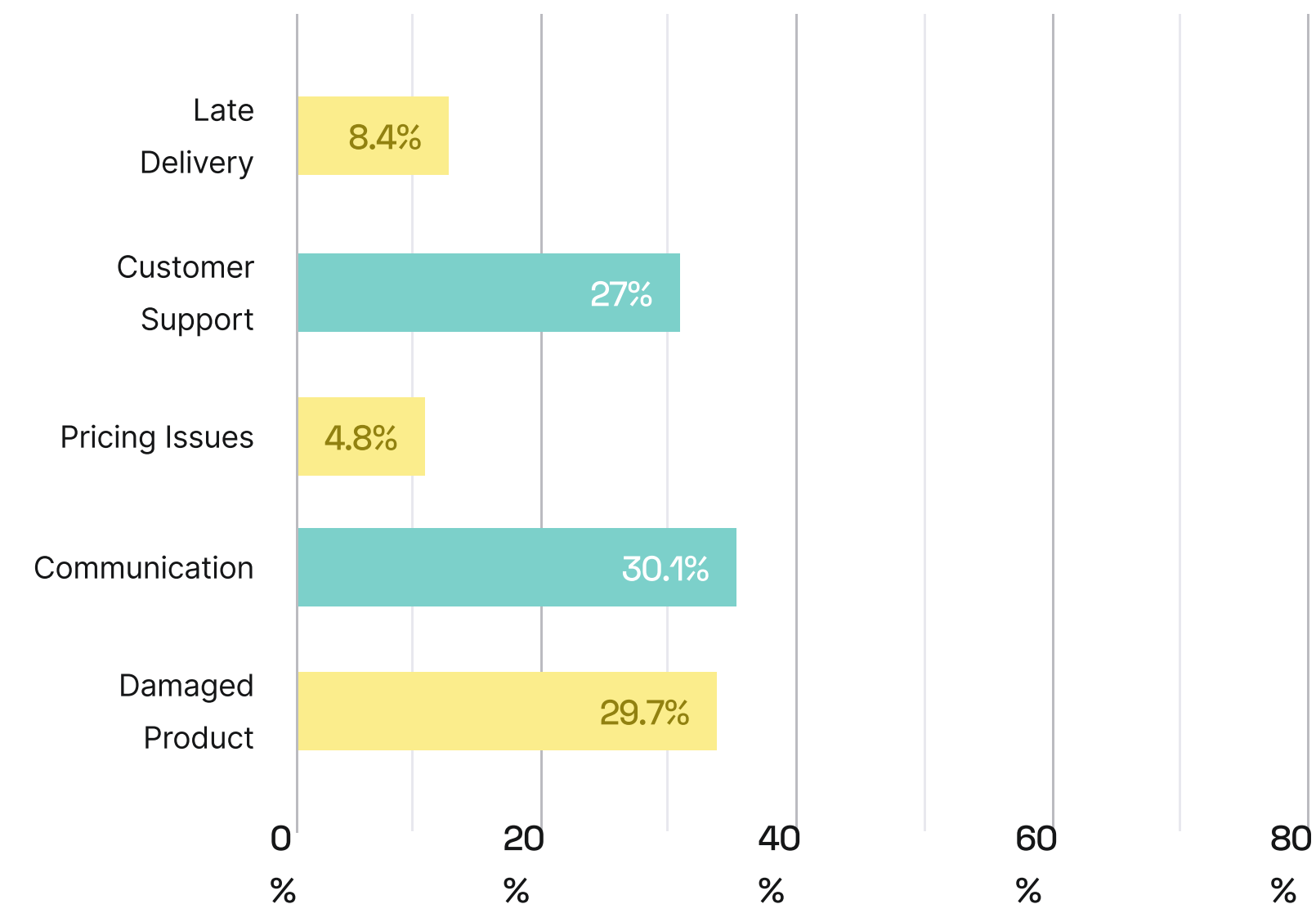


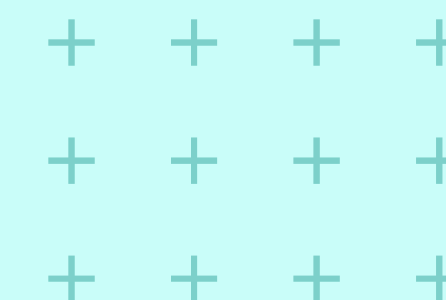
When UK consumers leave negative reviews, it's most often based on a bad experience with support or poor communication.

57%

of consumers cite customer support and bad communication as the leading motivation for leaving a business a 1 star review.

If you had a negative experience of any of the following, which would most motivate you to leave a business a 1 star review?
(Select your top 3)





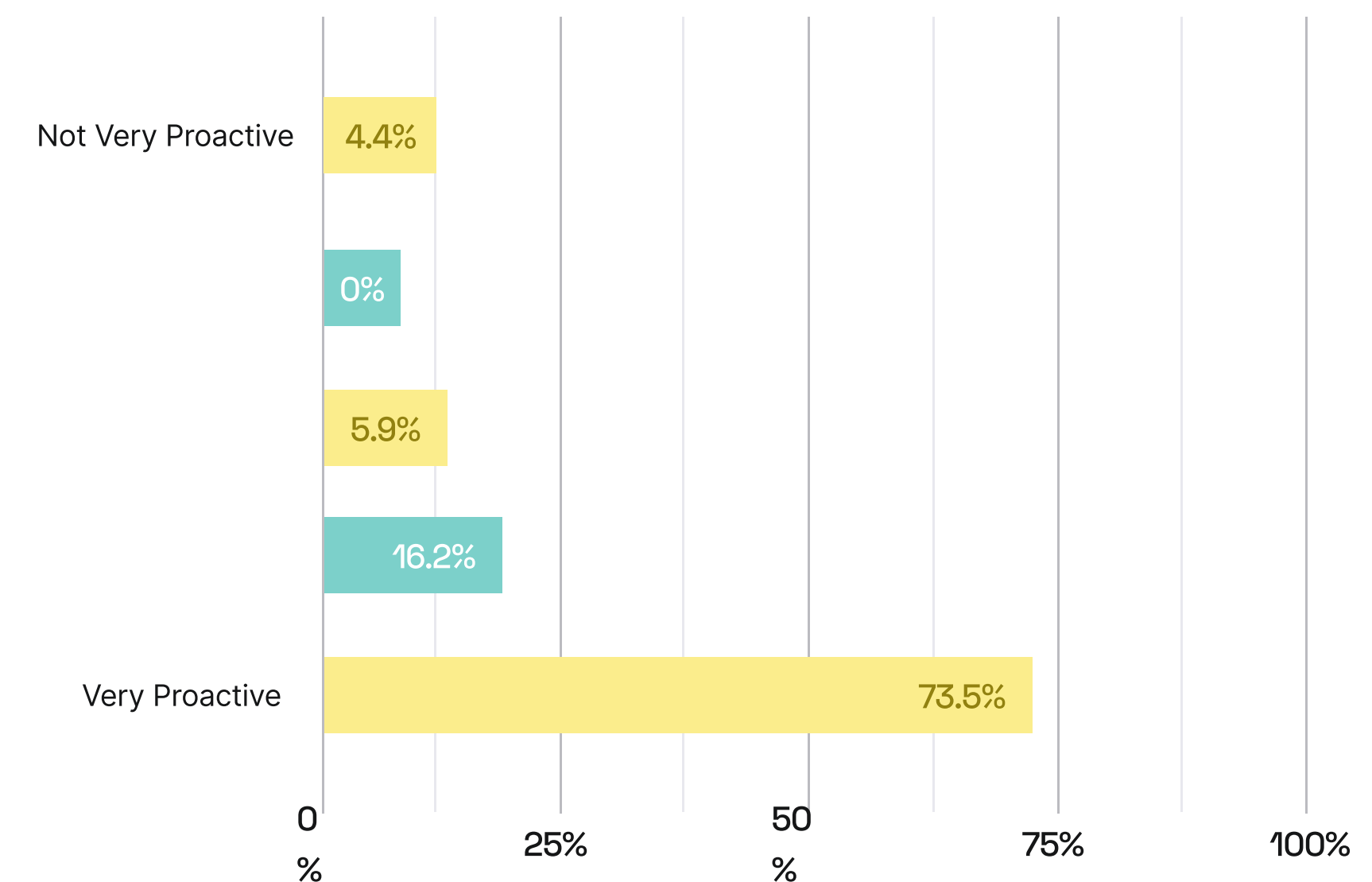
On the flip side good customer support increases your chances of a positive review by 57%



74% of merchants say they are 'very proactive' when it comes to their online reputation, with 96% as a whole being 'somewhat proactive' at the very least.

Merchants that take a proactive approach are **1.4 x more** likely to achieve a **4.5 star** rating than those that are passive about reputation management.

How would you describe your business' approach to online reputation management?

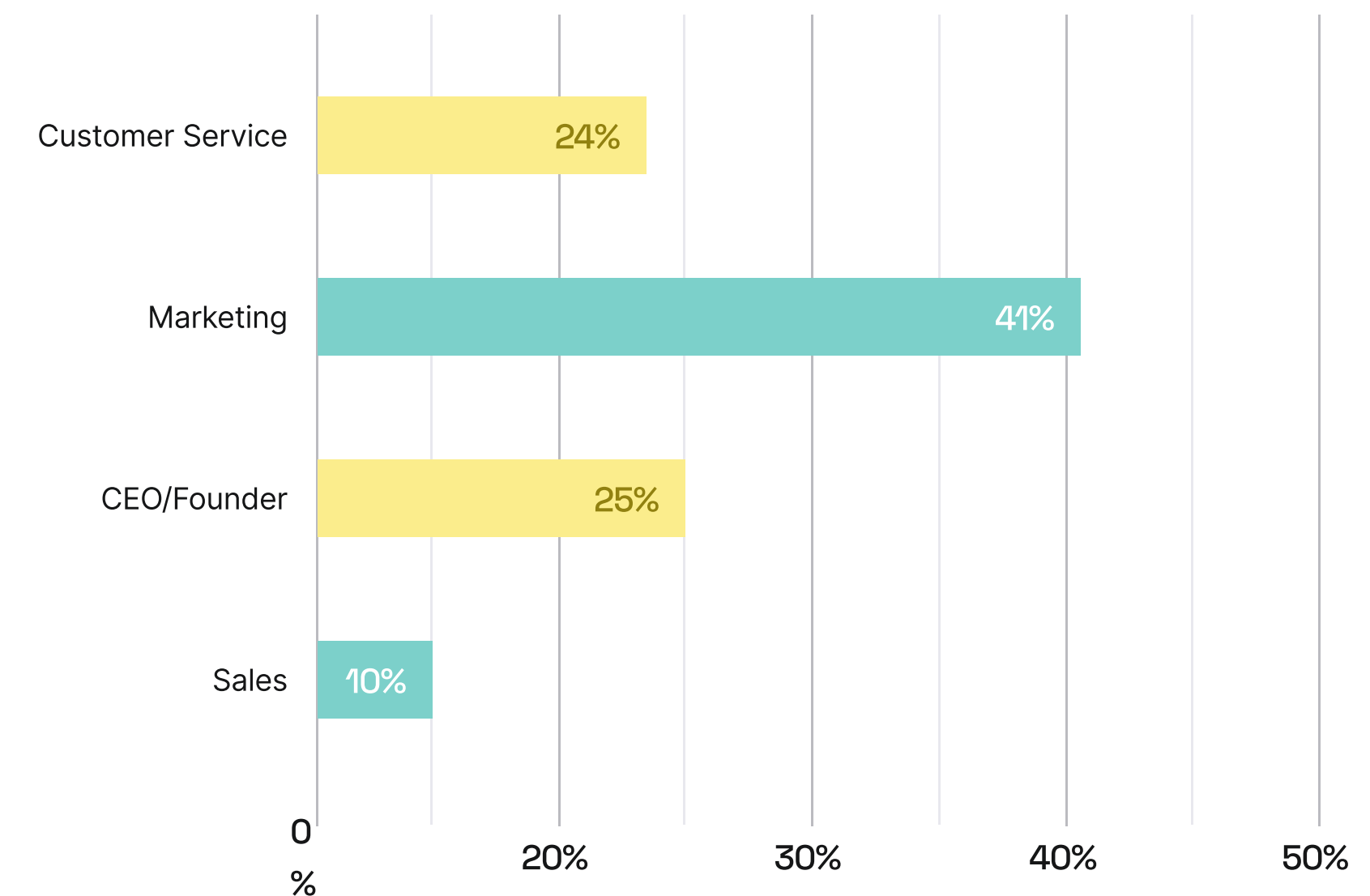




For most small and medium businesses, marketing is seen as responsible for managing online reputation.

Data from Hotjar survey was combined with an additional 53 business owners from a LinkedIn for a broader data range

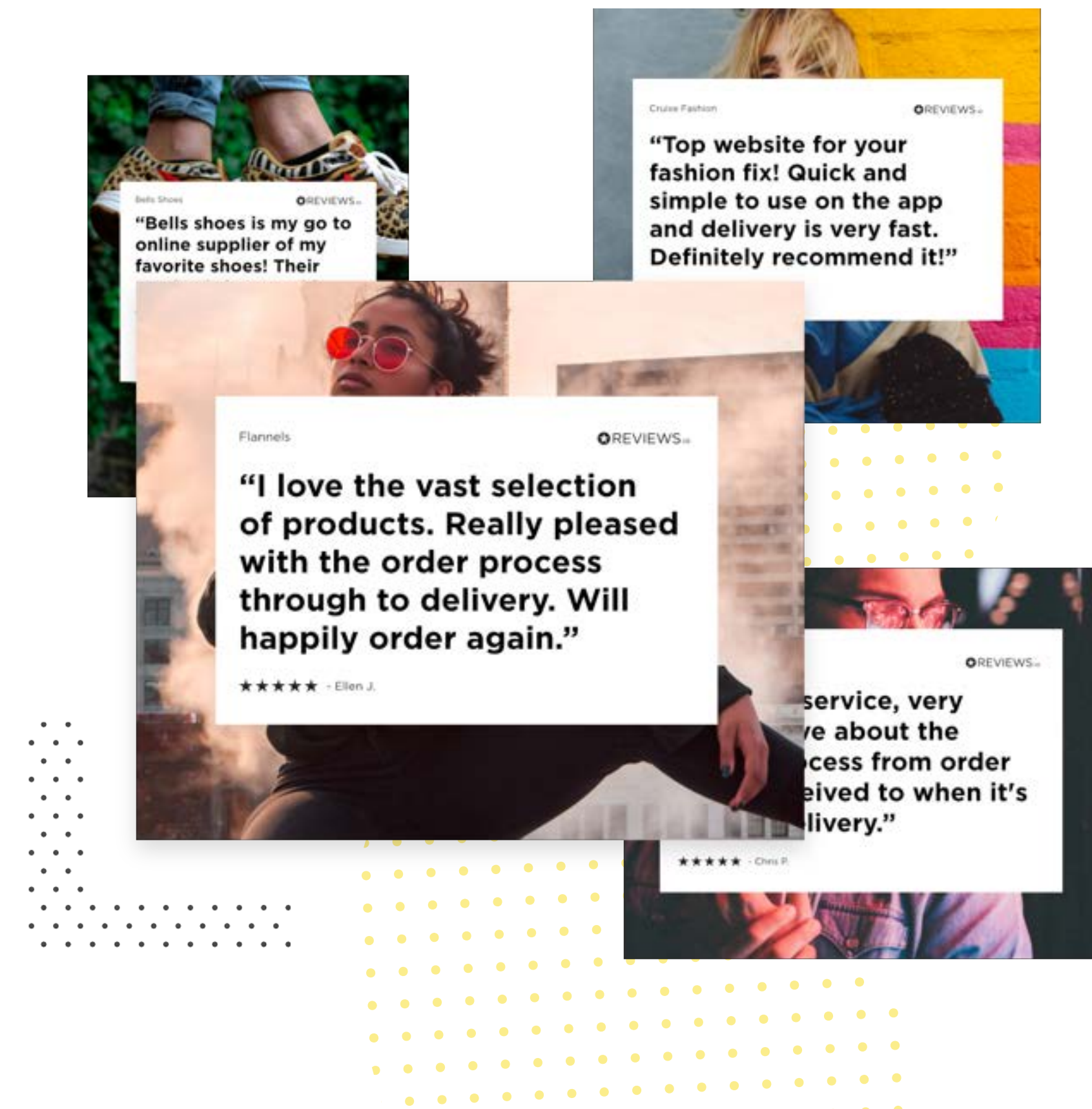
Who in your business holds responsibility for managing your online reputation?





In the face of increasing competition, businesses are taking proactive steps to manage and improve their online reputation.

Merchants are realising that success relies heavily on brand perception, and are leveraging the power of the consumer voice to drive awareness, sales and growth.

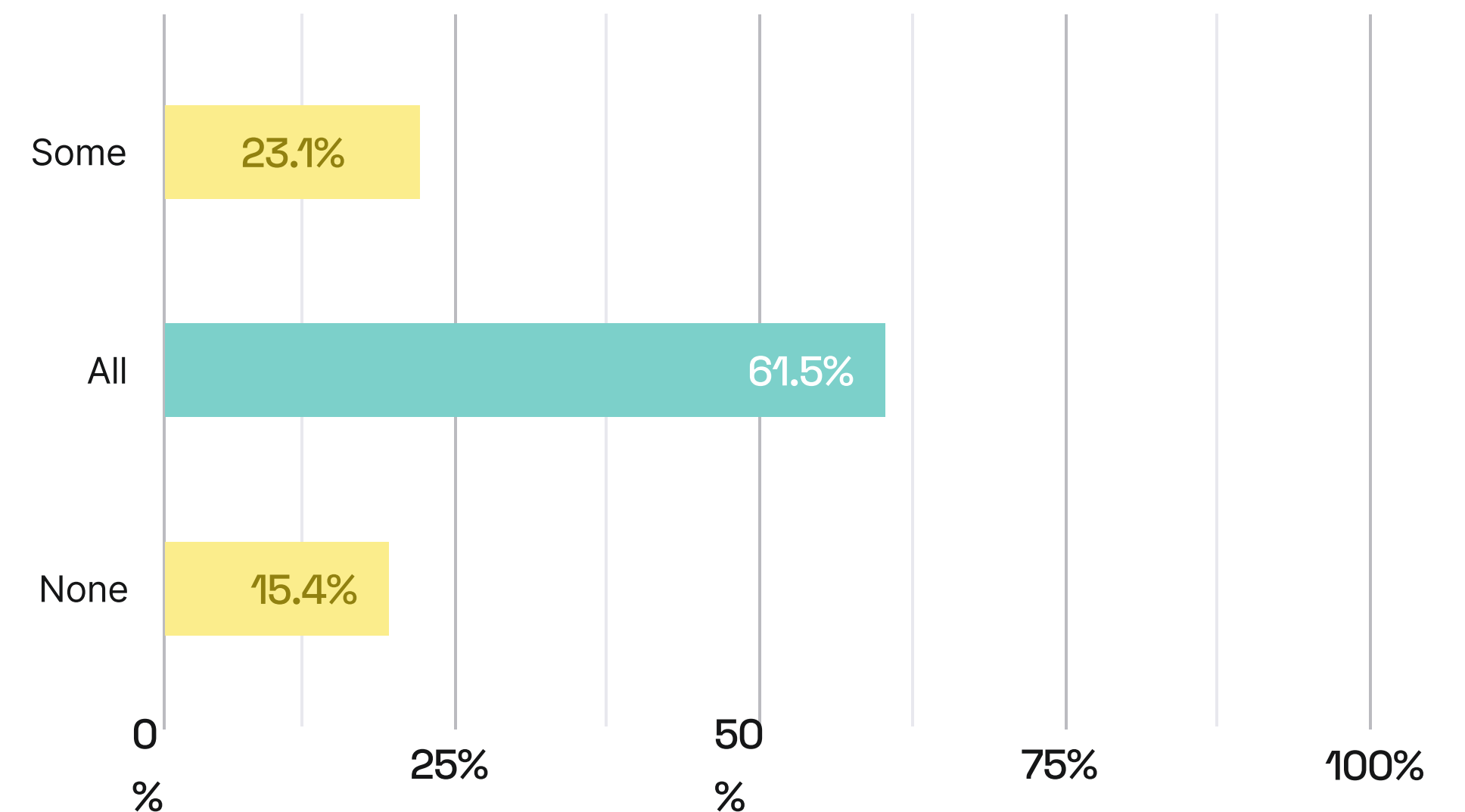




Over half the businesses surveyed take the time to respond to customer feedback.

62% say they respond to all or most of the reviews they receive.

15% say they never or rarely respond to online reviews.

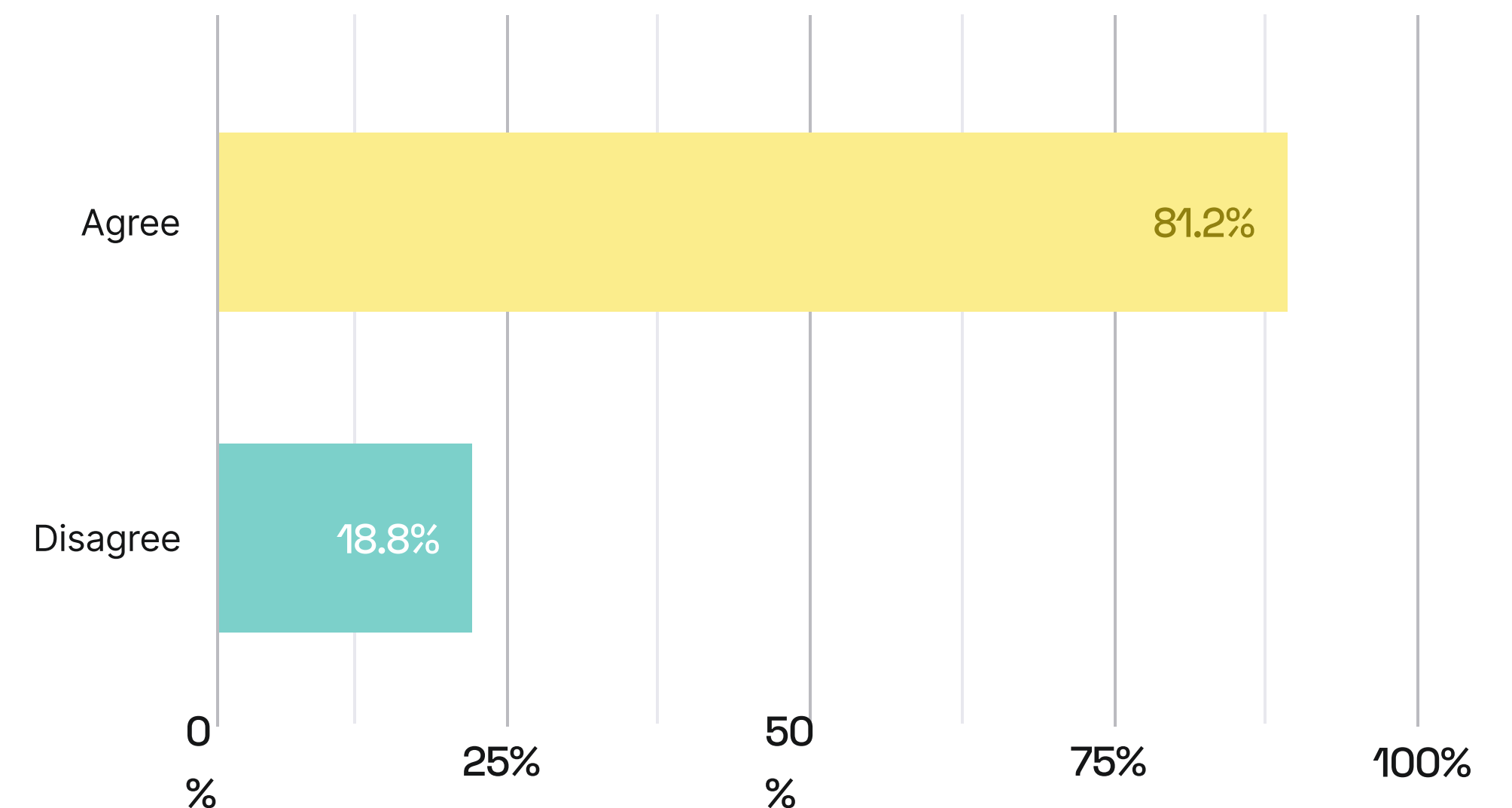




Nearly all businesses working with a review collection provider agree that it provides a profitable return on investment.

81% of those that do agree or strongly agree that the ROI is well worth the cost of the service.

To what extent do you agree that business reputation management software provides enough return to warrant the investment?



Thank You.



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