

Title:

Buyers Guides vs. Unbiased Product Reviews - why more and more consumers are preferring the latter?

Word Count:

882

Summary:

Why more and more consumers are increasingly depending on themselves for unbiased product information and turning away from Buyers Guides? Why websites and blogs have become more acceptable to consumers seeking product information for purchase decisions than buyers guide written by experts?

Keywords:

buyers guide, consumer, product review, consumer right, consumer forum, consumer action

Article Body:

If you are on the look out for a buyers guide before going on your next shopping spree, here's something that can help you make a smarter choice! We all know there are buyers guides written and compiled by product experts that are served along with the newspapers and magazines. You can get a buyers guide for buying a new lip color to a new car. Usually these buyers guides tell you everything about your new buy and aren't you excited at these when they talk about the best features of a new Nokia phone or a new motorbike that is just launched? There isn't any doubt that these guides are packed with information and still are very powerful tools in today's markets. Often these guides are compiled by a publishing house and sponsored by manufacturer of products for which the guides are meant for. But let's keep in mind that most of the time these guides are nothing short of adverts in disguise.

There are several compelling reasons for these buyers guides to mimic an advertisement. One is most of the time the guides are sponsored directly or indirectly (thru advertisements) by product manufactures and so the authors cannot really write against the products and therefore have to toe the line of the manufacturers. And since there is no way that the primary players of the buying and selling game, i.e. the buyer, manufacturer or an existing consumer of the product can interact it becomes basically a one-way conversation where the buyer gets to hear all good things about the product. This is more of a biased representation of the products which it features and in most cases the authors of the guides are the company representatives or other hired people having an

interest in promotion of the product.

Appropriately a buyers guide, as the name suggests should be buyer or consumer-centric and primarily cater to the betterment of the consumers. If we think hard, we would know that customer satisfaction goes a long way to strengthen the business. So a true buyers guide will not only help the consumers but also the manufacturer of the products in the long run. Once a buyer criticizes a product it actually presents an opportunity for the manufacturer or the sellers to rectify that defect or lacuna or respond to the changing taste of the consumers. But unfortunately such buyers guides are not abundant in circulation and still the vast majorities are the one-way communication types where reporters and paid experts write a product review more as a part of a business deal than a critical review. Probably the authors and publishers of the buyers guide failed to realize the need of the consumers; the consumers are looking for more than brochures in the buyers guides.

So what is the choice before the consumer in the absence of a true buyers guide? Consumers gradually are learning to differentiate between biased information and true feedback. They cannot be just fooled anymore and already many consumers are turning their back to these sponsored guides. They are increasingly relying on fellow consumers for information about products and services. Gone are the times when a company can form a consumer opinion by clever advertising and influence buyers to select their products. The consumers in the 21st century have a very powerful tool within their reach and that is internet. There are already hundreds of blogs which anyone can access and these online journals tell us the real consumer experience about products and services. They also narrate the harrowing experience that some consumers had to face due to unscrupulous companies and or inferior products. The information is voluntary and not paid for and so people perceive them as authentic as compared to the adverts. There are positive feedbacks too which are actually recommendations and consumers are taking cues and choosing smartly.

But the battle against biased information that seek to influence and misguide consumers can only be won if there is a larger participation. It is time for consumer action that makes sure consumers reclaim their rights and their voices are heard. Also they deserve timely action as they are tired of the slow and often ineffective consumer forums that have a very poor record in India. In the backdrop of a weak consumer rights protection system and many vested interests only consumers can help fellow consumers and they can do so without spending any money or much effort. There are already few websites available where a consumer can find out feedbacks about a product and also write a review for others to read. But again discretion should be applied as some of the websites contain many bogus reviews and also paid inserts. Consumer blogs are also very good

source of unbiased and authentic information. The best part is that a consumer can also interact with the author and can ask specific questions before making a buy decision. So if you are a smart consumer better listen to your folks than an expert when you want to buy a product next time. Don't worry too much about the experts, you can be an expert overnight and all you just need is to write product reviews which are eagerly waited by other consumers who want to read them.