



The Impact of Customer Ratings and Reviews on European Buying Behaviour

How Trustpilot content influences
EU consumers



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Executive Summary

This research explores the value of showcasing customer star ratings and reviews in advertising, and in particular the impact of Trustpilot content in digital campaigns.

Based on a survey of 3,000 European consumers, this London Research study reports on the benefits of using Trustpilot ratings and reviews to build trust and increase propensity to purchase, and the uplift from Trustpilot compared to another leading reviews platform.

The research also looks at the extent to which specific types of Trustpilot content in online advertisements influence consumers, including the Trustpilot logo and stars, TrustScore, the volume of reviews, and the impact of an authentic customer testimonial.

Looking at the impact of customer star ratings and reviews at the broader level within the customer journey, around two-thirds of EU consumers regard customer reviews (65%) and star ratings (63%) as either 'very useful' or 'useful' during the buying decision-making process.

To test the value of Trustpilot ratings and reviews in digital advertising, survey respondents were shown a series of online ads for a fictitious banking brand, and asked which ads they would be most likely to click through with a view to potentially applying.

Methodology

London Research was commissioned by Trustpilot to carry out a survey of 3,000 European consumers in France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands (750 per market). The survey, carried out in December 2023, included questions about sources of information and touchpoints used during the buying process, and also questions specifically about Trustpilot.

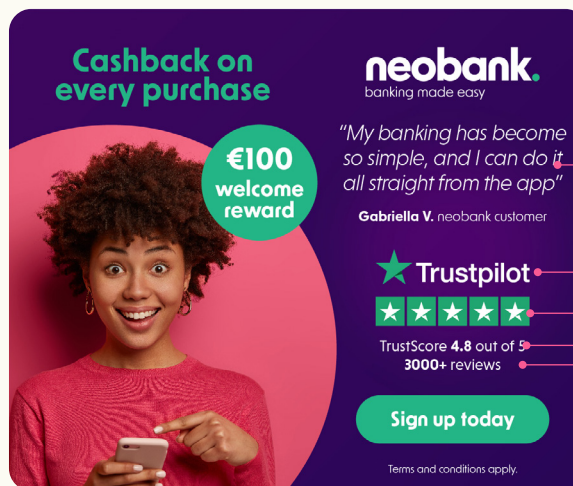
A survey-based research technique called conjoint analysis was used to quantify consumer preferences when respondents were shown different combinations from a series of advertisements for a fictitious bank called Neobank. The ads included star ratings and customer reviews co-branded with Trustpilot, competitor reviews platforms, and also ads without any co-branding.

Survey respondents were asked which of the ads for Neobank would most make them want to click through. They were also asked whether they would actually click through on the ad they selected with a view to signing up if they were considering changing to a different bank.

Individual reports are also available for France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands.

According to the research:

- **Around two-thirds (65%) of European consumers agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand**, compared to only 9% who disagree.
- **A similar percentage of consumers (63%) agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand**, compared to only 10% who disagree.
- **Around two-thirds of EU consumers regard customer reviews (65%) and star ratings (63%) as either 'very useful' or 'useful'** during the buying decision-making process.
- **European consumers are almost three times more likely to click an online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars** than the same ad without the logo and stars.
- **And they are almost nine times more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer review** than an ad with no Trustpilot content.
- **An advert with a five-star Trustpilot score, 3,000+ reviews and customer testimonial performs two-and-a-half times as well as the same ad with no Trustpilot components**, even when the welcome reward is decreased by 20% (from €100 to €80).
- **European consumers are 50% more likely to click through on an online advertisement for a brand with the Trustpilot logo and stars** than the same ad with the Trusted Shops logo and stars.
- **And they are 72% more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial** than a Trusted Shops co-branded ad showing exactly the same information.

Impact of Trustpilot: the anatomy of a co-branded ad

European consumers looking at a banking advertisement are **8.7 times more likely** to click on a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a verbatim customer review than an ad with no Trustpilot content.

Customer review

European consumers are 64% more likely to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it contains a customer testimonial (i.e. verbatim customer review).

Trustpilot

EU consumers are 72% more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than a Trusted Shops co-branded ad showing exactly the same information.

Trustpilot logo and stars

An online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars is 2.8 times more persuasive than the same ad without them.

TrustScore

European consumers are 14% more likely to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it specifies the TrustScore behind the five-star rating.

Number of reviews

Showing 3,000+ reviews makes the ad 33% more compelling than the same ad just showing the Trustpilot stars and TrustScore without the number of reviews.

Section 1

Introduction - Importance of Star Ratings and Reviews in the Buyer Journey

Customer star ratings and reviews are an integral part of the journey to purchase for the majority of European consumers, and among the three most useful touchpoints for influencing buying behaviour, along with search engines (*Figure 1*).

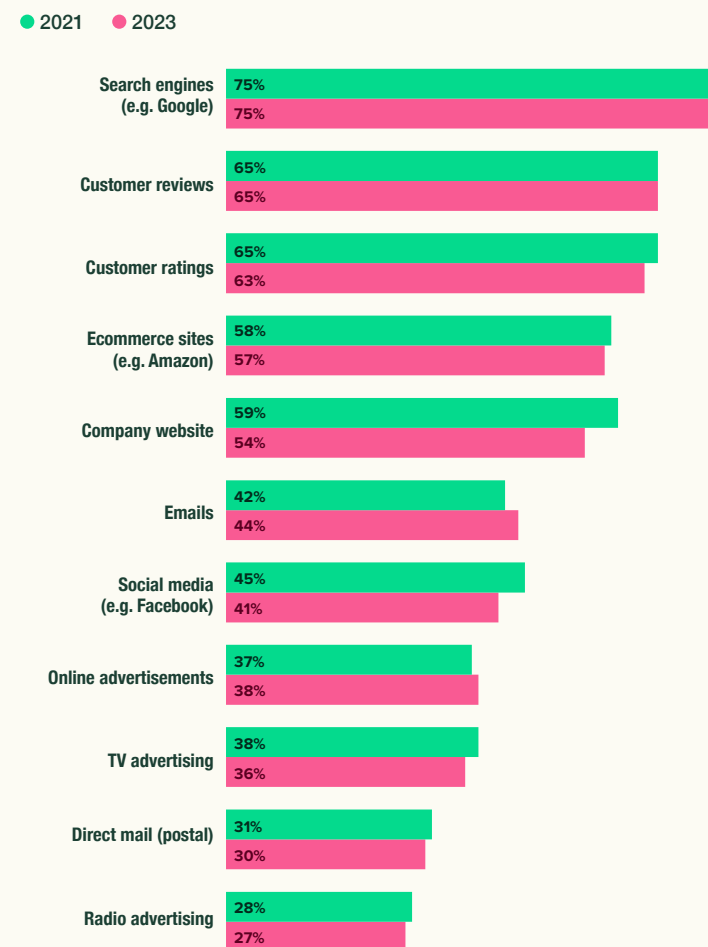
The *Edelman Trust Barometer* for 2023 shows there is a growing distrust of traditional and social media in Europe.

It is therefore no surprise that around two-thirds of EU consumers regard customer reviews (65%) and star ratings (63%) as either 'very useful' or 'useful' during the buying decision-making process, compared to only 41% for social media and 36% for TV advertising (*Figure 1*).

Against this backdrop it is clear that many consumers are relying on ratings and reviews for unbiased information. Our research shows that just under two-thirds of EU consumers say they're at least occasionally influenced by both star ratings (62%) and customer reviews (63%) during the journey to purchase (*Figure 2*).

FIGURE 1

Proportion of consumers saying the following sources of information are 'very useful' or 'useful' for influencing their decision to buy something



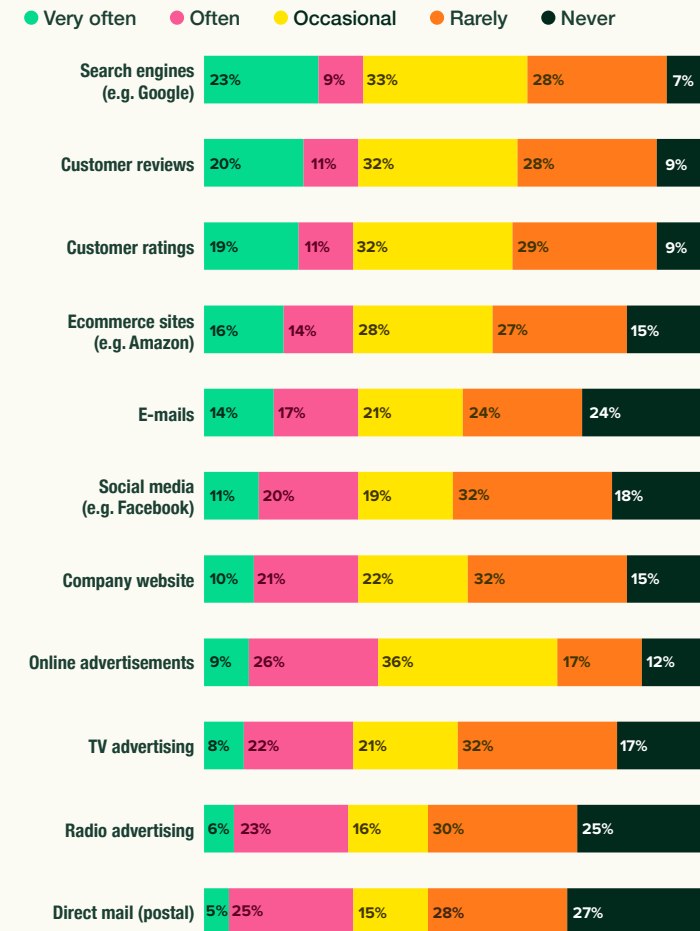
And it is clear that customer ratings and reviews continue to play an important role in influencing buying decisions across a wide range of categories, from travel to electronics, and financial services to fashion. For all sectors shown in *Figure 3*, at least two-thirds of consumers regard ratings and reviews as at least ‘somewhat useful’ for making decisions relating to their purchases.

It is also clear from *Figure 1* and *Figure 2* that consumers are influenced by a wide range of online and offline touchpoints before they make a decision to purchase something. In addition to customer ratings and reviews, the majority of EU consumers consider search engines, ecommerce sites, social media, email, company websites, online advertisements, TV and radio advertising, and direct mail to be useful to some degree.

Brands need to understand how different touchpoints and channels work together to build trust and positively impact the decision-making process. Given the popularity and usefulness of ratings and reviews, it makes sense for marketers to understand how they can be harnessed across other channels, including both online and offline advertising, as well as across their own digital properties and email campaigns.

FIGURE 2

How often do the following sources of information influence your decision to buy something?



The use of ratings and reviews in digital marketing campaigns is credited with driving a period of huge growth at *My English School (MyES)*. The company reports that four in five people who make enquiries about courses reveal they were prompted to get in touch due to the highly positive feedback the business receives on Trustpilot.

By using these reviews and ratings in its digital marketing, MyES has managed to increase leads by 26% and contract signings have leapt by 70%, compared to previous campaigns. This had led to a 28% improvement in digital marketing return on investment, and prompted a change in strategy which will see ratings and reviews used in all its digital marketing going forwards.

“We live in a context of reputation economy in which people choose based on the quality of the service. Trustpilot has allowed us to communicate the value of our courses through the words of our own satisfied students, combining our brand with that of a reviews company recognised worldwide for its reliability and transparency.”



Luigi Sgueri
MyES CEO

FIGURE 3

How useful are ratings and reviews for influencing your decision to buy the following types of products or services?

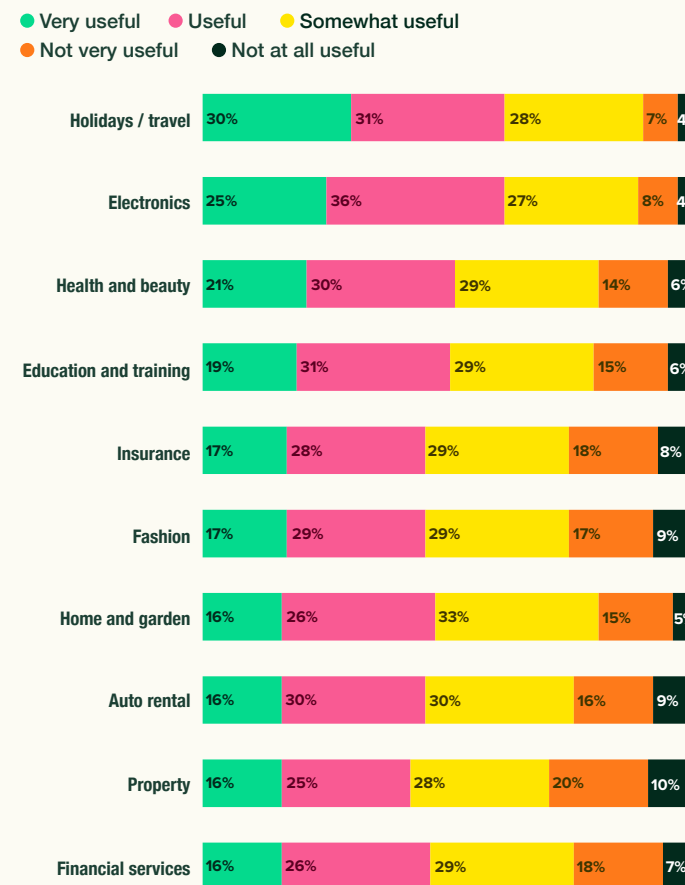


Figure 4 shows the perceived usefulness of ratings and reviews across the four different European countries surveyed.

Consumer reviews and ratings are a key part of the buying journey for large numbers of people across all countries surveyed, with between around half and three-quarters of respondents regarding them as ‘very useful’ or ‘useful’.

The percentages vary across the four markets. Italian consumers are most likely to value ratings and reviews during the decision-making process when they are buying something. Around three-quarters of survey respondents from Italy say both customer reviews and customer star ratings are ‘very useful’ or ‘useful’ sources of information. In contrast, around half of German consumers say that this is the case.

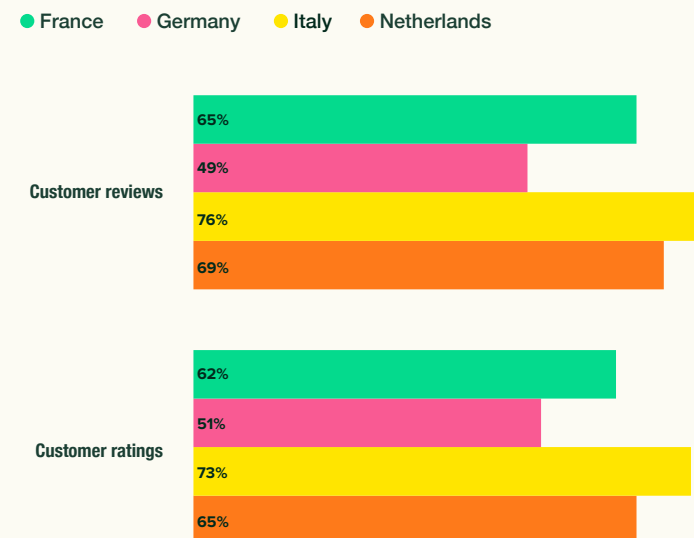
“In order to best meet the needs of our investors, feedback is elementary and very valuable for us. Trustpilot is an ideal partner through whom we receive this feedback directly, on the basis of which we can continuously optimise our processes.”



Sarah Buge
Team Lead Customer Success Management
Companisto

FIGURE 4

Proportion of consumers saying the following sources of information are ‘very useful’ or ‘useful’ for influencing their decision to buy something



Section 2

Benefits of Trustpilot Content Through the Funnel

The trust engendered by adding Trustpilot stars and scores to digital advertising is not just good for brand image, it is also a core component in driving sales. Just under two-thirds of EU consumers (63%) agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand, compared to only 10% who disagree (*Figure 5*).

The propensity to buy something from a company is very closely linked to the level of trust in that brand. A similar percentage of European consumers (65%) agree that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand (*Figure 6*).

“With Trustpilot reviews, you get exceptional insights into what your customers like and don’t like, but also what they’re looking for. This all helps us tremendously in developing our roadmap.”



Jillian Ross
Brand Manager, Setmore

FIGURE 5

To what extent do you agree that a good Trustpilot score makes you more likely to buy from a brand?

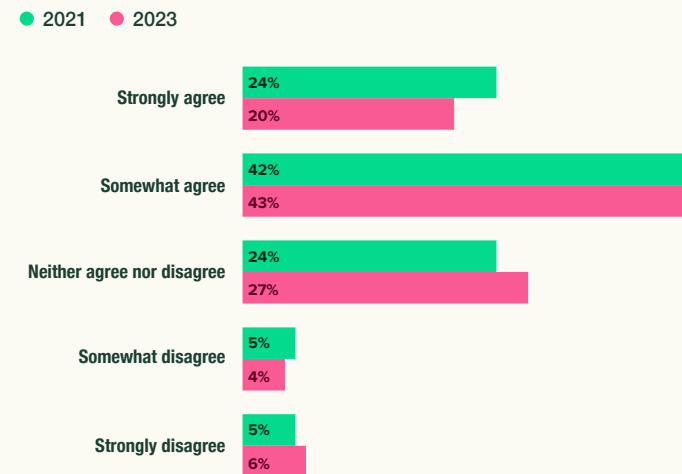


FIGURE 6

To what extent do you agree that a good Trustpilot score makes you more likely to trust a brand?

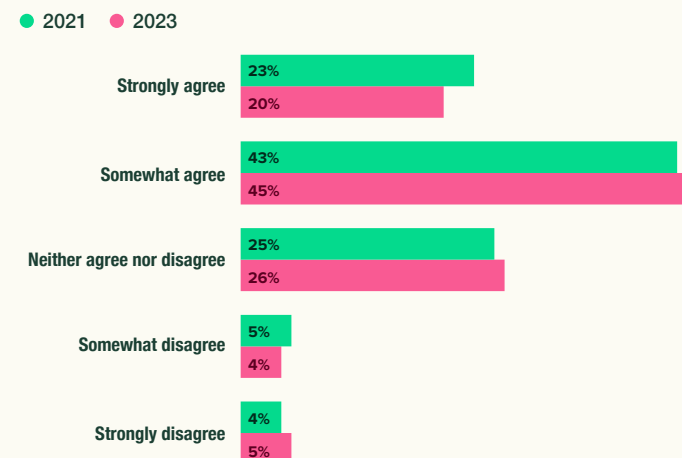


Figure 7 shows the different percentages for the four EU countries surveyed. Italian consumers are most likely to say that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from a brand (72%), and Dutch consumers are most likely to say that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to trust a brand (73%). And even though only around half of German consumers said that customer ratings and reviews were very useful or useful (Figure 4), Figure 7 also shows six in ten German consumers agreeing that a good TrustScore makes them more likely to trust and buy from a brand.

Groupon is another example of how ratings and reviews can be used throughout the sales and marketing funnel. It has embarked on a close partnership with Trustpilot to improve its TrustScore not only to show new customers it is reliable, but also to underpin its commitment to retaining existing users by acknowledging and addressing their problems. As a result of this strategy, the company has seen its TrustScore rise to more than four stars.

“It’s the customer reviews and satisfaction insights that really drive the change in the business. That’s why we partnered with Trustpilot. We’d rather have 10x more feedback so we know and can fix issues. If we don’t know something is going wrong, we can’t fix it. Now we can, between Trustpilot and our satisfaction surveys.”



Adam Lindsey
Senior Director of Operations at Groupon

FIGURE 7

Proportion of consumers agreeing that a good Trustpilot score makes them more likely to buy from or trust a brand

● Buy from a brand ● Trust a brand



Section 3

Impact of Trustpilot

Logo with Star Rating

We have seen that consumers say they're more likely to trust and buy from a brand with a high Trustpilot rating.

A key objective of our research was to understand the impact of different Trustpilot content elements, namely the logo and stars, TrustScore (out of five), number of reviews, and an actual verbatim quote from a named customer ('Gabriella V.', with the spelling localised for each market).

Some brands have previously carried out studies of their own, using Trustpilot A/B testing tool. Fire prevention business *Brandpreventionwinkel* compared running search adverts with and without Trustpilot stars in 2023. It found that with its rating included conversions nearly doubled to 5.19%. With Google Shopping adverts, conversion rates similarly leapt from just over 4% to 6% when its rating was included, with an accompanying 9% drop in cost per click.

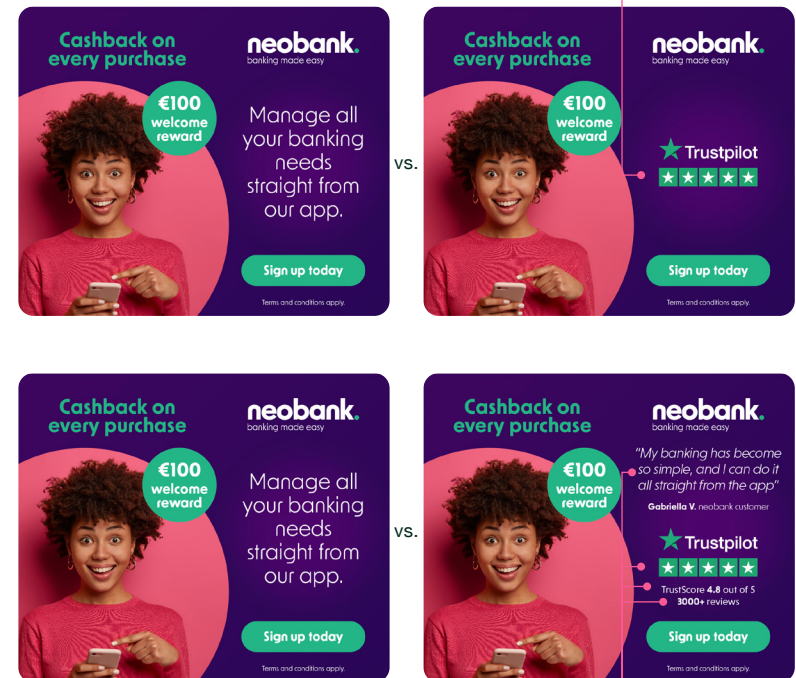
As part of our own proprietary research, consumers were shown a series of digital advertisements for a fictitious banking brand called Neobank, and asked which ads they would be most likely to click through with a view to signing up.

The research found that European consumers are almost three times more likely to click on an online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars than the same ad without them, even when the text to the right-hand side of the original ad is sacrificed.

An even more emphatic finding from the research is that consumers are almost nine times more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, high TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial (compared with the baseline ad with no Trustpilot branding).

As well as seeking to understand the overall impact of the full suite of Trustpilot content and the logo and stars on their own, we also wanted to explore the relative impact of different content components, namely the customer review, the TrustScore at different levels, and the volume of reviews. We also compared the performance of Trustpilot ads with similar ads featuring Trusted Shops across all markets.

European consumers are **2.8 times more likely** to click on an online advertisement with the Trustpilot logo and stars than the same ad without them.



European consumers are **almost nine times more likely** to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, high TrustScore, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial (than the baseline ad with no Trustpilot branding).

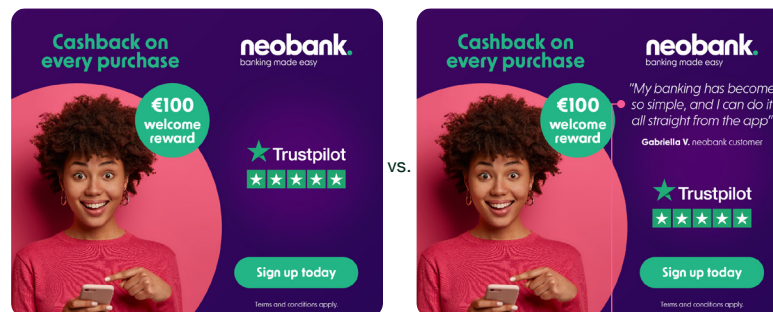
Customer Review

The power of an authentic testimonial to build trust and sway a prospective customer into a purchase should not be underestimated. European consumers are 64% more likely to click through on a Trustpilot co-branded ad when it contains a customer review.

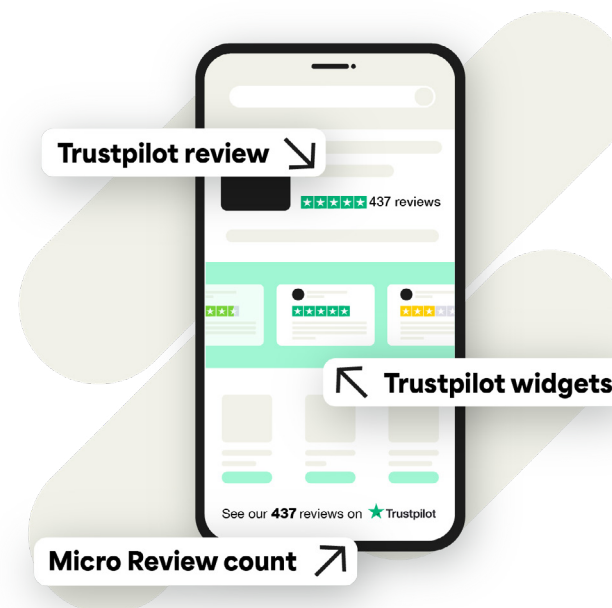
“For us, Trustpilot is the authority in the field of reviews. Trustpilot reviews ensure more consumer confidence, which directly results in more conversions and a higher average order value.”



Jeroen Bonnemaïjers
Owner, Brandpreventionwinkel.nl



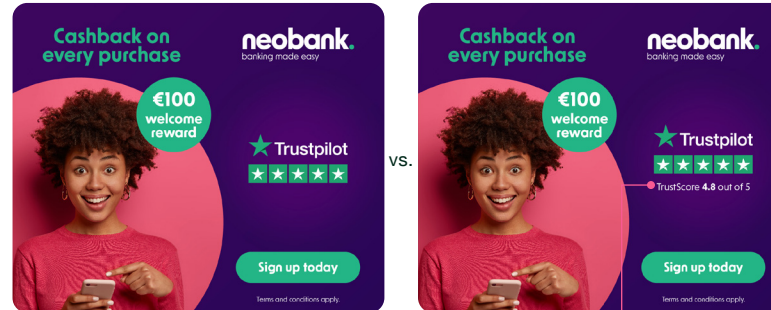
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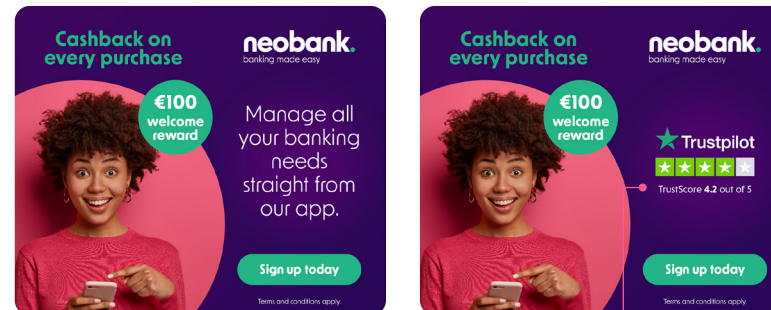
TrustScore

European consumers are 14% more likely to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it specifies the high TrustScore behind the five-star rating.

The ad showing the 4.8 score performs 37% better than the ad with a 4.2 score, though the ad with a 4.2 score is still more than twice as compelling as the basic ad with no co-branding.



EU consumers are **14% more likely** to click through on a like-for-like Trustpilot co-branded ad when it specifies the high TrustScore behind the five-star rating.

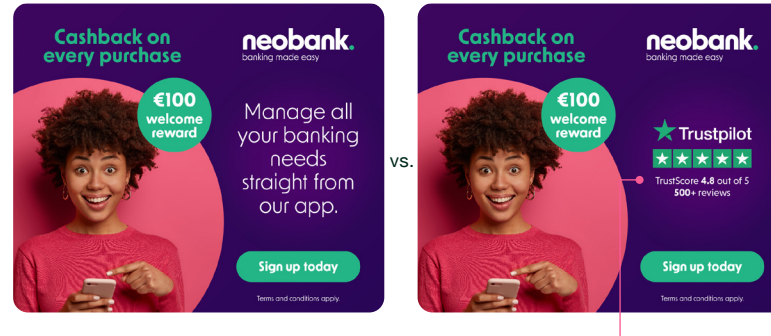


A Trustpilot ad with a 4.2 score is still **more than twice as compelling** as the basic ad with no co-branding.

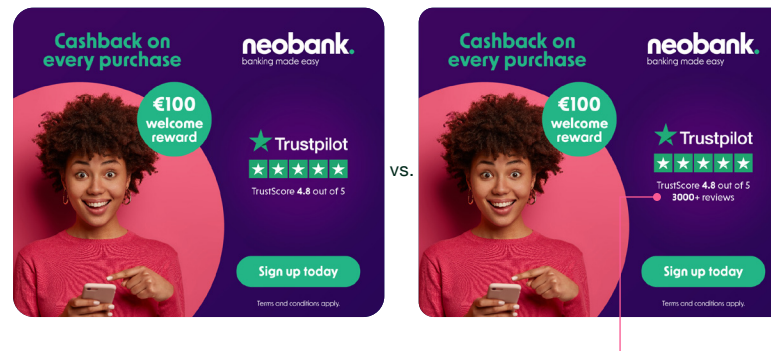
Number of Reviews

A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 score showing 500+ reviews is almost four times more compelling than an ad with no Trustpilot branding, according to our research.

Our consumer research for Europe also shows that a Trustpilot five-star advert with 3000+ reviews performs 33% better than an almost identical ad including the Trustpilot stars and TrustScore, but without the number of reviews.



A Trustpilot five-star advert with a 4.8 score showing 500+ reviews is **3.8 times more compelling** than an ad with no Trustpilot branding, according to our research.



A Trustpilot five-star advert with 3000+ reviews **performs 33% better** than an almost identical ad including the Trustpilot stars and TrustScore, but without the number of reviews.

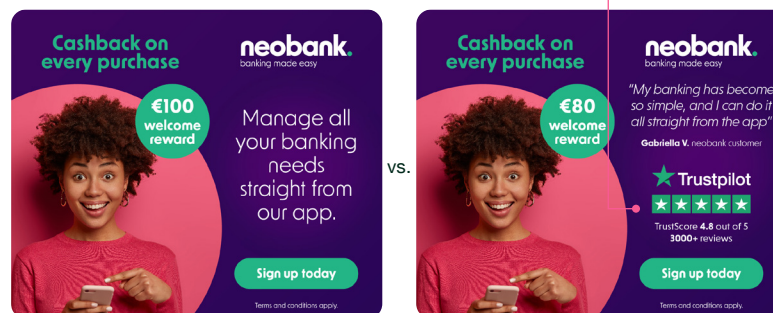
Impact on Reduced Incentive or Higher Price

The research found that consumers are two-and-a-half times more likely to click through on an advert with a five-star Trustpilot score, 3,000+ reviews and customer testimonial than the same ad with no Trustpilot components, even when the welcome reward is decreased by 20% (from €100 to €80).

This can translate into significant cost savings or revenue increases for businesses either wishing to reduce incentives and discounts or increase pricing or interest rates (in the case of banks or personal loans companies).

Separate studies carried out by London Research have shown similar results for a higher price (in the case of a fictitious SIM card company), a higher interest rate (in the case of a personal loans company) and smaller discount (for a car insurance company).

European consumers are **two-and-a-half times more likely** to click through on an advert with a five-star Trustpilot score, 3,000+ reviews and customer testimonial than the same ad with no Trustpilot components, even when the welcome reward is decreased by 20% (from €100 to €80).

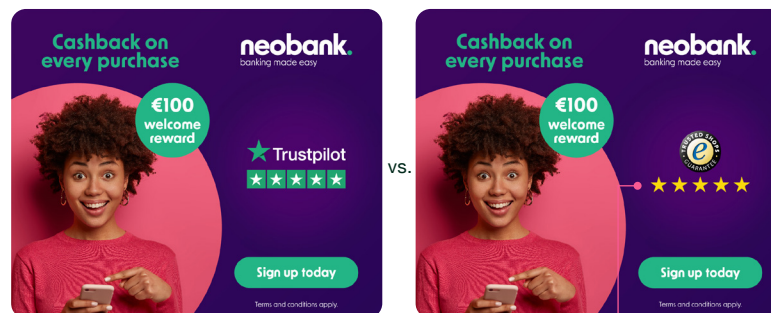


Performance Against Trusted Shops

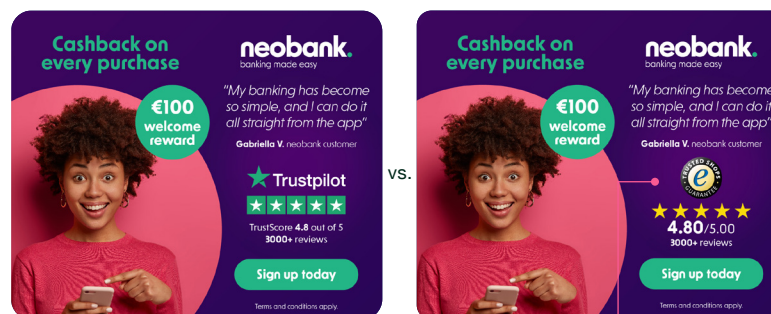
As part of this research, London research also compared the level of consumer engagement with similar advertisements co-branded with Trusted Shops in all four markets surveyed.

European consumers are 50% more likely to click through on an online advertisement for a brand with the Trustpilot logo and stars than the same ad with the Trusted Shops logo and stars.

Additionally, the research found that consumers are 72% more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than a Trusted Shops co-branded ad showing exactly the same information.



European consumers are **50% more likely** to click through on an online advertisement for a brand with the Trustpilot logo and stars than the same ad with the Trusted Shops logo and stars.

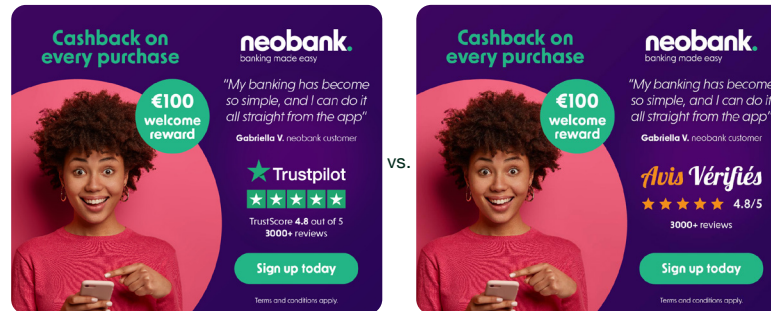


Consumers are **72% more likely** to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than a Trusted Shops co-branded ad showing exactly the same information.

Country-specific competitors

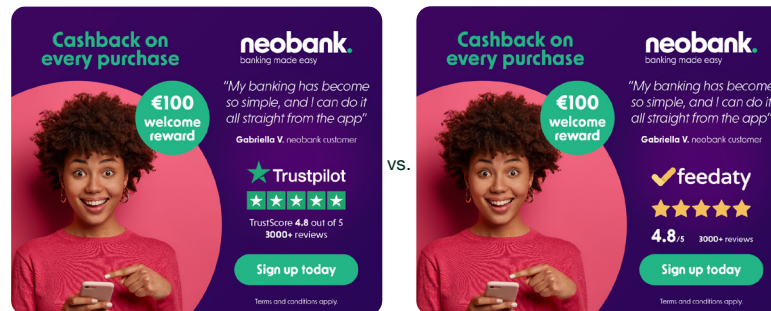
The research also found that Trustpilot outperformed the following country-specific competitors.

France - Avis Vérifiés



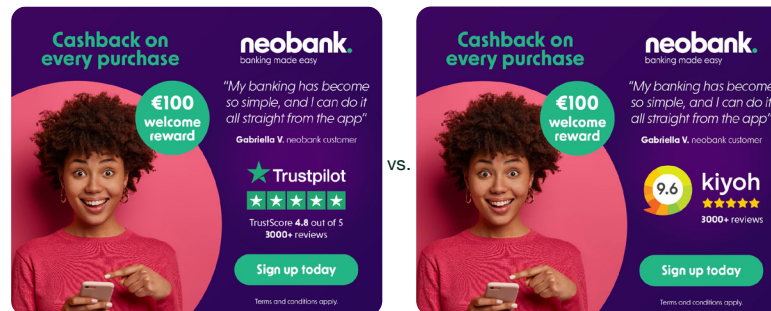
French consumers are 20% more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than an Avis Vérifiés co-branded ad showing exactly the same information.

Italy - Feedaty



Italian consumers are 1.7 times more likely to click a Trustpilot co-branded ad with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than an equivalent Feedaty co-branded ad.

Netherlands - Kiyoh



Dutch consumers are 2.2 times more likely to click through on a Trustpilot co-branded online advertisement with a five-star customer rating, 3,000+ reviews, and a customer testimonial than the equivalent Kiyoh ad.

*Methodology note: Kiyoh scores are out of 10 rather than 5.

Appendix

	Creative	Logo	Price	Stars	Score	Number of Reviews	Verbatim
	9	Trustpilot	€ 100	5	4.8	3000+	Yes
	19	Competitor #2	€100	5	9.6	3000+	Yes
	14	Trusted Shops	€100	5	4.8	3000+	Yes
	3	Trustpilot	€100	5	None	None	Yes
	7	Trustpilot	€100	5	4.8	3000+	No
	6	Trustpilot	€100	5	4.8	500+	No
	20	Competitor #2	€80	5	9.6	3000+	Yes
	18	Competitor #2	€100	5	9.6	3000+	No
	5	Trustpilot	€100	5	4.8	None	No
	15	Trusted Shops	€80	5	4.8	3000+	Yes
	4	Trustpilot	€100	5	None	None	No
	13	Trusted Shops	€100	5	4.8	3000+	No
	17	Competitor #2	€100	5	9.6	None	No
	10	Trustpilot	€ 80	5	4.8	3000+	Yes
	8	Trustpilot	€ 100	4	4.2	None	No
	12	Trusted Shops	€100	5	4.8	None	No
	16	Competitor #2	€100	5	None	None	No
	11	Trusted Shops	€100	5	None	None	No
	1	None	€100	None	None	None	No
	2	None	€80	None	None	None	No

Please note that advertisements 16-20 were branded as Feedaty, Avis Vérifiés and Kiyoh for Italy, France and the Netherlands respectively.

About us



London Research is focused on producing research-based content for B2B audiences. We are based in London, but our approach and outlook are very much international. We work predominantly with technology companies and agencies seeking to tell a compelling story based on robust research and insightful data points.

As part of Demand Exchange Ltd, we work closely with our sister companies Digital Doughnut (a global community of more than two million marketers) and Demand Exchange (a lead generation platform), both to syndicate our research and generate high-quality leads.

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Trustpilot is a leading online review platform – free and open to all. With more than 238 million reviews of over 980,000 domains, Trustpilot gives people a place to share and discover reviews of businesses, and we give every company the tools to turn consumer feedback into business results.

Our mission is to bring people and businesses closer together to create ever-improving experiences for everyone. Trustpilot reviews are seen more than 9 billion times each month by consumers worldwide. Trustpilot is headquartered in Copenhagen, with operations in London, Edinburgh, New York, Denver, Melbourne, Berlin, Vilnius, Milan, and Amsterdam. Trustpilot's 900 employees represent more than 50 different nationalities.

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