

How to Dress Up Your Product With Naked Marketing

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You have spent countless hours and thousands of dollars dressing up your product. It has the perfect packaging, the product **marketing** team is working magic, and the sales team can successfully pitch your merchandise even to the Pope. It's a beautiful symphony of strengths.

Then you have the "naked" nightmare: Your product is naked in front of all of your prospects, and they're highlighting its obvious beauty and strengths—along with its small blemishes, stained teeth, and bad haircut. (Can you imagine Freud's analysis of that one?)

Guess what: That's not a nightmare. It's the reality in our age of technology.

Buyers no longer rely on the information provided by your salesperson and your website, where an excess of great reviews may seem like a good thing, but visitors tend to find them biased and unrealistic. Instead of taking a company's word for it, they are accessing detailed information on product review sites, including testimonials provided by a product's users.

In short, your potential clients are seeking out third-party validation of both the good and the bad of your product.

Consumers have been using reviews as a resource for quite some time; now professionals are, too. According to recent data, 85% of tech buyers read up to 10 online reviews prior to a purchase. That's borne out by the 600,000 monthly visitors to G2 Crowd (where I work) in search of reviews of B2B software products in order to make the best buying decision for their needs.

Potential customers are doing their research, but don't get too nervous: The good news is that you have the opportunity to flip the script by embracing naked **marketing** in your strategy. The following tips can help.

Accept that the review process is creating transparency

Understandably, professionals want to know what they are getting themselves into before they buy. Those purchases are tied to their professional credibility and identity. They must decide what is important or not important to them and their organization.

Learning both the positives and negatives of certain products—through your willingness to make yourself more transparent—helps them to prioritize their wants and needs. Third-party assessments of your product help move the buying process forward.

Take the naked pledge to create a review strategy

Most products will receive negative reviews because, like anything else, most products and brands can't make everyone happy. Having a review strategy in place is the first step to engaging with all of your customers—a great opportunity to find out what customers like best and to learn where you might not be delivering on expectations.

By exposing the good and the not so good, you're demonstrating to potential customers that you are committed to providing the best product and experience possible.

The foundation of a naked marketing strategy must be built around empowering your current users to review your product; that's because as your total number of reviews grows, so will the number of customers who are considering your product. Reviews help customers prioritize what aspects are most important to them in their buying decision, and when you have a large number of reviews, in a buyer's mind you become more viable in the product category.

Embrace the negative reviews

The reviews will contain a smattering of good and bad. Embrace both and learn from the bad; both offer enormous value.

Good reviews are easy to identify, to use, and to amplify. But customers researching your product expect to see negative reviews, too; they understand that no product can be everything to everyone. (Moreover, negative reviews provide you with an opportunity to improve; more on that next, below.)

Professionals do not trust a product with all five-star evaluations. Having a balance of positive and negative reviews makes your product credible.

Learn from the reviews

Current customers are transparently sharing your product's strengths and weaknesses. Many companies spend tens of thousands of dollars for that kind of valuable information! So take it in stride and run with it. That's the kind of information that can drive strategic innovation at your company.

Engage with the reviews and the reviewers

With negative feedback, you have an enormous opportunity for your company to shine. Publicly engaging with users, addressing their issues, and showing that you care about their concerns is a good way to build trusting, loyal customers.

Buyers love to see a company engage with their customers to address an issue; witnessing your engagement efforts will increase the likelihood that those potential buyers will consider purchasing your product.

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By adopting naked marketing, you are attracting potential customers who have realistic expectations for your product. They, in turn, are also more likely to share their own experience with your product, thus increasing the number of reviews and helping to drive product awareness among potential buyers. And if you exceed their expectations, they are going to tell the world.

The successful outcomes of naked **marketing** are happy customers, the right prospects, and a successful business.

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