

## WebEffective Enables PowerReviews to Validate its New Approach to Product Reviews

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*-Darby Williams,  
Vice President  
of Product  
Strategy,  
PowerReviews*

### Challenge

- Validate effectiveness of a new type of online product reviews in enhancing Internet retailer conversions
- Perform proof-of-concept testing for a new portal site

### Solution

- Keynote WebEffective to survey users about how PowerReviews compares to its competition

### Results

- Retail customers preferred PowerReviews to Amazon.com reviews by a margin of two to one, providing PowerReviews with a powerful marketing tool
- PowerReviews was able to improve the usability of its reviews and of its new shopping research portal

### Company

User product reviews have become a mission-critical part of retailers' web sites, and PowerReviews has developed a better way for retailers to provide them. PowerReviews enhances the shopping experience by providing highly relevant social feedback, with the goal of improving online retailer revenues. This service is based on technology that uses tags to collect and consolidate customer feedback on products and services. Users select from

sets of user-defined tags and have the opportunity to provide free-form comments as well. The data is then consolidated and summarized for the shopper. Currently, PowerReviews powers customer ratings and reviews for more than 200 branded e-commerce storefronts.

PowerReviews has also recently launched its second service, a new shopping research portal, called Buzzillions.com. This new portal collects reviews from PowerReviews' retail customers'

sites and aggregates them to provide a single place for online shoppers to find and read reviews. Buzzillions.com leverages its unique tag-based approach to allow users to narrow product selection based on user-defined pros, cons and best uses as well as get recommendations from “people like them.”

### Challenge

About six months after launching its retail service, PowerReviews was looking for a way to determine how its service stacked up to the industry standard – Amazon.com reviews and ratings. The goal was to gather competitive selling points for use in its sales and marketing efforts.

At the same time, the company was working on rolling out its new Buzzillions.com customer portal and wanted to find out how well it would be received and how it should be improved. Darby Williams, vice president of product strategy for PowerReviews said, “We wanted a sanity check to find out whether the service would be as great as we thought. And if it was, we wanted to use the results for public relations and analyst briefings.”

### The Keynote Solution

PowerReviews selected the Keynote WebEffective product to run tests comparing its reviews with those of Amazon.com and to perform

overall usability testing. Williams said, “I had used WebEffective in a previous position. I was familiar with the product and was very happy with the results I had achieved. I never considered any other solution.”

WebEffective is an easy-to-use online, self-service UX tool for conducting in-depth customer experience and market research studies. WebEffective gives PowerReviews researchers access to a panel of more than 160,000 real online users from a cross-section of demographics, languages, and broadband and dial-up connections.

With WebEffective, researchers can also create their own panel or intercept visitors to their site.

Using WebEffective to perform user testing of its retail products, PowerReviews performed quantitative usability testing with 412 users who compared Amazon.com reviews and PowerReviews tag-based reviews in an objective way. Williams said, “We wanted a methodologically clean test to eliminate brand bias, so we chose a DVD Player product that was sold both on Amazon.com and through one of our tag-based retailer customers. We asked users to compare and evaluate the customer reviews on Amazon.com with those on our retail customer’s site. We used the same branding for both to focus the feedback on the review approach.”

## About Keynote

Keynote Systems (NASDAQ "KEYN") is the global test and measurement company for mobile communications and online business performance. As an independent and trusted third-party, Keynote provides IT and marketing executives with an unbiased view into their Internet services from around the world. For over a decade, we have been providing measurement data and testing capabilities that allow companies to understand and improve their customer's online and mobile experience.

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For the new portal site, PowerReviews did usability testing, looking for how well the site was received and what the company could do to make the site better.

WebEffective can be used as a self-service testing tool or in collaboration with Keynote for some or all of the test design and implementation. The Keynote Professional Services team collaborated with the PowerReviews staff to develop objectives and establish an overall methodology, as well as to write specific questions and options for answers. Williams said, "Keynote did such a good job of helping us determine how to do the testing that the answers fell out of the results without the need for a lot of additional analysis—except for the open-ended questions. Keynote was extremely helpful."

## Results

In tests of its retail service, PowerReviews found that despite user's greater familiarity with the Amazon.com approach, they nonetheless preferred PowerReviews tag-based approach to the Amazon.com free-form approach by more than two to one. Specifically, PowerReviews achieved the following results from the users it surveyed:

- 80% more users preferred PowerReviews' customer review approach
- 99% more (2-to-1) found the PowerReviews approach more helpful in helping them make informed decisions
- 77% more users found PowerReviews quicker and more efficient
- 83% more users found that PowerReviews gave them more confidence in making a purchase decision

The "Review Snapshot" that tabulates the most often cited pros, cons and best uses was a major reason users cited for both the speed and informational advantage.

Over time, moreover, the company expects the preference rate will become close to three-to-one as users become more accustomed to the PowerReviews format.

Williams said, "This gave us a great deal of confidence that we have provided a major step forward in the way people consume reviews. And we've been able to use these results as quantitative selling points to merchandize our retail service."

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