

2017 Retail Reputation Report

What Over 400,000 Consumer Web Reviews Say About In-Store Experience

Bradley W. Null and Mark D. Lange

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Correspondence to mlange@reputation.com, bnull@reputation.com or 1400A Seaport Blvd., Redwood City, CA 94063

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Executive Summary

Why This Report Matters

While in-store shopping still accounts for 91 percent of U.S. retail sales,ⁱ the pivot toward online shopping means that brick-and-mortar retailers have to find ways to deliver experiences that web outlets alone can't match.

The *2017 Retail Reputation Report* gives in-store retailers systematic insights into their strengths as well as opportunities for improvement, based on consumer reviews on the web -- and equips shoppers with useful tips as they head into the holiday shopping season.

This report reveals which retailers lead – and which lag – on the aspects of shopping experience most frequently cited by consumers in online reviews.

How We Analyzed Retail Experience

Rather than rely on surveys and focus groups, whose insights are limited to the questions asked, we analyzed the spontaneous reviews consumers leave on the web. We applied machine learning and sentiment analysis to unstructured text from over 400,000 reviews that consumers posted on Google and Facebook about their in-store shopping experiences at over 8,000 locations owned by 28 marquee retailers.

Our algorithms structured the free text from consumer reviews into nine key in-store experience categories: value, service, wait time, cleanliness, convenience, manager interactions, product availability, staff competence, and parking, facilities and amenities.

Retailers included in this inaugural report include: Abercrombie & Fitch, Adidas, Aeropostale, American Eagle Outfitters, Athleta by Gap, Burlington, Carter's, Disney Store, Express, Gymboree, Hollister Co., The Home Depot, Hugo Boss, Justice, The LEGO Store, Lowe's, Lululemon Athletica, Nike, Nordstrom, Nordstrom Rack, Old Navy, OshKosh B'Gosh, Ralph Lauren, Ross Dress for Less, Sephora, Toys R Us, TJ Maxx and Ulta.

Who Stood Out

The most highly rated retailer in the group? The LEGO Store, whose locations earned an average rating of 4.53 stars online. In fact, perhaps thanks to their highly demanding clientele, toy and baby stores took four of the top ten slots in the study, with the Disney Store (4.49 stars) a very close second, Carter's (4.31) in sixth, and OshKosh B'Gosh (4.22) in ninth.

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Among apparel retailers, Athleta (by Gap) led with 4.39 stars, due largely to consumers' ratings of its staff, product availability, parking, facilities and amenities. Lululemon (4.38) and Nordstrom (4.32) were close behind, largely due to their teams' abilities, though they got more complaints about wait times. And while Hugo Boss (3.63) did extremely well on staff competence, consumers did ding the stores' managers.

Leading the discount retailers in our sample, TJ Maxx won with 4.13 stars, followed by Nordstrom Rack (4.06), Burlington (3.98), and Ross Dress for Less (3.96).

A Few Tips for Consumers

- Shoppers looking for the best service, value and convenience among the discounters should head to TJ Maxx first.
- Consumers report being most disappointed by store managers at Ralph Lauren (1.2 stars), Gymboree (1.3), Express and OshKosh B'Gosh (both 1.4).
- Cosmetic shoppers: the excellent gift-buying-guidance at Sephora and Ulta does come at a price, as these stores rank lowest in the group for affordability. Consumers commonly complain about lengthy check-out lines.
- Lululemon (4.3 stars for staff competence) and Nordstrom (4.1 stars) top the list when it comes to in-store-staff support, but the time you'll save searching for the right gift will be lost during checkout.
- When shopping to outfit kids and teens on a budget, visit Old Navy (3.7 stars for value) and Justice (3.6 stars for value) first.
- If you're in a hurry, note that wait times will be longest at American Eagle Outfitters (1.3 stars), OshKosh B'Gosh (1.6) and Abercrombie & Fitch (1.7).
- You'll want to get to some stores early. Merchandise availability has been a challenge at Aeropostale (1.0), American Eagle Outfitters (1.5), Sephora (2.1) and Ralph Lauren (2.2).

The report that follows provides all the details.

[About Reputation.com](#)

Reputation.com, Inc., based in Silicon Valley, pioneered Online Reputation Management (ORM) technology for the enterprise market in 2006. With its SaaS platform, businesses across the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific gain actionable insights that help them make operational changes, improve online reputation and drive revenue.

Reputation.com technology has managed tens of millions of consumer reviews and consumer interactions across hundreds of thousands of online points of presence for global companies spanning 77 industry verticals.

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The Overall Winners

	Overall Star Rating
The LEGO Store	4.53
Disney Store	4.49
Athleta (by Gap)	4.39
Lululemon Athletica	4.38
Nordstrom	4.32
Carter's	4.31
Ralph Lauren	4.27
Nike	4.23
OshKosh B'Gosh	4.22
Aeropostale	4.19
Abercrombie & Fitch	4.14
TJ Maxx	4.13
Gymboree	4.09
Justice	4.09
Hollister Co.	4.07
Nordstrom Rack	4.06
American Eagle Outfitters	4.05
Express	4.01
Adidas	4.01
Burlington	3.98
Ross Dress for Less	3.96
Old Navy	3.92
Toys R Us	3.91
Home Depot	3.75
Sephora	3.68
Lowe's	3.65
Ulta	3.65
Hugo Boss	3.63

When it comes to capturing consumers' affections and overall star ratings, toy and baby stores earned four of the top ten slots in the study.

LEGO Stores led the entire retail pack, ranking at the top of the list with 4.53 stars overall. In fact, consumers rated LEGO well over 4 stars in eight out of nine categories of shopping experience: value, service, wait times, cleanliness, convenience, product availability, staff competence, and parking, facilities and amenities (with a perfect 5.0).

1) Where the Deals Are

TJ Maxx (4.3 stars) led the field for price and value, followed by Carter's, Burlington, Ross Dress for Less and OshKosh B'Kosh (all 4.2).

Consumers felt they were getting less of a bargain at home improvement outlets Lowes (2.8) and the Home Depot (2.7), cosmetics boutiques Ulta (2.6) and Sephora (2.3), and men's fashion stores Express (2.7) and Hugo Boss (2.1).

	<u>Value</u>
TJ Maxx	4.3
Carter's	4.2
Burlington	4.2
Ross Dress for Less	4.2
OshKosh B'Gosh	4.2
Nike	4.1
The LEGO Store	4.1
Disney Store	4.1
Nordstrom Rack	3.9
Adidas	3.8
Old Navy	3.7
Justice	3.6
Gymboree	3.5
Aeropostale	3.4
Abercrombie & Fitch	3.4
Athleta (by Gap)	3.2
Hollister Co.	3.1
Ralph Lauren	3.1
American Eagle Outfitters	3.1
Toys R Us	3.1
Nordstrom	3.1
Lululemon Athletica	3.0
Lowes	2.8
Home Depot	2.7
Express	2.7
Ulta	2.6
Sephora	2.3
Hugo Boss	2.1

2) Help! I Need Somebody...

Service	
Disney Store	4.6
The LEGO Store	4.4
Nike	3.9
Nordstrom	3.7
Athleta (by Gap)	3.6
Lululemon Athletica	3.6
Ralph Lauren	3.5
Carter's	3.5
Toys R Us	3.5
TJ Maxx	3.4
Home Depot	3.3
Nordstrom Rack	3.2
Old Navy	3.2
Burlington	3.0
Adidas	3.0
Hugo Boss	2.9
Lowe's	2.9
OshKosh B'Gosh	2.8
Abercrombie & Fitch	2.7
Express	2.7
Justice	2.7
American Eagle Outfitters	2.6
Sephora	2.6
Gymboree	2.6
Hollister Co.	2.6
Ulta	2.6
Ross Dress for Less	2.6
Aeropostale	2.4

For overall service experience, Disney (4.6 stars), LEGO (4.4) and Nike (3.9) outperformed even Nordstrom's legendary service (3.7) in consumers' reviews.

Athletic wear stores Athleta (3.6), Lululemon (3.6) and Adidas (3.0) scored better than average ratings for service.

Among the discount retailers, T.J. Maxx (3.4) was rated particularly strongly.

Cosmetic boutiques Sephora and Ulta (both 2.6) were more often dinged for service by their clients, who presumably have higher expectations than the typical shopper.

3) Wait for it...

Nerves fray and phones come out when the line at the register gets too long. Why not pass the time writing a scathing review?

Stores staffed and efficient enough to avert that risk and be rated highly for short wait times include LEGO (4.5 stars), Lululemon (3.6), Disney Store (3.4) and Nordstrom Rack (3.4).

While Lowes, Sephora and Home Depot had the greatest share of negative reviews about waiting, customers at American Eagle Outfitters were the most aggravated.

Short Wait Times	
The LEGO Store	4.5
Lululemon Athletica	3.6
Disney Store	3.4
Nordstrom Rack	3.4
Athleta (by Gap)	3.2
Nike	3.1
TJ Maxx	3.1
Aeropostale	3.0
Old Navy	2.9
Burlington	2.6
Carter's	2.6
Nordstrom	2.6
Ross Dress for Less	2.5
Toys R Us	2.5
Express	2.4
Adidas	2.4
Hugo Boss	2.3
Gymboree	2.3
Home Depot	2.1
Justice	2.0
Ulta	2.0
Hollister Co.	2.0
Ralph Lauren	1.9
Sephora	1.8
Lowes	1.8
Abercrombie & Fitch	1.7
OshKosh B'Gosh	1.6
American Eagle Outfitters	1.3

4) Cleaning Up

Store Cleanliness	
The LEGO Store	4.6
Carter's	4.5
OshKosh B'Gosh	4.3
Nordstrom	4.3
Adidas	4.3
TJ Maxx	4.2
Nike	4.2
Gymboree	4.2
Hollister Co.	4.2
Disney Store	4.2
Nordstrom Rack	4.1
American Eagle Outfitters	4.1
Old Navy	4.1
Aeropostale	4.0
Lululemon Athletica	3.9
Lowe's	3.9
Abercrombie & Fitch	3.9
Home Depot	3.9
Express	3.8
Toys R Us	3.7
Burlington	3.7
Ross Dress for Less	3.7
Justice	3.6
Ralph Lauren	3.4
Ulta	3.3
Athleta (by Gap)	3.3
Sephora	2.7
Hugo Boss	1.0

LEGO (at 4.6 stars) continued to sweep nearly all categories of shopping experience, earning 4.6 stars for store cleanliness – followed closely by baby goods boutique Carter's (4.5).

OshKosh B'Gosh, Nordstrom and Adidas (all 4.3) rounded out the top five.

5) Convenience

LEGO and Disney (both 4.3 stars) tied for top honors as the easiest stores to get to, followed Abercrombie & Fitch (4.1) and TJ Maxx (3.9).

Store locations for Hugo Boss (1.7) and Aeropostale (1.8) present more of a challenge for consumers to get to.

Convenience	
The LEGO Store	4.3
Disney Store	4.3
Abercrombie & Fitch	4.1
TJ Maxx	3.9
Nike	3.9
Ralph Lauren	3.8
Carter's	3.7
Nordstrom Rack	3.7
Athleta (by Gap)	3.5
Toys R Us	3.4
Adidas	3.4
Lululemon Athletica	3.4
Old Navy	3.4
Ross Dress for Less	3.3
Nordstrom	3.3
Justice	3.3
Burlington	3.3
Express	3.2
Home Depot	3.0
American Eagle Outfitters	3.0
Lowe's	2.8
Gymboree	2.8
Hollister Co.	2.6
Ulta	2.5
Sephora	2.3
OshKosh B'Gosh	2.0
Aeropostale	1.8
Hugo Boss	1.7

6) Let Me Talk to Your Manager

Manager Interactions	
Disney Store	2.7
Lululemon Athletica	2.4
Aeropostale	2.3
The LEGO Store	2.2
Toys R Us	2.2
Nike	2.1
Nordstrom	2.0
Abercrombie & Fitch	1.9
TJ Maxx	1.9
Carter's	1.9
Nordstrom Rack	1.9
Home Depot	1.8
Burlington	1.8
Athleta (by Gap)	1.8
Justice	1.7
Sephora	1.7
Old Navy	1.7
Hollister Co.	1.7
Lowe's	1.7
Adidas	1.6
Ulta	1.6
Ross Dress for Less	1.6
American Eagle Outfitters	1.5
Hugo Boss	1.5
OshKosh B'Gosh	1.4
Express	1.4
Gymboree	1.3
Ralph Lauren	1.2

Based on the numbers, by the time a retail customer asks to see a store manager, something has already gone less than right.

Disney managers get the highest ratings from consumers, at a slightly-less-than-neutral 2.7 stars.

Judging from the ratings consumers assign the managers of the rest of these other leading retailers, it's rough out there.

Express and Gymboree got unusually high volumes of negative manager reviews; Ralph Lauren's were fewer but more negative.

7) What Do You Mean, It's Not in Stock!

Disney (4.5 stars), Carter's and Express (both 4.4) are least likely see shoppers leave empty-handed this season, with the highest ratings for product availability.

T.J. Maxx (4.1) ranked number one among all of the apparel chains we studied for in-stock.

Retailers ranging from high-end cosmetics Sephora (2.1) to home improvement leader Lowe's (2.4) have ongoing opportunities to improve inventory management.

Product Availability	
Disney Store	4.5
Carter's	4.4
Express	4.4
The LEGO Store	4.2
TJ Maxx	4.1
Abercrombie & Fitch	4.0
Adidas	3.8
Nordstrom Rack	3.8
Athleta (by Gap)	3.8
Nike	3.7
Old Navy	3.7
Ross Dress for Less	3.6
Hollister Co.	3.6
Justice	3.5
Lululemon Athletica	3.4
Burlington	3.4
Nordstrom	3.4
Toys R Us	3.3
Home Depot	2.8
Ulta	2.6
Lowe's	2.4
Ralph Lauren	2.2
Sephora	2.1
American Eagle Outfitters	1.5
Aeropostale	1.0
OshKosh B'Gosh	n/a
Gymboree	n/a
Hugo Boss	n/a

8) Who Knows Their Stuff?

Staff Competence	
Hugo Boss	5.0
The LEGO Store	4.9
Disney Store	4.5
Nike	4.5
Lululemon Athletica	4.3
Gymboree	4.3
Nordstrom	4.1
Justice	4.0
Toys R Us	4.0
Home Depot	3.9
Sephora	3.9
Lowe's	3.8
Athleta (by Gap)	3.8
OshKosh B'Gosh	3.8
TJ Maxx	3.8
Old Navy	3.7
Ulta	3.7
Ralph Lauren	3.7
Express	3.6
Burlington	3.5
Nordstrom Rack	3.4
Adidas	3.3
Ross Dress for Less	3.0
Carter's	3.0
American Eagle Outfitter	2.8
Hollister Co.	1.9
Aeropostale	1.0
Abercrombie & Fitch	1.0

Staff competence was one of the most highly-variable aspects of consumer experience.

Consumers who wrote reviews related to competence gave Hugo Boss a perfect 5.0 stars, followed closely by LEGO (4.9) and Disney (4.5).

The significant majority of retailers delivered better than 3.0, suggesting they're making ongoing investments in training.

9) Shopping, Shopping Everywhere and Not a Place to Park

LEGO and Abercrombie & Fitch both got perfect 5.0 star ratings for parking, facilities and amenities.

Given their demanding clientele, toy and baby stores took four of the top five positions for parking and amenities.

Shoppers headed for specialty apparel retailers Aeropostale (1.0 star), Express (1.3) and American Eagle Outfitter (1.5) should allow extra walking time.

<u>Parking, Facilities, Amenities</u>	
The LEGO Store	5.0
Abercrombie & Fitch	5.0
OshKosh B'Gosh	4.5
Disney Store	4.4
Carter's	4.2
Ralph Lauren	4.2
Justice	4.2
Adidas	4.1
Lululemon Athletica	4.1
TJ Maxx	4.0
Nordstrom Rack	3.9
Nordstrom	3.9
Athleta (by Gap)	3.8
Nike	3.7
Hollister Co.	3.7
Old Navy	3.6
Ulta	3.4
Toys R Us	3.2
Burlington	3.1
Home Depot	3.0
Ross Dress for Less	2.9
Sephora	2.9
Lowe's	2.8
Gymboree	2.2
American Eagle Outfitter	1.5
Express	1.3
Aeropostale	1.0
Hugo Boss	n/a

Conclusion

Consumers are living and shopping in an age of near-perfect transparency now, as they post and read reviews about the service they're receiving at retailers.

The perfect shopping experience, far from being a matter of chance, happens when a retailer fully understands – and has the information to fully manage – every facet of the consumer's journey, from the web to the four walls.

Retailers have an important opportunity to capture the data available to them in the vast ocean of unstructured consumer feedback on the web, and put it to work to improve customer experience and attract more customers into their stores.

Data Table

Name	Consumer Experience Rating (with written reviews)									Overall Rating (with and without written reviews)
	Value	Service	Wait	Cleanliness	Convenience	Manager	In-stock	Competence	Parking, Facilities, Amenities	
The LEGO Store	4.1	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.3	2.2	4.2	4.9	5.0	4.53
Disney Store	4.1	4.6	3.4	4.2	4.3	2.7	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.49
Athleta (by Gap)	3.2	3.6	3.2	3.3	3.5	1.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.39
Lululemon Athletica	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.9	3.4	2.4	3.4	4.3	4.1	4.38
Nordstrom	3.1	3.7	2.6	4.3	3.3	2.0	3.4	4.1	3.9	4.32
Carter's	4.2	3.5	2.6	4.5	3.7	1.9	4.4	3.0	4.2	4.31
Ralph Lauren	3.1	3.5	1.9	3.4	3.8	1.2	2.2	3.7	4.2	4.27
Nike	4.1	3.9	3.1	4.2	3.9	2.1	3.7	4.5	3.7	4.23
OshKosh B'Gosh	4.2	2.8	1.6	4.3	2.0	1.4	0.0	3.8	4.5	4.22
Aeropostale	3.4	2.4	3.0	4.0	1.8	2.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	4.19
Abercrombie & Fitch	3.4	2.7	1.7	3.9	4.1	1.9	4.0	1.0	5.0	4.14
TJ Maxx	4.3	3.4	3.1	4.2	3.9	1.9	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.13
Gymboree	3.5	2.6	2.3	4.2	2.8	1.3	0.0	4.3	2.2	4.09
Justice	3.6	2.7	2.0	3.6	3.3	1.7	3.5	4.0	4.2	4.09
Hollister Co.	3.1	2.6	2.0	4.2	2.6	1.7	3.6	1.9	3.7	4.07
Nordstrom Rack	3.9	3.2	3.4	4.1	3.7	1.9	3.8	3.4	3.9	4.06
American Eagle Outfitters	3.1	2.6	1.3	4.1	3.0	1.5	1.5	2.8	1.5	4.05
Express	2.7	2.7	2.4	3.8	3.2	1.4	4.4	3.6	1.3	4.01
Adidas	3.8	3.0	2.4	4.3	3.4	1.6	3.8	3.3	4.1	4.01
Burlington	4.2	3.0	2.6	3.7	3.3	1.8	3.4	3.5	3.1	3.98
Ross Dress for Less	4.2	2.6	2.5	3.7	3.3	1.6	3.6	3.0	2.9	3.96
Old Navy	3.7	3.2	2.9	4.1	3.4	1.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.92
Toys R Us	3.1	3.5	2.5	3.7	3.4	2.2	3.3	4.0	3.2	3.91
Home Depot	2.7	3.3	2.1	3.9	3.0	1.8	2.8	3.9	3.0	3.75
Sephora	2.3	2.6	1.8	2.7	2.3	1.7	2.1	3.9	2.9	3.68
Lowe's	2.8	2.9	1.8	3.9	2.8	1.7	2.4	3.8	2.8	3.65
Ulta	2.6	2.6	2.0	3.3	2.5	1.6	2.6	3.7	3.4	3.65
Hugo Boss	2.1	2.9	2.3	1.0	1.7	1.5	0.0	5.0	0.0	3.63

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Methodology Note:

This analysis was applied to 411,429 consumer reviews of 8,161 locations for 28 marquee retailers posted on Google and Facebook between October 1, 2016 and October 31, 2017.

Overall Ratings are based on all 411,429 consumer reviews, with and without written comments. Consumer Experience Ratings include the subset of 141,276 reviews with written comments that could be analyzed for the nine specific aspects of consumer experience extracted from free text.

ⁱ The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that U.S. retail e-commerce sales for in the third quarter of 2017, adjusted for seasonal variation, accounted for 9.1 percent of total sales.

https://www.census.gov/retail/mrts/www/data/pdf/ec_current.pdf