



WHITEPAPER

LISTENING AND LEARNING FROM CUSTOMER REVIEWS

**A Partnership Between PDFfiller
and Shopper Approved**



a publication of



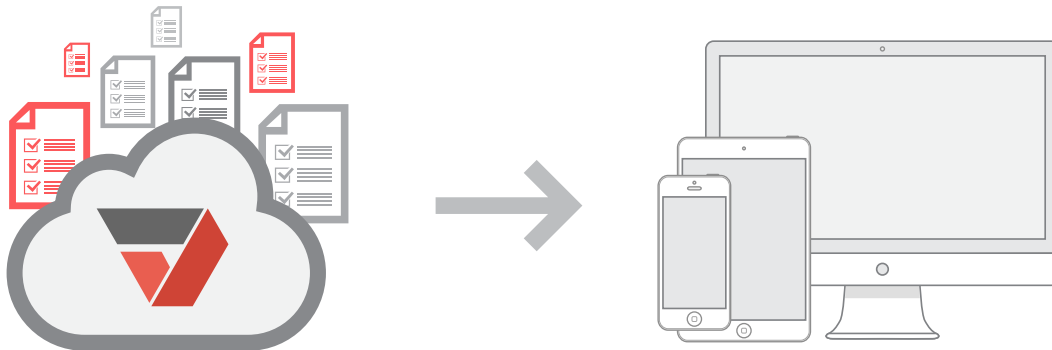
New businesses face a problem shared by everyone that hasn't yet built a brand. That problem is simply establishing customer trust in a company nobody is familiar with. Developing that kind of trust is challenging, particularly when people are unsure of how valuable your product is. Often, a customer's decision to go ahead and try your product is based on a limited number of features which they know about through traditional advertising. Without implementing other methods to increase consumer trust in your product, your company won't get the initial cache of early adopters and growth may stall before you can reach the whole of your potential customer audience.

These kinds of brand recognition and consumer trust issues are, to a certain extent, addressed by freemium models, in which the customer is encouraged to try the product at no financial cost. Instead, consumers "pay" with a small amount of their time and attention through actions such as watching advertisements or taking short surveys. The problem is that the product you build for people that are willing to try it for free and the product you build for customers that are willing to pay often end up being two very different products. It is also a notoriously difficult process to convert a group of customers who use your product for free to a group of paid subscribers.

This paper describes a complementary solution to the problem of building consumer trust that involves the use of a third party system to expose potential buyers to the experience of previous customers. The results of a collaboration between **PDFfiller**, an online PDF Editor and document management service, and **Shopper Approved**, a customer review service, indicate that when new users are exposed to the experience of existing users, it leads to greater consumer confidence. Moreover, soliciting and sharing customer feedback can become a crucial element of both marketing and future product development.

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A LITTLE BACKGROUND



PDFfiller Inc. is a SaaS company based in Brighton, Massachusetts. Its core product is **PDFfiller**, a document management platform that allows users to fill, sign, store, and share forms and documents like contracts and agreements via any web browser or mobile device. The product features unlimited cloud storage, a comprehensive online PDF editor that allows you to edit, type on and sign forms in PDF, DOC and other formats, as well as a range of document management options from sharing to Faxing to signature request. The company also offers 6 apps for iPhone, iPod Touch, and iPad that enable you to fill and sign forms and documents on any device.



Shopper Approved is a web-based reputation management and customer service system that fully automates the collection, management, and online promotion of customer ratings and reviews on your website, on social media sites, and in the major search engines.

Shopper Approved has two parts; an initial survey right after a customer buys a product, followed by a full survey after they receive their order. **Shopper Approved Trust Seals** are images that display your total number of ratings, your overall 5-star rating and your company name. When a visitor clicks on the seal, a certificate opens to instantly display your overall rating statistics and customer reviews to help motivate new potential customers to buy your product. **Shopper Approved Review Widgets** give you the ability to add hand-picked reviews to your web pages for visitors to read while they're shopping.

At **PDFfiller**, before we try any service or change to the website, we like to test the effect of that change on our customer funnel. In this case, we wanted to be sure that incorporating the SA widgets would improve a potential customer's experience.

When working with **Shopper Approved**, **PDFfiller** tested how the presence of SA seals along with their color, content and positioning affected key metrics such as click-through, conversion, and time on the front page, payment page, and landing page. We also experimented with different ways to use the feedback system in **Shopper Approved** to optimize open communication and customer issue resolutions. For example, we included a question on our feedback survey asking for feature suggestions from **PDFfiller** users.

Findings

Through a series of A/B tests run over varying periods of time, **PDFfiller** collected data relating to the impact a customer rating system like **Shopper Approved** can have on a SaaS company. The key findings from our experiments are that:

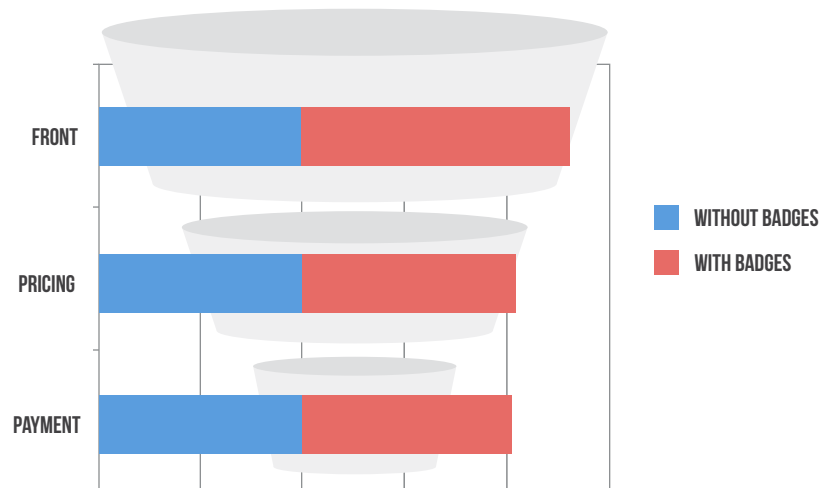


Certification by 3rd party customer rating software makes a difference.

The overall impact of using SA seals was stronger when customers first enter the landing page than when they make their way to the payment pages. In one experiment, we found a +33% increase in conversions from our landing pages and a 3% increase from our payment page over a two month span.

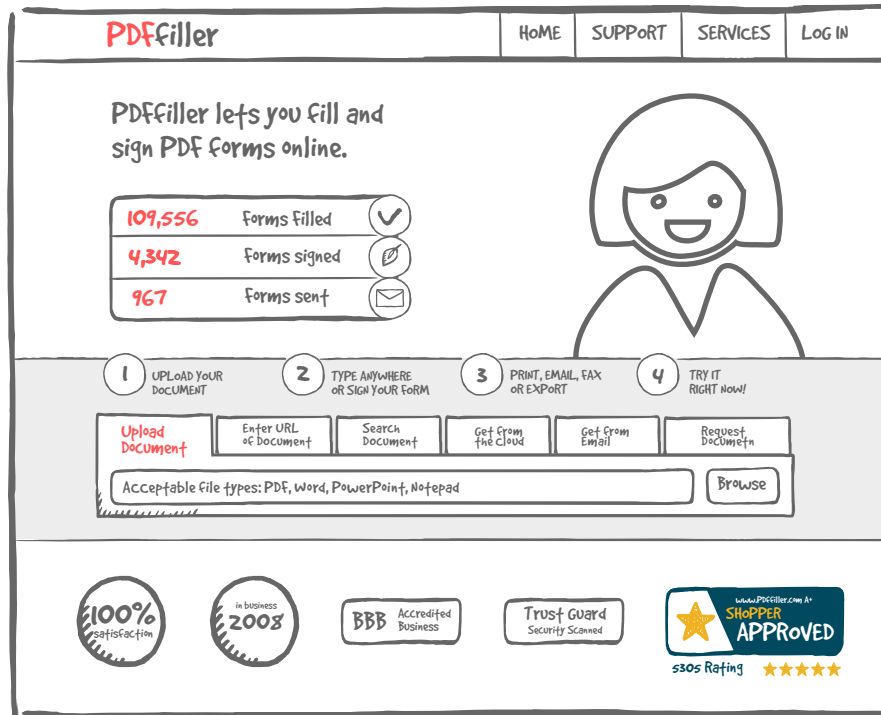
That said, the impact on SEO was not as strong as was initially expected. Click through rates improved slightly after application of SA star ratings on Google Ads and organic links. However, the effect of incorporating the SA seals on the website was comparatively stronger, with an overall increase in traffic of about 10%.

IMPACT OF SHOPPER APPROVED BADGES ON CONVERSION RATES ALONG THE PAGE FUNNEL



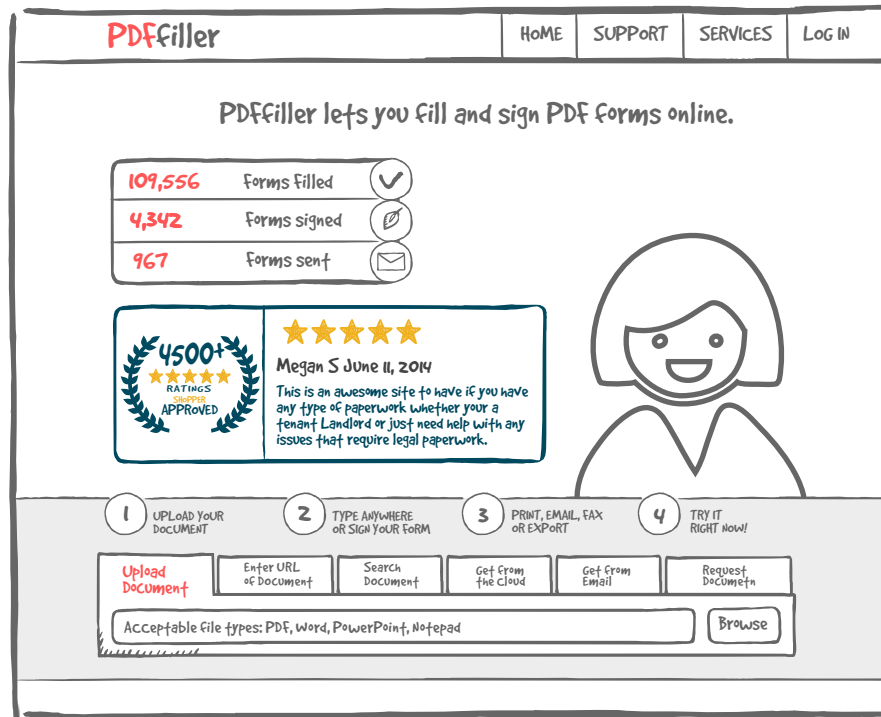
More prominent placement yields better conversion.

Factors such as design, placement, layout, color, content, and blending with page elements impact the results/outcome of the experiment. Ultimately the right combination of testing and following web and design standards is key to achieving optimum results from the incorporation of 3rd party seals and customer reviews.



The inclusion of large numbers of customer reviews yields better conversion rates.

Providing customer reviews helped potential buyers to see that not only had others purchased the product, but that their experience with it had been overwhelmingly positive. This positive feedback in turn encouraged other people to try it for themselves, thus leading to more buyers. Working with **Shopper Approved**, PDFfiller was able to build this customer feedback into our social media campaigns by tweeting to our customers about our 4,500 plus five-star reviews. In addition to increasing brand recognition, the reviews provided a way for customers to share information with each other about the specific ways they incorporate PDFfiller into their workflow to increase efficiency, deal with the needs of their industry, or simply to get out of a paperwork jam.



Moreover, with the opportunity to provide feedback, customers became more vocal about the product and the potential features they would still like to see incorporated. Using **Shopper Approved** helped **PDFfiller** to tap into the willingness of customers to provide suggestions for further development of the product, with positive impacts for retention rates and the acquisition of new users. Currently, about 30% of our new product developments originate from customer suggestions and requests. For **PDFfiller**, customer reviews have become an important source of information about what people value in the product and a key resource for building brand loyalty.

The collaboration between **PDFfiller** and **Shopper Approved** suggests that instead of using a freemium model that encourages your company to focus on the needs of non-paying users, you instead start by addressing the segment of users that may actually end up as loyal customers. In addition to helping you to develop a proactive and expanding customer base, this segment of users will ultimately offer you with more valuable insights regarding product development.

Sharing 3rd party user feedback is a model that helps to attract that segment of users through establishing consumer trust. It also has the additional benefits of improving search engine optimization, building long-term and transparent relationships, and helping to integrate customer feedback into the development of new and relevant product features. Ultimately, one of the keys for any business to creating consumer trust is by becoming more responsive to consumer feedback. In the experience of **PDFfiller**, when you invest in your customers in addition to building a great product, they will ultimately become your most vocal champions.