



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 with which few people are familiar**. 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 may end up being two very different products.

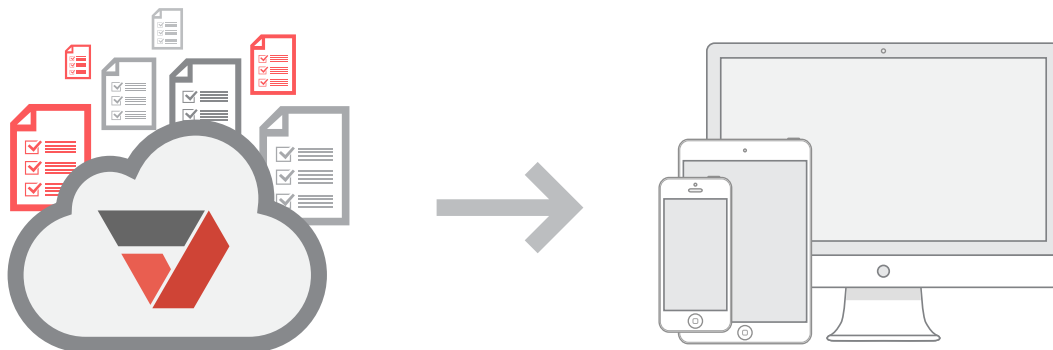


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This paper describes a complementary solution to the problem of building consumer trust that involves the use of a third party system to expose potential buyers to the experience of previous customers. The results of a collaboration between **PDFfiller**, 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 eFaxing 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 (SA) 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 appearance of the website, we like to test the effect of that change on our customer conversion funnel. When working with **Shopper Approved**, we wanted to test how the presence of their seals along with their respective color, content and positioning affected key metrics such as click-through, conversion, and time spent on various landing pages.

Using a series of A/B tests we tested the effect of the SA badges at three different points in the funnel: namely, the landing page - the beginning of the funnel where customers have their first point of contact, the registration page - where customers register for an account, and the payment page - where having tried the product themselves, customers make the decision whether to go ahead and purchase it.



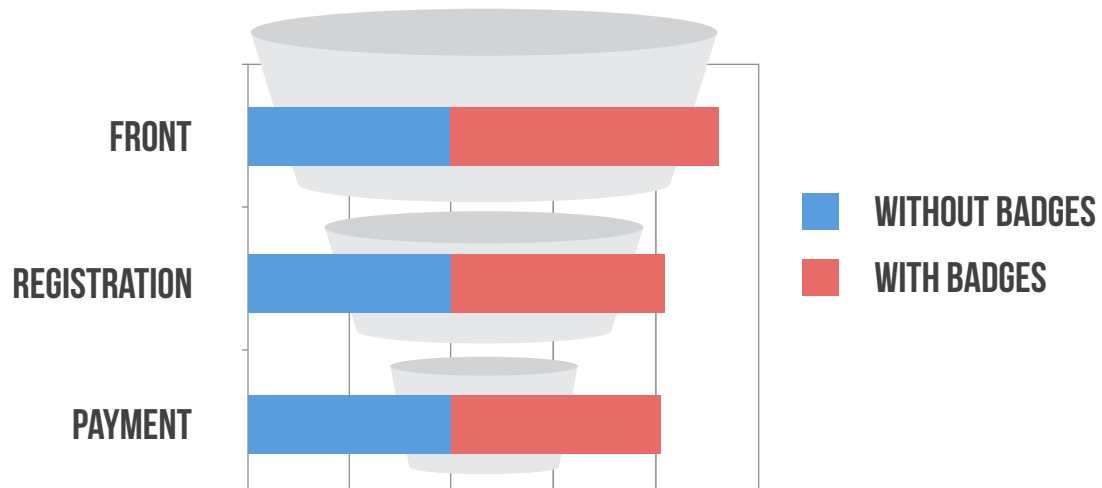
Placing badges at the front of the funnel increases the chances of conversion more than placing the badges at the end of the funnel.

The key findings from our experiments are that placing badges at the front of the funnel increases the chances of conversion more than placing the badges at the end of the funnel. 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 compared to a 3% increase from our payment page over a two month span.

This makes sense for two reasons:

1. Each stage of a website conversion funnel sees a reduction in the number of viewers. Therefore the benefit of placing badges on the landing page will be highest where it reaches 100% of customers.
2. By the time by the time customers reach the payment page, they have already made up their minds whether to buy the product based on their own experience of it.

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



Therefore the strongest impact of the seals is in terms of getting potential users to try a product. After that, the quality of the product is what convinces customers that they are making a worthwhile purchase.

Factors such as design, placement, layout, color, content, and blending with page elements will also impact the results of any 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.



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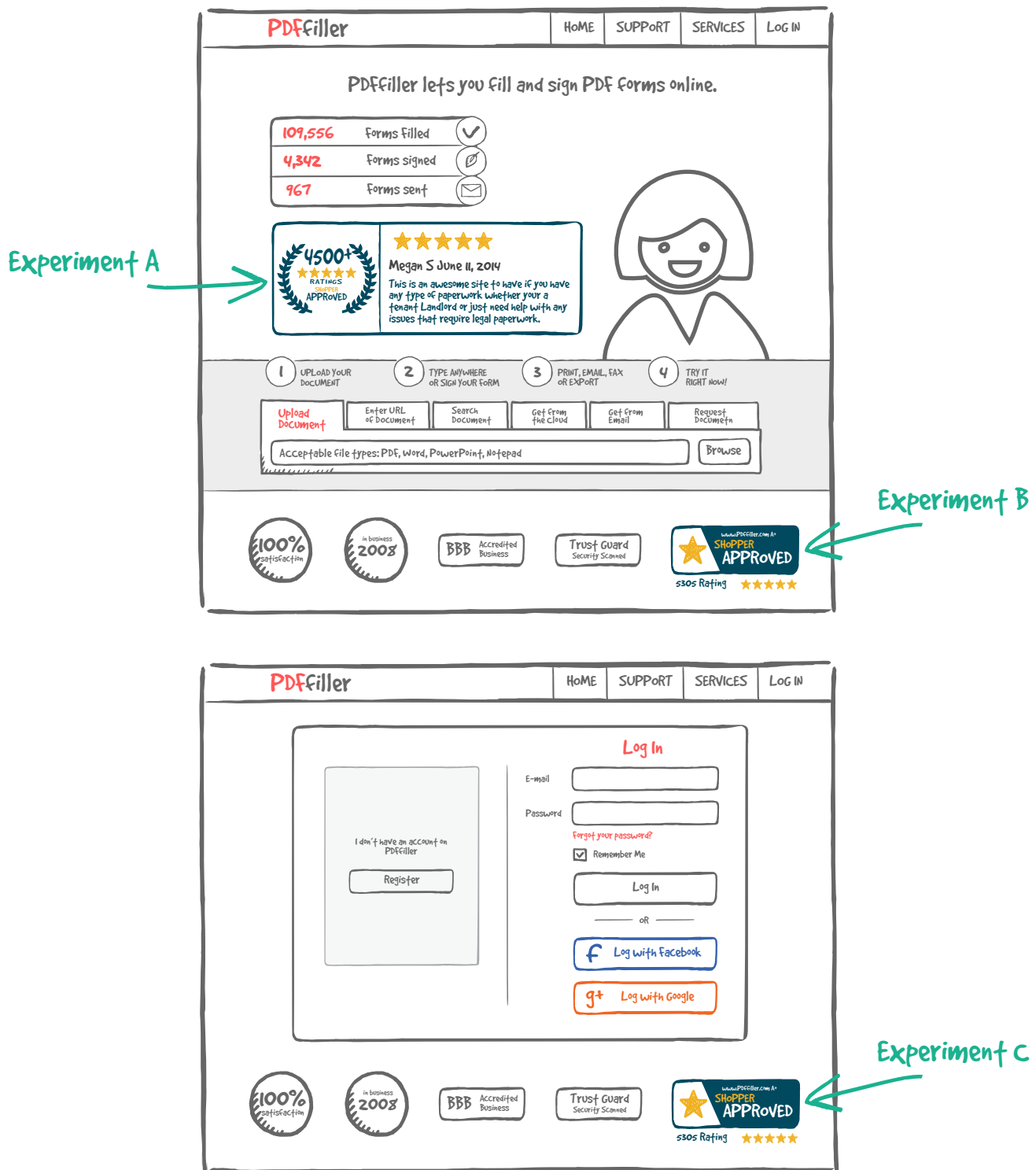


Figure A. Experiments used to test above-the-fold, bottom-of the page, and badge versus review placement on the front page and registration page.

PDFfiller
HOME
SUPPORT
SERVICES
LOG IN

Thank You for choosing to Subscribe to PDFfiller!
Subscribing entitles you to PDFfiller's premium features:

PERSONAL
\$ 5,99
per month
Annual Monthly

Fill and e-Sign any PDF or other document online

- ✓ Upload, edit, fill, type on any PDF or document anytime
- ✓ Email/SMS, print, fax, download your document anytime, anywhere
- ✓ Highlight, annotate and draw on your documents
- ✓ eSign using our unique DigSign Technology
- ✓ Create your e-signature using your smartphone or tablet

customer support WITHIN A DAY
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PROFESSIONAL
\$ 9,99
per month
Annual Monthly

All the tools you need to create professional-looking documents
+ All the features of the Personal Plan plus

- ✓ Erase, redact, black out text or add photos to your documents
- ✓ Merge PDFs, rearrange and add pages
- ✓ Skip entering repetitive data by creating reusable templates
- ✓ Create new PDFs with Google
- ✓ Docs integration

customer support WITHIN 30 MINUTES
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per month
Annual Monthly

Increased security and advanced workflows for businesses
All Inclusive Plan for Businesses

- ✓ Reinstate previous versions of documents
- ✓ Create customized signature workflows
- ✓ Protect sensitive information with our Encrypted Folder
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We are committed to customer support and satisfaction (if you're not happy, we're not happy)
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5309 Rating ★★★★★

Experiment D

Figure B. Experiment used to test bottom-of the page placement on the payment page.

Using a customer review service can be a complementary component of a campaign to increase customer willingness to try a product. While the freemium model effectively pays customers to try a new product, using a customer review service like **Shopper Approved** instead builds on the product's reputation by helping potential customers to see that not only have others purchased the product, but that their experience with it had been overwhelmingly positive.



We also were able to build customer feedback into our social media campaigns by tweeting to our customers about our 4,000 plus five-star reviews.

Working with **Shopper Approved**, **PDFfiller** was able to experiment with different ways to use the feedback system to optimize open communication and customer issue resolutions. We also were able to build customer feedback into our social media campaigns by tweeting to our customers about our 4,000 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 and deal with the needs of their industry.

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. We included a question on our feedback survey asking for feature suggestions from **PDFfiller** users helping to tap into the willingness of customers to provide feedback, 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 customer review services have their strongest impact at the beginning of a customer's interaction with an SaaS product. Sharing 3rd party user feedback is a model that helps to attract that segment of users through establishing consumer trust. By incorporating **Shopper Approved** badges, we were able to increase conversions up to 30% by placing them at the beginning of the customer funnel. Sharing customer reviews 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.



Sharing 3rd party user feedback is a model that helps to attract that segment of users through establishing consumer trust.

In terms of marketing strategy, the results suggest that instead of relying on a freemium model that encourages your company to address the needs of non-paying users, it is possible to take an alternative approach with a customer review service that will enable your company to reach 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, accessing this segment of users will ultimately offer you with more valuable insights regarding product development.

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, those customers will ultimately become your most vocal champions.