

Online Marketplaces

An analysis of the top 100 most popular
sports products on Amazon and Zalando

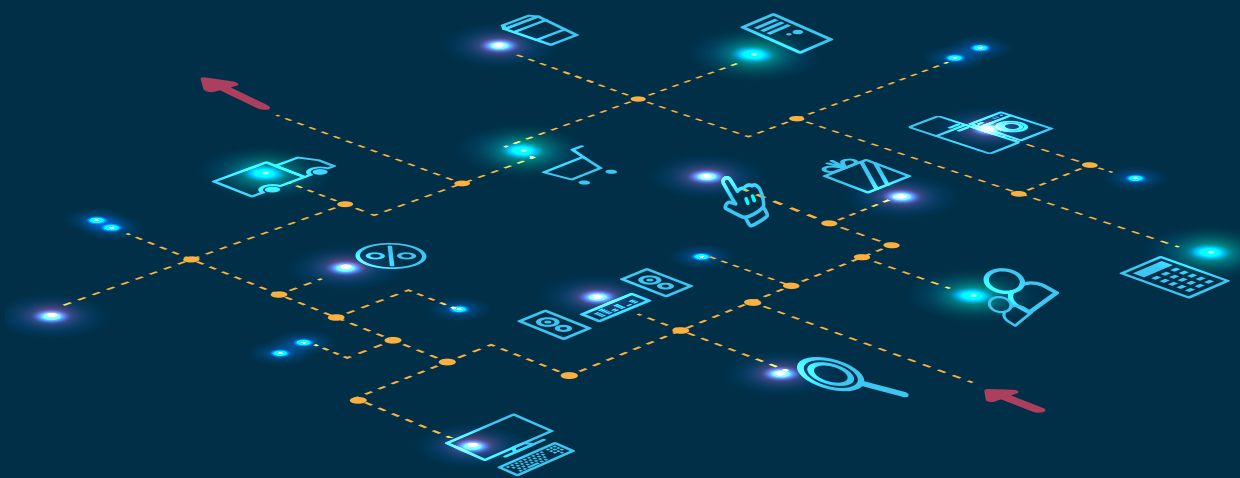


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Introduction

The relevance of online marketplaces has increased significantly over the past years. Besides the industry's pioneers, Amazon and eBay, many other companies have jumped on the bandwagon of today's [platform economy](#). Together with the rise of social media, this has also led to the importance of [user-generated content \(UGC\)](#).

E-commerce platforms have transformed the traditional retail industry and pose opportunities and threats for both incumbents and new players. For consumer brands it is vital to learn and play by the new digital rules, e.g. how to best manage products on Amazon.

As markets are flooded with cheap, non-branded products, consumers are beginning to rely more on product reviews, which help them determine the best value for their money. Those (often Asian) sellers perfectly understand the Amazon e-commerce system and pose a real threat to traditional brands. Similarly, new [direct-2-consumer](#) brands focus on digital marketing and digital sales and have shown great success

within short time frames. Incumbents across all consumer goods industries need to catch up and become quicker in adopting these new marketplace strategies and tactics.

In 2020 we have seen an acceleration of these trends due to the Corona pandemic. According to a recent survey by Territory Influence (Bertelsmann Group) "The Power of Ratings and Reviews" (Aug. 2020), the days of Covid-19 lockdowns and quarantines have caused people to shop online even more and to pay even closer attention to online reviews. Brand manufacturers will need to play an active role in managing reviews for their products if they want to maintain the advantage they have over their competition.

[This research paper demonstrates the importance of product reviews. It shows both the significant reach many non-branded manufacturers have despite their lack of traditional branding, and branded manufacturers' remarkable opportunity to improve their products' current market position.](#)

Summary

- Nike, Adidas, and Puma have the highest number of products among the Top 100 listings across the four platforms examined: AmazonDE, AmazonUK, AmazonFR and ZalandoDE.
- Big brands are present across all researched sporting goods categories and countries, whereas non-branded producers typically appear in just one category or on one country's platform. Hence, those could be called “[category killers](#)” as opposed to firms with a wide products assortment.
- The majority (61.5% for all four platforms, 75.7% with Zalando excluded) of all top 100 products across the four categories are sold by non-branded manufacturers, especially on Amazon. Here, single no-name manufacturers selling their goods on just one platform, most frequently AmazonUK, become more visible, showing that they manage to generate lots of reviews and sales without a brand name to rely on.
- [Fitness](#) is the product category with the highest review volume.
- There are many [non-branded products](#) represented in the top 100 list, especially on Amazon, proving that there is room for branded products to improve their position when focusing more on review management.

Method

Data was pulled from the top 100 most popular products (i.e. the top 100 by browse node) on three Amazon platforms (AmazonDE, AmazonFR, AmazonUK), and from Zalando Germany (ZalandoDE). The product list was generated by pulling all product review data from across each platform that fell into one of the four categories for:

- sports and outdoor shoes
- sports and outdoor clothing
- fitness products
- bike accessories

The bike products were only pulled from the three Amazon platforms,

as Zalando does not have a bike accessories category. Sports accessories were pulled from ZalandoDE as a comparable product category.

After removing duplicate product listings, the total number of products came to 1,520.

We have then focused on products with “reviews”, i.e. those that have a star rating plus a review text.

Star ratings without review texts have been excluded from our analysis, because they do not give users additional information on products and because companies cannot analyze them for insights into the strengths and weaknesses of their products.

Platform comparison: by product segment

All three Amazon country platforms have the lowest number of reviews for the shoe category, followed by clothing, with bike accessories and fitness/sports accessories being the categories with the most reviews.

ZalandoDE has the most reviews for the shoe category, with more reviews than any of the three Amazon platforms. In sports apparel, the ZalandoDE numbers are roughly comparable to AmazonDE, while in sports accessories they have the fewest reviews of any product category across all platforms.

AmazonFR has the lowest number of reviews, ranging from 6,000 for shoes to 14,000 for fitness. AmazonUK has the highest number of reviews, with between 34,000 and 77,000.

Supposedly, AmazonFR has fewer visitors and/or users that either buy less or tend to rate their purchases less frequently than those on AmazonDE and AmazonUK. AmazonFR users also give lower ratings on average. AmazonDE and ZalandoDE show a relatively high volume of ratings and

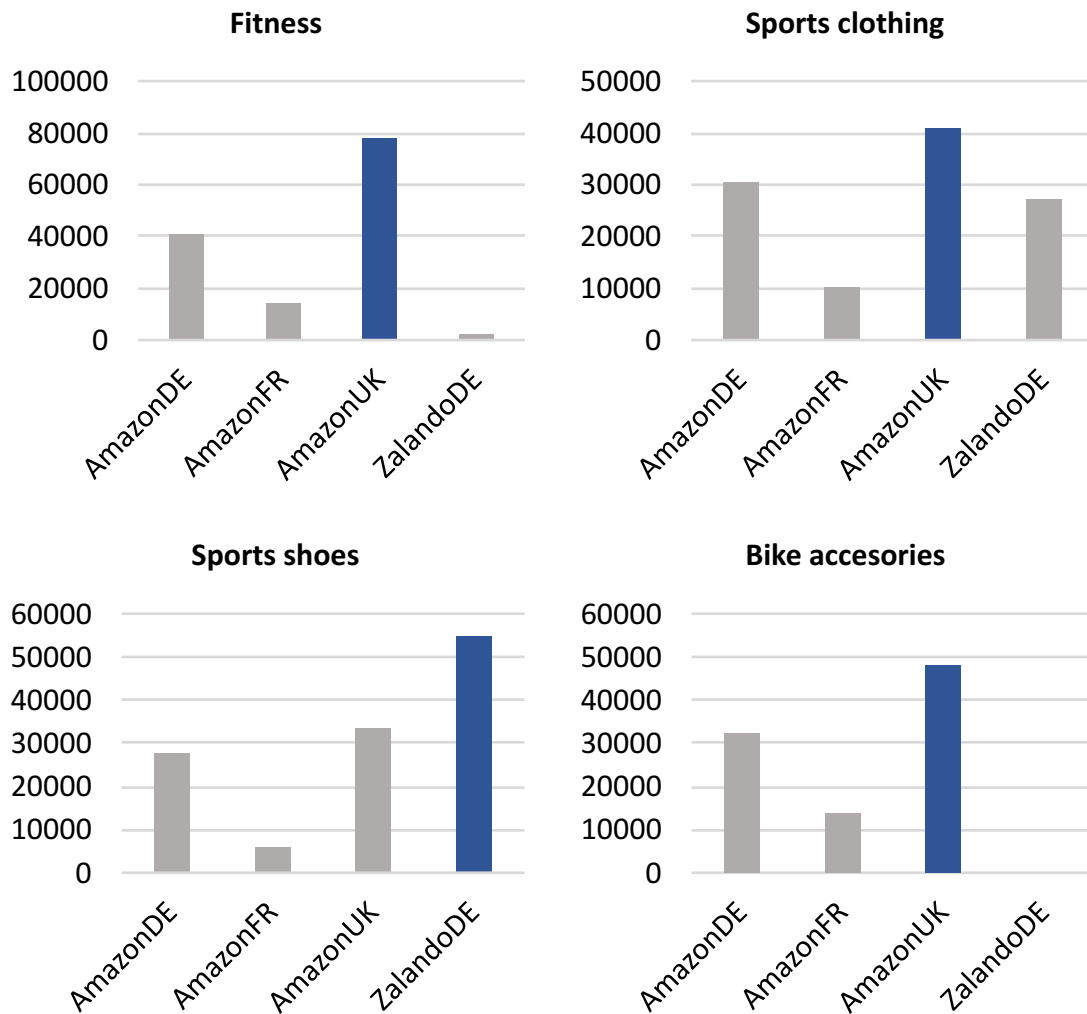
reviews compared to AmazonFR, but less than AmazonUK. AmazonDE and ZalandoDE user ratings are generally more positive. There are nearly twice as many reviews for shoes on ZalandoDE as there are on AmazonDE. Both platforms have roughly the same number of reviews for apparel, but AmazonDE has about twenty times the number of reviews for accessories compared to ZalandoDE.

Nike, Adidas, and Puma have products within the top 10 across three categories: shoes, clothing, and accessories.

JAKO, HEAD, Asics, Toplus, COFIT, Oakley, Under Armour, Uvex, BaF, and Proworks have products that are in the top 10 for two of the four categories.

Interestingly, the average rating per category is 4.4 stars for each of the four examined. There are only minor differences per category on individual platform level. The average rating on ZalandoDE is exactly the same as on AmazonDE for the respective product group.

Table 1: Review volume per product category



Note: the figures in the table above represent only reviews with user-written texts on the respective country platforms (i.e., no review syndication and no reviews with a star rating only).

For brands and retailers alike, the volume figures especially show that there are significant differences in each market segment and country.

This means there are still niches that both incumbents and new players can focus on to be successful.

Brands with products in the top 100 listings across all categories

The majority of the top 100 products are sold by **non-branded manufacturers** or smaller, less well-known players, often from **Asia**. Out of the overall examined data set of 1,520 products, 61.6% of products in the top 100 lists are not from well-known sporting goods brands such as Adidas or Nike. However, the non-brand manufacturers tend to concentrate more in specific product segments and do not seem to offer a wide assortment. Accordingly, they do not have many products within the top 100 lists in total. The only non-branded manufacturers ranking in the top 10 are Saguaro and IceUnicorn. In contrast, big brands are present across all categories and countries.

ZalandoDE is more selective in its vendor and seller selection process, therefore the entire product range is from branded producers.

As one might expect, the German heavyweights Adidas and Puma are much preferred by shoppers on AmazonDE. The most popular brand on AmazonFR is **Nike**. British shoppers do not show a strong preference for any particular brand. Under Armour, the most popular brand on AmazonUK, has only 11 products in the top 100 on AmazonUK. In comparison, Puma and Adidas have 25 and 22 products on AmazonDE's top 100 product list, and Nike has 21 products on AmazonFR's top 100.

Table 2: Top 10 brands with multiple products within top 100 lists across all categories

	Brand	# products in top 100 AmazonDE	# products in top 100 AmazonFR	# products in top 100 AmazonUK	# products in top 100 ZalandoDE	Total # top 100 products
1	Nike	8	21	9	75	113
2	Adidas	22	7	6	66	101
3	Puma	25	11	5	36	77
4	Oakley	-	-	-	37	37
5	Under Armour	4	-	11	16	31
6	Asics	3	12	-	14	29
7	SAGUARO	9	2	4	-	15
8	IceUnicorn	7	-	5	-	12
9	Champion	-	2	1	8	11
10	Salomon	3	2	1	5	11

Ranking: brands with the highest number of reviews

Nike, Adidas, and Puma have a high volume of reviews. However, the data is heavily skewed by [ZalandoDE](#). Here, top brands such as Nike and Adidas have 42k and 25k reviews, respectively. Maybe surprisingly for some, the review quantity on ZalandoDE is much higher than

on Amazon for the analysed data set. Further, there is a large gap between the few review champions on top and the large number of “followers” with relatively few reviews. This group includes both branded and non-branded products and leaves room for improvement for many.

Table 3: top brands by review volume

	Brand	AmazonDE	AmazonFR	AmazonUK	ZalandoDE	Total
1	Nike	2,772	623	1,198	42,766	47,359
2	Adidas	7,821	785	797	25,253	34,656
3	TEMINICE	-	-	9,442	-	9,442
4	Physix	-	-	7,988	-	7,988
5	Puma	5,172	1,252	724	638	7,786
6	Under Armour	912	-	3,201	3,404	7,517
7	Fitbit	-	-	6,914	-	6,914
8	Ultrasport	880	928	5,009	-	6,817
9	Beast Gear	1,678	342	4,398	-	6,418
10	Gritin	686	802	3,903	-	5,391

Note: the figures in the table above represent only reviews with user-written texts on the respective country platforms (i.e., no review syndication and no reviews with a star rating only).

This second chart, which represents the same data but only featuring Amazon's platforms, shows that non-branded manufacturers can generate lots of reviews and sales without relying

on a well-known brand name. This chart also shows that non-branded manufacturers have a higher rate of success selling on AmazonUK than the other two Amazon platforms.

Table 4: top brands by review volume (without ZalandoDE)

	Brand	AmazonDE	AmazonFR	AmazonUK	Total
1	TEMINICE	-	-	9,442	9,442
2	Adidas	7,821	785	797	9,403
3	Physix	-	-	7,988	7,988
4	Puma	5,172	1,252	724	7,148
5	Fitbit	-	-	6,914	6,914
6	Ultrasport	880	928	5,009	6,817
7	Beast Gear	1,678	342	4,398	6,418
8	Gritin	686	802	3,903	5,391
9	Shock Absorber	-	430	4,922	5,352
10	Gildan	4,844	-	-	4,844

Note: the figures in the table above represent only reviews with user-written texts on the respective country platforms (i.e., no review syndication and no reviews with a star rating only).

Ranking: leading brands by product segment – all marketplaces

The following data reveals which manufacturers have products with the most reviews across all platforms in each category. The top 10 products of each of the four platforms have been combined in one list and then ranked by the number of times their products were rated.

Clothing and **accessories** have the highest cross-brand appeal with products from 13 brands achieving the most reviews across the four platforms' top 10 list. The shoe category had products from seven brands that ranked across all platforms. Bike

accessories, on the other hand, are dominated by non-branded manufacturers, with only three brands represented in the top 10.

In the following charts, brand names highlighted in green represent brands present in the top 10 list on all four platforms.

As the data originates from a "most popular product" ranking created by Amazon and Zalando, it is possible for products that were purchased but not rated to appear on this list with zero reviews.

Table 5: top brands by review volume, category split

	Fitness	Sports clothing	Sports Shoes	Bike accessories
1	TEMINICE	Nike	Get Fit	Balhvit
2	Gritin	Regatta	Nike	nean
3	Maximo	Adidas	Adidas	Proworks
4	Fitbit	Puma	Saguaro	Beskoohome
5	Toplus	Bonjour	Nalu	king do way
6	Proworks	ShinyStar	Havaianas	Sportout
7	BLACKROLL	HEAD	Asics	Vandorm
8	KG Physio	ONLYuniform	SOLLOMENSI	SKS
9	Trideer	YouShow	Axcone	BEEWAY
10	POWRX	Asics	JAKO	WD-40
11	HEAD	Toplus	IceUnicorn	Diyife
12	Nike	Urban Classics	ECCO	Ion8
13	HZONE	COFIT	Teva	LEMEGO
14	BODYMATE	JAKO	WHITIN	Cocoda
15	FITFORT	ARKIM	TQGOLD	HYDRATE
16	OMERIL	HMIYA	Puma	Fischer
17	MQIAOHAM	Guba®	hiitave	Beto
18	WOTEK	Ueithor	BRONAX	ADORIC
19	iClosam	Sienna	Lakeland	COFIT
20	Adidas	YOUCHAN	Salomon	720°DGREE
21	Yogasearcher	Diadora	Mabove	Looxmeer
22	Casall	Love & Green	JIASUQI	Jooheili
23	Sveltus	Oakley	PAGCURSU	Grsta
24	Oakley	Ellesse	Merrell	QueenNa
25	Ultrasport	Under Armour	populalar	EXTSUD

Top 10 brands across all categories on each platform

AmazonDE has the highest presence of branded manufacturers across the three platforms, followed by AmazonFR. Again, it appears that UK customers have slightly less brand affinity than their European counterparts. It should be noted that the highest-ranked brand in AmazonFR, WD-40, is there with only one product, showing that a broad range of products is not necessary to achieve a high ranking in

this metric – although, as has been noted, rating activity is lower on AmazonFR than on other platforms.

Zalando again shows only branded manufacturers.

The non-brand manufacturers appear with generally a much higher review activity, especially in the UK, where review activity is higher in general, showing the need for brand manufacturers to catch up.

Table 6: Top brands across platforms by review volume

Rank	AmazonDE	AmazonFR	AmazonUK	ZalandoDE
1	Adidas	WD-40	TEMINICE	Nike
2	nean	Gritin	Get Fit	adidas
3	SAGUARO	Axcone	Gritin	ASICS
4	BLACKROLL	COFIT	Proworks	ECCO
5	HEAD	LEMEGO	Maximo	Teva
6	JAKO	Puma	Regatta	SALOMON
7	Toplus	Cocoda	Fitbit	Merrell
8	POWRX	Proworks	Balhvit	PUMA
9	Sportout	TQGOLD	Nalu	Diadora
10	SKS	BRONAX	Toplus	Oakley

Conclusions

As Territory Influence (Bertelsmann Group) showed in their survey “The Power of Ratings and Reviews”, people are paying more attention than ever to online reviews when shopping. Our analysis underlines that product reviews are a major factor for success on the examined marketplaces:

- Users read reviews.
- Platform algorithms take volume and star ratings into account.
- Reviews influence buying decisions across the customer journey.

We see that many smaller companies and new market participants know to play by the new online rules in a better way than many incumbents. [Success on marketplaces such as Amazon depends less on traditional](#)

[branding than on knowing how to read the right metrics and optimize the respective online accounts.](#) It has become apparent that [brands will need to improve their endeavours in this regard and focus more on review management.](#) This includes:

- Generating a certain volume of reviews
- Analysing reviews in order to identify strength and weakness
- Responding to individual reviews and product questions in order to engage with consumers.

In our study we see that Adidas and Nike are positive examples among the big brands at least in terms of review volume but that there is room for improvement for many others.



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