

# The New Review Indicator

**W**ith as much time, energy and money people put to become a doctor, you would think that if you'd made it as far to the point where you are about to start your residency, you'd keep going.

For Reza Lavasani, that wasn't the case.

When it came time for him to start the plastic surgery portion as a residency, his "internal spirit" was telling him that if he chose this path, it would be "for rest of my life."

"The thing was, I had always had an entrepreneurial spirit, but I pushed it to the side in order to pursue a career as a doctor," he says.

That is, until he reached this point in his medical career. And here it was that he made the unpopular opinion to get into the world of entrepreneurship, much to the dismay of his family.

With all the entrepreneurial choices pulling at him, the surprising part of this tale is Lavasani chose to launch a company *selling on the Amazon marketplace* with his college roommate, Farbod Rohani.



***Reza Lavasani launched Revioly to squash fake reviews and promote authentic ones with a unique platform that enables reviewers to try the product -- and then keep it.***

"We started Aroora Brands – with no money and only the spending power of our credit cards. To us, the future was all about online sales," Lavasani says. "We made a decision and stubbornly stuck with it."

Based on statistics, a very wise choice. Online sales continue to jump. In fact, online sales for 2020 will surpass the total online sales in 2019 by October 5, 2020. They put their faith in growth like that and jumped in the ecommerce market, selling products on Walmart, e-Bay and Amazon. They were doing well, too ... until they

experienced the glaring problem that all Amazon sellers have: Fake reviews.

How many times does the public go to buy online and immediately headed for the reviews section to check out what other people thought about the product? "Virtually every time," Lavasani says. "Reviews are a staple of online shopping. People rely heavily upon them in their decision of whether to purchase something – or not."

That reliance ushered in the era of fake reviews. "We were working 100 hours a week, studying and learning ecommerce and everything about

it,” he says. “We could see the fake reviews were destroying the reliability of the marketplace.”

So, they decided to join the battle against fake reviews by launching Revioly -- the first market-test platform that provides brand owners with early authentic reviews of their products *by* their actual target market. This new-to-the-scene platform is already squashing fake reviews by promoting authentic ones.

The risk was huge in trying to “solve the problems of fake reviews for Amazon sellers,” Lavasani says. “We were laser-focused. Amazon does its best to remove fake reviews, but the problem was bigger in that ecommerce was growing dramatically. So, we thought, ‘maybe we should find some way to help the marketplaces and websites have reliable reviews.’”

Bingo.

Clearly, fake reviews can make or break a product, and thus a seller. If a company is paying \$5 to write a good review of a product that may be awful, it results in undeserved purchases of the bad product. It also jeopardizes the legitimacy of the review program which, for some people (especially in times of COVID) is all they have to rely on. And, if nothing else, “it is plain deceitful,” Lavasani says.

**T**he concept of Revioly works like this: you sign up to be a “Revioler” and gain access to Revioly’s product catalog.

Revioly’s SAT (Smart Authentic Technology) works to score Reviolers to ensure the products they see are relevant. As a Revioler, you choose a product you are interested in, purchase it, and then test it out upon its arrival. You then create an authentic review for Revioly, and once it is approved, you get a full refund for the product.

“We don’t care if our target market wants to put a 1-star review or a 5-star review. We care if it is descriptive and authentic,” Lavasani says.

“Rather than talking about how a product makes you feel, we’re looking for reviews that talk about the different aspects of the product.”

Sounds pretty simple, right? From the Revioler’s

perspective, it couldn’t be easier. Trying out products for free in trade for an authentic review? Sure, why not?

However, there is so much that goes into making the process this simple.

“We do not have any investors and what we have is based on our own investment and a very low marketing budget,” he says.

That means 100-hour work weeks for Lavasani, Rohani and the Revioly team.

Without investors, Revioly works strategically to stretch every dollar as far as possible. The firm relies on the knowledge that sellers talk. Some sellers “love us so much they would come up with 10 more products to sell. They love the honesty and authenticity of the reviews and that’s how many people introduced us to other sellers and we got more customers,” Lavasani says.

The pandemic “had little direct effect on us, but many businesses were receiving products from China and then all of a sudden shipping stopped.” So while this meant lower revenue for Revioly, the situation is slowly improving. In fact, Lavasani sees COVID-19 as the catalyst that has increased the pace of ecommerce.

“The future of the industry will likely see issues with keeping up. The industry is going to grow very very fast and we are not ready for that. It’s a bit too fast and getting adapted to that isn’t even possible for a huge company like Amazon.”

With the growth of ecommerce comes the growing importance of the review industry. “People are working from home, having less contact with each other, less sitting and less chit chatting.”

What this means is that word of mouth will become digital word of mouth – a.k.a. reviews. “It matters to have reliable reviews and that’s how we think COVID will make the review industry more prominent and the importance of reliability, accountability, and authenticity as we go forward.” By Leslie Hughes, California Business Journal.

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