

chanel bag classic flap price

When Are Sales Too Good to Be True?

I wanted to figure out why this was happening, so I emailed the product listing to a media contact at Amazon. The next day, nearly all the reviews had disappeared, and those that remained were primarily negative. The listing now had just 43 reviews and it was no longer an Amazon's Choice product. The problem wasn't restricted to electronics accessories. An Amazon's Choice posture correction brace had 561 reviews when I found it on August 2, with an average rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars, but nearly all of the reviews were for other items, including dish soap, wooden spoons, garbage bags, dish-washing wands, allergy medicine, and a wooden spanking paddle apparently meant for the bedroom. I saw only a handful of reviews for the brace itself-most of them negative. It's unclear if review hijacking is a significant issue on other online retail platforms, but experts I spoke with say the problem is particularly acute on Amazon. The e-commerce giant hosts a wide variety of third-party sellers on its platform, using largely automated tools. At least 2 million companies beyond Amazon itself hawk products on the platform, generating \$160 billion in sales in 2018 and making the website a sprawling bazaar in which unethical sellers have an incentive to circumvent Amazon's rules if doing so will place their products in front of shoppers' eyes.

But another former Amazon employee I contacted says the company could be doing more. "It's a problem that affects enough customers and violates customer trust often enough that [more] resources need to be put against it," says James Thomson, former business head of Amazon Services, the group that recruits almost all new sellers to the Amazon marketplace. He is now a partner at Buy Box Experts, a consultancy for brands selling on Amazon. "You're being fooled as a customer."

"Dear reporter friend Hello, I am Adam Marks, the head of this FEEL2NICE brand, and I am very grateful for your comments on our products," he wrote. "Our products have been modified by other sellers and changed to sell other products, which led to other products in my product evaluation."

If FEEL2NICE had been the victim of review hijacking, its four sister brands, which also sell iPhone cables, had suffered the same fate. One brand's cables had more than 200 reviews for a hands-free dog leash, while another brand's listing included reviews for a reusable stainless steel straw. After I emailed them to an Amazon representative, the products were either removed or had the majority of their reviews deleted.

Tommy Noonan, the founder of ReviewMeta, says he first became aware of review hijacking in 2018. "People would write and give us feedback on our reports,"

not; says Noonan. "And they would say, 'Hey, your site is screwed up. I