Amazon Now Displaying Unit Sales Data for Customers

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Many of us are aware that Amazon recently added unit sales data for their customers on the product detail pages (PDP's). Sales data has long been highly protected by Amazon and not shared with anyone outside Amazon walls, so why now? To what extent does this data influence shopper behavior and sales? Can brands leverage this data to better inform decisions? What can brands expect next? Let's take a closer look.

Why Now?

It seems clear that Amazon has decided to add unit sales data to the PDPs to help customers make better informed decisions. Much like Ratings and Reviews data and Best Seller, or Amazon's Choice badges, Units Bought provides social validation for consumers that an item is worth buying (e.g., "if 30k+ bought this item in the last month, it must be a good value!") How much this particular data point impacts conversion rates, return on ad spend, and sales will be interesting to see.

What does this mean for Brands?

In theory, brands could use the unit sales data to better inform strategies around assortment, pricing, promotions, media campaign spending, forecasting, competitor items, among many other things, but as with lots of Amazon data points, reliability in data accuracy can be a factor. How often is the data updated? Why is this provided for some items and not others? Does it include all items in the variations? Will this data be provided in Amazon reporting (e.g., Vendor Central? Will it be included in the API?). These are just some of the questions that need to be answered before brands know how scalable it is and whether they can rely on the data.

Our Take on What's Next

We believe the addition of unit sales data will be significant once rolled across all categories and more items and accuracy is proven. We expect SERP aggregators like Analytic Index, PacVue, etc., will race to incorporate Amazon unit sales data, even in its current estimated format, into building more accuracy into their data model for brand and category sales share, and keyword analytics in advising media spend strategy.

If it is determined that unit sales data significantly impacts conversion rates, it will help inform media strategy in several ways. For example: How many units need to be sold for an item to achieve page 1 search placement? What ROAS can we expect on a term for an item selling a certain number of units and can we afford to bid on the top 100 keywords? It will also be interesting and perhaps useful to have greater insight into just how heavily weighted unit sales is in driving search relevancy. We all know it's #1, but by how much?

As Amazon and other eRetailer platforms continue to roll out new features and programs, we at TRANSACT help brands understand the impact to their business, and how to action to capitalize.