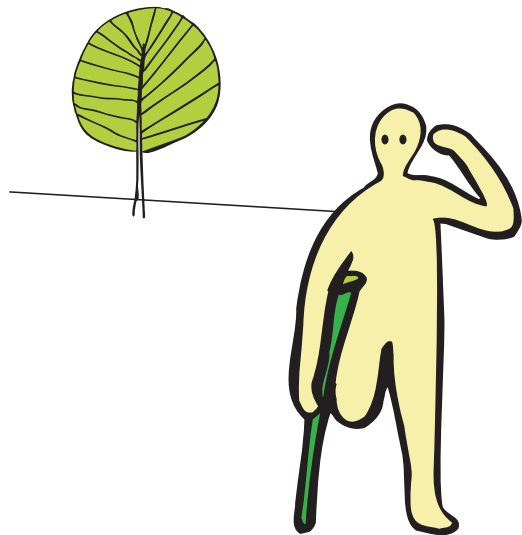

How user generated (UGC) saved the day. A cautionary tale



We were thinking of buying some armchairs for our office to provide a breakout zone. Chris, our founder, particularly likes furniture design from the 1950s and had been looking online for chairs based on the designs of Florence Knoll, who (*in case you didn't know*) designed the seminal 65A armchair in 1958.

From a Google search Chris found a website that appeared to offer a reproduction chair at a good price. The site, though not slick and obviously in need of some attention, was professional with pricing and delivery, and had persuasive content throughout. On the cusp of purchasing from the site Chris did a Google search for their company name. What he read changed his mind completely about purchasing from them.

There's a forum called 'Design Addicts' where people post comments and feedback on products and suppliers. The header that appears on the Google search results from this forum claims that the company is unreliable.

Design Addicts listed a litany of failed orders, lost money and appalling customer service. Even noting that unhappy customers are far more likely to post feedback than satisfied ones, the balance of feedback was weighted heavily against the company.

However, there were two posts saying that they had fantastic service and that the quality was great. Later another user posted back that both the comments came from users who had never posted previously to the forum and were highly likely to be scammers.

What killed off the prospective purchase was the thought that the company (*we can't honestly think who else would benefit from doing it*) knowingly placed false customer praise on a third party site rather than supplying feedback to the disgruntled customers with legitimate grievances. If they had tried to respond to the grievances then it would, in our opinion, have helped them a whole lot better. Ultimately the UGC led to a purchase going elsewhere and the writing of this small article.

This is what we do...



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