

Who's Telling the Truth?

The Explosion of Supplement "Review" Sites on the Net

By Paul Crane, Consumer Advocate, UltimateFatBurner.com

Just a few years back, I could count the number of prominent websites entirely dedicated to reviewing supplements on one hand. Now, a search for just about any product—especially those dedicated to weight loss—brings up dozens of sites. Many have names like “consumer-something or other” and give the impression they offer a “consumer advocate” type service in the genuine best interests of their visitors.

Most don't.

They are “fake” review sites designed to promote the products they either manufacture and sell themselves, or products which they are affiliated with, and earn a huge commission from referred sales.

Take, for example, the recent law suit filed against Utah businessmen Steve DeVore (of SyberVision) and Garret DeVore (of BlackStone Nutrition) that alleges...

Basically, the rules of common sense apply here. If someone is asking for your credit card while they are telling you something that sounds just too gosh darn good to be true, trust your instincts and do not make the purchase.

“...SyberVision and Blackstone Nutrition conspire to deceive consumers through Web sites that post bogus ‘product reviews’ that defame competitors and violate trademarks...”

The press release goes on to state...

“The defendants’ Web sites claim to contain unbiased and helpful consumer information. However, the ‘reviews’ are fake and the Web sites are nothing more than a marketing scheme for defendants’ competing products, which they promote on the sites.”

Unfortunately, these two guys are hardly the only two who are alleged to be engaged in such nefarious practices. The majority of review sites I’ve checked out lately are completely bogus, designed only to promote products for income.

With that said, how do you differentiate between sites that are bogus and those that are not? That’s a good question. Here are some tips...

Look for aggressive promotion of products available online ONLY

Generally these “review” sites do not promote regularly available commercial products like Hydroxycut, Lipo 6, etc. Instead, you’ll find they promote products which can only be found online and generally sell for about twice the price of popular, readily available products.

That’s because the profit margin on brand name products is low, and the commissions to be earned from promoting them is miniscule. Commissions on these online products, however, usually run close to the 50% mark, which means a lot of money can be made.

It also clearly illustrates that the additional cost of

these products is not used for developmental reasons (i.e., it's not because they include much more of the high-quality ingredients found in commercial equivalents) but as a major financial incentive to partners.

Follow the money

This is an important one. If you do a search on Google for a product of interest and see many paid ads for "reviews" of the product, be skeptical.

Advertising on Google is not cheap (you can use this handy tool at <https://adwords.google.com/select/TrafficEstimatorSandbox> to determine the cost of certain "keywords") and you can bet if an advertiser is targeting these popular keywords, there has to be a way to obtain a decent ROI (Return On Investment) for his/her money. They are only doing this to make money, believe me.

For instance, you won't see UltimateFatBurner.com advertising our reviews here. Since we earn the majority of our income from advertising, that means we can't afford to pay more than a few pennies for new visitors (which means Google is out of our league) or we would be losing money. The only way any site can place ads here and stay in business is to aggressively promote products that pay high commissions.

And we won't do that, of course.

Zero, minimal, or selective use of scientific journal references

Most of the reviews I've read on these sites boil down to something like this...

"This product isn't any good, and we recommend XXXX highest rated product as an alternative."

No real effort is made to explain why said product is "no good," and no breakdown of the various ingredients—along with relevant clinical references to validate the argument—are provided. Same goes for the recommended product. We're to take the recommendation on the word of the reviewer alone.

Inaccurate reviews

One review site, in an obvious shot at UltimateFatBurner.com and my appreciation for iSatori's Lean System 7 (LS7), claimed that new LS7 was nothing special, and certainly nowhere near as good as the old, ephedra-based product.

The thing is, LS7 has never, ever been an ephedra-based product. Pretty credible, huh?

Non-credible recommendations

Product recommendations are often made on the basis of...

} *A money-back guarantee. Feedback to Real-Customer-Comments.com indicates these guarantees are rarely honored. I have no doubt those making the recommendations know that.*

} *An overwhelming record of positive customer feedback. Positive testimonials are anecdotal. They can also be manufactured. And cherry-picked. We've received comments about several review sites refusing to publish negative comments about products, therefore presenting a "positively skewed" perspective.*

That's why so many people are overwhelmed when they visit Real-Customer-Comments.com. One of the things they regularly say is... "Wow! I can't believe all the negative comments here. All the other sites had nothing but positive ones."

} *The recommended product contains "patented" ingredients: It's a common misconception that "patented" means "proven to work."*

It does not. A patent is simply...

"...a legally recognized grant of property rights over an invention, formula, or design."

If someone is recommending a product only on the basis of patented ingredients, RUN.

The screenshot shows the 'Get Diet Solutions' website. The main heading is 'Best Weight Loss Pills Review - Top Pills for Fast Weight Loss'. There are three numbered callouts: '1 We Review Every Diet Pill', '2 Consumers Rate Each Diet Pill', and '3 We Rank the Top Picks'. Below this is a navigation menu with 'Home', 'About', 'Contact', and 'Reviews'. A search box is present. The main content area features a '3 Best Diet Pills' list with '1. Apidexin', '2. Fastest', and '3. Fenofibric'. A 'Reviews' section lists various diet pills with their ratings. The central focus is on 'Lean System 7', which has a 2.26 average rating from 162 votes. The text describes it as a 7-Keto product made by iSatori, claiming it helps burn fat without side effects. It lists ingredients like Yerba Mate, Guarana, Citrus Aurantium, Green Tea Leaf Extract, Dandelion, and Bioperine. A 'Proprietary Blend' section states that exact quantities are unknown. To the right, there is an 'Experts' Top Pick' for 'Apidexin' with a list of benefits.

One review site claims Lean System 7 is nowhere near as good as the old, ephedra-based product. The thing is, LS7 has never, ever been an ephedra-based product.

Recommendations for merchants who use deceptive billing tactics

Want an easy way to make money? Recommend a product that uses a free trial offer to add new customers to a recurring billing program with no mention of such. That way, you'll earn commissions every 30 days, when your visitor gets shipped a product they don't want, didn't order, and can't opt out of. Only the lowest of the lowest implement this tactic, but there are still plenty who do so.

Anonymous authors

Fake "review" sites don't reveal anything about the people behind them. This makes it impossible to determine whether they are credible, and whether a conflict of interest exists. On UltimateFatBurner.com, you know exactly who we are. Our names are on the site, we're associated with what we do, and we can be contacted.

Basically, you have a right to know who is behind these "review" sites. If their work was legitimate, they should be proud to stand behind it. If this information is missing, it's important to ask why.

Are you starting to see the patterns common to these "review" sites?

No science + aggressive advertising + umpteen positive testimonials + plenty of money to be made + total anonymity = HIGHLY LIKELY TO BE BOGUS.


It's all falling into place, no?

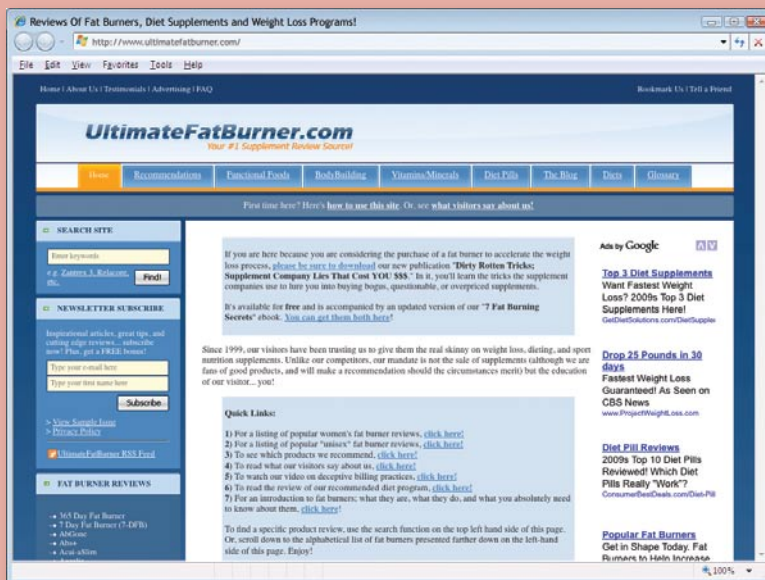
Basically, the rules of common sense apply here. If someone is asking for your credit card while they are telling you something that sounds just too gosh darn good to be true, trust your instincts and do not make the purchase.

Instead, visit UltimateFatBurner.com and see what we have to say about the product. Or, if it's not reviewed yet, use the Glossary to investigate some of the core ingredients. Alternatively, drop us a line at www.ultimatefatburner.com/contact-us.html and request a review. (We can't review everything, of course, and generally try to focus on the most "in demand" products, so the greatest number of people benefit from a review.)

You can also see what people are really saying about the product over at Real-Customer-Comments.com.

You'll be surprised at the difference!

In the meantime, watch out for the bogus review sites! 



You have a right to know who is behind "review" sites. If their work was legitimate, they should be proud to stand behind it, as we are at UltimateFatBurner.com