THREAT HUNTER

October 2026 Report on Malicious Water-Army Attacks Against Brands

October 2026

Monitoring window: October 1–30, 2026

Threat Hunter · Anti-Fraud Intelligence Research



Threat Hunter analyzed 651 brand water-army attack activities identified between 1 and 30 October 2026. The attacks involved multiple industries, including maternity and infant, beauty and personal care, and digital products. This report examines the distribution of targeted brands and industries, typical attack narratives, and the way comments are expressed—showing how water-army activity can influence consumers' brand perceptions and purchase choices, and offering a reference for companies seeking to identify and respond to organized malicious attacks.

Key Insights

01 Beauty and Personal Care, Maternity and Infant, and Digital Products Are the Main Industries Under Attack

Among industries that could be confirmed, beauty and personal care, maternity and infant, and digital products accounted for the largest shares of related attack activity, at 21.8%, 19.0%, and 18.3% of all attack activities, respectively. Beauty and personal care involved the widest range of brands; attacks in maternity and infant were more concentrated.

02 Product Comparison Is the Most Prominent Identified Attack Topic

Threat Hunter identified 168 attack activities involving product comparison or purchase choice, accounting for 25.8% of the total. These included talking points such as dissuasion and switch recommendations.

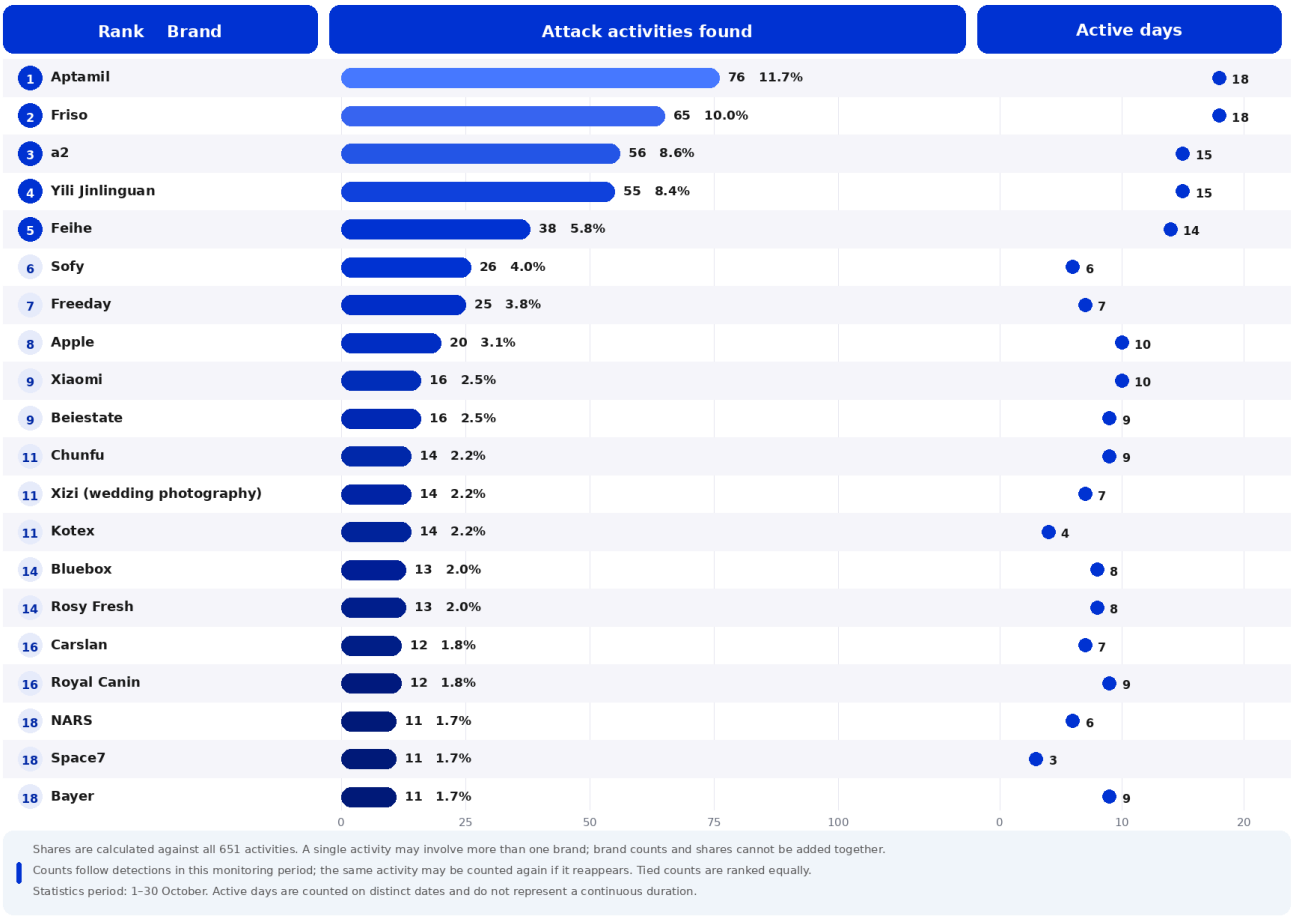
03 More Than Half of the Comments Use First-Person Expression

Of the 399 comment samples monitored by Threat Hunter, 207 used first-person wording such as "I," accounting for 51.9%.

> *The statistics in this report cover 1–30 October. Tied counts are ranked equally. Active days of an attack activity are counted as the distinct dates on which related attack activity was observed, and do not represent a continuous duration. Discovery counts do not directly indicate the number of people affected or the severity of the risk, and product accusations made in an attack are not thereby established. Brand names in the text are attack targets; comment samples are analyzed separately. Experiences, efficacy claims, causal links, and accusations in the cases still require verification.*

I. October Brand Ranking of Water-Army Attacks

The Threat Hunter Water Army Identification and Group Attribution Platform identified 651 brand attack activities in October. The chart below lists the 20 brands with the most related attack activity, showing both the number of attacks and the number of active days. The volume of content actually circulated, the number of people affected, and any losses cannot be inferred from this indicator.



The TOP 20 brands were involved in 275 attack activities, or 42.2% of all attacks. The top five brands were all in the maternity and infant industry: Aptamil, Friso, a2, Yili Jinlinguan, and Feihe. The remaining 376 attack activities fall outside this list. From a management standpoint, it is necessary both to keep tracking the priority brands and to retain the ability to identify health-and-safety, quality, and integrity attacks against other brands.

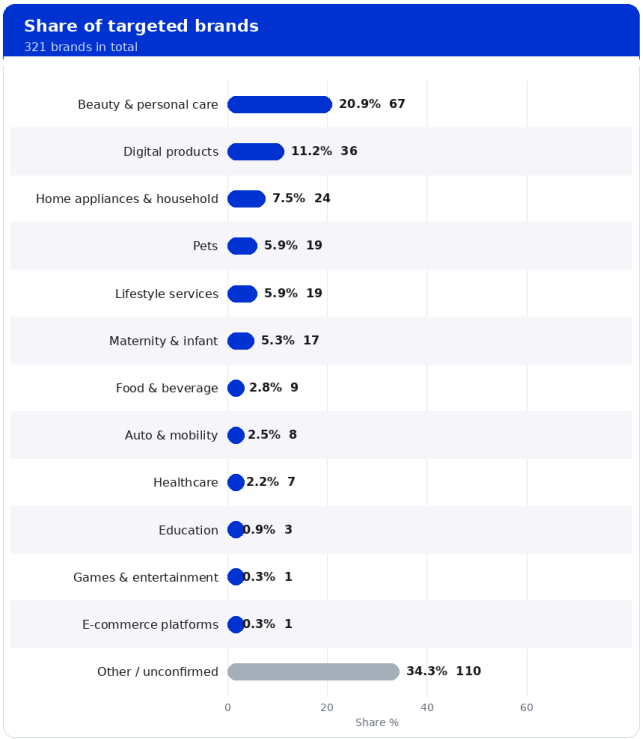
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II. Beauty and Personal Care Involves the Most Brands; Maternity and Infant Attacks Are More Concentrated

Among industries that could be confirmed, beauty and personal care involved 67 brands—the largest number—and 142 related attack activities, or 21.8%. Maternity and infant involved only 17 brands, or 5.3%, but 124 attack activities, or 19.0%. Read together with the brand ranking, a small number of priority maternity and infant brands warrant continued tracking.

Beauty and personal care brands need to cover a relatively wide set of brands and product issues; maternity and infant brands should keep watching priority names for claims about physical reactions, growth effects, and switch recommendations. What is shown here is the distribution of attack activity in this period—not market share, and

not the probability that a brand will be attacked.





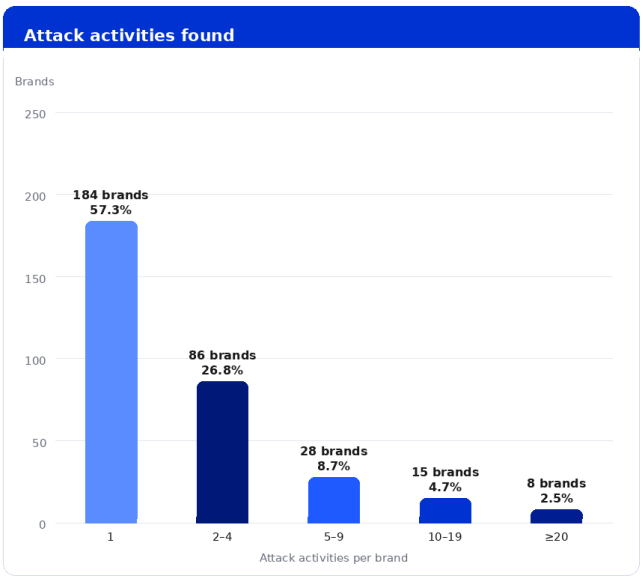
A single activity may involve more than one industry; the shares in the right-hand chart cannot be added together.

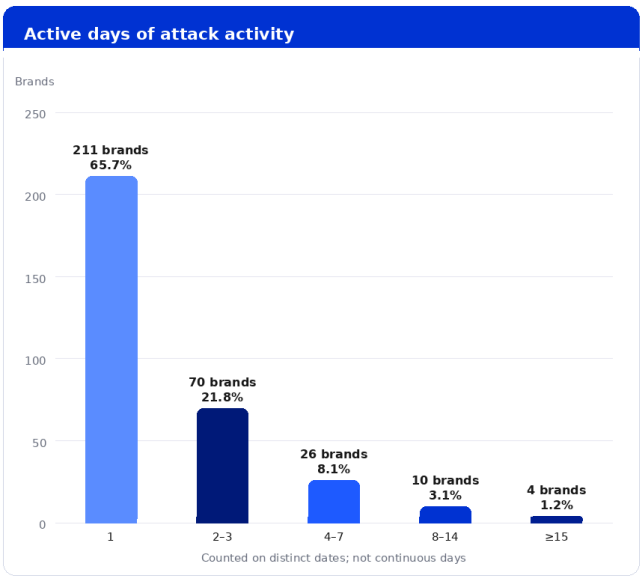
Industry Monitoring Needs to Distinguish Scope from Focus

The number of targeted brands shows how wide an attack's reach is; the number of activities shows where attacks are concentrated. The two indicators need to be read together. A large number of brands alone does not mean that an industry has suffered more severe actual impact.

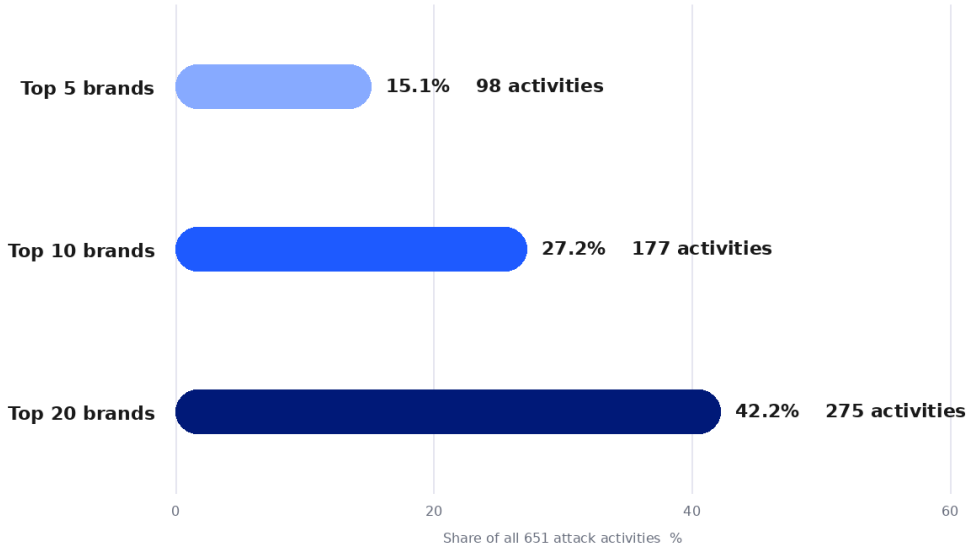
III. A Small Number of Brands Faced Repeated Water-Army Attacks

Among the brands observed in this round of water-army attacks, 184 were involved in only one attack activity, or 57.3%; only eight brands reached 20 or more activities, or 2.5%. Related attacks were found on only one day for 211 brands, or 65.7%; only four brands had related attacks on 15 or more days. Many brands were targeted, but brands with a larger number of attack activities and more active days were mainly a small minority.





Shares in both charts are calculated against all 321 targeted brands.



Repeated Attacks Require Tracking How Narratives Change

When the same brand is attacked repeatedly, it is worth watching whether the talking points are recycled, and whether they extend from purchase Q&A into use experience or after-sales complaints. When only one attack activity is found, the specific claims and factual basis should be clarified first, and only then should a response be decided. Where serious health or business accusations are involved, verification should be prioritized even if the discovery count is low.

IV. How Water-Army Attacks Target Key Brands

The brand ranking answers who needs attention; the attack narratives answer what should be examined. The chart below selects five brands and shows the typical topics used against them.

Which issues do water-army attacks target?

Illustrative mappings; the links do not imply connections among brands.

Attack target	Typical attack topics	
Feihe	A child's growth	Whether formula dissolves well
Beiestate	Workmanship and durability	Product odor
Freeday	Comfort in use	Switching to other products
Sofy	Breathability	Comfort in use
Apple	Whether features work well	Performance in different situations

Brands are attack targets; the product issues shown still require verification.

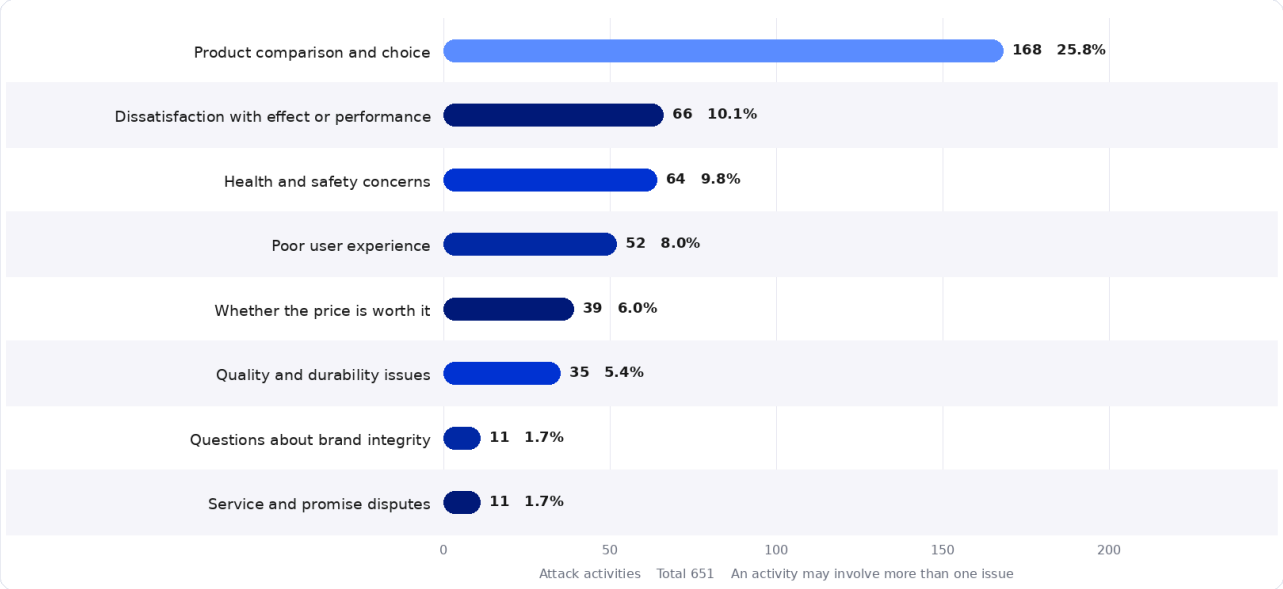
Maternity and Infant Attacks Center on Health and Growth Concerns

Aptamil, Friso, a2, Yili Jinlinguan, and Feihe were involved in 76, 65, 56, 55, and 38 attack activities, respectively. Of the 124 attack activities in the maternity and infant industry, 47 contained health-and-safety concern talking points, and 42 discussed dissatisfaction with effect or performance. Brands need to address parents' specific worries, the conditions under which the product is used, and whether an individual experience can support a general conclusion. These industry-level statistics cannot be applied directly to every brand.

Personal Care and Digital Products Call for Different Comparison Conditions

Sofy, Freeday, and Kotex were involved in 26, 25, and 14 attack activities, respectively. Typical claims in personal care concerned wear and use feel, comfort, and switching to other products. Apple and Xiaomi were involved in 20 and 16 attack activities, respectively. Negative attacks on digital products more readily proceed through comparisons among brands, models, and performance, amplifying differences in a particular function or in a specific use scenario in order to influence consumers' judgment of the brand's overall performance.

V. Product Comparison Is Used to Interfere with Purchase Decisions



Attack activities total 651. An activity may involve more than one issue.

Of the attack activities monitored in this period, 168 contained talking points on product comparison or purchase choice, accounting for 25.8%—the largest share among topics that could be clearly classified. Dissatisfaction with effect or performance was involved in 66 attack activities, and health-and-safety concerns in 64.

For brands, identifying this type of attack means looking not only at what is said about them, but also at what the attack ultimately urges consumers to buy or switch to.

Different Attacks Call for Different Factual Responses

In a specific response, product comparisons should be checked against the comparison objects and use conditions; claims about effect, quality, and discomfort in use should be verified against the specific product and experience. Health-and-safety claims should have their facts clarified first; attacks on price, service, and integrity should be checked item by item against marketing, orders, and promises. A general appeal to brand reputation is unlikely to answer these specific questions.

VI. Attacks Are Embedded in Everyday Consumption Scenarios

The same type of attack raises different management issues when it enters different consumption scenarios. Before a purchase, water-army activity may use comparison and recommendations to influence which brand a consumer chooses. In discussions of product use, descriptions of a poor experience, or agreement with other users' similar negative experiences, may reinforce dissatisfaction. Once a formal complaint is made, the brand needs to have orders, promises, and handling records ready.

How water-army attacks enter consumption decisions

Illustrative talking points: the five scenarios can appear independently; the right side shows potential impact.

Scenarios in the attack narratives	How judgment may be affected
Shopping and asking for recommendations	Changes the comparison and consideration order of candidate products
Sharing use experience	Presents personal feelings as general effects
Daily life and caregiving	Uses empathy and care-related worries to recommend other products
Price or service disputes	Expands dissatisfaction with one transaction into distrust of the brand
Complaints and follow-up handling	May affect content display or normal operations

Arrows indicate potential risk only. They do not mean the impact has already occurred, nor a fixed sequence.

Start with the Judgment the Consumer Is Making

Questions such as “Is this right for me,” “Why should I switch,” and “What happens if something goes wrong” are the specific issues brands need to answer. An attack may revolve around only one of these questions, or it may string together several passages of talking points in an attempt to push the consumer toward another product.

In analysis, two things should be examined separately: whether the content is talking about health, effect, or price; and whether it is expressed as a first-person account, a question, agreement, or a recommendation. Only when the two are read together is it possible to understand how the attack influences judgment.

VII. Health Anxiety Is Used to Introduce Switch Recommendations

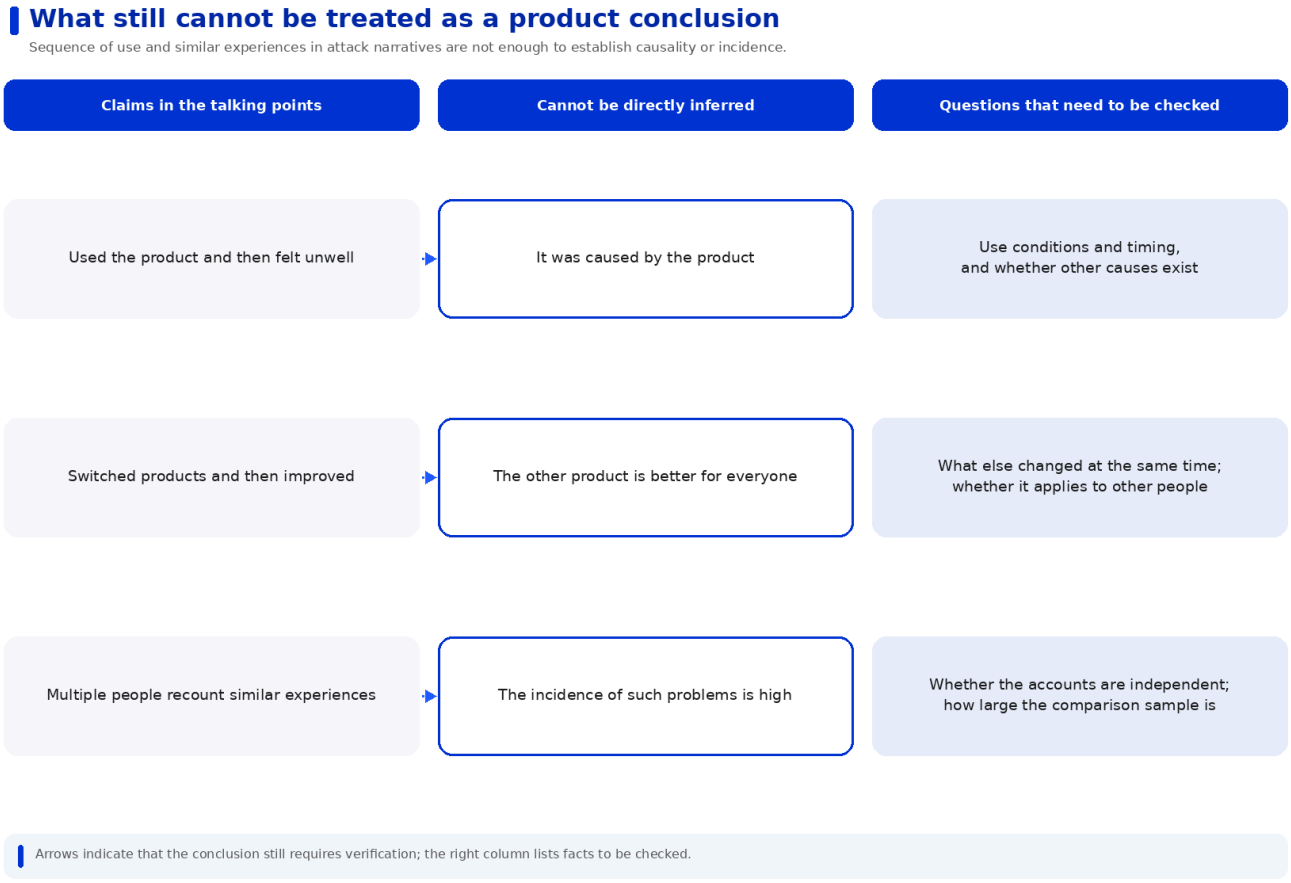
Among the attacks monitored by Threat Hunter, 64 attack activities contained health-and-safety concern talking points. Of these, 21 also explicitly mentioned switching to another product, or 32.8%; in 10 cases, both points appeared in the same passage. Brands need both to verify the symptoms described and to establish why the original product is said to have caused them, and why another product is recommended.

Example of an Attack Narrative: A Parenting Q&A Funnels Multiple Worries Toward One Product

Take a water-army attack observed against a maternity and infant brand. One type of narrative first raises worries about a baby’s digestion or growth, then adds similar experiences in a parent’s voice, and then claims that the situation improved after switching to another product. Follow-up replies continue to discuss taste, acceptance,

and longer-term use. Each reply appears to answer a small question, but the conversation as a whole gradually steers different worries toward the same product.

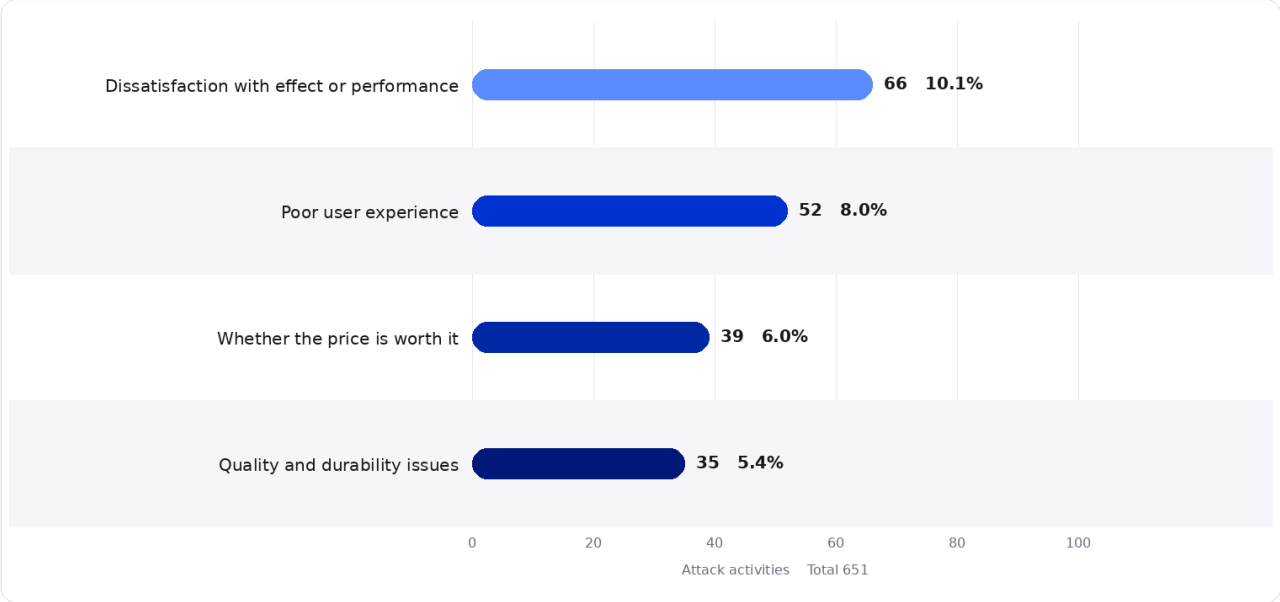
By fabricating or concentrating the circulation of accounts that “things got better after switching products,” water-army activity can lead consumers to believe that the original brand’s product is flawed and that the recommended alternative is better. Those claims themselves do not prove that such a difference between the products actually exists.



Of the 399 comments, three claimed severe health harm. Such claims should be verified first and reviewed by qualified professionals. In responding, consumers’ feelings should be taken seriously, while unconfirmed medical conclusions should not be repeated.

VIII. Individual Experiences Are Amplified into Brand Problems

Effect, use feel, and quality are often mixed together in an attack. “It did not meet expectations,” “it was uncomfortable to use,” and “it was damaged” require different kinds of verification and cannot all be answered with a single statement that “the product is qualified.”



Specific details in the attacks included growth or cleaning effects, signal and battery life, odor and skin feel, noise and comfort, as well as breakage, leakage, and malfunctions. A single experience does not prove that all products are ineffective, and a sense that the price is not worth it does not equal deception by the brand.

Example of an Attack Narrative: Several Small Issues Are Assembled into an Impression That the Brand Is Unreliable

One type of narrative used against infant products discussed wrinkles, tears, trapped dust, odor, and a poor fit, and added details such as “after I received it,” “after a short period of use,” and “the baby at home.” Some replies also claimed that customer service attributed the problem to improper use. Combined, these claims readily create the impression that the brand is expensive yet unreliable in quality.

Each use problem and after-sales experience in the talking points should be verified against the product, the order, and the conditions of use. Brands need both to deal with problems that do exist and to correct claims that expand an individual experience into a conclusion that all products are flawed.

Brands should answer by model, use conditions, the specific issue, and the service commitment. Solving real problems and correcting amplified conclusions should proceed at the same time; overall reputation and a general statement of qualification cannot replace case-by-case handling.

IX. Shopping-Guide Talk Is Packaged as Everyday Sharing

Among the attacks monitored by Threat Hunter, 168 attack activities contained talking points on product comparison or purchase choice. Some were direct dissuasion; others used milder wording such as “more suitable” or “improved after switching.” Whether an attack warrants attention depends on the basis of the comparison and the direction of the recommendation, not only on whether the tone is aggressive.

Example of an Attack Narrative: Everyday Troubles Are Used to Lead into a Purchase Recommendation

One type of attack unfolds through everyday topics such as overtime work, job hunting, and study: it first expresses understanding, then recounts a product experience in the voice of a similarly busy user. It then compares another product as “more comfortable” or “more convenient,” and finally adds information about a repurchase or a promotional purchase. The tone is calm, but the text already contains a product comparison and a purchase suggestion.

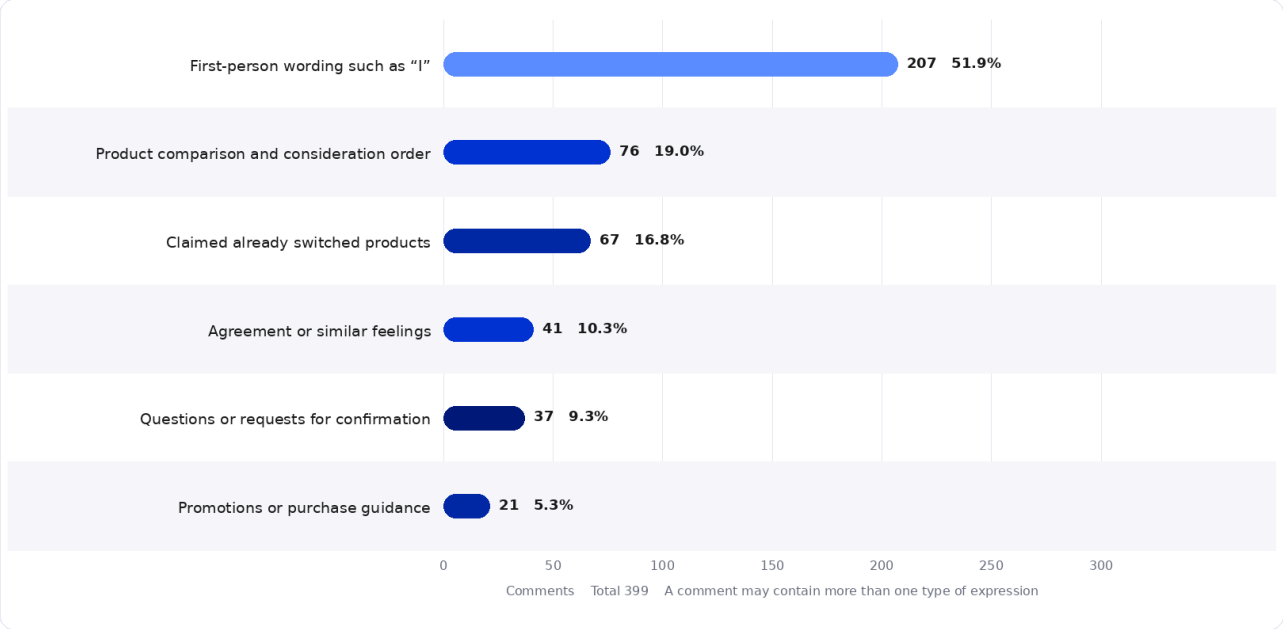
This writing embeds shopping-guide talk in everyday conversation and is easily taken for organic word of mouth. Brands need to look both at the basis of the comparison and at what is ultimately being recommended; attacks cannot be identified by negative wording alone.



Percentages at the end of each bar are of all 399 comments; percentages on the right are within each category.
“Of these” refers to a subset already counted in that category. Expression types may overlap.

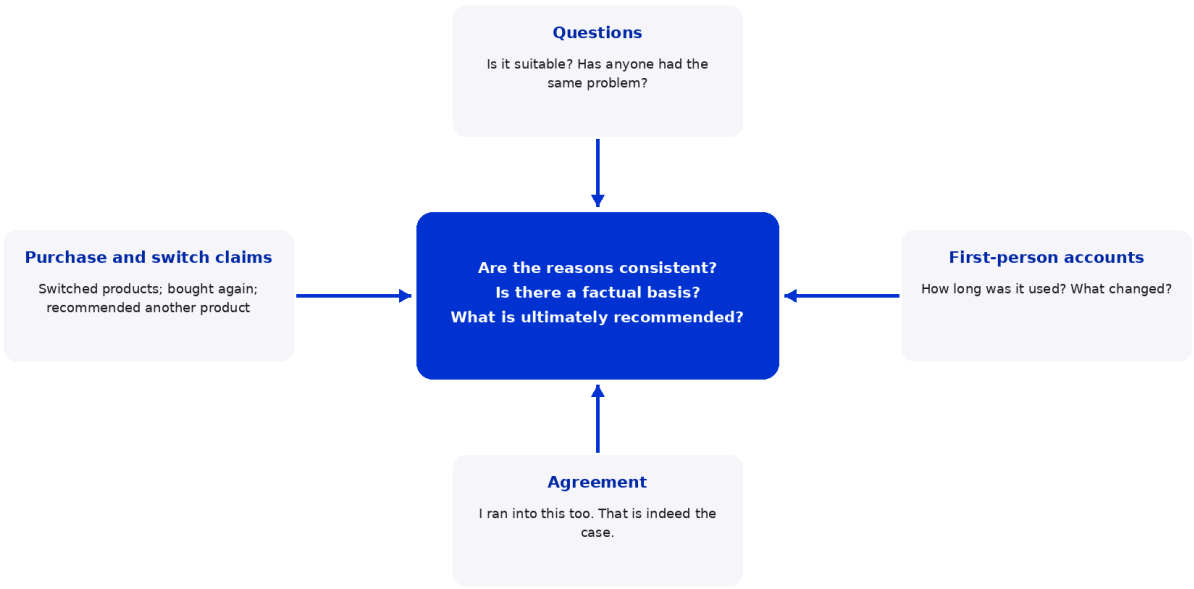
The same comment may both compare products and describe an already completed switch, or add a purchase promotion. Praise for another product can likewise affect the original brand. Brands should check whether the comparison conditions are consistent, whether the experience-based conclusion goes beyond its applicable scope, and whether the purchase suggestion rests on unverified claims.

X. A User Voice Is Used to Strengthen Persuasion



Among the comments monitored by Threat Hunter, 207 used first-person wording such as “I,” accounting for 51.9%. This voice makes the content resemble a use experience, but it does not prove that the purchase and the experience have been verified. Of the 67 comments that claimed to have already switched products, 43 also used the first person. In verification, “how it was used and why it was switched” should be read together with the final recommendation.

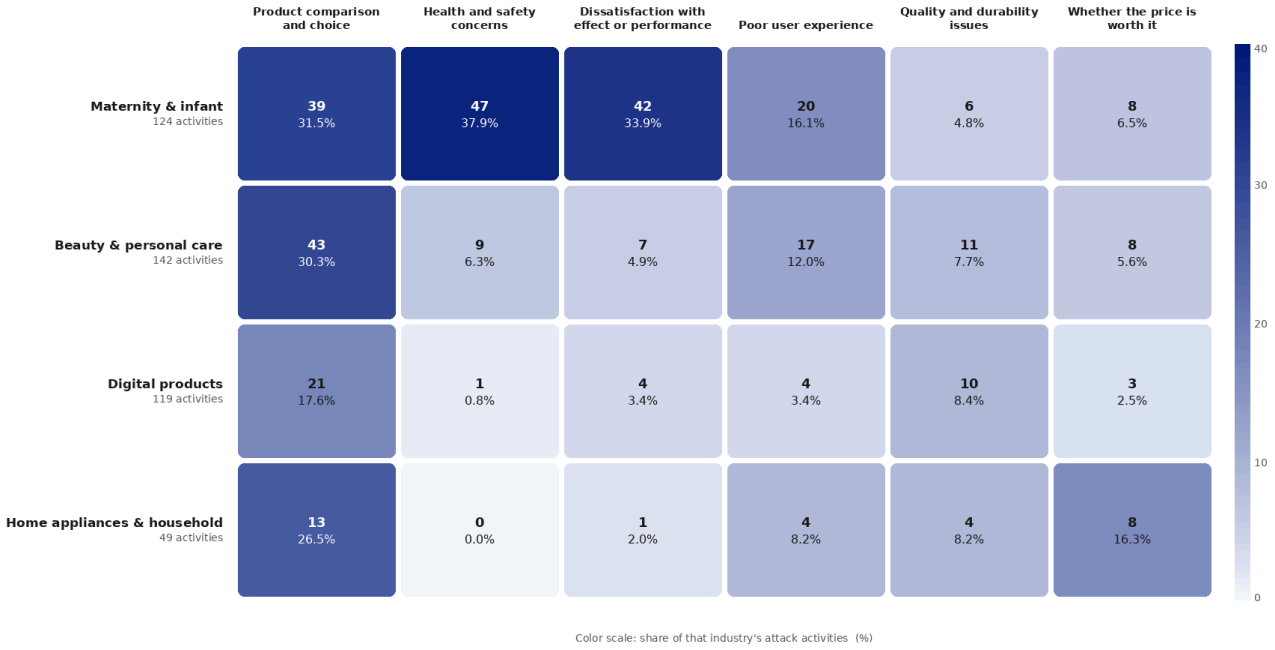
Read attack narratives together



These claims may appear alone or in combination, with no fixed order.
They do not confirm an actual purchase or use experience.

A further 37 comments used questions or requests for confirmation, including rhetorical questions and self-doubt; 41 expressed agreement or a similar feeling. Water-army activity borrows the manner of everyday conversation to reinforce the same claim; it does not always appear as aggressive abuse. For brand monitoring, analyzing the conversation as a whole is more helpful than identifying a single isolated sentence.

XI. Attack Focus Differs by Industry



The maternity and infant industry needs to verify physical reactions, growth expectations, and the conditions of a switch; beauty and personal care needs to explain skin feel, comfort, and the bounds of claimed effects. Comparisons in digital products should specify the model and test conditions; home appliances and household goods need to explain function, cost of use, and service terms together in order to answer questions about price differences.

Of maternity and infant attack activities, 37.9% contained health-and-safety concern talking points, and 33.9% discussed dissatisfaction with effect or performance. When physical changes, growth effects, and a switch choice are discussed together, brands should distinguish what the consumer is actually worried about, and which conclusions lack a basis.

XII. Experience Details Cannot Substitute for Factual Evidence



Among the comments monitored by Threat Hunter, 79 discussed digestion, excretion, and absorption, and 54 discussed growth, weight, and physical condition. These details are used both to create worry and to praise other products. Brands need to see clearly what conclusion a physical change is being used to support.

Example of an Attack Narrative: Changes in a Pet's Condition Are Used to Support a Food-Switch Recommendation

In discussions of cat-food experience and product choice, the talking points first claim that the pet would not eat the original product, or emphasize a sensitive stomach; they then link a food switch with a greater willingness to eat and fewer loose stools, and close with an intention to keep buying. A concern about physical condition is thereby tied to a clear purchase suggestion.

A change before and after a food switch does not mean the change was necessarily caused by the product. One pet's experience also cannot prove that the product is effective for all pets. Brands should verify the conditions of use and the changes claimed, and avoid confirming unverified efficacy on behalf of the attack content.

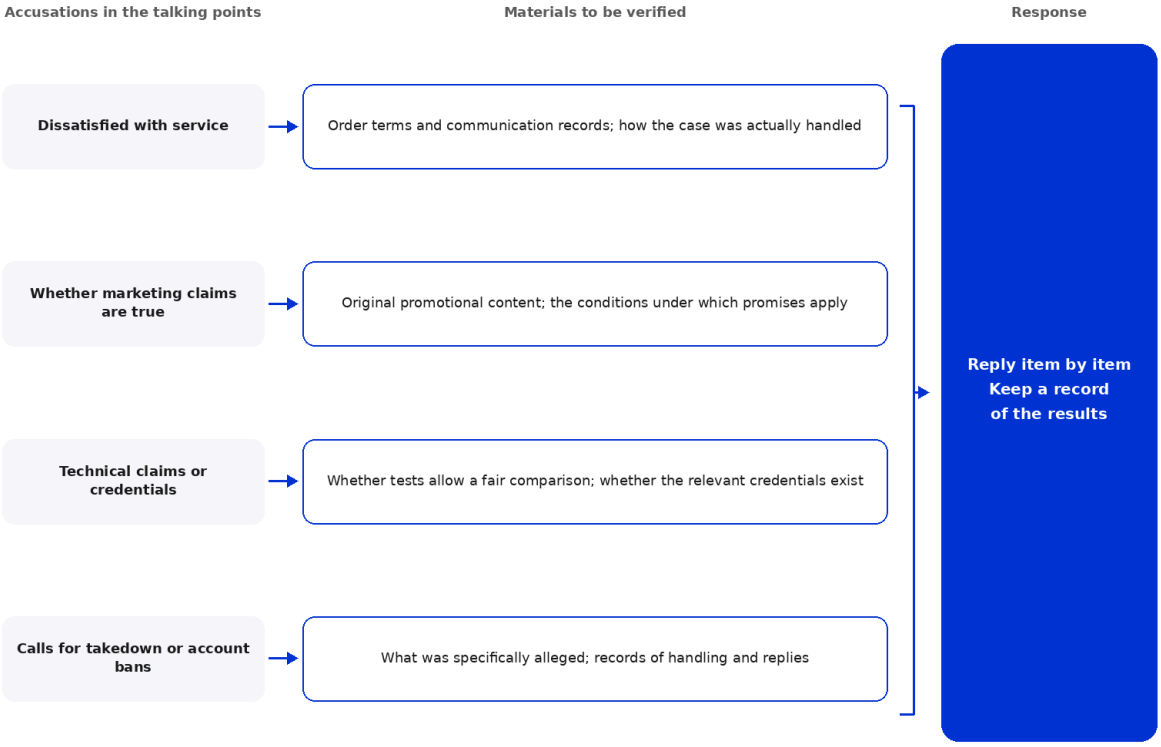
Similar writing appears in care products: redness, dryness, or scalp discomfort is placed together with short-term improvement, recommendations from friends or family, and repurchase. A personal account cannot directly prove a general effect. The same is true of technical products: a single metric or a single test needs to be explained in light of the model, the conditions, and the intended use.

In verification, the questions should be asked separately: What change occurred? Why is it attributed to the product? Why is another product recommended on that basis? Keeping these layers apart helps avoid amplifying unverified claims in a response.

XIII. Service and Integrity Accusations Are Used to Pressure Brands

Of the 651 brand attack activities monitored by Threat Hunter, 11 contained talking points on service or promise disputes, and 11 involved accusations against brand integrity. The counts are small, but claims about contracts, fees, promises, or credentials more readily take the form of specific complaint demands.

Different dispute narratives call for different factual materials



An accusation is not thereby established, and a request for action may not have been carried out; verify each item before responding.

Handling Records Are Needed Beyond a Public Response

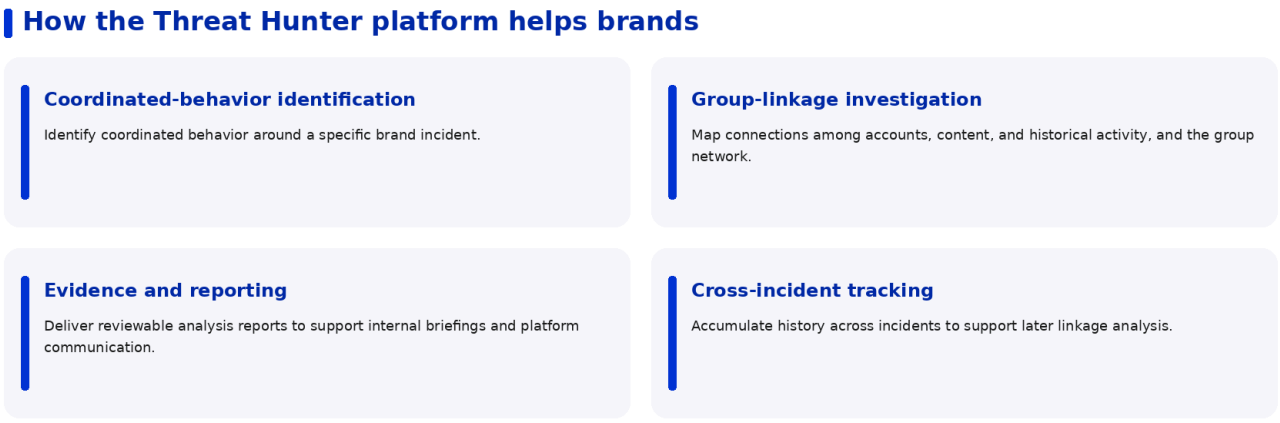
Facing consumers, a brand needs to explain what happened and how it will be resolved; once a formal complaint process begins, it also needs to submit verifiable records item by item. Public argument cannot replace a specific reply, and discussion volume cannot replace a factual basis.

This period found attack talking points that raised handling requests in a fixed format, but that cannot be taken to mean that restrictive measures have already been carried out. No explicit calls to file a report or demand a takedown were found among the 399 comments, and such mobilization should not be described as a common phenomenon in the comments.

When handling water-army attacks, real users' use and after-sales issues should continue to be addressed. Correcting false claims and resolving real problems should proceed at the same time.

XIV. Threat Hunter Water Army Identification and Group Attribution Platform

Threat Hunter's Water Army Identification and Group Attribution Platform provides capabilities for identifying coordinated behavior, investigating group linkages, and organizing evidence around specific brand incidents, supporting brands in risk analysis and handling.



Analysis is conducted around specific incidents to provide a basis for brand risk handling.

Use Cases Around Brand Incidents

When similar reviews appear in a concentrated way, the platform can be used to identify coordinated behavior; when attacks are repeated, group linkages can be mapped and compared with historical incidents; when a platform complaint or an internal briefing is needed, a substantiated, reviewable investigation report can be obtained.

Product Demonstrations and Service Inquiries

Brand, public-relations, and risk-control teams may schedule a product demonstration around a specific incident to understand the scope of application and what is delivered.

Product information and demo appointments: see product details.