

5

THINGS YOU SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT YOUR
ADVOCATES

AMPLIFINITY

Having customers who recommend you to their friends has always been important.

In a world where people are more connected than ever before and prospects depend on peers for help with purchasing decisions, most of us can agree that brand Advocates are more than just important—they're critical.

Because they're critical to company success, you need to know who these Advocates are. This goes beyond just tracking how many mentions you had on twitter last week. This is about knowing who was tweeting, how often that person tweets about you, what other platforms they used to talk about you and what motivates them to talk.

In a recent Harvard Business Review article Matthew Rhoden of Rogers & Peppers said, "Forwardthinking companies will be the ones that identify and work with their customer Advocates to genuinely build the brand, the customer base, and the bottom line." Notice the first step Rhoden outlines is to identify Advocates, and then to work with them. This is something that all marketers should take note of. Any company that wants to stay competitive in this changing marketing climate must develop a long-term strategy for building advocacy around their brand – and this must start with learning who their Advocates are, and what motivates them.

Some of the big players already know this and are dedicating resources to identifying their Advocates and finding out what makes them tick. Companies like TriNet, DIRECTV and ADT are quietly gathering information, including: who their Advocates are, why they make referrals and how they tell people about a brand.

If you're wondering how this information can work for your company, or if you should be following suit, here are a couple of examples of what knowing your Advocates can do for you:

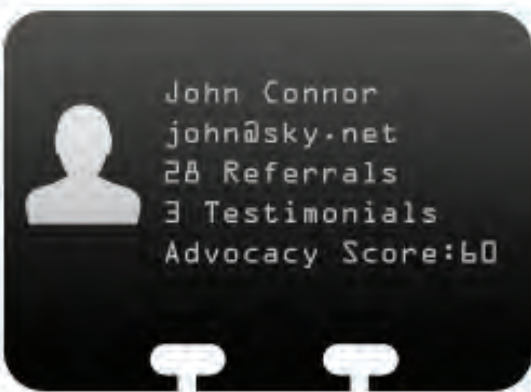
1. Know Their Motivations

When you know what motivates your Advocates to refer, you can motivate more people to refer more often.

Ask the following questions of your company:

When do your Advocates refer? Why do your Advocates refer? Perhaps your answer is that they refer when they have a positive interaction with a customer service rep, and doing so makes them feel empowered and proud of their decision to use your product or service.

If you know the answers to these questions you can replicate customers' experiences, and turn valuable customers into super-valuable Advocates. If your Advocates usually tell friends about you right after they make a purchase, you could make sure they had the tools right after checkout to tell more people. If your Advocates are most excited about you after a conversation with your customer service department, you could create a referral opportunity right at the end of the call. Until you know, you can't target!



2. Know Who They Are

When you know who your Advocates really are, you can keep them excited.

What if I told you that one of your customers generated 30

new customers for you last year? He's such an enthusiastic Advocate; he mentioned you on his blog, promoted you to all of his Facebook friends and convinced his neighbors that your product was the best he's ever used. Wouldn't you want to make sure that this customer was recognized and rewarded for his efforts? If you're only tracking the mentions, and not learning more about the Advocates who make them, you're missing a pretty big piece of the marketing puzzle.

3. Know Who Your Friends Are

Knowing the difference between who'll really stand behind you, and who won't, can make all the difference.

Your Advocates have proven themselves ready and willing to say good things about you to the world. If and when someone says something negative, you can activate your Advocates and invite them to be your allies on the front lines. Ten-hut, soldier.

4. Know They Talk to Each Other

Learning how your Advocates communicate with their friends is critical.

How do your Advocates talk about you? Offline? Facebook? Email? Which one of those communication channels generates the most new customers for you? Once you know the answer to these questions, you can create strategies that utilize the most effective referral channels.

5. Know the Value of Their Time

After considering numbers 1-4 above, can you say you really know your Advocates? If you do, congratulations! You're well on your way to making highly informed decisions about how to take positive advantage of your customers.



Think of your group of friends. Some of them like sports, some of them are into food and others into romance novels. When you find a great new recipe for lasagna, you're probably not going to tell all of your friends about it – you're going to tell the friends who care!

The same is true with your Advocates. Your Advocates like you, but they probably each like you for their own reasons. The more you understand the connection they have with you, the better equipped you are to send them the information they want to talk about.

Don't get us wrong- you need to do a lot of things right to foster advocacy around your brand, including providing your customers with exemplary products and stellar customer service. But to take brand advocacy from a happy accident to a strategic marketing channel, there has to be an emphasis identifying Advocates, building a personal relationship with them, and generating their referral data.

There is technology out there that make it easier for marketers to track, manage and motivate their Advocates: Amplifinity (www.amplifinity.com) has that technology. It's crucial that you have the ability to identify your Advocates, give them meaningful places to interact and tell others about your brand, and track what they do. Take five steps to create an Advocate channel that grows.

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