The Impact of Advocate Marketing
on Product Reviews

A Study of The Merits and Methods of
Advocate Marketing for B2B Vendors.

Introduction

In partnership with Influitive, G2 presents this study of the merits and methods of advocate marketing.

In order to study the effects of advocate marketing on customer populations, G2 analyzed the behavior of hundreds of thousands of site visitors and reviewers, comparing the performance of products of companies that use advocate marketing to an average product listed on the website. This study demonstrates that companies that utilize advocate marketing have successfully maximized the potential of their G2 listings. They have more reviews, are better positioned, receive more page views, and receive more leads through the G2 website than other products.

A special thanks to Influitive for providing valuable data about their customer base, which made this study possible.

Advocate Marketing

Really, advocate marketing begins when the marketing team acknowledges that buyers are smart. Buyers realize that a first-rate ad campaign doesn't guarantee a high-quality product and that celebrity spokespeople probably care more about their check than customer success. They pay attention to these marketing tactics, but they're not going to trust them the way they trust a personal recommendation from a colleague. Nielsen's much-touted "Consumer Trust in Advertising" study shows that...

...while consumer trust has increased in recent years across the marketing spectrum, "recommendations from people I know" remains the most trusted form of brand discovery and "consumer opinions posted online" comes in at third most trusted.

Additionally, this McKinsey & Company study found that the primary factor that determined 20–50% of all purchasing decisions was consumer-to-consumer communication. Acknowledging that your own customers are your best advertisers, advocate marketing prompts customers to engage with your brand, encourages conversation, and makes recommending your product and referring others to your company a smooth and rewarding experience.

A C-Suite Network survey of professional services firms found that nearly 62% of respondents said that generating more referrals was their top marketing initiative for 2015. But a study by Brightlocal shows that 85% of buyers read up to 10 online reviews before making a purchase. What's more, Forrester found that one-third of online buyers trust a stranger more than a brand and, corroborating the Nielsen study, that a review of a product was almost as trustworthy as a personal recommendation. The Internet has crowdsourced the personal recommendation, and no informed consumer will go near a product that no one is talking about.

Companies that utilize **advocate marketing** receive as much as:

17.5 x
product reviews

3.5 x
page visits
to their product profiles

+200%
sales leads

20–50%
of all purchasing decisions were determined by **consumer-to-consumer communication**

85%
of buyers read up to 10 online reviews **before making a purchase.**

influitive

Step 1:
Identifying Advocates

The first step in advocate marketing is identifying which of your customers will be a vocal user of your product. Locating and connecting with customers who have already taken to social media and the blogosphere to discuss your brand is an obvious place to start. However, probably the simplest method is to just ask upon purchase and in follow-ups if they are willing to refer and review your product. A Texas Tech University study found that 83% of buyers are willing to refer but only 29% actually do. Identifying that 83% by using a simple, one-question survey can be the first step to utilizing your advocate army later on. (For more tips on how to encourage high-quality reviews, check out this blog post from Influitive.)

(Texas Tech University & Advisor Impact, "Anatomy of the Referral: Economics of Loyalty," December 2010)

83% of buyers are **willing to refer**
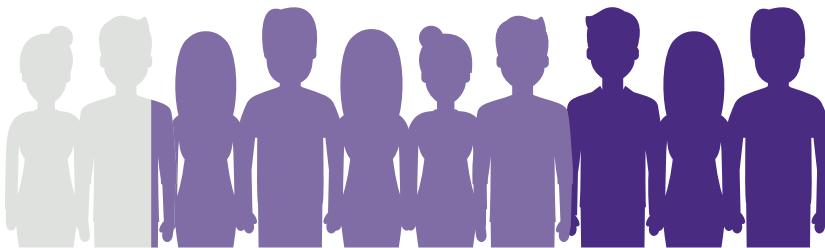
but only **29%** **actually do.**

Step 2:
Sustaining Relationships

Now that you know who your advocates are, it is important for your brand to stay top of mind with them. Just because they're using your product doesn't mean they are actively thinking about the benefits it offers them, updates and improvements that are being perfected on their behalf, or the dedicated support your company offers when they need it. A study by Deloitte found that brand advocates on average spend two times as much as an ordinary customer and the Wharton School found that the **"Life-Time Value of a referral customer (LVC) is more than 16% higher than non-referred customers."** These are important relationships to sustain. They're valuable regardless of any additional customers they send your way.
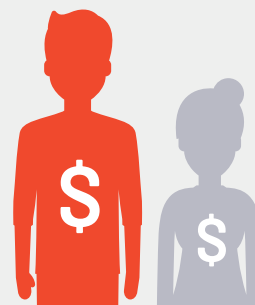
Step 3:
Encouraging Conversation

Next, encourage advocates to join in the conversation about your products and your brand. Include calls to action that involve forwarding content, including your products in a blog post, or linking to your site in a tweet. BzzAgent found that brand advocates are prolific content creators. They write and share more than twice as many online communications about brands than do non-advocates. Furthermore, they are 70% more likely to be seen as a good source of information by people around them. Make their access to valuable content about your brand easy and sharing it rewarding.

"Life-Time Value of a referral customer (LVC) is more than

16% higher

than non-referred customers."
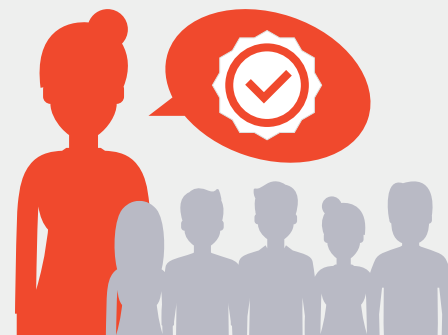
brand advocates are

70% more

likely to be seen as a good source of information

G2

influitive

Step 4:
Gathering Referrals

It makes sense that a referral is going to be more valuable to a salesperson than your average lead. The referee is going to trust the recommendation and be willing to engage in a conversation about purchasing the product, and the salesperson already knows that a current customer has evaluated the referee's situation and believes your product will be valuable and worthwhile to purchase. MathMarketing confirmed this hunch in a study that showed marketers who use referral marketing have higher marketing-qualified lead (MQL) closure rates than those who use purchased lists. Having a way to elicit and gather referrals from your advocates that is gratifying for all parties will ensure that the potential 83% of customers who would refer actually do and that you can cater your response to those potential future customers who have been referred.

"Marketers who use referral marketing have higher marketing-qualified lead (MQL) closure rates than those who use purchased lists."

Advocate Marketing Software

The digital age has splintered buyers' sources of information and democratized expertise. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the modern marketer. According to a survey by the Opinion Research Corporation, 84% of Americans say online reviews influence their purchasing decisions. In addition to review sites, social media and the blogosphere are teeming with user-created content about the products they use and services they utilize. The days of a tight grasp on brand positioning are over, and controlling the maelstrom of digital discussion of your products and services is near impossible. However, now there are hundreds of new ways to connect with your customers as well as hundreds of new ways that your brand advocates can do the legwork for you. Trusting in your customer base and facilitating the online conversation are essential to maintaining a healthy brand.
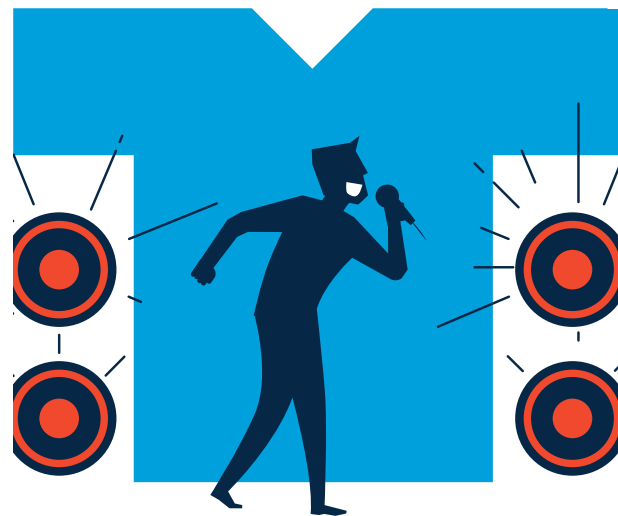
Advocate marketing software platforms leverage game dynamics to automate an advocate marketing strategy in a scalable way. They invite advocates to engage with brand content, and nurture their relationship through exclusive access, networking opportunities, and status amongst their peers. They encourage users to share their content and opinions with their colleagues, with their social media followers, and on review sites. They also make the referral process quick and painless. By gamifying these opportunities to contribute to a brand's marketing strategy with rewards and incentives, brands can grow their army of advocates and mobilize them to bolster their marketing campaigns whenever they need.

🔥 Reviews

Share your experience: review us on G2 Crowd!

People who've done this challenge:

+ 23 more

Points earned after completion:

750

G2 | CROWD

For many of B2B professionals, peer reviews are an important part of the buying process. After speaking with potential customers, we've identified that G2 Crowd is one of the top websites they visit to read reviews from knowledgeable peers. Would you be willing to post a review about your experience with us on G2 Crowd?

3 tips for writing a review:
1. Be honest. Your peers want to know what you love and also what you think needs improvement.
2. Be thorough. Comprehensive reviews help buyers make better decisions.
3. Share real examples. How has working with us impacted you, your team and your business?

Go there

I've submitted a review

Dismiss Challenge

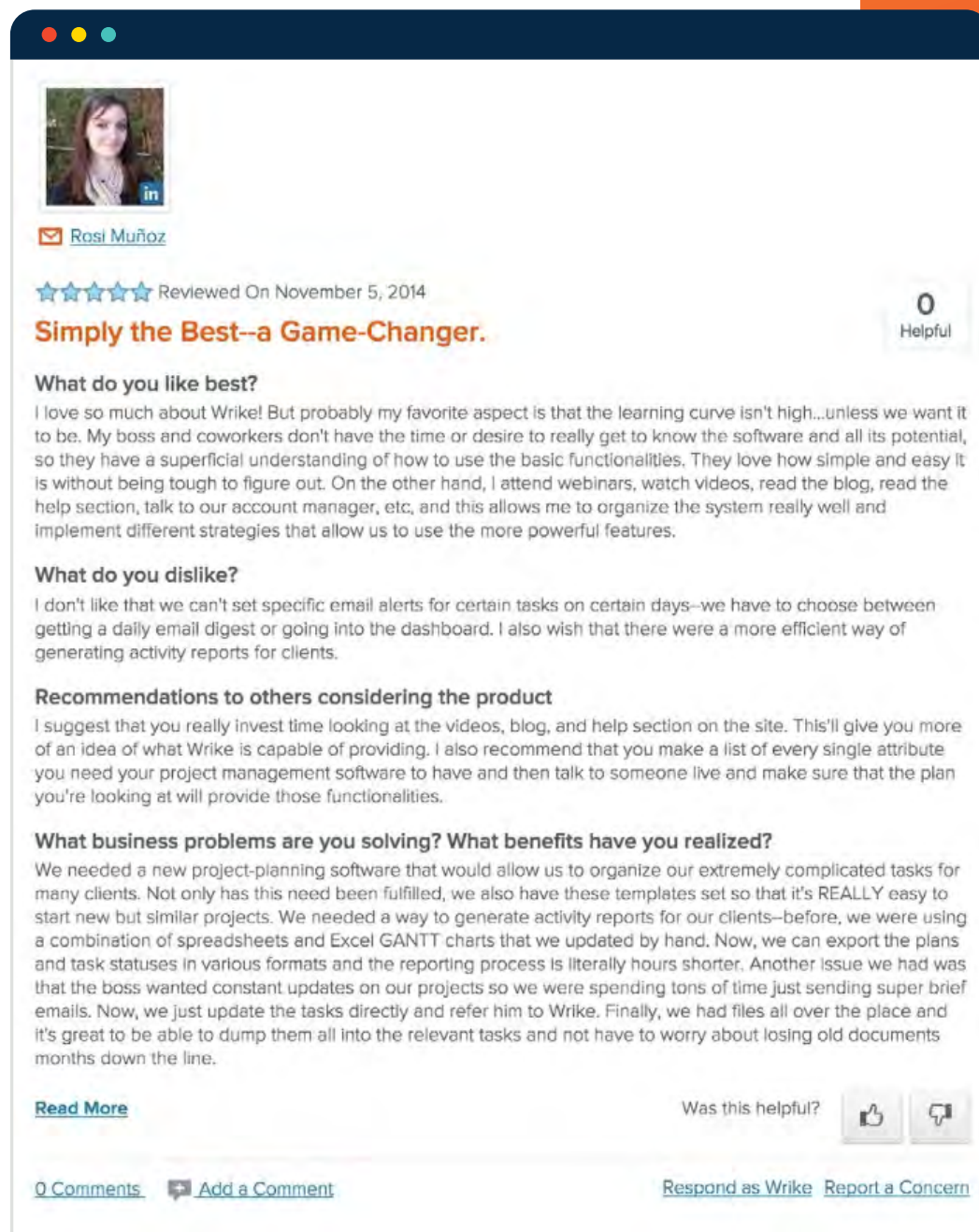**"Write a Review" challenges can be posted to Influitive's advocate marketing module to engage customers across online venues.**

influitive

Advocacy, Influitive, and G2

G2 is the largest B2B review site, and it leverages more than 270,000* user reviews to drive better purchasing decisions. Technology buyers, investors, and analysts use the site to compare and select the best software based on peer reviews and synthesized social data. The site contains product listings, gathers reviews, ranks products, and collects leads for vendors.

Software users share their experience with and feedback on the tools they use every day on G2's online review platform.

Rosi Muñoz

★★★★★ Reviewed On November 5, 2014

0 Helpful

Simply the Best--a Game-Changer.

What do you like best?
I love so much about Wrike! But probably my favorite aspect is that the learning curve isn't high...unless we want it to be. My boss and coworkers don't have the time or desire to really get to know the software and all its potential, so they have a superficial understanding of how to use the basic functionalities. They love how simple and easy it is without being tough to figure out. On the other hand, I attend webinars, watch videos, read the blog, read the help section, talk to our account manager, etc, and this allows me to organize the system really well and implement different strategies that allow us to use the more powerful features.

What do you dislike?
I don't like that we can't set specific email alerts for certain tasks on certain days--we have to choose between getting a daily email digest or going into the dashboard. I also wish that there were a more efficient way of generating activity reports for clients.

Recommendations to others considering the product
I suggest that you really invest time looking at the videos, blog, and help section on the site. This'll give you more of an idea of what Wrike is capable of providing. I also recommend that you make a list of every single attribute you need your project management software to have and then talk to someone live and make sure that the plan you're looking at will provide those functionalities.

What business problems are you solving? What benefits have you realized?
We needed a new project-planning software that would allow us to organize our extremely complicated tasks for many clients. Not only has this need been fulfilled, we also have these templates set so that it's REALLY easy to start new but similar projects. We needed a way to generate activity reports for our clients--before, we were using a combination of spreadsheets and Excel GANTT charts that we updated by hand. Now, we can export the plans and task statuses in various formats and the reporting process is literally hours shorter. Another issue we had was that the boss wanted constant updates on our projects so we were spending tons of time just sending super brief emails. Now, we just update the tasks directly and refer him to Wrike. Finally, we had files all over the place and it's great to be able to dump them all into the relevant tasks and not have to worry about losing old documents months down the line.

Read More

Was this helpful? 👍 👎

0 Comments   💬 Add a Comment

Respond as Wrike   Report a Concern

Unequivocally, products with more reviews perform better on G2. Users trust the opinions of their peers, and the more opinions about a product they have access to, the more time they will spend sifting through information and getting to know that brand. A product page without any reviews performs poorly on search engines and lacks the information that users are looking for: trusted and unbiased user-submitted product information.

Influitive

As a B2B advocate marketing and engagement platform, Influitive identifies a company's advocates and encourages them to engage in online conversation about that company's products or services. Software companies have utilized the Influitive platform to manage a successful G2 listing, either by generally encouraging a culture of online conversation with their customers or through targeted online review-gathering campaigns. By prompting their customers to be prolific and honest with their feedback, they gain the trust and confidence of both their customer base and future prospects.

For example, the project management tool, Wrike, had a respectable 31 reviews and was situated as a High Performer for project management software products on November 4, 2014. But by creating a "Write a G2 Review" achievement in their Influitive module, they gathered more than 100 reviews in 24 hours. This large review volume bolstered their market presence and pushed them across the line into the Leaders quadrant. The added confidence by way of a large customer sample secured their highest satisfaction rating among project management tools on the site.

Wrike

By creating a **"Write a G2 Review,"** Wrike gathered more than
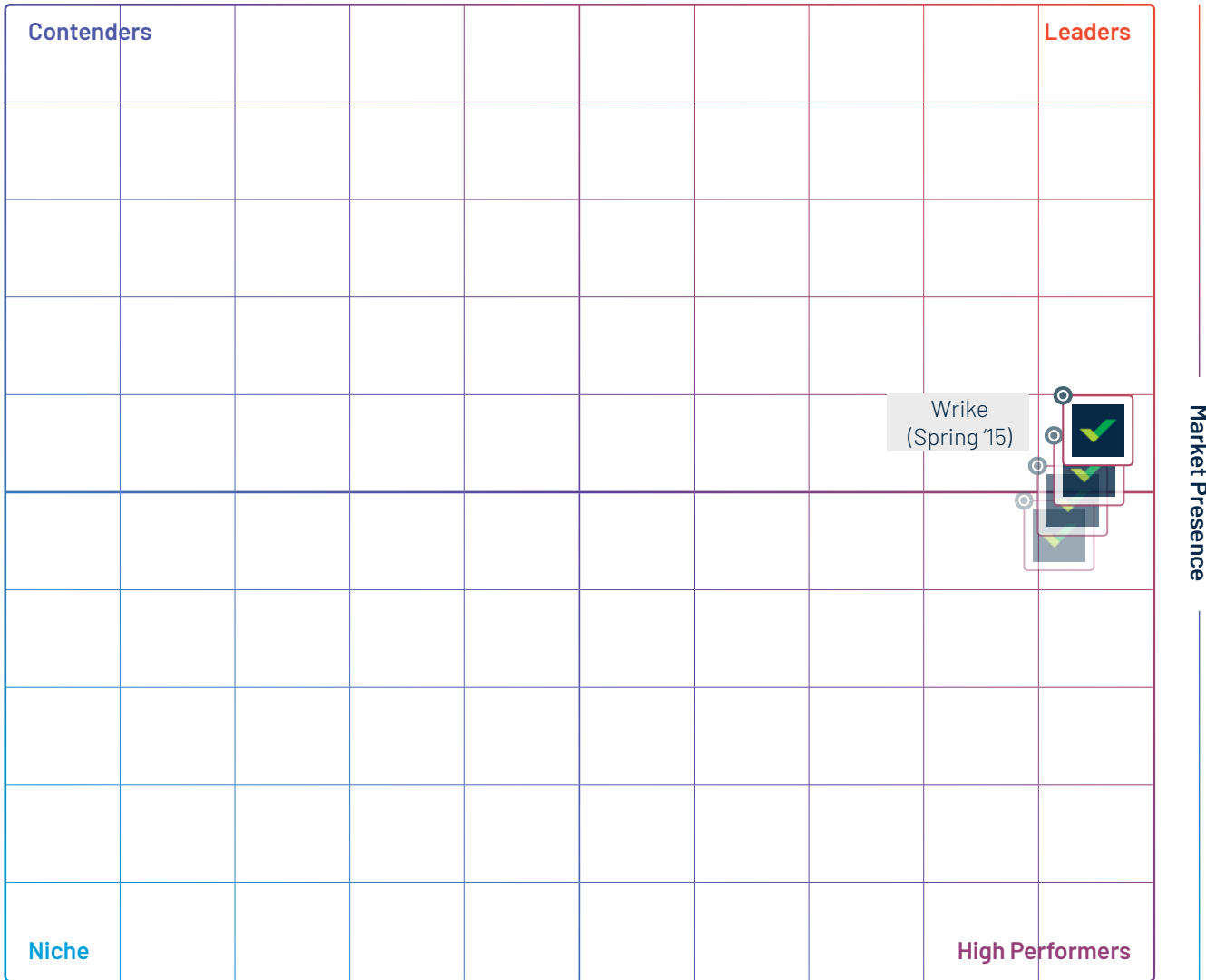
100 **reviews in 24 hours.**

influitive

A study of the 114 Influitive customers on G2 found that these results are not atypical. Influitive customers on average have more reviews, are better positioned, receive more page views, and receive more leads than other products in their category.

*Data pulled December 2017

G2 Grid℠ for Project Management

Grid® Scoring

Reviews

The key to a successful product listing is gathering reviews. This demonstrates that this product is one that people are using and is worth talking about. It delivers information from trusted sources about the product, and gives users a reason and time to get to know the brand. The average Influitive customer has 4.5 times as many reviews as the average product in their category (35.7 more reviews), and Influitive customers who have launched their advocate marketing program using Influitive's AdvocateHub software have 4.8 times as many (38.3 more reviews).

Vendors can claim their product profiles on G2 and manage some of the information listed there, and the average Influitive customer who has claimed their product profile has 173.33 times as many reviews as the average product (6.10 reviews). Moreover, the average Influitive customer who has run a review-gathering campaign with G2 has 17.5 times as many reviews as the average product on G2 (140.1 more reviews).

Influitive customers who have performed a review-gathering campaign

148.1

Influitive customers whohave claimed theirproduct page

67.7

Live Influitive customers

46.3

All Influitive customers

43.7

Average product

8

The **average Influitive customer** has

4.5 x

reviews

or if using Influitive's **AdvocateHub software**

4.8 x

reviews

influitive

Grid Placement

Because review volume shows that a product has greater market share and increases G2's confidence in their satisfaction ratings, it would follow that Influitive customers also achieve a better grid placement. Indeed, on average, they are ranked slightly higher in terms of user satisfaction as well as market presence. Out of 100, Influitive customers score 19.72 points higher in satisfaction and 5.32 points higher in market presence.

Out of 100, Influitive customers score

19.72 **points**
higher in satisfaction

5.3 **points**
higher in market presence

Grid Placement

Because review volume shows that a product has greater market share and increases G2's confidence in their satisfaction ratings, it would follow that Influitive customers also achieve a better grid placement. Indeed, on average, they are ranked slightly higher in terms of user satisfaction as well as market presence. Out of 100, Influitive customers score 19.72 points higher in satisfaction and 5.32 points higher in market presence.

Influitive customers receive

3.5 x
average page visits

influitive

Leads

G2 users have the option to contact vendors directly through a product's page. The average Influitive customer received 4.92 more leads per month than the average product on G2. The average number of leads for Influitive customers is just shy of 600 per month.

Influitive customers who have launched their advocate marketing program received on average 5.5 more leads. Influitive customers who have claimed their product pages received 14.4 more. And Influitive customers who have run a review-gathering campaign with G2 received 59.3 more leads and demo requests. That is a 200% increase in lead volume per year for Influitive customers who have performed a reviewing-gathering campaign.

Influitive customers who have performed a reviewgathering campaign

89.0

Influitive customers who have claimed their product page

44.1

Live Influitive customers

35.2

All Influitive customers

31.9

Average product

29.7

The **average Influitive customer** has

4.92 more leads

Influitive customers who have:

launched their **advocate marketing** program received

5.5 more leads

claimed their **product pages** received

14.4 more leads

run a **review-gathering campaign with G2** received

59.3 more leads

200%

increase in lead volume per year

Conclusion

Companies that utilize Influitive to implement their advocate marketing initiatives successfully develop their public product listings on third-party sites such as G2. By recognizing and engaging customer advocacy, companies increase by as much as 17.5 times the number of reviews of their products. They then reap the benefits of increased brand awareness through 3.5 times as many page visits and a wider marketing funnel through an increase in sales leads by as much as 200%.

Schedule a demo with Influitive or G2!