

A Fresh Way to Get Your Sales Team Involved In Driving Customer Advocacy



By:

Laura Sawyer
Customer
Advocacy
Manager,
VERINT

Intro

Customer engagement is the heartbeat of your brand. Innovation and creating differentiated experiences and driving new insights is the key to any successful business. No one understands this better than **Verint®**, The Customer Engagement Company™. We help our customers eliminate organizational and data silos to close the Engagement Capacity Gap™ and deliver differentiated customer experiences at scale. Leveraging artificial intelligence (AI), analytics, open integration, and the Science of Customer Engagement™, we empower businesses to adapt to shifting consumer expectations and provide delightful user experiences.

About five years ago, Verint launched a customer advocacy program, Elevate, which grew out of our former customer reference program. Elevate is powered by **Influitive**, a scalable platform that uses gamification to create personalized and targeted experiences that reward, recognize, and drive advocacy.

+ Elevate has been an incredible success. We use it to help fulfill a variety of customer advocacy opportunities, such as speaking engagements and sales references (sometimes in minutes), promote award opportunities, boost social sharing, and more. Although it is one of our most effective customer advocacy tools, our customer advocacy team was challenged in educating the sales team on its purpose, why they should get their customers involved, and how they and their customers would benefit. Elevate grew through the work of our customer advocacy team, and we knew we could grow the program even more with our sales team effectively advocating for us.

Over the years, we tried different ways to better educate the sales team about Elevate and its benefits. We offered recorded and live training sessions and met with various sales groups. We had one-on-one conversations with new reps. We created and circulated an overview video and brochure. Despite our efforts, the result was always the same: Our sales reps got excited about Elevate, but other initiatives took precedence. We wanted to make them understand that driving more advocacy and tapping into the advocate activity in Elevate could help them sell, but the message wasn't getting through.

Sharing Insider Knowledge with an Internal Audience

We decided the best way forward was to get our sales reps even closer to Elevate. If we gave them a firsthand look at the program through the eyes of our customers, we believed they would see the benefits for themselves. This idea ultimately evolved into Elevate Inside, an internal advocacy program for our sales reps that mirrors our customer-focused program.

92% Targeted sales audience had **joined Elevate Inside**

68% **Engaged**



Elevate Inside was initially launched as a 90-day competition and internal education campaign. In addition to educating our sales reps, we wanted them to feel comfortable talking to their customers about Elevate and introducing these customers to our advocacy team. We wanted them to understand that inviting customers to join our advocate program was easy, beneficial for all parties, and not an abuse of customer privilege.

I helped bring this project to life as a customer experience project manager. After launching Elevate Inside, I was invited to join the team full-time as a customer advocacy manager.

One of our first tasks was to repurpose the information from our customer-facing program and repackage it in language that spoke to our sales reps. We worked closely with many teams throughout the organization, including our Sales Enablement team, Customer Experience team, and the Direct Sales team who helped us understand what would entice and encourage sales reps to join this program. We created targeted, engaging content and made sure our contest format and prizes were attractive to members of the sales team.

The team worked together to put Elevate Inside in front of many of our sales leaders and helped ensure buy-in from the top down. Sales leadership helped us see that sales and marketing people look at the same problem from different angles; this helped us determine how to market advocacy to sales reps to ensure program success.



“An advocate hub can be a company’s **most effective marketing tool.”**

“Our marketing leadership was **blown away** by the number of social shares that sales reps initiated from within Elevate Inside. It was an unintended but welcomed consequence.

The Stats Spoke for Themselves

We launched Elevate Inside in August 2021, hoping to arrive at some actionable insights by the end of its initial 90-day competition. Amazingly, we started to see results within the first month. Our primary goal was to educate the sales team, but many new benefits were discovered, including how effective this program could be at helping sales reps with their social selling initiatives. When we ran our initial performance reports, we and marketing leadership were blown away by the number of social shares. We had tried other ways to get our sales reps to share social media content in the past, but nothing had the level of success that we saw from Elevate Inside. Our sales reps loved how easy it was to share content with their networks. It was an unintended but welcomed consequence. At the same time, it wasn't too surprising given the social sharing success we'd already experienced with our Elevate customer advocacy program.

As we neared the 90-day mark, the advocacy team realized that Elevate Inside should be extended to a permanent program beyond the initial launch contest. The program had gained so much traction and numerous sales reps told us how much they loved it. In fact, 92% of our targeted sales audience had joined Elevate Inside, and 68% were engaged.

During the initial contest period, our sales reps referred 74 new customer advocates to Elevate, many of which accepted the invitation to join the program. Our reps also referred seven customers for success stories, completed 2,700+ challenges (targeted asks), started 20 discussions, and shared almost 900 items on social media.

Six months into the program, we saw more than 1,300 social shares and more than 5,200 clicks generated from those shares. Engagement had risen to 81%, and we continued to see similar participation levels, resulting in 24 more customer referrals, 4,200+ completed challenges, and a total of 23 new discussion topics.

Elevate Inside discussion forums provided another unexpected benefit. Our sales reps started to use the forums to share their wins and what made them successful closing business, inquiring about other customers and needs to help them in certain sales situations. Overall, this helped them collaborate more effectively with one another. And the advocacy team has unearthed many golden nuggets of information within discussions. It's a great way to understand how the sales team thinks, recruits references, and considers best practices. This newfound knowledge is helping us create new advocacy opportunities for our sales reps. It is also providing us with another means to source references and uncover potential new customer advocates.

“Discussions are a great way to understand how a sales team thinks, recruits references, and considers best practices.

Expanding Elevate Inside

In its first 90 days, we limited Elevate Inside access to roughly 80 sales reps in North America and Central and Latin America (CALA). We have since expanded that to nearly 350 employees across our operations in the Americas, while, at the same time, welcoming others from other regions to join and participate if they are so inclined. We have also launched a contest around our annual customer conference, Engage, for our sales reps and other customer-facing employees, including our channels, customer success, pre-sales, and services teams.

Participants earn points for getting customers to register for the conference, referring them as speakers, and nominating them for awards. We've also added Elevate Inside content to our internal newsletter. As a result, more employees from various teams are asking to join and our program continues to grow.



Empowering Sales and Customer Success

The Influitive Professional Services team supported us from day one. They assisted us in launching Elevate Inside, ensuring our launch would help us achieve our goals of growing our internal advocacy program, sharing our customer successes, and helping our sales team be even more effective. Using the Influitive platform has also helped us grow exponentially by empowering our sales reps to share specific details about our customer advocacy program, upcoming webinars, campaigns, and events, including our annual Engage conference. Finally, Influitive helped bridge the gap between our sales and marketing teams by enabling us to share valuable information about best practices in attracting and nurturing customer advocates.

2,700+ Challenges
Completed





“ Influitive enabled Verint to **overcome internal hurdles** to starting and growing an internal advocacy program and, in turn, our customer advocacy program.



Influitive helped us further bring advocacy – internally and externally – to the forefront. The Professional Services team guided us through the launch and showed us how to keep everything on track. They helped us fine-tune our branding and messaging. But the real trick was giving us tools to communicate about customer advocacy in easily digestible chunks and to run challenges that would engage our sales reps’ competitive side. The discussion forums have also been transformative in terms of reps collaborating and sharing insights, best practices, and references.



1,300 Social Shares

5,200 Clicks generated

81% Engagement



Building a successful advocacy program requires finding ways to share information and offer opportunities to people without overloading them. Striking the right balance and figuring out why people will click on X instead of Y takes skill, along with a bit of trial and error. Influitive enabled Verint to overcome internal hurdles to starting and growing an internal advocacy program and, in turn, our customer advocacy program. Several years ago, Influitive helped us build a customer-facing advocate hub. More recently, the Influitive team were vital in helping us build an internal advocacy hub. Both help us empower our sales team to succeed and our customers to share their successes.

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