

Two years. 330 stores.  
63,500 sales associates.

THE DATA IS CLEAR:  
RETAIL ASSOCIATES PROVIDE MEASURABLE LIFT.



# Introduction

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Consumers are clear with what they want from a retail experience. More than 50% of consumers look for advice when entering a store<sup>1</sup>, and 80% state retail associates need product knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

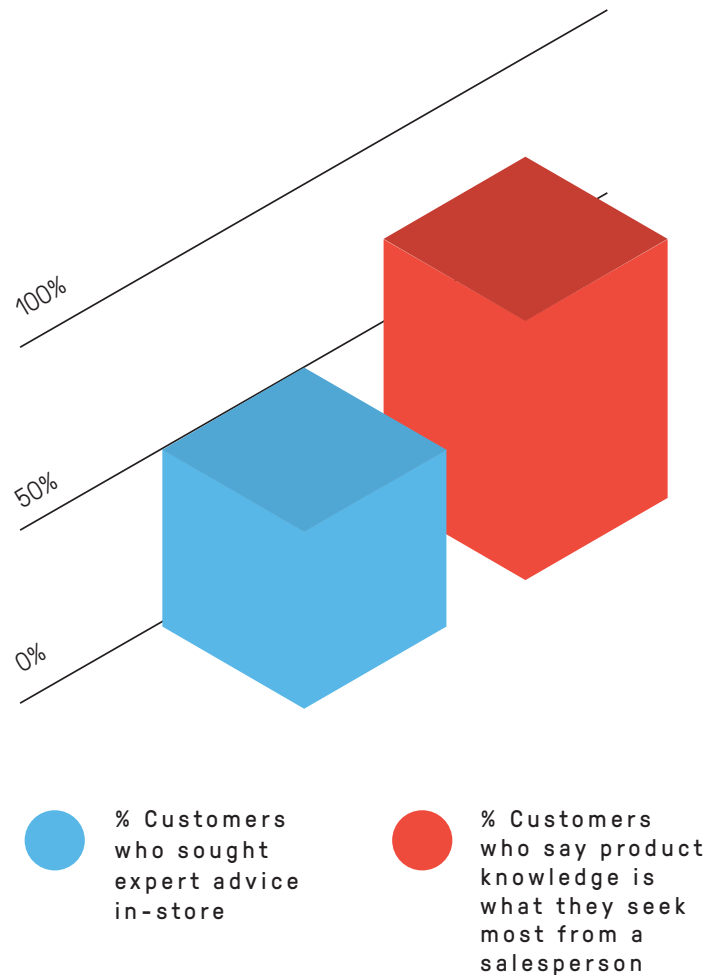
Of course, brands and retailers want to ensure consumers get the right recommendations they need to make smart purchasing decisions, buy confidently, and leave the store happy. But it can be difficult to know how much to invest in sales associates' expertise without knowing how much of a difference it can make on the bottom line.

In a world of inventory tracking, merchandising strategies, and the assumption that consumers only want to research products for themselves, we wondered:

## JUST HOW MUCH OF AN IMPACT CAN PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE – AN INFORMED RECOMMENDATION – MAKE ON THE SALES FLOOR?

We partnered with Marshall Fisher, a professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, to lead a study involving more than 63,500 retail sales associates in 330 stores over 2 years, comparing point-of-sale data to sales associates' engagement with ExpertVoice in the categories and brands they sell.

***“50% of customers are looking for expert advice on what to buy when they enter a store – and 73% say product knowledge is what they need most from a sales associate.”***



1. Source: 2013 ExpertVoice Retail Buying Experience Survey

# Results

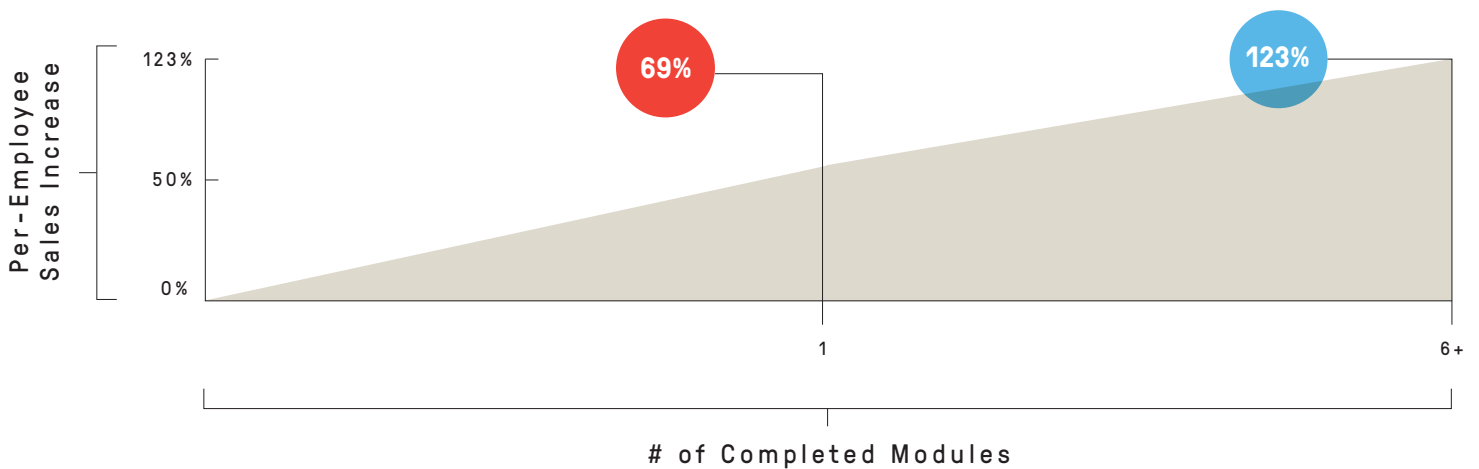
**DEFINITIVE PROOF. SALES ASSOCIATES WHO ENGAGE WITH PRODUCT EDUCATION SELL MORE.**

A lot more.

In fact, our study showed that sales associates who completed even one short online module with ExpertVoice sold 69% more than those who didn't. And associates who completed six or more pieces of content sold 123% more than those who didn't engage with content. For brands and retailers, it's clear that engagement with product education is a leading indicator of sales.

*“For brands and retailers, it's clear that engagement with product education is a leading indicator of sales.”*

## ENGAGED EMPLOYEE VS. NON-ENGAGED



- 1 MODULE COMPLETED
- 6 OR MORE MODULES COMPLETED

# Results

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## GETTING SALES ASSOCIATES TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR BRAND THROUGH EXPERTVOICE IS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE TOOLS FOR INCREASING SELL-THROUGH.

Our study found that the lift in performance was even more significant when isolated to specific brand training interaction. Brand sales were 87% higher for sales associates who engaged with just one education content piece specifically designed for that brand vs. those who didn't engage at all.

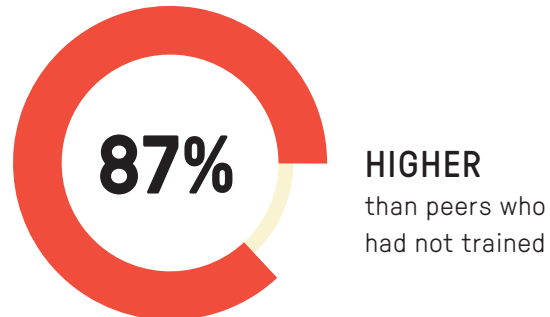
## THE MORE SALES ASSOCIATES ENGAGED WITH EXPERTVOICE'S PLATFORM, THE BETTER THEIR PERFORMANCE ON THE SALES FLOOR.

Sales associates that took one ExpertVoice training containing an average of three lessons sold a full 9.5% more than they did before the training.

The study further drilled down to see the impact on a specific brand training. The research found that with each additional completed piece of brand specific content by a sales associated, his or her sales of that specific brand increased by 2-4%.

The more sales associates know about a brand, the more likely they are to provide educated recommendations to consumers, and the more likely those consumers are to buy that brand.

## BRAND SALES IMPACT



*“Sales associates who took one ExpertVoice course containing an average of three modules sold a full 9.5% more than they did before the training.”*

# Results

## IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS USING THIS DATA.

Imagine being able to harness the voices that consumers actually trust for product recommendations. Ask yourself the following:

- How do I know which associates are most engaged throughout my retail distribution network?
- What engagement information should I be reviewing on a regular basis?
- Who is highly engaged with my top competitors, but not my brand?
- Which retailers are most engaged with my brand's advocate efforts?

## WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Don't leave product recommendations to chance. The brands and retailers winning in today's competitive landscape know that this type of measurable impact proves out their ROI. And it gives them the confidence to further invest in the retail influencers because passionate, experienced, knowledgeable retail sales associates give consumers the recommendations they need to buy confidently.

Learn more.

<https://www.expertvoice.com/business>



### Why don't more brands and retailers have this data?

Retail data has its share of variability, but we used a leading academic team to help normalize a long list of variables. A few examples:

- Employees' total hours worked
- Percentage of hours worked during key timeframes
- Dollars and units sold by brand and month
- In-stock rates by brand, month and store each week
- Modules completed by employee per brand and month
- We also considered things like employee tenure, the number of sales associates on the sales floor simultaneously, seasonality and much more

### Here is the formula we used:

$$\text{LogSales} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * \text{InStock}(\%) + \beta_2 * \text{HsWorked} + \beta_3 * \text{HsBlock}(\%) + \beta_4 * \text{OtherSalesEmployee} + \beta_5 * \text{EmployeeTenure} + \beta_6 * \text{Leaving} + \beta_n * \text{Additional Controls} + \epsilon$$

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## ABOUT EXPERTVOICE

ExpertVoice is transforming retail commerce by building and rewarding expertise in the influencers customers turn to for advice on what to buy. Hundreds of the world's most respected brands work with ExpertVoice to identify and engage with these influential experts and build, track and reward their helpful expertise. The results include improved conversion rates, bigger basket sizes, increased customer loyalty, more customer referrals – and better shopping experiences for everyone involved.



## ABOUT MARSHALL FISHER

Marshall Fisher is the UPS Professor of Operations and Information Management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, and co-director of the Fishman-Davidson Center for Service and Operations Management.

Dr. Fisher has been a consultant to many Fortune 500 companies, including Ahold, Air Products and Chemicals, BMG, Campbell's Soup, DuPont, Exxon, Frito Lay, General Motors, IBM, Motorola, Nokia, Scott Paper Company and Spiegel, Inc., to name a few.

His research has been recognized by numerous awards and his paper "The Lagrangian Relaxation Method for Solving Integer Programming Problems" was voted as one of the ten most influential papers published in *Management Science* during its 50 year history. He is also the author of the book "The New Science of Retailing."

Learn more about Dr. Fisher at:  
<https://opimweb.wharton.upenn.edu/profile/29/>



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EXPERTISE TO WORK FOR YOUR BRAND.**

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