

# Turning niche professionals into brand ambassadors with referrals

## Outdoor Research. For the Journey Ahead.

Based in Seattle since 1981, Outdoor Research provides award-winning technical apparel and accessories. The brand relies on the real-world testing of their athlete ambassadors, mountain guides, and local adventurers involved in outdoor sports: alpinism, rock and ice climbing, hiking, backpacking, paddling, trail running, and backcountry skiing and snowboarding.



**600%**

return on investment

**17%**

advocacy rate (2x higher than average)

**7%**

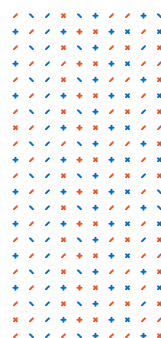
higher LTV of referred customers



## Client objectives

The Outdoor Research team was looking for a cost-effective marketing channel to acquire new customers by leveraging their existing PRO program - a community of influencers that work in the outdoors. They needed a tool with which to harness these brand ambassadors to spread the word about both the PRO program and the brand.

The client wanted a referral program partner to develop, integrate and optimize campaigns for multiple user segments to drive both PRO member sign-ups and online purchases.



## Solution

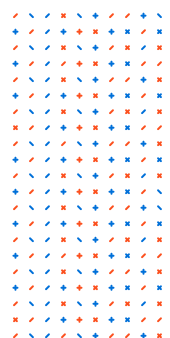
The Talkable team configured the referral program to dynamically display two unique campaigns onsite depending on whether or not the site visitor was a PRO member. PRO members were incentivized to refer other outdoor influencers to sign-up for the PRO membership while non-PRO members were incentivized to refer new customers to make a first time purchase.

The Talkable team tested and optimized the offers, share channels, and campaign placements for each customer campaign separately in order to find the most effective setup for each segment.

A/B testing advocate share page for PRO participants:

By **emphasizing email as a sharing channel**, the advocacy rate of PRO members increased by 8% and the conversion rate of referral recipients increased by 29%.

Email as a default sharing channel influences advocate sharing behavior. Rather than post on social platforms such as Facebook and Twitter, advocates gravitate towards referring specific individuals that are more likely to convert. On the other end of the referral, people are much more likely to consider an offer that was sent to them specifically, which leads to higher conversion rates.



When the sharing page was accessed on mobile, emphasizing SMS as a share channel led to a **7% increase in website visits** and an **11% increase in purchases**.

Looking to find the best reward type, the Talkable team also tested different incentives for friends and advocates, such as free shipping and discounts.

## Results

As a result of the ongoing optimization and testing, the Talkable referral program led to:

**22%**

of all new PRO member signups are driven by referrals

**17%**

PRO advocacy rate (every 5th PRO member refers someone from their network)

**7%**

higher LTV for referred customers

Talkable powered a word-of-mouth channel for a niche brand, through customer segmentation, user insights, and a rigorous approach to testing.

For **niche markets**, like outdoor apparel, **referral marketing is a perfect channel** to grow a community around a brand and bring in qualified customers. Whereas other acquisition channels lack credibility and social proof, referrals tap into an existing community to refer others just like them.

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*Talkable has helped Outdoor Research boost both our new customer and Pro acquisition through their advanced platform and optimization ability. Being able to leverage our existing customer base to grow both revenue and new customers has been a great asset to our e-commerce strategy.*



Zach Alexander, Pro Marketing Specialist,  
Outdoor Research

