GLOBAL EDITION

THE ADVOCACY RIPPLE EFFECT

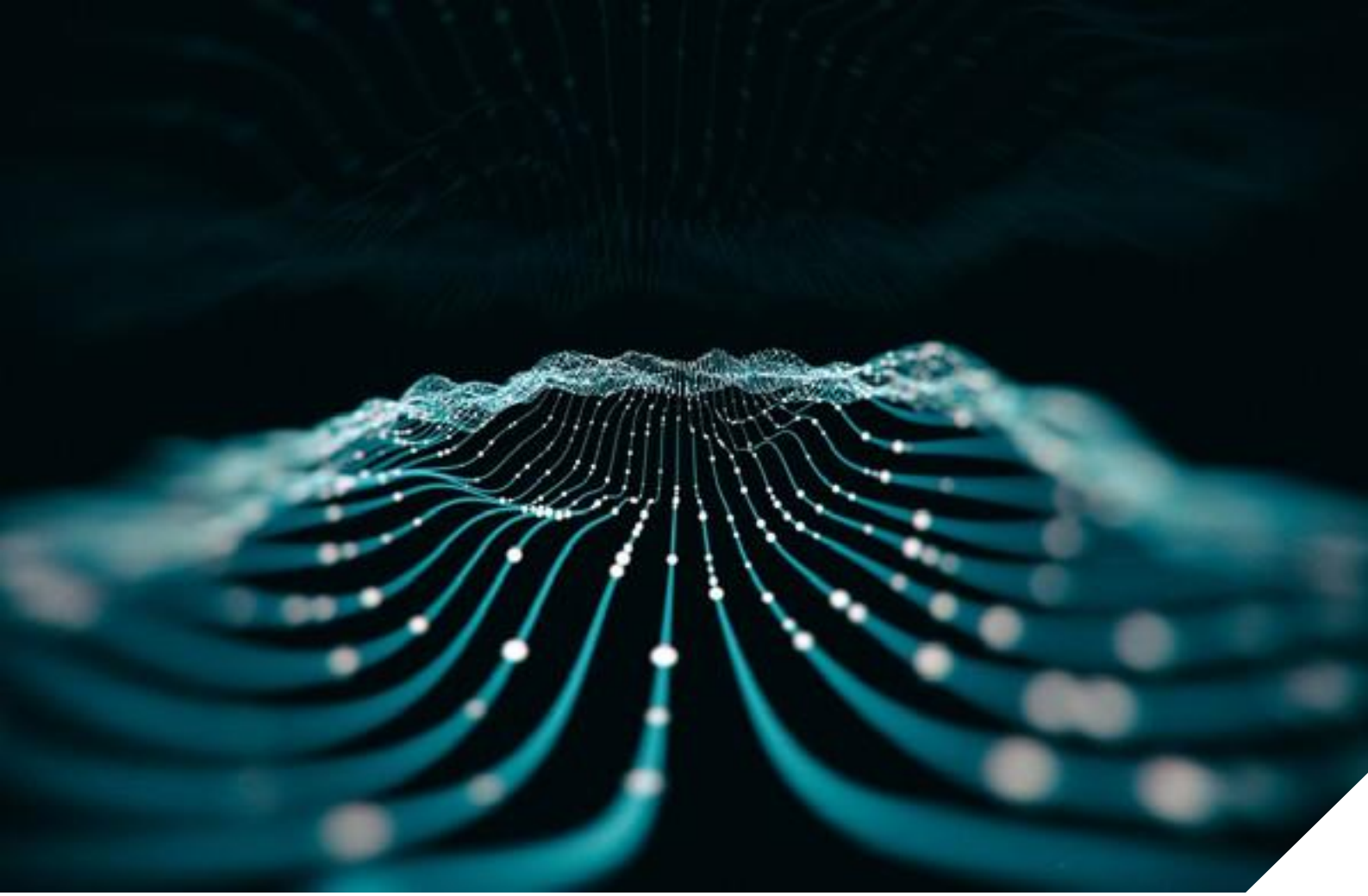
Activating customer experience as the primary growth engine through authentic word-of-mouth recommendations

Jean-François Damais
Lorraine Rough

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Ipsos



The advocacy ripple effect is an organic and self-perpetuating cycle of acquisition.

New research from Ipsos' Global CX Insights study helps activate CX KPIs, such as the Net Promoter Score (NPS)®, and provides organisations with the ability to calculate future acquisition potential from existing CX efforts.

Up until now, CX returns have been centered on retention and spend, but now Ipsos presents research that brings acquisition budget and resource into the mix for CX professionals.

Acquiring customers through recommendation is more cost-effective than above-the-line marketing spend. As Lorraine Rough, Ipsos' Director of CX Planning, puts it:

> **"If you want to create an army of advocates for your brand, the way to do it is by creating emotional attachment within the existing customer interactions you have."**

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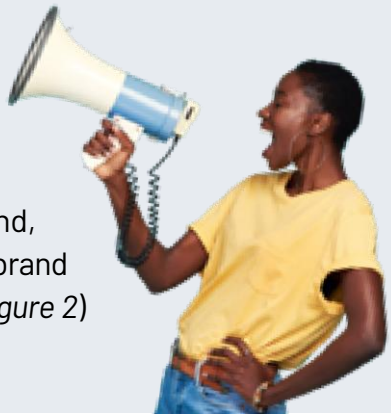
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Our new research reveals a powerful dynamic: Customers acquired through recommendations are more valuable, exhibiting higher retention and advocacy rates.

On average, customers actively recommend brands to friends and family **4 times per year** (*see Figure 1*)



The rate of recommendation is **twice as high** for customers who feel emotionally attached to a brand, acting as potent brand advocates (*see Figure 2*)



This organic word-of-mouth has a real impact, with **over a half** of customers saying that recommendations played a role in their decision to start using a brand (*see Figure 3*)



This advocacy ripple effect snowballs, as customers acquired through a recommendation end up recommending the brand more frequently themselves and tend to stay longer, becoming more valuable in the long run and creating a virtuous, self-sustaining cycle of organic acquisition (*see Figure 4*)



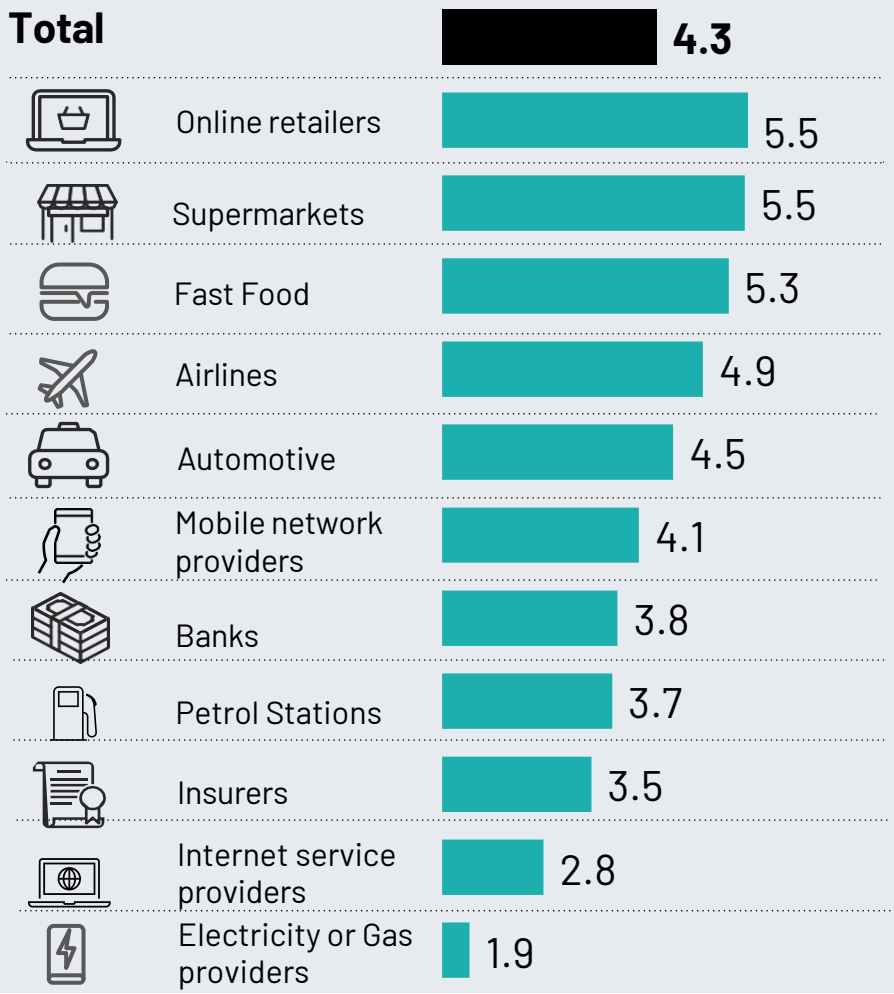
THE EVIDENCE

On average, customers actively recommend brands to friends and family 4 times a year.

Figure 1

Do customers actually recommend the brands they use?

Average recommendations given in a year by sector



How many times have you recommended [brand name] to friends and family in the last 12 months?

Source:
CX Global Insights 2025 (Global). N=65450



Emotionally-attached customers more actively advocate the brand they use to others

Figure 2 .

The rate of recommendation is twice as high for customers who feel emotionally attached to a brand; these people act as potent brand advocates.

How many times have you positively recommended [brand name] to friends and family in the last 12 months?



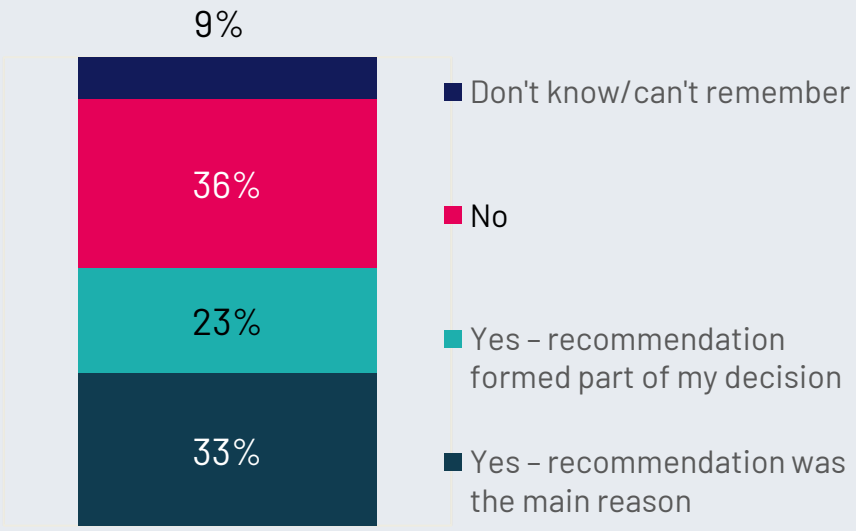
Emotionally-attached customers more actively promote the brand they use to others

Source:
CX Global Insights 2025 (Global). Functionally satisfied N=20392, Emotionally attached N=24179

Figure 3

This organic word-of-mouth has a real impact, with over a half of customers saying that recommendations played a role in their decision to start using a brand.

Advocacy impacts customer acquisition



Thinking back to when you first used or paid for products or services from [brand name], did you do this as a result of a recommendation from friends, family or social media?

Source:
CX Global Insights 2025 (Global). N=65450



CX is a driver of acquisition through the recommendations customers make to others

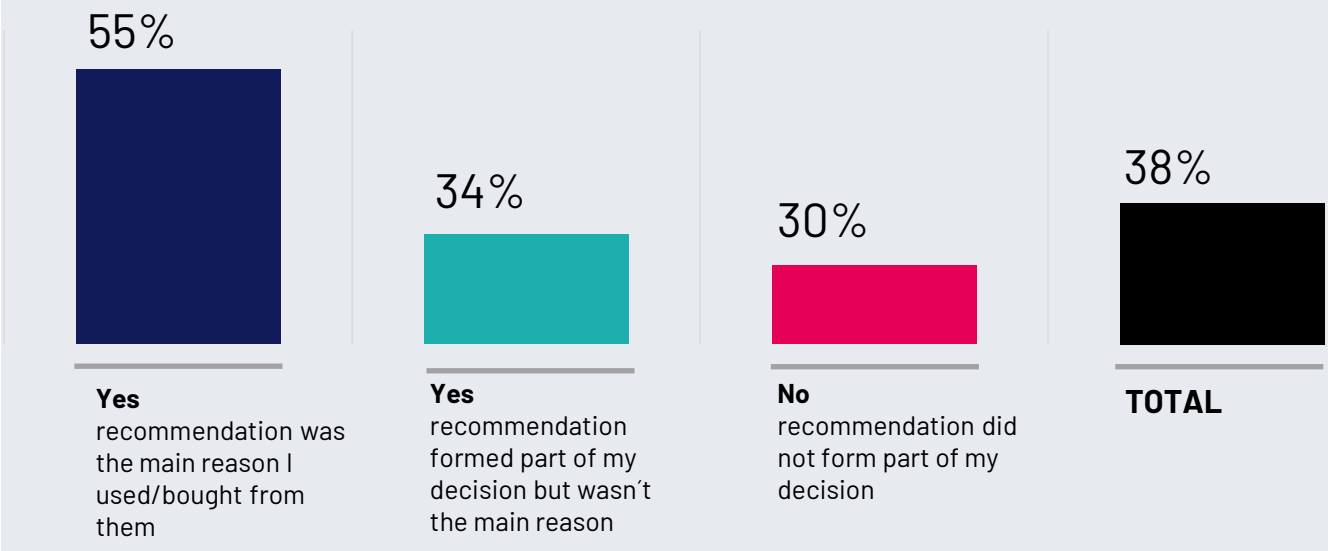
Customers recruited by recommendation end up being more valuable customers as they will stay longer and recommend to others more



Figure 4

The advocacy ripple effect snowballs as customers acquired through a recommendation also start recommending the brand more frequently themselves. They tend to stay longer, becoming more valuable in the long run and creating a virtuous, self-sustaining cycle of organic acquisition.

In the future, how likely are you to continue using [brand name]?



Source:
CX Global Insights 2025 (Global): Yes – recommendation main reason N=21305, Yes – Recommendation one of the reasons N=14773, No - N=23596



BUDGET PLEASE!

It is possible for customer experience teams to further their reach and influence by calculating the value of customer advocacy. This is the value of recommendations which creates a strong case for CX investment. The output is a monetary estimate of the incremental revenue a brand can expect through organic advocacy referrals.

Jean-François Damais, Global Chief Research Officer, Customer Experience at Ipsos, explains:

"We can now look at the impact of CX on acquisition of new customers, which gives us a more accurate and rounded view of the full power of customer experience. It also allows CX professionals to fight for budget, which was not previously in their sights."

HOW TO CALCULATE THE ADVOCACY RIPPLE EFFECT

You'll need:

- Total number of customers
- Number of new customers in an agreed period (e.g. average contract or annual)
- Percentage of customers recruited via recommendation
- Average customer revenue

For some organisations this data is readily available, for others it's non-existent. In either case, Ipsos can help you source, assimilate and stress-test your data sets prior to any modelling.

Six steps to success:

1. **Identify**: Your total customer base within a specific time period
2. **Discover:** How many new customers are recruited over the same time period (through survey or CRM)
3. **Determine:** How many new customers have joined because of a recommendation
4. **Establish:** How many recommendations are required to recruit each new customer
5. **Calculate:** The value per recommendation
6. **Simulate:** Changes in the number of recommendations given to adjust the impact of advocacy

This systemic approach transforms advocacy from an abstract concept into measurable business value, enabling data-driven CX optimisation and demonstrable ROI improvements.

PUTTING THE RIPPLE EFFECT TO WORK

So, how can organisations tap into this advocacy amplifier? The research points to fostering more emotionally connected relationships and deliberately engineering wow moments that fuel recommendations.

However, Damais cautions against overtly incentivising customers to recommend, as it can erode authenticity.

Measuring and tracking advocacy metrics alongside traditional relationship KPIs, can help gauge progress.

Ultimately, the key differentiator is staying focused on consistently delivering exceptional experiences that are worthy of being recommended. Do that, and your customers will become your most impactful marketing channel. The advocacy amplifier will take care of the rest.

“You can’t buy recommendations. You need to earn them through the quality of the experiences you deliver to your customers day in, day out, across touch points and stages of the customer journey.”





SO, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOUR ORGANISATION?

Here are four powerful actions you can take to harness recommendation.

1

Quantify how often your brand is recommended by current customers. Look at your metrics and uncover your advocacy baseline to inform your strategy and track progress over time.

2

Calculate your advocacy to conversion ratio and quantify the financial impact of recommendations on new customer acquisition and revenue. Build the business case for investing in customer experience as an organic growth engine.

3

Map your customer journey to pinpoint key moments where you can design signature experiences that will exceed expectations and ignite passionate recommendations. Systematically engineer advocacy into your CX.

4

Design, test, and scale initiatives focused on driving more organic recommendations from your customer base. Tap into the exponential acquisition power of the advocacy amplifier effect.

TIME FOR ACTION



The opportunity is clear

By understanding and activating the hidden power of recommendation, you can transform satisfied customers into a potent marketing force, driving unprecedented organic growth.

It's time to unlock CX's ultimate superpower. Start measuring, engineering, and harnessing the power of authentic advocacy today - your brand's growth depends on it.

How Ipsos can help

If you have hit a roadblock with number-crunching or if you don't know where to start, talk to our advisory experts, who can support with identifying data sets - performing advanced analytics and providing interactive simulators to help model the impact of the advocacy amplifier for your brand.

Recommended reading

- **CX Global Insights 2025: Unlocking the Future of Customer Experience**
  https://www.ipsos.com/en/cx-global-insights-2025-unlocking-future-customer-experience
- **The Forces of Customer Experience**
  https://www.ipsos.com/en-uk/forces-customer-experience

Ipsos Contact details:

✉ **Jean-François Damais**
Global Chief Research Officer, CX

✉ **Lorraine Rough**
Director, CX Planning

✉ **Alice Fraser**
CX Sales and Marketing Executive

About the research

CX Global Insights 2025 was conducted across 16 sectors covering automotive, airlines, retail, FS, utilities, tech and telecoms, and across 18 countries covering all key regions. Fieldwork conducted in Q1 2025 with 65K customer interviews in total.

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