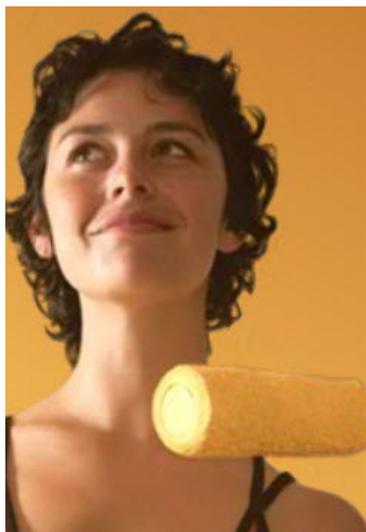


## CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE PARTNERS

## Will They Really Recommend Your Brand?



You may have recently seen or heard a commercial for Glidden Paint. In this commercial Glidden hammers home the message that 97% of its customers *would recommend* Glidden to a friend! This amazingly high proportion undoubtedly comes from a 'Net Promoter' study (NPS) the company must have conducted. While you've probably heard discussions of Net Promoter before, with this visibility we couldn't help once again review the problems with this popular, yet flawed, marketing measure. Cynically speaking, the statistic makes good advertising copy, but would be poor input for strategic planning.

Any marketer with an NPS score should ask themselves, "Are my customers really actively circulating among their friends, neighbors, relatives and co-workers and talking about my product as the score implies?" ..... Really?

We don't have access to Glidden's research, but what we can assume is:

**1)** The research conducted didn't ask customers whether they *had actually recommended* Glidden Paint to anyone (nor did it observe recommendations being made), but rather only asked **if** the customer *would recommend*. And that is a very significant qualification.

**2)** Of those customers answering the NPS research question positively, what they were likely signifying was, "Well, yes, **if** someone actually pressed me for my opinion about paint, then 'yes' I have positive feelings about Glidden Paint".

**3)** The NPS process disregards further qualifications stemming from uncertainties in the study respondents' minds, such as: **a)** "I can barely name any brand of paint...", **b)** "I really don't have a point of comparison....", and **c)** "Truthfully, I don't really know anything about paint; the only aspects I might be able to discuss would be color or price... so my recommendation may be specious, at best".

We're sure Glidden makes a fine product. But if company insiders who know: how paint is made; how to apply paint; and how to judge the quality of a paint, are putting trust in the 97% number, then that's a problem. It's a problem because their typical consumer is far less informed about paint and is therefore ill-equipped to provide meaningful testimonials - even if he or she had the motivation to do so. We don't really want to single out Glidden. We see NPS numbers deluding companies in every category. The truth is, as consumers, most of us know very little about the cars, televisions, breakfast cereals, paint, and the thousands of other products and services we buy. As a consequence, we can't possibly give meaningful recommendations on our own. We probably also lack the necessary motivation to actively recommend the brands we use.

Does this mean word of mouth recommendations are fruitless? Quite the contrary. But to really leverage customers' recommendations, marketers need to identify their best potential **customer advocates** and then *better prepare* and *motivate* them if they truly want them to recommend their brand.

We can tell you how. Contact Terry Vavra or Doug Pruden at:

[www.CustomerExperiencePartners.com](http://www.CustomerExperiencePartners.com).

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