



I'm writing in response to a position paper being circulated by the Grassroots Outdoor Alliance (GOA), which made factually incorrect claims about our member base and misrepresented our business. You personally, or your company, may have received or heard about their document. Regardless, I hope you'll allow me this opportunity to share factual and transparent information about how ExpertVoice works to improve retail commerce for all parties involved.

**ExpertVoice exists to help consumers make better, more confident buying decisions.** We do this by connecting experts and brands in a way that results in more informed product recommendations for consumers. Our platform enables brands to build their own community of experts, empower them with information and firsthand product experience, and reach more consumers with their advice. And experts get the opportunity to be more informed, to be elevated for giving better buying advice, and to work more closely with the brands they love.

**Our member base is not simply a consumer database.** Nor is it a static list of one-time industry professionals. On ExpertVoice each member builds a dynamic profile that gives him or her access to a unique set of opportunities at a point in time. Profiles include credentials like current jobs and previous employment experience, membership in professional organizations, certified knowledge through education on our platform, firsthand experience with products, accomplishments, and activity on the platform in general.

**Brands target only the experts who they consider most likely to be helpful to their consumers.** No brand targets all 1 million experts because that isn't how our platform works. Our largest 100 brand partners each engaged an average of 25,000 experts over the last 12 months. Our next 100 brand partners each engaged approximately 7,000 experts. Additionally, a given brand can target different groups of experts for different campaigns. For example, a large group to drive awareness, or a small group of elite experts to help shape their product line.

**Our platform brings a level of rigor to pro deal programs that isn't feasible for brands to implement on their own.** Every month we verify 20-25k applications manually, and another 15-20k through automated methods (direct ties to partners' databases, team codes, manager approvals, email address domain verification or brand rep referral). At the same time, we expire the credentials of approximately 40k members each month. To identify fraud and abuse, we use the well known fraud prevention software, Sift Science.

**Advocacy programs do offer discounts to a small fraction of a brand's target market, but more than compensate by increasing full price sales to consumers.** Extensive data supports this. Retail employees who engage with brands on ExpertVoice sell 87% more than their peers. Pros who engage with brands on ExpertVoice have 22.2 times as many weekly buying conversations that include product recommendations. And product reviews written by ExpertVoice experts and displayed on brand product display pages have been shown to improve e-commerce sales by 15-30% in third party testing.

Every great brand builds special relationships with the people their consumers trust for inspiration and advice on what to buy. Every great retailer works to hire and retain people whose knowledge and passion inspires customers, and works to turn local professionals into people who will refer customers to their business. ExpertVoice will keep finding, vetting and

growing the impact of the people who will naturally be the most trusted advocates for your products to consumers, improving buying experiences and full-price retail sales.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this further with you.

Sincerely,

Tom Stockham  
CEO, ExpertVoice

P.S. Here are some specific things in the GOA position paper that we would like to correct:

- GOA obtained retailer employee counts from our system and characterized them in a misleading way. These counts represent all retail sales associates who have ever signed up for ExpertVoice. Much the way LinkedIn profiles show peoples' past job experience. With turnover rates and changes in circumstance, the actual number of active RSAs is lower. For example, 130,449 Dick's Sporting Goods employees have signed up over the years, but only 21,812 were active in the last twelve months. As GOA points out, DSG currently reports 55,100 employees.
- GOA claimed that expert status on ExpertVoice is "permanent" for members. This is untrue. To the extent possible, we expire credentials when they no longer apply. Some types of credential auto-expire at a certain age. Others are kept fresh by an automatic feed that we maintain with retailers' employee databases. In cases where we aren't confident about credential expiration, we use other measures, like "ship to store" restrictions to protect the brand. We aren't perfect, but continually strive to improve our ability to track and verify a constantly evolving member base.
- GOA points out that we onboarded 9,000 healthcare professionals last year. This is true, but not the dilution of our member base that GOA implies. In categories like nutrition & health, healthcare professionals have relevant expertise, so brands will target them. Other brands used the ability to target healthcare professionals to thank them for their service during the pandemic by providing discounts. If a brand doesn't explicitly decide to target healthcare professionals (or any other group), they will not have access to a discount.
- GOA points out that some credentials on ExpertVoice are for groups that have paid membership. This is true, but brands have the choice of whether or not to target people in these groups. For some brands, and for specific campaigns, there are legitimate reasons to target a broad range of enthusiasts. We give brands the option to do this.

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