



Michaels

When Michaels approached Recollective in September 2019 to help implement a fast turnaround project, little did Michaels know they cultivated a long-term business partner that changed the collection of insights at the company. To this day, Michaels continues to use Recollective for both short-term and long-term online communities.

Background

Michaels is North America's largest specialty provider of arts, crafts, framing, floral, wall décor, and seasonal merchandise for Makers and do-it-yourself home decorators. There are more than 1,250 stores across the United States and Canada. Additionally, the Company has a large online presence and serves customers through Michaels.com.

In September 2019, Michaels' newly formed in-house Consumer Insights Team needed to conduct a quick turnaround project to find out what customers thought about a new in-store prototype space launched in three (3) of its stores. More specifically, Michaels needed to understand what customers liked, what they would change, and if customers would use this new space inside the stores. The prototype displays took up 10% of the available selling space, so would the concept be a worthwhile investment?



Challenges

The Consumer Insights Team at Michaels was given 10 days to plan, prepare and execute the research plan in time for the grand opening of the prototype spaces in the three (3) stores.

In the past, Michaels conducted this type of research using in-store intercepts. This process entails hiring one or more qualitative contractors to conduct 10-15 minute intercept interviews in each of the three (3) locations throughout the duration of the grand opening event. However, Michaels found that this method was inefficient as multiple individuals would be conducting the intercepts, the costs for completing were high and the respondent base was limited to whoever was in the store that particular day. The in-person method also made it difficult to screen participants to find the most qualified candidates from which to collect insights.

Michaels needed to find a way to ensure that it would be able to:

- Collect feedback from only the segment of interest
- Improve the cohesiveness of the data collection process
- Collect timely insights on the prototype spaces as all three (3) spaces had the grand opening event on the same day at the same time
- Give the Michaels team real-time visibility into the research process



Solution

After considering various methods of in-person data collection and other online tools, Michaels determined that a 3-day 'Pop Up' Research Community using Recollective best suited its needs. Once Michaels settled on using a new online method that ensured participants met defined criteria, the Consumer Insights Team needed to get buy-in from the Executive Team before implementing the project.

Alongside Recollective, Michaels quickly developed the project components on an abbreviated timeline. Michaels created a screener, prepared the discussion guide and homework assignments, programmed everything into the community, screened candidates and then onboarded them into the community, fielded the activities and got results all within the 10-day timeline. This was made possible with Recollective's in-house team of experts and the QuickStart package that Michaels purchased.

Michaels invited 15 pre-screened customers per store to the community, for a grand total of 45 participants. Participants attended the opening event for the prototype spaces and then completed a homework assignment before joining the 3-day online community hosted on Recollective. In the online community, participants completed daily activities designed to dig deep into their thoughts and feelings regarding the new prototype space.



Benefits

Through the use of the Recollective platform, Michaels was able to talk to customers all at the same time and in the same space. The online community provided an easy format to view the ongoing data collection, allowing the internal team to view the data transparently. Using Recollective also allowed for the quick turnaround of the project, as Michaels was able to do everything from screening to data analysis all within the platform.

The use of screening questions allowed Michaels to be selective about which participants they allowed into the community. This ensured Michaels' ability to collect data from its target audience and allowed the company to gather the highest-quality insights from the most relevant respondents.

Furthermore, using Recollective's online community made it possible for Michaels to ask tailored questions to subsegments as well as target content to its research participants.

The online community approach provided Michaels' participants with an equal voice for all, unlike in Focus Groups that can become dominated by one or two strong voices or in-person intercepts when a shy customer can slip by interviewers on their way out of their in-store shopping experience. Recollective also provided participants with flexibility in where and when they wanted to submit their feedback as well as on what device they felt most comfortable doing so.

“The community allowed for the thoughtful screening of participants and allowed for us to sub-segment participants into smaller groups. If I wanted to ask a question to only painters or to just Men - Recollective made that easy.”

- Deborah Walker, Director of Consumer Insights, The Michaels Stores



Results

Using the online 3-day community, Michaels generated deep insights at 1/3 of the cost of its previous in-person research method. Michaels used the insights collected to:

- Modify the spaces within its stores for future rollouts
- Better market the space for future customers
- Extend the length of time that a shopper remained in-store

Using Recollective, Michaels received a response rate of 85%, significantly higher than its goal of **67%**. After the completion of the project, Michaels determined that using an online community would be its new 'go-to' method of research and has continued to work with Recollective to host online communities ever since.

*For more information on how Recollective can help you jumpstart your research, **contact us!***

“It seemed to really click for the Executive Team when I described the Recollective online community as a marriage between Facebook and a Focus Group.”

- Deborah Walker, Director of Consumer Insights, The Michaels Stores

