

CASE STUDY

How to make your life easier, as a consumer insights professional

How Art.com transformed their customer feedback insights by shifting away from manual analysis, to a fully AI-driven solution, using Thematic



Background

You may have heard of Art.com; the online e-commerce platform that brings easily accessible, top-notch art to everyone. The company has gone through a lot of changes recently, in a short amount of time.

Being tasked with upgrading the quality of their consumer insights, and the way Art.com received and distributed insights throughout the organisation, you've got a tough nut to crack.

Not so, thought Ajantha Suriyanarayanan, Director Consumer Insights at Art.com, as she began researching natural language processing (NLP) text analytics solutions on the market.

We spoke to Ajantha to ask why they chose Thematic's AI-driven solution and how it's going so far, 6 months in.

"I was tired of going through a static Excel spreadsheet every month", explains Ajantha, "I asked myself, 'when there must be NLP platforms out there, why are we still using a manual process?'".



Ajantha Suriyanarayanan
Director Consumer Insights
Art.com

Making life easier – The big objective

"I basically wanted to make my life easier", says Ajantha, "and the lives of my colleagues!".

"And I'm not being funny, I mean it quite literally. We needed to make the process easier. I always joke with my team to say, 'if you hand something to a lazy person, rest assured that they're going to find an easy way to do it!'".

"We had been analyzing our Net Promoter Score (NPS) consumer surveys for many years. As the company became increasingly more consumer-obsessed, it was important to leverage consumer insights to the max".

Life before Thematic: time-consuming and slow

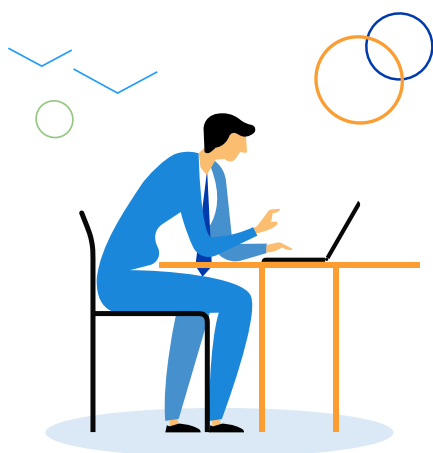
Before using Thematic, "gathering our consumer feedback [and analyzing it], was a slow, manual and very cumbersome process", says Ajantha, who was tasked to innovate it.

Previously, the Director of Operations, used to conduct the customer analysis. We used to do a two-fold review of open-ended consumer comments. If we wanted to understand anything in our comments, we needed to use specific pre-set tabs in Excel, or go through and search for specific keywords. This was a challenging issue.

But just as challenging, was the issue of how little attention consumer insights had from the P&L owners and how they would address priorities as an organisation. This was because the onus was on one individual alone and the responsibility was not distributed across relevant stakeholders.

“So, there was a clear disconnect between the intended use of our VOC feedback and our actual use”, says Ajantha.

“One person was manually reading the comments and then classifying them himself. When you have a spreadsheet and you need to guesstimate what you’re looking for, it’s more difficult and adds more steps to the process. As opposed to a SaaS based platform, where you just log in, adjust a date range and any other filters you need, and look at the results - right then and there”.



What about the financial impact of consumer insights?

Art.com not only wanted to make the process easier, but Ajantha quickly realised that only one person compiling the insights report “won’t instil consumer feedback into the minds of people that need to have it installed in their minds”.

As the objective was to get everyone involved, it needed to be easy, and accessible at everyone’s fingertips. She says: “if we put up more barriers to using it, then employees are just going to become more resistant”. More so, the importance was to be able to prove the financial impact.

Ajantha explains how presenting consumer insights to the senior leadership team often would lead to the question ‘How do you know this is going to help us?’ “If someone said that they did now get any value from our company, are we actually going to gain more business because we’re acting upon this particular feedback?” Ajantha agrees, “it’s a very valid question.

“Because with the limited resources we have, we need to be intelligent about where we’re dedicating our time. Do we want to do something new and cool, or do we want to fix issues that our consumers have surfaced?”

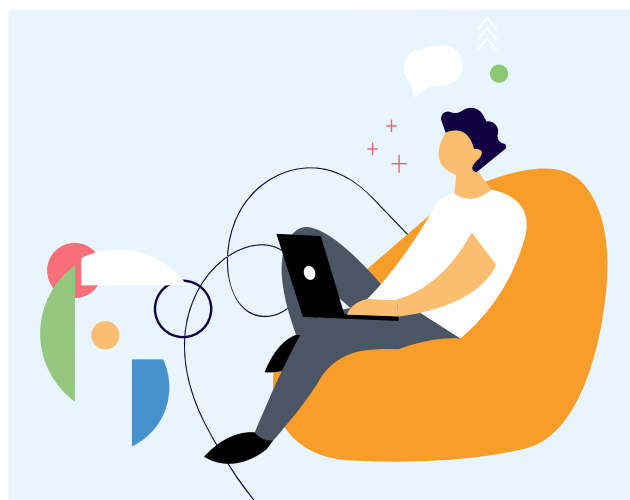
Knowing the prioritisation of issues and their subsequent business impact, was something that was missing at Art.com before Thematic.

How is Art.com using Thematic now?

Now, instead of only one person having ownership of insights, Art.com are distributing ownership across stakeholders in the organisation.

They’ve created “Team Consumer Leaders” (TCLs) so that within each group in the company, one person is a designated TLC representative of consumer feedback for their team. They’re responsible to use Thematic to look at feedback on a monthly basis and contribute to the overall organisational monthly report.

Ajantha confirms that it’s too early in the process to be able to assign an actual financial impact. However, she emphasises that when looking at the cost of time, it’s “so much easier having the platform! Knowing where the pain points are and knowing where we’re receiving kudos from people is huge”.



And, “being able to associate customer NPS comments or an NPS score, to the likely business impact is new to us. We can now include the data derived from Thematic into other company wide analytics”.

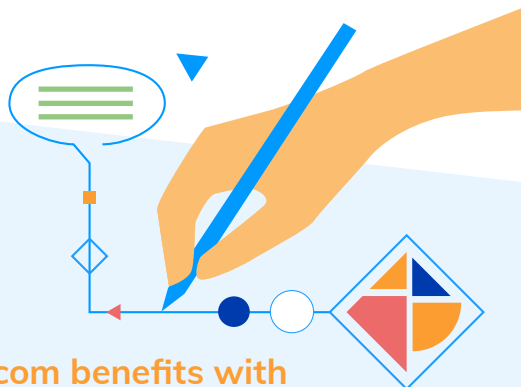
She explains how they're looking at an RFM analysis (recency, frequency, monetary analysis of the consumer base). This, combined with analysing how promoters' RFM, varies from detractors' RFM score, and passives' RFM score.

So, "we want to look at if someone is a promoter, does it automatically mean they keep coming back to us and purchasing or if someone is a detractor, does it mean that they'll stay away from us?" Ajantha says "such questions were difficult to answer in the past because we were missing the data integration component, but now that we have the ability to dig deeper when we need it, we can draw data from Thematic into our own data warehouse, and build custom analytics."

Thematic enables more powerful, data-driven insights.

"Thematic enables us to deliver more powerful insights than we've ever had in the past. As a team, we're becoming more mature in how we use NPS based feedback."

Ajantha is delighted, as in her words "it's going way beyond the standard 'would you recommend us' NPS question, into stronger data analytics and, is enabling us to make more data-driven decisions. We can now classify consumer comments into the right buckets."



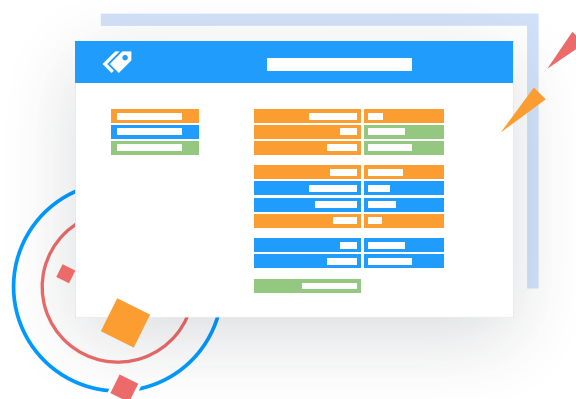
Art.com benefits with using Thematic, in only 6 months:

- Huge organizational impact
- Distributed ownership of insights: "we now have an intimate understanding about consumers' POV of engaging with the brand"
- Facilitated data-driven decision making
- Massive time-saving ability
- Reduced barriers to analyzing NPS feedback across the organization

Which of Thematic's tools are the favorite?

Ajantha explains her favorite Thematic tool; "I find the Impact tool extremely valuable – head and shoulders above the rest. Understanding which themes will help the business is very important for us. We want to increase the focus on our consumer obsession. We need to ensure that we're focusing on the things that allow us to deliver more impact. The impact score is a really big deal for us."

She also has an affinity to the Comparison tool. "When we're looking at specific team, personally I'd like to understand whether the view that promoters have is a different view than the view that detractors have", continues Ajantha. "Where do we need to focus? That comparison analysis allows us to start asking these questions".



"Also, I really like the Thematic dashboard! If it is our CEO, for example, who just needs to know if everything is okay or if we need to pay attention to something, it's a quick glimpse of what's happening right this moment. For example, "here are the top 5 positives, here are the top 5 positives, here are the themes that are trending. So, if we decrease our shipping costs, we can see if that's being mentioned. It enables quick pulse checks and I really like that".

What was it like working with the Thematic team?

"It's a strong SaaS platform yes, but, Thematic is more than a platform. It's not just a tool that just delivers a platform and says goodbye. It's just as much about the team".

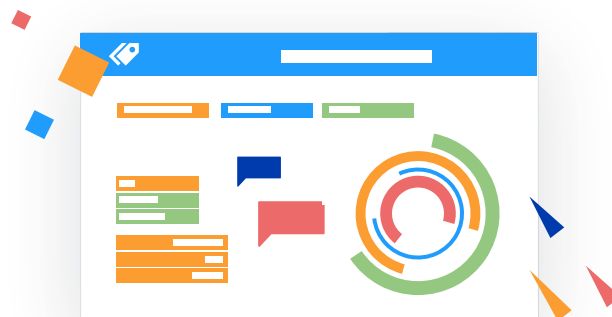
"A collaborative team", is how I'd describe it, says Ajantha. I would definitely recommend Thematic's solution to my peers.

She continues, “I was really impressed about how responsive and collaborative the entire team has been! For example, I’d be on a call with the team, explaining a problem we had, and the response was “that’s a valid point - keep talking”. I would keep talking and within the next 5 minutes, one of the team would ask me to refresh my screen to see if it is working now. And, low and behold, there was a new filtering option there and a whole new data-stream that I can download and analyse any which way. **What I am impressed with is that the team is willing to listen and act upon feedback immediately – this is a huge plus!**



She goes on, “in my research, we had looked at other tools, which we deemed to be ‘alright’. But we don’t want something that is just ‘alright’. We need something that is more effective at delivering what it needed to deliver.

So, when I came across Thematic, the promise of advanced NLP as opposed to just pure text analytics was attractive.”



Easy to implement

Ajantha says, “it was very easy to implement Thematic! There was nothing to download, no 4-6-week implementation timeline. There was only a login needed - that’s it.

And, with the one-on-one training sessions the implementation was easy, even though it was really just to ‘tick the box’”.

In summary,

we can see that going through a period change management and shifting focus to innovate their insights process has led Art.com down a road to better, more powerful insights. Or, was it perhaps vice versa, as well? With the newer, better, and faster insights that the company now has access to, it has led them to be able to change their internal processes to be faster, more efficient and ultimately deliver a better customer experience, which in the long term will only impact the bottom line positively.



**Considering Thematic or just want more info?
Contact us now to get started!**

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