

Haggar grows market share by becoming more customer centric

How agile access to category shoppers delivers actionable insights to de-risk decisions, increase satisfaction, accelerate innovation, and grow revenue

Growing menswear brand, Haggar Clothing Co., was facing pressure from the competition in its market space. To gain an edge, the company needed to become more customer centric. They launched Haggar Advisors to get direct, agile access to a hard-to-reach audience who has opted in to provide ongoing feedback. Haggar leverages their Advisors to iterate on go-to-market decisions and conduct wear testing of products. Haggar now has more decision-making confidence. New programs are validated by customers, which leads to improved satisfaction, accelerated innovation, and increased revenue. Plus, it helps the company get buy-in from retail partners.



“Insight from Haggar Advisors gives us more confidence in our decisions. We have a tendency to lean on our personal preferences, but when faced with a difficult decision, I’d rather go with what 1000s of consumers think versus what I think is better. Even if we make a mistake, at least it’s based on consumer feedback. Relying on the voice of our consumers is a trusted process.”



Davin Sanchez
Director of Consumer Insight and Analytics
Haggar

Drives revenue growth—new pant line estimated to double previous best seller

De-risks decisions on go-to-market strategy and avoids negative brand repercussions

Wear testing improves customer satisfaction and accelerates innovation

Agility, speed, and volume of trends and insight shows four times research ROI

Challenge

Haggar wanted to be the number-one brand in casual non-denim dress pants in its product and market space. With constant disruption in the retail sector and pressure from the competition, the company had to become more customer centric to meet this goal.

In the past, decisions were made on gut instinct. Market research and customer insights weren't a focus. Although they would dip into industry information once a year, the data they received simply wasn't detailed enough. A further attempt at customer segmentation proved to be too difficult to provide the business with agile insight.

The company was looking at a sub-segment of the population that was hard to find and engage, so it made sense to invest in a repeatable customer engagement model for insight.

Solution

Davin Sanchez, Director of Consumer Insight and Analytics, and his team launched Haggar Advisors in 2017 to enable the business to have direct, agile access to people who shop its category and have consented to provide ongoing feedback. The goal of launching Haggar Advisors was to allow everyone in the company to be as informed, enabled, and empowered as possible so that they could make the best decisions for the company. Haggar Advisors quickly became pervasive in its impact on the business.

Haggar Advisors is comprised of roughly 3,200 category shoppers. Davin and his team engage the community one to three times a month. In 2018 alone, they conducted 26 studies and received a 37% response rate. Having the rich profiles and longitudinal view of members enables comparisons of younger, more stylish shoppers with Haggar's core consumer.

Davin and the insight team were surprised how willing shoppers were to participate without receiving an individual incentive. In the past, an incentive was always needed when conducting traditional market research. Feedback from the Advisors is also more thorough and well thought out than the responses the team receives from other sources.

Having people opt in to participate means they are very engaged with the brand and care enough to invest their time. The first time Haggar conducted a wear test with the Advisors, one of the members sent in a video and showed their entire process of interacting with the garment, including washing it.

Haggar keeps the Advisors engaged by sharing findings and word clouds, inviting a select group to take part in wear testing, and getting feedback on important campaigns before launch (including the video for Haggar's Hall of Fame Dads campaign).

With a small and nimble corporate team of 150 staff members at the head office, the CEO is still very involved in the day-to-day running of the business and insight is no exception. The CEO is the main contact outside of the marketing department. He makes many of the requests for insight, including those for design, marketing, attribute testing, and pricing.

Haggar works with its Advisors to dive into go-to-market decisions for its programs and wear testing products before finalization to increase decision-making confidence. In the future, the aim is to get consumer feedback throughout the product development process.

From a go-to-market perspective, everything Haggar does goes through a few

Vision Critical has been mission critical for Haggar Clothing Co., allowing us to have an ongoing and real-time dialogue with our consumers and quickly evolve our product offerings and positioning in the marketplace. Vision Critical has great employees and a top notch platform. Bottom line, Haggar is exceeding expectations of our retail partners and end consumers thanks to our partnership with Vision Critical!



Paul M. Okimoto
Senior Vice
President,
Marketing
Haggar

iterations of consumer review. In one example, Haggar developed new packaging designs and wanted to get feedback from the Advisors. Davin and his team shared the designs along with some competitive comparisons to learn what worked and didn't work. Haggar iterated on the design and corporate thought it looked great. The design went back to the Advisors twice more. Nuanced feedback led the design team down a completely different path than what they had originally planned. The original design raised questions that Haggar didn't want to have come up in their shoppers' minds. Shoppers said the design was too American and people questioned whether the product was made in America or not. Since the products are not made in America, that would have been a negative result for the brand. Insight from the Advisors gave Haggar more confidence that it was making a consumer-validated decision.

Also, being able to wear test products that are already in the market has helped accelerate product innovation for new programs (pant lines) based on what consumers want and need. Recruiting a cross-section of consumers from the Advisors saves Haggar both time and money, gives more confidence in the authenticity of feedback, and builds on what is already known about each member. Plus, it's a great way to keep the Advisors engaged.

Haggar Advisors has also been very helpful in proposing product lines to retailers. It gives retailers more confidence in Haggar's proposed programs. In the past, the retailer may have been reticent to make a change and may have wanted to keep the old program. Now, retail partners more easily buy into new programs because Haggar can say with confidence their new programs have been validated by consumers.

In the future, Haggar plans to engage the Advisors even more frequently, using the longitudinal experience to better understand the nuances of their views and to get to know their consumers as people outside of their relationship with the product and brand. Providing consumers with products and solutions to meet their needs will help build a stronger relationship that will build a Haggar consumer for life and give the company an edge on the competition.

Outcome

Haggar Advisors was and continues to be the insight team's largest annual expense. Because of the value delivered, it continues to receive funding. Davin estimates the replacement cost of the research to be four times the investment for Vision Critical's customer insights platform.

By wear testing its products before they go to the market and iterating on go-to-market decisions, Haggar can validate investment decisions with its consumers before commitments are made. Add to that the strong faith of retail partners in Haggar's product design because of the iterations with consumers, and the value becomes exponential.

For the company's new program coming out later this year, Haggar has received the largest initial order from its retail partners, more than exceeding the potential for the pant it is replacing. Haggar estimates the new pant line could double the revenue performance of their previous best seller.

Takeaways

Validates direction of marketing campaigns



Informs smart product development



Develops trust with retail partners

About Haggar

Haggar Clothing Co. is an innovative and growing menswear brand with a 90-year history. Based in Dallas, the company primarily sells men's kakis, dress pants, and suits wear in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Haggar sells directly to consumers and through retail partners.

About Vision Critical

[Vision Critical](#) builds customer trust and creates new business value through the collection and application of consent data. With its unique, relationship-based approach, Vision Critical's Sparq platform lets brands directly interact with insight communities of opted-in customers. Unlike traditional voice of customer methods, Vision Critical unlocks the real-time feedback that companies need to build better products, deliver better services, and achieve better business outcomes hand in hand with their own highly engaged, well-profiled customers.

[Hundreds](#) of high-performing organizations across multiple industries benefit from Vision Critical's technology and guidance. To learn more about Vision Critical, follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), or visit us at www.visioncritical.com.