



How Refinery29 continues to be the authority on young women

Insight from consent data opens new revenue opportunities, expands partner programs and inspires new content for Refinery29

A scalable insights platform that supports Refinery29's mission and values

Refinery29's mission is to be radically inclusive, recognizing and representing the different experiences of women around the world. They needed to uncover agile, ongoing insight from their audience in a respectful, consent-based way that could scale to meet the needs of the business and express their commitment to learning and listening.

Central to that goal, The Refinery29 Intelligence team activated their Mad Chatter insight community to support differentiated advertising sales and content initiatives including: informing proposals, testing editorial concepts, and examining content impact.

The application of consent data collected through Mad Chatter resulted in the creation of new partnerships in new industries followed by a wider mandate to support content direction, marketing and strategic planning across the business. R29 Intelligence now supports both editorial and ad sales across the entire cycle of content creation, audience engagement, measurement, and partnership program development.



Trends and insights from Mad Chatter have added a new facet to Refinery29's position as an expert on young women and has opened up new opportunities to drive revenue opportunities, and reshape the editorial process by integrating customer backed insight at the onset of the process.



Nicholas Butterworth
CTO/CPO
Refinery29

Increased revenue from financial sector partners

Introduced insight-backed workflow and themes for editorial process

Custom insights supports proposals and brand partner marketing effectiveness

Challenge

Opening the door to new advertising partnerships

Like most media companies, a portion of Refinery29's business is fueled by ad sales and partnership programs. Maintaining that revenue depends on the ability to keep their audience engaged with relevant, innovative content and then quantifying that engagement to support pitches and partnership programs. On the back end, those same metrics are used to prove the effectiveness of these programs. It is an ongoing cycle that relies heavily on agile, ongoing insights.

Ideally, a media company can evolve into an absolute expert in an audience for Refinery29 that audience is young women, so it was imperative for Refinery29 to find new ways to leverage and broaden their insights to attract a more diverse set of advertising partners, particularly in the financial industry.

Challenging potential partner's perspective - More than a fashion brand

Historically, Refinery29 has been an undeniable authority on women; their reputation was shaped by deep roots in fashion and beauty rather than the financial sector, making it a new challenge.

At the same time, young women were indicating a growing interest in Refinery29's "Work & Money" content. To monetize this trend, Refinery29 needed to rapidly expand their partnerships and deepen their portfolio by servicing their audience with a secure channel for these conversations about personal finance.

While it is known that the management of personal finances can spark a range of emotions, little research had been done to explore just how those emotions influence action when it comes to financial planning. Specifically, how young women's perspective and reaction differs from men and why that is relevant to their potential partners.

Solution

Engaging Refinery29's core audience

To deliver fast, agile audience insights to the business, the team launched Mad Chatter in 2015. It is comprised of 11,000+ opted-in, highly engaged, and richly profiled Refinery29 audience across the US, Canada and UK.

Mad Chatter ensures ongoing access to their audience with speed and the ability to rapidly scale because young women have consented to provide feedback. Ongoing engagement and retention is facilitated by providing clear guidelines and expectations, a balance of dynamic activities and the ability to shareback information through member hub updates, editorial spotlights, and more.

As Refinery29 pursued opportunities in the financial industry, the team used Mad Chatter to understand women's spending and saving habits, long-term goals, and the actions she's taking to develop her financial portfolio.

Breaking into the lucrative financial services market

As part of this project, Refinery29 tracked demographic insights and they also explored a series of questions about how people are planning for their future with their finances.

Working with the marketing solutions team, R29 Intelligence used findings from the studies to show how their programs could deliver against the brand specific



Actionable insight about our audience is critical to our continued success as experts on young women and the context of their lives. We leverage Mad Chatter for differentiated content deals, building deeper partner relationships, and accelerating innovative content.



Brooke Hinton
Associate Director,
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Refinery29

objectives of potential partners and provide additional value to existing partners.

Keeping a pulse on their audience

Mad Chatters provided their perspectives on many topics including identity studies on perception of media coverage of disability and accessibility, values, shopping behaviors, modern manners, and exploring conscious consumerism. Members provide rich, authentic stories and opinions that allow Refinery29 to keep a pulse on how women are feeling across a variety of topics.

Refinery29's vision for the future is to inform early stage editorial content and then validate that direction, building out their full roster of content programs as iterative and on-going cycles. Refinery29 marries consumer findings with content and culture findings, to build out the Refinery29 Insights Library. R29 Intelligence also leads annual refreshes of popular statistics to fuel longitudinal analysis.

Outcome

Expanding their influence across the business

Given the richness of the bespoke research and effectiveness tracking for differentiated advertising sales, the team grew to provide a more proactive approach to integrating audience engagement into the advertising process and editorial ideation.

Mad Chatter is key to ensuring that Refinery29 is radically inclusive and provides service to its audience of young women, in support of their mission to consistently build a two way dialogue with them. In addition to aiding in the creation of impactful, pre-sale packages, Mad Chatter has contributed to a robust suite of metrics that Refinery29 uses to measure the effectiveness of their partner programs. Their ability to monetize insight and support repeated revenue generation is rivaled only by their superior ability to guide innovative content generation.

Emerging as a thought leader in the financial industry

Insights from Mad Chatter also fueled the creation of industry specific collateral that was used in a series of client events, agency road shows and brand workshops that proved the effectiveness of Refinery29's platform and provided for the foundation for in-depth consultation and exploration into the value of connecting with young women.

Refinery29 has cemented their reputation as the leading authority on millennial women on subjects ranging from fashion to finance. Moreover, they are now recognized by the financial industry as a thought leader and influencer.

Takeaways

Agile insight adds value to advertising partners

Audience insight fuels thought leadership

Editorial process enhanced with customer-validated direction and feedback

About Refinery29

Refinery29 is the definitive Media & Entertainment brand that elevates young women's voices around the world. They leverage audience insights to build their authority in the space, produce award-winning original content, and drive revenue growth. They reach women by creating content that matters to them most, from fashion and beauty, to politics and personal finance.

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.

Expanding from fashion into finance

Refinery29 is committed to its marketplace position as a 'translator between brands and young women' by developing innovative content and thoughtful audience analysis.

As part of this ongoing initiative, R29 Intelligence recently tapped into their Mad Chatter insights community to facilitate a series of ongoing engagements dubbed "Cents & Sensibility." This explored the unmissable tie between emotions and financial decision making. While it is known that the management of personal finances can spark a range of emotions, little research had been done to explore just how those emotions influence action when it comes to financial planning - and further, how those emotions differed between men and women - and why that is relevant to their potential partners.

Access to the Mad Chatter community quickly generated insights from over 3,000 women across the US and the UK, while comparing a supplemental male General Population sample. Refinery29 tracked a series of key profile variables including relationship status, income and age. As part of this project they also explored a series of questions about how people are planning for their future with their finances.

Working with the sales marketing team, R29 Intelligence used findings from the studies to show how their programs could deliver against the brand specific objectives of potential partners and provide additional value to existing partners who had placed branded content or were already participating in experiential partnerships.

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Editorial wins fueled by audience insights have solidified Refinery29's reputation as both a thought leader and "one to watch" in the financial space.

Broadening the scope of their expertise (and access to) young women and establishing themselves as a thought leader in the financial sector has contributed to YoY increase in revenue from financial partners and exclusive media coverage with NBC showcasing the findings. From an ad-sales perspective, Refinery29 is now working with more financial brands than ever before.

In addition to having a significant impact on the success of their partnership programs, insight from the Mad Chatter also supported Refinery29's editorial team across the business but also specifically in the "Work and Money" section that has driven some of the highest traffic on the site.