CASE STUDY

How Greyhound reduces analytics time tenfold, with Thematic Text Analytics

A great example of a company who has transitioned from time-consuming, manual customer feedback analysis to AI-powered, fast text analytics, practically in no time, is Greyhound.

Greyhound is the well-known bus transportation network, with services across the United States, Canada and Mexico. We spoke with Matthew Schoolfield, the Senior Customer Insights Analyst at Greyhound, to understand their customer insights journey.

"We've always had a post-trip customer survey for several years", Matthew explains, "but it was very long, and we got so many responses that frankly we didn't have a way to truly analyze the free-form fields".

3 major challenges Greyhound faced

Greyhound was faced with three major challenges, all of which massively impacted the business productivity and their allocation of resource. Quoting Matthew:

1. Firstly, our survey was way too long. It consisted of about 30-35 detailed questions.

2. As a travel company, on-time performance* is our biggest challenge. Just looking at the Net Promoter Score (NPS) score, will not let us identify other issues, it only gives us a score of 1-10.

3. We want to be at the forefront of technology, and as we had a manual system previously to analyze feedback, it made this challenging.

"Now, with Thematic, we have solved all of these issues".

Matthew Schoolfield
Senior Customer Insights Analyst, Greyhound

It was extremely easy to implement Thematic", says Matthew. "On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is the easiest, I'd say 1!

Matthew Schoolfield
Senior Customer Insights Analyst, Greyhound

*On-time performance refers to the level of success of the service remaining on the published schedule.

Easy to miss problems arising

What was the biggest issue with analysing feedback manually? "The biggest challenge", says Matthew, "was to spot problems outside of on-time performance, the station managers just didn't know where to attack. As most of them might be in the office between 8am-5pm each day, and an issue might happen from 11pm-3am, which in this case they would not be able to see."

"The manual process was about 80% of my job"

Matthew remembers how much time was invested in manually doing the work that Thematic now completes in a matter of hours: "Previously, only one person, myself, would manually analyze the feedback. It was about 80% of my job, and would take me from 3 hours to 3 days".

"The problem was, by the time we had manually compiled the results and sent them out across the company, the data was already 3-4 weeks old. So, we're trying to make improvements but by then, it's been going on for weeks. This was definitely not helping us be on the forefront in terms of fixing issues in the terminals", confirms Matthew.

"Other solutions didn't stand up to what Thematic could do"

Greyhound's aim was to remove the manual reporting, and find something that fit within their budget. Matthew says that other text analytics tools were not even on the table, because what most of them ask in a yearly fee is unattainable for us. And, compared with what Thematic does in terms of text analytics, they're not in the same realm. Thematic is every bit better than what other text analytics tools offer in that aspect. But significantly more cost effective."

"We had looked at a couple of other Text Analytics providers, and did a few trials but we never implemented their solutions. Even on paper, they didn't stand up to what Thematic could do."

Thematic able to spot issues in 2 minutes

"Where Thematic really has an impact is with the station managers, for them to see how their particular stations are performing. One of the great features is the dashboard, which allows the station managers to see and drill down to exactly what is happening."

"For example, if the New York station manager wants to see comments related to New York, they can get that straight away, without having to email off a report, wait for that to be generated – and then wait again to get the responses back. Or, try and dig through 100-150/day surveys."

"Another example was an issue with the Dallas station, where the terminal wasn't being cleaned as per usual. Earlier, there was no way we could get to that level of detail. Thematic pointed it out to us within 2 minutes."

"Thematic allows us to identify issues and distribute them to our station managers in real time. It's invaluable, as we can get the data into the hands of our employees easily. Before, when we sent the reports out, we were just hoping that people will read them, but had no way of telling."

Super easy implementation – quick set up

"It was extremely easy to implement Thematic", says Matthew. "On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is the easiest, I'd say 1! The Thematic team took care of everything on their side, and then it was simply a matter of me pulling a raw file of survey results."

Biggest selling point: clear and concise data

"It only took about 3 days to analyze our survey results the first time, and that's after building everything up from scratch. Basically, in no time, the first analysis confirmed the hypothesis we had, which we'd spent a lot of time and research on internally. This was the biggest selling point for us: the data was clear and concise, and told us exactly what we thought were going to see."

The biggest Aha! Moment: positive feedback for bus drivers

"My favorite part of the tool is the survey insights piece, especially seeing the way that customer service is mentioned. We had always thought of customer service being mentioned in a negative term, but this showed us that it shows up as positive."

"We didn't realise that people were SO happy with our bus drivers, and that was a great insight to see! That's been great to pass along info to our bus-driver training to let them know they're doing a great job to make sure our customers have a decent trip. We knew our drivers were great, but we didn't realise how great, until we started using this tool.

Top positive themes by NPS impact.

What business processes did Thematic's solution enhance?

Matthew describes how they're using Thematic in two distinct ways, depending on the roles of their employees. "Station managers log into the system 1-2/week, and check the dashboards to see if any new themes jump out at them. It's especially interesting if they have made any changes to their processes in the station, for example boarding or ticket sales. They always want to see if that changes the NPS score or customers comments, so if people mention boarding in a negative manner, they can see those key issues straight away", says Matthew.

Our corporate managers are looking at NPS score essentially, and the themes for the

> *I would say it's 50%-time savings vs before, it reduces my analytics time tenfold.*

Matthew Schoolfield
Senior Customer Insights Analyst, Greyhound

month; such as if mechanical breakdowns have increased 3% month over month. That means they can go to Maintenance and ask: "do we have more buses out of service than previous month?", or "are we having more issues with mechanical failures on the road?".

"Thematic is saving 50% of my time"

So, what impact does using Thematic have on time and resource? "To give you an idea of how much time was saved using Thematic," says Matthew, "we were now able to launch four different research projects that have been pushed aside for several the months. I would say it's 50%-time savings vs before, it reduces my analytics time tenfold."

"Shows us where to focus our time and efforts"

We asked Matthew what was his favorite Thematic tool, and he had a hard time replying. "That's a tough question! All of it is great, honestly. The over-time feature is always interesting to me, being able to view different themes over time and how they've improved or declined."

"And the correlation piece is really fascinating for us. Take New York. Customers get very frustrated when waiting for a late bus, but, in Kansas City, people don't care as much. And that correlation piece really shows us where we need to focus our time and efforts, and that's something that we definitely were not doing before."

Why did you choose Thematic?

"We chose Thematic for a combination of reasons. Firstly, the tools that we needed were there. Thematic really hit a home run with the theme analysis right off the bat, and everything was a home run from there", says Matthew.

"Our reasons to stay? Thematic is a spectacular service and the customer service is outstanding! That's the most important part to me going forward."

We asked Matthew to describe the Thematic team in three words: "Quick, reliable, knowledgeable".

"The team always replies in a concise manner and always take ownership if they do not know the answer as to how they'll get the answer. Which is hugely appreciative when you're dealing with data that is as sensitive as what we're dealing with here."

"Also Thematic is constantly improving the technology and constantly growing and evolving – that's huge. That shows that Thematic is committed to the future and to our success and that is really what keeps us there. No doubt, I'd definitely recommend Thematic's solution."

Shorter surveys – high success rate

"Since we started with Thematic, we're shortening our survey significantly. The data and themes that Thematic provides means that we don't need to ask 30 questions anymore. We just rolled out a 4-question survey, and we've been utilizing tablets inside of stations to survey customers as they get off the bus at their destination. It's had a really high success rate so far, and we hope to see our completion percentage rise up."

The tool of the future for Greyhound

Matthew concludes that he's happy with the service and will continue using it: "This is the tool of the future for us, and there are definitely savings [involved], as it frees up our time to do other research instead of being tied to our desks."

"We love it. Our senior director of customer experience is using the tool daily, she loves it and she uses it to quiz people on the phone sometimes! She'll say she saw a great insight in the tool and ask, "what have you been doing differently?" Thematic helps us to promote these conversations in the field and they're more targeted now – that's what we want to see."

> *This is the tool of the future for us.*

Matthew Schoolfield
Senior Customer Insights Analyst, Greyhound

Get a free customized analysis of your customer feedback.

Discover hidden insights, with AI-powered text analytics you can trust.

BOOK A DEMO