

How Meredith uses Segment to power unified customer analytics across the enterprise

From *People* to *Food + Wine*, the publications of Meredith Corporation have a massive digital audience. Using Segment to centralize and access their customer data, Meredith has opened up unprecedented opportunities for growth.

"Segment has enabled us to streamline the data capture process while maintaining flexibility to customize per brand as needed."



Grace Preyapongpisan
Vice President, Business Intelligence
Meredith Corporation

THE COMPANY

Meredith Corporation is a publicly-held media and marketing services company with more than 30 brands delivering print, digital, and video content on every topic from pop culture and food, to news and sports.

For more than 115 years, they have provided consumers with engaging content and marketers with a robust and diverse selection of channels for reaching consumers.

With more than 175 million unique monthly visitors in the U.S. alone, Meredith's digital audience consumes tens of billions of articles, videos, social media posts, and emails each year. By creating and distributing content across their top consumer brands, such as *People*, *Allrecipes*, *Sports Illustrated*, *Fortune*, and others, this massive scale has cemented Meredith as a leading omnichannel media company.

THE CHALLENGE

Turn Meredith's massive digital scale into a growth opportunity

With more than half of Americans consuming Meredith content *every day*, the Meredith team had the opportunity to understand readers' needs and interests. However, they had previously taken a brand-driven approach to data collection, which resulted in dozens of unique data architectures and siloed data sets. No matter how skilled or successful individual brands were with their data, the walled-off tech stacks limited their ability to measure enterprise-wide trends and performance and made it difficult to understand cross-brand traffic and appeal.

Meredith knew they had a huge untapped opportunity to unify their data and build consistencies across their properties. The result would be powerful consumer insights that could be leveraged across brands to optimize targeting, guide product development, and inform growth decisions. What's more, the cost and burden of supporting so many different approaches could be replaced with a single architecture that was more operationally and fiscally efficient.

Even though standardizing their data infrastructure across brands would enable untapped opportunities and usher in a new era of analytics and insights, it was a massive challenge to tackle. What's more, the analytics team was tasked with finishing their data unification and standardization project in just six months in order to align with a parallel software migration project.

INDUSTRY

Media and
Marketing Services

LOCATIONS

Headquartered in
Des Moines, IA

More than 20 other locations
in the U.S.

THE SOLUTION

Gather and centralize cross-brand data for easy distribution and analytics, and do it within a tight timeline

To accomplish such a comprehensive project across the distinct systems of nearly 30 brands in just 6 months seemed impossible. Searching for technical solutions to speed up the project, the Meredith team discovered Segment's customer data infrastructure which provided a means to quickly accomplish their goals. Since Segment could gather data from across all of their digital properties and distribution channels, including video, over-the-top (OTT) streaming services, mobile apps, and more, it was the perfect choice for pulling together their many data sources.

Using Segment's data infrastructure, Meredith could also centralize their consumer data, enabling their teams to collect and distribute data across the organization. That access and visibility would further enable downstream analytics tools to incorporate a wider consumer dataset to enable new cross-brand insights.

With Segment as the foundation, Meredith's team put into place two core pillars upon which to build their new data strategy:

1. Create and enforce a new data capture standard across the organization.
2. Give every team instant access to data.

First, by standardizing how data for every user interaction with Meredith's digital properties is collected, their internal teams could ensure data cardinality so that distinct users could be accurately tracked across properties. The standard would also ensure data was easily consumable and understandable by the various teams. For example, Meredith's video data was previously tied to individual streaming channels, such as Roku and Apple TV.

Using Segment would allow Meredith to combine data from many channels and enable a comprehensive analysis by brand, topic, or other attributes. With the new data structure, they could run highly-accurate trend analyses and surface predictions that transcended the delivery channel.

"We were diligent about ensuring we were porting data to a centralized place in addition to making the data universally actionable for all teams," said Kerry-Anne Doyle, Director of BI Audience Insights & Analytics at Meredith Corporation. "Sure, some of the event tracking we're doing is for product engineering, but it's actually also helpful for consumer marketing. It's really important that we're unbiased when it comes to powering teams with data."

KEY OUTCOMES

- Implement a standardized data infrastructure across nearly 30 brands in 6 months
- Capture consumer data trends to inform key product, marketing, and growth decisions across the organization
- Achieve unprecedented capabilities for audience segmentation, targeting, and opportunity identification
- Power real-time dashboards with standardized data for enterprise-wide performance indicators



Additionally, by using Segment to push standardized data—in real-time—into existing tools, it became easier than ever for Meredith to quickly implement new software. Data capture standards also made it easy to share data universally, feeding centralized analytics for an enterprise-wide view of users, brands, and their business.

Before adopting Segment, we were spending far too much money on a discombobulated analytics tech stack, and we had no way to look at the entire network performance at scale.

- Kerry-Anne Doyle

Director of BI Audience Insights + Analytics,
Meredith Corporation

THE RESULTS

Powered by Segment, every group at Meredith has an enterprise-wide view of consumer insights to drive new growth

Even under a tight six-month timeline, Meredith was able to successfully implement a centralized data analytics infrastructure, opening up new opportunities for teams to access and put to work the same standardized data across the entire breadth of Meredith's 36 brands.

This new data strategy and approach has fueled insights and driven opportunities for more accurate business metrics, unprecedented targeting, and enterprise-wide data alignment.

Visualize and measure enterprise-wide key performance indicators in real-time

With a streamlined and unified data architecture built on a Segment foundation, Meredith eliminated weeks of manual effort previously required to merge disparate first-party data. Now, a central data hub powers real-time dashboards with standardized data for all teams to use.

Uncover insights to power unprecedented segmentation, targeting, and business development capabilities

With a centralized view of data across brands and channels, teams can create rich, robust, and dynamic consumer profiles. These profiles are then used to guide media execution, optimize content recommendations, improve product development strategies, and inform business decisions.

INTEGRATIONS

- Google AdWords
- Facebook Custom Audiences
- Marketo
- Customer.io
- Postgres

Drive impact across the organization with an aligned, cross-departmental data strategy

Beyond consumer data, Meredith's broader business is benefiting from wider data transparency, signaling an organizational shift in how Meredith's business operates. Teams from editorial to engineering are taking a more data-driven approach to growing Meredith's bottom line. "We now look across the entire organization to make sure we're best serving all of these groups," Doyle said. "As we evolve and scale our data strategy—working continuously to enrich our first-party digital data—we can do it with Segment."

Thanks to Segment's centralized data infrastructure, which underpins their rapid unification of data from a multitude of digital properties, Meredith is poised to successfully scale and grow into the future.

ABOUT SEGMENT

Segment provides the customer data infrastructure that businesses use to put their customers first. With Segment, companies can collect, unify, and connect their first-party data to over 200 marketing, analytics, and data warehousing tools. Today, over 19,000 companies across 71 countries use Segment, from fast-growing businesses such as Atlassian, Bonobos, and Instacart to some of the world's largest organizations like Levi's, Intuit, and Time. Segment enables these companies to achieve a common understanding of their users and make customer-centric decisions.



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