

A More Inclusive Boating Industry

Rethinking strategy to reach a greater demographic



Objective

Boating has historically been a male dominant industry with companies focusing much of their marketing efforts on catering to male boaters and portraying women in stereotypical roles (e.g. the wife, the mother, the sexy boat accessory). Our client, a global marine manufacturer, is striving to make the boating industry more inclusive for all. Currently catering to only half the population is impeding market growth and our client acknowledges that they need to understand women's current perceptions of the industry and barriers to entry in order to inform marketing strategy and to better target the female base.



Approach

The client hypothesized that women boat owners differ greatly from male boat owners and that the key barrier for women entering the market was the perception of non-exclusivity in the boating industry. We know the most powerful source for validating such assumptions and uncovering valuable insights is capturing the voice of the customer directly. As such, research targeted female boat owners to understand current experiences with boating and the perceptions of the industry overall. We also captured insights from women interested in boating who have not yet entered the market to understand barriers, concerns, and industry perceptions. Lastly, we spoke to male boat owners and interested boaters so that we could compare and contrast the two different cohorts.



Results

While the research confirmed some assumptions and uncovered some surprising insights, with numbers to support the findings, hearing the voices of different women through powerful video responses captured the attention of an entire organization, from leadership to product developers to marketers. By understanding the voice of their customers - and potential customers - the client learned that their marketing and communication strategy needs to be adjusted, not only to be more inclusive of women and to empower women boaters, but to captivate even broader audiences (first time buyers, those with little to no experience, etc.) The client is now focused on revising their strategic direction to be more representative and inclusive of those outside of their core demographic.

