How Rosetta Stone Used Data to Transform its Approach

2x
increase in day-7 retention

2x
increase in subscriptions

40
weekly active users from Rosetta Stone on Amplitude

Amplitude

Since its founding in 1992, Rosetta Stone has helped millions of people learn a new language with its award-winning technology-based solutions. A longtime staple of mall kiosks and in-flight catalogs, the iconic brand has faced an onslaught of digital competitors such as Duolingo and Babbel in recent years. To stay ahead of the curve, Rosetta Stone looked to Amplitude to help cultivate a data-centric culture, where key metrics, user behavior and the ability to share insights drive decisions.

Confronting an Existential Question

The Rosetta Stone experience had always been built on its signature, immersion-based approach to learning. But language scientists at Rosetta Stone had begun to question that fundamental proposition in favor of a more inclusive educational method. They found evidence to support such a shift in negative reviews from app users, who were frustrated with the immersion method. Indeed, many users specifically requested a way to translate texts into their native language. Using Amplitude Segmentation, Svedin and his team observed that roughly 50 percent of all complaints and feature requests in 2018 revolved around offering translations.

Putting a Core Philosophy to the Test

Rosetta Stone's Digital Product team suspected an option to display translated text on-demand would improve learner retention and product satisfaction, ultimately boosting sales performance. To test this hypothesis, the team used Amplitude. They created English translations for their Spanish language module and rolled it out to a small subset of users. Learners using those modules would now be able to touch-and-hold over text or images for an instant English translation. The entire effort, including multiple iterations and experiments to find the best user experience, took two months.

Breaking a Mold

Rosetta Stone launched "Translations" in Version 5.8. To track core engagement, retention, and sales metrics, Svedin and the Mobile App team built a version-specific Amplitude dashboard so they could easily see the impact of their change.

Indeed, the Translations experiment was revealing: learners who interacted with Translations completed several foundational exercises at a rate 2x greater than that of learners without the feature. What's more, **day-7 retention also improved by 2x**. And Amplitude Funnels showed that learners who interacted with Translations also **purchased over twice as many subscriptions**, driving revenue by hundreds of thousands of dollars.

In fact, to the product team's surprise, as users progressed through Rosetta Stone's language modules, their Translations use grew. As Amplitude revealed, the experiment was so successful that Rosetta Stone has rethought it's entire approach to teaching and learning, and is now working on offering translations and alternate means of learning across its product offerings. As Svedin put it, after more than two decades of immersion-based learning, "we broke the mold."

Shifting a Culture

Beyond the direct boon to the company's bottom line, Svedin said, Amplitude has helped Rosetta Stone make better decisions, by making data accessible to stakeholders at every level.

> Whenever we launch a new product or feature, we want to see how it's performing, whether it's actually moving a needle. That's where Amplitude really comes in, allowing us to report on the successes of our features and the behaviors of our users.

Ryan Svedin
Senior Manager for Mobile
Rosetta Stone

"It's really helped us prioritize, he said." There's never an argument over where we should invest our time and effort because we can all see the data." That represents a marked shift from the past, when only a handful of employees used Google Analytics and a patchwork of other tools to what often seemed like a dubious effect.

"No one knew how to dig into Google," Svedin recalls, "And if they thought they knew how to do it, they were most likely doing it wrong." But Svedin said Amplitude has been so easy to use that now dozens of employees have access and use it regularly.

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