

# Abercrombie & Fitch

## How the ANF Co. brands utilize Live by Fuel Cycle to stay connected to customers

Abercrombie & Fitch Co. is a global specialty retailer of apparel and accessories for men, women, teens and kids through its brands – Abercrombie & Fitch, Hollister, Gilly Hicks and abercrombie kids. While the brands target customers at different life stages, they share a commitment to offering products of enduring quality and exceptional comfort that allows consumers around the world to express their own individuality and style.

A&F Co. is focused on keeping its customers at the center of everything it does – and to help achieve that goal, the company’s Global Customer Insights team has utilized its Fuel Cycle research communities, Inside A&F and the Hollister Insight Lab, to garner additional insights into customers’ mindsets, behaviors, and preferences.

“The Insight Lab has proven to be incredibly valuable for our business,” said Betsy Hall, Senior Vice President, Hollister Merchandising. “It’s an efficient way for us to understand what our customers want, and the participants tell us how much they love knowing their input helps shape our collections.”

FuelCycle Product:



**38**

Live sessions in 2020

**198**

Participants in 2020

**Areas of impact:**

Product, Marketing,  
Customer Experience

### The Challenge

Since the launch of the customer communities, the Global Customer Insights team has employed a robust blend of digital and in-person research methodologies. “Our most impactful projects incorporate primary survey data from our community complemented by in-person focus groups or immersions,” explains Ashley Barone, A&F Senior Researcher.

When the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders were implemented in early 2020, in-person research quickly became impossible – but the team faced the hurdle head on to ensure they were staying as connected to customers as possible. .

### The Solution

The Global Customer Insights team quickly decided to pivot in-person focus groups to real-time and moderated virtual discussions via Live by Fuel Cycle. According to Sarah Tonti, Hollister Senior Researcher, “We started working from home on Friday, March 13th and were able to host our first virtual focus group the following Tuesday afternoon, March 17th. Our leadership team was amazed by how quickly and seamlessly we responded to the challenge and kept all projects on schedule. Even better, more of the team could observe the research in real time without the logistical hurdles and cost of attending live focus groups.”

In addition to executing already scheduled projects, the efficiency and scalability of Live created an opportunity for the team to add bi-weekly customer touchpoints during the first few months of the stay-at-home orders. “When the pandemic hit, we felt a strong desire to check in with our community members to make sure they were okay. We strived to create moments where our community could get together, see each other’s faces, hear each other’s voices and have those moments of human connection that so many of us were craving,” said Barone. “Our community members told us these check-in sessions felt like an escape from the uncertainty and isolation many were feeling. The sessions were invaluable to the product and marketing teams because they brought to life how customers in different regions were experiencing (and reacting to) the pandemic and how rapidly their ‘new normal’ was evolving.”

### Results

Seeing and hearing the customers through Live provided insights to help teams navigate the quickly evolving 2020 environment. The A&F Co. team continues to leverage Live to “bring the customer to life” so its brands can deliver the products and experience that their customers will love.