

Introduction

For this assignment, I chose to focus on and monitor the Crumbl Cookies franchise, now officially known as just “crumbl” ever since they transitioned into a dessert company as opposed to just a cookie business. I have been a personal fan of crumbl’s desserts for many years now, and they are a business I always remember for being clean, high-quality, visually impressive, and committed and loyal to their customers in every way possible. Even before this assignment, I was already following crumbl on both Instagram as well as Facebook, although they also have official accounts on X (formally known as Twitter) as well as TikTok. I chose to focus my monitoring of crumbl on Instagram for this assignment since it is the social media outlet I personally use the most and am the most experienced with. This is also one of the social media platforms in which they are the most active from what I’ve seen. It is very clear through crumbl’s various outlets that they have a strong two-way communication with its publics, they keep up with cultural conversion, and use strategic planning to prioritize and develop a highly visual and fresh marketing feed on their platforms.

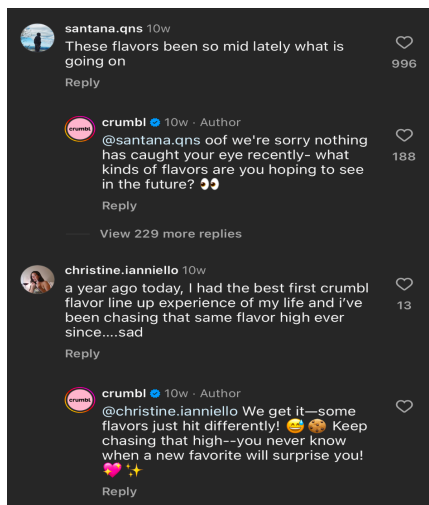


Concept 1

When it comes to public relations in businesses and brands, two-way communication becomes crucial and has a huge impact in how the audience’s feedback gets taken and put into consideration for improvement in a company. Throughout my process of monitoring crumbl for ten weeks, I’ve noticed they have a strong usage of two-way symmetrical communication with its publics. Two-way symmetrical communication is when feedback becomes more important than information itself, and the organization influences the public and vice versa. The brand does

strive for change and is constantly communicating back and forth with its audiences. This has to do with why crumbl slowly transitioned from being “crumbl cookies” to just “crumbl” in order to expand their menu to be more than just cookies. The audience wanted more of a dessert menu variety than just cookies, so crumbl listened and changed their brand completely to accommodate this. Going hand-in-hand with this is the concept of crumbl having strong loyalty and advocacy regarding the PRSA Code of Ethics.

Another way I also noticed that crumbl uses two-way symmetrical communication to improve their brand is by personally responding to Instagram comments on their posts as much

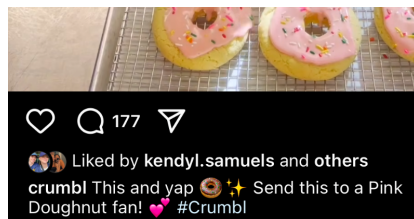


as possible. They have over six million followers on Instagram, and therefore receive thousands of immediate comments and likes every time they make a new post. It was really impressive to see that so many of people's comments get answered by crumbl directly. Crumbl responds to both positive comments as well as criticizing ones, making sure to reinforce those who are having a good experience and make those who don't feel the same way still seen. I did not know that crumbl even had a dessert request form until I was looking through the comments on their posts. It's been really impressive to see the courteous responses that crumbl replies with the more critical comments, making it personal every time by asking for their feedback or encouraging them to try again and come back. It's amazing to see an account with a

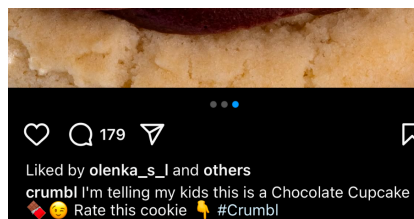
huge amount of followers interacting personally with their audiences because they care.

Concept 2

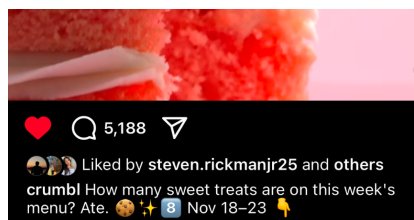
A second PR trend that I noticed from monitoring their Instagram for a couple weeks is that crumbl aims to keep up with the modern slang language of today. This is seen mostly in their captions on their posts and reels as well as their Instagram stories. Seeing this for the first time definitely caught my attention and made me smile and laugh, especially because it further shows their efforts to satisfy their audience who are likely of the younger range, and come off as more “relatable” and attractive to them. Some modern slang I’ve discovered so far within their captions include the words “ate”, “doomscrolling”, and the phrases “I’m telling my kids this is”



as well as “this and yap”. Interestingly, every post I’ve encountered that has included a modern piece seems to have no negative comments or feedback within the post.



This can be seen as the PR concept and strategy known as convergence, specifically cultural convergence in this case.

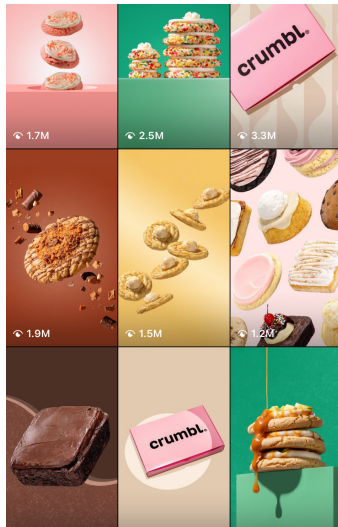


Cultural convergence is known as a process in which cultures “blend” together and begin to share common concepts and ideas on a larger scale. In this case, crumbl’s team observed and took in this advancement of language in the younger modern audience; in other words, the cultural convergence of

gen alpha regarding its use of language. Crumbl has always been known to have a very modern and streamline vibe across all social media platforms, so for them to choose to take this risk was a brave move knowing it could have been criticized greatly, but wasn’t. They are very open with the kind of reputation crumbl aims to have, which is yet another factor of PR that is important; maintaining openness and self-disclosure within a company’s goals and standards.

Concept 3

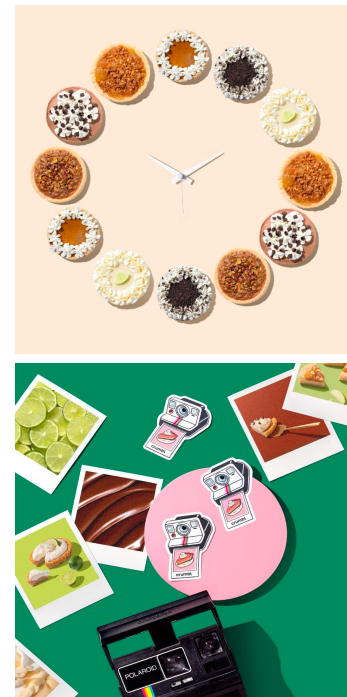
On the note of crumbl's intended goals and standards, a third and final trend that I have discovered through monitoring their Instagram account is regarding their strategic planning, specifically their strategies for understanding messages and making those messages memorable.



When you first look at the homepage of crumbl's Instagram, you are immediately captured by the very high-quality images and videos, bold yet light contrasting colors, and the actual style of the content that is posted (almost abstract-like). This immediately gives you an understanding of the type of style crumbl has as a company, and the aesthetic of floating, stacked, dripping cookies as most of the thumbnails helps the audience better understand their intended messages with this modern, almost futuristic look. I've noticed they

also use plenty of symbols and slogans that make them memorable. This includes their iconic pastel pink boxes, their "Mini Mondays", and even using the acronym IMHO (in my honest opinion) to further add to the modern slang language.

Crumbl has also found creative ways to incorporate their cookies into their social media posts that are unique and memorable, such as making a clock out of their cookies and incorporating items like polaroid pictures into their content. Also, crumbl has made other additional efforts to become memorable and build a positive reputation for themselves by doing giveaways almost every week and occasionally offering things like free stickers with a purchase made. Of the ten weeks that I monitored their Instagram, crumbl did a



giveaway for nine of those ten works. Each of these nine weeks, four people would receive a free four-pack of cookies as long as they entered the giveaway. That's 16 free cookies given out each week just from the Instagram giveaways, not including the Facebook giveaways which are the exact same as what Instagram's are. I follow many huge corporate food chains on Instagram, and I have never seen giveaways happen as frequently as with crumbl, further making this brand memorable by giving their customers more opportunities to engage with their company.

Weaknesses

Overall, crumbl has done a wonderful job working to communicate all its messages in the best way possible through their Instagram. However, one area where there could be improvement that I've noticed is regarding how crumbl is closed every Sunday of the week. Although having a day to be closed to reset and prepare for the new weekly lineup is understandable, it's statistically proven that Sundays are some of the best days of the week for business profit. Sundays are the days many families call "family days", where the day is taken to be out of the house with family and friends. I believe that if crumbl was open even for just a few hours on Sundays, it would not only financially benefit them but also make a lot of their regular customers happier. Even if they chose to still not be open on Sundays, giving some sort of opportunity or interactive activity to its audience on this day of the week could help them feel more active on a day they aren't open. Other than this, I think crumbl has done a wonderful job at taking every other aspect into consideration to make their brand as well-reputed as it can be.

Conclusion

To conclude, the dessert company crumbl is a multimillion dollar company that, regarding its public relations strategies, has been very successful in using two-way symmetrical

communication with its publics, taking part in cultural conversion to adapt to its primary audience, and using strategic planning to make their message understandable and memorable. Without each of these components being used and taken into consideration, their brand would not be as successful and well-known as it is today. It is clear from first glance how much effort the company puts into how they want an audience to perceive them. I wasn't even aware of the global transition from "crumbl cookies" to just "crumbl" until I began to see more than just cookies for sale on their feed. For a dessert company to have a look that is so clean yet so modern and almost futuristic stands out amongst so many other competing dessert brands, and their abstract and futuristic style in which they display their products will continue to make them unique. While there is always room for further improvement with PR strategies, I strongly believe that crumbl is a phenomenal example of what a brand with successful tactics should look like. Crumbl gives so much back to its community in a variety of ways that keeps customers returning, knowing that evidently this customer consistency is more important than just focusing on profit. Made fresh daily with unique and trendy flavors weekly, crumbl knows how to turn a dessert run into a memorable experience.