

“Exploring the SEO impact on Crumbl Cookie’s digital success”

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Everything is online. Whether it be education, shopping, communicating, or even working, the digital world is dominating our decisions. This is applicable in all industries, such as business and information acquisition. Whether it be the healthcare, beauty, or the food industry, all companies must leverage their digital presence in order to reach their target audiences and make an impact. This being, it is important to analyze the digital strategy of those growing businesses that have quickly dominated their industry and determine their digital competitive factors. For this paper, I will be looking at the digital strengths of the company Crumbl Cookie, as well as key recommendations for improvement to better their digital presence. The purpose of this paper is to analyze what Crumbl does well in terms of digital marketing, and what other digital marketing strategies can be used to remedy their digital shortcomings and overall improve the success of their company.

Crumbl Cookie is a cookie franchise in the food products industry. They specialize in fresh cookies with new offerings each week. Their headquarters are in Lindon, Utah, with an astonishing 1,040 locations throughout the U.S (estimated for 2024) and a 93% year over year growth since its beginning in 2017 (Cappiello 2023). Alongside its creative list of products and franchise model, Crumbl uses a variety of digital strategies such as social media marketing and website landing pages that advance the success of the company. What is most prominent about Crumbl's digital marketing strategy is its comparison to the strength of its product. When analyzing the product itself, it's a creative spin on a classic cookie. Further research shows how the ingredients in the cookies aren't much different than your standard cookie. (See figure 1-1). Alongside this and the fact that Crumbl doesn't offer many gluten free or allergy friendly options, which I will go into more depth later, you would suppose the popularity of the brand would

decrease. On the contrary, Crumbl has a huge social media and digital presence, being the #6 most downloaded app in the food and drink category of the app store(Kelso 2023). Consumers all over the internet are raging about these cookies, especially over TikTok and has developed into a routine trend. Overall, it's the digital strategy of Crumbl that has led the company to success. While of course the quality and variety of the product are important, Crumbl would not have the success and hype it does without these digital marketing techniques. This being, I will further explain the digital strengths and weaknesses of the company, and where there can be improvements to make the company even stronger.

Before I delve into the specific digital strengths and weaknesses of the company, I will do a general SWOT analysis for the company as a whole. I will then tie this into the content of their digital page. The SWOT analysis for the company in general is as follows:

Strengths: Some strengths of the company include their social media following presence, unique products, and franchising strategy. In terms of social media, Crumbl has a huge standing across various platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. Their Instagram has 6 million followers, and Tiktok has 5.6 million followers. They also take advantage of the hashtag #CrumblReview, which has garnered 498 million views(Huang 2023). Their social media has undoubtedly been the leader in their success, with millions eager to both watch and review their own list of cookies. This ties into the next point which is its unique list of products. Crumbl, despite starting as primarily a cookie shop, has delved into other desserts such as small cakes and brownies. It is ultimately the rotation of five to six new flavors each week that builds excitement and customer retention. Lastly, Crumbl's franchising business model has allowed them to grow vastly across

the U.S and parts of Canada. It is ultimately their social media that has given them the platform and retention they have, from weekly website updates to influencer marketing.

Weakness: One major weakness of Crumbl is they don't offer many gluten or allergy free options. While Crumbl offers the gluten free version of the chocolate chip cookie, they don't offer any other gluten free or allergy free options on their main menu. It is estimated that 8.4 % of the American population is gluten intolerant(Simpson 2024), with a broader 25% avoiding gluten whether they are intolerant or not(Reed 2020). It is also estimated that 11% of the American population has some food allergy. Health consciousness is also becoming more widespread, with more individuals monitoring their diet. Crumbl is missing out on a major market by dismissing gluten and allergy free options. Considering they already have the social media presence to get the news across, a gluten free line alongside their regular line would likely gain a lot of traction.

Opportunities: One opportunity for Crumbl is the increase in e-commerce for the food and beverage industry. According to Statista.com, the food and beverage e-commerce sales as a percent of all retail e-commerce sales is around 18% in 2024 and is expected to grow(See figure 1-2). Considering this statistic, Crumbl should hone in on their online sales and delivery services. Crumbl already has a good in-store retail experience, with an open-kitchen experience and store design consistent with the packaging and website. Crumbl should therefore take advantage of this online opportunity and enhance their online experience through their website and landing pages. They should highlight their online store and catering on their social media to take advantage of the growing e-commerce market for food and beverage.

Threats: One major threat to Crumbl is their drop in revenue. According to **mashed.com**, Crumbl has experienced a 37% decrease in sales and a 19% decrease in net income in comparison to last year (James 2024). This decrease is reflective of Crumbl's almost too rapid growth within their franchise model. Like previously mentioned, Crumbl's main traction has been gained through social media. Similar to other trends on social media, they die out or can be turned against the company. This being, Crumbl may have used their social media popularity and jumped to expanding without considering the strength of their actual product or finances. Considering Crumbl's reliance on their social media as the main source of their success, this statistic shows how Crumbl needs to either routinely strengthen their online presence even more, or enhance the product itself to match the popularity online.

This SWOT analysis clearly underlines the power of Crumbl's online presence, and how their use of social media and digital marketing should be focused on to further increase their success and prevent the threats from taking them over. Crumbl should fix their weaknesses by updating their menu, and then highlight this change with their already strong social media presence. However, Crumbl should be cautious of the business model they use and not solely rely on social media to make decisions as reflective of their decrease in sales.

Now that I have reviewed the company's overall SWOT, I will do an analysis of their home page using SEMrush to analyze their digital strengths and weaknesses and how that affects their business. I will analyze the user interface, user experience, page loading speed, bounce rate, quality and overall design of their homepage. The user interface refers to the interaction between the consumer and elements of the page, particularly with overall design. For the design, the colors, layout, and typography on Crumbl's homepage all seem to be in tune with one another.

The colors use a classic “Crumbl” pink that is very recognizable and distinct. The colors match the packaging, logo, and in person retail design. The layout is split between video and images accompanied by text. The navigation bar on the top left makes interaction easy and accessible, though the word “Menu” may benefit from being replaced with “Main Menu” or no description at all. This is due to the structure of Crumbl as a food franchiser, meaning “Menu” may be confused with a food menu as opposed to a navigation menu. Due to the change in color to black to highlight the navigation tab, a description might not be necessary. Overall, page layout is consistent, but could be changed around to increase user engagement which I will discuss when referencing their bounce rate. Lastly, typography matches the aesthetic of the company with a personalized “Crumbl Sans” that ties into their creativity. The overall user interface is consistent and easily accessible. User experience is how the consumer can interact positively with the page and how this can satisfy their needs and drive conversions for the company. The overall site is easily readable and digestible, but focuses heavily on the new menu rotation. While this is understandable as Crumbl builds excitement through weekly menu rotations, they are pushing other aspects aside like their catering that can drive more conversions and online traffic. User experience could be improved by therefore breaking the page up into more concrete sections, one highlighting catering and delivery. The page loading speed pertains to how long it takes the content of the page to load. I looked at the difference between mobile and desktop loading speed. According to Google's PageSpeed insights tool, the speed index for the mobile version is 10s while the desktop version is 2.4s. This reflects a big difference in the mobile vs desktop version of the page. The desktop version loads much faster than the mobile version. This being, mobile users may be discouraged to stay on the page which decreases mobile friendliness. Overall, mobile friendliness and user can be improved by compressing image sizes and reducing DNS

lookup time to reduce that loading speed. Next I will talk about bounce rate, or the percentage of visitors that leave the site directly after viewing it. As of the beginning of December 2024, Crumbl's bounce rate was 83%. This means the majority of users are leaving the website right after viewing. This can be due to the nature of the business itself. Most people are simply looking for the new cookies which are displayed on the homepage. After a quick glance at the flavors they leave, as there is no further incentive to stay. To remedy this, Crumbl should include more engaging and relevant content, exclusive deals, and online campaigns to keep the consumer on the page longer and drive conversions. Engaging content can include questionnaires, behind the scenes videos, etc. Relevant content should match the user intent and search ad to ensure the consumer is getting the information they searched for/need. Exclusive deals can include a percentage off a purchase in exchange for email sign up, which also ensures consumer retention and longer engagement. Online campaigns can be a digital marketing initiative that is exclusively given online. I will go more into depth about a sample campaign later on. Lastly, the content quality and overall design is consistent and intriguing, with highlighted call to action buttons and trust symbols(social media icons) listed near the bottom of the page. Content quality can be improved by breaking the page into more sections pertaining to different aspects about Crumbl's business and value proposition. Content quality can also be improved by ensuring content is relevant to the search ad and user intent, which I will discuss further later. Overall, the website has considerable strengths regarding design and quality, but can be improved by ensuring mobile friendliness and relevant content.

Now that I have done a website audit, I will do a broader SEO audit also using SEMrush to highlight areas for improvement and the impact of SEO on the overall business. The SEO audit

includes analysis on keywords, meta tags, headings, and backlinks. Due to Crumbl's heavy focus on social media, they have overlooked other digital marketing tools such as SEO, or search engine optimization. Not to say Crumbl hasn't used SEO at all, data on SEMrush shows they have been ranking organically in the top 100 on the SERP. However, improvements can be made and adjusted based on the following findings. In terms of the keywords, the majority of their organic keywords are 43.7% informational, meaning most consumers are looking for a direct answer to their question. **Figure 1.3** shows a breakdown of the organic keywords into informational, commercial, transactional, and navigational. Due to the fact that the majority of keywords are informational, Crumbl should focus on answering concrete questions through matching landing pages that will also help to reduce bounce rate. I also noticed how the majority of organic traffic, 5.8M, is branded. This means the majority of search queries included the word "Crumbl". This indicates how social media and other marketing initiatives are doing a good job at raising brand awareness. In terms of their meta tags, Crumbl has 24 pages with duplicate meta tags and meta descriptions. This can negatively impact SEO ranking by causing confusion for search engines and the consumer. The consumer may be confused as to which page has the correct information they are looking for, therefore decreasing CTR and overall conversions. To remedy this, Crumbl should prioritize pages with an already existing high conversion rate and CTR. For meta descriptions, Crumbl should focus on using high ranking and relevant keywords to the search intent and content on the page. In terms of headings, 23 pages don't have a heading 1. This can be harmful as heading 1 is used to help search engines understand content and ranking, as well as helps the user understand the objective of the search ad and page. To fix this, creating concrete yet powerful heading 1 titles can improve ranking and decrease confusion for the consumer. Lastly, there has been a 57% decrease in backlinks in the past year. This means

less links are directing traffic to Crumbl's website. To fix this, Crumbl should use outbound, internal links, and anchor texts to drive traffic to the website and link to positive/reputable websites that are relevant to Crumbl's key offerings. To enhance overall search engine visibility, Crumbl should focus on concentrating their key offerings into fewer search ads to reduce duplicate meta tags, and focus on keyword optimization to rank higher on the SERP and resonate with consumers. Overall, SEO can greatly impact a business by helping their pages rank well on the SERP. This increases the page and overall brand visibility and awareness, which therefore drives conversions. As stated before, everything being online means companies such as Crumbl must include SEO strategies like keyword optimization to gain relevance with its target audience.

Now that I have done a deep analysis of their SEO efforts and site, I will provide examples of a search ad and a sample social media campaign that will ultimately improve Crumbl's visibility and strength as a business. The examples are as follows;

Search ad: Search ads can help the consumer get the answers they are looking for. Crumbl should aim for keywords with high search volume and low competition(KD). My research using SEMrush showed there was high search traffic and low KD for words that included "menu" or "flavors". This highlights the informative majority of keywords and user intent. A sample search ad should include those keywords and direct to a relevant page. The sample search is shown below and was made using Google Ads;

Ad · crumblcookies.com

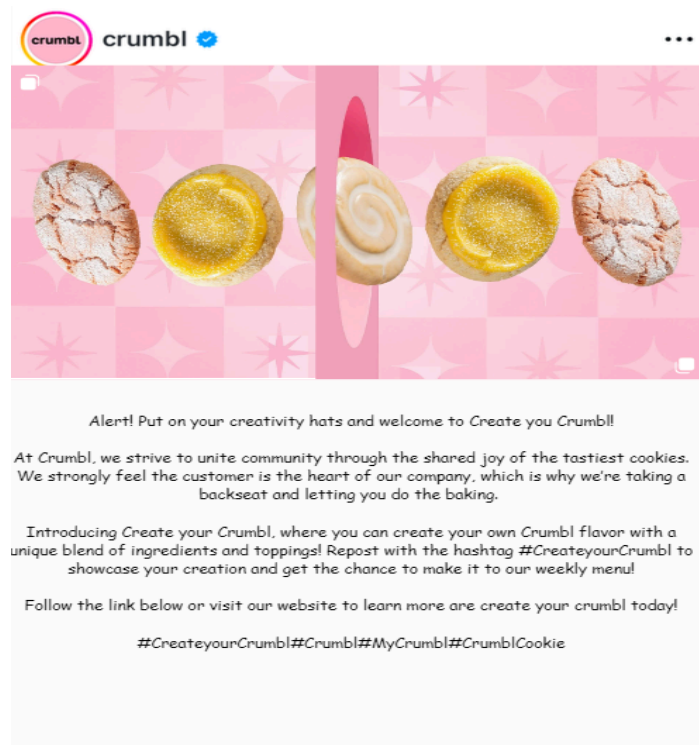
Crumbl Cookie Menu | Unique and Popular Cookie Menu

The Crumbl Cookie flavors that are changing the dessert game. Click to find more about our unique dessert offerings.

The ad includes the keyword “Crumbl Cookie Menu” with a high search volume of 33.1K and a low KD of 29. There is a clear call to action highlighted by “Click”, and the meta description includes both the user intent for flavors and Crumbl’s value proposition.

Social media campaign: Considering their already strong social media presence, Crumbl should use their top performing platforms such as TikTok and Instagram to highlight a new social media campaign to drive traffic and conversions. As an idea, a personalized Cookie line such as *Create your Crumbl* can help engage consumers on the website, unite audiences through new products, and create more brand awareness and widen Crumbl’s influence. Crumbl can include celebrity endorsement with an influencer's “signature cookie” to further incentivize engagement. The social media post would include a link to the website, as well as a hashtag #CreateyourCrumbl to increase user generated content and bring more traffic to the website and social media pages. Especially since this campaign would be digitally driven, consumers would need to visit the website to become involved which would therefore drive conversions and decrease bounce rate. Social media would act as the attraction for the campaign, while the website would be the deliverance. The metrics tied to the campaign and sample Instagram post are as follows:

- Objective: Brand awareness, website traffic, and conversions
- Target audience: Men and women between ages 15 and 27 in the U.S(Gen Z)
- Platforms: Instagram and TikTok
- KPI's: Conversion rate, user generated content, and impressions
- Theme/purpose: To show the importance the customer has on the overall brand and how creativity works wonders



Based on the above research and recommendations, it is clear Crumbl has its digital strengths and a few downfalls. Overall, my suggestion is that Crumbl should balance their social media focus with their SEO focus, therefore bringing more attention to their ranking and relevance amongst consumers. The actual product itself is strong and creative, but can be enhanced by including gluten and allergy free options and getting the consumer more involved. Focusing on using relevant keywords that resonate with the search intent can boost ranking and conversions, reduce bounce rate, and enhance overall SEO presence. Ultimately, this research has shown how a mix of all types of digital marketing is necessary in order for a company to have long-term success.

Figures:

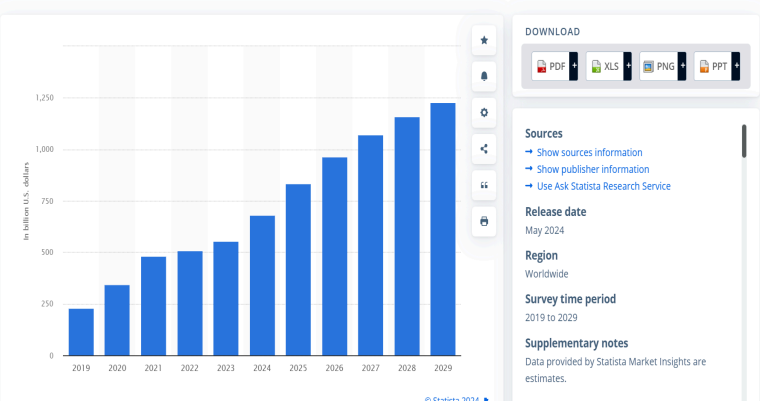
Figure 1-1

INGREDIENTS: all purpose flour (bleached wheat flour, malted barley flour, niacin, iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), heavy cream (ultrapasteurized heavy cream (milk), mono and diglycerides, carrageenan, polysorbate 80), butter (pasteurized cream, salt), brown sugar (sugar, cane molasses, invert sugar), sugar, egg, whole grain rolled oats, vanilla pudding(sugar, modified cornstarch, modified tapioca starch, disodium phospho), powdered sugar (sugar, corn starch), salt, baking soda, corn starch, butterscotch pudding mix(sugar, corn starch, natural and artificial flavors, salt, caramel (for color), acetylated monoglycerides, yellow 6), cinnamon, vanilla bean paste (sugar, water, vanilla extract, vanilla beans, gum tragacanth), flavoring (water, sugar, glycerin, vanilla extract (water, alcohol, extractive of vanilla beans), natural flavors, fruit juice (color).), flavoring (water, soybean oil, natural and artificial flavors, xanthan gum, citric acid, sodium benzoate, bha, mixed tocopherols and annatto), salt

CONTAINS: MILK. EGG. WHEAT

Figure 1-2

Revenue in the food segment of the e-commerce market Worldwide from 2019 to 2029
(in billion U.S. dollars)



Citations

- Cappiello, E. (2023, October 9). *How CRUMBL cookies suddenly became so popular*. Mashed. <https://www.mashed.com/476426/how-crumbl-cookies-suddenly-became-so-popular/>
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