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Online Trend Assignment Video Analysis of Key Markets

Over the last thirty years the world has rapidly transitioned into an advanced digital media landscape. Whether its news, art, music, food, or sports, almost every ounce of cultural content we consume has a digital media aspect and corresponding online market presence. In order to stay competitive it is up to brands and cultural content creators to produce a variety of accessible and multifaceted media content. The most common of these being video content. Through video content, brands and creators (regardless of their online market) can showcase their work through long or short form videos that can reach upwards of millions of views. One of the online markets to use video content as a promotional and highly profitable tactic is cooking and food related news. In the last decade alone the ways in which consumers view food videos and food news has changed drastically from the TV cooking shows that once established the appeal of watching others cook. The two leading players of the food video world today are BuzzFeed Inc.'s "**Tasty**" and Condé Naste's "**Bon Appétite.**"

In 2006 Jonah Peretti and John S. Johnson III founded the internet media, news, and entertainment company BuzzFeed Inc. The goal of BuzzFeed was to create a digital media platform that emphasized tracking and promoting viral content. Towards the mid 2010's the company began to gain a large cult following through the promotion of their humorous personality quizzes, up-to-date celebrity info, and viral original content videos. In July 2015 the

company launched its exclusive sub platform “Tasty” on Facebook and Youtube. Initially the platform was used to showcase simplified step-by-step videos of cooking tutorials set to upbeat music. All the videos were shot over-head and showed hands preparing the food without any added voice over. Over the years BuzzFeed has chosen to post content with slight editing and layout changes, but as remained pretty consistent to their original video content theme.

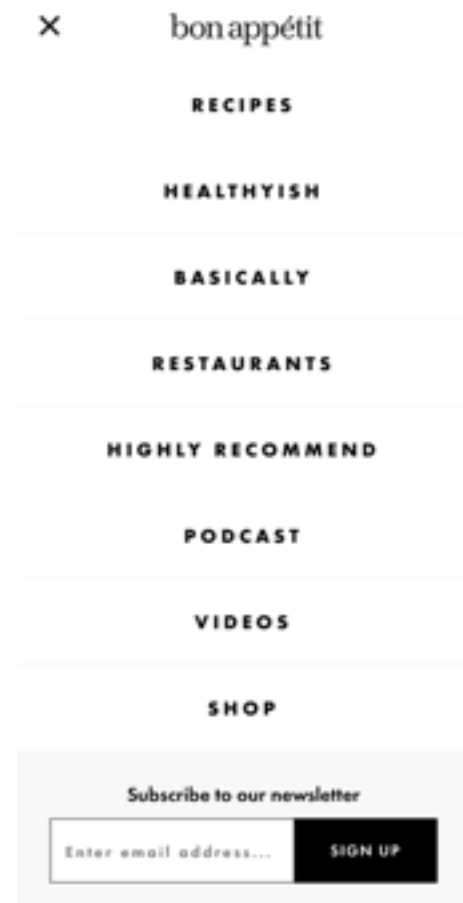


“BuzzFeed 2017”

Since 2015 Tasty has expanded from the Facebook page and Youtube channel to Twitter, Instagram, official website, mobile phone app, newsletter, and online shop. In addition to these media channels, the Tasty platform has also partnered with Walmart and jet.com and had several original cookbook publications (Indrajeet Deshpande, Martech Advisor, martechadvisor.com). The online store sells featured and speciality designed cookware as well as branded food products. Throughout its five year run this video leading player has paved a path for other big and small content creators to share video in the same type of over-head shooting style, as it became very popular and easy for audiences to follow. However, another food platform has also

gained an immense cult following online with an entirely different type of video shooting style, Bon Appétit.

Bon Appétit is one of 26 magazines and brand platforms of the Condé Naste production company. According to Condé Naste 2020 publications, Bon Appétit is the fastest growing brand on social media (BA2020MediaKit.pdf). The food culture magazine was started in 1956 and is currently has a print readership of 6.5 million monthly readers, 7.6 million digital users, and 11.4 million social media followers (condenast.com). Since its publication the Bon Appétit brand has expanded to an online website, newsletter, podcast, and online shop. Their social media sites include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and Youtube. The brand is recognized for their promotion of in house professional chefs and recipes as well as highlighting culinary hotspots and food trends both in the US and internationally. As described on their website, “Bon Appétit is where food and culture meet. The award-winning No. 1 food lifestyle brand covers food through the lens of cooking, fashion, travel, technology, design and home. As the leading arbiter of taste, its home-grown talent and tireless dedication to recipe testing separates it from the competition by miles.” (condenast.com). The BA brand doesn’t just show how to make food, but how food has a larger cultural significance and impact.



“bon appétit 2020”

In the last couple of years BA began to focus more attention on one of their social media sub divisions, the BA Test Kitchen Youtube channel. On this channel several food, drink, and culture editors, writers, and chefs at the magazine began to film and promote their cooking styles, challenges, and share their perspective of popular foods and dishes. Today the test kitchen has gained a massive social media audience, drawing in millions of views from Gen Z and younger Millennial generations. The channel promotes several show topics with specific appearances from now widely popular personnel, making them appear to be the unofficial-official faces of the BA brand. Unlike the likes of Tasty's over-head shooting style, the BA test kitchen staff are highlighted in videos with their individual personalities playing just as big of a role as the food they are making. This video distinction is just one of the several differences between the BA and Tasty brands and that also help distinguish them as the two key players of the food and food news online market.

While Bon Appéiti and Tasty share the commonality of being a online food and food culture market, they could not be farther apart in their differences. From video shooting and editing style to content material and target audience and motivation, these two leading brands approach they same field in drastically unique ways. The most obvious difference is the look and feel of their video content and promotion.

Majority of Tasty videos are shot over-head with a pair of hands making and preparing an single dish, drink, or entire meal. Easy to read and follow directions are shown in the upper hand corners as lively music plays over sometimes unedited mistakes like, food spilling or making significant mess. Overall the videos are posted in short duration lasting only 1 to 3 min for single dishes. Over time the brand has compiled old and similar dishes and themes together to make

longer videos. They have even reposted old videos with new voice overs from in-house and well known professional chefs, detailing that dish's significance or relevancy. Tasty has also incorporated videos of the behind the scenes process of how creating a Tasty video (a popular video style in BuzzFeed Inc). In this "How I Make Viral Food Videos" *YouTube*, uploaded by Tasty, 16 July 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ua-A1TyDgc8. viewers learn that the shorten and speedup version they see is far from the truth of filming a cooking sequence. Tasty chefs film several versions of the cooking process and sometimes have to make changes to the recipe. Another trend that can be seen in Tasty videos is the collection of dishes and recipes under specific cultural months, ethnic holidays, dietary restrictions, and sub-channels based on world regions and locations of international BuzzFeed Inc offices. These collections and sub-channels include Proper Tasty, Tasty Japan, Tasty Indian, Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and others. Under these sub channels viewers can easy locate recipes based on cultural background and significance. Since 2015 the frequent posting of Tasty original content has dropped drastically, but the brand keeps finding new ways to promote old videos and spinning the applicable motives. Even as many copycat companies popup showing the same type of video content as Tasty, the BuzzFeed brand still stays on top of the fast and easy food video game.

When comparing to BA videos we start to see major differences. BA videos are shot in way that is considerably closer to that have a standard for TV cooking show. The camera man follows the chef as the walk around the test kitchen, post-editing is used to add fun soundbites and limited descriptive text, almost all mistakes are shown, and people are constantly walking in and out of the shot. Its raw and has a much more personal feel than that of Tasty. The emphasis of the video is just not on the food being prepared but on the people preparing or eating

themselves. Chefs and writers include personal anecdotes about the dish they are preparing, about their general food preferences and cooking abilities, as well as discuss the significance of their show they are on. The BA test kitchen provides several shows including “It’s Alive” with Brad Leone, “Gourmet Makes” with Claire Saffitz, and “Alex Eats It All” with Alex Delaney, just to name a few. The purpose of these shows is to categorize the content based on food significance and challenge component, as well as showcase the skills of the chefs themselves. For example Claire Saffitz is a trained pastry chef and her show “Gourmet Makes” is about trying to recreate from scratch popular household and junk food items, like Pop Tarts and Twinkies. Part of the draw of the show is not only the process she takes in making the food but watching specifically Claire make the food. For audience members it is just as much about the BA “cast” as it is the food content. Often times the chefs will be featured on each other shows or even swap places and are instructed to go about the video’s challenge in the way the original chef would do it. This cross-showcasing of skills and personnel emphasizes the more dynamic nature of BA videos and overall brand, which strives to be about not just making and eating good food, but they lifestyle and culture that comes with it.

Another difference between BA and Tasty are the platforms in which they are presenting their video content and who is promoting the brand. As previously mentioned these two brands have a significantly large social media presence, from multiple platforms to websites and mailing lists. Both brands create and share their video content through YouTube and then link the videos to all of their other socials. However, Tasty also shares their videos and website content on their mobile phone app, which BA does not have, and BA also promotes articles and food culture content through their written publication and online membership service.

Since the chefs, editors, and writers at BA are play such an integral role for not only the magazine but the video content as well, the cast is also influential in the sharing of BA content online through their own social media presence. Cast members talk about their articles and share links to their videos on social apps like Instagram and Twitter, therefore further expanding the exposure of BA content. In regards to Tasty, the brand shares and categorizes all of their video content on their social apps as well as their mobile app. The mobile app is helpful because it consolidates all of the Tasty content and is easy to search for individual videos that can sometimes get lost on YouTube. Another interesting aspect of the Tasty app is that it is in partnership with Walmart and users can order ingredients to purchase in very few steps. The app also has a feature that allows for users to look up recipes that use ingredients they already might have. The usability of the Tasty app is extremely important in establishing themselves as a key player because their content is fast, approachable, and helpful to their audiences. While BA and Tasty have different promotion styles, both have been able to reap significant benefits while also solidifying their brand image.

After analyzing the different video styles and promotional tactics of two of the leading players in the online food market, I have given serious thought as to what direction I would take if I was to launch my own food and culture site. I am a firm believer in the connective and collective implications behind preparing, eating, and sharing food. All around the world food and the process of finding food dictates how we live out lives, and I think it is important to share all the factors that contribute to our eating styles. If I was launching a new food website/app I would base the model off of that of BA, in regards to the promotion of food culture and lifestyle. Video and other content would revolve around showing casing different heritages, small businesses to

support, places to visit, and amateur chefs to look out for, all in the name of food! I also think that the platform should allow for the promotion of audience's participation in cooking, by allowing for the posting of fan photos and videos of them cooking different meals. Part of the joy of cooking is the process in which we learn to be comfortable with cooking and trying new things. I would want this new platform to have a strong emphasis on audience participation and direct transparency with the original content it would be already posting.

Another aspect of this new platform is that it would have several different avenues in which the target audience could interact with it. Like BA and Tasty, this new food brand would have all the different social media profiles, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, in order to reach the largest and most diverse audience that it can. I also think that a print and mobile version of a magazine/article subscription service is necessary for this specific market. I am very fond of the fact that BA is a magazine first that turned into a wider online presence, while still advertising and discussing their published work. I think that it gives BA a more overall reputable platform than Tasty and I would want this new site to be the same. I am a big supporter of social media sites and apps and spend a considerable amount of time and energy online. However, having a print and written publication component in tandem with a strong social media presence is what really secures the largest exposure long-term. It also pays homage to the ways in which people consumed cultural content, including food, for decades. Holding a story or recipe in your hand and not just in your phone, it feels more grounded. There is no question that society revolves around emerging media and brands and companies establishing a competitive online presence.

Regardless of the online market, brands must find new and interesting ways in which to grab their audience's attention and retain their consumer loyalty. One of the key ways in which brands do this is through creating and sharing video content. When it comes to the online food culture and news market the two leading players of video content are Tasty and Bon Appétit. While their creation styles and promotion are different they have established themselves as the food culture brand ambassadors to be, and ultimately show no signs of giving up their positions.

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