

NASTY

NASTY GAL SOCIAL MEDIA
LISTENING ASSIGNMENT

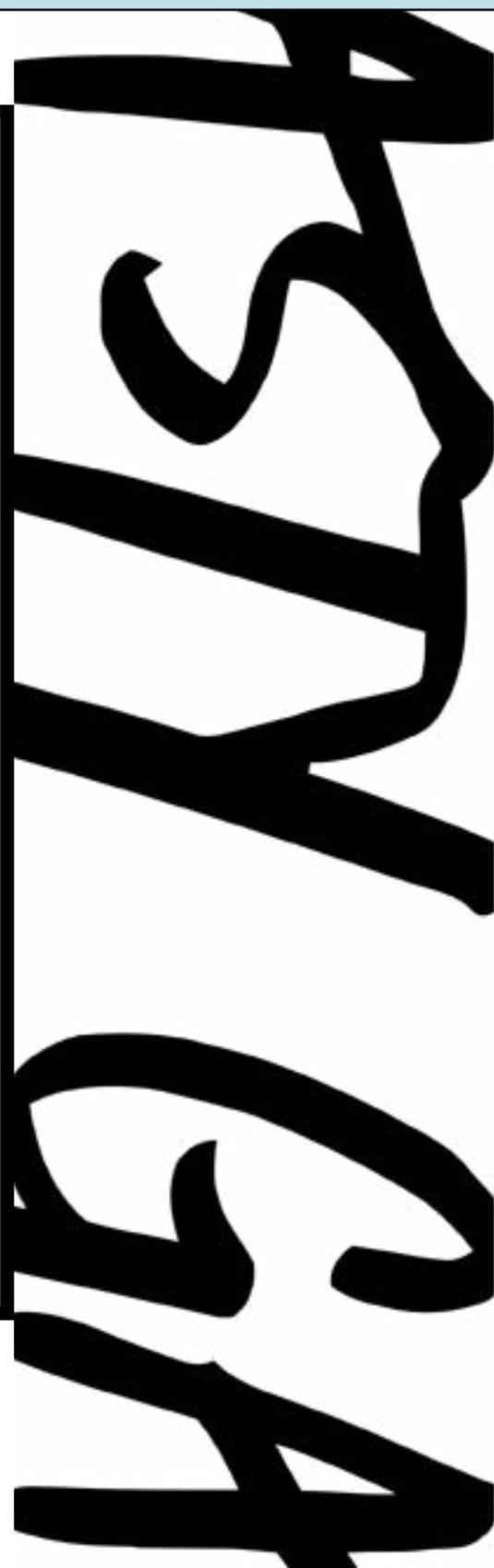
Y GAL

This report was completed by an Advertising junior in the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications in Fall of 2018. All rights are reserved for publications by the study and the Advertising Department.

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The purpose of this case study is to research Nasty Gal's social media presence by analyzing, measuring, and evaluating data through qualitative and quantitative research. In a time where groundswell, defined by Li & Bernoff as "the social trend in which people use technology to get the things they need from each other, rather than traditional institutions", is crucial in shaping a brand's image and success, social media serves at the platform for discussion and the virality of spreading a brand's image (Li & Bernoff). This study will showcase what Nasty Gal has done with their own social media, what others are saying about the brand, and where there is opportunity for Nasty Gal to grow as a company using their social media platforms.

HISTORY

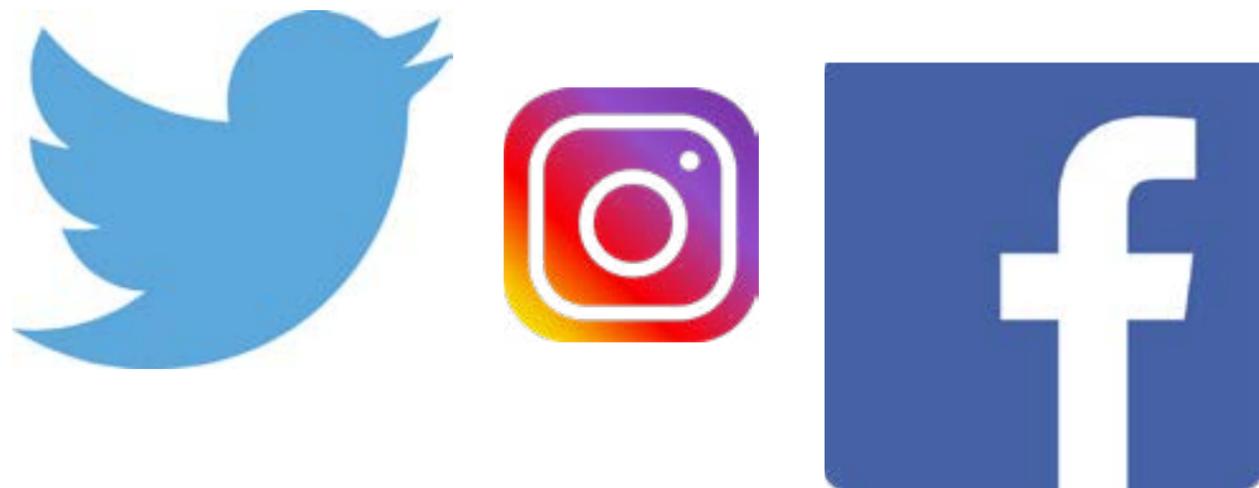
Nasty Gal is no stranger to the social media world. In fact, that's part of the reason it blossomed from an eBay profile run by one dumpster-diving woman to a company (once) valued at an estimated \$250 million (Jezebel). Nasty Gal started as an eBay store founded by Sophia Amoruso. The page listed vintage pieces, but was differentiated from other sellers by her artfully styled and photographed collection (#GirlBoss). Using MySpace as a platform to create her own social network and client base, Amoruso used her skills to harness her passion project into a company (Jezebel). When Nasty Gal was officially founded in 2007 it evolved from a "one of a kind" vintage curation into a fast fashion brand. It wasn't long before Amoruso's curated store picked up pace and expanded into warehouses, turned their profits by 800%, and eventually ranked eleventh highest retailer in 2012 by Inc Magazine. After Amoruso stepped down from the CEO position in 2014 (likely due to overwhelming legal claims about Nasty Gal being a "toxic" workplace) and Sheree Watterson took over, the company's stock took big hits. In just two years, the brand filed for bankruptcy and they sold the company one valued at \$250 million for a meek \$20 million to British retailer, Boohoo.

Today, Nasty Gal is still owned by fast fashion giant Boohoo, but remains a similar online storefront to how it functioned and looked before their brief crash. Nasty Gal appears to have landed on its feet with social media boasting 2.7 million Instagram followers and 1.3 million Facebook likes, but further research and social media listening will reveal the company's threats and opportunities to have a successful comeback.

THE RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

To best understand Nasty Gal's social media use, a variety of research methods were used. Secondary data was collected through observations and online tools, and syndicated data was used through Simmons to apply the research data and find an insight.



statista

Google Trends

SIMMONS

socialmention*

THE RESEARCH

THE QUESTIONS

QUANTITATIVE:

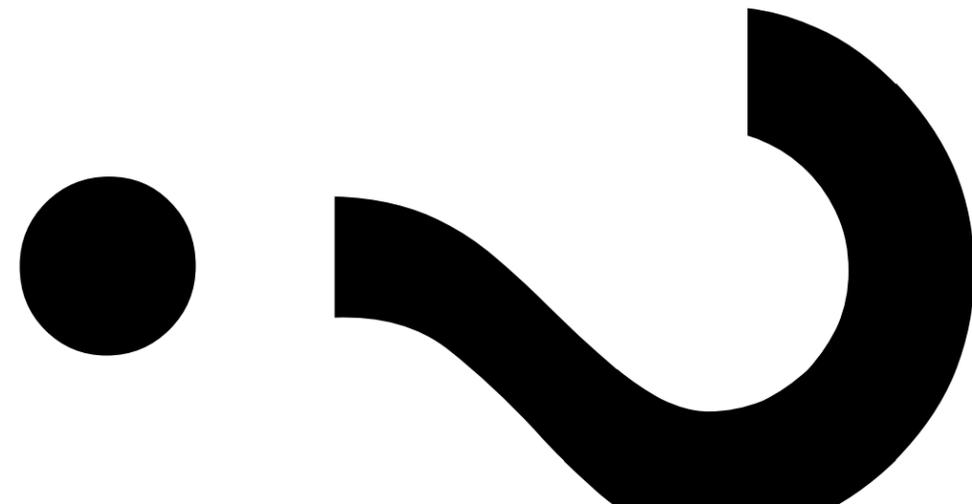
- How many followers does Nasty Gal have on each of their accounts and how often do they post?
- What types of content does Nasty Gal post?
- How do Nasty Gal's posts vary across platforms?
- Where (geographically) are people searching for Nasty Gal?

QUALITATIVE

- How do people feel about Nasty Gal?
- Where has Nasty Gal faced criticism?
- Who is the Nasty Gal consumer?

COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS:

- What other brands are Nasty Gal customers searching for?
- Who are the category leaders and what are they posting on social media?
- How is the competition engaging with their followers on social media?



THE DATA

QUANTITATIVE

HOW MANY FOLLOWERS DOES NASTY GAL HAVE ON EACH OF THEIR ACCOUNTS AND HOW OFTEN DO THEY POST?

Platform				
Followers	2.7 mil followers	230k followers	1.3 mil likes	11.6k subscribers
Post freq.	3/ day	3/ day*	3/ day	1/ week

Nasty Gal has undeniably racked up a considerable amount of follows on social media. With the highest amount of followers on Instagram at 2.7 million, followed by 1.3 million Facebook likes, and 230k Twitter followers, they are no stranger to building a large following. On feed-based platforms (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter*), the brand tends to post roughly 3 times a day.

*Nasty Gal stopped actively using Twitter in July of 2018 with no explanation. The brand may have done this because there is no easy shoppable feature on Twitter's platform, but this cannot be confirmed by data as there is not enough public knowledge of the company's decision to do so.



THE DATA

WHAT TYPES OF CONTENT DOES NASTY GAL POST?

Nasty Gal tends to have a precise pattern for their posts: one influencer/ product shot to one meme.

1. The Influencer/ Product post:

Nasty Gal showcases their products through Influencers/ bloggers sporting the pieces. The high quality images typically feature one item for sale on the Nasty Gal website (eg. a shoe, dress, set) with a link or direction to purchase the item as well as a tag to the influencer pictured. This native content helps Nasty Gal to advertise their latest products while staying relevant and “on brand”



2. The “meme” post:

According to Google Search, a meme is classified as “an element of a culture or system of behavior that may be considered to be passed from one individual to another by nongenetic means, especially imitation.” (Google). According to a 2016 Statista report, memes are ranked as the 4th most popular shared item on Facebook.

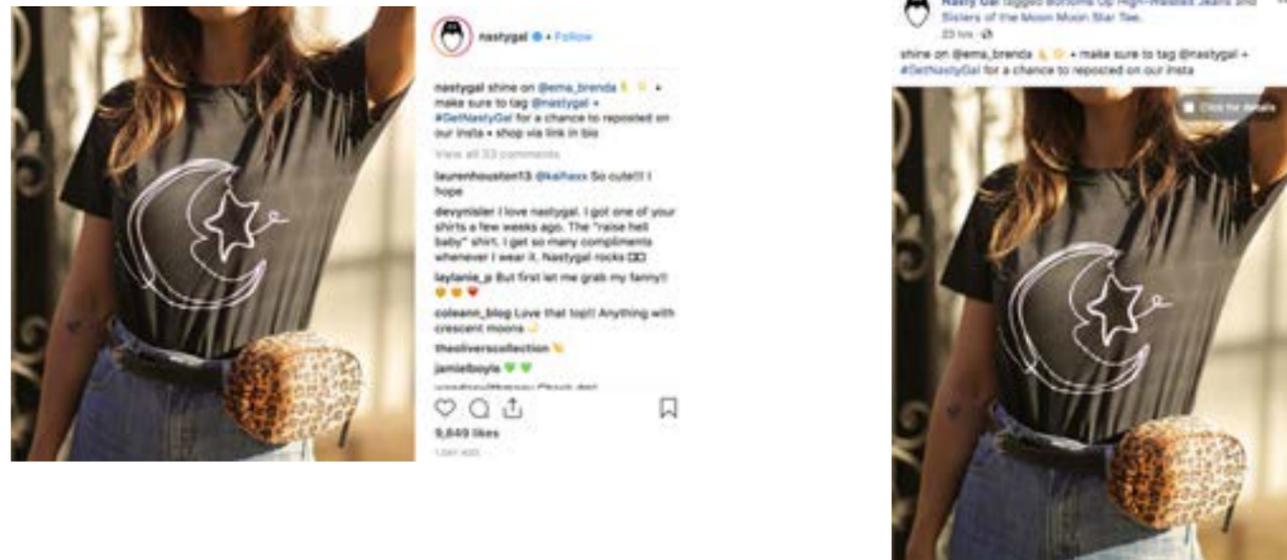
Nasty Gal is taking advantage of this social trend and creating sharable and “relatable” content for their followers. This type of post gets a considerable amount of engagement as followers are welcomed to “tag” their friends who might be able to relate to this content.



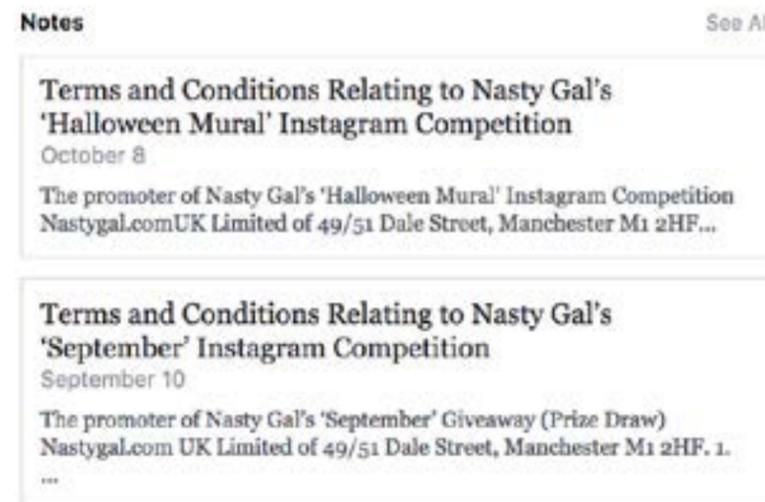
THE DATA

HOW DO NASTY GAL'S POSTS VARY ACROSS PLATFORMS?

Nasty Gal tends to share the same content across their social platforms with small modifications to fit the platform's affordances. For example, to purchase an item pictured in a post on Instagram, Nasty Gal urges followers to "shop via link in bio", whereas Facebook has a shoppable tag directly on the image.

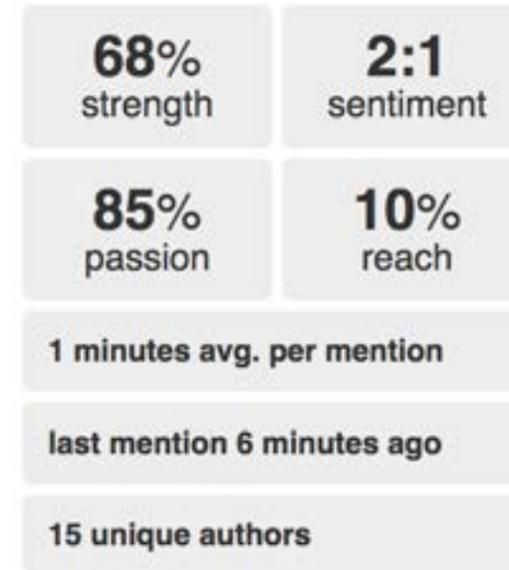


Additionally, their Facebook page is more informational with "notes" regarding contest rules and event information.



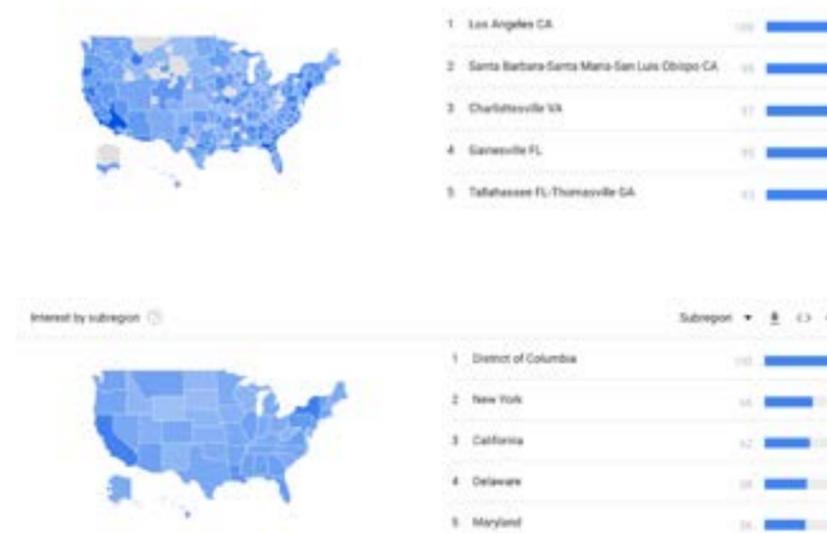
THE DATA

WHAT IS NASTY GAL'S REACH?



Nasty Gal has a 10% reach (the "measure of the range of influence" calculated by "the number of unique authors referencing your brand divided by the total number of mentions", according to Social Mention). Given their large social following, I think they should have a higher reach. I will discuss strategies to do so in the "Suggestions" section.

WHERE ARE PEOPLE SEARCHING FOR NASTY GAL?



(Google Trends)

According to Google Trends, Nasty Gal searches are highest in Washington, DC; Los Angeles, California; Santa Barbara, California; Charlottesville, VA, Gainesville, FL, and Tallahassee, FL . Interestingly, these are all popular college cities.

We can infer from this information that a large majority of current or potential Nasty Gal clients are currently attending college or recently graduated and live in the area.

THE DATA

QUALITATIVE

HOW DO PEOPLE FEEL ABOUT NASTY GAL?

According to Social Mention, the large majority of Nasty Gal customers feel “neutral” about the brand with a slight shift towards a negative sentiment.

Sentiment



Likewise, there are a plethora of negative comments sprinkled throughout Nasty Gal’s comment sections on Facebook and Instagram. Customer’s frustration about shipping and order issues are being publicly announced and shared. This public information can and will affect Nasty Gal’s brand image. Nasty Gal deals with these comments by requesting that the customer direct messages them with their specific order issue.



THE DATA

WHERE HAS NASTY GAL FACED CRITICISM?

Nasty Gal has faced three major controversies since its launch in 2007. There have been claims which have gone to court and straight to the media. The most controversial legal issues Nasty Gal has faced are:

1. Firing pregnant employees

In 2015, then CEO Sophia Amoruso faced major criticism as Nasty Gal was brought to court claiming the brand “systematically and illegally terminates pregnant employees, without offering them the four months of unpaid leave guaranteed for new mothers under California law.” This brought a lot of negative attention to the brand and ended around the time Amoruso stepped down from her CEO position (Jezebel).

2. Copying small artists’ work without credit.

Nasty Gal faced another legal suit in 2015 against graphic designer Deer Dana, claiming that Nasty Gal stole her design without asking permission or giving her credit. This wasn’t the first time Nasty Gal was accused of stealing designs- they had been previously called out for copying designers including Sophia Webster, Balmain, Céline, and Alexander Wang (Racked).

Nasty Gal has to be careful they don’t do this again, as social media accounts ranging from artists themselves and those specifically designed to call out knock-off or rip-off designs (e.g. @dietprada), are not afraid to do just that.

3. Using “frail” and “unhealthy” models.

Most recently, in October of this year, the Advertising Standards Authority ruled that an advertising campaign featuring a slim model in somewhat revealing clothes was “socially irresponsible” due to her appearance of being underweight despite Nasty Gal’s dispute that the British model is classified in the healthy range by the National Health Society (Mondaq).

THE DATA

WHO IS THE NASTY GAL CONSUMER?

Data is limited because we don't have access to Nasty Gal's analytics, but testing targets on Simmons and using data from Google Trends, it can be inferred that the Nasty Gal target persona is: **FEMALE, AGE 18-29, AND IS CURRENTLY A PART-TIME OR FULL-TIME STUDENT OR GRADUATED COLLEGE.**

I decided to add the college demographic due to the geographics of Nasty Gal searches grouped in college town/ cities.

According to data on Simmons with a crosstab against the given persona, we can learn that:

- The consumer is very likely to use social media 3 or more times a day (Index: 213, Vertical: 61.7%)
- The consumer feels they are usually the first among their friends to shop at a new store (I: 201, V: 61.3%)
- The consumer often buys clothes they don't really need (I: 181, V: 41%)
- The consumer likes to keep up with the latest fashions (I: 176, I: 43.2%)
- Almost every season the consumer buys new clothes in order to keep up with the latest fashions (I: 170, I: 20.6%)
- The consumer is usually the first among my friends to try new clothing styles. (I: 161, V: 19%)

SO, WHAT?

We can see a pattern from this dataset that Nasty Gal has the ability to appeal to consumers who use social media regularly, shop often, and like to be seen as trendsetters among their social circles.

THE DATA

THE COMPETITION

WHAT OTHER BRANDS ARE NASTY GAL CUSTOMERS SEARCHING FOR?

Related queries	Rising	?	↓	←
1 honeybum clothing				Bi
2 princesspolly				Bi
3 nasty gal promo codes				Bi
4 dr martens				+
5 prettylething				

(Google Trends)

Four out of five related queries to "Nasty Gal" include names of other clothing brands including HoneyBum, Princess Polly, Dr Marten, and PrettyLittleThing. These clothing brands are similar to Nasty Gal in terms of target audience and pricing.

PRINCESS
POLLY

PRETTYLITTLETHING

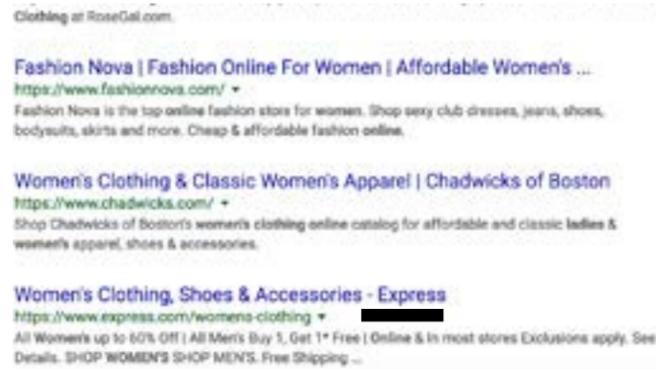


THE DATA

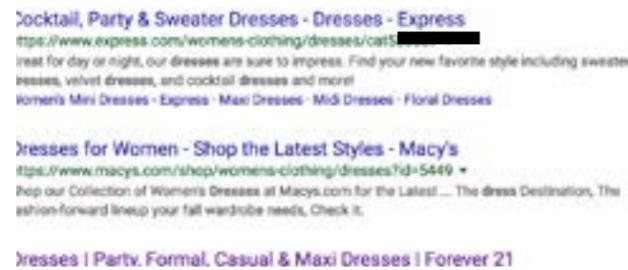
WHO ARE THE CATEGORY LEADERS AND WHAT IS THEIR FOLLOWING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

To find the category leaders, I searched “dresses” and “online shopping” (two related queries to Nasty Gal) on Google. The company which showed up in the top 5 results of both organic searches was Express. Almost all of the search titles included terms like “Affordable”, “Cheap”, and “Deals”, despite me not using these terms in the search.

“ONLINE SHOPPING” SEARCH RESULTS



“DRESSES” SEARCH RESULTS



FOLLOWER COUNT: EXPRESS VS. NASTY GAL

PLATFORM	EXPRESS FOLLOWER COUNT	NASTY GAL FOLLOWER COUNT
	736K FOLLOWERS	2.7 MIL FOLLOWERS
	254K FOLLOWERS	230K FOLLOWERS
	4.6MIL LIKES	1.3 MIL FOLLOWERS

THE DATA

HOW IS THE COMPETITION ENGAGING WITH THEIR FOLLOWING ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

Although Express has fewer Instagram followers, they surpassed Nasty Gal on Twitter and Facebook. This is likely due to the more professional nature of Express' clothes. According to Pew Research, Facebook holds a higher usage rate among those who have completed some college or are a college graduate.

	Facebook	Instagram
Total (online adults)	68%	35%
High school or less	60%	29%
Some college	71%	36%
College graduate	77%	42%



This research shows that for Express, a company concerned more with professional-wear than Nasty Gal, their social media success is coming from the appropriate social media account for their likely target.

Express also uses celebrities to advertise their brand. Most recently, they launched an NBA campaign to target their male audience and also launched a campaign with supermodels Karlie Kloss and Ashley Graham.



THE INSIGHT

WHY DO PEOPLE FOLLOW ACCOUNTS LIKE NASTY GAL?

As we discovered before, we can see patterns in the research that Nasty Gal has the ability to appeal to female consumers who use social media frequently, shop often, and like to be seen as trendsetters among their social circles.

WHERE CAN NASTY GAL'S SOCIAL MEDIA TAKE PART IN THEIR CONSUMER'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FASHION?

KEY INSIGHT:

FEMALES IN COLLEGE FEEL VALIDATED WHEN THEY DISCOVER AND PURCHASE THE LATEST FASHION TRENDS BEFORE ANY OF THEIR FRIENDS DO.



THE FINDINGS (SWOT)

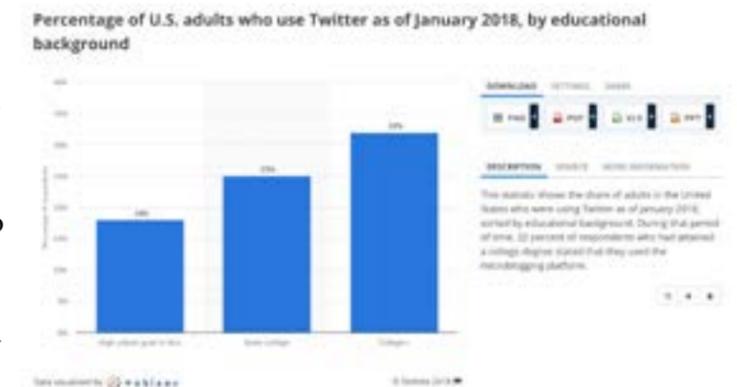
STRENGTHS

Nasty Gal's use of memes creates sharable, viral content- social media users are interacting with these Facebook and Instagram posts by tagging their friends and sharing the content to their own followers or friends. Additionally, Nasty Gal has utilized direct shopping tags and links on Instagram and Facebook so consumers can shop directly. This feature shortens the purchase funnel and utilizes the recency theory- the belief that that advertisements and promotions are most effective when they air immediately prior to the time of decision (Nielson).

WEAKNESSES

Their inactive Twitter means they are missing out on a huge market. Despite the inability to tag products to shop directly on Twitter, Nasty Gal should still harness this platform to create a brand image and connect with their customers. Twitter is a great place to share memes because of the ease of shareability and opportunity for organic growth.

Simmons also shows us that 23.1% of our key targets have used Twitter within the previous 7 days, and this graphic from Statista shows that the higher education one has, the more likely they are to be on Twitter. Since we are targeting those in college or recently graduated, there is huge opportunity to reach potential customers on this platform.



OPPORTUNITIES

There is limited interaction between the customer and company on Nasty Gal's socials- the only consistent topic of conversation and response rate occurs when there is a shipping, order, or product quality issue and Nasty Gal responds to these comments. Nasty Gal should leverage the conversational nature of social media to interact with their audiences. If they do this, they will appear more invested in the customer experience and they will get to learn more about their customers.

THREATS

Many controversies (big- see pg. 9, and small- see pg 8) surround Nasty Gal, unlike their competitors. They do not address or announce these mistakes on their own social channels which makes it seem as though they are hiding things from their client base- they should be the first ones to come out and apologize. Because of these controversies, the social groups who are affected (in Nasty Gal's case- artists, women in the workforce, and those with sensitivities to eating disorders), are likely to boycott Nasty Gal, speak negatively about the company on their own social channels, and/ or simply find a less "offensive" clothing brand to support.

SUGGESTIONS

KEEPING OUR INSIGHT IN MIND, IT IS IMPORTANT TO FOCUS OUR SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGING ON TWO POINTS:

1. NASTY GAL IS ALWAYS PUSHING OUT NEW & TRENDY ITEMS, YEAR ROUND
2. THE FASTEST WAY TO PURCHASE THESE ITEMS IS DIRECTLY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

WHAT WE NEED OUR CONSUMER TO KNOW:

BY FOLLOWING NASTY GAL'S SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, YOU WILL BE THE FIRST ONE TO KNOW ABOUT AND HAVE THE ABILITY TO PURCHASE NEW TRENDS.

FACEBOOK

Nasty Gal is already doing a great job on Facebook with a mix of original videos, influencer pictures, memes, and textual information. There are also many easy ways to shop by finding the website link or shopping directly through tagged product posts. With our insight in mind, I think it is important that Nasty Gal also focuses on trends and acts as a news source for girls to stay updated on the "latest and greatest" in fashion. Nasty Gal can do this by incorporating a blog-style post once in a while with references to big designers or street style. I don't think they should be intimidated by comparing their products to designers because Nasty Gal is a completely different type of store with inexpensive goods, and they can instead focus on a "we can help you get the look for less" angle.

By serving as a gatekeeper for the latest fashion trends, they can expand their audience from just females already interested in their clothing company to a style-conscious platform for anyone interested in the field to follow.

INSTAGRAM

Nasty Gal has created desire and inspiration from their Instagram posts with beautiful, fashionably styled influencers and bloggers, but to really reach their target audience, they should also show "regular" girls styling their products to showcase the individuality that Nasty Gal clothes allows girls to have. Instagram is an "aspirational" platform where users go to get inspiration and Nasty Gal's Instagram can serve that purpose. Additionally, Nasty Gal should incorporate their own product shots into their page when products first come in so the "trendsetting" followers feels like they have the opportunity to be some of the first to get the product (even before influencers/ bloggers).

TWITTER

Nasty Gal should definitely make a comeback on Twitter- we can see from research that they have a huge market opportunity based on their target audience's demographic and use of the platform. Additionally, their competitors are on Twitter, potentially "stealing" their customer base. Nasty Gal should use this platform to reference blog posts (as mentioned in the Facebook suggestion) and continue to post memes and other sharable content. Nasty Gal does not have to focus on selling their product as much on Twitter because it is harder to make direct sales on this platform. Instead, Twitter can be used to spread the word about their brand and continue building a positive and informative brand image.

CONCLUSION

Nasty Gal built its brand on social media and has the opportunity to continue to do so, as long as legal or customer issues are addressed publicly and the social content shows that Nasty Gal is a fun, trendy online store with plenty of options for young women to look and feel their best. Nasty Gal has done a great job at growing a large following, especially during a time where almost all fashion retailers targeting a similar audience are creating an online social presence and there is an incredible amount of competition. Nasty Gal should use their social platforms as an opportunity to really connect with their audience and become a go-to spot for learning about the latest trends in fashion.



NASTY GAL

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