

Ice Cream Advertising on Social Media: What You Need to Know



With the rise of diabetes and growing awareness of lactose-intolerance and veganism, consumers are demanding healthier ice cream options. The industry is rapidly changing, and with it, the way ice cream is marketed is changing too. Here's what brands in this space can learn from our recent analysis of nine ice cream brands' ads.

Highlights

For the ice cream category, positive experiences with the product itself are what drives the overwhelming majority of positive comments on brands' ads.

Negative comments are focused on a mixture of products perceived to be poor quality and advertising creative that is perceived as distasteful.

The majority of comments categorized as customer inquiries were questions on health aspects such related to gluten, dairy, and sweeteners used.



The Analysis

We analyzed 5,390 comments across nine ice cream ads posted between May 2017 to May 2018 on Instagram. The ads were from ten different brands including [Häagen-Dazs](#), [Ben & Jerry's](#), [Dreyers](#), [Talenti gelato](#), [Magnum](#), [Breyers](#), [Halo Top](#), [Outshine](#), and [ENLIGHTENED](#).

Seven out of the nine ads analyzed had a "Learn More" call-to-action leading the viewer to product pages with more information when clicked on.

Our technology uses neural networks, natural language processing and machine learning for content processing. Our content processing system processes all comments and takes actions based on pre-configured guidelines. Our trained teams of quality assurance managers and content processing specialists oversee the processes ensuring we have the highest level of accuracy.

Limitations:

- This analysis mainly focuses on the most popular ice cream brands
- We analyzed only publicly visible comments
- Topics identified are based on current context and can change over time

Ice Cream: A Rapidly-Transforming Industry

Globally, the ice cream market in 2016 was valued as a [\\$54.80 billion industry](#). Despite growing health consciousness worldwide, the ice cream market is expected to continue growing at a CAGR of 4.1% between 2018 to 2025.

Although there is an expected decline in ice cream consumption in North America and Europe, this will be offset by growing demand in The Asia-Pacific, Latin America, and Middle East and Africa markets. Ice cream producers are also attempting to stop the decline in traditional ice cream consumption by pandering to increasing demand for healthier options. Most major brands including Häagen-Dazs and Ben & Jerry's have introduced dairy-free and vegan options to fend off new market entrants like Halo Top, Outshine, and ENLIGHTENED which have been quickly stealing away market share.

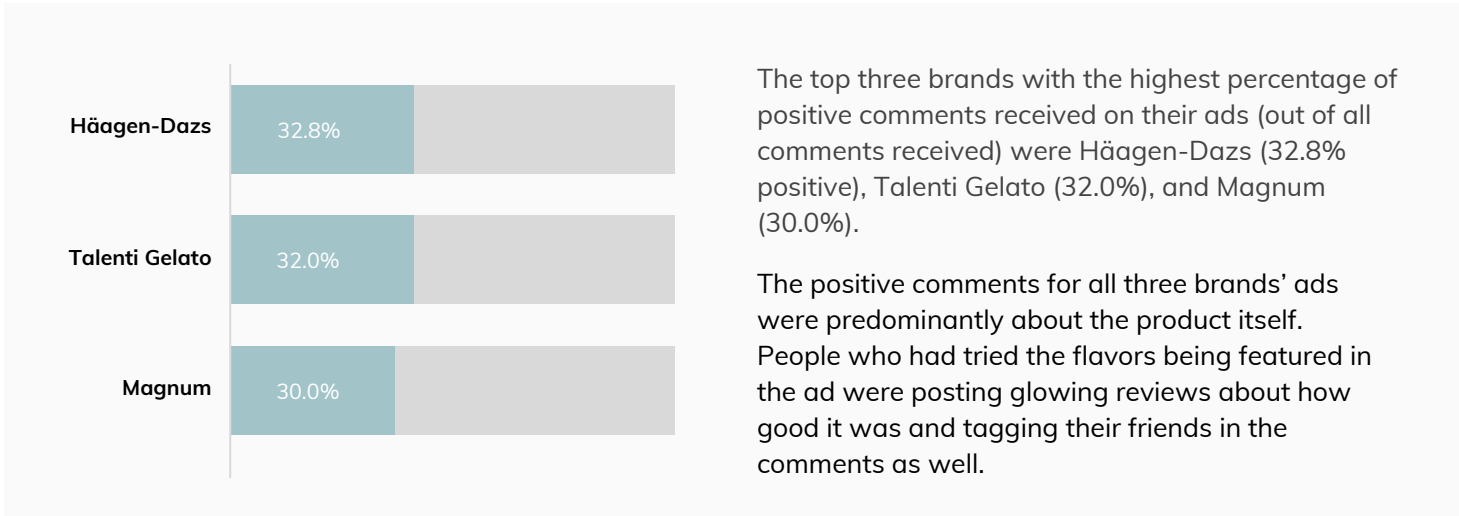
Research suggests that the demand for non-dairy ice cream is set to [triple between 2017 - 2024](#). These alternative plant-based ice creams are usually made from soy, almond, and coconut milk and were created in response to a variety of factors, such as:

- Asia's diabetes crisis which currently affects over 6% of the adult population in the region fueling demand for sugar-free ice cream;
- Europe's growing interest in veganism as a lifestyle, with over 9% of the population being vegans, leading to a surge in demand for non-dairy ice cream.

An entire industry is in the process of being completely transformed, from the way it is marketed to its entire supply chain from sourcing to production. With this in mind, and as summer holidays are just around the corner, the team at BrandBastion thought it would be great to dig into our bank of ice cream ads that we've analyzed to see what we could learn.



Top 3 Brands For Positive Comments



Here's a sampling of some of the comments that these three brands received:

Häagen-Dazs

- This is THE BEST ICE CREAM EVER!!!! This tastes like the hand dipped ice cream we got when I was growing up, but with the addition of incredibly delicious thin and crispy pieces of Belgian Chocolate generously layered throughout! #BestIceCream #Delish!
- My entire family are avid ice cream eaters... we have had many many different kinds of ice cream in our lifetime. We have decided that the Trio Chocolate with layers of Belgian chips is one of the most balanced and tasty ice creams we have ever had.

Talenti Gelato

- That coconut gelato is dangerous...one bite and the next thing you know, you're at the grocery buying more ☐☐☐.
- My sons absolute favorite is the mint chip. We buy it every week. I bribe him to do his homework with it.
- Gentleman this is the secret weapon to end an argument with your girl.... Lol 🍷. Seriously lol

Magnum

- OMGoodness! White chocolate flavor is soooo awesome...fighting not to finish it in one seating
- This is better than meeting Jesus at the golden Gates and hearing well done
- I saw the the other day and jumped right up and got one!!!!!! Soooooooo good

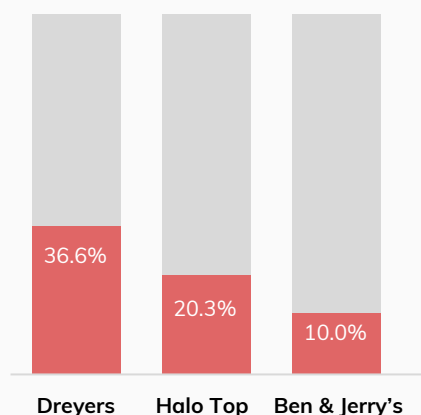
28%

The average percentage of positive comments for all nine brands analyzed

TAKEAWAY #1: Happy customers increase an ad's reach

Having a good product and keeping customers satisfied increases the ROI of your social spend and extends the reach of campaigns, as users spread the ad's reach organically by tagging their friends in the comments feed and recommending them to try the product

Top 3 Brands For Negative Comments



The top three brands with the highest percentage of negative comments received on their ads (out of all comments received) were Nestlé's Dreyers (36.6% negative), Halo Top (20.3%), and Ben & Jerry's (10.0%).

The negative comments for [Dreyers](#) were focused on the health aspects of Dreyers' "half-fat" ice cream being promoted in the ad - calling it deceptive marketing. Meanwhile, [Halo Top](#), marketed as America's #1 ice cream brand and as a healthier option to traditional ice cream, had a significant volume of negative comments saying the ice cream was "chalky" and "tasteless".

For [Ben & Jerry's](#), however, the negative comments were not about the ice cream, but rather about the ad creative. The video used in the ad for coffee-flavored ice cream showed coffee beans on a table that were vibrating or "buzzing", while the caption read: "Get buzzed! New Coffee, Coffee BuzzBuzzBuzz Pint Slices now available." This attracted criticism by many users who said the buzzing beans looked like "bugs" or "roaches".

This negative association has the potential to turn potential customers off the Ben & Jerry's flavor advertised, and serves as good creative feedback for the marketing team. This example is a good reminder that a brilliant creative idea may not work for a social + mobile format. Marketing teams often review ad creatives on large screens in the comfort of an office, while users tend to scroll through ads on tiny mobile screens, glancing at them for barely a second. So while Ben & Jerry's intended to communicate a vibe of energy and excitement with their Coffee BuzzBuzzBuzz ad, they did the opposite by turning users off and leaving them disgusted.



8%

The average percentage of negative comments for all nine brands analyzed

TAKEAWAY #2: Listen to what your customers have to say

The feedback from the comments thread contains valuable tips for future improvement and helps you spot technical issues about ads that you may not have known otherwise.

Ads With The Most Engagement

Overall, Unilever's [Breyers](#) ad garnered the most engagement with 1,615 comments and Dreyers the least with 29 comments. (Note: This does not take into account the varying reach of the ads and the varying ad spend.)

The ad for Breyers advertised a low-calorie ice cream with the caption "Amazingly delicious ice cream at 310-330 calories per pint. Go on enjoy. Indulge without all the guilt."



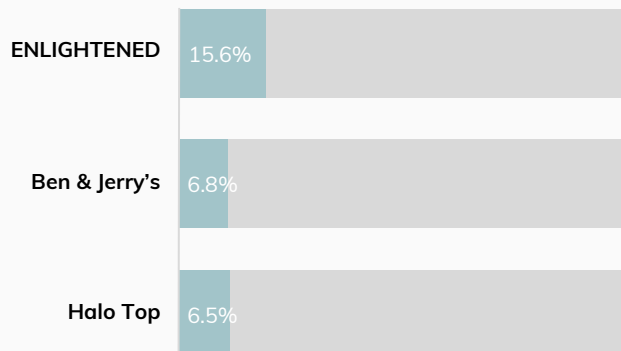
While the ad still generated a significant volume of negative comments (62 negative comments), the critics of low-calorie ice cream were drowned out by the overwhelmingly positive comments (410 positive comments). While there is much skepticism towards ice cream marketed as "healthy" and consumers tend to perceive it as bland, tasteless, or scammy, Breyers' customers seem to genuinely enjoy their product for its taste.

Customers left comments such as:

Those are so much better than halo top and enlighten. they taste just like real ice cream not like frozen protein shake

Thank you for making my little girl happy. The lactose free vanilla is an amazing find for a girl who loves ice cream and can't have lactose

Customer Inquiries



In addition to positive and negative sentiment, we looked at which ads had the most customer service queries in the ad comments. We found that high-protein, low-sugar ice cream brand ENLIGHTENED had the highest ratio of queries to overall comments (15.6%), followed by Ben & Jerry's (6.8%) and Halo Top (6.5%).

On [ENLIGHTENED](#) and [Ben & Jerry's](#) ads, people were mostly asking about the health aspects of the ice cream - for instance, whether it was gluten-free and vegan, and what types of sweeteners were used. Most of the queries on ENLIGHTENED's ads were responded to, whereas for Ben & Jerry's, these users did not receive any replies. Given that Ben & Jerry's does offer non-dairy options, these unanswered customer inquiries were missed opportunities to start conversations with customers about these alternatives.

TAKEAWAY #3: Cross-sell organically by replying to questions people are asking in the comment thread

Promoting products does not only have to be done directly through awareness campaigns. Cross-selling can take place organically, at a low cost, in the comments section where people are asking about your products.

6.1%

The average ratio of customer inquiries across all ads analyzed

For [Halo Top](#), the engagement varied slightly - it appeared that many customers were not able to find the flavor being advertised and as such were flooding the comment feed with frustrated feedback and questions. Such comments are an indication that there is a [communication gap between marketing and distribution](#) - leading to unhappy customers. At BrandBastion, we commonly see this gap in many ads we analyze, from apparel and fashion to food products to FMCG goods. Often, products are unintentionally advertised to regions where there are stock outs - wasting precious ad dollars and creating frustration and resentment among customers eagerly waiting to purchase the advertised items.

TAKEAWAY #4: Improve ad performance by closing the feedback gap between distribution and marketing

One simple way to stop wasting precious ad dollars and creating frustration and resentment among customers is to close the feedback gap between distribution and marketing.

ENLIGHTENED

Where do you get this? Is it gluten free?

Are there vegan flavors?

Ben & Jerry's

Are these gluten free?

Do you guys have these in the Vegan flavors too?

Halo Top

Where on Earth is this blueberry crumble? I've been looking everywhere since it was announced in February and the website doesn't show it anywhere in the US.

Other Types of Engagement

Aside from measuring sentiment and customer queries, we found that on average, 2.3% of all comments in the ads analyzed were references to competitors' products. These comments usually promote a competitor brand as better than the brand being advertised. At 4.7%, Breyers had the highest percentage of comments that promoted competitors' products.

TAKEAWAY #5: Listen and moderate actively

Active social listening and moderation can significantly reduce the volume of competitor promotions, toilet humor, spam, brand attacks, and other types of harmful comments.

We also observed a small percentage of negative comments being related to health issues (0.3%), toilet humor (0.3%), spam (0.7%), and brand attacks (0.4%).

Sexual/Toilet

- I'd rather eat blended dog poop
- Did they just put a vibrator on the table to get this effect?
- I can't eat this ice cream because it Look like a perm.

Spam

- <http://bestcashjob.com/?refer=202402>
- Got 1 GA pass for EDC LV for \$400... near Monterey, CA... furthest I'll meet is SF or Paso Robles, DM me or reply in comments if interested
- NEW INVENTORY SHOP @thelemonline for all the hottest and latest fashions!

Brand attacks

- Don't buy from this child trafficking and pedophile brand. Look up FBI pedophile symbols. Right above their logo.
- Unilever supports Genocide and ethnic cleansing in Palestine against the indigenous people of #Palestine so we #bds #bdsmovement and #Boycott all #Unilever products all over the wo

Health issues

- Type 2 diabetes, here i come!!!!
- This stuff will increase heart disease and Alzheimer's. It's been proven.
- Sugar and fat will kill you
- Well maybe people don't want there food to be genetically modified by machinery

Recap of Takeaways

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BrandBastion manages social media engagement
24/7 for the world's top brands

BrandBastion specializes in managing user-engagement at scale for brands, advertisers, publishers and organizations. We have five years of experience with processing user generated content, taking actions and providing detailed insight across many different industries. We're an official Instagram Partner and offer coverage in 43 languages. BrandBastion works with 300+ accounts such as Netflix, TechCrunch and DealDash.

Platforms covered:



Get in touch!



Ben Cathcart
Business Development
ben.cathcart@brandbastion.com
EU: +358 9 2316 0914
US: +1 (310) 736-1767

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