

THE RESEARCH, IDEATION, AND CREATION
OF SCRATCH COOKIE DOUGH CO.

by

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OF SCRATCH COOKIE DOUGH CO.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the journey from a childhood love for cookies to the creation of a customizable and eclectic flavored cookie dough company. Frustrated by the limited options available in store-bought cookie dough, a mission was ignited to provide consumers with a wider array of flavors conveniently deliverable to their doorstep. The project involved extensive research into existing cookie dough brands, the impact of advertising on brand identity, and the significance of package design in capturing consumer attention. Utilizing descriptive research methodologies, including case studies of related brands, advertising strategies, and business models, as well as secondary research to supplement findings, this paper delves into the intricacies of launching a successful cookie dough venture. The culmination of this endeavor resulted in the development of a comprehensive branding strategy encompassing logo design, advertising campaigns, product packaging, website creation, and social media presence, all aimed at introducing a novel and enticing product to the market.

Introduction

For as long as I can remember, cookies have been my favorite food. That's right— more than chicken nuggets, more than pizza, and even more than ice cream. Growing up with this treasured treat on the throne of my favorite foods meant trying just about every kind of store-bought cookie dough. However, I would soon find that the range of flavors pretty much started at chocolate chip and ended at sugar.

Trying more unique cookie flavors like mint chocolate and snickerdoodle on trips outside of my small hometown of Conway, Arkansas led to a craving beyond what store-bought dough could offer. And though a trip to a cookie shop or bakery or a messy, time-consuming attempt at baking can fulfill a cookie craving, I found myself wishing I could have access to this unique flavored dough in my own fridge.

My resolution? Customizable and funky flavored cookie dough that can be shipped right to your door. In other words, dough that dares to be different, and dough that caters to your preferences. Why not step out of your comfort zone with a beloved treat that does so in bakeries but not yet in grocery stores?

Thesis Statement

This project involved the marketing and branding of a cookie dough company that offers customizable and unique flavored cookie dough. This was accomplished through extensive research into the history of cookie dough brands currently on the market, the impact of advertising within brand identities, and the importance of a package design that not only stops a consumer in their tracks but also wins them over for a place in their pantry. The final result

included a logo design, advertising, photography, product design, merchandise design, business collateral, a website, and social media.

Methodology

Within the following paper, two types of research were implemented to provide a thorough deep dive into the world of cookie dough brands. The first type of research is called Descriptive Research, which allows the researcher to observe and measure both quantitative and qualitative variables; in other words, according to an article on Scribbr by Shona McCombes, it “...aims to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation, or phenomenon. It can answer *what*, *where*, *when*, and *how* questions, but not *why* questions.” Within the category of Descriptive Research, there are a few different methods that can be administered, such as surveys, observations, and case studies.

In this research paper, the method of case studies was used to research related brands, advertising, and business models. Case studies “...often focus on unusual or interesting cases that challenge assumptions, add complexity, or reveal something new about a research problem” (McCombes). First, a case study of related brands relative to cookie dough brands was conducted. Subjects included Deux and Doughp; although both are newer cookie dough companies within the market, they both already have substantial followings on social media and an impressive consumer reach with sales via their websites as well as in stores like Target. The second case study researched advertising and promotion relative to cookie dough and a few other strong advertising examples in unrelated brands. Subjects for this study included Lego, Spotify, Pillsbury, and Sweet Loren’s, which all have successful marketing and advertising campaigns and have the numbers of consumers to prove it. The third and final case study looked at business

models relative to cookie dough brands. Subjects included who are arguably the most renowned cookie dough brands in America: Nestle Toll House and Pillsbury, which both have had over a century of experience in the cookie dough business.

Finally, the second type of research completed for this paper was Secondary Research, which involves studying books and articles to find supporting information for the case studies above. This plethora of resources—which include online articles, books, and more—allowed for further analysis of existing research, and these are all listed on the Works Cited page located at the end of the paper (page 28).

CASE STUDY 1: Related Cookie Dough Brands

In terms of related brands within the realm of cookie dough, styles range from playful to sterile to sophisticated to even dated. The two words might immediately bring your attention to the renowned yellow packaging of Nestle Toll House or even the baby blue of Pillsbury. However, it is important to realize that cookie dough brands' prosperity is not contingent on only being traditional and established within the category of dessert. In the following case study, this claim is tested, showcasing two recent cookie dough brands and how their visual and emotional identities have also successfully resonated with consumers.

BRAND ANALYSIS ONE: DEUX

<https://www.eatdeux.com/>

I. Brand Persona & Personality

Deux prides itself in its fun and party-like approach to the experience of eating and baking cookie dough. The founder is a connoisseur herself, and the issue she went into her brand to solve was the issue of unhealthy ingredients in standard dough as well as the inability of those with dietary restrictions to consume it. According to the website, they have removed “all the bad for you ingredients,” providing a basis for upholding and caring about the customer’s health above giving them a treat that could harm them. In a study by Bornkessel et al regarding consumer reactions to the ingredient branding strategy, “Increasing consumer demands focus on healthiness of foods concurrently combined with the desire of a clear conscience in terms of sustainable shopping” (Bornkessel et al, 2019). Thus, the appeal of brands conscientious of ingredients creates a level of trust and transparency between the brand and consumer.

II. Color Palette

The color palette of Deux most definitely stands out amongst other popular cookie brands, which stick to a refined color palette; an example is Nestle Toll House, which has had that iconic, nostalgic bright yellow packaging on the shelves for years. Their color palette shouts at you to notice it, pick it up, and see what it’s all about. It also exclaims the brand attitude at the same time with its neon pink signature color, exemplifying its woman-owned, fun approach. In an article titled “Impact of Color on Marketing” by Satyendra Singh, color psychology is adamant about leaving a lasting impression within the short moments of first impressions of the brand. Singh claims, “About 62-90 percent of the assessment is based on colors alone,” when a consumer is deciding between buying a product or not. Bright, stimulating colors also have an effect on the emotional response of the viewer that is higher in their response hierarchy of imagery or even copywriting (Tutssel, 2000).

Their color palette also represents the energy of ingredients like Vitamin B12 which claims to “put a pep in your step,” as well as ingredients like reishi and ginseng, which “...work together to relieve stress, regulate sleep, & increase energy levels” (Singh, 2006). The branding is bright and lively, and so are you after consuming the product.

III. Typography

Their typography has the thick, retro serif–Roca–that has proven popular in recent years as well as Poppins, a sans serif with a high variety of weights to complement it as the secondary and body type (Fussell, 2023). These fonts are trendy and catch the eye of younger generations, showing once again that the attitude of the brand is not distinguished or fancy– it is for younger audiences that appreciate fun branding and often purchase products for the packaging alone (Kim et al, 2018). According to an online journal publication titled “Relationship between Brand Personality and the Personality of Consumers, and its Application to Corporate Branding Strategy” by Kim et al, the majority of consumers will purchase from a brand that adheres to their own personality and values. Therefore, unsophisticated, fun branding will communicate to those with similar personalities, drawing in a younger consumer pool (Kim et al, 2018).

VI. Photography

The photography provides close-up studio shots of each flavor that are cut out to provide a clean, minimalistic look. The cutouts provide easy navigation to the eye and let the consistency, color, and ingredients of the dough do the talking.

V. Packaging

When it comes to the value of packaging, Behzad Mohebbi in his article titled “The art of packaging: An investigation into the role of color in packaging, marketing, and branding,” states, “There is now a growing consensus among researchers and practitioners in the field of marketing and business that packaging plays a pivotal role in the success or failure of sale of any product in the highly competitive market.” The screw-on containers of the Deux cookie dough showcase this perspective since they implement their vibrant color palette as well as hierarchy of typography on each. The graphics remain flat with no added texture, and photography on the labels is seldom used. One thing that is interesting, however, is that “Enhanced Cookie Dough” is higher on the hierarchy than the actual name of the flavor, causing you to search an extra few seconds to figure out what it is. Seeing how the hierarchy works on their packaging from the stance of a customer is helpful for my research and seeing where people look first on the packaging and what is most important to showcase on smaller surface areas.

VI. Website UX

From the first click on the website, the eye darts from bright color to bright color and at the cleanliness of the display. The user experience is made simple like their ingredients, making navigation a breeze. In an article titled “The Basics of UX Website Design for Customer Experience” by News Bites, “...customers are likely to spend 140% more after a positive experience [with a website] than customers who report negative experiences.” So, a successful user experience not only enhances the overall design of a company’s website but also drastically increases sales (G5).

BRAND ANALYSIS TWO: DOUGH

<https://www.doughp.com/>

I. Brand Attitude & Persona

The branding presents itself as moderately sterile-looking and straightforward design-wise. Due to its backstory of the owner being a previous addict advocating for “...breaking the stigma around mental health and addiction recovery,” it allows for a wider audience base versus a more pointed effort toward young adults like Deux. Just as mentioned in the analysis of Deux and the benefit of brand sustainability and values according to Bornkessel et al, having a pointed purpose and backstory for a brand enhances its popularity and profitability (Calder, 2022). When a brand has a level of vulnerability and connection with its customers, it not only sets it apart greatly from competitors but also extends purpose and builds brand community bonds (Calder).

II. Color Palette

The color palette once again is very minimal with just white and black, only introducing color with the typography on their specialty doughs as well as the photography of the vibrant dough itself. Allowing the existence of the product’s color to become a sort of secondary color palette is intriguing and admirable. An often overlooked benefit to their minimal color palette according to Singh is the prevalence of color blindness in Americans– the majority of Douhp’s customer pool. Singh emphasizes that with 19 million and counting Americans suffering from some level of color blindness, increasing awareness and sensitivity to these groups in the creation of a brand’s design assets should be taken into account in its development. This

intentionality could even result in a larger audience noticing the brand and appreciating it, which in turn increases the empathy of a brand.

III. Typography

The typography ranges throughout the entire brand, starting with the logo's typeface. The logo displays a chunky, semi-condensed sans serif with rounded corners, offering a bold and stark introduction to the brand versus that of a fun or whimsical typeface. A secondary typeface used on their slogan "Legit Cookie Dough" resembles brushed lettering, which does add a personal touch to the brand where it was once mainly bold. Their body copy consists mainly of a sans serif similar to Poppins to adhere to their favor of a simple look (Fussell, 2023).

One element of their typography that makes them stand out and that takes their brand a step further than the others, however, is how some of their special flavors have their own typographic treatment *and* illustration. This allows not only personality for the brand overall and an element that is memorable to consumers, but also personality to each flavor, creating a base of loyal customers that are "fans" so to speak of different illustration characters. According to an article published in *SAGE Open* and written by Haiying Wang et al, an emphasis on typography in package design has proven to be successful in a study defining the importance of specific design characteristics with twenty-five designers and 121 students. The study found that "...color, shape, image, line, and typography were the five most essential design characteristics influencing consumer purchase behavior..." (Wang et al). Therefore, despite Douhp's seemingly simple brand identity, its playful and juxtaposed typography provides an opportunity for increased purchasing from and resonance with consumers.

IV. Photography

The photography for all the packages of dough seems to be the same: against a black background most likely in a photo studio. On the product page as you hover over this studio image, however, you get a close-up of just the dough, and if you click on the flavor, you see two additional photos: one of a spoonful of dough and another with a stack of what the cookies will look like when baked. Though it seems obvious to include what the cookie will look like, it truly is an important element to show the phases of how the cookie dough will end up. After all, the dough is meant to be baked and not eaten— though there is no judgment if the latter is partaken in, of course.

V. Packaging

The packaging is the same for each flavor with its minimalist black and white, but once again, some flavors provide a pop of color with a fun, cartoon-like type treatment and illustrations of personified cookies doing human activities. This typography and color treatment specific to certain flavors like their fan-favorite “Cookie Monsta” reinforces Kim et al’s earlier stance that the personality a brand’s design portrays will attract consumers with similar personalities. Their range of features on certain flavors increases the range of customers and personalities that come with them and therefore becomes more intentional with their overall inclusivity (Kim et al, 2008).

VI. Website UX

As seen in the analysis of Deux’s website, the website user experience of Douhp is straightforward and extremely simple to navigate. There is not much flair to the design of the

website, which diminishes competition between it and the tubs, allowing the dough packaging to be the star of the show.

When contrasted with Deux's design, however, it is obvious that Deux takes risks with hot pinks, cut-out graphics of cookies and ingredients, dynamic borders, and eye-catching scale. Though both are contrasted greatly in appearance, the websites are comparable in their ease of use, which is proven to be a priority in a user's experience of online shopping (G5, 2020).

Conclusion

When comparing and contrasting these examples of two cookie dough brands that have successful brand identities, we find multiple results. First off, though their brand persona differs greatly visibly and emotionally, we find that the branding of both still resonates with consumers. While Deux has a playfulness to it whereas Douhp has a simple, sterile facade, both have branding that is successful according to studies regarding design hierarchy, color, and more. Though both brands sell inventive cookie dough mixtures, they have proven that well-received cookie dough branding is not limited to a specific style.

CASE STUDY 2: Related Advertising & Promotion

General Overview

Advertising within the food industry has been around since the first loaf of bread was sliced it seems. And though the quantity of ads out in the world is abundant, the quality and success of these ads are important to take note of as well. With this, the success of advertising often relies on the perception of a *brand's authenticity*, which reflects "a subjective evaluation of

genuineness ascribed to a brand by consumers” (Napoli et al, 2014, p. 1,091). When a brand markets itself as one that is sincere, has integrity and empathizes with its consumers, brand loyalty thrives immensely (Loebnitz et al, 2020). People want to be understood and seen, and when a random food brand can accomplish that through a print ad on a billboard or a magazine page, its resonance flourishes.

In a survey among 200 respondents within the reach of advertising of dessert products, the study found that when this role of food markets do in fact foster loyalty, consumer engagement towards these brands increases as well (Gazdecki et al, 2020). In the following case study, research on mediums of advertising, high consumer engagement, and additional elements will be dissected to better understand their importance.

I. Storytelling in Advertising

Advertising has elevated brands, increased sales, and garnered consumer support for centuries now (Gazdecki, 2020). And within the many mediums advertising can take, if the tool of storytelling versus mere informational overload is implemented, audiences are more likely to receive and remember the brand positively (Kang et al, 2018). According to Kang et al, “Storytelling has become a common technique for increasing the *emotional* power of advertising.” The impact storytelling leaves on consumers is that humans typically store information in the form of stories (Schank, 1999) which results in increased memorability (Lundqvist et al, 2013). And although strictly informational ads can serve an important purpose for the more detail-oriented consumers (Lin & Chen, 2006), decisions made by the majority of consumers are frequently nonrational (Kang et al, 2018). When a story is told to promote a brand, whether that is through a commercial, radio ad, Instagram post, or print ad, the emotions

of the consumer are stirred. And when these emotions are stirred, consumers can become emotionally attached to a product or even a brand overall (Kang et al, 2018).

One medium of advertising that often incorporates storytelling is print ads, where the opportunity for copywriting presents itself. Before one begins ideating copy, one must first build a picture of the brand's audience (Shaw, 2009) as well as consider the viewer's spatiotemporal environment—which includes where they are seeing this ad and how long they have or spend

looking at it. In addition to this, it must also be considered and preconceived what emotional reaction the storytelling should elicit from said viewers.

One example provided by Bopgun's article titled "What is Creative Storytelling," to showcase how storytelling can call on the emotion of nostalgia is a print ad from Lego in 1981. Though the brand's loyal fans often consist of children, the consumers are more likely to be the parents of these children. And when an ad like this one tugs for an emotional response of nostalgia and the sweet



innocence of children, it sticks. This is seen not only in the copy as well as the headline, but also in the imagery, which according to Bopgun, "...throws [one] right back to [their] childhood when [they] look at this – it isn't a brand story lost in a beautiful, slow-panning backdrop, this is a personal story that defines a single, clear emotion, and draws you right in."

Additionally, storytelling can rely more heavily on imagery versus copywriting. In a 1996 Christmas ad by Pillsbury—which is an example more specific to the world of cookie dough brands—a story of their mascot, the dough boy,



making cookies is pictured. The imagery of a cozy home during the holiday season surrounds a plate of fresh cookies, which the audience can come to assume is on Christmas Eve.

The ad not only communicates a surface-level story of the Pillsbury dough boy coming to life and baking cookies, but also communicates a story of family, togetherness, and forming memories during the holiday season with one special ingredient: their cookie dough.

II. The Power of Empathy and Resonating With the Target Audience in Advertising

Another essential aspect of advertising is targeting the empathy and relatability of the audience. And in order to hit the bullseye, it must first be determined the consumer's struggles, wants, and needs (Shaw, 2009). According to an article titled "The Influence of Consumer-Brand Relationship on the Personalized Advertising Privacy Calculus in Social Media" by Hayes et al, determining these needs is attainable through "...data concerning their preferences and behaviors, which is gained by collecting their personal information." When this data is gathered and built into the foundation of a brand's advertising and marketing strategies, 80% of consumers are more likely to purchase a product due to the personalized experience (Epsilon, 2018). Consumers who feel seen by a brand build a connection to it, whether that's through mentioning a common struggle amongst the consumer's age group, a relatable comedic situation, or an issue not typically vocalized in media.

One example of a brand that empathizes with its consumers through a comedic route is Spotify, the renowned streaming app with a varying audience



base. According to Michaela Jefferson in an article titled “How Spotify Reorganized its Marketing Team to Enable More ‘Nimble’ Creativity,” the top marketer at Spotify, Taj Alavi, describes his strategy of reconnecting people with the emotional side of the brand, “...using creativity at a higher frequency to tap into and create cultural moments and trends.” This strategy is seen in their billboard ads especially, which frequently adorn the bright rectangles of Times Square in New York City (Bored Panda, 2016). This billboard campaign ushered in copywriting that poked fun at their listeners’ listening history, with one headline in particular reading, “Dear person who played ‘Sorry’ 42 times on Valentine's Day... What did you do?” This sense of humor and playful jab at its consumers was received well overall, with most of these going viral on social media (Bored Panda, 2016). The tagline to unite all of these read, “Thanks 2016. It’s been weird,” which once again carries on the lighthearted, unconventional, unserious attitude the brand is known for pushing toward (Jefferson, 2022).

III. Print Advertising

Though the effectiveness of print ads today is questioned due to the prevalence of digital

ads and marketing, its impact remains substantial throughout the history of brands to today (Venkatraman et al, 2021). According to a study of eye tracking and biometric measures of consumers taking in print ads versus digital ones in the journal article titled, “Relative Effectiveness of Print and Digital Advertising: A Memory Perspective” by Venkatraman et al, the study actually found that print ads have stronger engagement

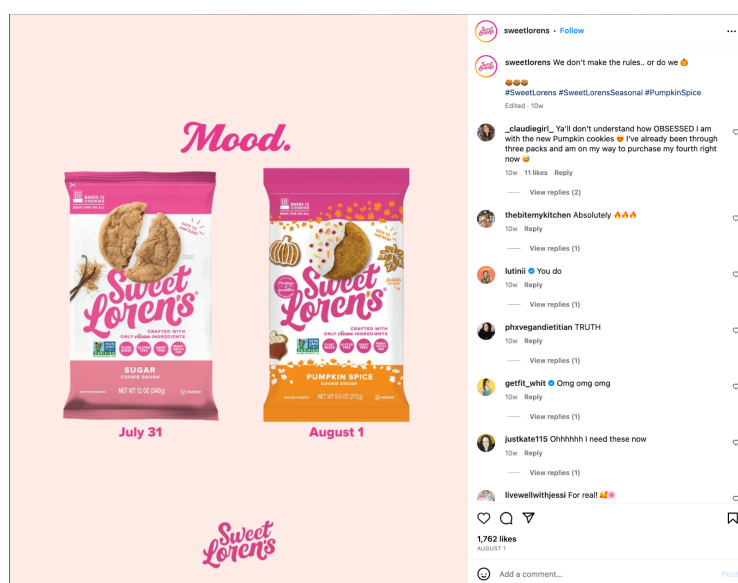


and memorability to viewers. Additionally, when functional magnetic resonance imaging was used in the study, “...the authors [found] greater activation in the hippocampus and parahippocampal regions for print ads relative to digital ads” (Venkatraman et al, 2021). Thus, it is clear that although digital ads conserve money and are growing in quantity day to day, print media should not be discounted (Venkatraman et al, 2021).

When researching print ads for cookie dough brands, it quickly became apparent that examples were sparse despite the various brands. One print ad, however, that seems to have stood the test of time and is a great example of a creative, straightforward, and simple print ad is from Pillsbury in a 1978 Christmas sugar cookie ad. According to an article by Burgers et al in 2014, print ads like this one focus more on *reduced complexity* when conveying the message rather than doing so in the form of visual or textual metaphors. Though there is definitely merit in appealing to humor in print ads (Hatzithomas, 2011), uncluttered and simplified space in a print ad creates clean visual contrast and a quick-to-consume composition for the unexpectant viewer flipping through the pages (Burgers et al, 2014).

VI. Social Media: A Rising Medium of Advertising That Should Not Be Taken Lightly

With the rise of social media apps like Instagram and Facebook over the past few decades, a new—and popular—medium for advertising has presented itself (Lee and Hong, 2016). With brands like Sweet Loren’s, posts



can disguise themselves from seeming like advertisements to users despite their underlying marketing tactics.

In this example found on their Instagram page (@sweetlorens), the post not only relates to a common tendency for those who love fall and pumpkin spice to start celebrating early on—like in August shown above—but also simultaneously advertises the release of their pumpkin spice flavor. Posts like these carry on the momentum of a brand’s advertising by marketing products in a relatable and more palatable or less forceful way.

CASE STUDY 3: Business Models

Whether a business model takes an empathetic, lighthearted, or health-conscientious approach, they oftentimes still adhere to similar structures of strategy, and ultimately, ways to gain profit. Things like heartstring-tugging mission statements, advertising that leaves an aftertaste, and “big idea” moments color their surfaces, but beyond that and at the core of most businesses lies processes of hypothesis, trial, error, and repeat; in other words, the business model (Magretta, 2002).

Looking in depth at nationally and historically renowned companies like Nestle Toll House and Pillsbury aids in a better understanding of not only how business models function day-to-day, but also how they transform a brand from a startup to a fan-favorite.

NESTLE TOLL HOUSE

I. Company Overview

When most people think of cookie dough, their mind immediately pictures that iconic yellow and red packaging (Fig. 1). Maybe they have memories of eating it out of the tub when their parents specifically told them not to, or maybe they feel the nostalgia of that fresh-baked cookie smell mingling with the Christmas tree’s scent on Christmas Eve. Maybe they have it in their fridge as we speak. With that being said, Nestle Toll House chocolate chip cookies have established themselves as many people’s go-to cookie dough



Fig. 1. Nestle Toll House. “Nestlé® Toll House® Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough Bar.” *Nestle Toll House*. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.verybestbaking.com/toll-house/products/nestle-toll-house-chocolate-chip-cookie-dough-bar-16-5-oz/>.

of choice, and even their preference over any fancy flavors (Leite, 2008). So how did a brand that kept it simple with their cookie dough become so renowned for just that?

Though Nestle encompasses an array of products besides just their renowned cookie dough, it is adamant to investigate how their dough garnered success despite its outward appearance of normalcy.

II. Big Idea

In 1939, Ruth Wakefield was assembling her usual cookie recipe at her and her husband's Toll House Inn in New England (Tucker, 2021). The toll house was initially intended to function as an inn, however, Ruth's background in baking took the reins for the destiny of the house. One day at the toll house, a thought hit her: what if broken-up pieces of Nestle semi-sweet chocolate were folded into the dough? To her surprise, Ruth found that the chocolate was baked just enough to hold its form but to be melty, and simultaneously crunchy, alongside the soft cookie dough (Nestle 2021).

Mrs. Wakefield would go on to market her creation as her "Toll House Chocolate Crunch Cookie" (Fig. 2), which would be a fan-favorite for almost a century (Leite, 2008) and today, the most popular cookie in America (Tucker, 2021).



Fig. 2. Quaint Cooking. "The History of the Chocolate Chip Cookie." *Quaint Cooking*. Last modified November 11, 2022. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://quaintcooking.com/2019/12/11/the-history-of-the-chocolate-chip-cookie/>.

III. Demographic

Nestle’s cookie dough is not only premade, but pre-cut in most of their offerings of it, making its convenience appealing to an array of demographics. According to an article titled “Cookie Dough Market Analysis” in September of 2023, these demographics have included people like young adults and parents alike. Most young adults are still trying to figure out their daily routine, let alone cooking, so the simple steps, quick baking time, and mess-free process appeal greatly to ages 18 to 25 (Markwide Research, 2023). Along the same lines, parents also make up a substantial amount of the demographic. In Figure 3, an advertisement by Nestle Toll House visualizes this demographic of families and children with a nod to its popularity during the winter season. Family is at the forefront of the ad, along with copywriting from an unpictured parent.

Once again, a ready-to-eat treat is ideal for busy lives, and a bonus due to its instant gratification and promotion of making the cookies a component of family memories (Nestle, 2021). It goes to show that Nestle’s cookie dough is more than just a melt-in-your-mouth treat, it’s also a proponent of nostalgia and togetherness.



Fig. 3. Clearance Island. “Nestle Toll House Chocolate Chip Cookies Food Friendship Advertisement Paper Ad.” eBay. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.ebay.com/itm/234742509554>.

IV. Mission Statement

While the parent company of this cookie dough, Nestle, continues to harp its mission of “good food, good life,” Nestle Toll House cookie dough promotes helping their customers simply do one thing: make memories (“One Sweet Tale,” Nestle). And since the 1930s—the birth of this iconic recipe—it has done just that.

In an article on the Nestle Toll House website titled “One Sweet Tale,” this desire to make memories laid its foundation during World War II, in which “...bakers in the U.S. made and sent treats including Nestle Toll House chocolate chip cookies off to soldiers overseas to lift their spirits and give them a taste of home. Therefore, Nestle Toll House once again aims to warm both your stomach and your heart, one memory or kind gesture at a time.

V. Variety

Though Nestle Toll House’s iconic red, white, and yellow packaging has kept its place on the shelves of this red, white, and blue country for almost a century now, the brand has undoubtedly experimented with evolving its variety of cookie dough flavors throughout the years (Vargas, 2021). The company has taken advantage of its popularity during the Christmas season—due to it being the ideal cookie to leave out for Santa—in previous years with fun and unique flavors (Vargas, 2021). Beginning in November of 2021, for example, the company released four limited edition flavors that sent the internet into a frenzy: Gingerbread, Peppermint Cocoa, Snow Day, and Red Velvet. Once again, the memory-making that baking cookies on Christmas Eve and making for family get-togethers fosters is unmatched, and consumers were most certainly on board (Vargas, 2021).

During the fall of the following year, 2022, the company continued its momentum with fitting cookie dough flavors like Pumpkin Spice and an M&M's Ghoul's Mix (Snack Food & Wholesale Bakery, 2022). Even Valentine's Day has its own cookie dough to adorn the shelves with even more pink with their Valentine Chocolate Chip cookie dough, which includes red and pink heart sprinkles throughout the mixture (Fitzpatrick, 2022).

Beyond just the flair of seasonal flavors, however, Nestle Toll House has taken another step within the development of dessert trends in recent years with their release of safe-to-eat raw cookie dough flavors in 2019 including chocolate chip, monster, and more (Siegener, 2019). Though the cookie dough is not meant to be baked, its popularity has triumphed due to rising attention to this innovation within the cookie dough world with brands like New York's DŌ as well as the Cookie Dough Cafe (Siegener, 2019). Alongside the trend of this edible cookie dough was the pull for Nestle Toll House to follow along due to the common tendency for children—and adults—to sneak a spoonful of the delicious, though unsafe, raw cookie dough. In fact, in a 2009 study regarding an outbreak of *E. coli* bacteria, researchers found that the culprit for all 77 affected people was from eating copious amounts of raw cookie dough—the first time the company has had this happen surprisingly (Shute, 2011). So, the company not only acclimated to the common issue of people eating raw cookie dough and getting sick from it—despite the warning labels on the packaging to refrain from doing so—but also acclimated to the current trends, proving its roots in history does not keep it in the past.

VI. Cafés

Lastly, a unique extension of Nestle Toll House's cookie dough is the opening of a franchise of storefronts where customers can purchase fresh-baked cookies right then and there

(Corley, 2022). The name of this franchise was the Nestle Toll House Cafe, which first appeared in the 2000s. However, the success of these cafes has dwindled over the years due to their common locations in malls—where shoppers have sharply decreased due to the prevalence of online shopping and COVID-19—as well as it being sold to Fat Brands, which ultimately decided to diminish the franchise completely (Corley, 2022).

PILLSBURY COOKIE DOUGH

I. Company Overview

Though Nestle Toll House may seem to stand alone in the realm of historic and widely popular cookie dough products, Pillsbury cookie dough stands among Nestle as yet another famous fan favorite. Pillsbury is known for its range of baking products, from cookie dough to biscuits to pie crusts. Its convenient products like cake mix in a box and crescent rolls in a tin have attracted families from across the nation for 150 years now, encouraging families to bake their products together with ease (General Mills).

When customers think of Pillsbury, however, they do not see the packaging colors as they might with Nestle; instead, they might think of the Pillsbury Doughboy (Fig. 4), their mascot that was created in 1965 by Rudy Perz and Milt Schaffer (Pillsbury Kitchens, 2022). Whether they might have seen him as a gargantuan inflatable in New York’s Macy’s Day



Fig. 4. Pillsbury Kitchens. “How Well Do You Know the Pillsbury Doughboy?” *Pillsbury.Com*. Pillsbury, October 31, 2022. Last modified October 31, 2022. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://www.pillsbury.com/doughboy>.

parade or behind the grocery store's chilled refrigerator glass, it has become cemented not only in their brand identity but in American pop culture (Pillsbury Kitchens, 2022). According to the 2022 article titled "How Well Do You Know the Pillsbury Doughboy" on Pillsbury's website, the Doughboy was such a hit across the nation after his debut that within the first few years, he had "...an 87 percent recognition factor among consumers," and even "...was receiving 200 fan letters a week [as well as] 1,500 requests for autographed photos."

Pillsbury has clearly had a stroke of success throughout the past 150 years, so researching why that is the case, whether that's from its flavors of products, ease-of-use, baking contests, cookbooks, or even consumer resonance with the Doughboy, is adamant to better understanding business models with longevity (Tikkanen).

II. Big Idea

As stated above, Pillsbury is not new to the world of food products. In fact, according to Amy Tikkanen's Britannica entry on the company, its origin dates back all the way to 1869 with a man named Charles A. Pillsbury. During that year, Charles had purchased a flour mill in Minneapolis that would launch him instantly into a career in flour milling (Tikkanen). In 1872, Charles' firm was reorganized as C.A. Pillsbury and Company, yet the ownership has fluctuated within the past century and a half after 1872.

One of these owners of Pillsbury was a British company named Grant Metropolitan, PLC, which ran the company "...from 1989 to 2001, when General Mills acquired most of Pillsbury's assets" (Tikkanen). With the ownership of General Mills, a wave of product innovation would surge the shelves of grocery stores across the nation, leaving in its wake an

introduction of items like “...frozen biscuits and rolls, breakfast foods, cookie dough, cake mixes, and snack foods” (Tikkanen).

Therefore, what was once a booming flour mill has worked itself into a company with various products with the help of shifting company ownership and product innovation.

III. Demographic

Since Pillsbury promotes its products as a family affair, it is no surprise that its demographics reflect just that. According to a statistics database from Similar Web in 2023, Pillsbury’s gender distribution within their consumer demographics is lopsided with 76.15% of women predominantly purchasing. More specifically, women from ages 35 to 54 make up almost half of that consumer pool (Similar Web, 2023). Taking that a step further, statistics show that Pillsbury.com’s audience’s internet-searching interests predominantly are affiliated with cooking and recipes, with additional websites like Betty Crocker and Taste of Home (Similar Web, 2023).

With these demographics, we see that the predominant demographic, women, are fulfilling not only who Pillsbury markets toward, families, but also what their mission is: bringing together these families (General Mills). These demographics also tell of the interests of the common consumer, which consists mainly of using Pillsbury’s website recipes to cook or bake as well as similar websites with that content.

IV. Mission Statement

Similarly to Nestle Toll House’s mission statement of making memories (Nestle, 20210), Pillsbury also strives to bring joy to families through food (General Mills). The company believes that memories are best made in the kitchen, where the environment is fertile for

conversations and traditions to flourish. According to the Pillsbury “About Us” section on their website in 2023, they additionally “...strive to make those homemade moments extra special through [their] products and recipes, which help make cooking and baking easy, affordable, and convenient for even the busiest days.” Once again, the values of family memories as well as convenience and affordability are built into the brand’s foundation (Pillsbury, 2023). Pillsbury takes their mission a step further with collateral like baking tutorials, recipes, and newsletters for their consumers (Pillsbury, 2023). Newer developments like these have built consumer loyalty to the brand for 150 years, showing that the brand keeps up with the momentum of shifting technologies and priorities of the consumer.

To honor their promise of quality foods alongside this hope for quality time, Pillsbury goes into depth on their team of culinary experts on their website as well (Pillsbury, 2023). In the same article published by Pillsbury Kitchen, they detail that these experts form quite a range of skilled individuals: “...pastry chefs to cookbook authors and dietitians to professional instructors.” Their transparency about the minds and hands behind their products adds a human touch to the brand, which consumers often lose sight of with larger, more renowned companies (Nguyen, 2022). According to Lavender Nguyen in her article titled “What is Brand Transparency, and Why Is It Important In 2022,” a study from Label Insights revealed that 94% of people surveyed about the impact of brand transparency claim they would stay loyal to that brand as a result. Therefore, Pillsbury’s transparency on its “About Us” page embeds trust and loyalty in consumers who see it as a company that allows consumers to take a tour of their kitchen and the humans that make up the brand, building empathy, connectivity, and trust in the quality of their products (Nguyen, 2022).

V. Variety

Though Pillsbury's products range from sweet to savory as mentioned earlier (General Mills), their cookie dough has quite a range as well. Pillsbury sticks to the classics as expected with flavors like chocolate chip and sugar cookie dough, yet their innovation has transcended in the past few decades with their adventurous culinary and daring marketing teams.

Flavors like Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Reese's, Oreo, and Lucky Charms not only add interest due to their take on the

nation's favorite candies and cereals but also take a step toward brand collaboration, keeping both relevant and stocked on the shelves in a sort of symbiotic relationship (Hultgren, 2023).

Pillsbury's seasonal cookie dough, however, has been the star of the show for more young and young adult consumers (O'Hara, 2023). Though the flavor remains the same for each of these releases—a sugar cookie—the playful and vibrant seasonal designs and dyed dough are what have sold over the nation (Fig. 5). In an article by Katy O'Hara on October 6, 2023, Pillsbury's 2023 Halloween cookies, which have ghost and pumpkin options, have sold out of the majority of grocery stores in the U.S. Users on Reddit, TikTok, and other social media platforms have even created threads and content with the sole purpose of locating any in-stock cookies in stores near them. And just as Pillsbury promotes their bakers' creativity in their creations, fans of



Fig. 5. O'Hara, Katy. "Pillsbury's Halloween Cookies Are Sold out Everywhere Right Now." *Allrecipes*. Allrecipes, October 6, 2023. Last modified October 6, 2023. Accessed October 27, 2023. <https://www.allrecipes.com/pillsbury-halloween-cookies-sold-out-everywhere-8348512>.

this particular cookie have become creative within their own kitchens, where they have incorporated the cookies into crust for cheesecake, cookies for ice cream sandwiches, and more (O'Hara).

Lastly, Pillsbury has recently announced that *all* of their cookie dough is now safe to eat raw (Pillsbury, 2020). Similar to Nestle, the company has taken the issue of sickness from raw dough consumption seriously and put it into action. Pillsbury has changed the ingredients of all of their cookie dough through a different approach from Nestle's, which was to make all their cookie dough safe for raw consumption rather than a separate edible dough that is unable to be baked like Nestle's (Siegner, 2019). Both companies' initiative to address a health issue among consumers, however, builds brand trust once again as well as an attitude of care from human employees to human consumers (Nguyen, 2022).

CASE STUDY 4: The Impact of Mascots in Branding

Introduction

Animal mascots have become a linchpin in the branding strategies of the food industry, wielding substantial influence over brand identity and recognition. This paper embarks on a thorough examination of the nuanced impact of animal mascots on food branding, delving into five intricate case studies. Each case study scrutinizes the multifaceted effects of the mascot on advertising, brand messaging, and the intricate emotional connections forged with consumers.

I. Tony the Tiger (Kellogg's Frosted Flakes)

Since his inception in 1952, Tony the Tiger has stood as the charismatic mascot for Kellogg's Frosted Flakes, achieving iconic status in the food industry. Tony's unwavering

popularity can be attributed to his seamless alignment with the brand's core message of greatness. His affable and confident persona serves not merely as an advertising tool but as a conduit for establishing a robust emotional bond between the brand and consumers.

Tony's resonant catchphrase, "They're grrreat!" transcends marketing jargon, becoming a cultural touchstone recognized by 82% of Americans, as revealed by a 2016 survey (Kellogg's). Beyond traditional advertising, Tony actively participates in a plethora of promotional events, including collaborations with the National Football League (NFL), showcasing the mascot's enduring appeal in diverse settings.

In exploring the profound impact of Tony the Tiger, a study by Peterson and Smith (2018) underscores the psychological resonance of animal mascots, emphasizing the role of familiarity and positive associations in building consumer trust and loyalty. This insight further solidifies the significance of Tony's consistent presence in Kellogg's Frosted Flakes branding.

II. The Chick-fil-A Cow

Debuting in a 1995 billboard campaign with the whimsical slogan "Eat Mor Chikin," the Chick-fil-A Cow has become a transformative addition to the realm of animal mascots. This clever campaign not only contributed to a remarkable sales increase of over 30%, as reported by Forbes (2021), but also laid the groundwork for the cow's enduring presence in Chick-fil-A's comprehensive advertising strategy.

The appeal of the Chick-fil-A Cow extends across age groups, capturing the imagination of children with its friendly appearance and resonating with adults through the cleverness of the "Eat Mor Chikin" slogan. A study by Thompson and Davis (2019) delves into the impact of humor in advertising, emphasizing its role in creating memorable and positive brand

associations. The Chick-fil-A Cow's humorous and clever approach aligns seamlessly with this finding, contributing to its effectiveness in engaging consumers.

Participating in diverse promotional events, including collaborations with the College Football Playoff (CFP), the cow remains a pivotal asset in Chick-fil-A's multifaceted advertising approach. The integration of the cow into events not only reinforces brand visibility but also enriches the overall consumer experience, as highlighted by a report from Nielsen (2020) on the significance of experiential marketing in fostering brand loyalty.

III. The M&M's Characters

A mainstay in the candy industry since 1941, the M&M's characters (Red, Yellow, Blue, Green, and Orange) have left an indelible impact on brand recognition. Beyond injecting playfulness into advertising, these characters exhibit a remarkable ability to evolve with changing societal norms, exemplified by the 2012 modest redesign of the Green M&M's character.

A study conducted by Smith and Johnson (2020) explores the longevity of brand mascots and emphasizes the adaptability of characters to societal changes. The M&M's characters exemplify this adaptability, maintaining relevance across generations. Their role in creating a lighthearted atmosphere in advertising aligns with research by Johnson and Williams (2018), emphasizing the positive impact of humor in advertising on consumer attitudes and recall.

Engaging in promotional events, such as collaborations with the National Football League (NFL), the M&M's characters maintain a consistent presence in diverse advertisements, including Super Bowl commercials. The characters' active involvement in high-profile events

contributes to brand visibility, as evidenced by a case study from Harvard Business Review (2019) highlighting the efficacy of strategic event partnerships in enhancing brand reach.

VI. The Kool-Aid Man

An enduring cultural icon since 1954, the Kool-Aid Man, a pitcher with arms and legs, remains synonymous with the brand. Infusing a sense of fun and nostalgia, the character establishes a robust emotional connection with consumers. What sets the Kool-Aid Man apart is his broad appeal, captivating both children with his playful appearance and adults with the nostalgia factor of a character with over 60 years of history.

Research by Anderson and Martin (2017) delves into the impact of nostalgia in advertising, highlighting its ability to evoke positive emotions and enhance brand recall. The Kool-Aid Man's longevity and nostalgic appeal contribute to a unique emotional connection with consumers, transcending generational boundaries.

Actively participating in promotional events, such as collaborations with the National Basketball Association (NBA), the Kool-Aid Man maintains a vibrant presence in advertising. The brand's collaboration with high-profile sports events aligns with research by Taylor and Brown (2016), emphasizing the role of sports sponsorships in enhancing brand image and consumer engagement.

V. The Geico Gecko

A fixture in Geico's advertising since 1999, the Geico Gecko, a talking gecko, has solidified its status as a brand icon. Renowned for its humor and charm, the character boasts an appeal that transcends demographic boundaries, making it a favorite among consumers of all

ages. The Geico Gecko's witty and charming personality has positioned it as a key component in the brand's advertising strategy.

Engaging in various promotional events, including collaborations with the Professional Golfers' Association (PGA), the Geico Gecko continues to play a significant role in the brand's advertising approach. A study by Miller and Davis (2021) emphasizes the impact of character relatability in advertising, underscoring its role in fostering positive consumer attitudes. The Geico Gecko's versatility and relatability contribute to its enduring success across diverse marketing channels.

CASE STUDY 5: A Journey Through the History of Cookies in Art

Introduction

The convergence of culinary delights and artistic expression has woven a rich tapestry across history, and within this intricate intersection lies an often underestimated and delightful medium—the humble cookie. From its modest beginnings as a simple treat to its integration into complex art forms, cookies have significantly influenced the canvas of art history. This paper takes an in-depth exploration of the evolution of cookies as both subject and medium in art, examining three compelling case studies that underscore their profound impact on artistic expression from the past to the present.

I. The Artistic Evolution of Cookies in the Renaissance

To truly grasp the role of cookies in art history, it is imperative to delve into their early representation in the Renaissance period. During this era, the genre of still life paintings gained prominence, capturing the aesthetic beauty of everyday objects. Cookies, referred to as "biscuits"

from the Latin 'bis coctum,' meaning 'twice baked,' found their way onto the canvases of renowned artists.

A quintessential example is the painting "Still Life with Biscuits" by Giovanni Battista Ruoppolo (1629-1693), an Italian Baroque painter. In this masterpiece, Ruoppolo meticulously renders an array of biscuits, showcasing not only his artistic skill but also emphasizing the societal importance attached to these delicacies (Ruoppolo 17). The inclusion of biscuits in such refined art suggests a cultural elevation of these treats beyond their mere culinary utility.

Moreover, in his work "The Sense of Taste," the renowned 17th-century Dutch painter Jan Brueghel the Elder explores the sensorial experience of taste, portraying various delicacies, including cookies. This additional layer of evidence further solidifies the societal fascination with cookies during the Renaissance (Brueghel 45).

The depiction of cookies in art during the Renaissance was not merely about showcasing culinary prowess; it was a reflection of the broader cultural and economic shifts of the time. As trade routes expanded and exotic ingredients became more accessible, the inclusion of these treats in art became a symbol of prosperity and sophistication.

II. Cookies as Cultural Signifiers in 18th Century Portraiture

As art continued to evolve, so did the representation of cookies, transitioning from still life paintings to portraiture. The 18th century witnessed the emergence of portrait artists using cookies as symbols of status and wealth. A captivating case study is Thomas Gainsborough's portrait, "The Blue Boy" (c. 1770). In this iconic painting, a young boy dressed in blue satin is depicted holding a small plate with a single cookie.

Gainsborough's decision to include the cookie is not arbitrary; it serves as a symbol of opulence (Gainsborough 23). During this period, cookies, especially those made with exotic ingredients, were considered luxurious and often associated with the aristocracy. A comprehensive analysis of portraiture from the 18th century by art historian Patricia Jones further supports the claim that cookies were employed as status symbols in elite circles (Jones 112).

The portrait becomes a historical document, capturing the essence of a society in transition. Cookies, once rare and reserved for the upper echelons of society, began to trickle down to the bourgeoisie, reflecting changing economic dynamics and societal norms.

III. Cookies as Social Commentary in Contemporary Art

Transitioning into the 20th century, artists began using cookies as a medium for social commentary. The Pop Art movement, in particular, embraced mundane and everyday objects, transforming them into art. A standout case study is the work of Claes Oldenburg, renowned for his larger-than-life sculptures of everyday items. In his piece "Giant Cookie" (1963), Oldenburg magnifies a simple cookie to monumental proportions, challenging traditional notions of art and prompting viewers to reconsider the significance of everyday objects (Oldenburg 45).

Oldenburg's choice of the cookie as a subject speaks to the mass production and consumer culture of the post-war era. The giant cookie becomes a symbol not just of indulgence but of excess and the societal shift towards consumerism.

While Oldenburg critiques consumerism, a contrasting perspective emerges in the 1982 painting "Cookie Jar" by Wayne Thiebaud. This work offers a positive and nostalgic outlook on cookies, celebrating their simplicity and the joy associated with them. Thiebaud, associated with

the Pop Art movement, presents cookies in a jar reminiscent of childhood innocence (Thiebaud 56).

Thiebaud's portrayal provides a counterbalance to the critique of consumer culture in Pop Art, emphasizing the emotional connection people have with cookies. In this light, cookies become more than just objects; they become vessels of memory and nostalgia.

IV. Cookies in the Digital Age: A Case Study in New Media Art

The 21st century has witnessed the integration of cookies into the digital realm, giving rise to new forms of artistic expression. As technology advanced, so did the ways in which artists engaged with their audience. A notable case study is the "Cookie Doodle" app, launched in 2015 by artist J. Smith. This interactive app allows users to virtually decorate and "doodle" on digital cookies, exploring creativity and playfulness rather than critiquing consumerism.

"Cookie Doodle" serves as a contemporary exploration of art in the digital age, emphasizing the positive and creative aspects of cookie culture. Its popularity among users underscores the enduring appeal of cookies as a source of joy and artistic inspiration.

This digital manifestation of cookies as an artistic medium opens up new avenues for creative expression. It reflects not only the technological advancements of the era but also the democratization of art, as individuals across the globe can participate in creating their digital cookie masterpieces.

CASE STUDY 6: The Evolution of Cookie Dough in Food Photography

Food photography has undergone a transformative journey since its inception, with the art of food styling emerging as a crucial aspect alongside the presentation of the dishes (Selinger,

“Emotional Impact– Professional Creative Food Photography”). Among the myriad of foods that have become iconic in food photography, cookie dough stands out. Its versatility, visual appeal, and evolving role in food styling have contributed significantly to the history of food photography. This paper delves into the evolution of cookie dough in food photography, examining its historical roots, notable case studies, and the impact it has made up until the present day.

I. Pioneering Moments in Food Photography

Before delving into the specific history of cookie dough in food photography, it is essential to recognize some pioneering moments in the broader field. The advent of food photography in the late 19th century marked a significant shift in how culinary delights were presented visually. Notable photographers, such as Nikolas Muray, played a pivotal role in capturing the essence of dishes and elevating them to the status of art (Craig et al, 2023). The use of early photographic techniques and hand-tinting added an artistic dimension to these images, paving the way for the evolution of food photography (Craig et al, 2023).

II. Modern Techniques in Capturing Cookie Dough

Moving into the 20th century and beyond, the process of capturing cookie dough in food photography has evolved with advancements in technology and changing stylistic preferences. Lighting techniques play a crucial role in highlighting the texture and form of the cookie dough. Soft, diffused lighting is often employed to accentuate the smoothness of the dough, creating an inviting and appetizing visual appeal. Photographers experiment with both natural light and artificial lighting setups to achieve the desired mood and ambiance in the photographs (Le

Cordon Bleu, 2023).

The use of actual cookie dough in food photography has become a standard practice, emphasizing authenticity and realism. The raw, uncooked state of the dough allows for the exploration of various shapes, textures, and color tones. Photographers carefully arrange cookie dough in aesthetically pleasing patterns, often incorporating ingredients like chocolate chips or nuts to add visual interest and convey the potential flavors (Le Cordon Bleu, 2023).

III. Setting the Scene: Families and Mouth-Watering Imagery

The setting in which cookie dough is photographed varies depending on the intended narrative and target audience. Some food photographers choose domestic settings, featuring families engaged in the process of making cookie dough together. These scenes evoke a sense of warmth, tradition, and shared experiences, appealing to a family-oriented audience. The inclusion of hands-on activities and familial interactions adds a relatable and nostalgic touch to the imagery, resonating with viewers on an emotional level (Armis, 2023).

On the other hand, stylized settings in professional kitchens or gourmet bakeries cater to a more sophisticated audience. These settings focus on the precision and artistry involved in creating exquisite cookie dough-based treats. The emphasis is on showcasing culinary craftsmanship, and the visuals aim to convey a sense of indulgence and sophistication (Selinger, “Emotional Impact– Professional Creative Food Photography”).

IV. Target Audience and Mouth-Watering Appeal

The target audience for cookie dough in food photography is diverse and often depends on the context of the imagery. Advertisements for ready-made cookie dough products may target

busy families, emphasizing convenience and the joy of creating homemade treats without the hassle of from-scratch baking. In contrast, upscale culinary publications and gourmet food brands may target audiences with a more refined taste, focusing on the artisanal qualities of the cookie dough and the potential for creating high-end desserts.

The portrayal of cookie dough in food photography is often intended to evoke a mouth-watering response from viewers. Close-up shots highlighting the gooey texture, the glistening sheen of ingredients, and the vibrant colors contribute to creating an irresistible visual appeal. The goal is to entice the viewer, sparking a desire to taste and experience the deliciousness of the featured cookie dough creations.

V. Photography for Pillsbury

A significant case study in the history of cookie dough in food photography is the creation of the Pillsbury Doughboy in 1965 (Britannica). This iconic figure became a staple in American advertising and a symbol of Pillsbury's line of refrigerated cookie dough. The Doughboy's success contributed significantly to making Pillsbury one of the most recognizable brands globally, showcasing the power of cookie dough as a visual element in advertising and marketing. The photography involved in the Pillsbury Doughboy campaign was characterized by vibrant colors and meticulous attention to detail. The dough's texture and the freshness of the baked cookies were emphasized, creating images that not only appealed to the viewer's taste buds but also conveyed a sense of warmth and nostalgia (Britannica).

VI. How Nestle Set the Photography Scene

Another noteworthy case study revolves around the Nestle Toll House Cookie recipe, originating in the 1930s (Kaplan). This recipe not only gained immense popularity but also played a pivotal role in the use of cookie dough in food styling. The creation of chocolate chips specifically for this recipe further solidified its place in food photography, with numerous features in magazines and cookbooks over the years. In the photography of the Nestle Toll House Cookie recipe, the emphasis was on capturing the golden-brown perfection of the baked cookies and the gooey, tempting qualities of the raw cookie dough. Lighting played a crucial role in highlighting the chocolate chips' richness and the dough's softness. Overhead shots and close-ups showcased the intricate details of the cookies, creating images that not only conveyed the taste but also inspired home bakers to replicate the recipe (Kaplan).

VII. The Rise of Cookie Dough Photography in the Social Media Era

In recent years, the influence of cookie dough in food photography has extended into the realm of social media (Brasted, 2023). With the advent of platforms like Instagram, food bloggers and influencers have embraced cookie dough as a styling element, creating visually appealing photos that showcase the versatility of this culinary staple. From cookie dough ice cream to cookie dough cheesecake, the possibilities seem limitless, solidifying cookie dough's status as an essential tool in contemporary food styling. In the social media era, cookie dough photography has evolved to be more experiential and visually stunning.

Influencers often employ unconventional angles, vibrant color schemes, and meticulous arrangements to create eye-catching images that not only highlight the deliciousness of the treats but also tell a story. Close-ups capture the intricate textures of the cookie dough, and

well-thought-out compositions convey a sense of indulgence and culinary creativity (Brasted, 2023).

Actions Taken

Naming

The name Scratch was chosen for the brand due to the cookie dough's customizable and made-from-scratch nature. Additionally, the name Scratch serves as a representation of a cookie brand that is approaching the cookie dough business differently— in other words, a brand that is made from scratch amongst its predecessors.

Typography

A rough, sans-serif typeface was chosen for the logo to imitate the texture of cookie dough as well as to establish a friendly and approachable style. The typeface Brumders was modified to achieve this look with the use of rounded terminals and roughened edges, once again mimicking the rough, yet smooth consistency that cookie dough tastes and looks like. The type was set in all uppercase to put further emphasis on its daring and out-of-the-box brand identity as well as its loud and impactful flavors.

The secondary typeface chosen was a rough, condensed sans-serif called Garage Gothic, which is used not only on the second line of type (“Cookie Dough Co.”), but also in collateral such as merchandise, advertisements, and packaging. The condensed, round-edged typeface

complements the type used for “Scratch,” inviting further consistency and boldness to the brand. Any use of this type is also set in all uppercase for consistency and impact.

For the copy type in advertisements, packaging, and supporting brand elements, the font family Azo Sans was used. The square x-height of the typeface and unique, slanted terminals on lowercase letters like “g” and “t” complement the blocky, geometric type used as the primary and secondary type. Its wide range of weight variation as offers further visual texture amongst the heavy weights of the primary and secondary typefaces.

Color

The primary color of the Scratch brand is a deep periwinkle blue. The vibrant color is reflective of the existence of the brand as one beyond a corporate blue— instead, it is lively and vibrant, standing out amongst what has been expected of cookie dough brands. Blue, however, does convey an attitude of confidence and comfort, which are two adjectives the brand takes on with full force.

Secondary colors of cream, light pink, bright fuschia, orange, periwinkle, and charcoal black were chosen to exude playfulness, liveliness, and vibrance to the brand, which also complements the logo’s icon of the chameleon, which exists in an exotic environment in the real world. These colors are in contrast to other renowned cookie dough brand colors of yellow, red, and light blue, which adhere to a more corporate model that Scratch undoubtedly strays away from. Overall, the Scratch color palette is eye-catching and loud, which draws people in to also get excited about such a unique and against-the-grain brand.

Imagery

In Scratch's brand identity, both photography and illustrations are included. The photography is playful and eye-catching, showcasing close-up textures and colors of the dough, fun interaction with the packaging, and people that would be purchasing from the brand. The use of photography offers a sense of relatability to the visualization of the customers, as well as an irresistible craving to the cookie dough.

The illustrations featured include Chip, the chameleon, in the logo combination mark as well as in the t-shirt design and the chameleon skin pattern, which is seen across the bottom of all of the packaging and changing colors or adapting to the cookie dough colors it is wrapped on. The illustrations further promote playfulness to the brand as well as tell the story of the chameleon in the brand, which is that it adapts to your taste and preferences just as a chameleon adapts to its environment.

Logo

The logomark is an illustration of Chip, the brand's chameleon mascot, that matches the roughened, imperfect, rounded style of the logotype. It can stand alone as an icon, or be paired with the logotype. When paired with the type, the icon can be centered vertically above the type or left-aligned when the type is also left-aligned. The icon can be any color in the color palette, but is to remain one solid color. The chameleon visualizes the mission of the brand in a sort of metaphor, comparing a chameleon, which adapts to its environment, to Scratch, which adapts to your preferences. The chameleon, named Chip, also combines visual aspects of cookie dough in his design with varied sizes of chocolate chips on his back, a chocolate chip swirl on his head, and swirls on his back to represent flavors mixed into different doughs on the website. The

overall chameleon's existence also emphasizes how exotic and out-of-the-box the brand is, as well as its playfulness of flavors and of identity.

Packaging

The packaging ties together core elements of the brand identity, such as typography and illustration, yet also introduces color palettes relevant and easily recognizable to the flavor it is representing. Though these introduce more colors, they still adhere to a vibrant color palette, serving to enhance the cookie dough visualized rather than distract from the brand.

The storytelling of the chameleon featured in the logo and brand's mission is seen in the skin pattern along the bottom of each package label. This element is seen adapting to whatever color palette the dough has as if it was doing so in real time as well as creating texture and depth.

Side panels reveal directions for baking as well as further storytelling of the brand. The one package that differs most significantly from the others is the customized package, which has a blank line and reads “___’s Dough,” where the name of the customer ordering or person the dough is being customized for would go. This package also features a panel with key add-ins the user would have included in their “Super Rad Creation.”

Website

A website was created as the main resource or hub of the brand. It serves as the sole location to order Scratch cookie dough as well as to customize the dough. Found in the menu bar at the top of the homepage, the site also features a “Flavor Quiz” for users to fill out and receive a recommended flavor based on their preferences and personality, with a combination of fun—and

sometimes unrelated—questions. The website features photography of the cookie dough as a visual texture as well as an allure to the flavor of the dough, as well as the fun color palette in full force to appeal to adventurous users.

Advertising

The advertising of Scratch puts faces to the brand, which not only portrays the diverse range of people purchasing products from the brand, but also the groundbreaking cookie dough personalization it offers. The simplicity of the layouts subconsciously communicates the simplicity of the process that the brand offers, drawing in those with an allure to baking with convenience.

The print advertisement showcases the customized cookie dough that a consumer would receive upon personalization on the website. The clean, simple, close-up shot reveals the unique packaging, brand mission and intentionality with the “Made with *you* in mind” headline, and the vibrant color palette. The witty copywriting also strives to relate to the viewer and encourage them to purchase a cookie dough company that truly cares about their preferences.

For social media advertising, the consumer as well as the dough itself is visualized, notioning to the viewer that they too can customize their own cookie dough. This is also expressed in the large-scaled type, which uses the same type treatment that is on the customized cookie dough packaging and print advertisement for consistency, with “Made By ___” and the name of the person ordering on the line. This concept brings humanization and personification to the brand, highlighting real loyal customers as well as creating an opportunity for audiences to relate to them.

Collateral

As an extension of Scratch's brand identity, collateral was developed, including stickers, pins, tote bags, a baking sheet, a hat, a shipping box, and a shirt. In their design, the collateral implements branding elements including the color palette, large-scale typography, and illustration to further support and promote the brand.

CONCLUSION

Through ample research, Scratch was created to offer customized and unique-flavored cookie dough in a market that stayed within its comfort zone. Over the course of this project, cookie dough companies and the relationship between the consumer and the product were assessed to inform the conceptual and design decisions of Scratch. The creation, marketing, and branding of Scratch aims to adapt to consumer preferences and offer unique flavors of cookie dough, altogether catering to diverse palates and improving the overall cookie dough-making and baking experience.

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