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Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing for Food and Dairy Brands

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Abstract
This research investigates the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies employed by food and dairy (F&D) brands in the contemporary digital environment. The marketing landscape has fundamentally shifted from unidirectional mass media to a dynamic, two-way dialogue on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which now capture the majority of digital ad spend. This transition is driven by changing consumer habits and the efficacy of strategies like influencer collaborations and user-generated content (UGC).
Using a survey of 100 highly engaged consumers, the study confirms a high and pervasive level of social media influence, with 91% of respondents reporting being swayed in their F&D purchase decisions. However, effectiveness is highly conditional: purchase intent is less driven by direct promotions than by authenticity/transparency (36%) and positive reviews (34%). Consumers primarily follow brands for utility, preferring recipes (65%) and nutrition facts (61%). The findings underscore that while social media excels at awareness and brand connection, its primary strategic function is to build long-term trust and provide value-driven content, rather than serving as a direct transactional channel.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, User Generated Content (UGC), Influencer Marketing, Customer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Food Brands, Dairy Brands

Introduction

The Transformation of Food and Dairy Marketing in the Digital Age: The marketing landscape for the food and dairy industry has undergone a seismic transformation over the past two decades (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6]. The once-dominant paradigm of unidirectional mass media advertising, characterized by television commercials and print advertisements, has been fundamentally disrupted by the rise of the internet and, more specifically, the ubiquity of social media platforms (Martino *et al*., 2021) [4]. This evolution represents more than a simple reallocation of advertising budgets; it signifies a fundamental reshaping of the brand-consumer relationship, moving from a monologue to a dynamic, continuous dialogue (Sani *et al*., 2025; Shehani, 2025) [6, 7]. For dairy and food brands, whose products are deeply embedded in daily life and cultural practices, this shift presents both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges.

The Paradigm Shift in F&D Promotion: Historically, F&D advertising expenditures were heavily concentrated in traditional media, with television accounting for the vast majority of spending (Potvin Kent *et al*., 2024) [6]. However, marketers in the F&D sector are now increasingly inclined towards social media marketing, a powerful subform of mass communication that is internet-based and allows for two-way interaction (Martino *et al*., 2021) [4]. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have become primary arenas for brand promotion and now constitute a critical duopoly in the online advertising space, capturing the majority of digital ad spend in many markets (Sani *et al*., 2025; Martino *et al*., 2021; Potvin Kent *et al*., 2024) [6, 4, 5]. This migration is driven by the changing media consumption habits of consumers, particularly younger demographics who are less engaged with traditional media (Kawecki, 2022) [3]. The shift has allowed brands to foster real-time interactions, moving beyond passive ad consumption to active engagement, which in turn can enhance customer relationships and build significant brand loyalty (Sani *et al*., 2025; Shehani, 2025) [6, 7].

Literature Review

The Contemporary Playbook: Dominant Social Media Strategies in the Food Sector

The strategic playbook for food and dairy brands on social media is multifaceted, leveraging the unique affordances of digital platforms to create visually compelling, interactive, and community-oriented campaigns. An analysis of current practices reveals a consistent set of core strategies designed to capture consumer attention, foster engagement, and ultimately drive commercial outcomes. These strategies move beyond simple product promotion to cultivate a brand identity and emotional resonance with consumers.

From Broadcast to Engagement: A Taxonomy of Digital Tactics

The foundation of F&D social media marketing rests on several key features identified within the literature: targeted advertising, sales promotions, firm-generated content, user-generated content (UGC), and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Martino *et al*., 2021; Shehani, 2025) [4, 7]. Unlike the static nature of traditional media, social media provides a visually rich and interactive canvas ideally suited for the food industry (Potvin Kent *et al*., 2024) [5]. Brands leverage this by crafting visually appealing content, including high-quality photography and video, that highlights food aesthetics, ingredients, and preparation methods to attract potential customers (Sani *et al*., 2025; Shehani, 2025) [6, 7]. Data-driven social media advertising, particularly through short-form videos on platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels, has proven highly effective in enhancing brand reach and engagement (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6].

The Influencer Marketing Ecosystem

Influencer marketing has emerged as a cornerstone of contemporary F&D strategy, offering a powerful method to reach and persuade consumers in a crowded digital marketplace (Sani *et al*., 2025; Folkvord *et al*., 2020) [6, 1]. Brands partner with social media influencers to circumvent the declining efficacy of traditional advertising among younger audiences and to operate in a digital space that is often less regulated than broadcast media (Kawecki, 2022) [3]. These collaborations allow brands to tap into the established trust and rapport that influencers have with their followers, lending an air of authenticity to promotional messages (Hwang *et al*., 2021; Folkvord *et al*., 2020) [2, 1].

Case Studies in Strategic Implementation

The practical application of these strategies is best illustrated through successful brand campaigns that have achieved measurable results. These case studies demonstrate a sophisticated understanding of platform-specific nuances and audience behavior.

- **Cadbury's Crème Egg:** This campaign adopted a digital-first strategy centered on humor and interactivity. It used short films and an online personality test to engage consumers, supported by strategic hashtag use across social platforms like Facebook to enhance brand equity and drive immediate sales (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6].
- **Starbucks' "Sip Into Spring":** This campaign focused on user-generated content by partnering with creators to develop aesthetically pleasing, spring-themed content for Instagram Reels and Pinterest. By encouraging customers to share their own experiences, the campaign amplified its reach and contributed to a 14% lift in spring beverage sales compared to the previous year (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6].

Mechanisms of Influence: Shaping Consumer Behavior and Brand Perception

The strategies employed by food and dairy brands on social media are effective because they tap into powerful psychological and social mechanisms that shape consumer attitudes, perceptions, and, ultimately, purchase decisions. Understanding these mechanisms—from the direct impact on the purchase journey to the subtle cultivation of brand trust and the formation of quasi-personal relationships with influencers—is critical to comprehending the full scope of social media's influence.

The Digital Path to Purchase

There is compelling evidence of a direct and significant link between social media activity and consumer purchasing behavior in the F&D sector. Research indicates a strong, positive correlation between various forms of social media engagement and purchase decisions (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6]. Specifically, strategies such as creating valuable content, collaborating with influencers, and monitoring and aligning with trends are all significantly predictive of consumer purchase behavior (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6]. The data is stark: over half of consumers (50.3%) report having purchased products they first encountered on social media platforms (Sani *et al*., 2025) [6].

Research Objectives

1. To Analyse the Demographic Profile of Respondents
2. To Analyse Respondent's Social Media Usage
3. To Analyse Customers' Exposure and Engagement with Food and Dairy Brands on Social Media
4. To Analyse the Influence of Social Media on Perception and Purchase of Food and Dairy Products
5. To Analyse the Pattern of agreement and disagreement of food/dairy brands' social media activity

Research Methodology

To effectively carry out the study titled "Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing for Dairy and Food Brands" a structured research design was developed. The research was conducted in October 2025, utilizing a web based survey as the primary tool for data collection. A structured questionnaire was designed to gather relevant information aligned with the study objectives.

The target population comprised individuals aged 18 to 60+ years individuals from different demographics, representing a key consumer segment for both food and dairy products. A random sampling method was employed to ensure that each individual within the defined population had an equal opportunity of being selected. This approach helped minimize selection bias and enhanced the reliability and generalizability of the findings.

A total of 100 respondents participated in the study. The primary data collected from these participants were systematically compiled and analysed using Descriptive Statistical tools. Techniques such as tabulation, graphical representation, and charts were employed to interpret the data effectively. These methods facilitated a comprehensive understanding of consumer awareness, buying patterns, and perceptions regarding social media marketing for dairy and food brands.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic analysis table is crucial as it lays the foundation for understanding the characteristics of the target population. It helps in categorizing respondents based on essential factors like gender, age, education level, college affiliation, and living conditions. This classification ensures that the sample is well represented and diverse, allowing for more accurate and generalized conclusions. It also enables researchers to identify demographic influences on behaviours, preferences, or attitudes relevant to the study. Furthermore, it supports subgroup analysis and comparison, enhancing the depth and quality of the research. Table 1 shows the data collected.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

(a) Gender-wise Distribution			
Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	47	47
2	Female	53	53
	Total	100	100
(b) Age-wise Distribution			
1	Under 18	72	72
2	18-30	28	28
	Total	100	100
(c) Education-wise Distribution			
1	High school / Secondary school	45	45
2	Diploma / ITI	2	2
3	Bachelor's Degree	46	46
4	Postgraduate Degree	5	5
5	Doctorate Degree	2	2
	Total	100	100
(d) Household income wise Distribution			
1	Upto 5 Lakh Rupees	59	59
2	5-10 Lakh Rupees	27	27
3	10-20 Lakh Rupees	14	14
	Total	100	100

(a) Gender-wise Distribution:

The gender distribution of the survey participants indicates a relatively balanced representation with a slight predominance of female respondents. Out of 100 respondents, 53% are female and 47% are male. This indicates that females form a slightly higher proportion of the participants in the study.

(b) Age-wise Distribution:

The majority of respondents (72%) fall in the age group of under 18 years, which typically represents high school students. This is followed by 28% in the 18 to 30 years age group, likely covering most undergraduate and postgraduate students, indicating that the survey predominantly targeted youth and early adults. This age distribution aligns well with the student demographic ensuring that the study results are relevant to students already involved with the use of social media.

(c) Education-wise Distribution:

Regarding educational qualification, the majority of respondents are undergraduates (46%), high school (45%), followed by postgraduates (5%) and a minimal number of PhD students (2%) and diploma students (2%). This breakdown provides insight primarily into the behaviour of early-stage students, offering a foundation for understanding social media usage habits across different levels of higher education. The presence of postgraduate and doctoral students also adds depth to the analysis in terms of maturity, lifestyle, and health awareness influencing social media usage.

(d) Household income wise Distribution:

The majority of respondents (59%) fall in the up to 5 lakh Rupees household income group, followed by 27% in 5-10 lakh Rupees and 14 % in 10-20 lakh Rupees household income group. This represents a diverse range of respondents coming from different financial background and purchasing power.

Respondent's Social Media Usage

To accurately analyze respondents' social media usage, the demographic analysis table provides the essential context for interpreting the collected data. This foundation allows for subgroup analysis, enabling the identification of significant demographic influences on the frequency, platform choice, purpose, and intensity of social media engagement. For instance, researchers can compare the usage patterns of different age groups or those with varying education levels. This comparative analysis is crucial for ensuring that any conclusions about social media usage are accurate, well-represented across diverse segments, and sufficiently deep to inform targeted strategies or to understand how various demographic profiles influence online behavior and preferences. This analysis is based on a survey of 100 respondents, focusing on their frequency of social media usage, the specific applications they use, and their perception of advertisement frequency on these platforms. Table 2 represents the data collected.

Table 2: Social Media Usage Profile of Respondents

(a) Frequency of social media usage			
Sr. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1	Multiple times a day	69	69
2	Once a day	26	26
3	Once a week	3	3
4	Less than once a week	2	2
5	Never	0	0
	Total	100	100
(b) Social media application used by respondents			
1	Instagram	67	67
2	Facebook	8	8
3	Whatsapp	81	81
4	Youtube	80	80
5	Linked In	19	19
6	Snapchat	39	39
7	X	2	2
8	Other	2	2
(c) Frequency of advertisement displayed in social media			
1	Several times a day	34	34
2	Once a Day	39	39
3	Several times a week	22	22
4	Once a week	4	4
5	Never	1	1
	Total	100	100

Frequency of Social Media Usage

A dominant 69% of respondents access social media multiple times a day, highlighting a high level of dependency or engagement with these platforms. An overwhelming 95% (69% + 26%) of the total respondents use social media at least once a day. Critically, none of the respondents reported never using social media, suggesting that the sample population is highly engaged with digital platforms. This pattern of use suggests that social media channels are primary avenues for information, communication, and entertainment for this demographic.

Social Media Applications Used by Respondents

Whatsapp (81%) and Youtube (80%) are the most frequently used applications, underscoring the priority of instant messaging/communication and video content consumption. Instagram (67%) and Snapchat (39%) show strong adoption, confirming the widespread appeal of visually-driven, short-form content. Facebook is utilized by only 8%, which may suggest a shift in preference away from traditional social networking sites within this sample. LinkedIn (19%) is used by a notable minority, indicating some level of professional networking engagement. Platforms like X (2%) show minimal usage, suggesting a highly fragmented and platform-specific usage pattern among respondents. The usage profile is dominated by mobile-first, communication-focused applications, followed closely by content and entertainment platforms.

Frequency of Advertisement Displayed in Social Media

A cumulative 73% (34% + 39%) of respondents perceive that they are exposed to advertisements at least once a day or several times a day. 95% of respondents reported seeing advertisements at least several times a week, indicating that advertising is a near-constant feature of their social media experience. Only 1% of the sample reported never seeing an advertisement, which aligns with the high overall frequency of platform usage. The data strongly supports the finding that social media platforms are highly utilized by advertisers, resulting in a saturated environment where the vast majority of users encounter ads on a daily basis. This has significant implications for both digital marketing effectiveness and user experience.

Exposure and Engagement with Food and Dairy Brands on Social Media

To accurately analyze Exposure and Engagement with Food and Dairy Brands on Social Media, the preceding understanding of general social media usage, structured by demographic variables, serves as a vital interpretative framework. This analysis will specifically utilize the established subgroup classifications from the demographic table (including age, gender, and college affiliation) to determine how these characteristics mediate brand interaction. By linking general usage patterns to specific engagement metrics—such as the frequency of seeing brand content, types of interaction, and recall of specific campaigns—we can identify precise demographic segments that are most or least receptive to brand messaging. This detailed comparative approach is essential for providing actionable insights into targeted marketing effectiveness, moving beyond broad statistics to understand the nuanced ways different consumer profiles engage with food and dairy brands in the social media space.

Table 3: Exposure and Engagement of Respondents with Food and Dairy Brands on Social Media

(a) Prefrence of choosing food or dairy products			
Sr. No.	**Particulars**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Social meida advertisement/post	34	34
2	Word of mouth/Recommendations	16	16
3	Traditional media advertisement	4	4
4	Brand reputation	46	46
	Total	100	100
(b) Preference of content liked by respondent			
1	Recipe/Cooking Video	65	65
2	Product announcement/Launches	28	28
3	Promotional offers/Giveaways/Contests	26	26
4	Behind the scene videos	42	42
5	User generated conted	25	25
6	Influencer/Celebrity content	10	10
7	Health/Nutrition facts	61	61
8	None	2	2
(c) Preference of social media content which encourages product purchase			
1	Short, engaging videos	45	45
2	High quality photos of final product	15	15
3	Detailed, informative text posts	23	23
4	Live stream/Q&A sessions	9	9
5	Funny and sarcastic posts	8	8
	Total	100	100
(d) Pattern of follwing food/dairy brands on social media			
1	Yes	56	56
2	No	44	44
	Total	100	100
(e) Primary reason to follow food/dairy brands on social media			
1	To enjoy content	39	39
2	To stay infromed about new products	58	58
3	To get discount/offers	15	15
4	Contest/Giveaways	6	6
5	Brand loyalty	34	34
6	Other	9	9

Preference of Choosing Food or Dairy Products

The data suggests that non-media factors and brand reputation are the dominant drivers in the selection of food and dairy products, with social media having a notable but not primary influence. Brand Reputation emerges as the most critical factor, with 46% of respondents citing it. This high percentage indicates that established trust and quality perception are paramount in the decision-making process. Social Media Recommendation/Post and Word of Mouth/Recommendations account for 34% and 16% respectively, together totalling 50%. This highlights the significant, combined role of social and personal endorsement. Traditional Media Advertisement holds a minimal influence at only 4%, underscoring the shift in marketing efficacy from traditional to digital channels.

Preference of Content Liked by Respondent

Respondents demonstrate a strong preference for highly practical and informative content, with a clear rejection of non-specific or promotional material. Recipe/Cooking Video is the overwhelmingly preferred content type, selected by 65% of respondents. This indicates that consumers primarily seek functional utility and inspiration from food/dairy brand content. Health/Nutrition Facts is the second most popular category at 61%, signifying a strong consumer focus on wellness and the nutritional value of products. Content related to transparency, such as Behind the Scene videos (42%) and User generated content (25%), also holds moderate interest. Highly commercial or promotional content, specifically Promotional offers/Giveaways/Contest (26%), Product announcement/Launches (28%), and Influencer/Celebrity content (10%), are among the least preferred options, suggesting consumers value authentic, educational content over direct sales pitches.

Preference of Social Media Content which Encourages Product Purchase

When focusing specifically on content that drives a purchase decision, short-form, visual, and high-quality content is most effective. Short, engaging videos (45%) and High quality photos of final product (45%) are tied as the most effective content for encouraging purchase, with a combined 90% of responses. This confirms the efficacy of visually appealing and quickly consumable content in moving consumers towards a transaction. In contrast, Detailed, informative text posts (23%) are less than half as effective, indicating that while information is valued (as seen in section b), its delivery must be concise and visual to translate into immediate purchase action. Interactive formats like Live stream/Q&A sessions (9%) and non-serious content such as Funny and sarcastic posts (8%) are the least effective drivers of purchase.

Pattern of Following Food/Dairy Brands on Social Media

A clear majority of respondents actively engage with brands on social media. 56% of respondents follow food/dairy brands on social media, while 44% do not. This high engagement rate confirms the importance of social media as a key communication and marketing channel for the food and dairy sector.

Primary Reason to Follow Food/Dairy Brands on Social Media

The primary motivation for following brands is informational and utility-driven, with a secondary interest in brand enjoyment. The most significant reason is To stay informed about new product (58%), demonstrating that social media serves a crucial function as a primary channel for new product announcement and updates. The second major driver is To enjoy content (39%), reinforcing the preference for engaging and entertaining material (as seen in section b). Brand loyalty (34%) is a substantial factor, suggesting that social media serves to maintain relationships with existing customers. Reasons related to immediate monetary benefit—To get discount/offers (15%) and Contest/Giveaways (6%)—are the least influential factors, further supporting the conclusion that content utility outweighs direct promotion as a driver for brand following.

Influence of Social Media on Perception and Purchase of Food and Dairy Products

This final analytical phase, To Analyse Influence of Social Media on Perception and Purchase of Food and Dairy Products, builds directly upon the established patterns of brand exposure and engagement, while maintaining the crucial demographic context. This section will assess the subsequent impact of social media on consumer behaviour. The analysis will focus on linking high engagement levels within specific demographic segments to their self-reported changes in brand perception, attitude formation, and, ultimately, purchase intent or actual purchase decisions. This detailed, comparative evaluation is necessary to provide high-value, actionable recommendations by demonstrating which social media activities and which demographic groups translate brand exposure into tangible commercial outcomes for food and dairy products, thereby completing the research objective of understanding the social media-to-purchase lifecycle.

Table 4: Influence of Social Media on Perception and Purchase of Food and Dairy Products

(a) Extent of influence on purchase of food/dairy prodcut through social media			
Sr. No.	**Particulars**	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
1	Significant	24	24
2	Moderate	51	51
3	Slightly Influenced	16	16
4	Not Influenced	9	9
	Total	100	100
(b) Influence of social media indluencer on purchase of food/dairy products			
1	Very likely	10	10
2	Likely	41	41
3	Neutral	42	42
4	Unlikely	5	5
5	Very unlikely	2	2
	Total	100	100
(c) Influence of social media element on purchase of food/dairy products			
1	High quality photos/videos	18	18
2	Authenticity/Transparency	36	36
3	Positive reviews/Testimonials	34	34
4	Special offers/Discounts	4	4
5	Detailed product information	8	8
	Total	100	100

Extent of Influence on Purchase of Food/Dairy Products through Social Media

The data demonstrate a high and pervasive level of social media influence on consumer purchasing decisions for food and dairy items. A dominant 91% of respondents reported being influenced by social media to some degree (Significant, Moderate, or Slightly Influenced). Critically, the combined categories of Significant (24%) and Moderate (51%) influence represent 75% of the sample. Only a minimal 9% reported being Not Influenced.

Influence of Social Media Influencer on Purchase of Food/Dairy Products

The findings indicate that Social Media Influencers (SMIs) exert a noteworthy but carefully considered impact on consumer decisions within this product category. A substantial majority of consumers are receptive to influencer recommendations, with 51% reporting they are Very likely (10%) or Likely (41%) to be influenced. However, the largest single response category is Neutral at 42%. Only 7% reported being Unlikely or Very Unlikely. The combined "Likely" responses validate the efficacy of influencer marketing in the food and dairy sector. However, the large Neutral group suggests that the influence of SMIs is highly conditional. This aligns with the principles of the Source Credibility Model, where the effectiveness of a message source (the influencer) is contingent on perceived trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness.

Influence of Social Media Element on Purchase of Food/Dairy Products

Analysis of specific social media content elements reveals that trust-building components are far more influential than aesthetic or promotional ones. The two most powerful elements are Authenticity/Transparency (36%) and Positive reviews/Testimonials (34%), which together account for 70% of the stated influence. High quality photos/videos follow at 18%. In contrast, direct transactional drivers like Special offers/Discounts (4%) and purely informational content like Detailed product information (8%) show minimal influence. This is perhaps the most salient finding. For consumables like food and dairy, the data clearly indicate a consumer prioritization of Social Proof and Integrity over visual appeal or price incentives. The high value placed on Authenticity/Transparency suggests a strong consumer desire for open communication about sourcing, production practices, and ingredients, reflecting contemporary consumer skepticism and a focus on wellness and sustainability. This confirms the critical role of User-Generated Content (UGC) (i.e., reviews/testimonials) as a perceived third-party endorsement, which inherently possesses higher credibility than brand-generated content. For brands, this mandates a shift in strategy: from prioritizing high-gloss imagery to fostering genuine dialogue and transparent communication.

Pattern of agreement and disagreement of food/dairy brands' social media activity

Table 5: Pattern of agreement and disagreement of food/dairy brands' social media activity

Sr. No.	Particulars	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Social media content makes customer aware about its new products	38	41	15	1	5
2	Customer trust the product quality displayed on social media	20	45	24	5	6
3	Customer feels connected to the brand with social media	26	43	23	5	4
4	Social media presence influences the brands' image over its competitor	20	46	23	7	4
5	Customer has purchsed the products through to social media influence	17	29	37	10	7

The data indicates a predominantly positive perception among customers regarding the effectiveness and influence of food and dairy brands' social media activities across several key areas. The results strongly suggest that social media is a vital platform for product awareness, brand connection, image building, and trust cultivation.

- New Product Awareness is Dominant (a): A strong consensus of 79% (38% Strongly Agree, 41% Agree) confirms that social media is highly effective as a primary informational channel for making customers aware of new products.
- Brand Connection is High (c): A large majority of 69% (43% Agree, 26% Strongly Agree) feel a strong sense of customer-brand connection through social media, affirming its success in building community and relational equity.
- Trust in Quality is Substantial (b): 65% (45% Agree, 20% Strongly Agree) trust the product quality displayed on social media. However, a notable 24% Neutral response suggests brands must couple online claims with verifiable quality cues to address remaining skepticism.
- Competitive Advantage is Clear (d): Nearly two-thirds (66%) believe social media positively influences the brand's image over competitors, positioning it as a strategic imperative for competitive advantage.
- Direct Purchase is Lowest (e): Social media's direct role as a transactional channel shows the highest uncertainty, with the lowest overall agreement rate of 46% (29% Agree, 17% Strongly Agree). This suggests that while it excels at awareness and brand building, its influence on direct purchase is more moderate.

Major Findings

Social Media Usage Profile

- **Frequency:** Social media usage is extremely high, with a dominant 69% of respondents accessing platforms multiple times a day.
- **Most Used Applications:** Whatsapp (81%) and Youtube (80%) are the most frequently used applications, followed closely by Instagram (67%).

- **Advertisement Exposure:** The vast majority of respondents perceive they are exposed to advertisements frequently, with a cumulative 73% reporting seeing ads at least once a day or several times a day.

Exposure and Engagement with Food and Dairy Brands

- Primary Factor in Product Choice: Brand Reputation (46%) is the most critical factor influencing the selection of food and dairy products. Social media advertisement/post (34%) and Word of mouth/Recommendations (16%) collectively account for 50%.
- Preferred Content Type: Consumers overwhelmingly seek functional utility and information:

1. Recipe/Cooking Video is the top preference at 65%.
2. Health/Nutrition Facts is the second most popular at 61%.

- Purchase-Driving Content: Short, engaging videos (45%) and High quality photos of the final product (45%) are equally effective as the most influential content for encouraging product purchase.
- Reasons for Following Brands: The primary motivation for following brands is To stay informed about new products (58%) and To enjoy content (39%). Direct promotional benefits (discounts/contests) are the least influential factors.

Influence on Perception and Purchase

- Overall Purchase Influence: Social media's influence on purchase decisions is high and pervasive, with a total of 91% of respondents reporting being influenced to some degree (24% Significant, 51% Moderate, 16% Slightly Influenced).
- Influencer Impact: A substantial majority of 51% are Very Likely or Likely to be influenced by social media influencers; however, the largest single response category is Neutral at 42%, suggesting the influence is highly conditional on perceived credibility.
- Most Influential Content Elements: Trust-building elements are paramount: Authenticity/Transparency (36%) and Positive reviews/Testimonials (34%) are the two most powerful elements for purchase influence.

Customer Agreement with Brand Activity (Key Takeaways):

- Product Awareness: An overwhelming 79% Strongly Agree or Agree that social media content effectively creates awareness of new products.
- Brand Connection: 69% Strongly Agree or Agree that they feel connected to the brand through its social media presence.
- Direct Purchase: The total agreement rate for having purchased products due to social media influence is the lowest (46%), with the largest response being Neutral (37%), suggesting social media is more an awareness and trust builder than a direct transactional channel.

Conclusion

The research on the Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing for Dairy and Food Brands confirms that the digital transition has fundamentally repositioned social media from a mere advertising channel to a critical platform for customer relationship management, informational utility, and competitive brand building. The findings, based on a survey of 100 primarily young and highly-engaged respondents, reveal a clear set of strategic priorities for food and dairy marketers.

The single most important factor for product choice remains Brand Reputation (46%), but Social Media's influence is nearly universal, with 91% of consumers reporting they are influenced to some degree in their purchase decisions. The primary reasons for following brands are informational (to stay informed about new products, 58%) and for content enjoyment (39%), with direct transactional appeals like discounts being the least influential.

Consumers are not driven by high-gloss visuals alone. The most influential content elements for purchase are Authenticity/Transparency (36%) and Positive Reviews/Testimonials (34%). This underscores a strong consumer desire for integrity and social proof, demanding that brands shift from prioritizing perfect aesthetics to fostering genuine dialogue and open communication.

The most preferred content is functional and educational, with Recipe/Cooking Videos (65%) and Health/Nutrition Facts (61%) being the most popular. Content that successfully drives purchase is highly visual and concise, with Short, engaging videos (45%) and High-quality photos (45%) being the most effective.

While 51% of respondents are Likely or Very Likely to be influenced by social media influencers, the largest single response was Neutral (42%). This suggests that influencer efficacy is not guaranteed and is highly contingent on the perceived credibility, expertise, and authenticity of the partner.

Social media is highly effective for building product awareness (79% Agree/Strongly Agree) and brand connection (69% Agree/Strongly Agree). However, its direct role as a transactional channel shows the highest uncertainty, with only 46% reporting a purchase due to social media influence and a large Neutral response (37%). This indicates that social media successfully sets the stage for a purchase, but the transaction often occurs on another platform.

In essence, for food and dairy brands, the future of marketing is not about simply advertising at consumers, but about earning a permanent seat in their information feed by consistently providing value, maintaining transparency, and enabling social proof.

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