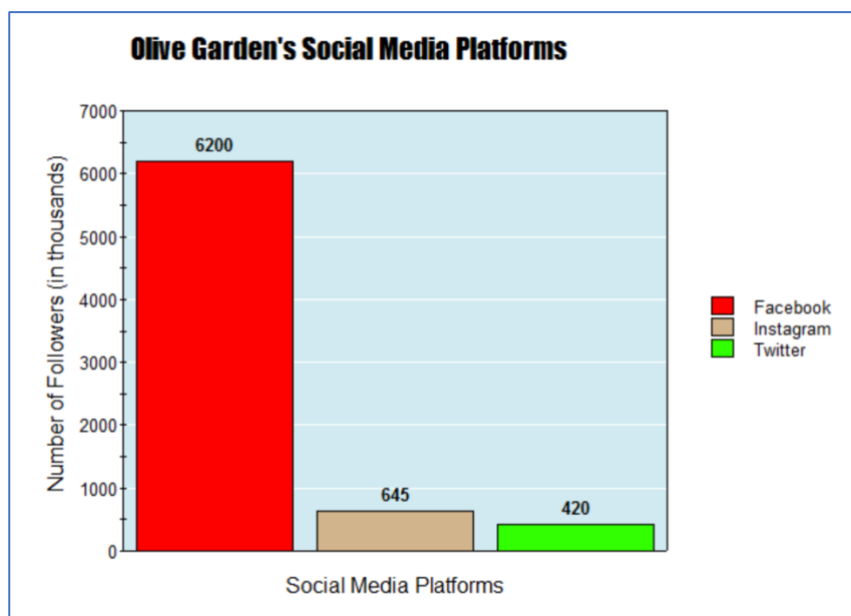


Introduction

Olive Garden is a casual dining chain restaurant in the United States that specializes in Italian cuisine. Its parent company, Darden Restaurants, owns many other restaurants such as Longhorn's, Bahama Breeze, Seasons 52, and many more. Out of all of the casual dining options available in the United States, Olive Garden is one of the few chain restaurants that continues to grow. Could their prominent social media presence influence their continued growth? Olive Garden has garnered a total of over six million followers on various social media platforms. Through the use of these platforms, Olive Garden continues to strengthen their presence and establish their success on social media.

Platform Analysis

Olive Garden is currently active on three different social media platforms, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#). Out of all of the platforms, they are all being used effectively. On each account, Olive Garden posts regularly, consistently replies to customers in the comments, and uses tools to boost potential engagement on each platform. Through high responsiveness and regularly updated posts, Olive Garden is using social media quite effectively.



Competitor Analysis

As stated above, there are many casual dining restaurants chains in the United States, bringing competition to Olive Garden. Two of Olive Garden's top competitors are Applebee's and Chili's. Similarly to Olive Garden, Applebee's and Chili's are active on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter with high numbers of followers as well.

Applebee's strengths include high responsiveness to customers and visually-pleasing posts. These visually-pleasing posts are attractive to look at, but don't overload the viewer with information either. Applebee's weaknesses include posts that don't optimize engagement, and using the same media across all platforms, which could be boring for the viewer or customer. Chili's social media strength's include customized responses to customers (more personable) and they post regularly. Chili's weaknesses include very few posts that engage their audiences and the content itself is repetitive and not visually appealing. From Olive Garden's competitors, they could learn to make their posts more visually appealing, customize each response to be more personable, and use different media across various social media platforms.

Audience/Publics Analysis

Olive Garden's followers across their social media platforms include a wide range of demographics. Overall, their followers are very diverse on all of their platforms. Although Olive Garden has a wide reach, their engaged audience is more specific. This specific audience tends to include people who are white and 40+ years old. While a younger audience might opt in to following Olive Garden, they do not actually engage with the accounts. Olive Garden is *reaching* a large audience; however, they are not *engaging* with everyone in this large audience.

Content Strategy Analysis

Through the use of social media, Olive Garden reinforces its mission that “everyone is family” when you are choosing to dine with this restaurant. This mission is apparent in both the content produced and the messaging of the social media accounts. Olive Garden is also popular for their never-ending soup, salad, and breadsticks, and this is commonly posted across social media platforms as well. The specific content that seems to be most popular is content that is centered around Olive Garden’s never-ending breadsticks. There were consistent keywords that garnered larger engagement (likes and comments) on Olive Garden’s social media platforms.

The keywords are as follows:

- Breadsticks
- Family
- Never-Ending
- Dinner
- Wine
- Lunch



Summary Conclusion

Overall, Olive Garden’s social media efforts are strong, present, and effective. Olive Garden has achieved this through high engagement, consistent responses to customers, and effective keywords, which leads to higher search engine optimization. However, if the company wants to continue to grow their online brand, there are opportunities Olive Garden could take. A potential opportunity would be to actually *engage* their large audience, not just reach them. The analysis of Olive Garden’s competitors shows that by creating visually appealing content paired with customized, personable responses, Olive Garden may continue to expand their prominent social media presence.