

CASE STUDY

Nestlé Toll House Finds a Sweet New Way to Engage Modern Bakers



When the brand that invented chocolate chips found it wasn't reaching Millennial bakers, it turned to online video to reach them in their baking micro-moments. Now the Nestlé Toll House channel is one of YouTube's top baking destinations.

Nestlé® Toll House® is one of America's best-loved brands. (They *did* invent chocolate chips, after all.) But the brand faced a growing hurdle in recent years: Their loyal bakers were aging out of the category, and younger bakers weren't replacing them at the same rate.

"We want to be a brand that's loved because of people's memories from growing up, but we also want to be a brand that is making memories with consumers today and tomorrow," says Corinne Kelly, Marketing Director for Nestlé Toll House. "We need to retain our core values but also make sure that Toll House is relevant for Millennials as they have families and enter the world of baking."

Changing Needs

With this challenge in hand, Nestlé paid a visit to [Google BrandLab](#). In a custom strategy workshop, the Toll House team made some key discoveries about why their digital approach wasn't reaching the modern bakers they had been struggling to attract for years.

"We had been more or less taking our traditional seasonal marketing campaigns and putting them online," says Heather Green, Marketing Manager for Nestlé Toll House. "And we realized that those messages weren't capturing today's digital-savvy bakers in the moments they were seeking recipes and inspiration. It was eye-opening to see competitors pulling ahead of Nestlé Toll House on key search terms—even on searches for chocolate chips!"

ABOUT NESTLÉ TOLL HOUSE

- Nestlé Toll House has provided the best-tasting chocolate chips for over 75 years
- <https://www.verybestbaking.com/toll-house>
- Headquarters: Vevey, Switzerland

GOAL

- Reach and engage new generations of modern bakers

APPROACH

- Use Google and YouTube search data to find the most frequent baking searches
- Build a custom affinity segment to better reach the new, younger target consumer
- Shift to a new always-on approach to video, with content that caters to a full range of baking needs
- Partner with food enthusiast Ashley Adams to create a fun and lively YouTube series

RESULTS

- 17+ million unique modern bakers reached since September 2015 with YouTube TrueView ads
- 20+ years worth of videos watched, making the Toll House channel one of YouTube's top baking destinations
- YouTube TrueView view-through rates for the "Bake My Day" series with YouTuber Ashley Adams are 43% above the CPG benchmark

Nestlé also uncovered another key insight: Millennials didn't necessarily grow up with a mom or a grandmother teaching them how to bake. "They're getting that information from YouTube now," says Kelly. "We saw that Toll House could play a big role in being that friend and partner alongside them in the kitchen, helping out in those show-me-how-to-do-it moments."

That did it: The Toll House team set out to reinvent its entire content strategy. They shifted from a traditional holiday-centric model to a new always-on, evergreen approach to video. And they began to create relevant information for the modern baker's full range of baking moments.

Reaching the Modern Baker

The modern baker spends a lot of time online, and the Toll House team needed a strategy to reach her. First, they worked with Google to build a custom affinity segment based on what the modern baker looks for, the blogs she reads and the videos she watches. This allowed them to reach qualified members of their target audience efficiently while delivering greater relevance with their ads.

The Toll House team also used search insights from both Google and YouTube to learn more about high-demand baking searches over time and to discover the modern baker's most common micro-moments, from "Birthday cake ideas for a 6-year-old" to "How do I melt chocolate?"

Then Nestlé Toll House overhauled its [YouTube baking channel](#), creating dozens of helpful videos that offered [inspiration](#), [recipes](#), and [how-tos](#). "We try to think about, in each moment, what is the modern baker looking for and needing?" says Green. "It might be as broad as 'best dessert recipe,' or it might be super-specific like 'most chocolatey chocolate-chip cookie.' Then we do our best to match our content to those micro-moments." Whatever the baker's questions, Nestlé would be there to dish up the answers.

Bake My Day

To help really engage Millennial bakers, Nestlé's agency, Reach, found a perfect partner: Ashley Adams, popular co-host of the "Feast of Fiction" cooking channel on YouTube. "Ashley loves to bake and she has a wonderful personality that we knew our bakers would want to spend time with," says Kelly.

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Together, they created a series of “Bake My Day” videos with recipes and in-the-kitchen inspirations. “We’ve spent a lot of time on quick and easy baking, which is really the new way to bake,” Kelly says. New “Bake My Day” videos, like [Chocolate Chip Cookie S’mores \(and 7 Other Great Baking Hacks\)](#) have been big hits with those viewers, earning millions of views.

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The Nestlé Toll House team also created fun new videos for a wide range of events and seasons, from [Chocolate Chip Mexican Wedding Cakes](#) for bridal showers to [Bunny Bottom Cookie Pops](#) for Easter.

The message: “You can totally dough that!” And modern bakers are responding. The YouTube TrueView view-through rates for the “Bake My Day” videos are 43% above the benchmark for typical CPG brands.

The Results

“We’re seeing wonderful results,” says Corinne Kelly. Nestlé Toll House’s YouTube TrueView ads have reached 17+ million unique modern bakers since they launched in September 2015. These modern bakers have watched 20+ years worth of videos—making Toll House one of YouTube’s top baking destinations.

“We see people come to our channel, stay around to watch our long-form content, and subscribe to hear about future videos,” Kelly reports. “Video helps us to be much more on trend and to adapt quicker. And it really speaks to consumers wanting to spend time with Nestlé Toll House as a partner in their kitchen.”

“This has changed the way that we’re spending our money and doing content marketing as a whole,” says Heather Green. “The modern baker is always seeking out content, and now we know how to be there to entertain them, inspire them, and build strong relationships for the long term.”

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