Pendulum

MASTER
THE MULTIMEDIA MENU

Build a Resilient F&B Brand Using our Social Tips and Deep Insight

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The **Death** of the Recipe Scrapbook

In 2026, a brand is not defined by static menus, polished corporate blogs, or recipe books by celebrity chefs like Gordon Ramsay. Brand identity and reputation are now defined by what is seen, heard, and shared in real time by real, everyday people across channels ranging from the standard (Instagram's @poptartsus) to the niche (4chan's Food & Cooking (/ck/) board).

The Food & Beverage (F&B) industry is dynamic and constantly evolving, with new flavors, cooking methods, diet fads, and more emerging almost daily. And now? The industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation driven by the evolution of social media and the power of AI search.

So, how do you keep up?

Legacy social listening—the digital equivalent of cutting out recipes from a newspaper—is no longer a functional brand management strategy. Legacy tools rely on text in hashtags, captions, or text-based posts to measure brand reach and sentiment. According to Pendulum's case studies, this leaves up to 75% of brand mentions across audio, imagery, and video unaccounted for. As you can imagine, this exposes your brand to reputational risk and missed revenue.

A brand is measured and judged by mentions in a podcast, a logo appearing on TikTok, or a raw review on YouTube Shorts. Large Language Models (LLMs), such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude, pick up these mentions, highlight your customer sentiment, bring niche channel conversations into the light, and illuminate what people really think. Sometimes... before you even know it is happening.

If an LLM relies on niche channels for information and a negative thread pops up on 4chan, you won't be able to mitigate, address, or fix it if you don't even know it is there.

Brand Mention Detected   2:14 m
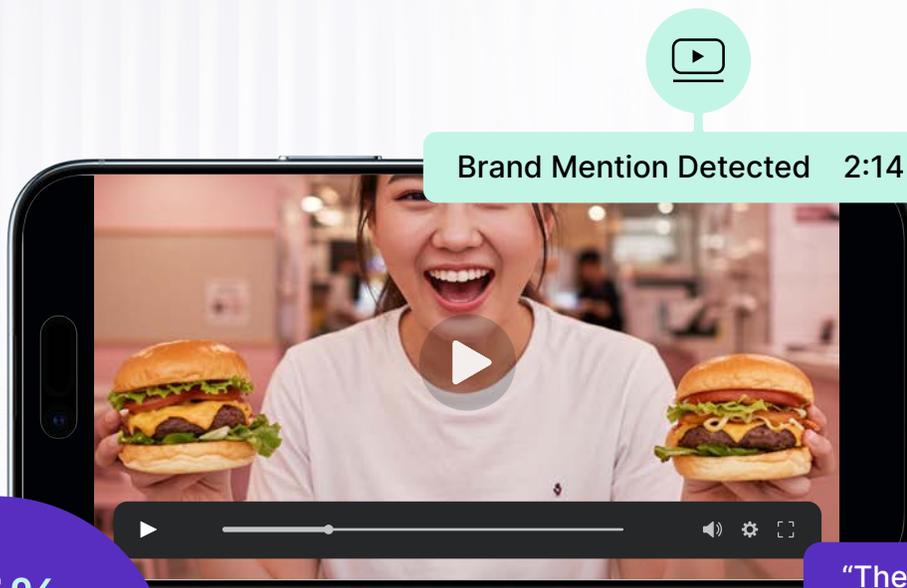
"These Flairy Burgers are amazing!"

3.2 views | Feb 08 2026

75% missing data

The significant audio, image, and visual data deficit ([52% for Pepsi in January](), for example) leads to unseen reputation challenges on fringe platforms, misallocated marketing spend, and algorithm-driven discovery failures. To gain a complete picture of customer sentiment and reach, brand leaders must evolve toward social intelligence.

WHAT IS SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE?

It is the AI-driven Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR), Optical Character Recognition (OCR), and Computer Vision-led modern version of social listening you need. It allows brand leaders to finally capture the sensory-rich truth of how consumers experience their products across niche and popular social channels, and gain the insights needed to analyze how their brand lands.

Relying on legacy social listening tools that focus on text only means missing the vast majority of your brand's narrative. It's time to meet your authentic audience. Let's show you how.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings, please reach out.

Thank you,
[The Pendulum Squad]()

ARE YOU JELLO SALAD OR FIBERMAXXED?

"68% of Instagram brand mentions exist solely as visual data"

How to Tell if Your Social Listening is a Relic of the Past or a Viral Masterpiece

In F&B, there is a massive divide in how brands see their own success. Some brands are still operating like a jello salad—stuck in a rigid, static mold, relying on text-based hashtags and captions that were on trend a decade ago. Others have evolved—they understand that modern appeal is found in the sensory experience: the crunch of the audio, the ooze of the visual, and the viral momentum of the process.

The Missing Ingredients

Legacy social listening tools only read the recipe card (the captions). But up to 75% of brand mentions never appear on the card. They are spoken—hidden inside video transcripts of cooking tutorials, deep-dive podcasts, and unboxing vlogs. If your intelligence can't hear the conversation, your data is as flat as an unrisen dough.

The Hidden Garnish

In 2026, the most valuable brand placement is untagged. Approximately 68% of Instagram brand mentions exist solely as visual data. Through AI-driven OCR and Logo Detection, social intelligence platforms can find your brand's logo on a bottle in the background of a party or a package on a kitchen counter, even when the creator never types your name. Without this, your visual equity is a wilted garnish that's been left in the kitchen.

The Proof is in the Pudding

The data doesn't lie. In our latest scan of five global F&B leaders by revenue (Nestlé, Anheuser-Busch, Coca-Cola, Kraft Heinz, and PepsiCo) for only the month of January, almost **200,000 brand impressions occurred entirely within audio transcripts** or background visuals. There were zero mentions of the brands in the titles, descriptions, or hashtags.

THE VERDICT:

Failing to use ASR (Audio) and OCR (Visual) leaves you with a jello-salad view of a fibermaxxed world—completely ignorant of up to 75% of your missing market reach.

Serve the Social Where Trends Take Root

Trends in 2026 are moving so quickly that traditional quarterly reporting is obsolete. To keep up, brands must be able to track trends, sentiment, and brand reach across modern, visual, and audio platforms—with a minimum of daily updates.

WHERE YOUR AUDIENCE IS:

- **TikTok (The Discovery Engine):** <u>46% of Gen Z</u> uses TikTok as a primary search tool for recipes; if a product isn't aesthetic-ready for this medium, it effectively doesn't exist.

- **YouTube (The Test Kitchen):** Long-form vlogs drive <u>40% of shoppers</u>. In January 2026, Visual Share of Voice in 'What I Eat In A Day' vlogs revealed higher market penetration than tagged mentions alone.

- **Dark Kitchens & Fringe Networks:** While recent estimates indicate that 95% of social sharing occurs in completely private channels like Discord, critical supply chain conspiracies and misinformation often spill over from these private channels and incubate on niche platforms such as Rumble or Telegram.

THE 2026 SWEET SUCCESS MATRIX

Success in 2026 is defined by how well you adapt your strategy to the specific strengths of each platform. To do that, you must be able to track what is said on each platform, know your audience, discover who the vertical influencers are, and tailor your content to the specific platform's best-performing posts.

Platform Type	Primary Strategy	2026 Loyalty Driver
Video Giants (YouTube, TikTok)	Sensory Storytelling	Behind-the-scenes rhythm and 3-second viral hooks.
Social Media (Instagram, X, Threads)	Community & Vibe	Rapid-response human interaction and visual vibe checks.
Niche Forums (Reddit, Quora, 4chan)	Cultural Intelligence	Identifying emerging seed trends and supply chain discussions early.
Alt-Platforms (Rumble, TruthSocial, Gab)	Narrative Defense	Monitoring for synthetic outrage and astroturfing campaigns.

The Sensory Shift: Static Social to Sense-based Branding

2015 called; it wants its Instagrammable toast back.

In 2026, the sector is defined by motion, audio, and authenticity. Social media is a real-time R&D department. Your social intelligence platform should help you track topics, sentiment, influencers, and more across video, audio, imagery, and text, so you know what is trending before it goes viral, and can build sense-filled socials.

Brands that over-invested in faux-luxury, gimmicky, or overly processed better-for-you products are struggling, while those focusing on genuine, authentic, and good-for-you options are winning in 2026.

Let's break down what you need to know to succeed socially in this always-on social media world:

The Rise of Sonic Branding & ASMR
Sound is a primary driver of appetite.

Audio Triggers: Brands optimize for audio-first sensations, such as the specific crunch of a fried chicken sandwich or the hiss of a carbonated drink.

Physical Reactions: These ASMR (Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response) triggers are strategically deployed to elicit physical reactions in viewers, significantly increasing purchase intent.

Sonic Identity: Beyond visual logos, F&B brands create audio logos and catchy TikTok montages.

Effectiveness: Ads featuring distinct sonic cues are 8.5 times more effective than those relying solely on visual assets.

From Pretty to Process

Consumer value has shifted from the final, perfect brand shot to the raw narrative of creation.

Narrative Plating: High-speed video allows brands to showcase the cheese pull, the drip, and the sizzle.

Menu Engineering: Items like chaos cakes and textured desserts are engineered specifically to move in 60-fps slow motion.

Authenticity over Polish: This lo-fi, authentic content builds deeper consumer trust than polished corporate advertisements.

Social Media as the New Search Engine

Diners bypass Google to vibe check their next meal through visual feeds.

Visual Search: Over 50% of diners now choose restaurants based on social media content.

The Creator Effect: A single 60-second video from a trusted creator, such as Keith Lee, can cause an overnight spike in reservations that traditional PR cannot match.

Atmospheric Intel: Users search TikTok or Reels for the 'Best pasta in NYC' to see the atmosphere and hear ambient noise before booking.

Accelerated Product R&D

The feedback loop between a viral hack and a menu item has shrunk from months to days. If you see it, jump on it (Thoughtfully! We do not want your attempt at virality to flop like an underbaked cake).

Viral-to-Menu Pipeline: When a secret menu hack goes viral, agile brands codify it into their point-of-sale systems almost instantly.

Testing via LTOs: F&B brands use short-form video to test-launch hyper-niche flavors (e.g., Hot Honey, Pistachio, or Ube) as Limited-Time Offers (LTOs). If a video hooks viewers in the first two seconds, the product receives a wider release. Coca-Cola released fresh LTOs: Cherry Float and Cherry Float Zero Sugar in February 2026, and Pepsi has Wild Cherry Cream hitting shelves soon, and let's not forget the Heinz Kegchup.

The DIY & Nostalgia Boom

Everyone is the chef in their own kitchen. The rise of DIY recipes and recipe hacks has had unexpected knock-on effects in the grocery store aisles.

Culinary DIY: Viral tutorials drive massive sales in specific grocery categories, such as the great 2025 cottage cheese shortage!

Nostalgia 2.0: Brands leverage audio-first nostalgia—using sounds or music from the 90s and 00s—to market elevated comfort food like childhood cereals and gourmet grilled cheese.

Exploring and exploiting all senses (except smell!) is an essential ingredient to build brand loyalty.

And as a bonus? If your social intelligence platform can track your post success on every platform you use and track the earned media mentions, you can see how your new sense-filled social strategy lands with your target audiences.

If you want to externalize these new wins and provide your C-Suite with a real dollar value of your earned media, take a look at our Earned Media Value explainer, fillable executive reporting template, and the Gemini Gem that does the calculations for you.

What's Cooking for the Big Brands?

For major F&B players, brand equity is built in multimedia social spaces—video backgrounds, audio transcripts, and images—where brand names are never explicitly included in titles or descriptions.

Based on data from the Pendulum dashboard between **December 31st, 2025**, and **January 29, 2026**, here are the verified social media statistics for the top 5 global F&B brands.

Brand	Total Social Mentions	Percentage of Audio and Image Mentions	Impressions from Top Creator	Influencer Sentiment (Pos/Neg/Neu)
PepsiCo	97.1K	52%	19.8K	14 / 3 / 91
Nestlé	53.2K	41%	10.2M	15 / 13 / 35
Coca-Cola	278.4K	39%	1.8M	26 / 21 / 46
Anheuser-Busch	180.9K	**60%**	13.3K	11 / 0 / 72
Kraft Heinz	10.2K	21%	2K	3 / 2 / 24

Anheuser-Busch leads the group in hidden mentions, with **60%** of its social presence occurring in non-text formats, which validates our research showing that traditional keyword-based social listening tools may underreport your brand's actual reach by up to 75%.
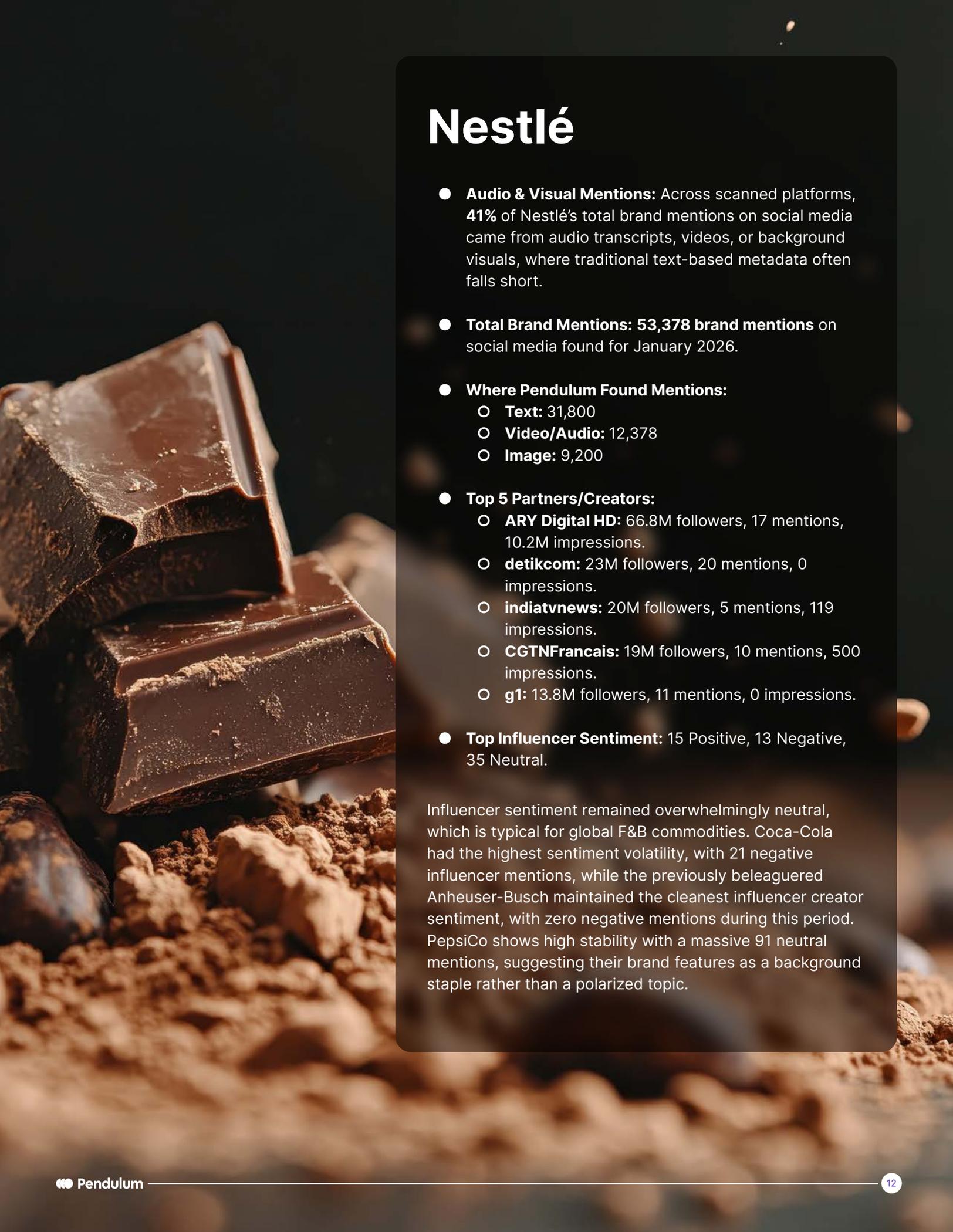
Anheuser-Busch

- **Audio & Visual Mentions:** Across scanned social platforms, **60%** of Anheuser-Busch's total brand mentions came from audio transcripts, videos, or background visuals.

- **Total Brand Mentions: 180,930 brand mentions** on social media found for January 2026.

- **Where Pendulum Found Mentions:**
    - **Text:** 73,200
    - **Video/Audio:** 82,330
    - **Image:** 25,400

- **Top 5 Partners/Creators:**
    - **ChinaGlobalTVNetwork:** 125M followers, 14 mentions, 13.3K impressions.
    - **chinadaily:** 117M followers, 21 mentions, 8.4K impressions.
    - **XinhuaNewsAgency:** 100M followers, 8 mentions, 16.8K impressions.
    - **PeoplesDaily:** 84M followers, 26 mentions, 22.8K impressions.
    - **globaltimesnews:** 77M followers, 14 mentions, 1.2K impressions.

- **Top Influencer Sentiment:** 11 Positive, 0 Negative, 72 Neutral.

In addition, there is a stark disparity between creator reach and actual engagement. While our Anheuser-Busch analysis shows creators with 125M followers mentioning the brand, these creators yielded only 13.3K impressions.

Conversely, Nestlé's top creator had roughly half that reach (66.8M followers) but generated a massive 10.2M impressions. Major news agencies (such as Xinhua and CGTN) command global authority but often fail to drive the viral shelf-to-screen engagement seen with entertainment-focused creators.

Nestlé

- **Audio & Visual Mentions:** Across scanned platforms, **41%** of Nestlé's total brand mentions on social media came from audio transcripts, videos, or background visuals, where traditional text-based metadata often falls short.

- **Total Brand Mentions: 53,378 brand mentions** on social media found for January 2026.

- **Where Pendulum Found Mentions:**
  - **Text:** 31,800
  - **Video/Audio:** 12,378
  - **Image:** 9,200

- **Top 5 Partners/Creators:**
  - **ARY Digital HD:** 66.8M followers, 17 mentions, 10.2M impressions.
  - **detikcom:** 23M followers, 20 mentions, 0 impressions.
  - **indiatvnews:** 20M followers, 5 mentions, 119 impressions.
  - **CGTNFrancais:** 19M followers, 10 mentions, 500 impressions.
  - **g1:** 13.8M followers, 11 mentions, 0 impressions.

- **Top Influencer Sentiment:** 15 Positive, 13 Negative, 35 Neutral.

Influencer sentiment remained overwhelmingly neutral, which is typical for global F&B commodities. Coca-Cola had the highest sentiment volatility, with 21 negative influencer mentions, while the previously beleaguered Anheuser-Busch maintained the cleanest influencer creator sentiment, with zero negative mentions during this period. PepsiCo shows high stability with a massive 91 neutral mentions, suggesting their brand features as a background staple rather than a polarized topic.

Coca-Cola

- **Audio & Visual Mentions:** Across scanned platforms, **39%** of Coca-Cola's total social media brand mentions came from audio transcripts, video, or background visuals.

- **Total Brand Mentions: 278,410 brand mentions** found on social media for January 2026.

- **Where Pendulum Found Mentions:**
    - **Text:** 169,300
    - **Video/Audio:** 85,110
    - **Image:** 24,000

- **Top 5 Partners/Creators:**
    - **La Granja de Zenón:** 45.2M followers, 15 mentions, 1.8M impressions.
    - **Enaldinho:** 45.1M followers, 27 mentions, 40.4M impressions.
    - **LankyBox:** 42.1M followers, 28 mentions, 2M impressions.
    - **Willie Salim:** 38.3M followers, 11 mentions 1.9M impressions.
    - **BabyBus:** 29.1M followers, 12 mentions, 4.1M impressions.

- **Top Influencer Sentiment:** 26 Positive, 21 Negative, 46 Neutral.

Across top brands, video and text are the primary drivers, but audio-only mentions (transcripts/podcasts) remain an untapped frontier, accounting for less than 0.1% of mentions for giants like PepsiCo and Coca-Cola.

PepsiCo

- **Audio & Visual Mentions:** Across scanned platforms, **52%** of PepsiCo's total brand mentions on social media came from audio transcripts, video, or background visuals, with no brand mention in the video title, description, or captions.

- **Total Brand Mentions: 97,144 brand mentions** on social media found for January 2026.

- **Where Pendulum Found Mentions:**
    - **Text:** 46,500
    - **Video/Audio:** 42,044
    - **Image:** 8,600

- **Top 5 Partners/Creators:**
    - **XinhuaNewsAgency:** 100M followers, 14 mentions, 19.8K impressions.
    - **NFL:** 35.9M followers, 34 mentions, 0 impressions.
    - **indiatvnews:** 20M followers, 13 mentions, 5.9K impressions.
    - **inter:** 18.8M followers, 34 mentions, 2.1M impressions.
    - **pubity:** 18.5M followers, 13 mentions, 29.5K impressions.

- **Top Influencer Sentiment:** 14 Positive, 3 Negative, 91 Neutral.

Kraft Heinz presents a unique profile compared to other F&B giants. While its total volume is lower, its presence is highly professionalized and leans heavily toward institutional and retail authority.

Unlike competitors such as Anheuser-Busch (60% hidden mentions) and PepsiCo (52% hidden mentions), Kraft Heinz has the lowest percentage of hidden mentions at 21%.

Most of Kraft Heinz's social presence is explicitly text-based (8,100 of 10,213 total mentions). This suggests the brand is being discussed directly in titles and captions rather than just appearing as a background prop in videos.

In addition, Kraft Heinz's top creators are notably different from the entertainment-heavy partners of Coca-Cola or Nestlé, which are dominated by financial and retail heavyweights like Walmart (32M followers), The Wall Street Journal, Forbes, and Bloomberg. While these partners provide high institutional authority, they generated relatively low engagement in this period (e.g., Walmart led with only 2K impressions).

Kraft Heinz

- **Audio & Visual Mentions (Missing Percentage):** Across scanned platforms, **21%** of Kraft Heinz's total brand mentions on social media occurred in audio transcripts, videos, or background visuals.

- **Total Brand Mentions: 10,189 brand mentions** on social media found for January 2026.

- **Where Pendulum Found Mentions:**
  - **Text:** 8,100
  - **Video/Audio:** 1,513
  - **Image:** 576

- **Top 5 Partners/Creators:**
  - **Walmart:** 32M followers, 2 mentions, 2K impressions.
  - **The Wall Street Journal (X):** 20.6M followers, 18 mentions, 0 impressions.
  - **Forbes:** 20.3M followers, 3 mentions, 0 impressions.
  - **The Wall Street Journal (LinkedIn):** 10M followers, 3 mentions, 0 impressions.
  - **Bloomberg:** 9.7M followers, 3 mentions, 14.1K impressions.

- **Top Influencer Sentiment:** 3 Positive, 2 Negative, 24 Neutral.

Fresh Influence: Vetting the 2026 Creator

Building and maintaining brand loyalty in 2026 demands continuous, data-backed influencer partnerships that prioritize brand alignment. To avoid the vibe-based liability of manual influencer vetting–completely insufficient in a video-first landscape. Brands need AI-powered social intelligence that can track influencers wherever they post, ensuring partners remain compliant and authentic.
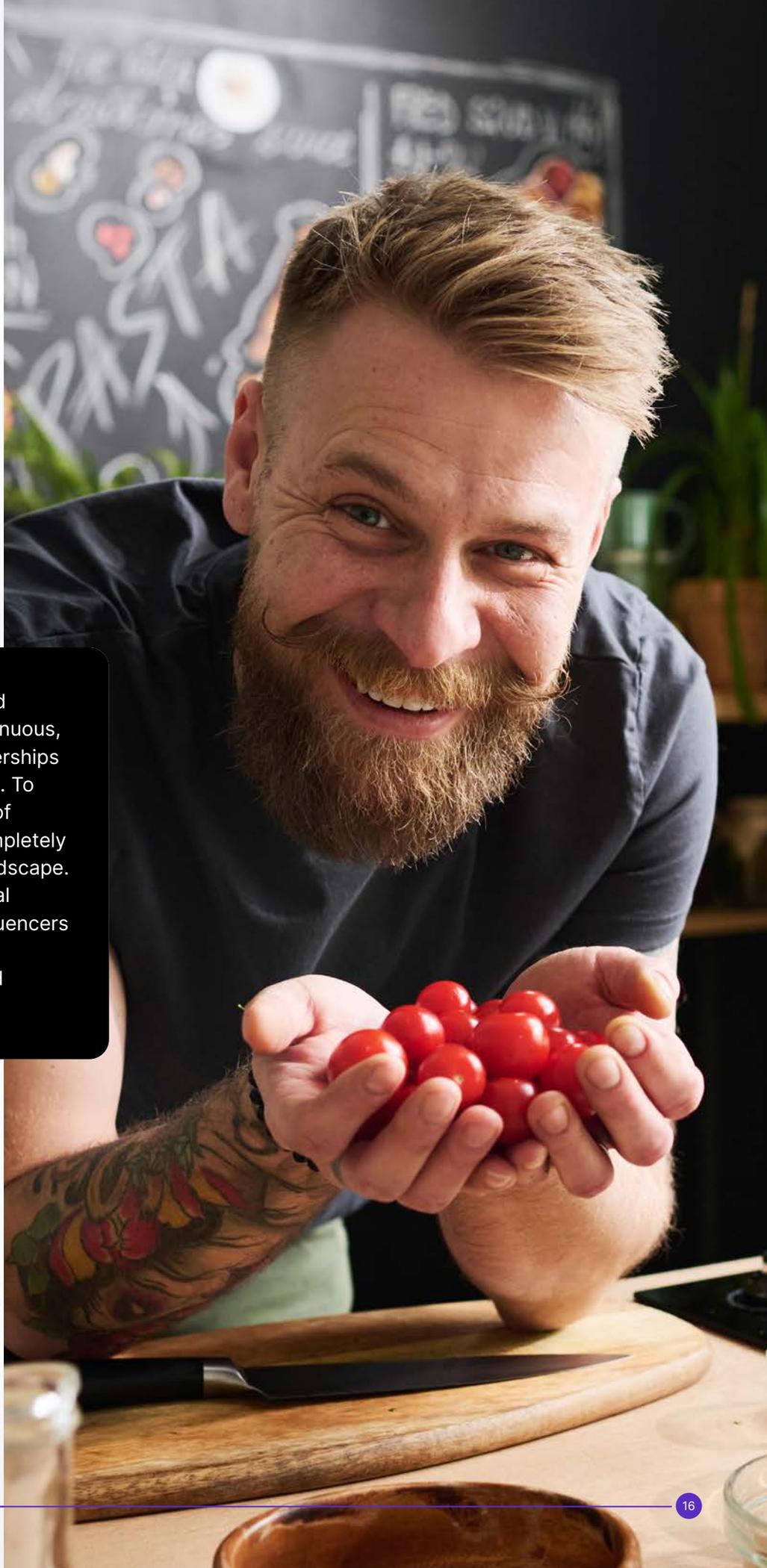
Brand Brilliance or Spoiled Reputation?

F&B brands risk millions on influencer partnerships that lack thorough due diligence. Success in 2026 depends on shifting from transactional posts to auditable, long-term brand advocacy to protect your brand reputation. You must be able to scan a creator's historical record to identify controversial statements or misaligned brand values buried deep in years-old content.

Recently developed AI-powered influencer vetting capabilities can identify a Safety Delta—instances in which creators discussed core brand values or sensitive ingredients (such as raw milk or medical misinformation) in long-form livestreams years prior.

Brand safety is not a one-and-done task. By utilizing social intelligence platforms that refresh influencer-list handles every few hours across mainstream and niche channels, brands can ensure partners have not pivoted to conflicting trends or shared false information after signing. With modern social intelligence, nothing spoils your brand's reputation post-launch.

AI-powered social intelligence can distinguish between standard brand mentions, high-impact viral content, and controversial triggers. It identifies shifts in tone or sentiment early, allowing brands to address narratives before they escalate into a PR crisis or a missed viral trend.

Use-Case: The Organic Pivot Incident

Imagine a global beverage brand signs a top wellness influencer who has passed all standard vetting. Two months into the campaign, the brand's social intelligence tool triggers a high-priority alert.

- **The Detection:** The tool detects a sentiment shift not in a post's caption, but in the audio transcript of a 45-minute livestream on a niche platform.

- **The Content:** During the stream, the influencer made passing, unscripted comments expressing skepticism about a specific preservative the brand uses—a comment that contradicts the integrity story the brand is paying them to tell.

- **The Result:** Because the tool flagged the spoken mention and immediately noted the tonal shift, the PR, Comms, and Marketing teams were alerted simultaneously. They were able to pause the partnership and address the narrative misalignment before the synthetic outrage machine could amplify the clip into a mainstream scandal.

Let us help you vet your influencers - check out The 2026 Influencer Vetting, Monitoring & Discovery Tool Checklist for our top tips.

INFLUENCERS WE LOVE FOR THEIR AUTHENTICITY:

- **samsPOV** boosts the visibility of small restaurants and brings customers through the door in Texas.

- **nycbutglutenfree** highlights dedicated gluten-free (celiac-safe) restaurants, bakeries, and kitchens in NYC to ensure safety.

- **Emilymariko** makes simple, uncomplicated, sensory-driven F&B content.

- **Taste Radio** creates podcasts for the modern foodpreneur featuring interviews with F&B's rising stars and industry giants.
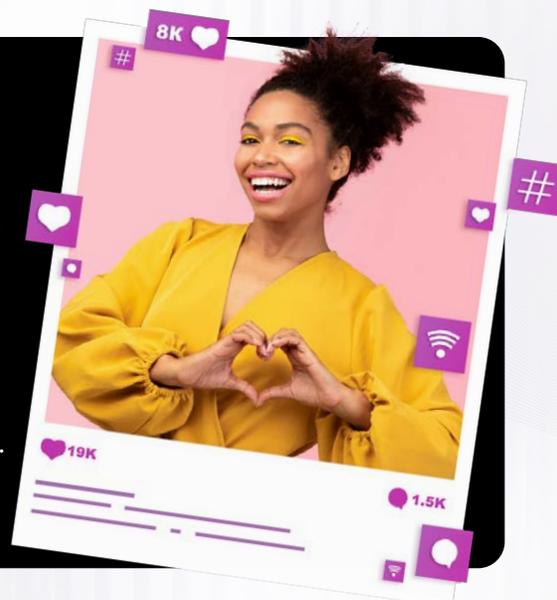
The Spice of Surprise: Unexpected Partnerships in 2026

The F&B industry is no longer confined to the kitchen or the grocery aisle. To break through the noise, brands are leveraging "Surprise-and-Delight" partnerships that cross into beauty, fashion, and lifestyle—turning everyday pantry staples into viral cultural artifacts.

Case Study: TABASCO® x Sephora Outrageous Plump

A prime example of this cross-industry fusion is the already sold out Sephora Collection Outrageous Plump x TABASCO® set, launched on January 6th, 2026. By blending the culinary heat of the cult-favorite hot sauce with high-performance beauty, the brands created a sensory-driven product that demands attention across both food and beauty channels.
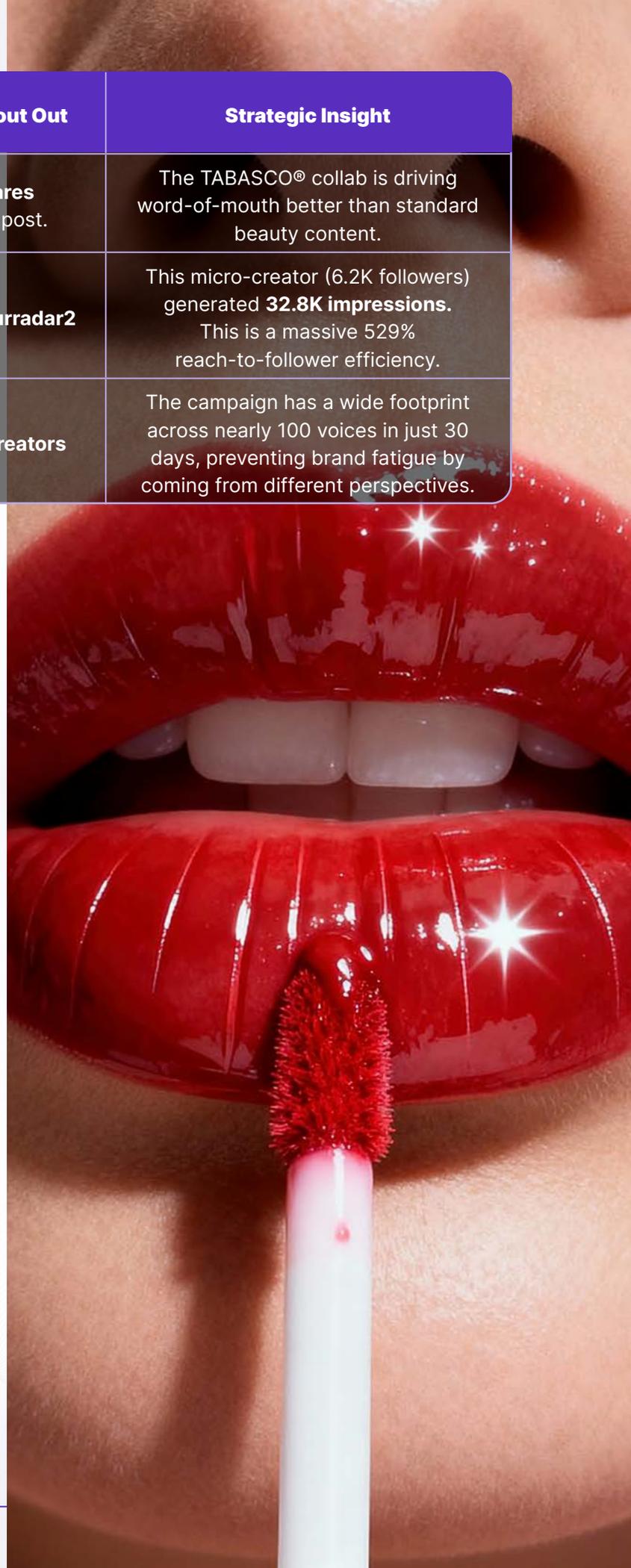
- **The Product Sensory Hook:** The limited-edition glosses use chili pepper extract to deliver maximum plumping power, translating TABASCO®'s fiery world into a physical sensation.

- **Influencer Amplification:** These partnerships are a gold mine for vetted, monitored influencers who specialize in unboxing and first-impression content.

- **Visual Storytelling:** Creators on TikTok and Instagram leverage the aesthetic appeal of the TABASCO® Red shades and custom silicone keychains to drive Visual Share of Voice. @sofiapetrillo is one of the creators garnering the most engagement in January.

- **Audible Reactions:** The immediate tingle from the chili-infused gloss makes for perfect fodder for ASMR-style content, which social intelligence can track via audio transcripts even when the brand isn't tagged in the caption.

Pillar	Metric to Shout Out	Strategic Insight
The Viral Spark	2,100 Shares on a single post.	The TABASCO® collab is driving word-of-mouth better than standard beauty content.
Efficiency	makeuponyourradar2	This micro-creator (6.2K followers) generated **32.8K impressions.** This is a massive 529% reach-to-follower efficiency.
Market Coverage	90 Unique Creators	The campaign has a wide footprint across nearly 100 voices in just 30 days, preventing brand fatigue by coming from different perspectives.

Why Monitoring Matters for High-Heat Collabs

When brands step outside their traditional category, the risk of narrative misalignment increases. Using AI-powered social intelligence allows F&B leaders to:

1. **Track Cross-Channel Sentiment:** Monitor how beauty influencers discuss food ingredients (like chili extract) to ensure the narrative remains authentic rather than gimmicky.

2. **Audit Influencer History:** Ensure that beauty partners haven't previously expressed negative views on spice levels or food additives that could undermine the partnership.

3. **Identify Viral Momentum:** Capture when a niche beauty review spills over into the F&B world, enabling marketing teams to pivot spend in real time.

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INGREDIENTS

2 TBSP OLIVE OIL.

1 1/2 CUPS CHOPPED YELLOW
ONION (1 MEDIUM)

2 CUPS PEELED AND CHOPPED
CARROTS (ABOUT 5)

1 1/4 CUPS CHOPPED CELERY
(ABOUT 3)

4 CLOVES GARLIC , MINCED.

4 (14.5 OZ) CANS

LOW-SODIUM CHICKEN BROTH OR
VEGETABLE BROTH.

2 (14.5 OZ) CANS DICED
TOMATOES (UNDRAINED)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. HEAT OLIVE OIL IN A LARGE POT OVER MEDIUM-HIGH HEAT.

2. ADD ONIONS, CARROTS, AND CELERY AND SAUTE 4 MINUTES
THEN ADD GARLIC AND SAUTE 30 SECONDS LONGER.

3. ADD IN BROTH, TOMATOES, POTATOES, PARSLEY, BAY LEAVES,
THYME AND SEASON WITH SALT AND PEPPER TO TASTE.*

4. BRING TO A BOIL, THEN ADD GREEN BEANS.

5. REDUCE HEAT TO MEDIUM-LOW, COVER AND SIMMER UNTIL
POTATOES ARE ALMOST FULLY TENDER, ABOUT 20 – 30 MINUTES.
ADD CORN AND PEAS AND COOK 5 MINUTES LONGER.

"Building loyalty requires mastering the three core pillars: authentic storytelling, sensory engagement, and community integration"

How to Ensure Your Brand is on the Right Ingredient List

Now you know what to post, let's explore how you post.

To build and maintain brand loyalty for your global F&B brand, you must create active community participation through sensory-rich storytelling. Success is defined by your brand's ability to be authentic, responsive, and visible across mainstream and niche digital spaces.

How to Build Brand Loyalty in 2026

Building loyalty requires mastering the three core pillars: authentic storytelling, the sensory engagement we discussed above, and community integration.

- **Lead with Process and Human Connection:** Consumers value the raw narrative of creation over hyper-polished corporate imagery.

  - **Humanize the Brand:** Feature real staff, chefs, and founders as the primary faces of your content to build personal trust.

  - **Show the Making:** Use high-speed 60-fps video to highlight sensory trust markers like the cheese pull, drip, and sizzle.

  - **Embrace EGC and UGC:** Shift toward Employee-Generated Content (EGC) and User-Generated Content (UGC). Reposting high-quality customer content with permission fosters a direct sense of belonging.

- **Build Private and Niche Communities:** Loyalty is increasingly fostered in intimate, gated digital spaces rather than broad public feeds.

- **Dark Social Channels:** Launch WhatsApp Communities for VIP guests or Discord servers for superfans to share exclusive early access to events and menus.

  - **Niche Engagement:** Actively participate and monitor niche forums like Reddit and 4chan's Food & Cooking (/ck/) board to understand unfiltered sentiment and catch emerging trends before they hit the mainstream.

- **Accelerate R&D Through Social Hooks:** Close the feedback loop by turning viral fan ideas into actual menu items.

  - **Codify Viral Hacks:** When a secret menu hack goes viral, move quickly to codify it into your point-of-sale systems.

  - **Interactive Polling:** Use polls and interactive Stories to let followers vote on new toppings or flavors, making them feel like part of the innovation process.

The Recipe for Loyalty Success

To ensure your strategy is effective, check if your brand is successfully capturing the 2026 share of sensory data and search intent.

Success Indicator	Checklist
Sonic Identity	**The Eyes-Closed Test:** Can a user identify your brand within 3 seconds of hearing your content? **Audio Watermarks:** Do you have a consistent sonic watermark across your TikTok and Reel montages?
Visual Process	**The 40% Ratio:** Is at least 40% of your content focused on the making of the product rather than just the final, polished result? **Logo Visibility:** Are your logos positioned in untagged organic shots, such as on a chef's apron or counter-top, to ensure visibility in unseen areas?
Search Optimization	**Ambient Noise Level:** Is your space captured with its real-world soundtrack, so diners can gauge the vibe before booking? **Thumbnail Scannability:** Does your video thumbnail visually answer a search query (e.g., best spicy pasta) without requiring the viewer to read the title?
R&D Feedback	**Hack Monitoring:** Are you actively tracking and responding to spoken menu hacks mentioned in your social video comments? **LTO Hook Speed:** Does your product reveal happen within the first 2 seconds of video content to optimize for algorithm discovery?

To maintain success, your brand needs to keep a close eye on earned media, trends, and sentiment, and track them across audio, video, text, and images. This magnifying glass, provided by social intelligence platforms, dives into the social arena and enables you to pivot, update, swerve, or address customer needs and narratives as they happen.

Budweiser Dropped a Cinematic Brand Building Masterclass in 'Americana'

Pairing the legendary Budweiser Clydesdales with a bald eagle and the soaring guitar of Lynyrd Skynyrd's Free Bird, Budweiser hijacked the Big Game spotlight and an entire cultural conversation.

The data from **Pendulum** between January 27th and February 3rd proves that nostalgia, when executed at this level, is an absolute juggernaut:

The American Icons Impact Report
The numbers don't lie. This was a cultural obsession:
- **184.8K Impressions** on posts specifically mentioning the ad.
- **119.2K Engagements** (People aren't just watching; they're reacting).
  453 Total Mentions across 312 unique posts.
- **Sentiment:** A staggering **191.4K positive mentions** vs. only 12K negative.

How We're Consuming the Hype
The way this story is spreading is just as interesting as the ad itself. While text is still king for discourse, visual media is carrying the emotional weight:

- **73%** of mentions were in **Text.**
- **19%** of mentions were found in **Video.**
- **10%** of mentions were found in **Images.**

Why it Works
Over-edited, high-concept, and often confusing modern ads are out.

Budweiser brought back **pure Americana**. They bet on the fact that a horse, a bird, and a guitar solo could still move the needle. They were right.

It turns out that even in 2026, we all love "Made of America."

Distinguishing the Sizzle from the Smoke

Standard keyword filters and the resulting alerts barrage on legacy social listening tools lead to infobesity—where decision-makers are overwhelmed by more information than they can efficiently process or use.

This overload clogs brand arteries with irrelevant data, slowing reactions to genuine threats while burying the few insights that add value. To regain a brand's edge, leaders need more than just a firehose of unstructured data. They must achieve proactive, precise intelligence delivered through easily understandable, prioritized alerts and automated executive-level analysis reports.

Moving Beyond Boolean: The Power of AI-Powered Social Listening

Legacy social listening tools rely on rigid Boolean queries that detect only exact keyword matches, leaving significant gaps in context. Modern F&B leaders use social intelligence equipped with natural language to capture the nuances of human emotion.

- **Contextual Intelligence:** Unlike conventional analytics, AI-powered tools use Natural Language Processing (NLP) to understand slang, metaphors, and even emojis.

- **Emotional Intensity:** Smart AI-powered capabilities assess the momentum of a conversation, distinguishing between a customer who is mildly okay with a product and one who is fantastic or furious.

- **Intent Recognition:** These systems process words in the context of the entire sentence structure, accurately identifying references to your brand even when your specific name isn't used.

Precision Crisis Preemption: Decoding Sarcasm

The presence of sarcasm has historically been a major hindrance to accurate sentiment analysis, as sarcastic statements often use positive words in negative contexts.

- **The Sarcasm Detector:** Advanced AI now identifies patterns, such as sarcastic cue words and linguistic features, such as specific phrase use or punctuation.

- **Spike Detection:** AI-driven alerts monitor for unusual shifts, such as a sudden 40% jump in negative sentiment, alerting businesses to investigate before the issue escalates into a public scandal.

- **Multimodal Analysis:** These social intelligence platforms also analyze text overlaid on images and videos, ensuring that a sarcastic meme or a cynical video review is correctly tagged as a risk rather than a positive mention.

Guarding Your Bottom Line

Proactive brand leadership means identifying and mitigating intentional threats and narratives—such as misinformation or viral moments—before they impact public health or brand market share.

- **Ingredient Misinformation:** With increased regulatory scrutiny in 2026 of ultra-processed foods (UPFs), additives, and all-natural claims, brands must flag emerging challenges to their formulations in real time.

- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Social intelligence helps identify supply chain vulnerabilities, such as insider threats or intentional contamination risks, by monitoring niche forums and professional discussions.

- **Economic Protection:** Economically motivated fraud—such as misrepresenting ingredients—costs the global food industry an estimated $49 billion annually; proactive defense tools help safeguard brands from the financial ruin of such scandals.

The Master Chef's Toolkit: Deploying the Strategic Response Engine

Visuals:
Here is a proactive narrative risk mitigation strategy to help you build a better response:

Immediate Strategic Steering: Upon detecting a trigger event—such as a bot attack or a viral menu hack—tailor responses for each department.

Department-Specific Angles:
- **PR & Comms**: Draft integrity-focused statements to address misinformation or narrative shifts.
- **Marketing:** Recommend commercial pivots, such as rapid-launch Limited Time Offers (LTOs) based on viral trends.
- **Social:** Suggest sensory activations, such as ASMR-rich videos or 60-fps process content, to reclaim the narrative through authenticity.
- **Track Emerging Narratives:** Monitor exact intent and tone shifts across 25+ platforms, including niche sites like 4chan and Rumble.
- **Perform Forensic Audits:** Distinguish between standard brand mentions and high-impact viral content or controversial triggers.
- **Fill the Data Deficit:** Capture conversations hidden in audio transcripts and background visuals, where up to 75% of your social mentions reside.

Combine this strategic framework with Pendulum's multimodal monitoring, and you can pivot, update, or address customer needs in real time—ensuring your brand is always on the right ingredient list!
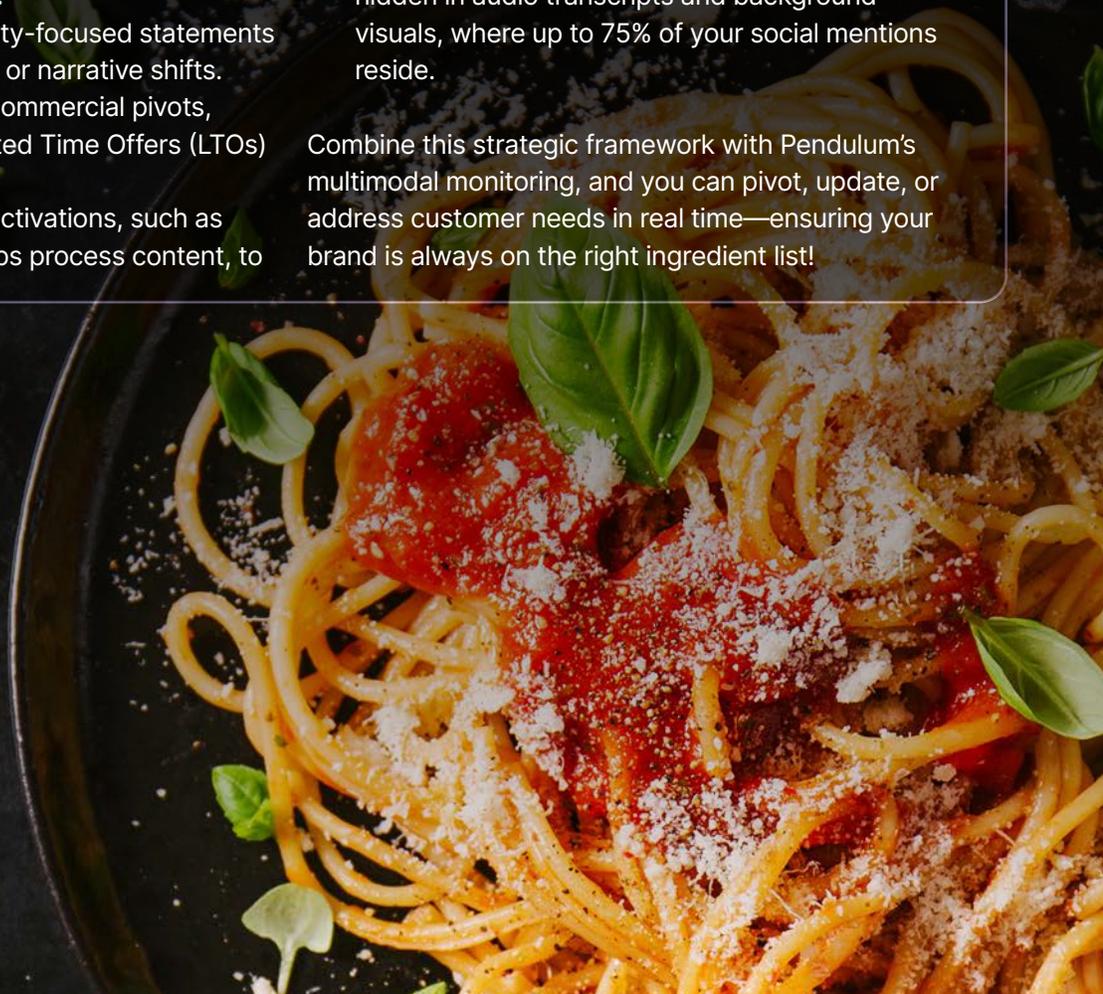
Turning Data into a **Dish Worth Serving**

Data is only as valuable as the insights it provides. Automated social intelligence is the executive chef for your PR and Communications team, allowing them to stop manually sifting through thousands of mentions and focus on high-level strategy. By moving from raw data to refined intelligence, brands transform a firehose of noise into a curated menu of actionable insights.

Legacy reporting often requires hours of manual assembly, but AI-powered tools can now automate the collection and organization of media impact. This ensures that your brand's narrative of reach and sentiment is delivered with professional consistency and speed.

Understanding the why behind the numbers is critical for resource allocation. Within AI-driven insights, teams can leverage statistics to identify exactly which media formats (video, audio, or text) and specific content creators are driving current narratives. This allows leaders to see which ingredients resonate with their audience and which do not.

Senior leadership does not need a list of every tweet or video mention; they need clarity. Modern social intelligence facilitates the transition from overwhelming lists to executive-level summaries. These summaries distill complex multimodal data into clear briefings that identify precisely what leadership needs to know, why it matters, and the recommended next step.

And the cherry on the cake? By deploying autonomous AI that understands intent and tone, brands can reduce manual alert review hours by over 90%, according to our customer data. This resource efficiency allows high-value analysts to focus on risk mitigation and strategy rather than acting as human spam filters.

Bake in Better
Brand Management

The difference between a brand that scales and one that plateaus in 2026 is the ability to see the full earned and owned brand picture across video, audio, and images. The future of F&B is being broadcast in 4K and spoken in real-time. Serving half-baked insights is not going to win you any James Beard Awards.

Let Pendulum help you prepare a complete menu.

Why Pendulum is the Essential Ingredient for 2026

To thrive in this sensory-driven market, legacy social listening tools are no longer enough. Pendulum provides the social intelligence needed to capture the audio- and visually rich truth of the consumer experience. Unlike traditional platforms that leave up to 75% of your brand narrative in the dark, Pendulum illuminates the hidden conversations that define your market.

- **Multimodal Mastery (ASR & OCR):** Pendulum reads captions, hears, and sees your brand. Through Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR) and Optical Character Recognition (OCR), Pendulum captures spoken mentions in podcasts and untagged logos in the background of viral videos—data that accounts for up to 75% of your true reach.

- **Agentic AI with Smart Alerts:** Pendulum replaces rigid, complex Boolean logic with a say it to track it philosophy. Our Smart Alerts use autonomous AI to understand intent, tone, and narrative shifts in real-time, reducing manual alert review hours by approximately 90%.

- **Comprehensive Global Coverage:** Trends don't just happen on mainstream feeds. Pendulum monitors over 25 platforms, including niche and fringe sites like BitChute, Rumble, 4chan, and Telegram, where critical narratives often incubate before spilling into the mainstream.

- **Real-Time Linguistic Intelligence:** With the ability to translate 75+ languages in real-time, Pendulum ensures your brand is protected and visible on a global scale, regardless of where the conversation starts.

- **Bot-Weaponized Defense:** Pendulum provides the tools to distinguish genuine human sentiment from synthetic outrage. By identifying bot-driven posting patterns and cross-platform discrepancies, we help you protect your bottom line from manufactured crises.

- **Influencer Vetting, Monitoring, & Discovery:** Pendulum provides a powerhouse of ongoing influencer data for your brand creators and their creator neighborhoods.

Serve a Complete Strategy

In 2026, relying on text-based tools is like ignoring the fire in the kitchen and the elephant at the buffet. Pendulum provides Executive Chef-level brand oversight to refine your strategy, mitigate risk, and build lasting customer loyalty.

Book Your F&B Brand Briefing

See Your Hidden Brand Conversations Today

Pendulum