



INDUSTRY ANALYSIS OF

WHOLE FOODS

MARKET

2023

EMILY MULLER





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ABOUT

Whole Foods is an American multinational supermarket chain that was founded in 1980 by John Mackey and Renee Lawson Hardy. They started with one store in Austin Texas with just 19 employees and today there are 524 locations across the nation with 105,000+ team members.

Whole Foods Market has an annual revenue of \$16.0 Billion. Whole Foods Market sells all-natural and organic food and produce. Their organic food meets the standards of the FDA but with no official definition existing for natural food, Whole Foods took it upon itself to compile its own list of forbidden substances, including high-fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated fats, and many kinds of artificial colorings, flavorings, sweeteners, and preservatives.

SECONDARY RESEARCH

The average shopper at Whole Foods is between the ages of 25-44, which is the age group considered to be apart of the Millennial generation.

(Boyer, 2017)

Their target market is educated professionals with mid to high-level incomes who live in upscale suburban or metropolitan areas.

(Brandongaille, 2014)

Whole Foods also reported that most of their consumers are female, which is no surprise since in a 2022 survey 60% of respondents that identified as women said they were the primary shopper in their household.

(Statistica, 2022)

SECONDARY RESEARCH

MILLENNIAL CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

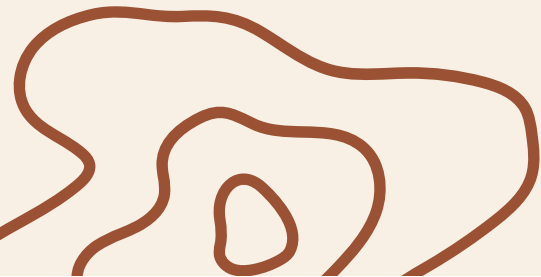
Millennials are the most willing generation to pay more for items that are popular or offer a unique experience.

According to Charles Schwab, 60% of millennials agreed that they would buy a cup of coffee that costs more than \$4.

Better yet, 57% of millennial women say that their purchase decisions are driven by a brand's values and stance on issues that are important to them. This helps Whole Foods build relationships with their consumers since majority of Whole Food shoppers are millennial women.

LIFESTYLE TRENDS & VALUES

Whole Food as a brand focuses on sustainability and healthy life choices, which aligns with Millennials' core values. In a recent study, Sanford Health discovered that aside from family, millennials care most about their health. 79% of participants said that family was most important in their lives, closely followed by health and wellness at 53%. They are known to smoke less than the generations prior and are more into fitness and dieting. Whole Foods does not carry products with hydrogenated fats, animals raised with antibiotics, caged hen eggs, or products containing artificial flavors, colors, and sweeteners (Whole Foods Market, 2015) which is something Millennials value and would pay more money to purchase.



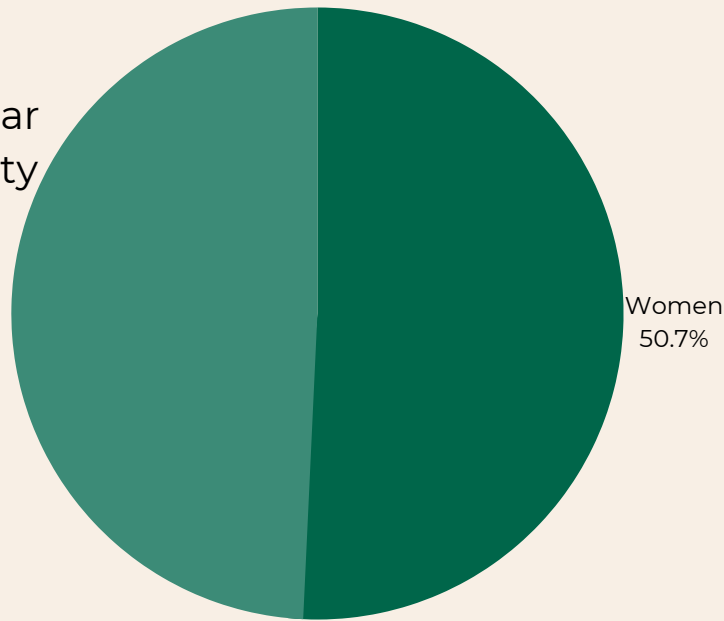
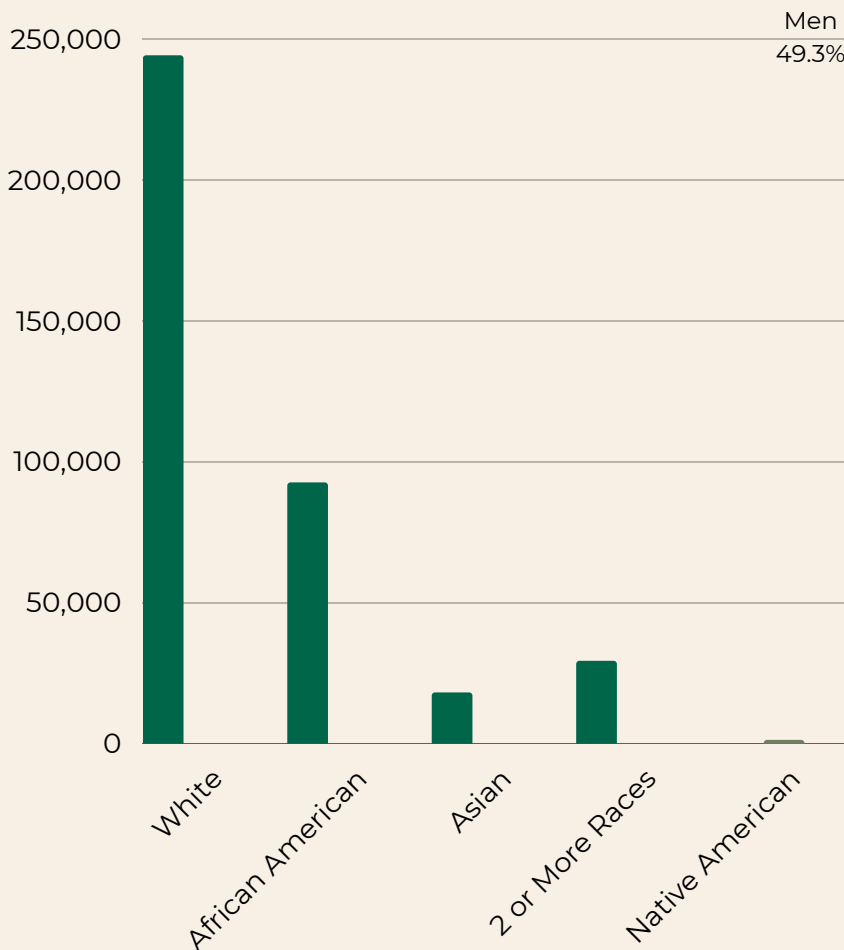
SECONDARY RESEARCH

DEMOGRAPHICS IN TAMPA BAY

In Tampa Bay, there are 2 Whole Food locations, one in Midtown and the other on Northdale Blvd. According to Claritas, the majority of households in those areas have an income of 50-75k or 75k-100k which is considered mid-upper class, which fits with the income of Whole Foods' target market. The age range for these regions as well shows the highest percentages being people 65+ and people 25-35 and the smallest age demographic being 18-20 year olds. With Whole Foods' target market being older individuals this also is beneficial for their business. (Claritas, 2022).

AGE, GENDER, AND RACE IN TAMPA

To the right, you will see a pie graph of the percentage comparison of males and females in Tampa, Florida. There is also a bar graph with the race demographic in the city as well.



Tampa Bay has a 2023 population of 399,734 people that spans over 176 miles, resulting in a population density of 3,506 people per square mile.

Mystery Shopping

Objective:

How do the employees of Whole Foods treat their customers? What steps do employees make to ensure the consumer experience is positive?

Process:

This was a structured direct observation taken place in the Whole Foods Market on 3740 Midtown Dr in Tampa, Florida. The observation took place on Friday, February 10, from 12 pm-1 pm, and focused on both the customer and employee interactions and attitudes. This approach allowed for a realistic observation of how employees treat their customers at this particular store and what the customer experience is like at Whole Foods.

Structured direct observations are effective for seeing interactions between customers and employees while having particular questions in mind. This was completed without interjecting, which helps to limit bias.



Mystery Shopping

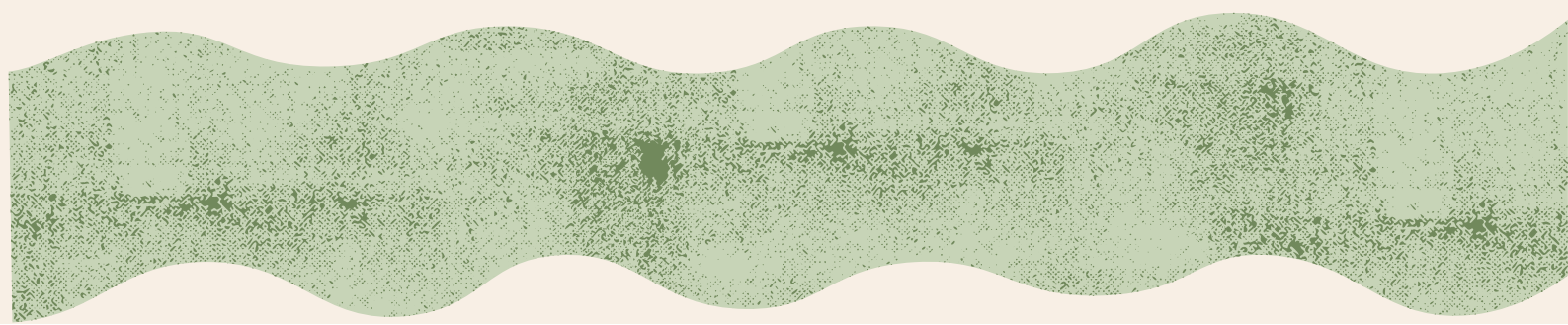
Questions

- What was the gender of the customer?
- What was the customer's estimated age range?
- Did the customer come alone?
- Did the employee ask the customer if they needed anything?
- How long were the customer and employee interacting?
- What was the emotion of the customer?
- What was the emotion of the employee?
- Did the employee go up to the customer first or vice versa?

Mystery Shopping

Results

Time Stamp	Customer Observation	Employee Observation
12:00PM, 7 second interaction	Woman, in her 50s, alone, no smile on her face, looked like she was in a rush.	Male Employee approached as soon as she entered, asked if she needed help finding anything, smile
12:15PM, longer interaction	Man, in his 30s, alone, smiled when approached, asked to find an item, followed the employee to the correct aisle, talked the entire way.	Male employee was by the door when customer entered the store, greeted and asked if he needed any help, smiled and walked the customer to where the item was.
12:22PM, 2 second interaction	Man, in his 30s, alone, walked in and made no communication with any employee, no smile	No employee approach, no words exchanged.
12:37PM, longest interaction	Woman, in her 40s, holding her young daughter's hand, smiles when approached, was looking for specific fruit snacks.	Female employee said hello and asked if the customer needed anything, told the customer where to find snacks, complimented the little girls outfit aswell.
12:43PM,	Woman, in her 30s, alone, came from an aisle, said hello to the employee first, asked about the sushi in the cafeteria section.	Male employee offered his insight on the best kind, sashimi was his answer, he mentioned how it was made fresh, had a pleasant attitude.



Mystery Shopping Analysis

Most of the customers at the Whole Foods Market located in Midtown appeared to be in their 30s or 40s, except for the first elderly woman who came in. All of them were in casual clothing, with most of the women seeming to be in athleisure wear.

4 out of the 5 customers I observed came by themselves and 3 out of the 5 were female. The 1 female who came in with her young daughter had a long interaction with an employee after asking a general question. The employee not only engaged with the woman but her child as well by complimenting her outfit.

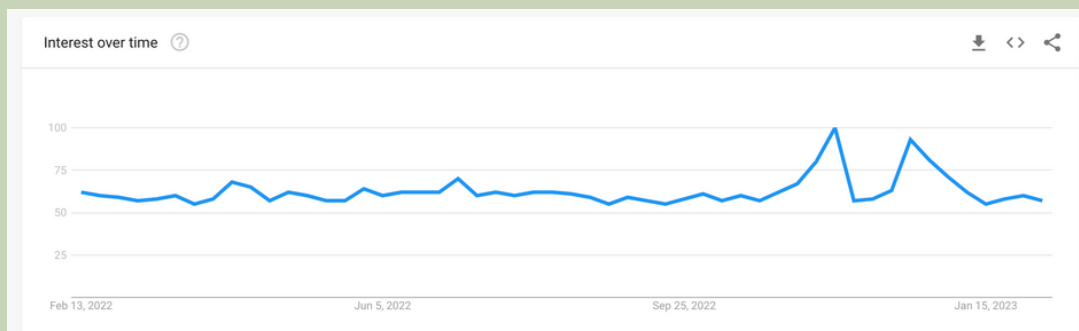
The employees always seemed to be around the store when customers entered and had questions. Only once in my observations did I see a customer enter and have no interaction with an employee.

Most of the customers seemed satisfied with their interactions with the employees. They all were greeted with friendly faces and helpful insights pertaining to the store.

Media Trends

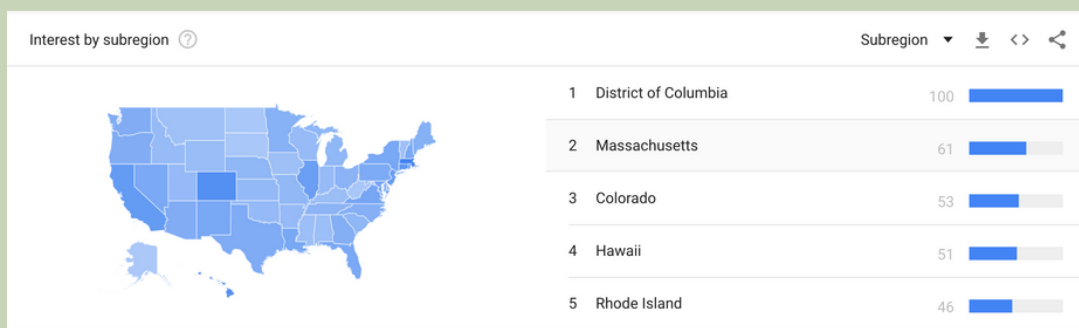
Interest Over Time

Over the course of the past 12 months, according to Google Trends, the search of "Whole Foods" has remained relatively flat. As you can see below there were some slight peaks in interest during November 20-26 and December 18-24. I rationalized those peaks due to the major holidays that occur in between those dates, like Thanksgiving and Christmas, where people tend to cook big family meals.



Interest by Subregion

According to Google Trends, the search for "Whole Foods" is highest in the District of Columbia. With the second highest being Massachusetts. In the District of Columbia, the average household salary is \$90,842 while in Massachusetts its \$89,026. Considering Whole Food's target market is individuals who live in urban areas and are fairly wealthy, this interest by Subregion makes perfect sense.



Media Trends Cont.

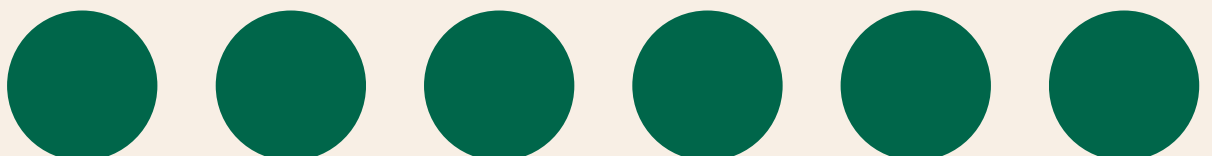
The related topics to "Whole Foods" were "Hydro Flask", "Vacuum Flask", "Oyster", and "Catering". Whole Foods Market is a grocery store with not only groceries but products and an in-store dining area with prepared meals. The Hydro Flask topic was something that went viral on TikTok since Whole Foods was selling limited edition colors at their stores in October of 2022. The Oyster and Catering searches were the lower searched topics but due to Whole Foods' prepared foods department being so popular, it makes sense.

Related Queries

"WHOLE FOODS
HYDRO FLASK"

"WHOLE
FOODS
THANKSGIVING
DINNER 2022"

As previously mentioned in the related topics section, Whole Foods has blown up on TikTok with their Hydro Flask video having 196.7K views (TikTok, 2022). As this product remains popular, more people will continue to search for them. Thanksgiving Dinner also was a popular query since Whole Foods is a grocery store and on Thanksgiving, most Americans cook huge meals or get pre-made desserts and dinners.



Relevant Searches

Organic SEO

Relevant keywords people used when searching for "Whole Foods" include "Whole Foods Market near me", "jobs at Whole Foods Market" and "Whole Foods delivery". These keywords are considered fat head brand keywords they include the brand name and contain only three or four words.

"Whole Foods Market near me": has an average number of searches per month in a year, or total volume, of 18,100 and a high competition rate. High competition rates make the mention harder to find when it is searched, making it not a valuable keyword.

"jobs at Whole Foods Market": has a total volume of 1,000 and relatively low competition so using this word would also be beneficial, especially when Whole Foods is looking to hire employees.

"Whole Foods delivery": has a total volume of 40,500 and a high competition rate, due to the high rate of SEO competition it wouldn't be a good opportunity to use this keyword.

"Whole Foods Market" has a search volume of 4.1 M according to [Ubersuggest.com](https://www.ubersuggest.com)

Relevant Searches


Organic SEO

Relevant keywords people used when searching for non-brand fat head keywords for organic SEO would be "organic groceries near me", "organic grocery" and "best grocery store for organic produce". Utilizing non-brand keywords would help Whole Foods get its brand name out there to people who are interested in all organic and natural produce but don't know where to shop for it.

"organic groceries near me": has a volume of 440 and competition is low, making this a helpful non-brand keyword for Whole Foods.

"organic grocery": has a volume of 320 and a high competition which would not only take you longer to rank for but has the potential to drive the wrong type of traffic.

"organic grocery delivery": has a volume of 180 and the competition number is in the middle between high and low. This could help attract people who are searching for all-natural products that can be delivered but may not know of Whole Foods.



*All the analytics on this page were calculated via [Wordtracker.com](https://www.wordtracker.com)

Recent News



This article from The Wall Street Journal, published Jan 31, 2023, discusses inflation and the effect it has had on Whole Foods. Whole Foods has expressed concern and has asked suppliers to help bring prices down on packaged groceries as inflation moderates. The article follows the concern of price increases in the industry. (Kang, 2023)

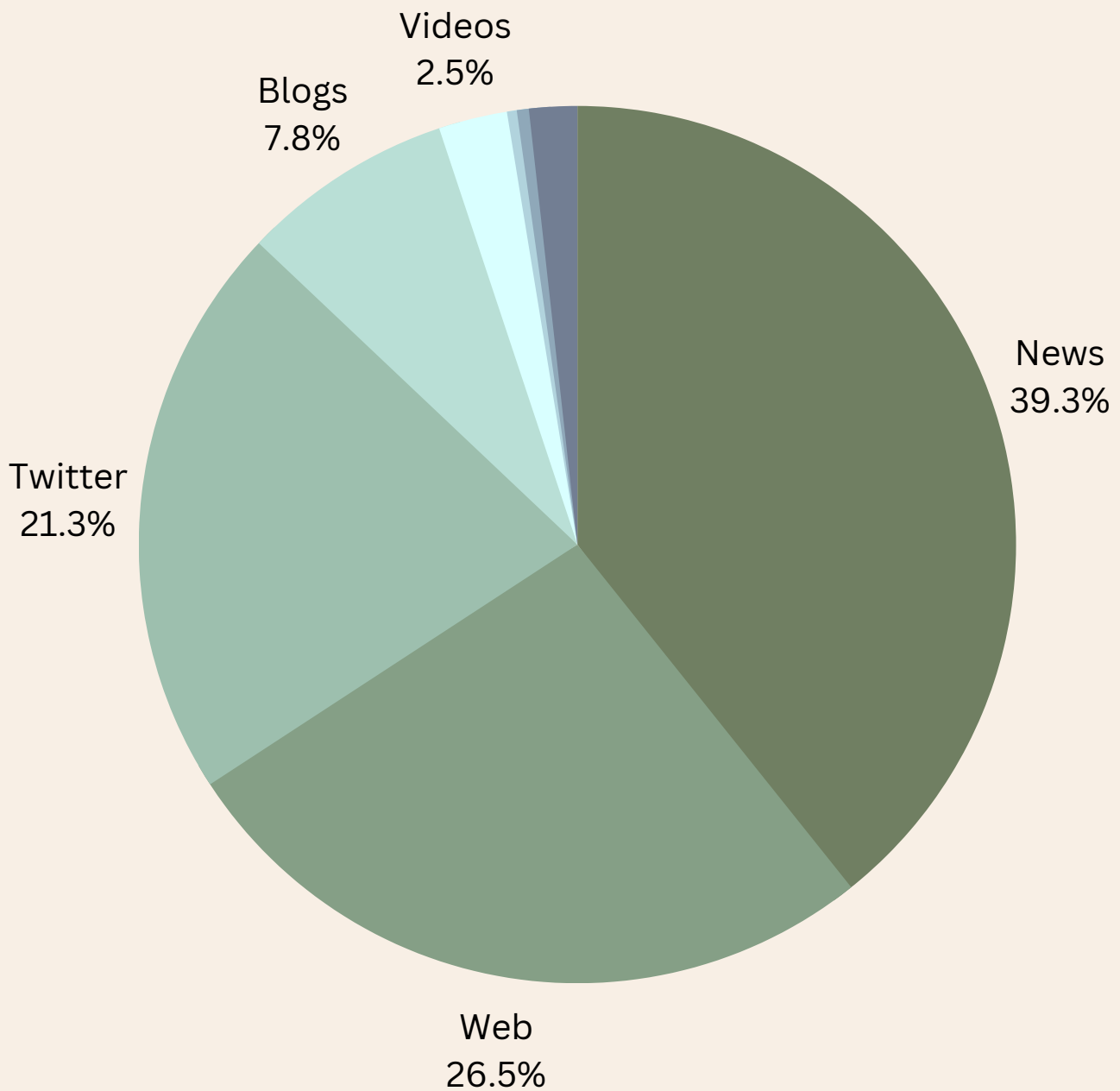
This article is from the Whole Foods Magazine about a new product entering their stores. The product is a Dairy-Free Smoothies created for babies by the brand Serenity. The article further explores the different flavors and benefit of the product. (WholeFoods Magazine Staff, 2023)



Google News

Many of the headlines pertaining to Whole Foods on Google News were about their new stores and new products. Whole Foods Market recently opened their first store in Bozeman, Montana, making them now have stores in forty-four U.S. states. (Redman, 2023) The articles also announced new products being introduced to all their stores across the U.S.


Social Listening



Above is a pie chart providing the sources that are most and least used when discussing Whole Foods Market. The most prevalent sources are the News and Web mentions with the news mentioning Whole Foods 977 times and the web 660. This coincides with the age demographic of Whole Foods Market since their target market's age range is millennials and baby boomers who may not use social media as much as they use the news. Also with Whole Foods Market being a grocery store, they most likely appear in the news for updates on new products or store locations.

Social Listening Cont.


Top 5 Themes

 **Best grocery delivery services in 2023** Neutral
cbsnews.com • 60M visits 📅 2023-02-10 04:53 AM

Matt Rourke / AP Amazon Fresh, **Whole Foods Market**, Bristol Farms and more offer grocery delivery and pickup through Amazon. Meet all your grocery needs with Amazon Fresh, or have your favorite Whole Foods and Bristol Farms selections delivered to your home [...] All one- and two-hour delivery orders from **Whole Foods Market** will include a \$10 se...

[Visit](#) [Tags](#) [Delete](#) [More actions](#)


Whole Food's Delivery

 **12 Whole Food Products Worth Adding to Your Cart This Month** Positive
yahoo.com • 3.3B visits 📅 2023-02-10 07:58 AM

cookies have a butter base that's soft and crumbles with one bite, but the star is a raspberry jam filling that's tart enough to balance the sweetness of the cookie. Muffuletta Pizza on **Whole Foods Market** Hot Bar. Courtesy of Whole Foods. Perhaps my favorite item I tried this month was this limited-edition Muffuletta pizza from the hot bar... [...] ter

[Visit](#) [Tags](#) [Delete](#) [More actions](#)

New Product Release


 **@Melaniezee & @Dimka** Positive
tiktok.com 📅 2023-02-08 07:34 AM

This food haul thoughhh..ah💛... **Whole Foods Market**..I love you!...💛 #selfies #selfietime #wholefoods #wholefoodsmarket #myfavoritethings #eatcleann #nutrition #bulkingseason #bulk #bodybuilder #naturalbody #naturalbodybuilding #wednesdayvibes #humpday #legday #legsfordays #legday #productreview #supplement #supplementsthatwork #GymLife #Fitness #fi...

🗨️ 0 • 👍 23 • 🔄 0

[Visit](#) [Tags](#) [Delete](#) [More actions](#)

Grocery Haul/Taste Test

 **WSJ** Neutral
twitter.com • 20M followers 📅 2023-01-30 10:12 PM

Whole Foods Market is asking suppliers to help the retailer bring prices down on packaged groceries as inflation moderates <https://on.wsj.com/3DufWnQ>

👍 7 • 🔄 1

[Visit](#) [Tags](#) [Delete](#) [More actions](#)

Inflation Prices

 **Sinmiaraoye** Negative
twitter.com • 2423 followers 📅 2023-02-05 03:05 AM

This is one of the shit they did to me at **Whole Foods Market**. A white woman interrupted my check out process. I told her off. The cashier treated me as the aggressor. Not surprised about this because Black people are supposed to take shit silently.


👍 1 • 🔄 0

[Visit](#) [Tags](#) [Delete](#) [Add to PDF report](#) [More actions](#)

Poor Customer Service


Top Mentions & Profiles

1

 **Amy** Positive
tiktok.com · 2023-02-11 03:10 AM


Strawberry Taste Test Result! All three kinds were better than the regular strawberries from big supermarkets, but Driscoll's Sweetest Batch from the US that I purchased from the **Whole Foods Market** in NYC was definitely worth paying extra money for! #strawberry #winterstrawberry #eatnycnyc #wholefoodsmarket #tastetest #strawberrytastetest

2

 **Best grocery delivery services in 2023** Neutral
cbsnews.com · 60M visits · 2023-02-10 04:53 AM

Matt Rourke / AP Amazon Fresh, **Whole Foods Market**, Bristol Farms and more offer grocery delivery and pickup through Amazon. Meet all your grocery needs with Amazon Fresh, or have your favorite Whole Foods and Bristol Farms selections delivered to your home [...] All one- and two-hour delivery orders from **Whole Foods Market** will include a \$10 se...


3

 **Jamie | Clean Eating + Living** Neutral
tiktok.com · 2023-02-07 08:30 AM

WEEKLY GROCERY HAUL 🛒 to grab some essentials @**Whole Foods Market** for the week that I needed to restock my kitchen with #cleaneating #groceryhaul #wholefoodsmarket #wholefoodshaul

0 · 134 · 1


4

 **axios** Neutral
twitter.com · 648K followers · 2023-01-31 09:26 AM

Whole Foods Market is looking to cut prices, which could help it shake its longtime nickname "Whole Paycheck." <https://trib.al/A3Qej3j>

26 · 8

5

 **WSJ** Neutral
twitter.com · 20M followers · 2023-01-30 10:12 PM

Whole Foods Market is asking suppliers to help the retailer bring prices down on packaged groceries as inflation moderates <https://on.wsj.com/3DufWnQ>

7 · 1

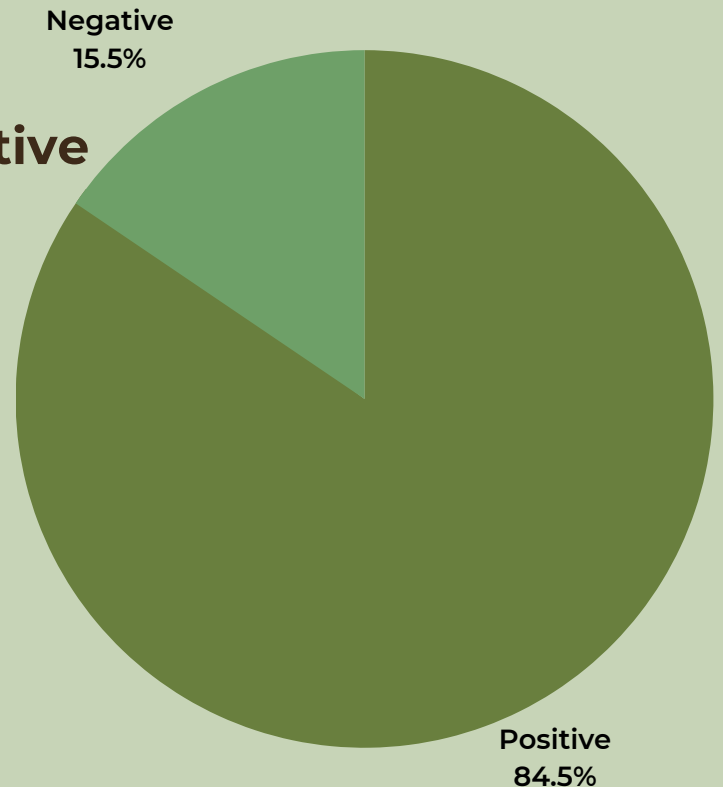


TOP FIVE PROFILES

- Wall Street Journal
- Whole Foods
- axios
- MisterSalesman
- mySA

Sentiments

84.5% of all mentions were positive and 15.5% were negative regarding Whole Foods.

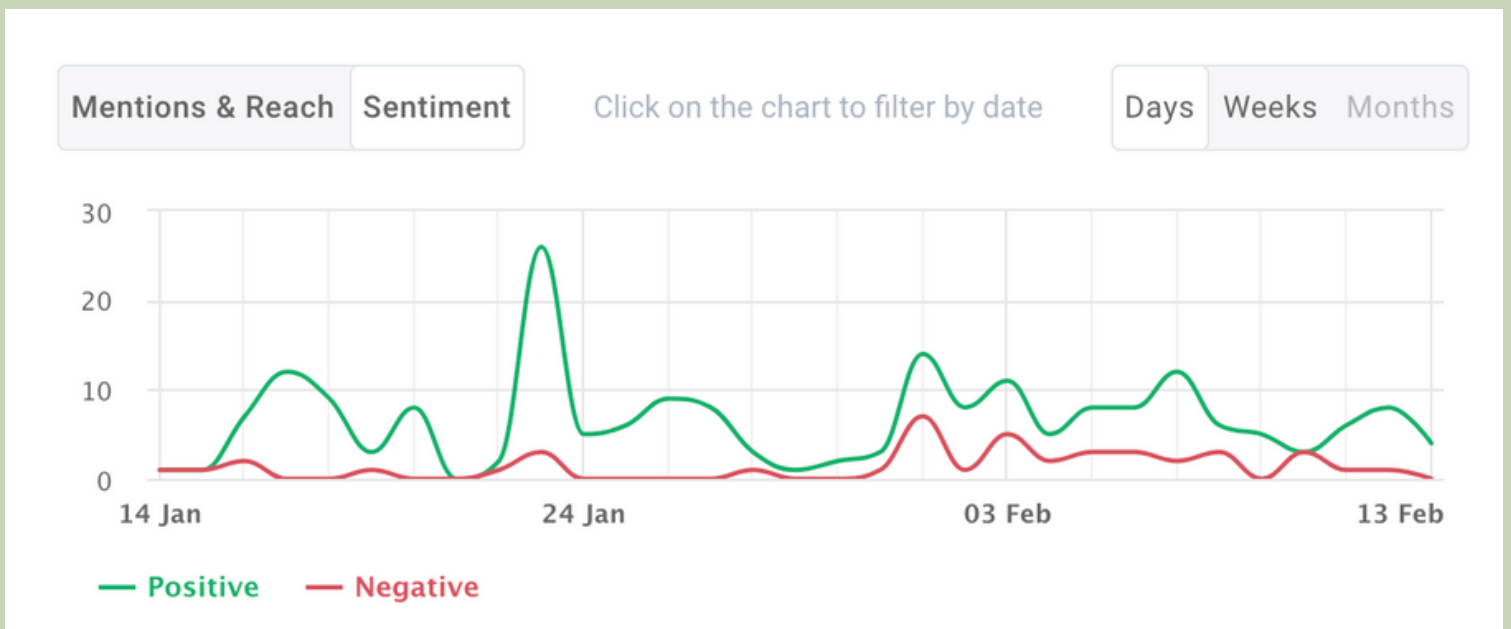


Positive sentiments showed trends of new products and excitement for new products.

- One yahoo.com article stated "12 Whole Food Products Worth Adding to Your Cart This Month" (Gutierrez, 2023) and has 3.3B insights.

Negative sentiments showed trends of employees being rude to customers and after analysis was discovered that the majority of negative mentions were found on Twitter.com

- "Frozen Pizza Review, 'Whole Foods missed the mark on this one, which had me feeling anything but whole...just hungry'" The article mentioned the pizza was soggy and very greasy. This post had 242.6M insights.



Metric Analysis

2519 Mentions	624 Social Media Mentions	1895 Non-Social Mentions
1,061,037 Estimated Social Media Reach	154,672,319 Non Social Reach	1,003 Social Media Interactions
871 User Generated Content	929 Social Media Likes	75 Videos Incl. Tiktok
234 Positive Mentions	43 Negative Mentions	\$8.46M Ave

When analyzing these numbers it is clear that Whole Foods needs a higher engagement rate with their socials since the estimated reach is immensely higher than their actual social media mentions and interactions. Their mentions for non-social platforms are a higher total than social media mentions, but still, the reach for nonsocial is in the millions, while the mentions are only in the thousands. I suggest they increase engagement by using trending hashtags, influential sites, and get creative with the copy on their content by adding some of the words in green listed on Brand24 under the context of discussion, since those words are what people are talking about when they mention Whole Foods.

cake tab corn include kroger keith Whole Foods Market storage cheese everyday target company month home com prime
Apple sale premium powder card arctic good drink retail food mercadolibre ounce team position gift clothe
amazon mackey new foods time oil trend original location try chantilly kvarey fool exclusive alphabet
dog market experience grab recommend member click customer mention chain website store locator Amazon
Fresh motley electrolyte The Motley Fool salmon favorite grocery mark berry physical dea john february
board employee photo united buy enjoy director organic come Amazon Prime Student discount tunisia trial view
speights walmart subsidiary hot year stock water sports unlimited available find ceo hydration

Metric Analysis

Influential Sites

1. Youtube.com
2. Twitter.com
3. Yahoo.com
4. Amazon.com
5. Tiktok.com

Trending Hashtags

1. #amazon
2. #prime
3. #opportunity
4. #jobs
5. #hiring

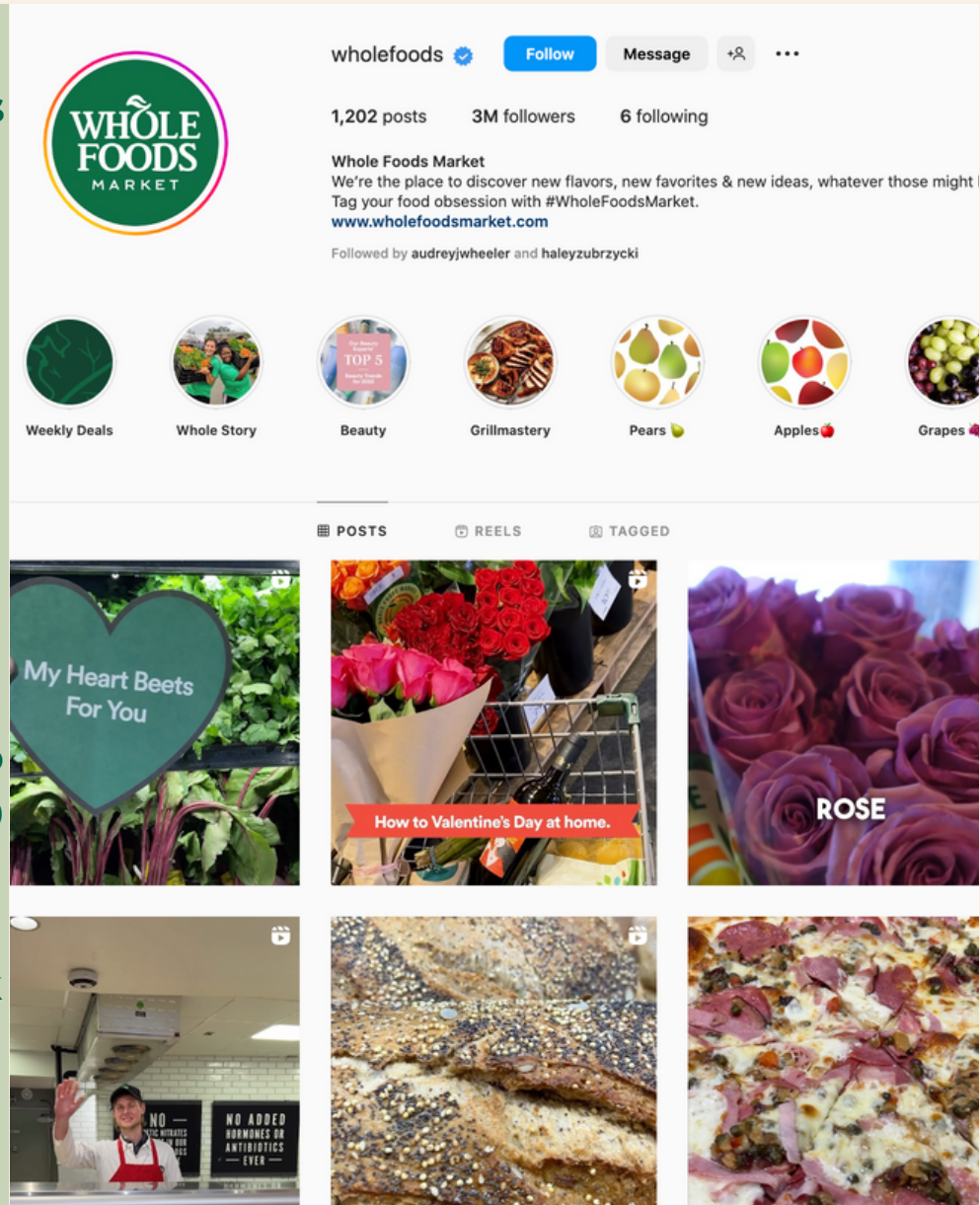
These hashtags are trending because Amazon owns Whole Foods and through Amazon Prime, you can online order groceries and other items from Whole Foods and have them shipped the next day with Prime. These hashtags are also important to Whole Foods because they are continuously opening new stores across the country and having popular hashtags be related to new job opportunities will help them find passionate future employees.

Social Media Analytics

Instagram: @wholefoods

Whole Foods' Instagram page is full of reels and images showcasing their products through recipes, and fun life hack videos.

One video is "How to Valentine's Day at home" which gives inspiration to their followers on new things to purchase for the holiday. Their posts seem to average around 1,000-3,000 likes and around 100 comments per post. They post around 3 times a week and are very up-to-date on current trends and popular viral sounds.



Highlighting this post from September, since it's interactive. It encourages the audience to engage by having each zodiac sign paired with a Whole Foods fall flavor to help personalize the brand.

Social Media Analytics

Whole Foods Market

3740 Midtown Dr, Tampa, FL

4.4 ★★★★★ 1,729 reviews ⓘ

People often mention

All

organic 57

healthy 29

salad bar 24

vegan 21

+6

On Google Reviews, the Midtown Whole Foods had a 4.4 stars out of 5, and almost every review I saw was positive. Most reviews are talking about how the location is very up-to-date, the employees are helpful, and the store is clean. I have to say that these reviews do line up with my Mystery Shopping results, since 4 out of the 5 customers I observed were helped by an employee with a great attitude.



Elizabeth Rocchino-Torres

Local Guide · 16 reviews · 5 photos

★★★★★ 7 months ago

I've been to many Whole Foods throughout the country and this one is by far my favorite. To start, it is quite spacious. The store has an excellent variety of healthy foods. The buffet is to die for with a great selection of foods and everything is well organized and clean! Staff is friendly and super helpful. The parking garage attached is spacious. There is also an escalator ramp that allows your cart to go up so you can take your food to the car. Overall amazing experience.



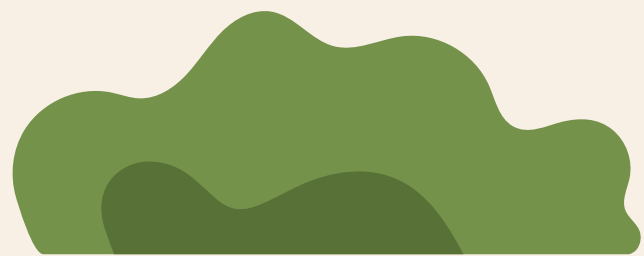
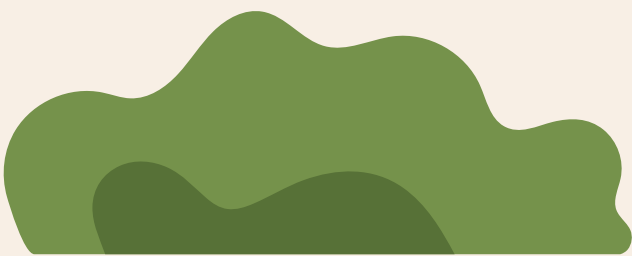
Summary Insights

Overall, Whole Foods does not have too many issues or problems within its brand. They reported a 2021 annual revenue of \$469.82B, display positive reviews on both Yelp and Google Reviews and uphold a respected reputation nationwide. However, they seem to lack in their opportunity with social media.

Whole Foods' engagement on both non-social and social media platforms is extremely low when compared to its estimated reach for social and non-social (Brand24, 2023). Although they are averaging around a couple of thousand likes on each post, for having 3M followers that like count should be much higher. I think if the brand took the time to engage with its consumers a little more the activity rate on socials would greatly improve. I also think they post a lot of Reels on Instagram and should start doing more image posting instead and save the Reels for their TikTok account.

With Millennials as their main demographic, I think they should also focus on them and their desires and wants. Millennials are very cause-driven, promoting more of the benefits of eating organic and natural products or showing support for environmental causes would also help increase traffic on their socials with their target market.

Whole Foods should engage in further research and analytics to take advantage of these opportunities so they can grow even larger and become more successful.




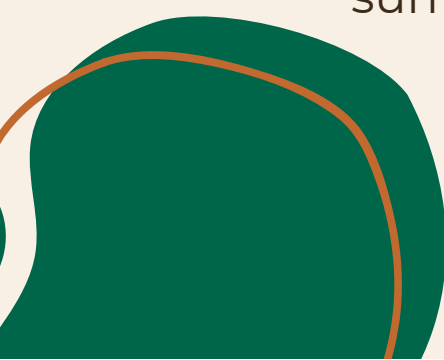


CONCLUSION

Whole Foods Markets is an American grocery chain that exclusively sells natural and organic products with the purpose to nourish people and the planet (Whole Foods, 2023). The employees strive to meet and exceed the expectations of every shopping experience and do it with a positive attitude.

With the demographic being middle-upper-class individuals it's important to maintain the quality that their target market happily pays extra for. Based on the mystery shopping observations conducted, the employees seem sincere in doing their job to help maintain that quality and flourishing company.

If Whole Foods focuses more on its social and non-social media mentions and engagement it has the potential to become an even greater success and bigger brand. By utilizing fathead keywords with competition rates below 70, they can increase traffic to their website and posts. The same goes for using resources like Brand24's word cloud and trending hashtags to help Whole Foods stay on top of popular topics and themes surrounding the brand conversation.



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