



essie social media audit

Alex Piwtoratsky



an overview of essie

Created by entrepreneur [Essie Weingarten](#) in 1981, essie nail polish debuted on a trip to Las Vegas with a 12 color line. After successfully selling to and integrating with local salons in Las Vegas, Weingarten finally branded her polish line in 1999. Her products would soon dominate the market and in the summer of 2010, the indie brand [was acquired](#) by L'Oréal.

As a consumer beauty product, essie markets itself as a drugstore luxury; meaning it is accessible enough to be picked up at your local Walgreens, but its formula performs like that of specialty lacquer at a high-end salon. This simple, elegant, but relatable aspect transcends how essie brands itself as a company and speaks to the type of customer they wish to attract.

On social media, essie is extremely active - holding six social media platforms. Every channel, besides their Tumblr channel (dead since 2017), is updated daily. To view their content, click on the icons below to be brought to their respective channels.





**what I concluded
after auditing
essie's channels...**

“

essie's social media objective is to create an online style hub where trendy, affordable, high-quality nails are considered to be a form of self-expression & the crucial finishing touch to any successful look.”



target audience

Demographics:

- Between the ages 16 - 34
- Majority of customers are Asian or Hispanic in ethnicity
- Making between 80k - 125k
- College-educated with an advanced degree or in school
- Are not parents

Psychographics:

- Very feminine in style
- Prefers to do their nails in the intimacy of their own home
- Loves trendy colors
- Regularly peruses the makeup aisle when shopping
- Experiments with self expression

Pain Points:

- Most users do not buy their nail polish online, because nail polish is so accessible in the drugstore many do not think to engage with essie's content on social media (not a top of mind product)
- The drugstore nail polish market is pretty saturated with competitors with lower prices. Many from less affluent households would rather make MORE purchases on many different nail colors than splurging on one or two bottles of essie polish. Nail polish is seen more as experimental, not a must like makeup where people would pay out for a certain brand of foundation/skincare.



social media content pillars

What's Hot

As a brand seen in so many stores and salons, essie is constantly keeping up with trends, celebrities, and their competitors.

Their “What’s Hot” content features new product launches, looks from the runway, popular nail art designs, and other bits of company news.

This pillar is extremely important as they want to remain as relevant as possible. While nail care seems trivial, polish alone brought in nearly \$570 million in 2018. Indie nail polish brands are slowly gaining traction on larger, mainstream ones, so it’s good to stay on top.



From the Fans

With so many people loving on their brand since the ‘80s, it only makes sense for essie to share the talented nail art creations of their fans.

Their main channels for sharing and curating content are Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter. Those platforms allow brands to easily be tagged in user-generated posts and share them.

While the brand doesn’t share every piece of content they are tagged in on their main feeds, they still put effort into maintaining their Facebook community and showing support by likes or comments.





social media content pillars pt. II

'Tis the Season

As most of essie's launches occur during the season changes, like many fashion brands, their brand needs to make sure their new products align with some seasonal happenings.

Most recently, this can be seen in their [#essievalentinesday collection](#). Limited edition colors and packaging were revealed for 2019 to stir some excitement around the romantic holiday.

This also sparked [#essielove](#), a hashtag I believe will span past February and become a fixture in their social media marketing/content presence.



Nailing Education

It is important with any personal beauty product to know how to use it properly. While nail polish seems rather straightforward to the average consumer, there is a lot of knowledge that goes into salon-like application.

essie uses its YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest pages to showcase helpful how-tos and nail care tips. As this brand has specific ties to salons, it is important for them to not only educate the technicians who will be using their products, but also the general consumers who might not be as skilled or knowledgeable.





brand voice & personality

Brand Personality:

- Trendy
- Youthful
- Punny
- Enthusiastic
- Succinct
- Youthful
- Inclusive
- Feminine

Brand Voice:

After viewing the company's content, I believe that essie's voice is that of an enthusiastic guru. Their habit of writing in all lowercase stems from their wordmark & differentiates them from the competition. While posts are short and sweet, essie makes sure to remember the crowd. Engaging the audience is encouraged and helps essie to cultivate their specific following. As a source for everything beauty and style-related, essie strives to be an authority on what is trending. essie is a brand that promotes creativity, femininity, and beauty without being condescending, allowing them to lead in followers and engagement in the mainstream nail market.



what they're doing right

- Engaging and brief copy, suitable for all forms of social media platforms
- Consistent imagery quality, even when curated
- Product campaigns are seamlessly integrated with their social media
- Great use of Instagram Highlights, subjects are separated by topic and consistent emoji icons.
- Plugging into events, holidays, and pop culture to maintain relevance in the fashion/style sphere
- Using YouTube to hone in on people looking for tutorials and tips, and keeping video content to an appropriate length (viewers less likely to click off if shorter)



**what the
competitors
are doing**

Competitor: O.P.I

OPI is a nail polish company that is the most direct rival to essie. This brand, also founded in 1981, began as hybrid business between acrylic nail systems and dental supply sales. Upon the success of the nail care side of the business, they decided to expand and close the dental side of the business.

On social media, OPI is killing the game. They are catering directly to the younger 16 - 24 audience they share with essie by going on platforms like Snapchat. Their pages are meticulously upkeep, with their Instagram content gradating in color scheme as your scroll down their profile. This works well with their tagline, “We Believe #ColorIsTheAnswer.”

Their content is focused less on celebrities and seasonal holidays and more on creating their own experience. Their presence is unique, edgy, and I would even argue a bit trendier than essie. OPI is pulling ahead because they are fluid and detail-oriented. What I used to think was a farty, old-lady brand has turned itself into one that is focused on serving up its own unique view and sharing the creativity of others.



competitor: sally hansen

Sally Hansen is the oldest competitor with the business being founded in 1946 by the very Sally Hansen herself! As a more affordable brand, they rake in the younger, less affluent consumers. This company is one of the few nail companies that actually have successful lines besides nail care. Sally Hansen currently also specializes in sunless tanning products, hair removal products, and beauty tools. Their brand emphasizes “self-made beauty” with #SallyMade and encourages ladies to pave their own way.

On social, Sally Hansen has made an effort to go global. By having a social media presence on Russian social platform, VK, they're making themselves more accessible to a vital part of their market. What Hansen doesn't have compared to essie and OPI is a clear vision. Their content appears to be mostly product-driven with less of an attention to creating a community. Their content APPEARS to be corporate-made content however one cannot be sure they aren't just reposting and not crediting on various channels. This brand does do a good job, but more consistency in content could help.





**how essie
can improve on
social media**



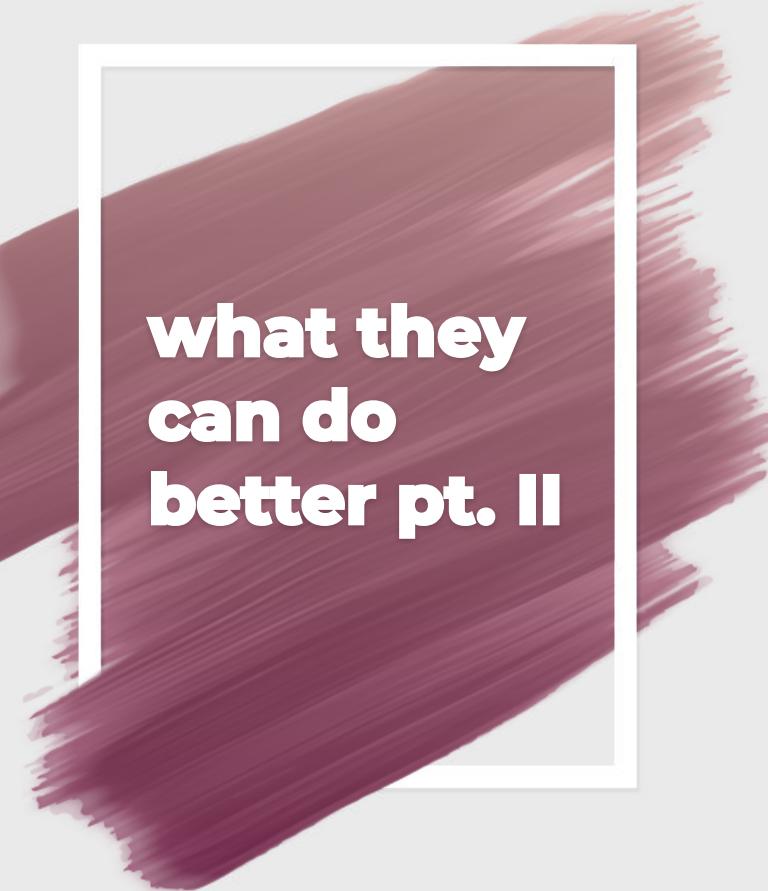
what they can do better

Hashtags:

One area where essie needs to improve is their use of hashtags. Across all platforms, there seems to be no rhyme or reason for how they use them. Many hashtags are created for their nail polish shades, but with over 250 (and growing!) it doesn't make sense to hashtag every shade name. Posts with hashtags should only be used on Instagram and Twitter. Facebook posts with hashtags usually tank. Instead, essie should concentrate on tagging other users. Whether it be a celebrity or indie nail tech, tagging the post does both parties a direct amount of good.

Address Video Content:

A lot of their YouTube content is applicable to their Facebook or Instagram channels. By spreading what they've already created, they could save money and time. Sharing the whole video, or even just snippets will allow essie audiences to be engaged in a way they haven't before. Essie should especially pay special attention to video on Instagram as it has a way higher engagement rate than static photos - live video also performs extremely well. I cannot find one video instagram post on their feed. Step it up!



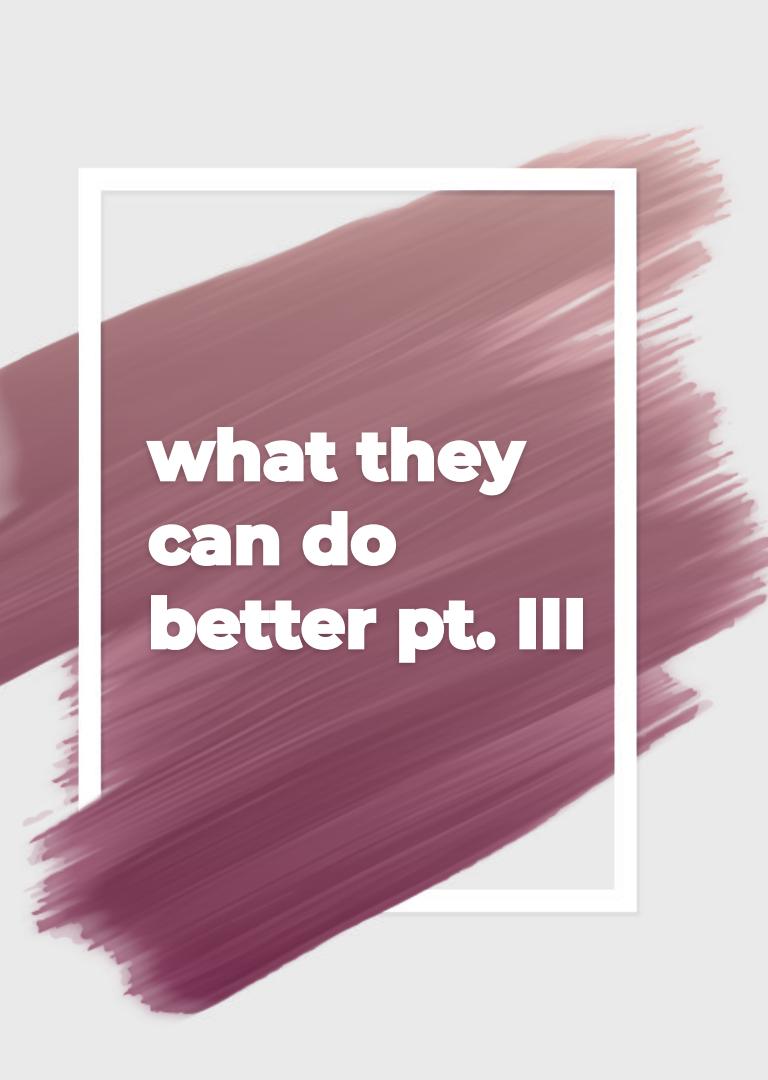
what they can do better pt. II

Diversity:

Something I noticed when scrolling down essie's various feeds is the lack of diversity in their content. Most of the curated content featured the hands of Caucasian women. I feel like they might want to take that into consideration, especially as the bulk of their target audience is of Asian and Hispanic ethnicity. When new products launch, show swatches of color on all different skin tones so consumers can better identify which colors would look best on them. The beauty industry is now taking diversity very seriously, and essie should really put more emphasis on this in the future.

Carousel Posts:

For a company who has many different product shades in their launches, carousel posts are an easy way to display everything at once without being too crowded visually or clogging people's feeds with multiple posts. This type of post would also translate well if they ever wanted to do paid ads. Currently, I don't see any ads running on their Facebook page but a carousel could have done great to promote their latest Valentine's Day collection.



what they can do better pt. III

Use the Instagram Shopping Feature:

After going through their content on Instagram, I noticed they were severely misusing the shopping feature. Under the shopping bag icon on their profile, only two polishes were listed - and they weren't from the current featured collection. I also noticed none of the posts had inserted the shopping feature for the polishes in their feed posts. Instead of hashtagging every shade name, essie should use the shopping feature and instead link to it on their site. This will declutter their copy and increase click-throughs and purchases from their online store.

Customer Engagement:

While they don't receive an exorbitant amount of comments on their posts, essie should make more of an effort to engage with their fans. Indie brands are killing it in this area because even a simple response of emojis shows that the company read & appreciated the consumer's comment. If a community manager is not within scope, simply doing engaging posts like polls, can get the audiences to genuinely interact with your brand.



the wrap up

“

essie's social media presence is trendy, fun, and integrated. To reap the largest benefit, the brand must explore video, diversity - in both content and ethnicity, and rethink how they interact with other brands. They are keeping up with their competition, but I'm excited to see how they switch up their strategy in the future.”