



CASESTUDY

TRANSFORMING CHILI'S PRESENCE ON TIKTOK THROUGH ICUC'S COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY





"When the pandemic hit and we were faced with necessary budget cuts, the only agency that got protected was ICUC. We just knew that we could not move on without ICUC's help"

Luz Bickert, Senior Marketing Manager Chili's



Founded in 1975 in Dallas, Texas, Chili's people first approach continues to play into who they are and how they engage Guests. Today, Chili's restaurants are known for food perfection; being technology pioneers leading the industry in the digital Guest experience; and for putting their people first because they foster a culture of family that makes every Guest and Team Member feel special.

HIGHLIGHTS

CHALLENGES

- Knowing how to optimize User Generated Content (UGC) on TikTok
- Hiring a social media monitoring team who embodies Chili's values
- Assuring social media crisis support during the 2020 COVID-19 crisis

SOLUTION

- ICUC's strong "big brand" background
- Fast integration into ICUC's platform-specific social listening tools
- 24/7, culture-driven customer care capabilities

RESULTS

- Countless surprise and delight campaigns
- High risk TikTok community escalations
- Over 25,000 items moderated, 14,000 mentions tracked, and 1,000 items escalated per month, on average

CHALLENGES

Optimize new audience engagement verticals with trustworthy partnership

Chili's approach to technology innovation is simple – build an infrastructure and keep the digital Guest experience at its core. In 2013, they revolutionized the casual dining industry with the introduction of Ziosk® tabletop tablets, now on more than 70,000 Chili's restaurant tables nationwide.

With technology on their side, the demand for social media brand engagement was always something their teams were prepared to handle – until one social platform amassed to 2, then 3, then countless.

TikTok specifically presented both opportunities and challenges for the Chili's team, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic. As Luz explains, they needed to outsource digital care strategies and right-hand services they could trust with a big brand's name and time commitment.





She says, "One of the biggest challenges was simply that we weren't on the platform we wanted to be, and we needed a team who could track and listen to when we were mentioned and find ways to uniquely engage with those people."



Chili's needed a partner to not only optimize their brand presence but understand the community on the platform, as well as the UGC strategy.

"We heard about ICUC from our media agency, 360i, who highly recommended ICUC. At the time one of the most appealing aspects was 24-7 coverage. It's just hard to find experts that are comfortable being in the space and with our customers all the time."

Chili's found the 24/7, trusted partner in ICUC, and the two teams partnered together to tackle TikTok optimization, and a broad social media community management strategy.



At a fundamental level, Chili's is a restaurant. But we believe we're more than a restaurant, we're a place for family, loved ones and friends to come together. It's important to us to find a team who can embrace that brand at a core level - ICUC is that team."





SOLUTION

ICUC's strong "big brand" TikTok knowledge and culture-driven, 24/7 digital care coverage (during a pandemic)

"One of the most helpful aspects of ICUC stepping in was that our team there had such expertise around large brand-use on TikTok. We felt a level of ease and comfort with them, knowing they not only cared about our brand's safety but also the quality of work."

When ICUC and Chili's started their partnership, the first step was to understand the brand voice at a values level.

"We celebrate 'togetherness,' both internally as a team at Chili's and with our guests. It's important to us that our partners embrace that brand at a core level."

The notion of togetherness was tested quite literally as the world shut down during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Restaurants were hit badly, and Chili's needed constant online communication and moderation.

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The pandemic presented different battles for brands around the world. Some experienced mass layoffs, while others had unique requests and challenges from a product line and operations standpoint that deeply affected customer conversations online. For Chili's, having ICUC's social listening team on their side allowed them to understand valuable employee complaints and discrepancies they would have otherwise not known.



"During the terrible time in Spring of 2020 when there were mass layoffs and furloughs, ICUC was a big help, knowing to inform us around employee statements on social media through their social listening tools. This was a game changer in navigating a challenging time with a greater understanding and higher communication level in our internal teams."





RESULTS

Countless Tiktok surprise and delight campaigns & over 25,000 items moderated per month

Luz mentions "We've been able to take advantage of so many surprise and delight campaigns because of ICUC. They pay such close attention to individual voices and nuanced conversations."

Through diligent social listening methods and seamless software integration, the ICUC team was tapped into nuanced stories related to the restaurant and the brand. This allows the team to deeply understand trends and traffic spike origins.



On Average 25,000 items/ month moderated





"On TikTok, ICUC found a woman speaking about the kids she babysits for. She said, 'They think I work at Chili's, and I don't have the heart to tell them that I don't work for Chili's -- I work for them!'

Through rapid escalations and creative solutions. ICUC was able to pitch this over as an opportunity to Chili's within 24 hours.

"So, when ICUC saw this, they told us internally, and our outreach teams were able to send swag and a uniform and everything to show the kids and 'prove' that she had a Chili's job. It was so cool."

ICUC and Chili's teams were able to establish a mutually beneficial and enthusiastic partnership that endured 2020 and continues to build.

"What's stood out to me how amazing the people at ICUC make the account. That's what's made the difference for us at Chili's. Sarah Benton has been amazing. We've also had some amazing content specialists and we are always sad if they get promoted or change teams! I'd just like to commend the individuals who have worked on the Chili's account at ICUC - we appreciate you!"

ICUC.social delivers fully integrated social media community management and digital customer care to trusted brands around the globe.

LET'S TALK



