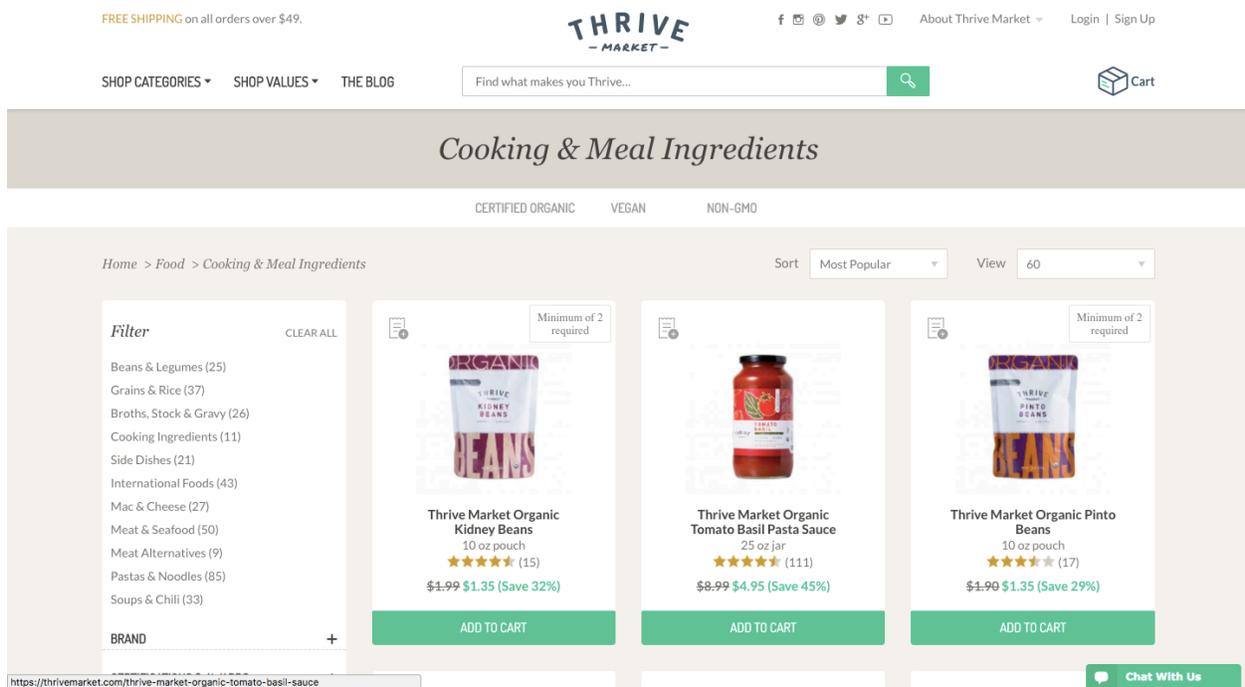


S2: User Research

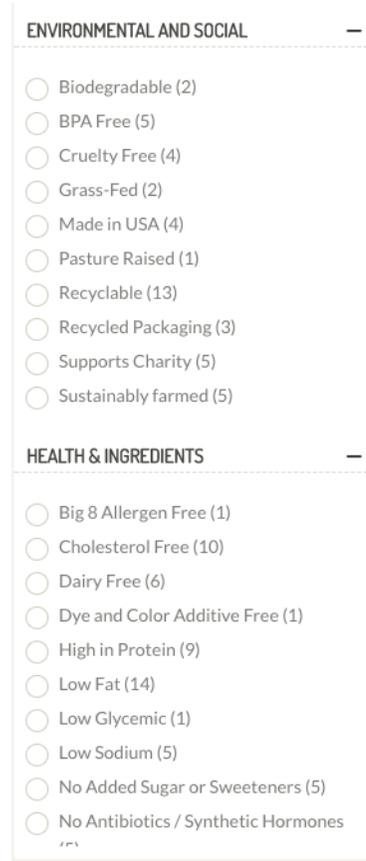
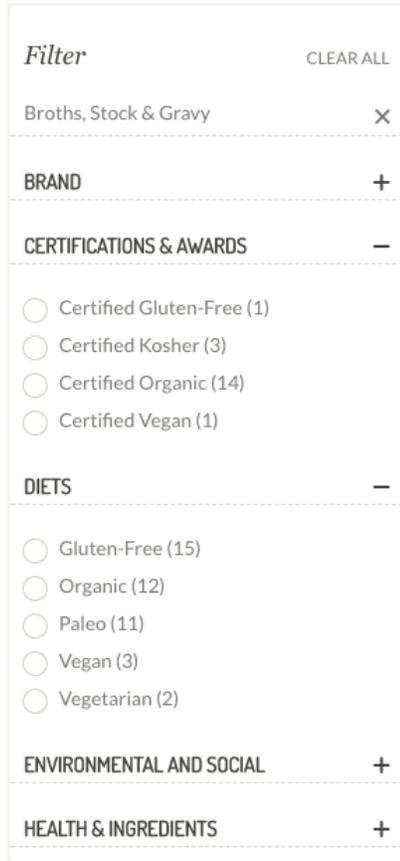
Project Description

Our group project aims to build a product that is catered towards students that have a dietary restriction. Within our group we defined that these dietary restrictions can be religion-based, health-based, and/or ethic-based. While we don't know what exactly we are going to build yet, we mutually agreed that this user group is an often overlooked group of people yet exists plentiful within our families and peers.

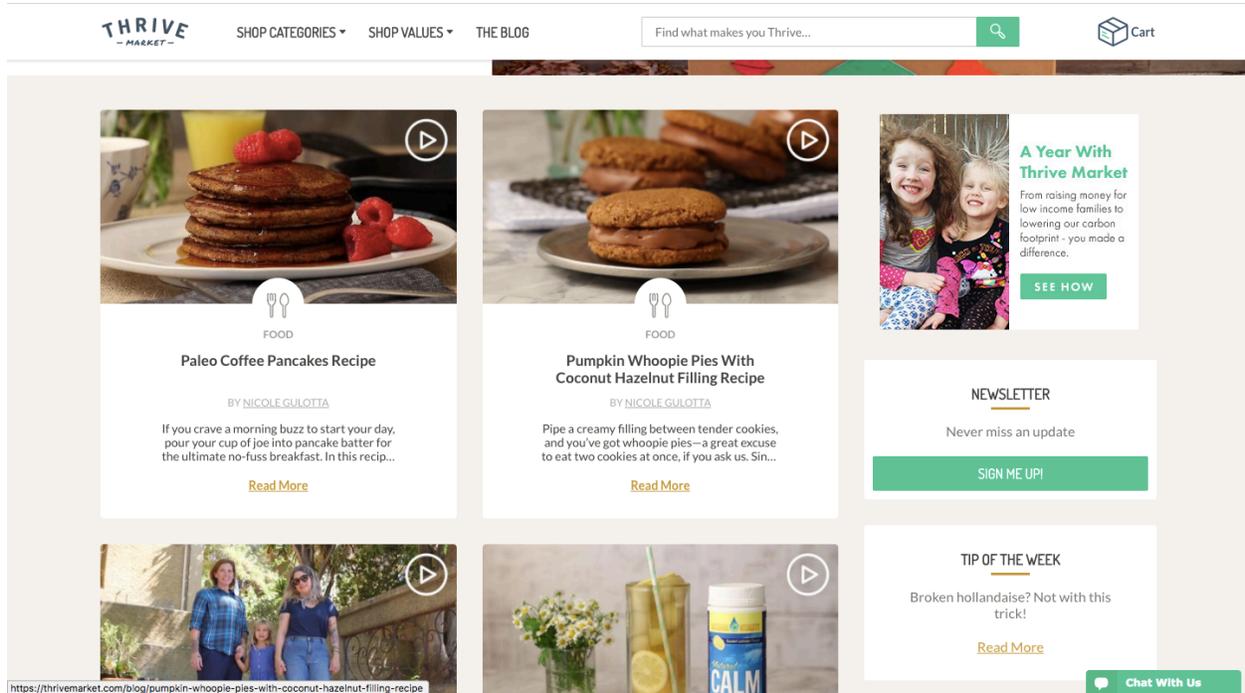
Competitive Analysis: Thrive Market



Thrive Market is an online market place that the student (who is vegan) I interview uses to make orders from anything from food to health goods. It's similar to something like Amazon where the website basically lists a variety of products. Except the key difference is that its catered for people with dietary restrictions. In some ways, it's similar to Amazon Prime in that it works with a membership model (\$59.95/month) and offers great discounts (usually around 20% – 30% off) the retail price. Thrive Market is available on the web, iOS, and Android.



The website itself offers an incredible amount of filtering features for those who are conscious of what they consume. Unlike Amazon where users are given filtering options based on things like color and price, Thrive Market can filter products based on brand, certification & awards, diets, environmental and social causes, and health & ingredients. The screenshots only show a fraction of the filtering options. Each product listing is very detailed with nutrition information and a reviewing system where buyers rate the product. While packing all of these neat features, I would describe the design as being lightweight and inviting which makes the product easy to use and navigate.



Another neat feature of Thrive Market is that it has its own blog with many editors that write about delicious recipes, healthy lifestyle tips, skincare tips, and more. While I did not know that this website offered this feature, it seems to be very useful for people with dietary restrictions and I would be interested in seeing how people use this. While Thrive Market is first and foremost a place to buy your everyday needs, it's great how they use this blog as a platform to build a community that share information with each other.

User Interview – Transcript

- “Thanks for being part of this interview. I’m going to start with some basic information. What’s your dietary restriction, age, and also year?”
 - “Yeah no problem. I’m a vegan. I’m 19 years old and I’m currently a sophomore.”
- “Cool that was simple. How long have you had this dietary restriction and why?”
 - “A year and a half. Why? I used to do this for fun but then I started looking into the ethical reason. I saw this documentary, read articles, which is on Netflix by the way, and basically it became more than health reasons. Yeah environmental and political reasons have played a big part in my decision.”
- “I see, so what drives you to stay vegan today?”
 - “I mean the reason I started to live the vegan life was for health benefits but what made me stay was all of the other reasons I just mentioned.”
- “That’s great stuff... the next question is about the resources that you navigate your life as a vegan. So this can be people, apps, or any other thing.”
 - “Okay so I’m going to start with social media like Instagram food bloggers and then there are vegan Youtubers. I first saw these people and thought ‘wow, they look good’ and wanted to see if I could like, reflect that too.
- “Quick question. What’s the content of these social media platforms that you follow?”
 - “It’s mostly vlogs. ‘This is my gym, this is what I’m eating’ kind of stuff. They’ve served as sort of an inspiration to keep me continue this lifestyle because all of the benefits they have encountered over the years.
- “I know veganism is more than just food. What are the other things in your life that needs to be regulated other than food?”
 - “Makeup, household items, clothes, leather and stuff too. I mean I do have leather items before I went vegan but I will not try to actively buy it.”
- “What other things that have helped you stay on track as a vegan?”
 - “Hmmm... there are subscription boxes that they send every month. Inside is like crystals, household stuff, and beauty stuff. I only pay like \$30 and it’s really great because it’s like a cute surprise for me that I can look forward too. Also there’s something called Thrive Market which is like a hybrid of Amazon Fresh and Costco because they deliver based on your dietary restriction. And they sell beauty products, skincare products, and much more it to you at a discounted services. And these things I learned from Youtubers.
- “So I know you cook a lot but where do you eat?”

- “I’ve actually never eaten on campus haha. Easiest places are Thai food places, Japanese food, and Mexican foods. I feel recently now, because demand is increasing, there is always an option for me.”
- “How do you make sure that what your eating is okay for you to eat?”
 - “I ask before I order. Well actually, I would look at their menu online and make sure that there is something for me. And if spontaneously stop at a restaurant, I look for menu indications. And if that fails, I’ll ask the waiter/waitress and see if there are any options for me.”
- “That’s a great answer, thanks. How does your dietary restriction affect your social life?”
 - “It’s hard to go out with people and share with people. I guess family-style dining is not really an option. And then, if I go to events then I have no options over the food. Even with clubs and things, it’s pizza, donuts, hamburgers, and stuff. So I always have to eat beforehand and that would sometime would determine if I’d want to go that event or not.”
 - “Not that it happens a lot, but when you’re with an employee and they are like ‘this is on me’ it’s kinda awkward. Same thing for friends’ parents and grandparents. I mean they do it with good intentions but it’s an inconvenience for me. And when this happens, and this depends on my relationship with them, I try to find something that I can eat from the food provided. If they point it out, I’ll tell them”
- “In an ideal world, that might help with your diet?”
 - “In an ideal world, I don’t want the image of vegans to be this ‘I’m gonna go on a protest and tell the world how bad people are for eating animal products’. I don’t like saying I’m vegan and I think society has made it that way for me and other vegans in the world. I just want to be more comfortable in my own lifestyle.”
 - “There are apps that tell me where vegan restaurants. I mean it’s helpful but it’s not always up-to-date so I don’t use it all the time. It’s great though because it means that I can avoid having an interaction with the people working at the restaurant. It’s called Happy Cow by the way.”
 - “I also wish just menus being friendlier. Even just a parentheses with vegan inside them would help me a ton.”
- “Cool, I’m curious to hear about process of buying groceries. I know I can go to any grocery store and just buy whatever but I’m assuming it’s different for you.”

- “I mean typically I can go to a Safeway and buy produce and don’t have much problem there. But usually my go-to is Trader Joes and PCC, which is a co-op and they have all-organic all-natural items. Kind of like whole foods meets a co-op. But I always check the ingredients label because it’s always good to double check. And then I always try to buy things that have the simplest ingredients without all the junk.”
- “Do you feel supported by the UW campus for your lifestyle?”
 - “I don’t expect other people to be vegan and people don’t expect me to no be vegan so it’s a more of a mutual respect thing. I mean UW doesn’t do a really great job for catering towards my lifestyle. I hear UCLA does much better do in the cafeteria. But I don’t have peers that bully me or anything so it’s been no problem for me.”

User Interview - Consolidated

- What are your dietary restrictions?
 - vegan
- What is your age?
 - 19
- What is your year?
 - Sophomore
- How long have you had this dietary restriction? Why?
 - Has been vegan for a year and a half now
 - Started just for fun
 - Prior to being vegan, she has tried out many diets but eventually landed on veganism
 - Started as a way to live a healthy lifestyle but eventually discovered a documentary that made her become more passionate about the environmental and political reasons
- What resources are available to you (App, signage, etc)?
 - Social media has played a big influence
 - Instagram bloggers and Youtubers that are also vegan and live a healthy lifestyle has given her a drive to be vegan
 - The content from these influencers includes vegan recipes, healthy cooking tips, makeup product, gym routines, etc.
 - Being vegan is not just about the diet but a whole lifestyle including makeup, household items, clothes (specifically leather)
 - Subscription boxes that includes some of the products (\$30/month) which she uses to get vegan-friendly products (not food)
 - “Thrivemarket” is a service which she learned from a vlogger
 - Kind of like Amazon Fresh/Costco hybrid
 - Groceries, supplements, cleaning products, skincare
 - Basically sells vegan-friendly products for cheap
- Where do you eat?
 - Never eaten on campus
 - Thai food places, Japanese food and Mexican food are safe options
 - But usually, restaurants have at least one vegan-friendly option which helps

- Before she goes to a restaurant, she looks at the menu online to make sure there are food options for her
- How do your dietary restrictions affect your social life?
 - What challenges do you face?
 - Most people are omnivorous and when she goes out to eat out with friends, she can't share food with other people (family style)
 - Whenever she goes out to events, most of the food that is provided usually are donuts, pizza, and hamburgers which she can't eat and it's a bit frustrating
 - To solve this, she eats beforehand events or doesn't go to the event at all
 - Receiving food from an employer, friends' parents, grandparents
 - She understands they have good intentions but it is usually an inconvenience for her since she can't eat them
 - To solve this, she tries to find something edible from what they provide or depending on the relationship, say "thank you for the gesture but..."
 - It's very awkward and wants to avoid this situation as much as possible
 - In an ideal world, what kinds of things would you be looking for? Products, services, imaginary technology.
 - I don't want the image of vegan to be the "strong anti-omnivorous protester that shouts at people"
 - Happy Cow is an app that show where vegan options are available except it's not always up-to-date and reliable
 - She also goes to the restaurant's website directly
 - Some places don't have menus on their website which is frustrating
 - Friendlier menus that clearly shows what item is vegan-friendly without asking waiter/waitress is ideal
- How does it influence where you choose to eat? Home, out, etc.
 - She usually goes to Safeway, Trader Joes, PCC (All natural products)
 - People think it's expensive but she thinks that the expensive items are actually meat, cheese, processed food
 - Going vegan is not that expensive

Yuki Asakura
HCDE 318

- Granted, fake-meat and fake-cheese is expensive but she doesn't crave the taste of them and is currently happy with non imitational food
- Whenever she buys an item, she always check the ingredients (double check) and picks whatever has the the simplest ingredients
- Do you feel supported by the UW Campus, Peers, etc?
 - Doesn't expect others to be vegan and her peers respect her for her decision (never has been bullied
 - UW is pretty bad at being vegan-friendly, UCLA and other California schools do it better according to her

Yuki Asakura
HCDE 318

References

<https://thrivemarket.com/>

<https://thrivemarket.com/blog>