

A CELEBRATION OF VARIETY AND FOOD DISCOVERY

For publication

Cottage Delight

DBA Design Effectiveness Awards entry - October 2019



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A DECLINING AND OLD FASHIONED CONDIMENTS BRAND

In 2017, Cottage Delight was a brand that was stagnating, lacking relevance and declining year on year.

Despite a broad (and constantly growing) portfolio covering jams, chutneys, table sauces and beyond, retailers were losing interest and choosing more emergent, modern looking brands to fill their shelf space.

The business approach of regularly launching new products to try and stem the decline, meant that the portfolio had become confusing and the proposition to the trade unclear. This strategy was also failing to do anything to arrest the decline in sales and reduction in distribution.

Our challenge was to shift the perception of the brand in order to grow sales, distribution and listings – we needed to change Cottage Delight from being perceived as dated and boring, to exciting and modern, and therefore relevant to today's consumers.

IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKET CONTEXT

The explosion of foodie culture in the UK, where 63% of Millennials consider themselves to be 'foodies', has seen a fundamental shift in consumer attitudes and a growth in the market for artisanal products.

BEFORE



However, with a raft of new brand launches including Mrs Bridges and Rubies in the Rubble, Cottage Delight were losing shelf space and declining despite the opportunity of a growing market. Priding themselves on the product and ingredients was no longer enough – this was expected, and other brands were telling more engaging stories. Cottage Delight were becoming a casualty of an old-fashioned design and an uninspiring product focused narrative.

REFRAMING THE BRAND STRATEGICALLY AND VISUALLY TO BE A 'CELEBRATION OF VARIETY AND FOOD DISCOVERY'

The strategy behind the rebrand was to bring to life the idea of 'Celebration' whilst taking inspiration from the revival of street fetes and food festivals.

The new identity embraces the idea of celebration, with a bold and colourful design and personality; shifting the brand from being centred around 'handmade tradition from Granny', to celebrating the variety and choice that Cottage Delight can offer.

Our core visual idea of bunting symbolises the celebration of culinary discovery and is paired with the hidden, more modern and aspirational looking cottage.

AFTER



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



RESULTS OVERVIEW

- The redesign has enabled Cottage Delight to have grown by 9% (turnover) since launch, with an uplift in sales between 2018 and 2019 of +9.66%. In volume, this equates to 81,944 in 2018 to 89,915 units in 2019.
- New listings gained (12.3% increase in customers) and de-listed business won back (most notably Notcutts garden centres where they are now present in all 18 stores)
- Cash margin increase up by 27.9% and overall margin of 10.74%.
- YOY revenue increase of £150,000 between January and June 2018 to 2019.
- Brand perceptions shifted with increased consumer and trade engagement.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

- 6% Growth in sales in the first year.
- Grow distribution and listings, including winning back de-listed business (specifically the Notcutts Garden Centre account).
- Shift consumer brand perceptions from old-fashioned and boring to exciting and modern.

THE CHALLENGE TO SHIFT CONSUMER PERCEPTIONS AND RE-ENERGISE THE BRAND

When Cottage Delight approached us in 2017 their key business challenge that they wanted us to address was a critical brand perception issue.

Put simply, the brand was all old-fashioned Cottage, and absolutely no Delight!

We needed to shift perceptions from old-fashioned and boring to exciting and modern.

The business believed it was the current perceptions of the brand that were truly holding the business back and thus the root cause of the decline they were experiencing.

THE BUSINESS

Cottage Delight was founded in 1974 by Nigel Cope, creating handmade fudge in his kitchen at home in Staffordshire. The brand has grown over the years to include jams, marmalades, curds, chutneys, table sauces and many more delectable delights. As well as creating their own recipes, the brand also collaborates with artisan producers from across the world.

The range of artisanal products and hand-crafted gifts is only available to independent garden centres, farm shops, delis, butchers and selected department stores.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

When we first started working with Cottage Delight in 2017 the brand was in trouble. Margin had been declining year on year for the previous 3 years at rate of approximately 1.5% per product category. The brand was suffering from declining sales and dwindling distribution.

In order to arrest this decline in sales, the Cottage Delight team had been focusing their energy on bringing out new products, but this hadn't been effective in reversing the brand's fortunes. If anything, the continuous stream of new products was diluting the brand and adding further confusion for the trade and consumer.

From a business perspective, the brand wanted to return to growth and were targeting a 6% growth in sales. But they were also looking to grow distribution - critically in recent years they had been de-listed from some of their key accounts and wanted to win them back.

The client understood that they had an issue with brand perception and felt this was the root cause of their business issues, hence their challenge to us to reframe Cottage Delight as modern and relevant, in the eyes of both the trade and the consumer.

SCOPE OF WORK

- Brand Strategy: including brand narrative, brand idea and positioning
- Brand Identity and logo redesign
- Structural redesign (across 12oz, 8oz jars and 220ml bottle)
- A visual packaging design system that could be carried across the full portfolio
- Brand World - including a visual language system and tone of voice guidelines



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW

THE FOODIE TREND AND AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE MARKET...

The UK has become a nation of proud foodies, with 32% of Brit's considering themselves as "foodies", and when looking at millennials, this rises to 64%. And it's not just perception, there's been a 10% increase in the number of people who cook and prepare meals from scratch at least once a week, and there's now a majority (just over half) who would describe themselves as "good" cooks.

There was absolutely no reason that Cottage Delight shouldn't be capitalising on this trend with its broad range of recipes which use only artisanal produce. Their issue was clearly not a product one, they had a brand problem. People weren't perceiving Cottage Delight to be relevant to 'foodie culture' because they represented an old-fashioned idea of food and essentially, felt outdated.

The rise of "modern foodie" culture also came with some supplementary challenges for Cottage Delight; it had led to the creation of a raft of new brands with similar products and stories to tell. Handcrafted and artisanal ingredients had become category hygiene factor rather than a product or brand differentiator. These newer brands were winning market share due to being visually more modern and expressive in their identities and packaging.

Cottage Delight were being pushed out of the 'foodie' set by the likes of Mrs Bridges, Tracklements and Rubies in the Rubble. With a strong competitive set, the challenge of re-gaining distribution was made all the more difficult.

FROM AN OLD-FASHIONED COTTAGE
TO CELEBRATING THE FOODIE WORLD
OF FETES AND FESTIVALS...



CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



STRATEGY

The previous narrative and visual identity focused on an old-fashioned black and white cottage, coupled with a story which centred around ingredients. This meant that the brand itself lacked a compelling idea to engage consumers and a story that differentiated from the growing set of competitors. It felt dated and no longer relevant.

Our new narrative and positioning for Cottage Delight brought **'CELEBRATION'** to the centre of our brand idea. We outwardly wanted to convey a celebration of variety and food discovery, playing into the broad offering that the brand has through its diverse portfolio.

But to make a credible space for the brand to play in, we wanted to base the idea on one of the brand's product truths. We decided on using artisanal produce and realised this could tap into the rise of street fetes and food markets, which are becoming ever more popular in today's society.

By embedding food culture into the Cottage Delight brand in a more meaningful way, it allowed us to bring the brand up to date to feel exciting, modern and relevant.

Consumers can now relate to an idea at the heart of the brand that is more emotionally engaging than a functional product truth; the new positioning brings the joy and delight of these experiences into the consumers' kitchen.

BRAND IDENTITY

Building on our new strategy and the brand idea of 'Celebration' we created a visual identity which brought this to life at the heart of the new look and feel.

With the bright and colourful bunting paired with a modern interpretation of a cottage, we were able to tell a more engaging visual story, which enabled the shift in consumer perceptions that was the key project objective. The new bold and colourful design livery were also developed with the growing competitive set in mind in order to ensure standout when up against the multitude of ever increasing new 'foodie' launches.

The strength of the identity is revealed when the products are displayed together as they are in store; activating the bunting within the identity and creating a strong and colourful presence on shelf.

CASE STUDY OVERVIEW



PACK DESIGN

The design as it previously stood across the jars, had a one size fits all approach with a white mop top and consistent label shape across all jars. With a portfolio as wide and diverse as Cottage Delight's, this limited the ability for the consumer to navigate the portfolio. The unique flavour combinations and delicious recipes were being lost in a sea of sameness, preventing consumers from being able to cross purchase and drive sales growth at a brand level.

To further communicate our positioning around culinary discovery and delight, we utilised the distinctive feature of the mop top to create individual and bespoke illustrations to convey the personality and flavour of each product. To aid the challenge around navigation, we created tonal colour palettes and styles to be used across each range e.g. yellow tones for curds, deeper colour hues for chutneys. This helped resolve the difficulty consumers faced navigating the huge portfolio. The unique illustrations brought personality and charm to each product encouraging the consumer to be drawn into buying multiple products which catch their eyes.

We also sought to bring a friendly and approachable tone of voice to life on each pack, with a unique descriptor which helps convey further discovery and 'delight'.

All these elements combined, enabled us to shift away from the disjointed look and feel which separated the product from the brand, and to instead unify the portfolio through a clear visual language and allow for the new brand meaning and narrative to be communicated clearly.

STRUCTURAL DESIGN

To further enhance the standout of the visual identity on the jars and create the strong brand blocking we created 3 unique structures.

These new structures created synergy within the range and incorporated an eye-catching custom embossing, further reflecting the narrative around celebration and variety of Cottage Delight products; "Great taste, Great times." The language used reflects the idea of street fairs of foodie celebration.

We wanted to create a jar that would be worthy as a keepsake, and continue to be part of the consumers' world, long after the product has gone, creating a lasting and memorable role for the brand.

BRAND WORLD

We created a very distinct visual language and tone of voice guidelines to ensure that the new positioning flowed cohesively through every touch point. This enabled the brand to have a very distinctive visual language which can be seen across their activations at trade-stands, in store and across their websites and meant that the new brand narrative created to shift perceptions, was communicated consistently in order to maximise impact.

KEY FACTS

LAUNCH DATE

TWO PHASE LAUNCH

GIFTING LAUNCH - **AUGUST 2018**

SINGLE PRODUCTS LAUNCH -

MARCH 2019

DESIGN FEES - £120K.

SCOPE - 20 SKUS (+ X4 GIFT PACKS)

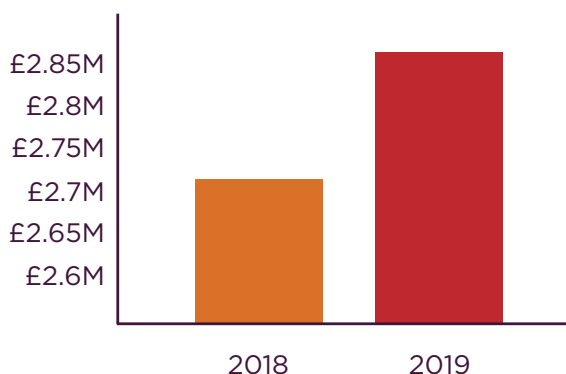
RESULTS

SALES GROWTH SINCE REBRAND

Considering that the brand had been in decline before the redesign, turning the decline to growth would have been success in itself but the business had targeted an ambitious 6% growth in the year following the relaunch.

In fact, the **business grew by 9%** in the year following the launch of the new identity and packaging. As part of that growth, Cottage Delight has seen an **uplift in sales between 2018 and 2019 of +9.66%**, with a **cash margin increase 27.7%** and an **overall margin increase of 10.74%**. In volume, this equated to 81,944 units in 2018 to 89,915 units in 2019. In terms of overall revenue, an increase from January to July from **£2.7million in 2018 to £2.85 million in 2019**.

REVENUE INCREASE



GROWING DISTRIBUTION AND LISTINGS, AND WINNING BACK LOST ACCOUNTS

One of the key indicators of success for the project was based on growing distribution and listings, and winning back lost accounts – **this success can be directly linked to the redesign as neither the products nor the sales team changed, only the branding.**

A key retailer that had de-listed Cottage Delight was Notcutts – and so the brand were delighted to re-gain that listing following the redesign. Notcutts had previously not stocked any core categories of jam, marmalade, chutney and sauces. But since the redesign, all these ranges were now stocked and the brand now has presence in all 18 Notcutts garden centres. These sales are contributing as much as **25% volume growth** in some categories such as sauces. The range increased from **£25k in 2018 to £89k in 2019**, from 24 lines to 118 lines plus additional POS spaces in store.

We can also see this consistently in other retailers; RHS increased range, space and volume, from £10.5k in 2018 across 42 lines to £22.5k across 55 lines in 2019. Another retailer, Spicers, also included the brand for the first time in over 5 years, creating an account worth £29k across 9 lines.



RESULTS

SHIFTING PERCEPTIONS OF THE BRAND

Cottage Delight haven't run any specific brand tracking research, so it was hard to measure the shift in brand perceptions directly. However, the **increase in sales and regaining of previously lost listings are clear indicators that a change in perception has taken place.**

A secondary anecdotal measure for the success of the redesign in shifting perceptions would be the way in which the visual identity has encouraged stores to give Cottage Delight additional retail space, as they can see the impact it has on their customers. One example is Sterling Home Store who now have a 1 metre bay and a globe stand of the product due to the presence of the new brand and the fact that it's selling; they previously had dropped almost all of the old range completely.

Another prominent retailer is Avoca Group Stores Ireland, their bigger outlets (Dunboyne and Rathcoole) have double sided fixtures and they continuously give Cottage Delight Table displays prominent positions in their Food Halls. This is also the same for their smaller stores, for example Powerscourt and Suffolk Street, have extra Cottage Delight displays in very small ambient display areas.

Social media engagement also supports the fact that the rebrand has re-engaged consumers through the more exciting and modern narrative; since the relaunch **Facebook likes and positive interactions have increased, and the number of Instagram followers has increased by 153% YOY vs 2018.** This is indicative that the brand has succeeded in moving away from the old fashioned and boring image that was previously holding it back.



RESULTS

OTHER RESULTS

Beyond growing sales and distribution, the new engaging visual identity and brand world allowed the brand to vastly improve their point of purchase marketing and create a richer experience of Cottage Delight in store. Our visual assets and guidelines were used to implement all in store materials to ensure that the shift in brand perception was maximised at all touchpoints.

**“IT REALLY DOES HELP ANCHOR
THE BRAND IN STORES, CREATING
ALMOST ‘A SHOP WITHIN A SHOP’ ”**

SARAH WILLIAMS
Head of New Product, Design
and Marketing

OTHER INFLUENCING FACTORS

- The brand did not do any price promotions outside of the normal promotional activity that they would do on an annual basis.
- In fact, they actually did less activity than usual. Usually the brand runs a promotion on 12oz jars that runs from January to end of March each year, which did not take place in the year of the launch.
- No other advertising has been carried out since the launch.
- The business has seen absence levels within the business improve since the launch, demonstrating improved engagement with staff, Most significantly from comparing January 2018 to January 2019, absence levels improved by 2.65%, with an average absence improvement of 1.65%.
- Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce Awards 2019 – Manufacturer of the Year – finalist.
- UK Packaging Awards 2019 – finalist – winner to be announced in November.

DATA SOURCES

- SAY MAGAZINE 2015 – “FOOD IS THE NEW PUNK ROCK”
- BBC GOOD FOOD - FOOD NATION SURVEY RESULTS 2017