



BURTS: BAGS OF GROWTH

FOR PUBLICATION

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CLIENT COMPANY

Burts

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BRANDING & DESIGN



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Burts refers to a consumer brand and the subject of this entry.

Burts Snacks Ltd is a manufacturing company with multiple interests, one of which is as owners of Burts.

Sales Data refers to the potato chips range only (none of the other new product ranges the agency worked on are included in the data)

Burts was started some twenty four years ago with the ambition of making the best hand cooked potato chips in the world. For several years Burts remained a consumer brand, building up a small but loyal regional following.

However, the skills, knowledge, capabilities and partnerships the business acquired meant the biggest opportunities came from manufacturing third party brands and retailer own-label. While Burts Snacks Ltd was established as a successful manufacturer for others, the consumer brand 'Burts' was effectively relegated to a secondary consideration for the business.

The appointment of a new MD in 2020 saw Burts Snacks Ltd reassess the potential held in the consumer brand. In spite of flat category growth (+1.2% y-o-y) the year of the relaunch, sales being impacted by potato shortages in 2023 and cooking oil shortages in 2022, and the reduction of Burts' marketing spend (by -21%), the success of the redesign seen over the following two years has been exceptional:

- **Sales value year one: +14% vs target and +48% growth vs pre-redesign**
- **Charitable donation from sales: +100% vs target**
- **First nationwide 'big four' listing in 20 years - Tesco**
- **Significant new nationwide distribution through Costa Coffee, Bidfood and Booker**
- **Two-year sales value: +88% (almost doubling the size of the brand)**

This is an incredible achievement, especially considering the stronghold a handful of omnipresent category leaders, such as KP (Tyrells), Walkers (Pipers) and Kettle Chips have on the market. The hand-cooked crisp category is 90% dominated by a few major players and own-label.

Finally, as a crowning glory, Burts Snacks Ltd, was purchased in 2023 by Europe Snacks. This will open new production and distribution channels for Burts, with the rebranding cited by both parties as a key factor in the acquisition.

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

Outline of project brief

Burts was started in 1999 in Devon by young couple Linda and Richard Burt who had a vision of creating the world's best potato chips. They launched their own potato chip brand simply called 'Burts'.

Burts secured a small but loyal regional following in the South West, sold through independent retailers. However, the business found its biggest opportunities came from employing their manufacturing capability, expertise and partnerships for third-party brands and retailer own label. As such, Burts Snacks Ltd was established as a snacking manufacturer for others. The Burts consumer brand's revenue stood at [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] in 2021, before the rebrand, constituting just a small part of Burts Snacks Ltd's [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] revenue.

The appointment of Dave McNulty as the new MD of Burts Snacks Ltd in 2020 triggered a reappraisal of the potential value of the Burts consumer brand. Dave saw promise in the brand, and convinced the business that it was worth investing a little to see if growth could be achieved. In 2021 the design agency was appointed. In order to drive brand growth, success was measured against the following objectives:

- Achieve ambitious sales value target
- Reposition from outdoor snacking and on-the-go, to a brand also bought through grocery to eat-at-home
- Win new accounts
- Augment stronghold in South West
- Leverage innovation to stretch from potato chips core into 'better-for-you' healthier snacking
- Achieve charitable donation target

Burts was not a household name and from a marketing perspective lacked any tangible personality or story to engage with. While the products were, and continue to be great, the brand faced the challenge of growing in a space strongly dominated by a handful of big brands, a space that (as it would transpire) was slowly contracting. Furthermore, Burts didn't have the marketing spend of the competition to drive and promote, so any branding and design would have to punch above its weight to make inroads.

The work carried out by the design agency included front end strategy:

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|---|---|
| – Stake Holder interviews | – Proposition and Positioning Development |
| – Current Brand and Design Analysis | – Key Brand Messaging |
| – Category Brand Equities and Visual Codes Analysis | – Brand Model Creation |
| – Category Trends | – Brief Creation |
| – Positioning Maps | – Brand World Creation |

The design work carried out by the agency included:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| – Logo | – Potato Chip Range - Packaging and SRP Design |
| – Copywriting | – Lentil Chips Range - Packaging and SRP Design |
| – Final Artwork | – Ridges Range - Packaging and SRP Design |
| – Brand Guidelines | – Popcorn Range - Packaging and SRP Design |

Design solution

The design agency's strategy and assessment of the brand led the team to formulate brand pillars: four key traits to incite interest and engage retailers and consumers alike:

- Simple honesty
- Partnerships
- Provenance
- Craftsmanship (knowledge, skills, care and quality)

From here a creative brief was born: to recreate the Burts brand and to demonstrate the quality and spirit of the product on the packaging.

The redesign looked to reflect the brand's honesty with simple, large, bold, no-nonsense typography, which would be disruptive in a noisy sector. The new design would be led by the flagship potato chip range which accounted for 92% of sales.

Burts was not synonymous with a colour, but it was felt that a brand colour would help bring the products together and help enable NPD launches while creating stronger cut-through in store via brand blocking. The introduction of the 'Navy' blue as a brand colour was apt, contributing to the story of a brand based by the sea in Plymouth, a place in the UK with strong naval traditions. Printed on matt foil packaging this grown-up blue colour helped to further establish the premium position. It also created the opportunity to use 'flavour' colours as strong accents to drive appetite appeal.

Burts' provenance was incorporated into every part of the rebranded identity and new packaging design.

In teasing out the brand essence, the creative agency captured the honest, straight-talking passion that Burts exudes and the emotional connection the business has to people and place while augmenting its position as high quality and hand-cooked in small batches.

The packaging features photography of Devon's farmland and landscapes, a reflection of the long-standing relationships between Burts and the local independent producers, such as Spoilt Pig Farm, Quicke's Cheese and South Devon Chilli Farm, many of whom are named on the front of the pack.

Burts' keen eye for quality, dedication, care and connection to people is further iterated on the back of the pack that features the name of the potato farmer and also that of the person who hand-cooked the chips in each bag.



BEFORE
NOT THE WORK OF
THIS DESIGN AGENCY



BURTS[®]



**STRAIGHT TALKING
NO NONSENSE
GREAT TASTING
REALLY CRUNCHY**
British Potato Chips



Every pack in the core range sports a crafted roundel with messaging that underpins Burts' provenance and craft: 'Made in Devon with Care', 'Since 1999', 'Small Batch' and 'Hand Cooked'.

The logo was evolved to reflect the craft values of Burts and to inject meaning. With the previous logo being just a generic font, the agency crafted a bespoke logotype, shaping, balancing, cutting into and crafting it adding an underscore made from rope. The rope bears a 'square knot' binding two separate pieces of rope together. In this way the two pieces of rope are partnered, like a symbolic handshake. The final result is an ownable, recognisable brand mark, that subtly tips its hat to Burts' seaside roots - knots being associated with sailing and the square knot in particular used by sailors to tie two lines together.

Research revealed 80% of the 500 people surveyed intended to purchase Burts on sight of the new packaging [Source: Savanta Comres].

The limited-edition Prawn Cocktail pack is one of three packs from which a portion of sales is donated to the RNLI (with best-selling Lightly Sea Salted and Sea Salt & Malt Vinegar flavours also contributing). This pack features a dramatic image of a lifeboat in strong seas against a stormy background creating a sense of drama and the challenge of the unknown, with the lifeboat being the light of hope. It celebrates the skill, bravery and heroism of the lifeboat crews who risk their lives to save others day and night and in all weather conditions. RNLI packs also carried a promotional message around the RNLI's own Float to Live campaign.

The NPD lentil chips range carries a strong hit of the new Burts blue and takes a similar approach to bold typography, while introducing soft organic illustrations depicting lentil plants to help position these as a better-for-you product and meet consumer expectations.

While the ridges range is delivered as a close sibling to the core range, the NPD popcorn range takes a different steer, embracing category norms with a much lighter, uplifting and jovial tone of voice - using bright colours and bold patterns to elevate Burts into new territories.



Overview Of Market

Worth £4.2bn, the UK crisps, snacks, nuts and popcorn category is huge, growing at 7.3% in 2022.

Hand cooked premium crisps represent £259m of this, which was fairly stagnant y-o-y with only 1.2% growth. 90% of the category being held by three major players and own label. 2023 is looking a little more promising with a current 4.7% growth (IRI MAT 03/09/23).

Key Facts

Project launch date: March 2022

Design fees: [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]
(included strategy, branding, packaging design x4 ranges and brand guides)

Collaborations: The agency did not work with any other agency or unit in creating the branding and packaging.



Lifeboats

Fundraising in aid of the RNLI
5p from this pack will go to the RNLI*

BURTS®



PRAWN
COCKTAIL



Hand Cooked
BRITISH POTATO CHIPS

150g e



RESULTS

Burts' success in the (almost) two years since the redesign has been nothing short of exceptional. With only a modest marketing spend and against a flat market, the design captured the imagination of consumers and retailers alike.

OBJECTIVE 1: GROW SALES - BURTS POTATO CHIPS

Value sales 2022

+14% vs target

+48% growth vs pre-redesign

Sales value reached [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] against the [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] target. Not only was this forty times the rate of market growth in 2022, but it was also +48% versus [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] sales value in 2021. The redesign was rolled out via a soft relaunch starting in March 2022 and not at the start of the year, but an immediate growth impact was evident.

Value sales 2021 to 2023

+88% growth vs pre-redesign

Sales/Forecast value for 2023 is [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] (confirmed in November 2023). Not only is this thirteen-fold the rate of market growth over the same period, but it is also +88% versus [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] sales value in 2021. According to all indications, this would have actually been 109% had sales not been impaired due to the fact that demand could not be met due to cooking oil shortages in Europe, and a very poor potato season in 2023.

Burts Potato Chips Sales		
	Total Sales/Forecast	YOY % +/-
2023 Target incl new distribution already achieved	[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]	+27%
2022 Soft roll out of design from March 22nd	[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]	+48%

SOURCE: BURTS GSV REVENUE SALES DATA

2021 Pre-launch: [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]

In the 6 months following the start of the roll-out of the design, the brand had an increased revenue of [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] which means the design fees were recouped in just 5 weeks from new profit.

OBJECTIVE 2: GROW SALES IN THE GROCERY CHANEL (Burts sales being predominantly out-of-home)

While the relaunch of Burts was soft in out-of-home, the introduction of the new packaging design was more immediate in grocery. IRI data for the 6 months before and after launch showed immediate impact. This while the category was experiencing a slight decline.

Potato Chips Sales through Grocery			
	Pre-launch May 21- Jan22 2021	Post-launch May 22- Jan23 2022	Difference
Burts Total UK value sales	[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]	[REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA]	+23.1%
Burts Total UK market share	0.9%	1.1%	+0.2%
Total Market value sales	£206,596m	£204,282m	-1.1%

SOURCE: IRI

OBJECTIVE 3: GAIN DISTRIBUTION

New listings were achieved across the board with new customers and existing customers taking on additional ranges as well as extending existing lines:

- TESCO - First nationwide 'big four' supermarket listing
- ASDA - New regional listings
- BIDFOOD and BOOKER wholesalers - Extended ranges
- CATERFORCE and out-of-home specialist SSP - New listing
- GREAT WESTERN RAILWAYS - New listing
- COSTA COFFEE - New listing of popcorn nationwide (driving a delisting of key category player Propercorn).

"We would not have got the listing in Tesco without the rebrand, it opened doors for us. The new design provided clear narrative about the brand (made with care & provenance), heightened our quality, and emotionally connects with shoppers and consumers, providing Tesco an element of disrupt on the hand cooked fixture in store – a sea of blue." - Dave McNulty MD

OBJECTIVE 4: INCREASE RATE OF SALE IN HEARTLAND (SOUTH WEST)

Sales demonstrate that post-launch rates were considerably higher despite the percentage on promotion being lower.

Burts Potato Chips Sales South West Grocery			
	Pre-launch May 21- Jan22 2021	During launch May 22 – Jan 23 2022	Difference
Rate of Sale - number of units	5909	7018	+19%
Volume Sold on Promotion	71.4%	68.4%	-3%

SOURCE: IRI

OBJECTIVE 5: DRIVE BURTS INTO BETTER-FOR-YOU HEALTHIER SNACKING

Burts NPD included the introduction of a popcorn range under the new branding achieving immediate success, gaining a listing nationwide at Costa and squeezing out key category player Propercorn in the process. The existing lentil chips range which boasts under 100 calories per bag, received a reinvention using the new design and branding which also drove new listings nationwide through Costa and stabilised its nationwide position in Waitrose where pre-redesign it had been under threat.

OBJECTIVE 6: DELIVER AGAINST CHARITABLE DONATION TARGET

The Burts rebrand featured the RNLI logo and the charity's Float to Live campaign message on the packaging of its two top-selling flavours, as well as a special edition Prawn Cocktail pack dedicated to promoting the RNLI.

5p from every packet of Burts RNLI Prawn Cocktail potato chips sold was donated, this was initially capped at £10,000. When sales of the limited-edition well exceeded initial targets, Burts' were able to double their original pledge, donating £20,000 in total. Following the huge success spurred by the design, the RNLI and Burts extended their partnership to June 2024 and are doubling on-pack fundraising targets to £40,000.

Ultimately packs carrying the RNLI logo and Float to Live campaign, key water safety messaging, was seen on over [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] packs in the 6 months following launch and [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] to date.

BIG BONUS: IMPROVED COMMERCIAL WORTH AND DESIRABILITY OF BURTS SNACKS LTD

As a crowning glory, Burts Snacks Ltd was purchased by France-headquartered Europe Snacks in March 2023. The acquisition is set to power Burts growth in the UK and beyond through export.

"Partly as a result of the rebrand of Burts, Burts Snacks Ltd attracted significant interest from third party buyers. The re-brand of Burts was a pivotal component in the sale of the business to Europe Snacks. Driving both extraordinary top line growth and accretive EBITDA to the business, it proved an attractive proposition to the Europe Snacks business as it introduced a branded element to the business which could be leveraged across a European wide footprint." – Dave McNulty MD

Other Influencing Factors

Can success be attributed to sector growth?

We can't ignore that the market has grown but only by 1.2% in 2022 and 4.7% to date in 2023 so this can't account for Burts 88% growth over these two years.

What about marketing, PR and social media?

Burts spent [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] on marketing and social media in 2022, the year of the relaunch. However, this can't account for the brand's massive growth as this cost was -21% less than the year before the redesign. Plus all marketing has had the redesign and brand world created by the agency front and center.

Was it pricing or special offers?

On the contrary, since relaunch, 3% less volume has been sold on promotion and Burts has managed to retain their premium pricing during a time of austerity; in fact successfully introducing an [REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA] inflationary per unit price increase.

Case Study Data Sources: IRI / BURTS GSV REVENUE SALES / KANTAR / SAVANTA COMRES