



ORGANIC BABY FOOD UK

CLIENT NAME
LITTLE FREDDIE

ENTRANT
LEWIS MOBERLY

DBA DESIGN EFFECTIVENESS
AWARDS ENTRY
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FOR PUBLICATION

"We knew we had a great product in Little Freddie, but in such a crowded and competitive market it was proving a real struggle to persuade UK parents that we genuinely had something different and special. This design made the difference. It helped us get to where we are today."

JADE HOWES | MARKETING MANAGER, LITTLE FREDDIE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Big in Hong Kong and bigger in China, organic baby food brand Little Freddie launched in the UK in 2018. But five years later, in 2023, growth had stalled at 1% share. This made it a top ten brand – but not in the way 25%-share market leader Ella’s Kitchen was.

The promise of quality organic ingredients that made Little Freddie so distinctive and appealing in other markets were just the entry ticket in the UK. Everyone was already doing them. Leading brands. Challenger brands. Even supermarket own-brands. They all looked like each other, down to the hand-drawn fonts and cutesy graphics, and Little Freddie struggled to stand out.

This is the story of the redesign that kick-started growth, by digging deep into consumer insight and the defining vision of the brand’s founders. In a category of generic ‘kiddy’ visual codes, we used design to speak to foodie parents who buy the products, rather than the kids who consume them.

HEADLINES

- **Within 12 months, retail sales increased from £3.8m to £5.3m, an increase of £1.4 million.**
- **After five years of going nowhere fast, Little Freddie is now growing at +15% YoY, against a market average of just +1.8%, and despite having only 50% of the distribution levels of the leading competitors.**
- **This makes Little Freddie one of only two baby food brands to achieve double-digit growth, and the single fastest-growing brand in its direct competitive set.**



spoon-full
meaning-full
mouth-full
taste-full
delight-full
play-full
tummy-full
rest-full

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

THE BRIEF IN OVERVIEW

In the UK's crowded and competitive baby food market, Little Freddie struggled to replicate the levels of growth and commercial success it had achieved in Hong Kong and China. Little Freddie took the decision to restage the design, in the hope of gaining market share and finally unlocking growth.

OBJECTIVES

- **Business Objective**
 - Increase sales value from £3.8 million to £4.5 million, in a market growing at just 1.8%
- **Marketing Objective**
 - Unblock market share growth beyond the brand's 'ceiling' of 1%
- **Design Objectives**
 - Use design to tell a new brand story to:
 - o cut through market noise to increase visual distinctiveness and preference
 - o communicate quality, taste and premiumness



previous design

SCOPE OF WORK

Create a new vision for the brand, starting with 7 SKUs across existing Fruit Purées and a new line of Dairy-Free Yog*urt pouches, as well as leveraging new recyclability messaging.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Little Freddie was founded in Hong Kong in 2014 by parents Piers Buck and Taslim Ho. Dissatisfied with the poor-quality products available at the time, they set out to create a range of wholesome, high-quality, nutritionist-approved organic recipes.

After buoyant sales in Hong Kong the brand launched into the UK in 2018. But the things that made it so distinctive in its home market turned out to be merely the price of entry.

Little Freddie had a great product made with quality organic ingredients. But compared with rivals like UK market leader Ella's Kitchen, it looked less premium, less natural, less healthy and less distinctive.

After five years, growth had stalled. Share peaked at 1.2%¹ in February 2023, before slipping back to 1%. So Little Freddie turned to design to make a difference.



CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW (continued)

OVERVIEW OF THE MARKET

The £366 million UK baby food category was, and is, a mature market impacted by social and demographic change. Parents in Britain are having fewer children, later in life. Though fewer in number, they are more willing to invest in high-quality baby food, leading to a market declining in volume (-4.1%) while increasing in value (+1.8%) and increasingly dominated by organic products, the preference of $\frac{3}{4}$ of all UK parents².

Within this market, Little Freddie's UK products are pouches, part of a £134.6 million 'wet food' category dominated by Ella's Kitchen. This category's design conventions are typified by vibrant colours, hand-drawn lettering and playful, childlike illustration.

STRATEGY AND INSIGHT

To stand apart from its UK rivals, Little Freddie needed to dial up its difference. But to remain recognisable as organic baby food, that change needed to be carefully handled.

We undertook a three-stage strategic process:

- **Product Truth.** What makes Little Freddie different?
- **Audience Insight.** What are the motivations and unmet needs of modern parents?
- **Brand Story.** How can we combine product truth and audience insight into a motivating, design-led brand story?

Product Truth. Organic baby food is a category with strong commonalities between brands. The same kinds of products, the same kinds of ingredients, the same packaging formats. But there's one area where Little Freddie is an outlier: an obsessive focus on the finer details of sourcing and provenance. Founder Piers Buck says:

"I visit all our farms...from the Canadian tundra (we are the only brand to use wild blueberries) to the Madagascan highlands (for Cayenne Lisse pineapples) to the Sri Lankan east coast for the creamiest coconuts."



don't be shy!

CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW (continued)

STRATEGY AND INSIGHT (continued)

This raises the question of who, exactly, notices or cares about things like this. It's unlikely that any baby can tell the difference between regular organic and wild Canadian blueberries. So this brings us to...

Audience Insight. It's grown-ups who most notice and care about things like the provenance of blueberries. In particular, it's discerning grown-ups with a 'foodie' mindset. Exactly the kind of parents most likely to buy premium organic baby food for their babies. Our insight was that in a market characterised by child-centric design codes, Little Freddie's hyper-focus on provenance and quality could only bring competitive advantage by being targeted at adults.



Brand Story. At the intersection of product truth and audience insight, we set out to use design to tell a new story, rebalancing the elements of the brand to appeal to foodie parents first.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DESIGN APPROACH

Design approaches can be described as either evolutionary or revolutionary. This was both. It was evolutionary in retaining enough cues and visual assets to remain recognisable to loyal users. It also strengthened the boldness and colour that instantly communicates 'modern, organic baby food'. But it was also revolutionary in that in a category designed around kids, it put parents first. It did this by putting lovingly-photographed food front and centre stage, and by reducing noise and busyness to create a feeling of calm and order. A sort of visual exhale, if you will.

The distinctive 'squiggle' is dramatised with new energy and impact. Pouches are flagged as 'simply fruit' or 'coconut yog*rt' to help navigation. A secondary subtle colour reduces clinical white and extends taste perception. 'Organic' is clearly set out for reassurance.

Where other brands seek to persuade parents by appealing to the child, Little Freddie now seeks to appeal to parents to persuade them to buy it for their child. It looks like something they would choose for themselves.

The design rolled out initially across 7 SKUs: 2x Dairy Free Yog*rt pouches and 5x Fruit Purée pouches. However new meals pouches were added later on, and a photography shoot was included to produce visual materials to redesign the broader brand world both online and across multiple physical touchpoints.

KEY FACTS

- Total design spend: REDACTED CONFIDENTIAL DATA.

RESULTS



After five years of stasis in the intensely competitive UK baby food market, this insight-driven design finally unblocked growth, allowing Little Freddie to stand out and break free.

In this section we explain how the redesign performed against the design, marketing and business objectives.

DESIGN RESULTS

The design objective was to increase Little Freddie's visual distinctiveness and preference. By delivering not just distinctiveness but a meaningful and compelling brand story, **design delivered on both of these tasks.**

Design increased visual distinctiveness and strengthened the brand's focus on flavour:

- People noticed and preferred the new packaging by a margin of 59% to 35%.
- The two most frequent descriptions of what people liked were:
 - **colourful** – this heightens Little Freddie's sense of joyous wellbeing.
 - **flavour** – cited in 16% of all responses, this differentiates Little Freddie in a category where packaging communication tends to focus more on fun.

As a result, design increased preference versus category rivals:

- **Versus the market leader:** people preferred the new pack to market leader Ella's Kitchen by 52% to 43%.
- **Versus other 'challenger brands':** people preferred the new pack to direct competitor Piccolo by 60% to 35%.

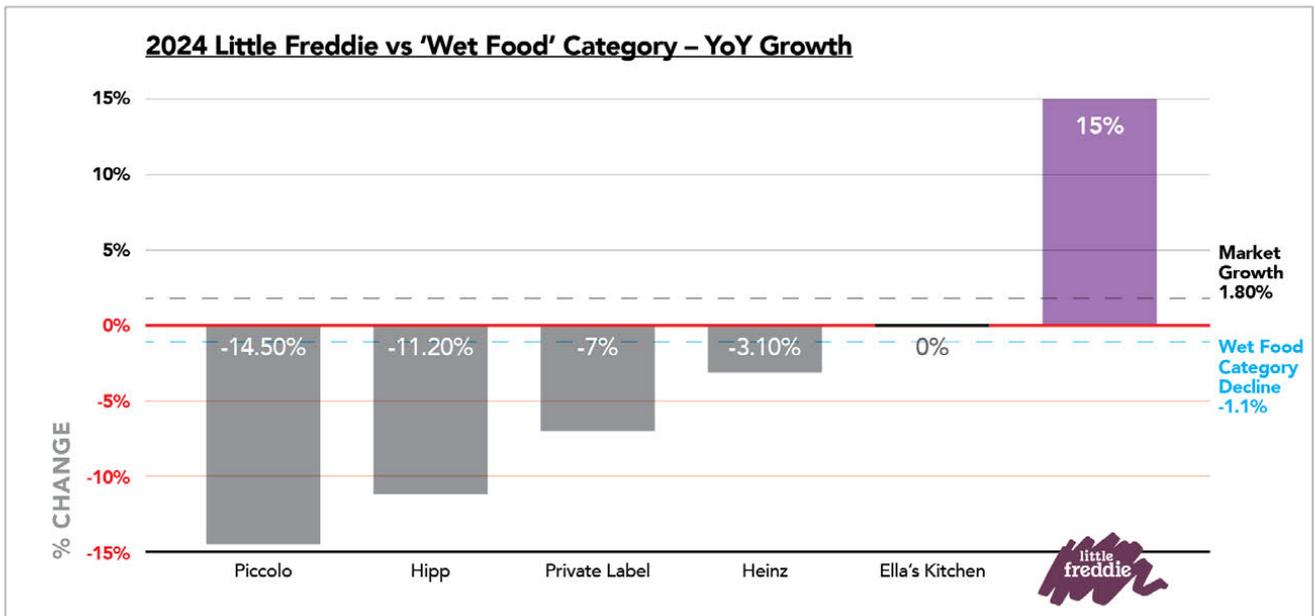
RESULTS (continued)

MARKETING RESULTS

The marketing objective was to unblock market share growth beyond the brand’s ‘ceiling’ of 1%. After 5 years, Little Freddie finally began to grow sales and share. That growth continues to accelerate.

With 15% growth in across 2024, Little Freddie became one of only two baby food brands that year to achieve double-digit growth against the backdrop of a market growing at just 1.8%.

- Seen in the context of its subcategory, ‘wet food’, which declined at -1.1% year-on-year, the achievement is even more impressive:



Source: Nielsen IQ

- In the first 12 weeks of 2025, Little Freddie’s growth accelerated to 24.5% year-on-year.

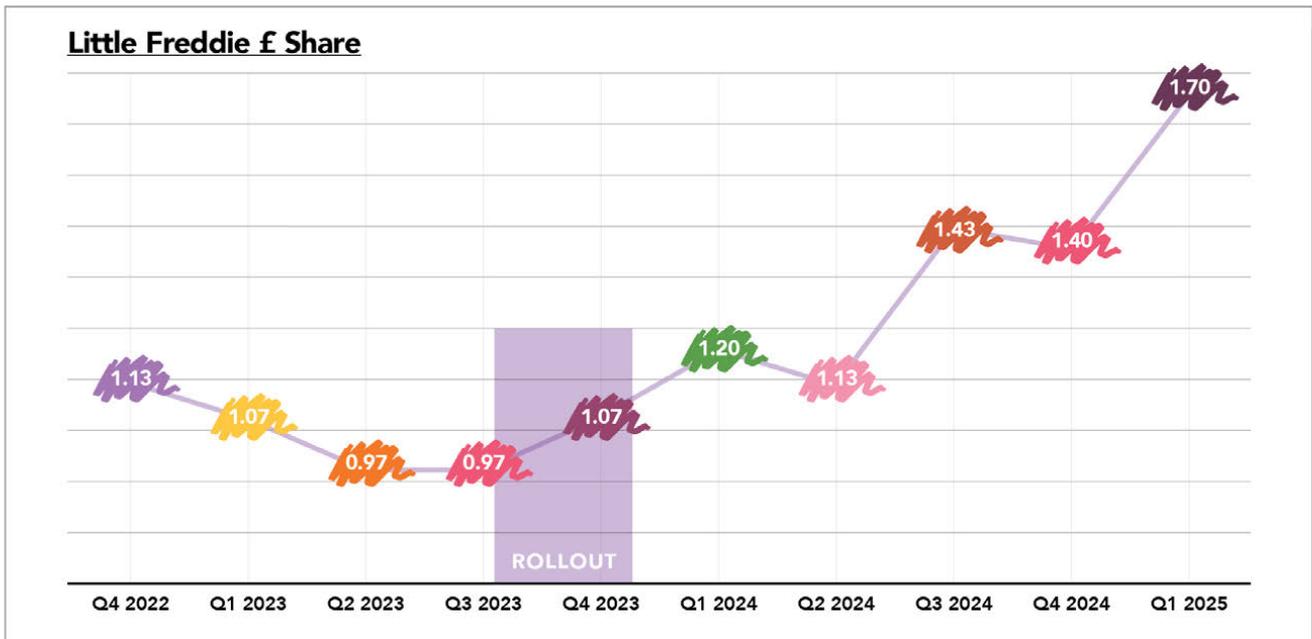


RESULTS (continued)

MARKETING RESULTS (continued)

Since redesign, Little Freddie has outpaced its rivals and its market share has shifted from 5 years of stasis to 2 successive years of steady upward growth.

- In 12 months following redesign, Little Freddie’s value share of the total UK baby food market increased from 1.2% to 1.4%.
- In the first quarter of 2025, that share has increased to 1.7%.



Source: Nielsen IQ

Little Freddie is making striking share gains in its direct competitive set.

- Looking specifically at wet pouches, the company consistently outperforms rival brands.
- In February 2024 the brand had 1.8% share of the category. Over 52 weeks to April 2025, this increased to 3.9%. **In the latest 4 weeks, Little Freddie jumped to a 4.8% share, overtaking Heinz and Piccolo to become the number 3 behind Ella’s Kitchen and Private Label.**



RESULTS (continued)

BUSINESS RESULTS

The business objective was to achieve increase annual UK sales of Little Freddie from £3.8 million to £4.5 million.

- In the past 12 months, retail sales have increased from £3.8m to £5.3m, an increase of £1.4 million.
- This is an increase of +36% in a baby food market growing at just +1.8%.
- It's all the more impressive for the fact that Little Freddie's UK products are all in the wet pouch category, in which sales values declined by -1.1% in the past year.
- As well as gaining sales from other brands, Little Freddie has added £0.7 million in incremental sales to the wet pouch category in the 52 weeks to April 2025, of which £528,000 has been through an increased rate of sale.



RESULTS (continued)

DISCOUNTING OTHER FACTORS

- **Product:** Little Freddie was present in the UK market for 5 years before the redesign. The redesign covered both existing products and a new line of dairy-free yog*rt pouches. In the 12 months to April 2025, £321,000 of the brand's incremental revenue came from the new line, while over £1 million came from the existing products.
- **Pricing:** over the period in question Little Freddie remained a premium product, with a pouch costing around £1.35 at Sainsbury's versus the own-brand equivalent costing around 50p. However, this pricing is broadly in line with Ella's Kitchen (£1.35) and slightly cheaper than Piccolo (£1.50). It enjoys no price advantage over its rivals.
- **Promotions:** in the past year, Little Freddie has sold 40.3% of sales on price-promotions. This is in line with category norms and compares with Ella's Kitchen (41.6%), Kiddylicious (42.1%), Organix (40.9%) and Piccolo (37.8%).
- **Distribution:** as a result of the redesign, Little Freddie was able to secure extra distribution which it had previously been unable to obtain. However, even today Little Freddie's distribution remains at around half that of Ella's Kitchen. The single biggest contributor to the brand's growth remains an increase in the rate of sale within existing distribution.



RESULTS (continued)

IN CONCLUSION

It is said that good branding is the fastest way to kill a bad product. This case shows the opposite effect: how good branding can unleash the growth potential of a great product that had languished as an also-ran for five long years.

By digging deep into the psychology of modern parenting and by interrogating the truth and founding vision behind the product range, design refocussed the brand story away from the faux-naïf 'kiddy' approach that had become the category norm, replacing it with a new emphasis on creating appetite appeal amongst a new generation of affluent, time-poor foodie grown-ups looking to buy the best for their kids.

By building on insight and designing with skill, strategy and desire Little Freddie is at last on the way to becoming the UK success it always deserved to be.

ends

CREDITS

Little Freddie:

Piers Buck, Founder, Little Freddie

Joe Budge, Marketing Manager

Lewis Moberly:

Designers: Joran Frydenlund,

Nicci Walker

Strategy: Portia Heley

Client Partner:

Melissa Scally



"It has been a pleasure to work with the design team to bring more personality and warmth to our packaging while strengthening range navigation.

They have done a fantastic job. Exceptional, organic ingredients remain at the core of our brand.

The new design reflects this in a more succinct way with the quality of our food shining through."

JOE BUDGE MARKETING MANAGER
LITTLE FREDDIE