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JACOB'S BITES

PLADIS - JACOB'S BITES

BURSTING OUT OF THE BOX

DRAGON ROUGE

Executive Summary

The UK savoury biscuit category was functional, seasonal and under-shopped until Jacob's Bites changed everything. In one year, Bites redefined the aisle, stole share from crisps, reignited retailer confidence and helped to turn Jacob's from penetration decline to penetration growth — all whilst delivering £8.4m value sales [1] with limited spend (£2M ATL on outdoor and paid social, £1M invested in shopper).

Jacob's Bites NPD exploded into the UK savoury biscuit category in 2024 — not as a quiet extension, but as a big, bold leap into snacking relevance. Through an impactful and disruptive brand world, Bites broke with the tired and dusty cracker norms, **tempting new buyers into the savoury category with 55% of its buyers coming from adjacent crisps, nuts and snacks aisle [2].**

Developed by PLADIS UK in close partnership with its lead design agency, this dynamic new sub-brand took Jacob's from mealtime and seasonal traditions into a completely untapped everyday snackable opportunity. Since launch, Jacob's Bites has **changed category perceptions with retailers resulting in total brand distribution point growth +32% vs. one year ago. [1]**

Crucially, the launch has added new buyers to the brand [2], creating a strong new platform for future innovation and further growth. Retailers have backed the launch, with distribution listings in all major Multiples of at least 2 SKUs [1]. Smaller convenience stores too have picked up this launch, seeing the potential in this new savoury snacking occasion.

Design has played a vital role in the incredible success of Jacob's Bites - intentionally challenging established category codes with a completely new visual snacking language and boldly grabbing attention both in store and out of home. Bites has burst out of the box and is showing no sign of stopping its trailblazing path for growth...

"Bites has smashed the records set internally and externally, surpassing expectations and revitalising perceptions of the savoury cracker aisle from tired and dusty, to exciting and flavourful. From the start, we knew this was our big bet innovation and how critical the design would be to stand out and to set the right tone. We've more than delivered with Bites – we've set a new standard for innovation internally at Pladis, and helped to shape the snackable future of the savoury biscuits category."

Asli Akman
Marketing director – savoury at Pladis UK&I

Context and Overview

Pladis operates in 11 countries and its products reach approximately 4 billion people worldwide in 120 countries. They have a broad portfolio of brands, spanning sweet and savoury biscuits with sweet business historically delivering greater value and volume growth for the group.

Jacob's is the largest brand within their savoury portfolio and Pladis' ambition was to re-energise the brand with consumers and retailers. Jacob's makes a vital contribution to profit, is margin accretive and efficient from a SKU perspective, but has been in long term penetration decline (Kantar World Panel) and 5 Year volume CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) decline (Neilsen NIQ) and declining faster than the category.

Key Business Challenge:
The central challenge for Jacob's was to drive relevance outside of its core 'cheese and cracker' seasonal occasions, and to bring in a broader set of consumers in a new snacking occasion, where flavour is king.

Key Business Objectives:
The challenge was clear – so too were the objectives from the business:

1. **Drive category growth for savoury biscuits**
2. **Launch a successful £6M RSV (Retail Sales Value) Brand in first year**
3. **Bring more buyers into Jacob's and turn from penetration decline to growth**
4. **Steal share from other snacking categories**
5. **Deliver increased distribution points for the brand in major multiples**

This was in the face of three strong headwinds:

1. **Declining category shoppers (who see the aisle as tired and dusty)**
   Shoppers traditionally only purchase the category once or twice a year, and then only for pre-planned seasonal occasions and cupboard staples.
2. **Brand was in long-term penetration decline**
   Savoury biscuits has high penetration, however it's highly seasonal with **9% of all purchases** made at Christmas. The category has also been constrained by traditional tactics (**50% consumed with cheese**), and an ageing consumer base to complicate things further.
3. **Pressure from retailers to bring category growth and excitement**
   The savoury category is **valued at £346m** and is growing (**+0.5% latest 52 weeks YoY**), but Jacob's was **declining by 2.7%** and performing behind the category; consumers see the brand as a heritage staple. There has been limited investment from both the category and the brand to offer true excitement and respond to areas of growth.
4. **Challenge to hold onto distribution points in the face of increased competition**
   Jacob's core crackers range were **down 4.2% YoY** in the face of increased competition from private label brands.

The Opportunity

"Brits are snacking more than ever, and this means more and more shoppers are looking for quick, grab-and-go options for sharing, but existing savoury biscuits aren't fit for purpose when it comes to these new snacking moments.

As a result, the category currently under-trades in almost two thirds of all savoury snack occasions (**64%**) [2], which means there's a huge growth opportunity for the taking."

Scott Landay
Senior Brand Manager – PLADIS

Our opportunity was to lean into Jacob's position as the category leader and use Bites to unlock a new usage occasion and reclaim the aisle — not through nostalgia, but through bold reinvention. This launch was to plug the gap for consumers looking for flavour-packed, permissible and sharable formats.

Brand ambition, to shift:
From
The default choice for cheeseboards and Christmas in long-term decline

To
A brand in growth with year-round relevance, a destination for snackable crackers

Partnership Model and Scope
The launch was a collaborative sprint between PLADIS internal teams (R&D, Brand and Marketing, Sales and Operations) and us as a sole agency partner. From sketch to shelf in under 18 months, the design work drove every decision from structural format to in-store activation.

Launch Date: July 2024

Initial Design Fees (excl. production): £120,000, extended by £41,000 for brand world

Paid Media Spend: £3M across Outdoor and Paid Social

Additional Activities: Activation campaign across 5 cities, 150k samples handed out

Scope of work
Our original scope of work was to create a brand identity, naming and pack design (x6) for Jacob's Bites. This was then extended to include brand world identity (kit of parts, shopper, social, merch, activation design look and feel including touchpoint examples) that could deliver an impactful holistic experience.

To succeed, the new sub-brand needed to do it all: be tasty, modern, and full of character. It had to feel as impulsive and flavourful (in line with category growth areas) — and drive excitement to the savoury biscuit aisle. Above all, it had to break convention without breaking trust.

Design Response

We identified a key tension that the brand strategy and design solution needed to address. On the one hand it needed to convince on taste (something Jacob's wasn't known for) and leverage more joyful, expressive semiotics that fit the social, snacking occasion. On the other, it needed to reassure with trust and baking credentials that were core to Jacob's.

Core Idea

The core creative idea "Made of More" framed this balance. More crunch, more flavour, more joy, alongside more craft and more satisfaction (than typical empty calorie snacks).

Brand Identity

The design flipped the category script. The bold Bites wordmark sits in a dynamic holding shape that explodes from the shelves, with the off-centre orange diamond of the masterbrand logo subtly signalling change for Jacob's. The fresh, bright and foodie colour palette conveys the energy and intensity of the flavours. And the radiating patterns, born from the unique cracker shapes, create visual disruption at shelf to grab the attention of shoppers (often making habitual purchases).

The result is a vibrant visual language that is fitting for the higher energy, social connect occasions that Bites wanted to tap into, whilst still being balanced with real photography, real ingredients and a crafted textured feel to bring the signature Jacob's reassurance.

Design Response

Broader Brand World, Kit of Parts and Touchpoints

One of the vital parts of the design was making the products the focal point on pack; the initial satisfying snap was a compelling benefit so the products are shown in profile to hero their thin edges and dramatise their crispy texture. The products are never static or staged, tumbling through the air to showcase their lightness and capture attention. And the abundant ingredients with editorial styling are there to tantalise the tastebuds and amplify flavour. Put together, these design decisions really hero the product as bite-sized mouthfuls of foodie joy, which couldn't be more different from traditional crackers.

Tone of voice also played a major part, bringing the Bites proposition to life in an attention-grabbing and disruptive way. The tone is deliberately bold, with short, punchy sentences, combined with a joyful use of onomatopoeic words that emphasise the textures and taste. All intended to appeal to the younger shopper target and to communicate the core message around a snackable, multi-sensorial experience.

With minimal above the line spend, Bites activation and communication had to punch above its weight for attention. The radiating assets became a bold backdrop for the tantalising product and fun lifestyle photography, with angles used throughout for text and packs, giving the impression that the Bites were literally bursting to get out of the box.

LETS SHAKE UP THE CRACKER AISLE!

Our Objectives vs Results

Bites has been a resounding success, changing Jacob's from long term penetration decline to penetration growth. It has increased buyers to the category, above expectation value growth, and ultimately re-set Jacob's retailer relationship, from one of tired heritage brand to category leader able to respond to strong headwinds and deliver success which in turn has unlocked additional distribution space. With additional flavours and limited launches on the horizon Jacob's Bites has true staying power.

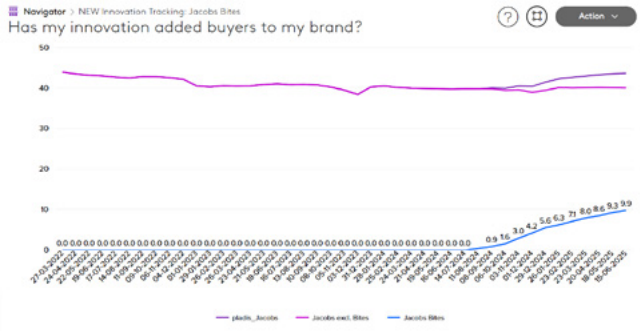

Chart showing penetration of Jacob's masterbrand driven by Bites.

Key Business objectives:

1. **Drive category growth for savoury biscuits**
   In addition, Jacob's Bites has superseded previous category launches by bringing growth in from other categories. **10% of buyers were totally new to savoury snacking** [2], which in turn has helped to bridge the relationship between Pladis' marketing team and retailers. Jacob's is no longer seen solely as a boxed-in heritage brand, but now a brand that can respond to growth areas and play the role of category leader.

2. **Launch a successful £6M RSV (Retail Sales Value) Brand in its first year**
   At the heart of this was a desire internally to create value added NPD. The type of NPD that doesn't copy but stands apart. Pushing existing codes and bringing a new usage occasion to the category. Bites does all of this, smashing its Year 1 target (**£8.4M RSV** vs. **£6M RSV**) [1] and has been recognised as a 'Category Innovation: Top 4 ranked NPD SKUs' (2024, Nielsen) [1].

3. **Bring more buyers into Jacob's - Change from penetration decline to growth**
   The team had lofty ambitions with this launch but were not expecting such a rapid response. Since the launch of Bites, the brand has single handedly switched from Long term penetration decline (Kantar World Panel) and 5 year CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) volume declines (Neilsen NIQ) to penetration growth. In addition, **Jacob's has switched at a Masterbrand level from volume decline (-2.7%) to volume growth (4.5%) which has outperformed the category (+0.5%).** [2]
   This isn't the first time that Jacob's has tried to launch NPD in the range. In fact, it has a range fragmentation issue, with most growth and profitability coming from a few products in a very large range. Bites is different. It is clear that the flavour profiling and standout design has brought in penetration, and even more exciting is the fact that **shoppers are re-purchasing the product ahead of established like-minded products (Jacob's Bites has a 39% repeat rate versus the benchmark of 35% for the established Ritz brand.** [2]

Our Objectives vs Results

4. **Steal share from other snacking categories**
   The brand team at Jacob's set out to lead from the front and reassert their position in the category as number one brand. To do this, they needed to bring more snacking buyers into the savoury cracker category; (an aisle where 'pre-planned' or 'cupboard staples' drove purchase intent.) Jacob's Bites has smashed through these ambitions, by delivering an impulse driven, highly flavourful product, backed with a standout design that broke all category conventions and design codes. It has been rewarded for its bold approach and has **brought in new shoppers with 55% of Bites sales coming from switchers in crisps/ snacks in the first year of launch.** [2]

5. **Deliver increased distribution with the brand in major multiples**
   The benchmark for Bites was to gain distribution in 2/4 major multiples with at least x2 SKUs.[1] Jacob's Bites has surpassed all listing and retailer expectations with the top x2 SKUs listed across all major UK multiples. In addition, the team has managed to unlock the highly coveted aisle-end and off shelf space contributing to a **32% increase in distribution points this year vs. one year ago (June 2024 vs. 23).** [1]

   Jacob's core crackers are down **4.2% YoY** in total distribution points with retailers seeing the core as a seasonal staple that has limited all year round relevance [1]. Since the addition of Bites, **total distribution points are up 14.4% YoY** [1], proving that the NPD launch has changed the retailer relationship and unlocked additional space.

   Historically, crackers have not had a lot of success in gaining off-shelf space outside of seasonal occasions. But the Bites launch has allowed Jacob's to provide a compelling proposition that can be supported all year round. No longer banished to Christmas cracker occasions, the savoury category can now shift towards an all-year round purchase. **Bites success has also impacted masterbrand off-shelf sales (Jacob's crackers +17.3% YoY, with addition of Bites +37.3%).** [3]

An example aisle end off-shelf space secured by Bites

BRING OUT THE BITES

GET TOGETHERS MADE BETTER

Conclusion

To sum up
With around 90% of innovation typically failing in the first year [3], Bites has defied the odds, going from strength to strength as it continues to open up opportunities for further launches, limited editions, and consumer engagement. It has propelled the Jacob's masterbrand into completely unchartered territory, with new relevance and occasions, and created renewed category conviction for internal and external teams. Key to its success has been the strong, visually disruptive design which challenged the cracker norms, amplified flavour, and pivoted Jacob's into everyday snacking moments.

Mitigating / Influencing Factors

Has there been anything else that could have contributed to the success?
The team have supported this launch with a £2M ATL on outdoor and paid social campaign and further invested £1M in shopper. This would not have been successful without the strong impactful design that was able to change brand perceptions and gain new audiences.

Is the category growth responsible for Bites success?
The category has been in minor growth (0.5% vs one year ago) and Bites has surpassed the category so this cannot be seen as a factor at play. [1]

Would additional distribution points have been secured anyway?
Jacob's core crackers down 4.2% YoY in total distribution points [1] and retailers had been shown to dis-invest in the brand outside of seasonal occasions. This is not a contributing factor to the success.

References

1. Neilsen NIQ Data, LMAT ending 28th June 2025

2. Kantar World Panel

3. Harvard Business School professor Clayton Christensen has frequently referenced that over 30,000 new consumer products are launched each year, and 95% of them fail (often quoted in innovation circles, although it's a broader claim).

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