

## The things we can't control

Rob Amar, managing director, writes:



“Work on the things you can control, don't worry about the things you can't.” That was one of the first things I worked on when I started out with a business coach a few years ago. Weather, crop failures, exchange rates, traffic – the list goes on. All outside my control, so why waste energy getting worked up about them?

Well, I try not to!

But I can see why people and companies do. A business can create the best strategy in the world, execute all the plans to deliver the strategy, but still be left at the whim of the uncontrollable: customers and suppliers can go out of business; new entrants can shake up the competitive landscape; products come in and go out of fashion; small fluctuations in FX can have a big impact on the bottom line; 17.4m people might vote “Leave”.

And did I mention the weather? We may joke about this favourite of British obsessions. But for many businesses it's no laughing matter. If you're in ice cream or soup, an unexpected hot spell or cold snap can make or break a season. For some businesses, the impact may be small, but for others it could be a 10%, 20% or even 50%+ swing in sales in a given time period. That's huge, almost unfair (but then life isn't fair).

Of course, this puts pressure on supply chains. In our case, with most of our products imported and some lead times in excess of three months (not to mention

## Double-digit growth for Ella's Kitchen



Ella's Kitchen, the UK's No.1 baby food, has posted its 11th consecutive year of double-digit growth with revenues increasing 11.2% to £56.9m in the fiscal year ending 30 June 2016.

Consistently out-performing the market, the brand increased UK market share in wet baby food by

three percentage points to 30% following increased distribution and NPD launches.

In addition to its sales growth, the team at Ella's has continued to drive its partnership with Save the Children, as well as working on the Veg for Victory Campaign in the second half of 2016. The company also saw itself listed in the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For, and achieved certification as a B company from the ethical organisation, B Lab.

Ella's Kitchen has a global target of one billion “tiny tummy touch points”, each representing one portion consumed of its baby and toddler products. The business added 122 million points in the year July 2015 to June 2016 to reach 745 million and is well on the way to achieving its ultimate goal.

## Another win in the Family Business Awards

For the second year running, RH Amar was named the winner of the Thames Valley Family Business of the Year Award for 2017.

The Family Business of the Year Awards are organised by Family Business United (FBU), the award-winning magazine and resource centre that champions and celebrates the family business sector.



Rob and James Amar were both present to collect the award at a ceremony which took place at the Mayfair Hotel in London.

products with seasonal pack), an unexpected spike in demand can lead to stock shortages (just as an unexpected drop in demand can lead to over-stocks). While we invest in a generous UK stock-holding, this also needs strong collaboration throughout the supply chain – from robust forecasting with our customers, to flexibility and responsiveness with our supply partners.

From a personal point of view, little makes me happier than the feel of a hot sun on my follicle-free head! And as our product portfolio has a bias towards summer eating, we certainly feel the benefit when the sun comes out. So I won't be worrying about it, but if June's great weather rolls on through July and August, I will definitely enjoy it.

## Fundraising fun?

Our colleagues certainly pick the most strenuous ways in which to raise funds for the charities RH Amar supports.

On 6th May the Tough Mudders race in Henley saw members of Team Amar running the 12 mile course of mud and obstacles. They set a target of raising £750 for Help the Heroes, but in fact have raised £905.



On 18th June, the day after our summer party, 11 of our staff set off from Clapham Common to cycle the 54 miles to the Brighton seafront. This proved to be one of the hottest days of the summer so far. Steve Croft, organiser of the event, said: "We all made it through the 30 degrees heat, and amazingly suffered no crashes or punctures! The ride took five and a half hours and the team crossed the finish line all together." £1700 was raised for the British Heart Foundation, with one of our part-time staff raising £700 on his own Just Giving page.

Pictured here are Ed Anderson, Mariusz Moszczyński, Steve Croft and Modestas Rupkus.



## Profit is waiting in the Wings for Schwartz

This summer sees the launch of two new Wings Seasonings from Schwartz in response to the continued growth in popularity of the chicken wing phenomena: there has been a 35% uplift in restaurants serving chicken wing dishes over the last three years.<sup>1</sup>

In the US, wings have evolved from a snack, often eaten during sporting events<sup>2</sup>, into one of America's favourite dishes. Chicken wing chains are to be found nationwide with more than 3,200 restaurants dedicated primarily to chicken wings<sup>3</sup>. With the trend for American food gripping the UK, wings are the latest must-have item for any style of operation. They are being featured on menus in restaurant chains as sides, sharing platters and mains. The increasing number of restaurants serving chicken wing dishes is driven in part by large chains such as TGI Fridays creating a dedicated wings menu. In a recent report, chicken wings were mentioned in six out of 11 "developing menu trends" last year<sup>4</sup>.

Schwartz Buffalo Wings Seasoning has a sweet and spicy vinegar-based flavour with hot and tangy notes. Schwartz Lemon and Herb Wings Seasoning, a citrus seasoning blend with herbs, including thyme, offers a mellow, mild yet tasty flavour boost. Both are easy to use by sprinkling straight onto hot, cooked chicken wings coating the meat just like a sauce. There is no fryer oil contamination and consistent results are obtained for any level of kitchen skills.



Wings Seasoning enables efficient customisation and menu expansion as it is added after the wings are cooked. Created to ensure 100% adherence to the meat, it leaves little or no waste and is easily transformed into a wet sauce by the addition of a small amount of water.

Schwartz Wings Seasoning is highly versatile, offering customers infinite recipe inspirations: it can be sprinkled onto chips, onion rings, mozzarella sticks and more. It can also be mixed through butter, mayonnaise and other condiments, or through breadcrumbs to form a coating or to top macaroni cheese before grilling. It will add flavour to sandwich fillings or to popcorn and nuts – and with all these uses comes additional margin potential.

<sup>1</sup>Horizons Menurama, Summer 2016 Menu Data

<sup>2</sup>2016 National Chicken Council Wing Report

<sup>3</sup>CHD Expert 2017 Chicken Wing Trends Report

<sup>4</sup>Horizons Menu Trends Report Summer 2016

## PRODUCT

### A new look for an old flame

The UK's No. 1 chilli sauce brand\* has had a makeover. The reasons why Nando's wants to give its products a new look are:

- To reflect the Nando's image – youthful, brave, inclusive and irrepressibly fun.
- Nando's is proud of its Peri-Peri and wants to show more of the sauce by reducing the size of the label.
- To keep the message simple by telling customers what Peri-Peri is, what is in the product and how to use it.
- The new look will increase shelf stand out.

The look may be new – but it is the same delicious sauce!



\* IRI 52 w/e 22nd April 2017

## Prewett's growth set to continue

The gluten-free and free-from markets have shown significant growth in recent years and this is especially the case with indulgent food products such as biscuits and cookies.

The Prewett's Gorgeously Gluten-Free range of premium cookies is no exception to this trend. The Prewett's manufacturer, Northumbrian Fine Foods, has seen volume growth of 35% year-on-year.

This expansion is expected to continue for the foreseeable future, especially since one in five of the UK population\* consider themselves to have some kind of food allergy or intolerance. Furthermore the eating of biscuits and cereal bars is almost universal, with 96% of people consuming them.\*\*

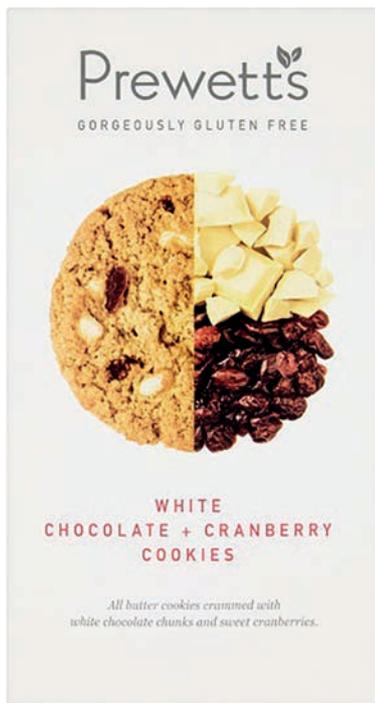
Prewett's has introduced a White Chocolate & Cranberry variant to its highly successful Gorgeously Gluten-Free range which joins the Quadruple Chocolate, Oat & Raisin and award-winning Dark Chocolate & Ginger cookies (RRP £2.69).

The Family Favourites range has had a revamp with new look single-facing packaging. The range consists of three variants: Plain Digestive (RRP £1.59), Milk Chocolate Digestive (RRP £1.89) and Jammy Wheels (RRP £1.59).

Last but not least, the individually wrapped Chocoful chocolate biscuit bars (RRP £2.49) have moved to a cardboard box rather than flow wrap so that they stand out more on shelf. Recently winning Gold in the Free-From Awards, at 100kcal Chocofuls are ideal for lunchboxes or just a teatime treat.

\*YouGov Report August 2015

\*\*Mintel March 2016



## For the times they are a-changin'

*(popular song of 1964)*  
Henry Amar, chairman,  
writes:



We are at the mid-point of 2017, and about to have a board meeting to review a pleasing first-half performance. Our directors were all sent a questionnaire ahead of the meeting, asking them to review the past six months and look ahead to the second half of 2017.

One section of the questionnaire was about "Opportunities and Threats". Clearly we live at a time of great uncertainty, with upheaval in our political arena and the huge question-marks over our Brexit negotiations. Nevertheless top of my list of opportunities and threats was the changing landscape of the grocery industry. We read daily about deals which will have massive impact for companies such as our own – Tesco and Booker, Sainsbury and Nisa, Amazon and Whole Foods Market, and plenty more besides. Some of these deals may fall by the wayside, but whatever happens it is a pretty safe bet that, by this time next year, the world in which we do business will look very different.

But will these changes be threats to our business? We simply do not know enough about them to say with certainty. What we can say with conviction is that, since the founding of our Company in 1945, there has been constant change in the grocery industry, and we are still here today, still owned by the same family, and still in robust health. The attributes which have kept us in business for 72 years – financial strength, a motivated team of professionals, strong and innovative brands, and a focus on customer service – are still with us today, and for as long as we continue to deploy these strengths, the changes we are about to witness should be viewed as opportunities.

# T NEWS

## Time for a makeover

Following its Veg for Victory campaign, Ella's Kitchen has introduced new packaging for a number of its First Tastes and snacking products, with clearer messaging and greater emphasis on the ingredients.

Anthony Biles, principal at Biles Inc., branding and packaging design agency, commented: "We are thrilled to be working with Ella's Kitchen. It is an icon in the category and a much loved brand. With this redesign, we have looked to build on its existing assets, to boost brand personality, and to simplify the range navigation, whilst keeping the packaging clean, simple and child-like."



## Mary Berry's hits the road

The Good Taste Tour is well underway with another highly successful stop at the recent BBC Good Food Show in Birmingham in June where Mary also visited the stand. To date we have reached over 135,000 consumers with still three more stops to make at the:

- Foodies Festival in Edinburgh (4th – 6th August)
- Foodies Festival at Alexandra Palace, London (26th – 28th August)
- Thame Food Festival, Oxfordshire (30th September – 1st October)

Consumers have the opportunity of tasting and buying products from the Mary Berry's range as well as entering a competition to win a hamper and a signed copy of Mary's latest book , "Everyday".

Mango, Lime & Chilli Dressing, the new dressing for the summer, has proved to be one of the top sellers on the tour. It is a highly versatile product: its use as a sauce or a marinade makes it a perfect addition to any summer barbecue; it also serves as a dressing or a key cooking ingredient.

The tour is supported by a strong social media programme. All the activity is continuing to engage consumers and drive awareness and trial.



## Londoners relax with Tranquini



Natural relaxation drink, Tranquini, has been promoting relaxation in the work place through an array of city sampling activities this summer. Partnering with the likes of ASOS, Arcadia, and Chiswick Business Park, Tranquini has helped to relax, refocus and refresh stressed workers.

The brand also promotes "active relaxation" - an active body but a relaxed mind. Lululemon and Virgin Active have proved to be the perfect partners for the brand. Tranquini has supported Lululemon's OM [meditation] Bus at FloVibe Festival and participated in experiential sampling at Virgin Active's Wellness Events.

There will be more activity over the coming months: sponsored yoga and trampolining events, experiential guerrilla sampling in the London business parks, more head office activations and university campus days throughout Freshers' Week.

Relax. Be Positive. Good Happens

## Community gardening project

Grainne Lawless, who chairs RH Amar's Green Committee, is always on the lookout for ways in which the Company can contribute to improving the local environment. Her most recent project involved working with a local nursery school to help them arrange and tidy their garden area.

Phil Jordan, Paul Tuhim, Modestas Rupkus and Grainne spent three hours on 13th June at the Mapledean Nursery in High Wycombe.

Grainne says: "As part of the project we planted strawberry plants in old milk cartons and hung these on some pallets which were attached to the wall. As well as lots of weeding, we also cleared an area for their new compost bins which the men constructed."



## Welcome to Andy

Andy Rudol joined the sales team on 5th June as a national account manager for the wholesale channel. Andy has spent most of his working life in this channel and most recently has worked for Cott Beverages. Previously he held roles with well-known companies including Typhoo, Warburtons, Whyte & Mackay, and Trebor Bassett.