

“Brands to Watch”

February 25, 2011

Brands To Watch

by Jill Rivkin

February 25, 2011

Justin's Nut Butter



Justin's launch of a single-serve squeeze pack was a huge triumph for the brand. "It was the first big innovation in the peanut butter industry since the creation of peanut butter," founder Justin Gold says.

United States

In 2002, the avid outdoorsman and devoted vegetarian began selling his homemade nut butters to family, friends and neighborhood natural food stores in whimsical, 16oz glass jars. "The original packaging had a playful, local farmer's market quality that really embodied the heart and soul of this company at its start—an entrepreneurial grassroots endeavor," Gold says. But, before long, it became clear that a packaging facelift would better—and more broadly—relay the quality, gourmet brand message and more effectively sell the product.

The initial packaging helped successfully launch the product in local and regional markets, and Gold recognized it could play an important role in driving the brand to think more "nationally." "[I needed to] take the emphasis off my playful and outdoorsy nature and convert to a more universal message of a simple, elegant and culinary experience," he explains.

In a March 2010 package and brand redesign, the new focus of the brand became the contents of the package, which Gold lovingly refers to as "The Heroic Nut." Now, a colorful illustration of an almond, peanut or hazelnut dipped in maple, honey or chocolate (depending on the variety) stands out on a white background, creating more of a premium feel. The refresh marked a major milestone for the brand, increasing sales by 133 percent and growing

distribution by 400 percent.

But Gold also points to the 2006 launch of a single-serve squeeze pack as another triumph for the brand. "It was the first big innovation in the peanut butter industry since the creation of peanut butter," he says.

Though the format received huge reception, it had initial challenges: Retailers had concerns about how to merchandise the pouches and consumers had questions about how to use them. But, with a little prompting, retailers and users caught on. Today the butters are sold in 16oz glass jars, a 10-count caddy of 1.15oz squeeze packs and a box of 150 loose 0.5oz squeeze packs marketed for outdoor adventures as well as quick snacks and school lunches.

As for what we can expect from Justin's next: "Innovation!" Gold proclaims, noting a goal to implement a 33 percent renewable squeeze pack film by Earth Day 2011.