

Stand-Up Pouches Spur Growth for Anthony-Thomas Candy Company

Since the beginning, Anthony-Thomas Candy Company has always been a candy wholesaler. For over seventy years we have specialized in making confections both for our own brand and for private labels. It wasn't until the 1970s when we began to get into the retail business and opened the Anthony-Thomas retail stores. Over the years, we have grown our business and have gained a reputation of specializing in shell-moulded candies, all while maintaining the warm atmosphere of a family-owned business. Our most popular shell-moulded item is the peanut butter buckeye, a staple in the state of Ohio and the Midwest region.

Our products have always been a premium line item ideal for gifting, celebrating and treating yourself. With each piece of chocolate sold, we felt we were able to provide an individualized experience that was luxurious yet affordable. I can recall many occasions of strangers becoming friends by telling us how they looked forward to our gold gift boxes every Valentine's Day or how their grandmother only asked for our buttercreams for Christmas.

At Anthony-Thomas, we pride ourselves on being able to provide a premium product in high-end packaging. While this has worked well for us in retail, we've found it is not the best business model for a candy maker looking to sell in highly competitive big-box stores.

By asking the question, "How can we maintain this same quality of product, yet make a bulk value pack for customers?" The answer became clear. We saw an opportunity, so together with my mother (Candi Trifelos) and grandfather (Joe Zanetos), we decided to break into the stand-up pouch market in 2019.

Being our first venture into the pouch market, we were fortunate to connect with a buyer from Costco, which led to my mother and I meeting with the Costco team at their Midwest headquarters. We swapped ideas on how to provide a product perfect for their target market. With their help, we were able to create a design concept for a stand-up pouch containing 40 of our individually wrapped buckeyes.

We quickly learned that executing the pouch design wasn't as simple. There were many choices to be made. Did we need a resealable pouch? Should we use a gloss varnish or matte finish? Should we incorporate a window for shoppers to see the product inside? Months went by as we worked with a local design company, and the whole Anthony-Thomas team

ultimately decided a matte-finish bag with spot varnishing on the product image of our buckeyes.

After Costco guided us through all these steps, the COVID-19 pandemic hit which halted all progress to this point. We felt confident on how to proceed, so we decided to take a gamble and pursue the pouches even though Costco was putting a pause on new inventory. The pandemic created a stir in the economy, and no one knew what the next or right move was going to be. But we had faith in our abilities and continued strong with the pouches.

Having paused the initial Costco business—but no longer holding an exclusivity agreement—we started exploring other avenues. Despite the fact that this was a brand-new project for us and we had zero pouches sold, we went ahead and invested in a pouch sealer from Mettler-Toledo in Worthington, Ohio.

It was a struggle to figure out our next step. It took several cold calls until I connected with another family-owned retailer. After a few virtual meetings and sending them product samples, they placed an order to sell our buckeye pouches in all of their stores. In the midst of this chaos, a popular grocery store in Ohio also pressed us for a pallet of pouches. And so, by October 1, 2021, our first pallet of buckeye pouches was sent.

The Proof is in the Pouch

Stand-up pouches have opened exciting new doors for us. While pouches will never replace gift boxes, they create a new opportunity for consumers to enjoy Anthony-Thomas buckeyes as an everyday treat—taking away the formality and allowing customers to purchase more at a great value. The flexibility of the package allows consumers to store it in their pantry, throw it in a bag, or empty it into a serving container. You don't have to worry about keeping it flat or scuffing up any of the pieces. And because each piece is individually wrapped (*a feature we offered shortly after introducing buckeyes to our product line in 2002*), you know the product is going to be fresh.

The concept of the stand-up pouch started to drive new sales for the Anthony-Thomas peanut butter buckeyes, and sales doubled within the year. We never expected the pouches to have immediate success like they did, but we knew it was a great opportunity for us to grow and ensure relevance in other markets. The candy industry is always changing, and there are always new and innovative ways to stay ahead in the candy

"game." For us, developing stand-up pouches allowed for new growth and even contributed to our decision to expand our existing facility to help offset the growing demand.

We knew we had an excellent product and that with dedication we could be a strong player in the bagged candy market. With flexible packaging becoming more and more popular, we were eager to get involved.

Working with companies like Costco allows for broader brand recognition in different parts of the United States. Being the officially-licensed Ohio State University Buckeye, we have always had great success regionally, but now, we have companies calling from all around the country wanting to put our product in their locations. This jump has accelerated our growth and made our brand more widely recognizable.

This venture could not have been accomplished without a love for what we do and without the great team we have at Anthony-Thomas. We never thought the high-volume market would fit our mission, but we are happy to learn it fits perfectly, and we are now currently exploring more ways to add other pouched candies to our line.

Nick Trifelos

Anthony-Thomas Candy Company
Columbus, Ohio



The Why Behind the Design

Finish: Matte finish with spot varnish on the product helps the buckeyes pop by drawing the eye to the glossy shine.

Window: Anthony-Thomas has been individually wrapping their popular buckeyes since the early 2000s, which leaves little reason to incorporate a window and instead focus on the beautiful product image on the bag.

Seal: The non-resealable bag keeps the price low for the consumer and individually wrapped pieces hold in freshness.



IMPORTER ~ DISTRIBUTOR ~ MANUFACTURER ~ EXPORTER

CANDIES, CHOCOLATES & CONFECTIONS, DRIED FRUITS, NUTS, SUPPLIES, COFFEES, TEA & BULK FOOD FROM AROUND THE WORLD

ELEVATE

YOUR CHOCOLATES
WITH COLOR!



Serving with Quality, Integrity, and Enthusiasm since 1975!

Phone: 1-800-4PEANUT | sales@weavernut.com | WeaverNut.com