



COOKING ACCESSORIES

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# The Artisan Snapshot...

How small businesses are taking on  
the big brands and winning...

# Small business optimism...

...IN  
2022



One of the most impressive sectors in the UK business scene is the small business sector. SMEs throughout the UK experienced impressive growth throughout 2021 and have continued this momentum into 2022, with 56.2% of SMEs reporting a rise in earnings in the last quarter of 2021 compared to the same period of 2020. The UK's small business eco-system is predicted to be a 'boom' sector throughout 2022, with UK SMEs looking to drive employment and investment. In addition, 58% of SMEs predict an increase in revenue this quarter compared to last year.

After a promising start to the year, 40% of UK small and medium-sized businesses are planning to hire, on average, six new employees before the end of March as they prepare to grow and progress their company.

## Why small businesses are optimistic about growth in 2022?

Small businesses are aiming for big growth in 2022, even in the face of challenges caused by rising prices, according to a new report.

The Federation of Small Business's Small Business Index revealed that cost pressures have hit a seven-year high, with 78% of the 1,200-plus SMEs surveyed saying their outgoings have increased. However, more than half (54%) still expect to grow their business this year. The figure is up four percentage points from the same period in 2019, before the Covid pandemic hit.

"After two years of turmoil, in which firms have once again shown their adaptability and resilience, the small business community stands ready to spur our economic recovery," FSB national chairman Mike Cherry said. "The majority intend to grow over the coming 12 months, and many are looking to increase headcounts." One in six increased their headcounts in the three months to December, and a similar number expect to boost staff numbers this quarter.

Staffing has become an issue for some businesses, with six in 10 saying that the tightening labour market has led them to increase wages. A third say a lack of appropriately skilled staff represents a "substantial barrier to growth".

The FSB says more support is needed to help SMEs achieve their growth goals. "We urgently need the Government to start looking closely at the policies that will empower the small business community to spur our recovery from this recession as it did in the last," Mike said. "The growth intentions are there, but we need the right support to turn vision into reality.

"New enterprises are launched everyday across the UK, never more so than at times like this when the economy is changing apace," he said. "Our start-ups need funding to go on and be the employers and innovators of tomorrow."

Food start-ups see growth:

Throughout the pandemic, the start-up industry has reported an increase in new food-related businesses, and recent figures back up this trend. Analysis by Simply Business, a provider of small business insurance, said more and more people are turning their hobbies into careers. Home baking featured in the top 10 fastest-growing sectors, with a 24% increase driven by bakers looking to set up their own small businesses.

The research revealed there was also a 62% increase in the number of online retailers and a 113% increase in market stall traders compared with 2020. The number of self-employed caterers rose 36% too, reflecting the growing popularity of outdoor leisure, food stalls and outdoor dining, accelerated by Covid-19.

"Small Businesses and the self-employed are vital to the UK economy, accounting for 99% of all British businesses – but few have been hit harder by Covid-19," said UK CEO of Simply Business, Alan Thomas.

"Thankfully, small business owners have shown resilience, innovation and creativity at every stage of the pandemic," he said. "And as a wave of challenges persist – from staff shortages to supply chain issues – it's incredibly encouraging to see UK entrepreneurs leading the way when it comes to our recovery.

"Put simply, our economy and communities need small businesses to bounce back, so it's heartening to see a new wave of entrepreneurs seizing the opportunity to start up."

# The power of artisan design

Artisan packaging design has become a massive trend in recent years and is still going strong.

What is artisan design, and why is it so popular?

The word "Artisan" by definition describes a skilled craft worker, especially one who makes things by hand. And big, upmarket brands have utilised artisan design for years to communicate the luxury of their products.

More recently, however, artisanal design cues have also been seen in smaller brands to make a statement about their products' craftsmanship and quality. But why is that?

Artisan packaging often includes elements such as kraft paper, natural muted colours and playful illustrations and minimalist design. Thus, artisan design essentially takes us "back to the basics".

And this aligns perfectly with consumer trends, such as the need for authenticity and simplicity.

Through artisan packaging, a brand can immediately communicate its skill, craftsmanship, and quality. Therefore, it can tap into key consumer trends and needs and differentiate itself from the competition.



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## ARTISAN WE LOVE: Dorset Sea Salt Co.

When the Dorset Sea Salt Company rebranded their business, it was important for the brand to stand out in the highly competitive salt market by focusing on the unique story and values. Dorset offers some of the purest, most mineral-rich waters in Britain, and the Jurassic Coast has a long-forgotten history of salt production, which Dorset Sea Salt Co. wanted to revive through the production of an innovative range of prestige, locally and sustainably sourced salt products.

A simplistic, typography-led approach to packaging design and identified a handwritten brush to be used as the brand font to communicate its craftsmanship. Furthermore, a beautiful soft pastel colour palette was chosen, which would make the brand stand out from other sea salt brands, who often used stereotypical deep blues in their packaging. The colour palette would also allow Dorset Sea Salt Co. to have a revenant colour for each of their infusions.

Finally, a gold finish was incorporated into the packaging to embrace the history of salt and reflect upon when sea salt was worth more than gold. Thus, this would ensure a connection to its rich past.

The result was a fresh, premium brand and, most importantly, completely unique, reflecting the Dorset lifestyle that consumers associate with the Jurassic Coastline and the exceptional quality of the products. Thus, a perfect example of artisan design.

# The Foodie 40 for 2022

Small Business' Foodie 40 2022 reveals the most innovative, exciting and sustainable fast growth food brands in the UK. As consumers look for more innovative, high quality and unique products when it comes to food, the number of fast growth food brands has exploded in the UK, with an increased focus on craft, health and sustainability, ranging from gourmet popcorn, seaweed and noodles, to exclusive ingredient delivery boxes.

1. Aye Pickled  
– gourmet pickles and live cultured ferments
2. Barenaked Noodles  
– low carb noodles
3. Bio & Me  
– granola that's 'good for you gut'
4. Boundless  
– activated snacking
5. Brave  
– celebrating the humble pea
6. CHIKA'S  
– authentic African snacking
7. Crosta & Mollica  
– bringing the food of Italy to the UK
8. Döner Haus and Döner Shack  
– authentic Berlin Kebabs to the UK
9. Doughlicious  
– gluten-free, gourmet cookie dough
10. DR. VEGAN  
– the vegan supplement brand
11. Eaten Alive  
– fermentation at its finest
12. Flower & White  
– gourmet chocolate treats
13. Free From Fellows  
– sugar-free vegan sweets
14. Fullgreen  
– the power of plant-based nourishment



15. Holy Moly Dips  
– delicious and nutritious dips
16. Howdah  
– authentic Indian snacks
17. Indie Bay  
– delicious and satisfying snacks, without the guilt
18. Jealous Sweets  
– sweets without the junk
19. Joe and Seph's Popcorn  
– a new popcorn experience
20. Kabuto Noodles  
– the original premium noodle brand
21. 8 Foods  
– biohacking health
23. ManiLife  
– Peanut Butter like no other
24. Mister Free'd  
– vegan tortilla chips
25. Nix & Kix  
– spice up your soft drink
26. Pasta Evangelists  
– authentic Italian pasta at home
27. Pip & Nut  
– all natural nut butter
28. PLAYin CHOC  
– organic dairy free chocolate
29. Popcorn Shed  
– gourmet popcorn treats

30. Pots and Co  
– exceptional puddings at home
31. PROPER  
– healthy popcorn
32. Purely Plantain Chips  
– plantain snacks
33. RE:NOURISH  
– plant-based soups
34. Shore  
– seaweed for snacking
35. Slim Jim Food Company  
– sauces from around the world
36. Soupologie  
– free-from soups
37. The Coconut Collaborative  
– yogurts and puddings made from humble plants
38. The Cookaway  
– recipe boxes from around the world
39. The Paleo Foods Company  
– revolutionary granola
40. Wibble  
– modern jelly pots



joanne.holder@dgi.co.uk  
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# Our Foodie 40 favourites...

A closer look at the list with our favourite designs, identity and products...



We love this identity and the use of negative space. Also the on-trend flat graphic illustrations.

We love the strong, bold and simple, less can be more and this design shows this off to the max.

Nix & Kix produces natural soft drinks without refined sugars, artificial flavourings or additives with a kick from UK grown chillies. All drinks are low in calories, below 5g of sugar per 100ml and vegan. Nix & Kix select the botanicals in their soft drinks for their taste and health benefits. They discovered that by using the right hint of cayenne, their soft drinks maintain a refreshing zing without the need to add any sugar or artificial ingredients. Also, cayenne contains capsaicin which boosts metabolism and increases endorphins.



RE:NOURISH is a range of revolutionary fresh plant based soups, in a grab and go heatable, fully recyclable bottle and carbon neutral packaging. The brand has gone global and is active in Hong Kong and the UAE, as well as the UK. RE:NOURISH is also proud to be offsetting its small carbon footprint with a clean water project in India and recycling ocean plastic in the Philippines.

This brand name is so much fun and we love the bright colours used!

Wibble's founder loved jelly as a kid, but whilst she grew up, she felt as though jelly never really did. Less than impressed with the current lack of jelly offerings available, and after some experimentation in the kitchen, Wibble was born!



We love the key detail in the identity. word disruption doesn't always work but in this instance it does!

Popcorn Shed is a range of gourmet popcorn treats and gifts for those sharing moments that matter most. Their production process is complex. Popcorn Shed uses an artisan cooking process by making a fresh caramel batch with each production run. Their popcorn is tumbled in fresh caramel before being scattered with melted chocolate, nuts and dried fruit. This ensures a deep, rich flavour and provides a lovely texture to every single kernel.

The stand out font makes these packs one of our favorites and we love the use of a strong product colour coding.



Celebrating the humble pea, BRAVE's crunchy roasted peas and chickpeas are grown in East Anglia and are nutritional powerhouses – they're high in protein and fibre, and burst with natural energy which makes for the perfect on-the-go snack. All of their recipes are made using all-natural ingredients, no sugar and are completely vegan too.



Soupologie was started in 2012 selling soups on market stalls. Their mission was to create the most delicious, free-from soups that are functional and suit your lifestyle. All of Soupologie's soups are free-from the 14 main allergens, are completely vegan and are packed with vitamins and minerals that occur naturally in fruit and vegetables.

We love the name and the on trend use of simple graphic illustration of the ingredients.

FAST GROWTH...

# New products to discover

The Farm Shop and Deli Show returned in April 2022 showcasing some of the best in British food and drink. Many of the products on show were new to market, giving retailers an opportunity to steal a march of their rivals by being among the first to list them. Here's a few of the hundreds of new products that were on display...

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Made with a blend of cayenne chilli peppers and European white truffles, this hot sauce packs a punch, promise creators Truffle Guys. The business developed its product to bring a touch of luxury to the hot sauce category. The chilli peppers in the sauce are homegrown by Truffle Guys' supplier, ensuring the business uses only high-quality cayenne chilli.



Espresso & Ale Sauce, Originally slated for launch in spring 2020 but delayed due to the pandemic, this premium product is designed to offer an alternative to overly sweet barbecue sauces. The sauce uses Monsoon Estates coffee roasters' Espresso blend of Guatemalan, Colombian, Brazilian and African beans. It's paired with Ross & Ross's own Cotswold Pig Ale, along with local smoked Cotswold rapeseed oil and cider vinegar.



Staffordshire's Bros Distillery has expanded its Sixtowns spirits lineup with a spiced rum. Distilled in batches of just 100 bottles, the rum is made using ethically sourced natural ingredients, says the supplier. At 40% abv, it is described as having a blend of mixed spices with tasting notes of caramel, apple pie, cinnamon, warm ginger, vanilla, subtle chocolate and peppercorn. Like Sixtowns' gin and vodka, the rum is packed in a porcelain bottle designed to pay homage to the ceramic heritage of the distiller's area. "The bespoke shape and design are reminiscent of the kilns in which ceramics used to be fired," says Bros.



Clotton Hall Dairy Clotted Cream Rice Pudding Made in small batches at the Clotton Hall Dairy in Cheshire, this rice pudding contains clotted cream and a hint of nutmeg. The business, which uses fresh milk from its own herd of free-range cows, is launching the rice pudding in a 330g pot. Aimed at older consumers and couples, it follows success of a 500g format. Clotton Hall Dairy products, including custard and clotted cream, are distributed through independent wholesalers into farm shops, convenience stores and delis nationwide.



Burren Balsamics has spherified its Citrus Infused White Balsamic Vinegar of Modena to create these pearl bursts, which it describes as a perfect for canapés and suitable for use in cocktail recipes. "For the Citrus White Balsamic, we slice ruby grapefruit, oranges, lemons and limes into the vinegar, allow it to infuse gently, strain it off and bottle it." Fruit that has infused the vinegar is used to make marmalade as part of Burren's Zero-Food-Waste range of jams, chutneys and relishes.



South-west England's St Austell Brewery and Mr Filbert's have teamed up to create nuts flavoured with Proper Job IPA. One of St Austell brewery's most popular beers, Proper Job is described as a powerfully hopped IPA with citrus, pineapple, and grapefruit notes. Oven-roasted Mr Filbert's peanuts are tumbled in a sauce recipe containing the beer to create the snack.



Ham Hoorays are one of three variants of lunchtime bites developed by Archer's Kitchen as an alternative to sandwiches in kids' lunchboxes. "They were developed in our home kitchen as a solution to the mad morning rush of making sandwiches for our two sons," says co-founder Ashley Grocott. "We are now bringing them to the market to save busy parents time and effort and provide a nutritional alternative to a sandwich, high in protein and low in sugar." The bites are supplied frozen and defrost overnight.

# The rise of artisan chocolate

During the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021 chefs on forced furlough were left scratching their heads, wondering what to do next. And swathes of them turned to chocolate making – there are more artisan chocolate makers in the UK than ever before. Let's explore some of the best around...



Dormouse Chocolate founder Isobel Carse began making artisanal chocolate bars in 2015 in her kitchen at home, where everything down to the peeling of beans to making cocoa butter was completed by hand. Now operating out of Manchester's Great Northern Warehouse, Isobel produces micro batches of quality chocolate of around 3-10kg, up to three times a week.

Core ingredients are kept simple: just cacao, sugar, and organic milk powder, but she also creates a number of limited edition and seasonal bars, wrapped in beautiful paper. The Christmas stollen bar – which contains roasted almonds and cherries – typically gains a long waiting list from as soon as October, so be sure to register your interest early. If you're a fan of white chocolate, Dormhouse's 39% Madagascar Toasted White, which is made with caramelised milk powder, is a must; it was the only white chocolate bar to be awarded gold at 2018's Academy of Chocolate Awards.



Solkiki's founders Iris and Bob have pocketed a wealth of accolades for their vegan bean-to-bar chocolate since officially launching in 2015, amassing more than 70 awards internationally to date. Their core range of micro-batch, heirloom chocolate and single-origin bars – which is made in a building powered by renewable energy – spans more than 40 bars including white, milk, dark and ultra dark. That said, they specialise in creating micro-batch chocolate, with batch sizes of less than 50kg, and produce approximately 400 batches a year. On top of being hands-on with the chocolate making process, Iris and Bob grow their own Aji limon chillies to use in their bars and also source local Dorset ingredients including apples and even CBD oil.

In 2013, fresh from travelling Central America and a stint working on a cocoa farm, Land's chocolatier Phil Landers switched a career in radio to set up an artisanal chocolate company. Today, from his workshop in East London, Phil – who has worked with chocolatiers such as Paul A Young and Mast Brothers – hand sorts his cocoa beans before roasting, cracking, winnowing (where the outer shell is removed to reveal the cacao nibs that make the chocolate), grinding and conching them. Despite this intricate process, Phil single-handedly is able to make up to 60kg batches at a time, twice a week. While he creates single-origin bars from around the world, Phil also collaborates with local producers as much as possible too.



Mother-daughter duo Andrea Huntingdon and Lucy Elliott, otherwise known as Creighton's, are celebrated for their small-batch, handmade artisan chocolates and their innovative flavour combinations which cover include anything from retro biscuits to ramen.

The all-female team of five has been crafting chocolate since 2010 and now produce up to 10,000 bars a week, with all of the work save the chocolate tempering undertaken by hand. Their fun and brightly designed bars contain ingredients from all over the UK, from Maldon sea salt to Yorkshire biscuits, Scottish edible flowers, and coffee beans from Bedfordshire roasters. Don't miss the Spoon of Cereal bar of chocolate, containing marshmallow-flavoured white chocolate and cereal hoops, while gin lovers will need to check out the Pink Gin chocolate bar which is made in collaboration with London jewellery makers Tatty Devine.



Premium vegan brand Firetree Chocolate has unveiled its first limited-edition range, The Innovations Collection. The lineup comprises five bars (made with cocoa beans sourced from volcanic islands in the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and the Solomon Islands). The bars are also available together in a gift box. Firetree says it is disrupting the luxury chocolate category by tapping demand for a healthier, natural and sustainable alternative to those currently on the market.



Look out for this London-based chocolate maker's innovative collaborations: its vegan white chocolate with beetroot, rose and vanilla – a collaboration with Raw Press – tastes just like Turkish Delight!



# Tru Earth - Challenging the laundry category

When a trio of entrepreneurs were first presented with zero-waste eco-strips as a new business opportunity that promised to change the way we do laundry, they were doubtful.

Could little strips of paper really clean clothes? But, trial turned skepticism into enthusiasm, and the seeds of a laundry revolution took hold.

Using a subscription-based business model, Tru Earth launched in April 2019 with a target of selling 150 subscriptions in the first month. When they sold ten times that, they figured they were onto something.

By the end of the following year, Tru Earth was the 2nd fastest growing start-up in Canada and, by the end of 2021, the 71st fastest-growing company in the world. They ramped up quickly from 7 employees to 230, and their products are now sold in over 65 countries.

Each 4"x2" highly concentrated, pre-measured Tru Earth strip cleans one load of laundry, completely dissolving in either hot or cold water. Shipped in compact, compostable cardboard packaging, they reduce shipping emissions by 94%. In addition, they are paraben and phosphate-free, hypoallergenic, vegan and biodegradable. And when Tru Earth isn't busy upending the laundry industry, they are giving back to communities. For every first-time subscription purchase, 32 loads of laundry are donated to organizations in need across the globe.

Like all challengers, Tru Earth aims to progress the category. They may be leading the way, but as CEO Brad Liski says, "I dream of a day where all the big creators of detergent turn off their laundry jug assembly lines and switch to this method". In challenger terms, Tru Earth is a Missionary. For them, the business is the mission. As Brad has shared, "the key performance indicators that drive our company are not profits and revenues, they're jugs and donations. How many jugs can we save from landfills and oceans? And how many loads have we donated to those in need?".

Tru Earth rejects the idea that environmentalism is an all or nothing proposition. Instead, they live by their mantra "small hinges open big doors" and meet consumers where they are. They inject new emotions into an often strident space, bringing a healthy dose of humour and even sparks of joy to never-ending wash cycles. Laundry detergent that seems to magically show up in your mailbox each month? No more messy spills

to clean up? And more space on top of the washer where folded clothes can sit for days? Sign me up.

Two years into their mission, Tru Earth has saved over 6 million jugs and donated over 10 million loads to families in need. And they are just getting started. In 2022, they are focused on tripling those numbers and moving beyond the laundry room to offer similar products for the kitchen and bathroom. If they are successful, mothballed laundry jug assembly lines may be less dream and more reality. Then the question will be, have they built a strong enough brand and a loyal enough fan base to hold their own in the brave new world of zero-waste laundry?

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joanne.holder@dgi.co.uk

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# Branding facts and figures

## Top Branding Statistics:

- It takes 5 to 7 impressions for people to remember a brand.
- Colour improves brand recognition by up to 80%
- 73% of consumers love a brand because of helpful customer service.
- Presenting a brand consistently across all platforms can increase revenue by up to 23%.
- 1/3 of the world's top 100 brands include the colour blue in their logos.
- 72% of the best brand names are made up words or acronyms.
- Brands with poor company branding pay 10% higher salaries.
- Over 70% of brand managers consider building an audience more important than converting sales.
- 89% of shoppers stay loyal to brands that share their values.
- Brands that blog generate 67% more leads.

It has never been more important for small and young businesses to invest in effective branding to drive awareness and sales...

In the consumer society we live in, people are constantly bombarded with different products and services - from the moment they get up until they go to sleep, across different devices, and in real life. A young company emerging in such a tough market can find it difficult to establish itself.

And that's where branding comes in. The primary purpose of branding is helping businesses stand out from the competition. Branding your company means sharing your brand values with customers and creating trusting relationships with them.

**59% of shoppers prefer to buy new products from the brands they trust.**

(Invesp)

Yesterday's successful branding efforts can help you launch new products today. If you had previously gained the trust of your customers, you'll have no trouble introducing new lines of products, as almost 60% will be willing to try them out.

**73% of small businesses invest in social media marketing as part of their branding efforts.**

(The Manifest)

A 2019 study by the Manifest reveals that social media channels like Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter is the preferred branding method of small businesses. Branding via social media is popular with three quarters of small companies due to low costs involved and a wide reach of potential customers.

**95% of small businesses intended to increase their marketing budgets in 2019.**

(Smallbiztrends)

Branding and marketing are intricately connected. Your branding efforts won't mean a thing if you don't advertise them, and small businesses are aware of this. According to branding stats 2019 revealed by SmallBizTrends, nearly all small-business owners plan to increase their marketing budgets for this year.

**34% of small businesses invest in video marketing.**

(The Manifest)

Using video material to communicate your company's key values and to engage with your customers is an effective way to brand your business. However, only a third of small businesses use video to this end.

**64% of consumers purchase a product after watching a branded video on social networks.**

(Forbes)

If you're uncertain how to create a brand for your small business, here's a little hint - video content on social media. Use Instagram Stories, product demonstrations, short branded ads, and influencer reviews to inspire people to buy from your brand. According to Forbes, creating consumer impressions through social media videos can generate a lot of leads.

**More than 80 million small businesses use Facebook every month.**

(Hootsuite)

A staggering number of small businesses has tapped into this network's amazing potential. And their number keeps growing year after year by 23%, according to Hootsuite. SMBs use the social network to promote themselves and their offers, stay in touch with clients and share customized content.

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Let us know what you would like to see next time...

[joanne.holder@dgi.co.uk](mailto:joanne.holder@dgi.co.uk)