Dunkin’ Lights a New Marketing Fire With Candle Collection

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It’s no longer time to make the doughnuts—this holiday season, it’s time to smell the doughnuts.

Dunkin’s newest merchandise drop isn’t a white-label clothing line or a new pair of running shoes. Instead, the coffee and doughnut company partnered with Homesick Candles to create three limited-edition candles for the holidays.

Justin Unger, director of strategic partnerships at Dunkin’ Brands, explained that candles made sense for the brand because people could bring the smell of doughnuts home with them.

“We landed with Homesick, and the candle in particular, to play off their nostalgia and evoke memories for our customers,” Unger said. “The candle is often seen as a gift and something in the home that can remind people of home and trigger a memory.”

Homesick and Dunkin’ started working together at the beginning of 2019 with the expectation of releasing candles during the holiday season, said Taylor Sicard, cofounder of Homesick’s parent company, Win Brands Group.

The Homesick research and development team worked with Dunkin’s culinary team to perfect the three scents: Original Blend Coffee, Peppermint Mocha Coffee and Old Fashioned Donuts.

Sicard said the teams chose these scents specifically to

ensure the true smell of the doughnuts comes through, as opposed to using a frosted doughnut with sweeter notes, which can overpower the fragrance. Only available on Homesick's website for $30 each, Sicard expects the collection to sell out quickly.

"The comparison we've been using on our side and their side [is] along the lines of the Saucony collaboration they did for the Boston Marathon," Sicard said. "That's the north star we're following."

Homesick previously collaborated with Tinder to create a Single Not Sorry candle earlier this year. However, Sicard said, creating candles for this partnership was a bit easier, as the team tied back the candle scent to the actual smell of

Dunkin’ products, whereas the Tinder candle and other “memory” ones the brand sells are a bit harder to unify and evoke a universal feeling in people.

Unger agreed, citing that working with Homesick was more of an “integrated partnership,” as opposed to making a candle to sit on a shelf.

“Their whole platform is about triggering memories in either places or times,” Unger said. “It felt more like a partnership that can grow into something bigger to bring to our consumers.”

Dunkin’ will measure the success of the candle via social listening to gauge how consumers are reacting to the news and the candle itself. Unger said nothing is necessarily “off the table” in regards to working with Homesick again—or any of the other brands Dunkin’s has collaborated with.

“I have one motto: Every interaction is an opportunity,” Unger said. “You never know what will come of a meeting or collaboration.”

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