

Sweet, Danish invention with great potential

Kim Jacobsen is the only person in the world who can cover popcorn with caramelized syrup and press it together before the syrup hardens. Production begins in a few months at Viking Chocolate Ltd. in Herlev.

Kim Jacobsen from Jystrup can do something that millions of popcorn-loving, sweetie-craving mouths cannot do. He can get caramelized popcorn to stick together in a bar which can be covered with chocolate. It sounds simple enough, but the special syrup hardens so fast that no-one else before him has ever succeeded in doing the same stunt, and in a few months the first **Double Up Pop** (as the new popcorn/Chocolate bars have been baptized) will hit the streets.

The production is ready at Viking Chocolate in Herlev and is now mainly just waiting for the packaging before up to 40,000 Double up Pops can be produced daily.

But to get this far, it has cost Kim Jacobsen and his dedicated partners time, sweat and lots of money. So much so, that the Treasury money has run out, even though the house is mortgaged up to the gills.

The European patent application has gone through smoothly, but the financial crisis has negatively affected bank lending so much, that Kim Jacobsen is now struggling to raise 800,000 DKK for a worldwide patent application to ensure that his newly created company, Double Pop License Ltd, will be eligible for licence money, not least from the United States. He is willing to sell a small part of company's capital for 200.000 DKK per percent to get the money before 4th January.

So what are the possibilities? First Denmark and the rest of Scandinavia, and then the whole world and not least the U.S. lie open to them. Americans eat tons of popcorn. He just has to find the right American partners.

An old dream

For years, the Americans have been eating popcorn in all possible variations, including all types of coatings, and the idea of pressing them together into a chocolate coated bar is close to them.

As far back as just after the war, Kim Jacobsen's father, Verner Jacobsen, dreamed of finding a method whereby the caramel syrup hardened at the correct slowness so the popcorn could be pressed together, but without success.

Later Kim Jacobsen took up the challenge and finally in 1983, when he tried for the 117th time at home in the utility room, by pure chance he discovered how the syrup could be made to cooperate.

Now the hard work began.

He lacked a machine, he lacked partners and above all he lacked capital.

Out of his own pocket, Kim Jacobsen paid 100,000 DKK for a Gallup study that proved that the popcorn bar was sellable, and with this in his back pocket, he was one of only ten people that were awarded a development grant from DTU of DKK 25,000 per month for one year to work further on the project.

Now the way was paved to build a prototype of the machine that would make the popcorn-bars.

Sweet production in Herlev

The time was not ripe just yet. The project was put on hold, but was often on the sidelines discussed with Viking Chocolate, which was under heavy mechanical development. Finally in 2005, the parties had reached the point where the project could be revived again. Torben Kristensen, who owns Viking Chocolate in Herlev, who in recent years has expanded the plant heavily, could make a production room available for them.

The first step for constructing the machines was to contact mechanical designer Karsten Jørgensen from Energetic in Soroe, who had 30 years of automation experience in the industry and who threw himself energetically into the project. However, it is not so always so easy to transform a utility room into a professional production plant, so the chromed solution has been taking a long time. In the meantime, the low-voltage electrician, Peter Scharling, from PS Automatik in Smørum, was brought in to program the controlling processes for all moving parts. He has been indispensable during the project, says Kim Jacobsen.

Torben Kristensen has also been involved in the development, having run the test productions and is full of confidence in the invention, which he has got the Scandinavian licence to produce.

FACT 1

Only natural ingredients

No additives in Double up pop

Double Up Pop is made from very few, completely natural ingredients. It primarily consists of a special kind of corn, that is imported from USA and Kim Jacobsen emphasises that it is not genetically modified corn. It also contains glucose produced from wheat and sugar. There are no preservatives or other additives. The finished bar is covered with creamy milk chocolate, dark chocolate or white chocolate with a hint of natural orange flavour.

It can hardly get more natural than this.

FACT 2

Hereditary burden

The father had the patent for the Tivoli lollipop

Had it not been for a good position as a financial officer in the IT firm, Blue IT Nordic, the support of his wife Kirsten and economic backing from Roskilde Bank (at least in the beginning), Kim Jacobsen would never have got this far with his Double Up Pop.

Or perhaps he would have done anyway because he was born with an unparalleled perseverance and he had a hereditary burden:

Just after World War, his father, Verner Jacobsen, invented the Tivoli lollipop, which he had the patent for, and which was hand-made in those days, using thumbs to press the sweet mass into a shape.

But Kim's father died when he was only 11 years old and his mother continued the production of both the lollipops and different kinds of chocolates, until the day when Kim Jacobsen reached the age of 18. Then she handed over all responsibility to him and moved to Sweden.

Verner Jacobsen's chocolate factory on Solrød Beach carried on until 1983, when he sold it in small parts, but he never gave up his father's idea of a popcorn bar.

FACT 3

Viking Chocolate Ltd

From chocolate marshmallows to hard-boiled sweets and Double Up Pop

Originally Viking only made the known luxury marshmallows covered in chocolate, but has now expanded their production to include liquid marshmallow that is used for topping on traditional ice-creams, Viking Gift Boxes and chocolate bars, Orchidé chocolate, Nørregade hard-boiled sweets, roasted almonds, etc. all in very high quality. The oldest parts of the company have roots right back to 1924, and the diligent staff cherish the proud traditions.

Double Up Pop fits perfectly in with this assortment. Double Up Pop is also a new Danish product that will be able to compete with the other chocolate bars on the market.

FACT 4

Great expectations

Huge market for chocolate bars

The outlook for Double Up Pop is very bright indeed. The owner of Viking Chocolate, Torben Kristensen, is full of optimism that chocolate sales are not usually affected by economic crises. He said that he is only sorry that the banks' reluctance to lend money in the shadow of financial crisis is now so extreme that it limits the lending opportunities and affects the many great ideas that exist in healthy Danish companies.

The parties involved expect that within a few years - with help from new licensees around the world - that up to 400 million Double Up Pops will be sold worldwide. This will give this little company up to 100 million DKK in license income every year, unless one of the big players comes and buys up all the rights.

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