Amys Kitchen Case Study
Strategy, packaging, website design, category design, art direction and style guides

“Honey really understood what we were trying to achieve and got to the heart of the Amy’s brand. After re-launch in 2011 sales grew by 92% that year.”

Andy Berliner - Owner/Director, Amy's Kitchen, San Francisco
Amy’s Kitchen cracks UK frozen food market

US family brand increases sales turnover by 92% and achieving mainstream success in three major UK supermarkets.

There would be no presentations under bright boardroom lights. If we had to tell a family company that their brand image didn’t work over here, and that they needed to change everything including the brand name, then we needed to show them proof. So we booked the Amy’s team on a flight to London to give them a tour of the supermarkets, where we could show them how UK consumers perceive frozen food.

Amy’s is massive in the US, but despite having tasty products they were still struggling to crack the UK market because they had been presented as a niche ‘free from’ brand.
The biggest challenge was convincing mainstream supermarkets that their US packaging would appeal to UK customers.

This was preventing a listing with ASDA, which was part of their strategy to increase their product range and push into Europe. So how could they change their brand positioning to succeed in the UK? Well, it would require a complete overhaul of their US branding.
The first problem was that the freezer aisle was a place many consumers avoid, because people see it as a cold and uninviting environment.

Tough economic times had also squeezed the price gap between fresh and frozen, giving frozen food a reputation for being poor value for money, and a meal choice that went against the nation’s values of spending meaningful time with family at home.

We showed them how brands like Birdseye and Quorn were struggling to communicate the health benefits of their products because frozen foods were perceived to be less appetising, less healthy, and less premium than fresh food. The lack of a dedicated ‘Free From’ frozen section would make it difficult for Amy’s to communicate their brand’s healthy and premium qualities, as well as the premium price tag.
It was important for us to understand Amy’s brand values and heritage before we started rebranding.

So we spent time with the Berliner family in California, toured the factories, and met the farmers that supply the ingredients. This gave us valuable insights into Amy’s key differentiators and would help us tell Amy’s story in a way that would connect with UK consumers.

First we changed the name back to the original brand name “Amy’s Kitchen”. Then we used design cues from the fresh food category like images of fresh ingredients and hand written typography to overcome consumer perception of frozen foods being processed and unhealthy. This allowed us to position the product as being a healthy and convenient family meal.
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Result
- Hand prepared quality emphasised by changing the name to “Amy’s Kitchen”
- Vibrant background colours used to define product category and help stand out
- Use of product shots, images of fresh ingredients and hand written typography
- Health claims, anecdotes and personal recommendations used to create interest
- Brand story told through back of pack illustrations and family photographs

Soon after the launch Amy’s Kitchen were relisted by Sainsbury’s and succeeded in achieving additional listings in ASDA and Tesco. This was a massive achievement and made it possible for them to increase their range from an initial three products (at launch) to ten products across several categories, as well as entering the French and German markets.

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We continued to work closely to design a UK branded website, design all of the new UK and European branded products, and create their UK trade stand and US conference presentation. Amy’s Kitchen made such a noticeable impact on the UK frozen food market that their success was widely talked about by The Sun, The Daily Mail, Mail Online, Red, The Grocer, Eat In and Zest Magazine.

74.6% Sales increased in major retailers