

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

How to use limited-time offers to raise funds for charity

To support meaningful causes and foster community goodwill, bakeries can leverage limited-time offers (LTOs). These promotions boost awareness not only for the cause but for the bakery brand as well. Tim Clegg, founder and CEO of Springfield, Missouri,-based Hurts Donut Company, understands the power of charitable giving: It's helped his business grow to 19 locations since its 2013 launch. "We attribute much of our success to our charitable partnerships in the communities we serve," explains Clegg, who considers fundraising a major marketing tool. To support charities through LTOs, try these tactics:

1 CONNECT WITH A MEANINGFUL CAUSE

"You've got to believe in what you're raising money for," says Clegg, who, after being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, decided to funnel the bulk of corporate giving to the National MS Society. Sprinkles Cupcakes, based in Austin, Texas, is a woman-founded bakery with a strong female following, so it paired naturally with the National Breast Cancer Foundation (NBCF), says Allison Click, Sprinkles' vice president of marketing.



2 DEVELOP MEMORABLE, MEANINGFUL LTOs

For inspiration, start with shapes or colors that your charity identifies with. For example, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, Sprinkles raised \$15,000 for the NBCF through the sale of pink strawberry champagne cupcakes (left). And a Hurts Donut's location in Wichita, Kansas, raised \$30,000 by selling Thin Blue Line donuts—topped with black icing and a blue line of frosting—to benefit the family of a fallen police officer.

3 SPREAD THE WORD

Just as with any other LTO, it's important to promote the one you create for charity on your bakery's social platforms. Highlight and tag the organization benefiting from the fundraising efforts, explaining its mission and work, as well as your bakery's connection to the cause. It's also a good idea to use social media, signage and other marketing materials to communicate how exactly the organization will benefit from the LTO. Clearly stating what portion of the proceeds will be donated demonstrates transparency to customers.

— Lisa A. Beach

COULD IT CATCH ON?

SUMAC

Packed with antioxidants, this superfood spice brings tart flavor and bright color to baked goods.

What Is Sumac?

It's a spice derived from **wild berry flowers** that's rich in antioxidants. A longtime staple in Middle Eastern and South Asian cooking, sumac is growing more popular, even making its way into baked goods.



Sumac by the Numbers

34% Menu penetration increased from 2015 to 2017

With **19%** of consumers saying **superfood** claims increase the likelihood they'll order a dish or beverage, sumac is a great addition to health-minded bakery offerings.

Bake With Sumac

Sumac tastes **tangy** and **fruity**, and it adds a reddish-purple hue to baked goods. Unlike other spices, sumac's flavor dulls as it's heated. For an even, rich color and invigorating lemony flavor, mix sumac with dry ingredients as you're preparing the batter for treats like cookies. For a stronger, more aromatic taste, use the spice sparingly to dust finished desserts.

Sources: Mintel, Datassential, Bon Appetit, Serious Eats



Early Adopters

New York City's Golda has **combined sumac with hibiscus** to create a cake glaze. And Chef Jeff Mahin of restaurant group Lettuce Entertain You created a sumac donut by **folding the spice and brown sugar** into brioche dough. He then glazed the donut with vanilla bean-sumac icing.

— Chuck Ulie

BEST PRACTICE



Tantalizing Textures

FIND OPPORTUNITIES TO ADD LAYERS OF CRUNCH, CREAM AND INDULGENT RICH TEXTURES TO YOUR BAKED GOODS AND TAKE OFFERINGS TO THE NEXT LEVEL.

From the crunchy-smooth dynamic of caramel and nuts to the gooey-crumblly mix of an apple crisp, texture can play a big role in baked goods' appeal. And it doesn't just please taste buds. Mintel recently identifies unique textures as a top trend since they can boost the appearance of foods—key for social media. Some bakeries get extra creative with textures, using ingredients like puffed rice cereal, sesame seeds, malted chocolate and marshmallows. Flavor Cupcakery in Bel Air, Maryland, for example, tops Cracker Jack cupcakes with popcorn and peanuts, and its chocolate peppermint cupcakes feature crushed candy canes. "There's definitely something to be said for flavors that are visually and texturally appealing and a little bit different," says owner Shelley Stannard. "It registers with people that this place is doing some neat things."

PROCESS MAKES PERFECT

Unique textures may require extra testing time, as bakers have to ensure not only that flavor combinations work but that any contrasting crunchiness, chewiness and fluffiness offer a pleasant eating experience. Items also have to work within existing operations. Stannard makes sure her team has enough time to make textured components—such as torch-caramelized sugar for creme brulee cupcakes—by offering only one complicated item each day. The bakery also makes smaller batches of these intricate treats, positioning them as limited-time offers. "We make limited quantities because it's something that excites people we can promote online," Stannard says. Another way to minimize extra labor requirements is to avoid relying solely on scratch ingredients for texture. Candy, like Pop Rocks, and nuts can add that component without a lot of extra work on bakers' part.

KEEP DISPLAY AND SHELF LIFE TOP OF MIND

The final product also has to be structurally sound; overloading baked goods with too many trimmings—no matter how interesting—can cause issues, says Aaron Surman, executive chef at Lucky's Doughnuts. The Vancouver, Canada, bakery offers seasonal donuts with toppings like shaved coconut and torched meringue. "When it comes to texture and timeline, you do look at what you're putting on, and will it stay or [will the donut] become too soft within an hour or two [because] you have too much stuff on top," Surman says.

— Erin Brereton

