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# Candied Optimism

## Brand Positioning & Messaging Guidelines

*Created with heart by Meg Joyce, inKind Design inc. — Because your brand's story needs to be told.*

### 1. Brand Essence

Candied Optimism is a sweet, activism brand using candy, uplifting messages, and radical kindness to invite everyone to hope, unity, and positive change.

#### **Core Belief:**

Optimism is not passive — it's an act of courage. Every piece of candy, every act of kindness, and every word from this brand is a reminder that the world is absolutely still worth fighting for.

#### **Mission Statement:**

Candied Optimism is more than a candy company — it's a movement to sweeten the world, one act of kindness and connection at a time. Every treat is a joyful love letter to the belief that optimism is powerful, kindness is contagious, and there's room for everyone at the table.

### 2. Core Beliefs

- Optimism is an act of courage, requiring both strength of conviction *and* compassion.
- Kindness is a form of activism and can come in all shapes and sizes (even small enough to fit into a box of fudge).
- There will always be enough room and resources for everyone when we choose generosity over fear.
- Inclusivity is non-negotiable — every identity, belief, and background has a place here.
- Hope is worth sharing, even when the world feels heavy.

### 3. Brand Promise

At Candied Optimism, we promise that every piece of candy and every interaction will be a reminder that optimism is alive — and that all are welcome to partake in it.

#### We promise to:

- Wrap big ideas in small joys. Because sometimes the sweetest way to inspire change is through a smile and a shared treat that opens space for conversation.
- Stand boldly for kindness, inclusion, and hope. Our optimism is not passive — it's active, deliberate, and unshakable.
- Use sweetness as a tool for connection. Every product is designed to spark conversation, uplift spirits, and make people feel something.
- Celebrate every person, every story, every seat at the table. Diversity is not just accepted here — it's essential.
- Make optimism tangible. In every package we give you something extra to carry with you, to share, and to believe in.

### 4. Brand Personality

#### Archetype Blend:

- **The Optimist** – Spreading joy, hope, and a belief in the goodness of humans.
- **The Advocate** – Standing for justice, inclusion, and collective well-being.
- **The Jester** – Using humor, sweetness, and play to help the message stick (and to make it more fun to share).

#### Voice & Tone:

- Warm, witty, and encouraging.
- Inclusive and welcoming — never talking down, always inviting in.
- Playful with language (puns, candy metaphors) while delivering meaningful truths.

### 5. Brand Positioning

For people who believe kindness is a form of activism, **Candied Optimism** is the candy company that blends sweetness with purpose. Unlike traditional candy brands that focus only on indulgence, we use every treat and message to spread joy, invite conversation, and remind the world that there's always room for hope and connection.

This brand is **not cheap**. This brand is **not luxury**. It's somewhere *in the middle*.

Candied Optimism is approachable. It's the warm smile you feel when someone shares something sweet with you. It's the kind gesture that feels personal without being precious. It's candy with heart, wrapped in kindness and hope — priced fairly so that spreading optimism is easy, joyful, and accessible for many, not just a few.

The goal of Candied Optimism is to be your customers' go-to brand when they want to lift someone's spirits, celebrate connection, or send a message of hope without overthinking it. Because real optimism is for everyone, and kindness should never come with barriers.

## 6. Target Audience

### Individual Consumer:

- **Primary Audience:**

Values-driven consumers who believe in kindness, inclusivity, and social justice — and who love supporting small businesses that stand for something.

Spending Habits: Willing to spend a bit more on products that align with their ethics and personal values; tend to prioritize quality and purpose over price

Motivations: They actively seek brands that reflect their worldview, enjoy sharing stories behind their purchases, and like to feel that their spending makes a positive impact. They engage on social media and often share brands they believe in with their networks.

- **Secondary Audience:**

Gift-givers looking for unique, uplifting, and meaningful treats to share with friends, colleagues, and loved ones.

Spending Habits: Moderate to high spenders on gifts, especially those that feel personal or impactful.

Motivations: They want gifts that stand out, inspire, and convey meaningful messages beyond the usual. They appreciate convenience but won't compromise on authenticity or values.

- **The Unicorn:**

Someone who fits into both categories *and* is a consummate gift-giver. This person may own a small business and need regular referral/customer gifts. Or they may be an individual with a big heart who remembers every occasion and is looking for a go-to gift source. Either way, they *love* your product and what you stand for and will be a loyal consumer for years to come.

Spending Habits: Loyal and consistent customers who return year after year; willing to invest in products that foster connection and convey their message

Motivations: Wants to make every gift count — not just in taste but in the story and the impact behind it. They become brand advocates, sharing their enthusiasm with others and helping grow the community around Candied Optimism.

Note: They value ease and consistency. Make the purchasing process as smooth as possible. Think about connecting more deeply with this customer by setting up a personal connection and helping them to feel supported and seen. Things like creating a special customer account that tracks when their occasions are, so that you can get ahead of those dates. Reach out saying “I see this is coming up, can I suggest this?” or helping them to pick “the gift” that they send for all occasions that year/season.

### **Corporate/Bulk Clients:**

#### **Corporate Gifting:**

A corporation with a heart that is looking for a meaningful, memorable gift to share with clients, employees, or partners. Not all of your corporate gifting clients will care as much about your cause as you do... which is a shame, but their openness to using a kindness-based brand as their corporate gift is a good sign.

#### **Non-Profits:**

Non-profit organizations are always looking for ways to reward their donors and sponsors. For them, gifting Candied Optimism is a great way to reinforce goodwill and connection. For you, this is a great way to potentially inspire a whole new set of loyal, individual consumers. Consider partnering with organizations to support *their* cause while strengthening *your* visibility.

#### **The Unicorn:**

A non-profit with BIG corporate donors and sponsors, who needs a reliable, impactful gift option that aligns with their values and helps build stronger relationships through kindness and optimism. This opens up opportunity for new individual customers *AND* new corporate gifting accounts. Create fully custom gift boxes for these clients and include information about how people receiving the boxes can connect with your brand directly.

## **7. Sales Channels**

### **Direct-to-Consumer:**

Customers who buy directly from your website can learn about our story, choose from gift boxes or subscriptions, and feel connected to the brand. Offer special, seasonal products tied to your message to encourage them to come back often and make sure the brand message and mission are always front and center, right beside the product.

### **Retail Partners:**

I also *highly suggest* selling through stores that share your values, like:

- Local gift shops and boutiques (New England has *so many of these*)
- Bookstores and places with inspiring products
- Shops focused on social justice and community causes

- Specialty food stores and co-ops

This will help you reach people who like shopping in person and will create instant trust because you are already connected to a location they are familiar with.

#### **Digital Retail Partners:**

Honestly, the one that REALLY springs to mind (although I'm sure there are lots of options) is Greetabl.com. They are who I use to send thank you gifts to my referral partners and I know someone who sells her product through Greetabl.

#### **Events:**

Pop-up shops and joint events give you a chance to meet customers face-to-face and share your message in person — keeping the brand friendly and approachable. I suggest avoiding craft fairs and markets unless they are on the more exclusive/boutique level. Not because that's the brand, but because markets can easily become a big suck on time and money. Think about connecting with a wine company and partnering with them to create fudge pairings for their wines at a tasting. Let someone else do the heavy lifting until you have a big enough audience to draw a crowd on your own. Be in spaces that feel like community gatherings, not just sales points.

## **8. Branded Catchphrases**

Use these interchangeably. Be inspired by them, in the moment. Each one could be used for a different occasion and still feel totally connected to the brand.

#### **General:**

- Take a bite out of negativity.
- Candy with a conscience.
- Hope never tasted so good.
- More sweetness, less cynicism.
- Optimism: now available in candy form.
- Candy for the hopeful heart.
- Candy that connects.
- Hope in every handful.

#### **Cause-related/activism-related:**

- Fuel your fight with Candied Optimism.
- Stirring up sweetness and solidarity.
- Hope tastes delicious.
- The sweet side of activism.
- Unwrap change.
- Sugar, spice, and social justice.

**Additionally, I want you to collect up as many fun, funny, super short testimonials/consumer reactions as you can.** Things like “Yum!” and “15 out of 10 stars!”. They don’t have to be anything more than that. This brand gets to be fun, funny, and uplifting. Be playful and let your joy shine through in ALL THINGS.

## 9. Marketing Framework

Your marketing plan is an extension of your brand — every campaign, post, and product should tell the Candied Optimism story and invite people to join the movement of sweetness and hope.

### What to say:

Use storytelling as the heart of your marketing, making the brand’s mission personal, relatable, and shareable:

- Founder’s Story & Manifesto: Share the “why” behind Candied Optimism. Not the practical how-I-ended-up-here stuff, the *this is who I am and what I believe* stuff.
- Behind-the-Scenes: Show the craft, the care, and the meaning you mix into every product.
- Customer Stories: Highlight real people using candy to connect, inspire, or spark hope.
- The “Long American Table”: Use your personal manifesto that you sent me to inspire welcome in your posts. Invite people in. Pull out a chair and ask them to sit because you know that there is more than enough to go around.

### How to say it:

Use platforms to spark conversations, share uplifting content, and celebrate small acts of kindness related to your product and your work.

Tie special product launches to activism moments (Pride Month, World Kindness Day, Election Day).

Engage passionate fans as brand advocates who share their experiences and host micro-events or pop-ups.

Create a nurturing inner-circle-type email newsletter with stories, sneak peeks, and calls to optimism-fueled action. Give people a chance to pre-order for big launches or seasonal products.

Use the act of packing to tell a story — create a culture of excitement around boxing up big orders. Give people a big-kahuna type option to purchase all-of-the-above from the website and show yourself packing it up. People will get excited and want that experience. The first few times you do it can even be fake... just to let people know that it’s an option. Include little extras, like an additional product or extra stickers to get people really excited.

Make unboxing an experience that reflects optimism and kindness. Ask loyal customers to share their unboxing experience in video, pictures, or posts.

## 10. Elevator Pitch

Candied Optimism is a candy company with a cause. We believe that candy can do more than taste good — it can open hearts, spark conversations, and remind us that we are all connected. Everything we make is wrapped up with a little hope inside, because optimism grows when it's shared.

## 11. Brand Manifesto

### We are Candied Optimism.

We believe that optimism is a powerful and deliberate choice.

We believe in kindness as an act of courage, and joy as a form of resistance.

We believe that there's room for everyone at the table — *and we'll be saving you a seat.*

Every candy we make, every sticker we share, every box we send is an invitation:

- To see the good.
- To spread the sweet.
- To keep believing in what's possible.

**Our optimism is loud.** It laughs in the face of cynicism. It refuses to give up.

It welcomes every voice, every story, every identity — **because the table isn't full until we're all here.**

We don't just make candy.

We mix up and deliver a kind of hope you can hold and even taste.

We wrap big ideas in small, joy-filled packages so you can share them easily, eagerly, and often.

This is sweetness as activism.

This is candy with a cause.

This is **Candied Optimism.**