

CRAFTING A STANDOUT BRAND: HOW TO BUILD IDENTITY AND TRUST THROUGH INGREDIENTS LIKE ALMONDS

BY JENNIFER BARNEY, CPG ADVISOR AND FOUNDER OF BARNEY BUTTER

In the crowded world of consumer packaged goods (CPG), building a brand that resonates requires more than a clever name or a trendy ingredient. Success hinges on a crystal-clear value proposition and a brand identity rooted in solving real consumer problems—with ingredients that are as meaningful as they are functional.

As a food and agriculture advisor, I've seen startups flourish not just because they had a "cool" product, but because they knew exactly who they were serving, how they were solving that person's need, and why their formulation—and ingredient choices—mattered. Whether you're launching a better-for-you snack or reinventing a pantry staple, **anchoring your brand in purpose and ingredient transparency is key.**

DEFINE A VALUE PROPOSITION THAT SOLVES A REAL PROBLEM

A value proposition is not your product's flavor or functional benefit alone. It's your answer to this question: **"Why should someone choose this product over all the others on the shelf?"**

Too often, founders test ideas by asking consumers hypotheticals like, "Would you buy this?"—which leads to polite but misleading feedback. Instead, dig deeper. Ask open-ended questions: *What's missing in your morning routine? What frustrates you about your snack options?* These answers reveal unmet needs that a product can authentically solve.

Take [Wundereggs](#), for example—a brand offering plant-based, hard-boiled egg alternatives. They don't just say, "Here's a vegan egg." Instead, they solve a problem: how to get convenient,

clean-label protein without animal products or allergens. By using almonds, they achieve the creamy texture and protein density of eggs while leaning into a sustainability narrative. Their proposition is clear: *a ready-to-eat, allergen-friendly protein that meets the needs of plant-based and flexitarian consumers alike.*

Similarly, [Love + Chew](#) creates protein-packed cookies made with almonds and superfoods. Their consumer? The health-conscious snacker who craves indulgence without compromise. Almonds bring protein, fiber, and healthy fats to the table—making them the hero, not just a supporting ingredient. The result? A brand that promises guilt-free snacking with real food benefits.



BUILD IDENTITY AND TRUST WITH SUPERFOODS LIKE ALMONDS

Once you're clear on what problem you solve, build your brand identity around how you solve it—**starting with your ingredients.**

Today's consumers don't just want what you're selling—they want to know where it came from, why you chose it, and how it aligns with your values. Ingredients like almonds aren't just functional—they're storytellers. They can represent sustainability, nutrition, purity, and even family heritage.

ALMONDS AS A BRAND STORY CATALYST

Almonds offer a rich foundation for brand identity. They're nutrient-dense, versatile, and increasingly linked to sustainability innovation—despite challenges around water use in California. For startups willing to embrace transparency, this duality becomes an opportunity for deeper storytelling.

Look at **Fresh Vintage Farms**, a California-based company producing premium almond oil from the byproducts of almond processing. Instead of discarding what's left after harvesting almonds, they upcycle it into a high-quality cooking oil. Their identity is deeply tied to sustainability, minimal waste, and family tradition. That's not just a product—it's a purpose.

The Almond Project, a regenerative agriculture initiative led by Treehouse California Almonds, White Buffalo Land Trust, and brands like Simple Mills and Daily Harvest, takes this even further.



By experimenting with cover crops, sheep grazing, and soil health practices, the project brings sustainability to life in measurable ways. CPG brands partnering with initiatives like this can integrate verified impact into their brand story—an authenticity that's hard to fake.

Love + Chew, again, uses almonds not just for their nutrition, but as a way to frame their values. Their story focuses on clean, plant-based ingredients with traceable origins. In a landscape where "real food" is often an overused buzzword, they back it up with formulation integrity and clear sourcing.

DEFINE A VALUE PROPOSITION THAT SOLVES A REAL PROBLEM

Here are four practical steps to bring your value proposition and ingredient-driven identity to life:

1. Co-Create With Your Audience

Rebranding or launching? Involve your community. When Oat Haus rebranded from “Kween,” they used Instagram’s “close friends” feature to test new names and get input from loyal followers. Invite your customers into ingredient conversations—*What almond-based flavor do they want next? What sustainability issue matters most to them?*

2. Be Transparent—and Specific

Don’t just say your almonds are “sustainable.” Point to practices or certifications. Mention if you’re sourcing from a partner in [The Almond Project](#), or if your almonds are certified [organic](#) or [regenerative](#). As greenwashing fatigue sets in, transparency builds credibility.

3. Solve, Don’t Sell

Like [Three Trees](#), which offers almond milks with no gums, oils, or additives, your ingredient should solve a real consumer concern—not just follow trends. *If you’re using almonds, are you addressing label transparency? Clean nutrition? Digestive simplicity?* Focus your story on the problem you’re solving.

4. Partner Strategically

Programs like [Whole Foods’ LEAP](#) support emerging brands and clean-label innovation. Get in early, work closely with buyer teams, and use in-store demos to tell your ingredient story. Share how your almonds are grown, sourced, or processed—it turns a sample into a story.

LEAD WITH YOUR “WHY” AND LET INGREDIENTS PROVE IT

A powerful value proposition isn’t just a line in your pitch deck—it’s the foundation for every touchpoint with your customer. When supported by ingredient integrity, smart formulation, and transparent sourcing, it becomes the beginning of a meaningful brand.

When framed with purpose, almonds can be the heart of a compelling CPG story. And with growing consumer demand for authenticity, sustainability, and real nutrition, ingredient storytelling isn’t a nice-to-have—it’s a competitive edge.

Your brand begins with a belief. Let your ingredients—and your consumers—carry it forward.



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