



# Sugar & Strategy's Campaign Proposal for PE•CANDY



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This campaign proposal focuses on Pecandy's opportunity to elevate its gifting experience by strengthening its packaging, brand storytelling and review system. While Pecandy already offers a high-quality, luxury product, its current packaging and digital presence do not fully reflect the brand's premium positioning or its potential for memorable, giftable experiences. By creating a more aesthetic and intentional unboxing moment, Pecandy can enhance its high-end image and encourage customers to share the product through photos and social media.

A key challenge is the lack of a strong, centralized review system, which limits how new customers perceive the brand and its uses. Sugar & Strategy proposes addressing this gap through interactive packaging elements—such as QR codes, review prompts and founder storytelling inserts—that guide consumers to engage more deeply with Pecandy. These tools turn each jar into a meaningful touchpoint for brand identity, customer feedback and long-term growth.

Strengthening Pecandy's branding and packaging will not only increase perceived value but also build emotional connection and customer loyalty. By investing in packaging that reflects the brand's mission, authenticity and luxury feel, Pecandy can reinforce its premium placement, grow its community and position itself as a top choice for intentional, elevated gifting.



# MEET THE TEAM



**Alexia Young**  
**EDITOR**



**Bailey Rehkopf**  
**DESIGNER**



**Karina Deere**  
**CO-FACILITATOR**



**Sara Chen**  
**REPORTER**



**Tyson Spence**  
**CO-FACILITATOR**



**Veronica Henderson**  
**RECORDER**

# ABOUT THE CLIENT

## History of Pecandy



## Brand Reputation

Founded in 2021, Pecandy is a Black- and woman-owned luxury treat brand known for its decadent candied pecans. The company began when co-founder Alishia Richardson recreated her favorite snack and shared it with friends and family, who immediately encouraged her to turn it into a business. Together with her Spelman College roommate and now COO, Keyana Parks, Richardson built Pecandy around the mission of spreading joy through thoughtful, indulgent gifting. This personal origin continues to shape the brand's identity, emphasizing authenticity, community and meaningful connection.

Pecandy's core audience consists of middle-aged women ages 35–50 with disposable income who enjoy premium treats and value intentional gifting. These consumers appreciate novelty, elevated presentation and high-quality ingredients. Through partnerships with brands like Uncle Nearest and Shuga x Ice, Pecandy has established itself as a community-oriented business focused on genuine connection and elevated snacking experiences.

Pecandy has developed a strong reputation among loyal customers through farmers' markets, in-person sales and social media engagement. However, the brand's digital footprint and media presence have not grown significantly since its appearance on the Tamron Hall Show three years ago. With most sales coming from direct-to-consumer interactions, Pecandy relies heavily on word-of-mouth and in-person events to drive recognition. There is room to strengthen its online review ecosystem and expand its brand visibility beyond its current audience.

Looking ahead, Pecandy aims to grow its reach and transition into upscale business-to-business spaces, including hotel retail and corporate gifting. To support these goals, the brand must continue to build its reputation, enhance its storytelling and present itself consistently as a luxury product. In its current stage, Pecandy has strong potential to elevate its presence and further position itself as a premium, gift-ready treat.

# SITUATION ANALYSIS

The central issue addressed in this campaign proposal is Pecandy's opportunity to foster a unique experience by strengthening their packaging and reputation for gifting. Creating an aesthetic experience behind Pecandy can push its high-end image and create more photo opportunities. Without a strong review system, there is an opportunity to mold how consumers view the product and its possible usage. Sugar & Strategy proposes leveraging these opportunities with interactive elements, such as QR codes, review prompts and founder storytelling inserts that invite consumers to more deeply engage with the brand. This aims to help Pecandy transform each jar into a vessel of brand identity and data-driven growth. Strong branding and storytelling not only elevate perceived value but also encourage emotional connection and loyalty. By investing in packaging that reflects Pecandy's mission and values, the brand can reinforce its luxury placement, build community and position itself as a first-choice gift.

The main campaign opportunity is enhancing Pecandy's gifting experience through improved packaging, clearer storytelling and better review collection. Adding elements like QR codes, review prompts and founder stories can deepen customer engagement, elevate brand value and reinforce Pecandy's luxury positioning. This is especially important with the brand's future goals to expand another sector of its business. We want to mold the experience of our current consumers to best showcase Pecandy's abilities to future partners.

# SWOT ANALYSIS

## STRENGTHS

- The quality of Pecandy is consistently represented across social channels and through packaging.
- Richardson's personality is reflected in the brand's voice, making Pecandy feel very authentic and personable.
- She does a good job showcasing community involvement on her social media accounts.
- Returning customers can get rewards through the website, prompting customer loyalty.
- Pecandy has had various partnerships with other small businesses that share similar values.

## WEAKNESSES

- She doesn't offer products for different dietary restrictions, which could limit gifting opportunities.
- Not offering nutrition information on the product or website, which could also limit gifting ability.
- Some of the pictures don't highlight the potential of the product as a gift.
- Issues with consistency across the website.
- The default size of products on the website is the larger size, which can make the product look more expensive.
- Pecandy has low SEO.

## OPPORTUNITIES

- Increase potential to connect with a business audience by having a page dedicated to businesses (i.e. a request page for bigger orders) and showing examples of past B2B experiences.
- Increasing shared media by enhancing Pecandy's photogenicity.
- Lean into identities and advocacy to build brand values and create a connection to her customers.
- Partner with other brands and events that align with Pecandy's values.
- Make it easier for consumers to provide information and feedback.

## THREATS

- Packaging and shipping issues could affect the perceived quality of the product.
- Other grocery/retail competitors have options that are more accessible.
- The state of the economy could pose a threat because Pecandy's products are nonessential goods.
- Increased pricing is expected as a result of the supply chain/economy.



# SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS



## Objective Statement #1:

**To understand the existing market landscape of the food gifting market by analyzing current market reports and growth trends.**

According to the 2024–2025 Edible Arrangements State of Gifting Report, “just because” gifting has risen over the years, driven by social media and nontraditional occasions like National Siblings Day. These spontaneous moments are becoming cultural norms, signaling that consumers are motivated by emotional check-ins and digital inspiration rather than calendar holidays alone. This opens the door for year-round marketing opportunities for Pecandy and reinforces its role as a go-to gift for everyday joy, whether for others or for self-gifting.

Additionally, Yahoo Finance identifies personalization as one of the top-three packaging trends in the food gifting industry. Personalized touches elevate emotional resonance, making Pecandy ideal not only for spontaneous gestures but also for milestone celebrations and, eventually, corporate gifting. By tailoring the gifting experience to individual needs, Pecandy can demonstrate its commitment to thoughtfulness and expand its reputation across both consumer and business audiences while maintaining repeat consumers.

# SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS



## Objective Statement #2:

**To understand the impact of packaging on marketability by analyzing packaging trends and psychology.**

According to the UCLA Anderson School of Management, gifts typically fall into two categories: material gifts, which are tangible items, and experiential gifts, which offer moments to live through. UCLA research found that experiential gifts tend to be more personal, leading to greater satisfaction, less regret and increased happiness. These experiences are also more likely to be shared with others and contribute to a stronger sense of self. Although Pecandy offers a material product, its unwrapping experience can be designed to evoke the emotional depth of an experiential gift. Leveraging impactful storytelling alongside an aesthetic presentation can enhance the opportunity to capture a photo and leave an everlasting impression.

Packaging plays a critical role in shaping consumer perception before they even view the product. According to the Journal of Consumer Psychology, a discrepancy between expectations and product perception can leave dissonance in the consumer. If the packaging or appearance feels cheaper than anticipated, the emotional gap can lead to harsher judgment. Conversely, when packaging exceeds expectations, consumers often rate the product more favorably than its objective qualities warrant because it pleasantly surprises them. Another study in the same journal found that unveiling products from opaque boxes significantly increased perceived value compared to transparent ones. Expanding the label on Pecandy's products to cover more of the container could enhance perceived value and create space for storytelling elements that deepen audience engagement. For a luxury brand like Pecandy, indulgence and elegance should remain consistent.

# SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS



PE • CANDY

## Objective Statement #3:

**To determine how to build credibility and understand how it resonates in the market through consumer research.**

According to Xerago, Credibility is a cornerstone when it comes to building campaigns. With our campaign objective in mind, creating a strong brand identity is essential for Pecandy as it leads to long-term relationships and builds greater resonance with audiences. Earned media is an excellent way to build credibility. With our research, we discovered through Cision how that people are more likely to trust earned media in the form of recommendations from friends or other respected sources than they are traditional advertisements or a marketing team. The article highlights user-generated content, media coverage, influencer partnerships, online reviews, and social media engagement as forms of earned media that build credibility.

Applying this research to our campaign, Pecandy has room to grow due to limited online reviews and little media coverage of the brand. Focusing on building these two areas will help build Pecandy's credibility, thus strengthening its brand identity. Additionally, according to online reputation management company Erase, 95% of customers read online reviews before buying a product. With many users relying on online reviews, there is potential for the brand to establish better credibility and increase earned media by enhancing photogenic packaging and encouraging customers to leave a Google Review through incentives and storytelling inserts. Therefore, by enhancing Pecandy's current storytelling and marketing, it will lead to streamlining consumers' sharing their experience by providing easy access and clarity on how to do so. This strategy will elevate Alishia's voice and entrancing personality to pivot focus onto the product.

# SECONDARY RESEARCH FINDINGS



## Objective Statement #4:

**To analyze how business-to-consumer marketing strategies help businesses successfully transition to business-to-business tactics.**

Kensium, a B2B and B2C ecommerce company, reveals a combination of brand consistency, communication and data-driven customer engagement is essential when analyzing the bridge between business-to-business and business-to-consumer markets. Additionally, Forbes even reports that 77% of business-to-business purchasing decisions now involve emotional factors, similar to business-to-consumer behaviors. This research displays how companies are drawn to brands with human-centered stories and strong consumer reputation. By aligning with these insights, Pecandy could strengthen its consumer identity through refined storytelling and enhanced credibility. Valuable behavioral data such as gifting frequency, purchasing motivation and repeat purchase rates attract clients and are necessities when building a loyal consumer base.

This data-driven approach allows Pecandy to demonstrate measurable consumer engagement and positions the brand as both credible and appealing to corporate partners. Additionally, brands like Sugarfina and Compartés Chocolatier have successfully transitioned to business-to-business partnerships by first perfecting their direct-to-consumer image. By offering customized packaging or co-branded gift options, Pecandy can replicate this trajectory. Sugar & Strategy's consumer-first mission supports the campaign goal to position Pecandy as a premium, thoughtful gift that builds trust for customers and appeals to future business partners. By prioritizing credibility, consistent branding and story-driven marketing, Pecandy will be able to extend its emotional appeal from individual to professional customers, connecting both markets with a cohesive and authentic brand image.

# GOAL STATEMENT



*Strengthen  
Pecandy's brand  
image by positioning  
the product as a  
premium gift.*





# KEY PUBLICS & MARKETING PERSONA

**(35–50 YEAR OLD UPPER–MIDDLE CLASS BLACK WOMEN EARNING ROUGHLY \$100,00–\$150,000)**

Sugar & Strategy will focus on Pecandy’s core audience: middle-aged Black women who enjoy thoughtful, creative gifting. They are within the upper-middle-class bracket with an income from \$100,000–150,000. These are college-educated woman living in urban areas—especially in the Southeast and Great Lakes regions where Black entrepreneurship is strongest. Alishia’s Midwest background and Spelman connections contributes to her “Midwest Nice” personality. This also makes her more relatable and credible to this group. Research shows Black women prefer brands that reflect their cultural identity and authenticity. Studies comparing Shea Moisture to Pantene’s Gold Series confirm that Black-founded brands often win because they feel more genuine and community-rooted.

This audience fits Alishia’s “Rich Auntie” vibe—confident, social, trend-setting women who represent about 30% of Black consumers, according to McKinsey. They love small indulgences and express care for their loved ones through gifting, adding their own flair to every celebration. The campaign will use a reputation-management approach by leaning into Alishia’s authentic voice and transparent storytelling. Her audience already trusts her and engages actively on Instagram. Because these consumers are loyal and excited about Pecandy, they are well-positioned to embrace the shift toward seeing Pecandy as a premium, year-round giftable product.



## ANGELA WILLIAMS

**47 | African American | Woman | Married | Master’s degree**

Angela is a 47 year-old woman who works as a consultant for a corporate consulting firm in Columbus, Ohio. She spends her free time exploring new restaurants and events downtown, and is particularly passionate about going to local farmers and makers markets. She loves supporting local small businesses and frequently recommends women- and Black-owned businesses to friends, family and clients. She’s known by her loved ones as someone who somehow always finds the perfect, meaningful gift.

# MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Traditional Method: In-Depth Interviews

### Background

From October 29 to November 3, Sugar & Strategy conducted interviews with three current consumers of Pecandy. Names and contact information were collected through Alishia, and Sugar & Strategy confirmed their demographic information during the interviews to ensure they fit the audience of the key public. With questions like *'What kinds of occasions do you typically choose for gift-giving? What do those gifts look like?'*, *'What are your thoughts on Pecandy's packaging and overall design? What aspects appeal to you, and what could be improved?'* and A/B Testing, the interviews were conducted with the goal of getting a better understanding of consumers' attitudes towards gifting, Pecandy as a brand and Pecandy's current packaging.

### Key Findings and Takeaways

**1. Quality, intentionality and thoughtfulness are most important when it comes to gifts:** All participants expressed that the biggest factor in deciding which gifts to buy is not a price point or the biggest, gaudiest gift, but a gift that feels the most thoughtful and relevant to the person they're gifting it to. As Alishia continues to create associations between her product and its gift-ability, it is important to reinforce the idea that Pecandy is not only a thoughtful gift for those with a sweet tooth in your life but an experience that clearly communicates that a gift-giver truly understands the person they're gifting the product to. Through upgrading the packaging and enhancing the brand association with gifting, Pecandy has the opportunity to position itself as a reliable gift for anyone with a sweet tooth.

**2. Identity and quality co-exist:** While each participant expressed that they love Pecandy for the delicious product itself, they also expressed that Alishia herself plays a role in why they continue to support the brand. As the target demographic included in the market research were Black women, participants shared that having a shared identity with Alishia was something that directly impacted their decision to be both financially and emotionally invested into the brand. Alishia's background and brand story of being a small business were items that strongly resonated with the participants. Through continuing to lean into the qualities that make Alishia relatable and authentic, Pecandy can continue to be a brand that individuals who share identities with her will continue to want to support.

# MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Traditional Method: In-Depth Interviews Cont.

### Key Findings and Takeaways

**3. Pecandy already has a strong, cult-like word-of-mouth reputation:** Every participant involved in the sample had either already gifted Pecandy to a client or friend, recommended it to someone or was willing to do both. Pecandy's customers already have a loyalty to this high-quality product and a desire to share it, but they aren't necessarily mobilized to do so on platforms like Instagram, which can have a much broader reach than simple word-of-mouth recommendations. Through taking the excitement that already exists with Pecandy's clientele and encouraging loyal customers to share the word on social media, Pecandy can achieve a much broader reach, which will help with its long-term goals.

**4. Participants preferred to see Alishia featured in the package inserts as the baker of Pecandy rather than solely the businesswoman behind the product:** The image included in the updated insert of Alicia in a Pecandy apron makes the brand feel more approachable and human. Customers who see a founder personally involved in creating the batch of Pecandy allows the product to feel more authentic and credible as opposed to feeling like the product was a mass-produced item. Much like sharing her story and leaning into her identity, presenting a genuine identity of who and what Pecandy is allows consumers to resonate on a deeper level with the product.

The conducted in-depth interviews provided direct insight from customers already familiar with Pecandy, providing data on what was already working well, what could be done better and where Pecandy can potentially connect on a deeper level with its customers. This research revealed how we can continue to evolve the brand image and helped to identify what is working and where there are gaps that can be addressed. As the campaign continues to consider how to best develop new relationships with clientele and strengthen the existing perception of Pecandy, it is important to understand these pre-existing perspectives and attitudes of Pecandy's audience.

# MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Alternative Method: Social Listening

### Rationale

In late October, Sugar & Strategy conducted a social listening analysis of Pecandy's Instagram. The review covered 29 posts, beginning with Alishia's birthday post on Sept. 24, 2024, and ending with the "HOOKED" reel on Oct. 12, 2025. The goal was to uncover authentic perceptions of Pecandy, assess how Alishia's personal brand shapes emotional resonance, and evaluate whether the brand is positioned as a giftable product. By examining emotional engagement, founder-led branding and seasonal moments, we aimed to identify messaging strategies that foster the "hive-minded" following the client seeks.

### Engagement Tracker

The first analysis tracked engagement by post type, visual focus and caption themes. Results confirmed Alishia's presence is central to Pecandy's appeal: eight of the top 10 posts featured her, and carousel posts outperformed other formats. Audiences favored detailed, interactive content, especially in posts that celebrated accomplishments such as partnerships and anniversaries. These findings suggest that engagement is driven not only by the product but by the storytelling that surrounds it.

### Comment Coding

Comments were coded for emotional content. We focused on personal comments longer than five words from verified audience members. Codes included gifting, personal connection, joy, nostalgia, community, premium perception, curiosity, storytelling response and compliments. This process helped identify emotional triggers and refine Pecandy's storytelling tone. Each comment was then scored using the Affective Norms for English Words (ANEW) framework, which measures valence (emotional positivity), arousal (excitement) and dominance (sense of control). To ensure relevance, scores were calibrated for female subjects, aligning with Pecandy's target audience. Results showed strong emotional resonance: valence averaged 8 (high positivity), while arousal and dominance averaged 6 (moderate excitement and control). These scores reflect an empowered audience that associates Pecandy with pleasure, pride and belonging.

#### Alishia's Top Post based on comments



- Carousel with Alishia as visual focus.
- Values represented: collaboration, excitement and **accomplishment**.
- Top performer in comments and #2 in likes and overall

77

285

# MARKET RESEARCH FINDINGS

## Alternative Method: Social Listening Cont.

### Key Findings and Recommendations

Social listening reveals that Pecandy's audience is emotionally invested, especially in founder-led storytelling and community-centered content. While this drives strong engagement, product-specific mentions like gifting and premium perception remain limited. This imbalance presents both an opportunity and a challenge: while emotional resonance builds trust, Pecandy's product identity must be strengthened to ensure the brand is seen not only as a story but as a desirable, giftable experience. As Shehu (2025) notes, "Founder branding pulls, company branding pushes." To sustain growth and avoid bottlenecking reach, Pecandy must balance its emotional appeal with clearer product-led messaging.

#### Current Engagement:

*"I know this post is supposed to be about Pecandy promotion, but I really miss that smile! ❤️" (@iamdaveellis, 7/5/2025)*

Why it matters: Reflects dominant pattern of engagement towards Alishia. Underscores the reliance on founder-led branding.

#### Desired Engagement:

*"Receiving my package yesterday ❤️ and personalized card thank you!! The sampler does not disappoint @pecandy.co." (@atb\_riandnique, 10/12/2025)*

Why it matters: Language strengthens product identity and supports positioning as a desirable, giftable item.

**1. Emotional Resonance Is High but Product Mentions Are Low:** Audience comments reveal strong emotional investment in Alishia's story, often framed as personal connection or community affirmation. Emotional tags like personal connection and community dominated, showing joy and belonging. However, direct mentions of Pecandy's product identity, especially gifting or premium perception were less frequent.

**3. Product Identity Needs Strengthening to Support Growth:** Mentions of gifting, premium quality and indulgence are present but infrequent. To avoid over-reliance on founder branding, Pecandy must elevate its product identity as a premium, giftable item that resonates independently.

**2. Founder Led Branding Drives Engagement:** Posts featuring Alishia's face or personal reflections consistently outperformed product-only visuals. Carousel formats and candid storytelling fostered trust and emotional resonance. Many business accounts engaging with Pecandy were connected to Alishia through events or collaborations, underscoring her role as the brand's emotional anchor.

**4. Audience Overlap is Limited:** High-performing commenters were primarily business accounts, most of whom followed only Pecandy. This challenges the assumption that Alishia's personal network drives traffic and suggests that brand resonance is stronger than founder influence in terms of reach.



# STRATEGY

## Audience Engagement

Because Sugar & Strategy is seeking the opportunity to enhance consumers' perceptions of Pecandy's giftability, a proactive, action-based PR strategy is necessary. To accomplish the campaign's objectives, Sugar & Strategy will implement an audience engagement strategy to increase both interest and participation among middle-aged Black women.


Audience engagement is the best strategy for this campaign because, according to Sugar & Strategy's social listening findings, there are currently few mentions of the product itself, especially when it comes to its giftability and premium positioning. This means that there is ample room to be able to lean into Pecandy's giftability and position the product as a luxury gift in the minds of the key public.

Additionally, our secondary research illustrates that "just because" gifting has risen over the years, and personalization is a top-three packaging trend. By enhancing Pecandy's packaging and gifting options to encourage user-generated content displaying this new and improved side to the brand, Pecandy can embrace these trends and implement them into the brand's core to instill greater memory to its base audience. Furthermore, these improvements will attract the interest and participation of the campaign's key public, impacting the perception of the product through both owned and earned media. From our in-depth interview research, we learned that our participants—who are also members of our key public—value gift-giving for a variety of occasions. Quality, thoughtfulness and personalization were some of the aspects the participants mentioned that they believe should be present in a good gift. They all expressed that they have recommended Pecandy to multiple people. One participant explicitly shared that they have previously sent Pecandy as a gift, praising it as something that is easy to send to friends they have not recently talked to that makes for a usable, shareable and consumable gift.

# Tactic #1

## *“It’s a Gift” Custom Packaging & Upgraded Storytelling*

Sugar & Strategy aims to incorporate a strategy of integrating new owned media for a five-month period by elevating Pecandy’s packaging and unboxing experience to reinforce its position as a premium, experiential gift through users clicking “It’s a Gift” box on Pecandy’s website, with an updated postcard added to all orders. The tactic runs January through May, strategically positioned after the gifting season to keep momentum through Valentine’s Day and until market seasons begin again. We aim to connect with our target audience of middle to upper-middle-class Black women, ages 35–50, who are current Pecandy consumers and value thoughtful presentation, novelty and community-driven businesses and engage in gift-giving.



The “It’s a Gift” addition to the Shopify site allows customers to select upgraded gift packaging featuring a premium custom Pecandy gift box, elevated storytelling inserts, limited-edition Pecandy ribbon and the ability to add a handwritten message by Alishia.

This enables customers to effortlessly upgrade and personalize packaging for special moments, strengthening the giftability of Pecandy while aiming to facilitate increases in earned media. Elevated packaging enables consumers to organically share the gift experience and capture Pecandy as a special, personalized moment.

According to interviews, consumers enjoy the experience of the product but lack attachment to the packaging. Enhancing owned media can rebrand the product to better align with consumer preferences and market trends. According to Forbes, 72% of American consumers stated that purchase decisions were influenced by packaging design.

# Tactic #1 continued

## *"It's a Gift" Custom Packaging & Upgraded Storytelling*

With this, refining packaging can showcase emotional relevance in the product instead of solely revolving around Alishia. The tactic aims to increase mentions of Pecandy as a premium gift option on Instagram, and the upgraded insert will include a QR code linking directly to Pecandy's Google Reviews page to strengthen digital presence and generate mentions of the product.

More reviews allow consumers to trust the product more and learn about the experience of gifting and buying Pecandy, and enhanced aesthetics improve photogenicity for the perfect unboxing moment with stronger photo uploads in reviews. The insert also features the call to action: "Every flavor's got a story—what's yours? Share your moment with #PecandyPeople and join the story," inspiring user-generated content and cultivating community online, something our client is very passionate about. This tactic is achievable and measurable as it promotes Pecandy as not just a purchased good but a unique, shareable experience.



*Every flavor's got a story — what's yours?  
Share your moment with #PecandyPeople  
and join the story.*

If you've made it this far, that means you're probably down to a few Pecandies left ...and that's okay!

Allow me to introduce myself — I'm Alishia, a realtor based in Columbus, OH, lover of travel, and the person behind this dangerously delicious snack. What started as a stress reliever during the pandemic has turned into an (almost) full-time labor of love — and I'm so excited to share it with you.

Each jar is more than a sweet treat — it's a gift meant to spark joy, connection, and a touch of nostalgia. Whether you share it or keep it all to yourself (no judgment!), I'm just happy you're part of the Pecandy tribe.

So, from my oven to your hands, I hope you enjoy, share, and come back for more.

— Enjoy

[www.pecandy.co](http://www.pecandy.co) | [@pecandy.co](https://www.instagram.com/pecandy.co)



Enjoy Pecandy?  
Leave a review!



# Tactic #2

## *#PecandyPeople Instagram “Giftaway”*

Sugar & Strategy plans to launch a two-month-long “giftaway”: a giveaway hosted on Instagram in which three participants will win a pair of Pecandy gift packages as described in Tactic #1, one to keep and the other to send to a friend. To enter, participants must tag a friend in the comments of the announcement post, make their own post featuring their Pecandy product including the hashtag #PecandyPeople and leave a review of their product. An additional limited-time insert will be placed in all orders leading up to and during the campaign featuring a call-to-action for Pecandy’s “giftaway” including entry instructions: “We started Pecandy because of the experience of gifting something magical with friends and family. So, we want you to as well! Enter our giveaway right now to win free Pecandy for you and make someone’s day sweeter!

Pecandy’s Instagram will create a kickoff post announcing the giveaway and including all instructions to enter and participate. This post should retell the story of how Alishia started Pecandy—baking the treats for friends and family—to personify the brand and reiterate Pecandy’s giftability by providing authentic insight as to how the business started. Consistency will strengthen current consumers’ connection and generate community while not being exclusive to new consumers considering her early stages of growth.

The giveaway gifts will have all the same elements as the “It’s a Gift” packages as well as a simple, handwritten note from Alishia thanking the winner for participating and congratulating the winner’s chosen recipient. Additionally, social media during the campaign will be organized into the following content buckets: flavor love, community wins, gift moments, and identity and pride. In order, these have the following purpose: celebrate product indulgence and personal favorite, showcase Pecandy’s role in collective events and milestone celebrations, position Pecandy as a premium and emotionally resonant gift, and celebrate the collective community the brand aims to uplift and the identity of Pecandy people.



# Tactic #2 continued

## *#PecandyPeople Instagram "Giftaway"*

Through this "giftaway" campaign, Sugar & Strategy hopes to bring more attention to what the aforementioned "It's a Gift" option looks like as well as reinforce brand storytelling, increase earned media and build a strong community while engaging the key public. Our market research showed that members of our key public are not only present on Instagram but they are also active users of it and engage in liking, commenting and sharing their own posts, meaning this tactic and its goals align well with their behaviors. Additionally, they gain the chance to win free Pecandy for themselves and a person of their choice—an opportunity we believe they would be willing to pursue because of their appreciation of both the quality of Pecandy and the value of gifting. Although the majority of the participants will not be winners, the target audience will still be glad to participate because, according to our research, they are happy to support small Black-owned businesses and contribute to their success.



# Evaluative Research

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**Objective 1: To affect the awareness of Pecandy as a personalized gift among Black upper-middle-class women by increasing attention to Pecandy's upgraded gifting option by 25% within five months.**

**Evaluation: Sugar & Strategy aims to increase recognition of Pecandy as a premium and desired gift. Brand awareness will be measured through comments on Instagram based on initial analysis of brand perception through social listening. Insights should increase by 25% after the campaign's efforts to enhance storytelling around gifting to increase recognition of this trait.**

**Objective 2: To transform Black upper-middle-class women's perception of Pecandy from a simple snack to a luxury experience, increasing Instagram comments about the quality of the product by 20% in five months.**

**Evaluation: Social listening allowed Sugar & Strategy to determine perceptions of Pecandy and assign ANEW ranking based on the impression comments had. Using these numbers, new messages will be tailored to lean into flavor, feeling and celebration of identity that fall into improved tone categories and should return the desired mentions in comments. Moving forward, the frequency of ANEW keywords like gourmet, indulgent and premium would preferably increase in a post-perception survey of the campaign. Overall acceptance of Pecandy as a luxury item will be determined by an increase in premium mentions, along with an overall social share of voice and advocacy.**

# Evaluative Research

**Objective 3: To increase user-generated content by Black upper-middle-class women showcasing Pecandy's packaging/product by 20% in five months.**

**Evaluation:** Outside of hashtags, Sugar & Strategy will track the amount of content created that mentions Pecandy, tags the brand or leaves reviews. Using social listening tools by establishing quarterly review nodes to track the current total amount of user-generated content as means to measure action for brand growth. Reviews will record interactions with the social campaign, and hashtags such as #PecandyPeople and #Hooked will be introduced through shared media channels to encourage greater user-generated content highlighting Pecandy's packaging.

**Objective 4: To drive use of Pecandy's new "It's a Gift" selection at checkout among Black upper-middle-class women to make up 25% of total orders over the course of five months.**

**Evaluation:** Sugar & Strategy plans to use analytics tools like Shopify to monitor the number of customers selecting Pecandy's "It's a Gift" option at checkout and to identify the purpose behind each purchase. Tracking these selections over time will help measure whether gift-related orders reach the 25% goal. Additionally, referral codes and brief follow-up surveys will be distributed via email to collect demographic data and feedback on package quality. These insights will enable Sugar & Strategy to compare gifting-related performance and customer perceptions before and after the campaign.



# Budget

*Breakdown keeping small business goals in mind*

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	EXPENSES
"IT'S A GIFT" WEBSITE ADD-ON	ADDING A NEW OPTION TO THE SHOPIFY WEBSITE DURING CAMPAIGN PERIOD	\$30/MONTH, \$150 TOTAL
ELEVATED PACKAGING	LIMITED EDITION GIFTING BOX, BRANDED RIBBON, AND PERSONALIZED CARD	\$5 EACH, \$260 TOTAL
SIX ELEVATED PACKAGES	EACH WINNER + CHOSEN RECIPIENT RECIEVE A FREE BOX	\$38 PER PERSON, \$228 TOTAL
LABOR COSTS	PAYING FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND COWORKERS FOR HELP	\$18 PER HOUR, \$180 TOTAL
SIX JARS OF PECANS	GIVEAWAY JAR FOR SOCIAL CAMPAIGN PRIZES	\$16 PER JAR, \$96 TOTAL
PART-TIME SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT	HELP MANAGE PECANDY'S SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS AND ENGAGEMENT	\$260 PER MONTH, \$780 TOTAL
BOOSTED INSTAGRAM POSTS	INCREASE AWARENESS AND ENGAGEMENT DURING GIVEAWAY	\$50 PER MONTH, \$100 TOTAL
PICKUP OR DELIVERY OF SUPPLIES	TRANSPORTATION AND SUPPLY COSTS FOR CAMPAIGN MATERIALS	\$60 TOTAL
PACKAGING	GENERAL PACKAGING AND ASSEMBLY MATERIALS	\$75 TOTAL
UNEXPECTED COSTS	LEFTOVER EXPENSES FOR UNEXPECTED COSTS (PACKAGING, SHIPPING, ETC.)	\$71 TOTAL
		TOTAL: \$2,000

# Timeline

## January

- Launch “It’s a Gift” option during checkout for customers, emphasizing Pecandy’s new gifting option.
- Create content to generate interest/increase awareness of Pecandy’s giftability via owned and shared media (website, social media, email).
- New inserts emphasizing Pecandy’s storytelling will be incorporated, the option of adding a personalized note, introducing QR codes and calls to action for Google Reviews.
- Introduce the Pecandy “Giftaway” campaign on Instagram, informing the public of Alishia’s story and how they might participate through a call to action to participate in the campaign.
- Begin shipping out orders with specialized inserts, informing customers how they might participate in the campaign.
- Announce the first winner of the current submission collections at the end of the month.

## February

- Ship out the winning jars and roll out the next wave of submissions.
- Repost the winner’s submission to the giveaway to enhance giftability and share their #PecandyPeople story and how they utilize the product.
- Email post-analysis follow-ups to those who checked out with the added gifting upgrade.
- Continue rolling out content that encourages Giftaway submissions and user-generated content featuring community storytelling, allowing insight into current consumer needs/trends.
- Announce the final 2 winners for the Giftaway.

## March

- Ship last month’s winning jars, share both their submissions and HOOKED reactions.
- Giftaway recap celebrating the “#PecandyPeople” community

## April

- Continue offering the “It’s a Gift” option on the website.
- Launch “Sweetest Gift” series showcasing customer gifting stories with “Who would you gift Pecandy to?” prompt.
- Ship final giveaways.

## May

- Final month of offering the “It’s a Gift” package upgrade.
- Continue supplying content that encourages Pecandy’s giftability through Giftaway campaign highlights.
- Solicit testimonials in-person throughout Pecandy’s peak season.



# Appendix A

## In-depth Interview Questions

- Demographic questions: age, income, city/state, gender, race, highest level of education
- What kinds of occasions do you typically choose for gift-giving? What do those gifts look like?
- What values are important to you?
- What do you think is the most important aspect of a good gift?
- What impressed you most when you first heard of or saw Pecandy?
- Do you think Pecandy is more suitable for personal use, gift giving or both? Why?
- What are three words that you would use to describe Pecandy? Does the brand's design embody a "premium," "thoughtful" or "special" gift-giving experience? Why or why not?
- What are your thoughts on Pecandy's packaging and overall design? What aspects appeal to you, and what could be improved?
- A/B Testing: We have two different packaging options (Insert/Label). Which one do you prefer? Why? Which version do you find more appealing, buying or gifting?
- If you were asked to recommend Pecandy to a friend or client, would you do so? Why?
- In what ways could knowing Pecandy's story (i.e. founded by a black woman) instill more trust or likability for you?
- If you can give some advice to Pecandy to help it become a "top gift brand," what would it be?

# Appendix A

## Sample Transcript: Interview with Elan Drennon

- Name is Elan Drennon, Female, Black american, lives in New Jersey, is a Consultant, highest education is a JD, single
- What values are important to you?
  - Spend more money for more quality gift if it is something thoughtful, tailored or personalized, something that's rare, or something she won't be able to get again
  - The more rare or personalized, the better the gift
- What do you think is the most important aspect of a good gift?
  - The most important aspect – the more thoughtful it is to what a person is experiencing.
  - Got her dad and his siblings with bracelets with coordinates of their childhood home, wasn't expensive but really meant a lot. Was very meaningful to them because it was personal and they all shared an experience around that
- What impressed you most when you first heard of or saw Pecandy?
  - Its a very good snack, can have it on a plane or a train, very portable, very high quality, very flavorful, its a conversation piece too
  - Can say that this is from a woman owned business, means more to people because she shared something that has a story they can relate to, they can share it with a colleague and it's also delicious
- In what ways could knowing Pecandy's story (i.e. founded by a black woman) instill more trust or likability for you?
  - Important to support those businesses, selling point, it's an easy snack to sell, it still has to be a quality product, it's a quality product that isn't popcorn with a bunch of protein, something you can give to people without getting into their dietary business
  - A thoughtful snack
  - Something that belongs in your purse and charcuterie board
  - Multipurpose snack without missing out on the luxury of it

# Appendix A

## Sample Transcript: Interview with Rachelle

- Rachelle, age between 45-55, double Masters in nursing and business, currently works in healthcare, is a hospital executive, living in the midwest in Indiana, Black
- What kinds of occasions do you typically choose for gift-giving? What do those gifts look like?
  - Is very intentional about how she spends money, is black and has a very strong commitment to support black brands, most gifting is targeted from brands that are black owned and operated, very intentional about that.
- What do you think is the most important aspect of a good gift?
  - Its quality, but it's not too overly priced, it depends on the item that you're buying, would never purchase a gift that is excessive, but would look at the market
  - Quality is important – the item should be quality – would be willing to spend more for a quality product,
- What impressed you most when you first heard of or saw Pecandy?
  - It's high quality. Even though she has a lot of packages, the personal note that says thank you is something she really likes. She usually buys it for herself because she likes it.
- What are three words that you would use to describe Pecandy? Does the brand's design embody a "premium," "thoughtful" or "special" gift-giving experience? Why or why not?
  - Delicious, high quality, and unique
  - Typically gets the same flavor, it's consistent, she's never gotten a bad batch
- In what ways could knowing Pecandy's story (i.e. founded by a black woman) instill more trust or likability for you?
  - Seeing that she started this as a passion project, her story inspires you to support this because you hear her dream became a reality
  - Understanding her backstory to hear how she decided to take the leap for entrepreneurship, she likes that even with the card she sends a handwritten note, it gives a sort of connection to the owners

# Appendix A

## Sample Transcript: Interview with Maryella Matthews

- Maryella Matthews, lives in Alabama, Master's degree and two Bachelor's degrees, African American woman, 46 years old
- What kinds of occasions do you typically choose for gift-giving? What do those gifts look like?
  - Give recognition gifts for a job well done, birthday presents, christmas presents, anniversaries and other milestones.
  - Depends based on personal or corporate gifts
  - Personal gifts are tailored to the person, corporate mandated by gifting and ethics and compliances
- What values are important to you?
  - Looks for things that are intrinsic, things that signify she sees that person and notices something about them that it would make a good gift for them, something not just monetary but is meaningful to them
  - I.e. Someone who loves christmas she finds a custom specialized Christmas ornament to be reminded of their friendship every year.
- What do you think is the most important aspect of a good gift?
  - Personalized, unique, and memorable.
- What impressed you most when you first heard of or saw Pecandy?
  - Really liked that it was sophisticated, yet approachable, and who doesn't like candied pecans??
  - Looked like something very easily approachable and something people would know what it is without asking
- Do you think Pecandy is more suitable for personal use, gift giving or both? Why?
  - Great for personal gifting, know if they have a nut allergy before giving it to them, makes a personal gift, can see it being in a corporate gift basket setting, warn that it may contain tree nuts, can be a personalized gift basket component
- In what ways could knowing Pecandy's story (i.e. founded by a black woman) instill more trust or likability for you?
  - Trusts the product, if you're looking at building more trust, small batch process ensures a quality product where we don't rush and maintain the highest standards by creating these smaller batches.

# Appendix B

## Top 10 posts with most engagement info:

1. **Carousel, Alishia featured in cover image**
  - a. **Purpose of post:** storytelling, SpelHouse glass jars
  - b. **Values/emotions represented:** community
2. **Carousel, Alishia featured in cover image**
  - a. **Purpose:** partnership announcement with comm class
  - b. **Values/emotions:** collaboration, excitement, accomplishment
3. **Carousel, Alishia featured in cover image**
  - a. **Purpose:** Alishia birthday
  - b. **Values/emotions:** love, celebration, appreciation
4. **Carousel, product featured in cover image \*\*\* (Alishia not in post at all) \*\*\***
  - a. **Purpose:** partnership announcement w/ Shuga Ice
  - b. **Values/emotions:** excitement, accomplishment
5. **Carousel, product in cover image, Alishia in second image**
  - a. **Purpose:** Pecandy anniversary and special promo
  - b. **Values/emotions:** growth, accomplishment, celebration, thanks
6. **Carousel, Alishia in cover image (with friend)**
  - a. **Purpose:** Juneteenth, Pecandy reaction
  - b. **Values/emotions:** humor, community
7. **Portrait of Alishia**
  - a. **Purpose:** Alishia's birthday and Pecandy campaign
  - b. **Values/emotions:** celebration
8. **Carousel, Alishia in cover image with product**
  - a. **Purpose:** market season reflection
  - b. **Values/emotions:** nostalgia, accomplishment
9. **Reel in which Alishia is featured**
  - a. **Purpose:** partnership announcement w/ Hotel Revival
  - b. **Values/emotions:** growth, celebration, accomplishment
10. **Reel in which Alishia is featured**
  - a. **Purpose:** reflecting on talk show and Black Women in Food summit
  - b. **Values/emotions:** accomplishment, excitement

# Appendix B

## Comment Coding Template

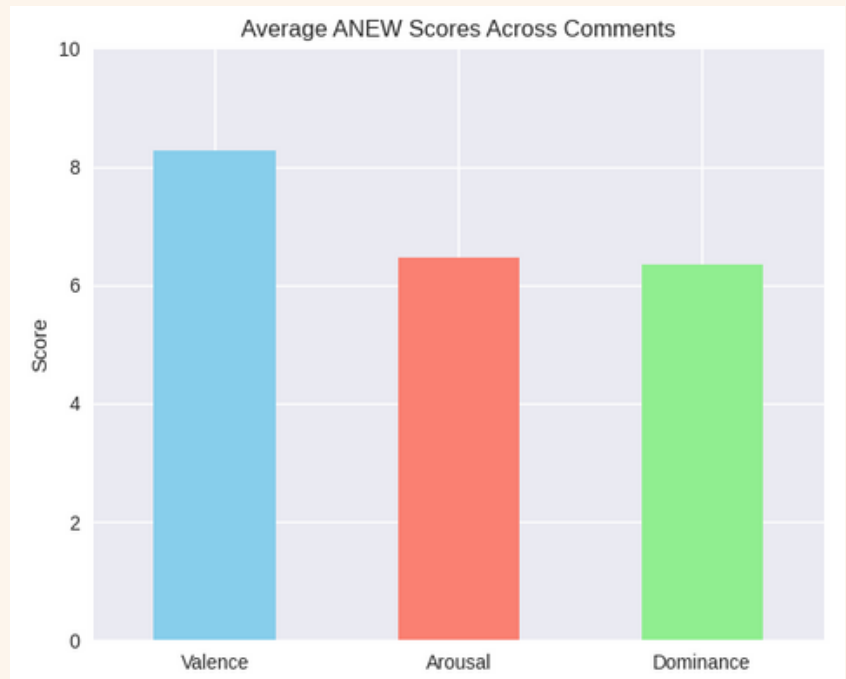
- 📁 Gifting (mention packaging or intent of purchase) - 1 occurrence
- ❤️ Personal Connection (relatable comment, personal anecdote, opinions) - 22 occurrences
- 😊 Joy (positive feedback, joyous wording, celebratory) - 9 occurrences
- 🕒 Nostalgia (discussing past experiences or tied to childhood) - 3 occurrences
- 🌈 Community (strengthening of relationship, support) - 11 occurrences
- 💎 Premium Perception (product specific, high quality) - 2 occurrences
- ❓ Curiosity (inquiries and interest in post or future endeavors) - 4 occurrences
- 💬 Storytelling Response (response to call to actions, their own storytelling) - 17 occurrences
- 🌸 Complementary (alishia specific or mentioning of her hard work) - 10 occurrences

## ANEW Coding Definitions

**Valence**: Emotional connotation from 1-9 (negative to positive). Determines whether the words have a negative or positive emotional appeal.

**Arousal**: Suggests how excited the words bring the subject. On a scale from 1-9 (calm to excited).

**Dominance**: A Less strongly related dimension but explains the amount of control the word has on a scale from 1-9 (dominated to in control).



# Appendix B

## Suggested Storytelling and Tone with ANEW:

- **High-Valence (Positive Emotion)** - These evoke happiness, satisfaction, and warmth—perfect for celebrating flavors, milestones, and community wins:
  - Love, Celebrate, Delight, Sweet, Excited, Indulgent
  - Use in captions like: *Indulge in the sweet delight of Blueberry Muffin magic.*
- **Moderate-Arousal (Energized but Grounded)** - These convey enthusiasm and movement without overwhelming intensity—great for storytelling and flavor reactions.
  - Dance, Crave, Refill, Hooked, Glow, Lift
  - Use in captions like: *Hooked from the first bite? You're not alone.*
- **Balanced-Dominance (Empowered and Affirming)** - These reinforce agency, pride, and emotional control; ideal for community building and identity affirming posts.
  - Shine, Support, Share, Lead, Grow, Create
  - Use in captions like: *Support small, gift big. Pecandy is community-crafted.*

## Top 10 ANEW comments

Post Date	User	Comment (excerpt)	Valence	Arousal	Dominance	Emotion Tags	Sentiment
9/26/2025	@seanisthedon	"...crumbs are the best part..."	8.9	6.8	6.7	❤️💬	positive
5/20/2025	@atriciavirtualservices	"...so you can network and	8.76	6.55	6.76	❤️🌈	positive
9/23/2024	@mswhitneyelise	"We love Pecandy! 🔥"	8.72	6.1	6.62	😊🌈	positive
7/23/2025	@frances.smith.7370	"Love this! Makes me	8.61	6.8	6.46	💬😊	positive
4/23/2025	@pkjames87	"BLUEBERRY MUFFIN!!! Can	8.6	6.7	6.3	❤️🌈😊	positive
5/20/2025	@mrs_tricee	"...won me over from my	8.6	6.9	6.4	❤️😊👩	positive
8/1/2025	@tomisimisola	"Congratulations on 4	8.57	6.83	6.67	❤️💬🌈	positive
7/5/2025	@iamdaveellis	"...but I really miss that	8.5	6	6.3	❤️🌈🌈👩	positive
3/27/2025	@willholmes.global	"...reminded me to place an	8.5	6.5	6.8	💬❤️🌈	positive
positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive	positive

# Appendix B

## Audience Overlap

User	Engaged with @pecandy?	Engaged with @alishia?	Type of Engagement	Frequency	Notes
BUSINESS @patreatsboutique_ *P follower	YES *not following	YES - On shared posts	Comments, likes, Follows @Pecandy	6+	Strong engagement, commenting on birthdays, anniversaries, product drops, and partnerships.
BUSINESS @miracledraws	YES *not following	Yes- On Shared posts	Comments, likes, Follows	6+	Showcasing Humor with
PERSONAL / INFLUENCER @onlynishaa_ *P follower	YES *following	Yes- On Shared posts	Comments, likes, Follows Pecandy	6+	Frequent commentator, comments on birthdays and anniversaries along with collabs. Loyal supporter. Example comments: "Happy anniversary ❤️" "Congratulations"
PERSONAL @olivelifeisgou	YES *following	YES - On Shared Posts	Comments, likes, Follows	6+	Active Commentor across
PERSONAL/ INFLUENCER	YES *following	YES- On Shared Posts	Comments, Follows	3/5/2025	Authentic support on all
PERSONAL @a2global	YES *not following	YES - Share *following	Comments, Follows	3/5/2025	Supportive Comments on
BUSINESS @sweetkiwiusa	YES *following	YES- Shared Posts only	Comments, Follows	3/5/2025	Engagement on business
BUSINESS @cateringdesig	YES *following	YES- Shared posts only	Comments and follows	3/5/2025	Engagement on collaborations
BUSINESS @biftiesgifts	YES *following	YES	Comments, Likes and	3/5/2025	Brand-to-brand support,
BUSINESS @drinkalchy	YES *following	YES	Comments, likes and follows	3/5/2025	Showcases humor with

# Appendix C

## Sample Marketing Insert

### Pecandy Giftaway

We started Pecandy because of the experience of gifting something magical with friends and family. Now, it's your turn to share that **luxury!**



Enter for a chance to win a **premium Pecandy gift package**...One for you and one to make someone's day sweeter!

1. Tag a friend in the comments of our giveaway post on Instagram
2. Share a post featuring your Pecandy with **#PecandyPeople**
3. Leave a Google review of your Pecandy product

# Appendix C

## Campaign Sample Post and Suggested Captions



### January

We're starting the year with a little sweetness.

The Pecandy "Giftaway" is officially live! Three winners, three months, and three chances to gift joy to someone you love (and yourself too)!

Enter by sharing your Pecandy moment and tagging a friend who deserves a sweet treat.

Because every flavor has a story. What's yours?

#PecandyPeople #ItsAGift

### February

February is for the intentional gifts, the kind that says "I thought of you."

Our Giftaway is still going strong, and this month is all about celebrating the people who make life that much sweeter. Share your Pecandy moment, tag your person, and enter to win a gift box for you and one to send forward.

Joy tastes better when it's shared.

#PecandyPeople #ItsAGift

### March

Meet our Pecandy Giftaway winners! Thank you to everyone who shared their moments, tagged their people, and helped us spread a little joy these past months.

Your stories, your celebrations and your community made this campaign special.

This is what #PecandyPeople is all about! Sweeter moments—shared together.

More gifts. More love. More Pecandy.

#PecandyPeople

# Resources

- Children and Screens** - Black Women and Social Media Use (2022)
- Columbia** - Qualitative vs Quantitative Analysis
- Cision** - Types of Earned Media: Unlocking the Power of Organic Publicity
- Column Content** - Founder Branding vs. Company Branding (2025)
- Dash Social** - Instagram Stories Engagement Benchmarks (2025)
- Digismoothie** - Shopify App
- Edible Arrangements** - State of Gifting Report (2025)
- Entrepreneur** - What You Need to Focus on to Fuel Sustainable Growth (2024)
- Erase** - 95% Of Customers Read Reviews Before Buying (2025)
- Forbes** - People Over Product (2025)
- Forbes** - Psychology of packaging (2024)
- Howard Journal of Communication** - A Study on Black Consumer Identity Congruence & Brand Preference (2019)
- Journal of Consumer Psychology** - The Effect of Wrapping Neatness on Gift Attitudes (2019)
- Kensium** - Marketing Strategies to Consider When Transitioning from B2B to B2C (2025)
- McKinsey & Co** - Marketing to the multifaceted Black consumer (2022)
- MBN USA** - The 10 Best States For Black Entrepreneurs Data Report (2023)
- Pecandy** - About Us
- Pew Research Center** - A look at Black-owned business in the U.S. (2025)
- Pew Research Center** - Americans' Social Media Use (2024)
- Tamron Hall Show** - Pecandy Feature (2022)
- Texas A&M Research** - The Benefits of Revealing Race (2023)
- The Century Foundation** - Black Women Navigating Barriers in Higher Education (2024)
- UCLA Anderson School of Management** - Experiential Gifts Foster Stronger Social Relationships than Material Gifts (2016)
- University of Vermont** - ANEW Coding Database
- Wiley** - Short Brand Stories on Packaging: An examination of consumer responses (2018)
- Xerago** - Building Credibility: The Foundation of Successful Branding and Acquisition (2025)
- Yahoo Finance** - Food Gifting Industry Trends and Growth Forecasts (2025)