

# Memorandum

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**FROM:** **MID113 Team #3** Cheyenne Dudziak, Nathaniel Duke, Jason Harter, Amelia Kaiser, Brayden Perry, Alyssa Steward, Junior Associates  
**DATE:** November 17, 2025  
**SUBJECT:** Buddy Builder Candy Lab

The attached report, *Buddy Builder Candy Lab*, requested by Copeland Associates in the Project 2 Charge dated November 17, 2025, provides a comprehensive analysis supporting the development of our product concept. This report begins with a broad overview of the candy and DIY activity kit industries and then examines the problem, uniqueness, key market segments, consumer behaviors, competition, and emerging trends that influence product success. We conclude with several strategic opportunities for launching Buddy Builder Candy Lab based on evolving customer needs and current industry dynamics.

## Process

Through research in the Ohio University database and additional credible industry sources, our team identified a growing demand for screen-free, educational, and interactive products among children ages 4-14 and their parents. Using industry benchmarks from brands such as *Popin' Cookin'* and *Bazooka*, we evaluated market size, consumer behavior, and trend projections. Financial estimates were developed using benchmark data from similar DIY and novelty candy products, allowing us to assess projected expenses, revenue potential, and the long-term profitability of Buddy Builder Candy Lab. Further research also informed our operational and promotional strategies to ensure market entry.

## Business Concept Proposal

Today's children and families face a shortage of fun, accessible, hands-on activities that encourage creativity and meaningful interaction. Buddy Builder Candy Lab fills this gap by offering a customizable candy-making experience that allows kids to mold, mix, and decorate their own edible buddies using colorful taffy and candy gels. This concept aligns with major industry trends favoring DIY kits, experiential products, and screen-free learning. Backed by projected profitability, strong consumer appeal, and a growing market for interactive candy, Buddy Builder Candy Lab has the potential to become a competitive and engaging product in the children's novelty and activity space. Promotion will center on social media engagement, partnerships with families and creators, and targeted outreach to parents seeking meaningful, educational play experiences.

**Growing Demand for Screen-Free Creative Play:** Families are actively seeking hands-on activities that encourage learning, creativity, and bonding without relying on technology.

**Strong Market Interest in DIY & Interactive Candy Kits:** The rise of experiential products and customizable kits shows clear consumer demand for unique, playful products.

**Competitive Advantage Through Personalization:** Buddy Builder Candy Lab stands out by letting kids fully customize their candy characters, offering more creativity and engagement than traditional candy products.

This project would not have been possible without the guidance of the Senior Partners supporting the Cluster experience. With the help of the Senior Partners, we were able to complete this in-depth analysis. Our team appreciates all feedback and is fully prepared to discuss the report and its recommendations further upon request. With any further questions, please reach out to our team, and we will answer them for you. Thank you for the direction throughout this process and the opportunity to present our findings.

# Build-a-Buddy

## Candy Lab



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# Buddy Builder<sup>★</sup> Candy Lab



## Create a Buddy, Share a Smile!



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# Executive Summary

With 81% of parents reporting that their children prefer interactive play over screens, Buddy Builder Candy Lab delivers a hands-on, customizable candy-making experience that meets a rising demand for creative, engaging activities families can enjoy together. This executive summary provides a clear overview of our concept, outlining the challenges families face in an increasingly digital environment, the market conditions that validate strong demand, and the competitive advantages that position Buddy Builder Candy Lab for success. It also highlights our financial potential and scalability, demonstrating how our product aligns with industry benchmarks and supports long-term growth. Collectively, these insights show that Buddy Builder Candy Lab is well-positioned for a successful launch in Austin, Texas, offering a compelling blend of creativity, connection, and experiential play.

## Problem

Families today often struggle to find meaningful, screen-free activities that encourage creativity, learning, and connection, leaving parents searching for hands-on experiences that go beyond just passive entertainment. Buddy Builder Candy Lab addresses this gap by transforming candy-making into an interactive, educational activity that allows kids to mix, mold, and design their own unique and edible creations.

### Key Indicators:

- About 40% of urban families subscribed to monthly activity kits in 2023.
- 65% of parents value products that help their child learn while having fun.
- DIY or creative kits have grown 40% since 2020, showing high demand for hands-on activities.

This strong alignment with both emotional and developmental needs positions Buddy Builder as a solution that enhances both family connection and child engagement.

## Market Conditions

The interactive candy and DIY activity kit markets are both experiencing strong, sustained growth. The global candy-toy segment is projected to reach a 5.7% CAGR through 2035, while the craft and DIY market continues to expand rapidly. Parents are increasingly prioritizing creative, educational, and hands-on activities that help their children learn and engage without screens. With its youth-dense population and innovation-driven culture, Austin, Texas offers an ideal environment to introduce a product that blends creativity, play, and interactive candy-making.

## Uniqueness

Buddy Builder Candy Lab is unique because it allows kids to fully customize their own edible buddy, offering freedom that goes beyond traditional candy and DIY kits. Unlike competitors such as *Popin' Cookin'* or *Bazooka*, who produce items that lack in complete creative control, our product uses reusable molds, clean ingredients, and a simple, family-friendly process that emphasizes imagination, storytelling, and hands-on learning.

### Differentiators:

- Uses a reusable silicone mold, unlike single-use competitor kits.
- Focuses on creativity plus STEM concepts, appealing to parents seeking educational value.

This strong value proposition makes Buddy Builder not just a product, but a repeatable experience that supports ongoing family engagement.

## **Profitability using Benchmarks**

Benchmark data from companies like *Frankford Candy*, *Bazooka*, and *Popin' Cookin'* show strong industry performance and support our financial projections. With a consistent \$15.99 unit price, manageable operating expenses, and growing demand for interactive products, Buddy Builder Candy Lab is projected to break even by Year 3 and achieve positive cumulative earnings by Year 5, demonstrating long-term financial viability.

### **Financial Highlights:**

- Benchmark companies show unit costs ranging \$0.18-\$0.73, supporting strong margins at our \$15.99 price point.
- Startup costs total \$90,000, supported by a \$40,000 loan at 4% interest.
- CAGR expected at 38%.

These benchmarks confirm that Buddy Builder can achieve sustainable growth while strengthening operational efficiency.

## **Operational & Staffing needs**

A small but well-functioning team is essential to operating efficiently. This team consists of a CEO who makes financial and strategic decisions, a manager who oversees day-to-day operations and keeps lines of communication open with customers, and two associates who manage inventory, assemble kits, and prepare shipments, among other essential tasks. The business can run smoothly from the beginning thanks to this specific structure, which guarantees that all crucial business operations are covered without needless overhead. We can maintain great coordination and timely decision-making by keeping the team small and concentrated. At the same time, this organizational model provides a scalable foundation that can be expanded as demand increases, ensuring that additional staff and responsibilities can be integrated seamlessly when growth occurs.

## **Promotional Strategy**

Buddy Builder's marketing strategy incorporates community-based marketing, social media interaction, and digital storytelling on platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and local pop-up events. Through these channels, the brand can establish a genuine and relatable connection with customers, enhancing brand recognition and generating steady visibility. Our target audience's trust is gradually increased, conversion rates are raised, and repeat business is encouraged through influencer partnerships, school collaborations, and interactive demonstrations. This diverse approach gives us a solid basis for long-term growth as the company grows, enabling us to uphold significant client relationships while broadening our online and local community reach.

## **Conclusion**

Buddy Builder Candy Lab transforms traditional candy into an interactive, educational experience that brings families closer through creativity and play. Our research confirms a strong and growing demand for screen-free, hands-on products and shows that Austin provides an ideal launch environment due to its family-centered culture and emphasis on creative learning. With a unique value proposition, strong market fit, clear operational structure, and profitability supported by benchmark data, Buddy Builder is positioned for meaningful impact and long-term success. By combining strategic marketing, efficient operations, and a product built on creativity and connection, Buddy Builder Candy Lab is prepared to launch confidently and deliver memorable experiences for families.

# Introducing Buddy Builder

Have you ever wished you could create your own candy, a colorful, delicious, and shaped just the way you imagine? What if candy-making could be more than just a treat? What if it became a creative adventure for families to share? Introducing **Buddy Builder Candy Lab**, a DIY candy-making experience where learning meets fun and imagination comes to life.

## Purpose

Buddy Builder Candy Lab lets families mix, mold, and design edible buddies using colorful taffy, candy gels, and playful molds. Each kit comes with everything needed to turn a kitchen into a candy lab, complete with mixable colors, droppers, and shaping tools. Designed to spark creativity, reduce screen time, and bring families together. Buddy Builder Candy Lab transforms candy-making into a joyful, hand-on bonding experience for parents of young children **ages 4-12**.

## Preview

Whether you are creating your first candy character or crafting new flavor combinations, every Buddy Builder moment brings families together through laughter, learning, and a touch of sweetness. We are starting this sweet journey in **Austin, Texas**, a city known for its creative energy, family-friendly culture, and love for hands-on learning. From the heart of Texas, we aim to inspire families everywhere to "Create a Buddy, Share a Smile!"

## Mission & Values

"To blend fun, learning, and creativity into every candy-making moment by providing families with interactive, hands-on experiences that spark creativity, encourage connection, and transform ordinary candy crafting into extraordinary memories of play, discovery, and togetherness."

### Values:

- Creativity:** Inspiring imagination through colorful, hands-on candy-making experiences.
- Family Connection:** Encouraging meaningful, screen-free time that sparks happiness and laughter.
- Learning:** Introducing kids to simple STEM and art concepts through candy chemistry and design.
- Safety:** Ensuring quality and child-friendly materials for a fun and worry-free experience.
- Joy:** Bringing families together through play, storytelling, and shared creativity.

## Logo & Tagline: "Create a Buddy, Share a Smile!"

### Our Logo

The Buddy Builder Candy Lab logo is bright, playful, and welcoming, designed to capture the imagination of both children and parents. The colorful, rounded typography reflects creativity and approachability, while the cheerful candy buddy character reinforces the fun, hands-on nature of our product. The use of warm, vibrant colors like pink, blue, and yellow evokes joy, curiosity, and a sense of togetherness, perfectly aligning with our mission to make learning and play a shared family experience. The logo's simple yet dynamic design also makes it unique across packaging, digital platforms, and local events, ensuring instant recognition wherever families encounter our brand.



### Our Tagline

Our tagline "**Create a Buddy, Share a Smile!**" Expresses the heart of our brand that making candy with our company is not just about creating something sweet but is about sharing joy and connection. Each candy buddy represents a moment of creativity and collaboration between parents and children, turning every experience into a smile-worthy memory.



# Overview of Buddy Builder Candy Lab

Buddy Builder Candy Lab is a hands-on taffy candy kit that lets kids mold, shape, and decorate their own edible “buddy.” Designed for children ages 4-12, the kit transforms candy-making into creative, sensory learning experiences. It encourages imagination, fine motor skills, and quality family time, turning screen-free play into something both fun and delicious.

## Includes:

- Silicon mold (body, shirt, pants)
- 4 moldable taffy packets (red, blue, yellow, and white)
- 4 powder-mixing packets (red, blue, yellow, and black)
- Dropper tool and spife (spoon + knife combination) for mixing and decorating



## For:

- Children age 4-12
- Families looking for interactive, screen-free fun
- Ideal for parties, gifts, classrooms, or creative playtime



## Purpose:

Buddy Builder Candy Lab encourages creativity and connection by letting kids become candy creators. Each step, mixing colors, molding shapes, and decorating, teaches imagination, patience, and sensory exploration while giving families a fun way to bond together.



## Key Components

Each Buddy Builder Candy Lab kit contains all the tools and ingredients for hands-on candy creation.

## Four Major Components in Each Kit

- Silicone mold containing a body, shirt, and pants
- Four moldable taffy packets in red, blue, yellow, and white colors
- Four powder mixing packets in red, blue, yellow, and black to make candy gel
- Dropper tool, spife (spoon and knife-combined tool)



## Product Insights

### Educational & Developmental Benefits

Buddy Builder Candy Lab encourages hands-on learning through play. Research shows that 79% of parents agree STEM toys help their children develop skills, and 85% actively seek out these types of products (The Toy Association, 2019). Through mixing, measuring, and observing cause and effect, kids explore early STEM concepts and develop their motor skills.

### Safety & Quality Information

All materials in the Buddy Builder Candy Lab are non-toxic and food-grade, ensuring a safe experience for kids. Tools are reusable for easy cleanup, and the product meets all safety standards.

### Packaging & Sustainability

The Buddy Builder Candy Lab is designed with sustainability in mind. Packaging is recyclable, and included silicone mold can be reused for future creations. Minimal plastic is used to reduce environmental impact.

# Challenges in Modern Children's Play

Families are struggling to balance screen time with meaningful playtime. As digital entertainment become more dominant, children are losing opportunities for creativity, imagination, and hands-on learning. Parents want experiences that are educational and encourage family connection, something traditional candy brands and our competitors do not provide.

## Screen Time Overload & Passive Play

Today's families are facing the challenge of excessive screen time among children, with many parents seeking ways to balance technology use with more meaningful, hands-on activities. As digital entertainment becomes the default form of entertainment, kids are losing valuable chances to be creative, imaginative, and socially connected.

Parents are actively searching for ways to get their kids off screens and engaged in experiences that encourage learning and family interaction. They want fun, affordable ways to bond with their children, something beyond the passive entertainment that dominates today's market.

This growing concern highlights a key problem in the market, while families value creativity and connection, most available products focus on consumption rather than experience. Buddy Builder Candy Lab addresses this need by turning playtime into something imaginative, memorable, and sweet.

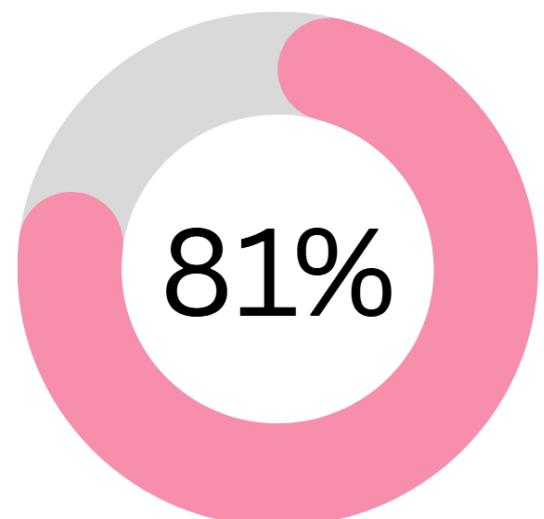
## Turning Candy into Creativity

*Before: Screen-focused entertainment*



*After: Hands-on family candy creativity*

Figure 1: Interactive Play vs. Screen Time



**81% of parents in the U.S. report that their child prefers interactive play over screen time (Ipsos, 2020)**

### Traditional Candy = No Interaction

Most candy brands focus on instant gratification rather than creativity or experience. Traditional sweets are enjoyable to eat but don't allow kids to participate in making them. Buddy Builder changes this by transforming candy-making into an interactive craft where children can mix, mold, and decorate their own treats.

### Parents Want Meaningful Family Time

Parents today are actively searching for ways to spend quality time with their children that promote both learning and fun. Many families prefer products that encourage creativity and bonding rather than passive entertainment. In fact, 65% of parents say they value products that help their child learn while having fun (Quanta Research, 2024). Buddy Builder provided an enjoyable, screen-free activity where parents and kids can connect.

### Kids Crave Ownership and Self-Expression

Children are most engaged when they can personalize and take ownership of their creations. The growing popularity of DIY kits, up more than 40% since 2020, shows that kids love products that let them express themselves (Grand View Research, 2024).

### Emotional Angle & Why It Matters

Hands-on play has proven development benefits, including improved motor skills, problem-solving, and emotional expression. Creative activities also help children build confidence and reduce stress.

# Market Conditions

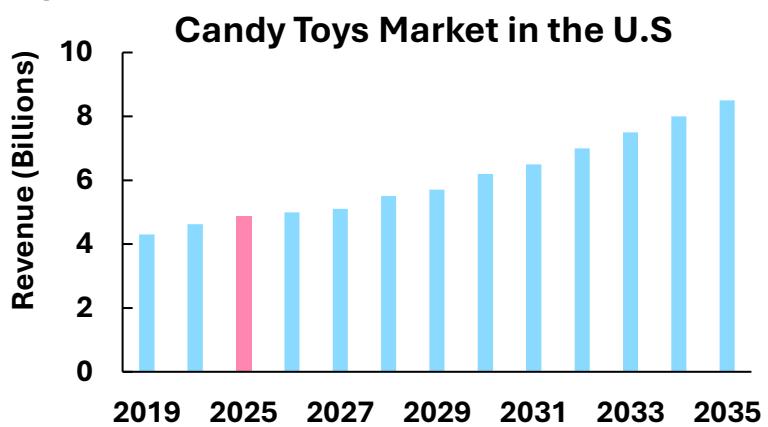
## Market Overview

The interactive and experiential product market is experiencing significant growth, driven by rising consumer interest in hands-on, creative, and customizable experiences. The global candy toys market is currently valued at approximately \$4.62 billion and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.7% from 2025 to 2035 (*Candy Toys Market Research: In-Depth Study 2035*, 2025), reflecting strong demand for innovative products that engage children through play and taste. Similarly, the craft kits and projects market, valued at \$3.8 billion in 2024, is projected to reach \$7.2 billion by 2033, with a CAGR of 7.4% (*Craft Kits and Projects Market Size, Share 2025 – 2033*, 2025), highlighting a broader consumer trend towards interactive, DIY experiences. Both market appeal to parents of young children, who are increasingly prioritizing creativity, education, and shared family activities. This allows Buddy Builder to thrive by combining the fun of candy with the creativity of crafting.

## Target Market

- Primary Audience:** Parents of children aged 4-12.
- Children in U.S.:** There are 73.2 million children in the U.S. under age 17, providing a large and stable consumer base for kid-focused products (US Census Bureau, 2017).
- Key Trend:** Growing demand for creative, hands-on and interactive experiences.
- Parent Insight:** 83% of parents say they have the most fun when spending time with their kids, showing a desire for shared, meaningful activities (*Arts and Crafts for Children Market Overview*, 2025).
- Market Opportunity:** Buddy Builder meets this need by offering a customizable, engaging candy-making experience that encourages creativity and family bonding.

Figure 2:

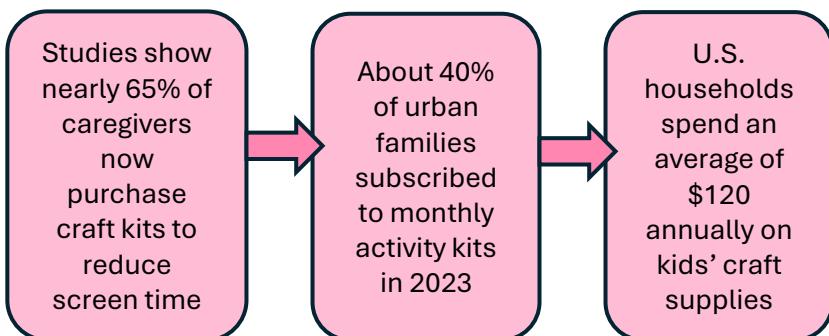


(*Candy Toys Market Research: In-Depth Study 2035*, 2025)

There is steady and consistent growth, highlighting the opportunity in this market

## Market Drivers

Several key factors are fueling the growth of both the interactive candy and craft kit markets. One of the strongest drivers is the rising demand for experiential and family-centered activities. Today's consumers are drawn to products that go beyond simple consumption, favoring experiences that encourage creativity, learning, and connection. DIY candy kits and buildable treats have gained popularity because they allow consumers to actively participate in the creation process, making the experience more personal and engaging. Additionally, social media and digital influence play a major role in promoting these products, amplifying the trend of families doing hands-on, creative activities for quality family bonding time.



(*Arts and Crafts for Children Market Overview*, 2025)

Rising interest in craft and activity kits shows families are actively seeking creative, screen-free ways to engage, proving strong demand for Buddy Builder interactive concept

# Family Fun: Engaging Parents of Young Children

## Parent Demographics

The target consumer (Parent, aged 25-45), can be leveraged by local engagement through pop-up shops, at community events, festivals, or craft events. This strategy focuses on converting interest generated by offline visibility into immediate sales and future digital loyalty. These parents are primarily family-focused and prioritize quality, interactive time. They are actively seeking ways to engage their children in off-screen, creative play that fosters family interaction and imagination. The children (Gen Alpha) are creative, experimental, curious, and experience-focused, preferring interactive activities over passive entertainment. The parents are therefore drawn to activities that satisfy this demand for hands-on play.

**Figure 3: Percentage of Households with Children**



Around 39% of U.S. family households include children under 18 (US Census Bureau, 2017).

Among Millennials who are age 25–34, there are 10.8 million households with children, showing this age group is very active in parenting

**These consumers are heavily involved in parenting and responsible for most child-related purchases, making them the strongest target for Buddy Builder**

## Parent & Child Engagement Funnel

To attract both parents and children to the Buddy Builder stand, the setup should highlight the products creative and interactive spirit. It will create a vibrant and eye-catching space where kids are encouraged to explore, build, and play with the candy. Staff can lead mini DIY demonstrations, inviting children to join in and experience the fun firsthand. As kids become absorbed in the activity, parents will naturally follow, giving them a clear view of how our product transforms candy into an imaginative, hands-on experience.

Using the pop-up as a funnel to gather contact information from parents who attend the event, with the goal of generating 5-10% of attendees as leads. Offering a small incentive (chance to win a themed kit or exclusive flavor sample) in exchange for signing up for small email marketing allows the brand to follow up digitally with kid-friendly craft ideas and exclusive flavors, fostering long-term loyalty after the initial encounter. Prior to the event, utilizing social media campaigns on Instagram or Facebook would allow PR to announce the pop-up appearance. For example, partnering with the festival organizers or a local parenting blog can increase awareness, effectively directing interested families to the specific location where they can interact with the product.

## Strategic Engagement

The pop-up strategy directly addresses the parent's need for quality, interactive engagement by bringing the product experience to them offline, which is key when drafting offline brand visibility. Buddy Builder's core mission is inspiring kids to create, play, and learn through hands-on candy-making fun. Physical presence at a festival allows parents to see this concept in action, demonstrating that the product provides the engaging, hands-on, creative experience they are seeking to reduce screen time.

Appearing in local family events or community festivals serves the objective of strengthening brand credibility and building community awareness. Since these parents are often price-sensitive and purchase based on occasion, the pop-up stand will utilize tactics focused on driving immediate sales. This includes offering limited-time launch discounts and bundle deals at shop locations. This provides instant perceived value for a product that fulfills their need for quality engagement.



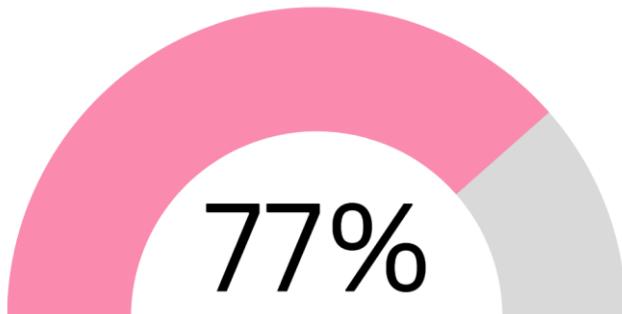
# The Digital Trendsetters: Converting Viral Novelty

Consumers, especially those who use social media frequently, are constantly looking for fresh and innovative trends. This audience is more likely to react to new, aesthetically pleasing, and culturally relevant offerings because they are continuously exposed to emerging brands, products, and experiences. By effectively drawing in this particular customer base, we can build a larger and more devoted following for our brand in addition to temporarily increasing sales. By successfully grabbing their attention, we can boost online engagement, build our digital presence, and generate natural word-of-mouth advertising. This group eventually positions us for long-term growth in a market that is becoming increasingly more competitive by acting as a strong driver of credibility and brand awareness.

## Consumer Profile

Trend-Seeking/Novelty consumers consist primarily of ages 13-32, made up of trend-driven teens and adults who are active on TikTok, Instagram, and other social media platforms. This group values aesthetic and novelty experiences and enjoys playful, nostalgic, DIY fun. They seek products that offer the ability of building your own character and are unique. This segment of consumers follow viral products on platforms like YouTube. Who share new experiences online and enjoy gifting or collecting unique items. These consumers tend to purchase off impulse, due to constant exposure.

**Figure 4: Percentage of Gen Z that use TikTok for product discovery**



**The platform is a catalyst for new trends and influences consumption habits**

(Opena, 2025)

## Attraction Process

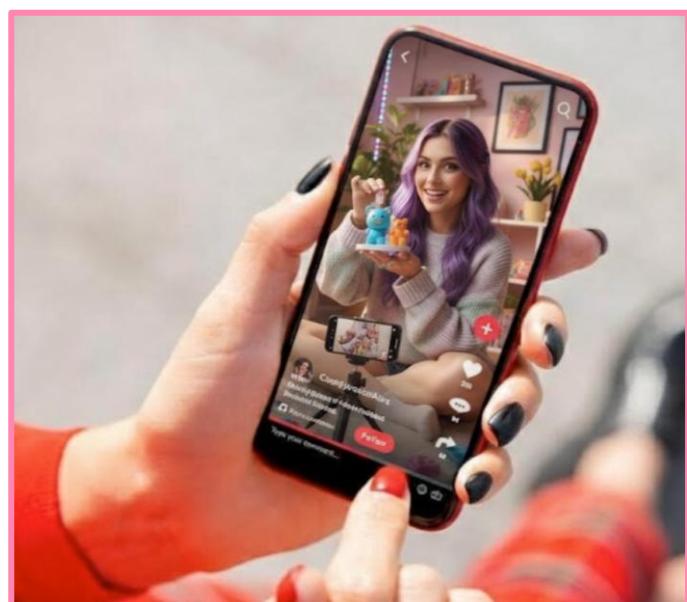
To properly attract consumers who are eager for the next trend, we must maintain our brand name on each platform effectively. This means following trends by releasing kits and products that inherently follow what's new and different. Finding a way to create visually appealing novelty can increase the chances of our brand name being involved in each and every trend to come.

## Marketing Application

Having a set social media schedule consisting of new and recent trends can give our consumers a reason to reach our website and purchase the product. Ads will be deployed via social media campaigns, focused on playful, Buddy Builder DIY videos. The ads will align with the consumer's demand for novelty, emphasizing the product as "edible entertainment" and highlighting the interactive experience that blends candy crafting with storytelling.

### Additional Social Media Opportunities:

- User-generated content: Encourage parents to share photos or videos of their child's Buddy Builder creation.
- Interactive polls: Let followers vote on new flavors, characters, or kit themes.
- Behind-the-scenes clips: Offer sneak peeks of production, packaging and product development.
- Kid-friendly challenges: Weekly mini-challenges like "Build your happiest buddy" or "flavor mash-up".



# Austin, TX: A Perfect Fit for Hands-On Learning

## Hands On Learning

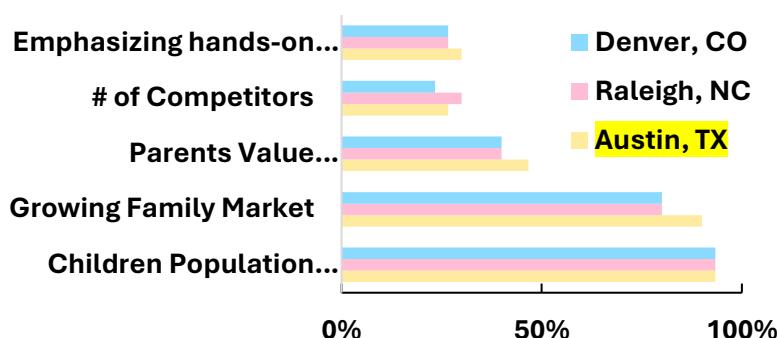
Our DIY candy kit concept is a perfect fit for Austin, as the city's family-friendly culture is built on innovative, hands-on, and interactive educational opportunities. For example, the local museum Thinkery describes itself as a space "where children and their families come to enjoy play-based, inquiry-rich, hands-on learning experiences." Because parents in Austin already respond to activities that engage kids in doing and creating (rather than just consuming), our product aligns very naturally with that value. Austin provides us with a community that embodies the 'make-it-yourself, decorate-it, eat-it' model (Thinkery, 2025).

## Competitors

Although Austin has a thriving dessert and candy market, there aren't many options that cater to both parents and children and emphasize creativity, design, and hands-on creation. With our DIY candy kit, Austin presents us with a chance to establish a distinctive market. Overall, Austin is a good test market because we can enter the family design/interactive market and make an edible experience space there with little/no direct competition (Seeger, 2024).



Figure 5: Location Decision Table



Overall, Austin is the strongest location for our product

## Parents Value Creativity and Education

Our DIY candy kit is supported by Austin's culture, which focuses on the arts, creativity and innovation. For example, the goal of Austin's cultural planning document is to chart a course to sustain the City as a magnet for arts, culture, and creativity. Also, the Creative Learning Initiative ensures that every child benefits from the arts and creative learning in and outside of the school day. These show that Austin's parents and schools value creativity and hands-on learning (McLain, 2025; Seibert, 2025).

## Children Population

Austin and its surrounding county clearly host a significant share of children and youth, which is an important indicator of target market size for our product. For example, 269,942 children under the age of 18 made up roughly 21% of Austin's total population. Additionally, the median age in Austin is only about 34.5, indicating a younger population base that is likely to include parents with children. With these larger amounts of children and parents it shows that there will be a sizable market for our product. (Demographics, 2018; Seeger, 2024).

## Growing Family Market

Given that Austin is one of the fastest growing cities in Texas and the U.S., more young families are moving here, creating a perfect market for a product like ours that caters to families. For instance, a study found that between 2000 and 2013, the number of children aged 5 to 14 increased by 49.3% in the Austin metro area. Additionally, according to population projection data, the region's population is expected to increase by 41% between 2020 and 2040 (Potter, 2025; Texas, 2024).

# Industry Competitor Analysis

## Bazooka

Bazooka is known for iconic candies like Ring Pop and Push Pop, built being quick, high-energy novelty rather than true interactivity. Their units cost roughly \$0.18–\$0.25 to make, and they operate at about 7.1% expenses, earning \$382 million in revenue and \$29.5 million in net income. With distribution through Walmart, CVS, Amazon, and wholesalers, they thrive in reach. Buddy Builder differs by shifting the experience from simple consumption to hands-on creation, giving kids a creative role in making their candy (Doering, 2025).



## Popin' Cookin'

Popin' Cookin' is the closest interactive competitor, offering Japanese DIY kits where kids assemble detailed miniature foods. Their appeal comes from mixing, molding, and decorating tiny edible creations. However, their kits can be more complicated and instruction-heavy. Buddy Builder sets itself apart by offering a simpler, more interactive and customizable process focused on molding and shaping taffy like candy, making the experience more accessible and family friendly (Japan, 2025; Popin, 2025).



## Frankford Candy and Chocolate

Frankford Candy and Chocolate is a useful benchmark because of its kid focused novelty candies like Krabby Patties and Gummy Lunchables. Their products offer fun experiences but doesn't provide the interactive, hands-on creativity that Buddy Builder focuses on. With an average unit cost of about \$0.73 and operating expenses around 7.6%, Frankford generates \$195.5 million in revenue and \$16 million in net income. They distribute widely through major retailers like Walmart, Target, Dollar General, and Amazon. Compared to them, our product stands out by offering a more engaging, taffy-like DIY candy experience that encourages real creativity (PrivCo, 2025).



## Examples from Each Company

### Bazooka



### Frankford



### Popin' Cookin'



Buddy Builder Candy Lab offers not only uniqueness, but imagination and creativity as well

# More Than Just A Candy Kit

A creative candy-making experience where kids design their own unique candy "buddy" with personalized features and character, offering far more imagination and customization than traditional DIY kits.

Buddy Builder Candy Lab offers a far higher degree of personalization and creativity than do-it-yourself candy companies like Bazooka, Frankford Candy, and Popin' Cookin'. Buddy Builder Candy Lab enhances the experience by allowing customers to actually design a candy "buddy" with personality, customizable features, and specific traits, in contrast to many DIY brands that concentrate on the novelty of assembling or mixing different candies. Users participate in a creative process that combines imagination, storytelling, and crafting rather than just following directions. Compared to conventional do-it-yourself candy kits, this gives the finished product a more significant and memorable feel.

Buddy Builder Candy Lab goes beyond simple activities, in contrast to Bazooka and Frankford Candy, which frequently focus on kits with a novelty theme or simple construction. While Frankford may provide simple candy setups and Bazooka may provide interactive packaging, these experiences are typically brief and have little creative depth. By allowing users to create characters with their own appearance and sense of style, Buddy Builder Candy Lab adds a level of customization that goes far beyond simply stacking pieces or combining things. Each creation feels like a genuine one-of-a-kind product since customers are encouraged to customize the experience.

Although Popin' Cookin', which is well-known for its tiny food-making kits, provides engaging and entertaining candy-making, its main focus is still on recreating pre-made dishes like sushi, ramen, or different kinds of desserts. However, Buddy Builder Candy Lab is unique in that it focuses on creating something unique rather than replicating pre-existing foods. The final product is a candy friend that is connected to the user's imagination as opposed to just candy. In contrast to other DIY candy brands, Buddy Builder Candy provides a more immersive experience by combining creativity, character development, and hands-on play.

## UVP Comparison

Table 1: UVP Comparison

	Buddy Builder	Bazooka	Popin' Cookin'	Frankford Candy and Chocolate
Limited/Seasonal Flavor Options	✓	✓	✓	✓
Clean & Ethical Ingredients	✓	✗	✗	✗
Educational Appeal	✓	✗	✓	✗
Character Customization	✓	✗	✗	✗
Interactive Family Time	✓	✗	✓	✗

Overall, Buddy Builder outperforms each company in these five distinct categories

# From Production to Play: Our Distribution Hub

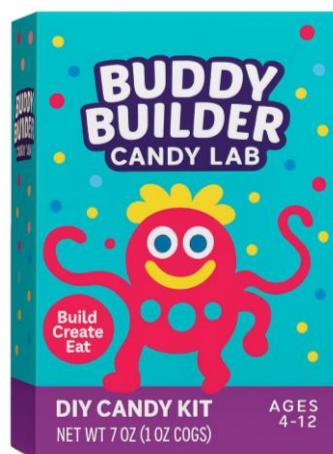
A Buddy Builder Candy warehouse would look and feel entirely different from a typical candy or product distribution warehouse. The area would be split up into colorful, themed sections that complement the brand's creative, character-based identity rather than endless rows of identical boxes and industrial shelving. The warehouse would feel more like a fun production studio than a conventional storage facility, with each section concentrating on a different aspect of the "buddy-building" process, such as ingredients, character parts, packaging materials, and customizable add-ons. In addition to making it easier for the team to find parts quickly, bright signs, well-organized bins and certain zones would also support the imaginative and playful environment that is created by the Buddy Builder experience. Compared to a traditional setup, the warehouse would operate more cooperatively and creatively.

## Equipment/Cost

Our total expenses include several necessary pieces of equipment that will enable our business to operate effectively and quickly reach a solid level of profitability. Including the cost of securing the warehouse, our total expenditure on equipment alone comes to about \$4,188.10. This investment ensures that we can meet production demands without delays or additional unneeded spending by covering all necessary tools for daily operations. Every item was chosen for its longevity, affordability, and contribution to increasing productivity while lowering long-term maintenance expenses. By investing in top-notch equipment up front, we hope to decrease downtime, enhance workflow, and establish a solid operational base. A thorough analysis of these costs, including justifications for every purchase, can be found in the appendices section.

## Official Packaging

The Buddy Builder Candy Lab packaging is bright, playful, and designed to instantly excite kids. Its bold colors, cheerful candy character, and confetti-style accents create an energetic look that signals fun and creativity. The overall design clearly communicates that this isn't just candy, it's an interactive activity where kids get to build and create their own edible masterpiece, all before enjoying the final treat.



## Utilizing Area

Fully using our space is essential to the performance and overall efficiency of the Buddy Builder Candy Lab. This facility will serve as the daily workspace for all employees and associates, ensuring a consistent, organized, and productive workflow. Making the most of our 5,000 sq/ft warehouse allows us to streamline operations, support higher output, and ultimately maximize profitability. By optimizing every part of the space, we create an environment where our team can work effectively, and our business can thrive for years to come.



## Choosing A Space

Our office space will play a critical role in supporting our overall success. Selecting the right location not only enhances our daily workflow, but also strengthens our ability to stay organized, collaborate effectively, and maintain a high level of efficiency as we grow. By choosing a space that aligns with our operational needs, we position ourselves to run a more productive, focused, and well-coordinated business.

# Financials

This financial projection outlines our expected performance over the first five years of Buddy Builder's operations, highlighting how our revenue growth, cost structure, and net income evolve as the business scales. These estimates incorporate startup expenses, operational costs, and market demand assumptions, giving a clear picture of when the company transitions from losses to profitability. Our product price remains constant through all 5 years at \$15.99. The table below shows how our model reflects both the challenges of the initial launch phase and the long-term financial outcome of the business.

**Table 2: Financial Projection**

CAGR = 38%

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Revenue</b>	\$107,933	\$179,888	\$275,828	\$407,745	\$539,662
<b>Growth YoY</b>	-	67%	53%	48%	32%
<b>COGS</b>	\$118,575	\$135,225	\$157,425	\$219,150	\$249,675
<b>Gross Margin</b>	\$(10,643)	\$44,663	\$118,403	\$188,595	\$289,988
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$(88,937)</b>	<b>\$(39,539)</b>	<b>\$26,373</b>	<b>\$85,856</b>	<b>\$176,536</b>
<b>Cumulative Earnings</b>	<b>\$(178,937)</b>	<b>\$(218,476)</b>	<b>\$(192,102)</b>	<b>\$(106,246)</b>	<b>\$70,290</b>

The table above outlines our profit and loss projections, showing that net income turns positive by the end of year 3 and cumulative earnings become positive in year 5, allowing us to repay the startup loan on time. Revenue estimates were developed using Austin's parent population data and attendance figures from the Thinkery (STEM Institution), dividing attendance by two to approximate parents and applying a 75% overlap to identify those most likely interested in STEM focused activities. This target consumer group forms the basis of our revenue projections.

## Start Up Cost

**Table 3: Start-Up Cost**

Start Up Cost	Price
Rent Deposit	\$1,000
Warehouse Setup	\$10,000
Utilities Setup	\$2,000
Equipment	\$6,000
Initial Inventory	\$5,000
Website	\$3,000
Licensing/Insurance	\$4,000
R&D	\$4,000
Other/Miscellaneous	\$5,000
Working Capital	\$50,000
<b>Total Start Up Cost</b>	<b>\$90,000</b>

Loan Amount: \$40,000

Equity Investments: \$50,000

The essential one-time expenditures required to start our business are represented by these startup costs. These consist of the initial inventory to support early operations, utilities, equipment, setup fees, and the warehouse rent deposit. Website development, insurance, and licensing guarantee brand awareness, compliance, and seamless online sales.

Additionally, funds are set aside for research and development to improve customer experience, packaging, and product design. Working capital gives you the flexibility to pay for upfront costs like marketing, shipping, and payroll. These expenses, which add up to \$90,000, provide the groundwork for a launch that is sustainable and scalable. For the loan that is \$40,000 there will be an interest rate of 4%.

## Metrics

This table highlights the company's projected growth over its first five years. In the early stages, losses occur as startup and production costs exceed revenue. By year 3, profitability begins to emerge as sales grow, and operations become more efficient. Rising gross margins reflect better cost management and stronger brand positioning. Employee growth remains steady, aligning with operational needs, while units sold increase rapidly each year, showing strong market demand. With a consistent \$15.99 unit price, growing sales and improved margins drive sustainable profitability by year 5.

**Table 4: Projected Growth**

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Profit Margin</b>	-82%	-22%	10%	21%	33%
<b>Gross Margin</b>	-10%	25%	43%	46%	54%
<b># of Employees</b>	3	3	3	4	4
<b>Units Sold</b>	6,750	11,250	17,250	25,500	33,750
<b>Price Per Unit</b>	\$15.99	\$15.99	\$15.99	\$15.99	\$15.99
<b>Break Even</b>	15,734	15,077	14,752	17,475	17,359

## Total Target Consumers

Austin Population: 993,588

% Of Residence <18: 18.3%

# Of Children Per Household: 1.8

Attendees at Thinkery: 400,000

Overlap %: 75%

# of Children:  $993,588 * 18.3\% = 181,826$  Children

# Family :Households:  $181,826 / 1.8 = 101,015$  Family Households

Engaged Parents:  $400,000 / 2 = 200,000$  Engaged Parents

Target Households:  $200,000 * 75\% = 150,000$  Target Households

## Marketing Conversion Rates

**Table 5: Marketing Conversion Rates**

(Khan, 2025; Yaqub, 2024)

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
<b>Tik Tok</b>	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	5.0%	6.0%
<b>YouTube</b>	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	1.0%	2.0%
<b>Instagram</b>	1.0%	1.5%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%
<b>Website</b>	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%
<b>Influencers</b>	0.5%	1.0%	1.5%	2.5%	3.0%
<b>Events</b>	1.0%	2.0%	3.5%	5.0%	7.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.5%</b>	<b>7.5%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>17.0%</b>	<b>22.5%</b>

Above is a table showing the conversion rates for each of the marketing strategies. They fluctuate as the company evolves because the money going into each marketing strategy increases as the revenue does. The total percentages at the bottom are the numbers that were used in calculating the revenue. The total percentages were multiplied by our total consumer base in Austin for each year to find the expected revenue.

# Expenses Overview

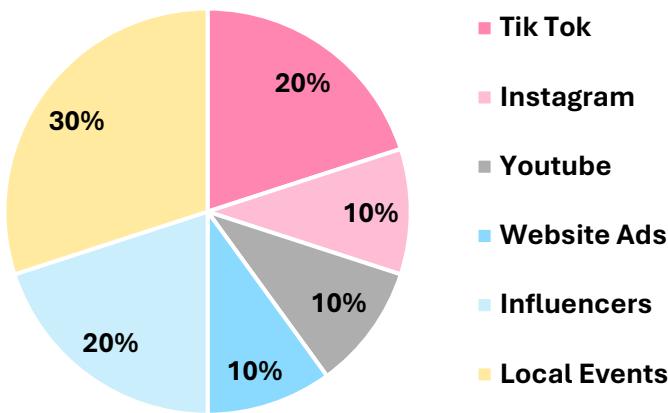
Key expenses over a five-year period are shown in this table. Rent remains constant per year but as the business grows and marketing increases since its 8% of revenue. Utilities increase slightly with higher production activity, and the inventory/sales system remains a small, steady cost. All things considered, costs show a solid base with scalable growth primarily due to marketing initiatives.

**Table 6: Overview of Expenses**

Expenses	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Rent - Fixed	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000
Marketing - Variable	\$8,635	\$14,391	\$22,066	\$32,620	\$43,173
Utilities - Variable	\$7,500	\$7,650	\$7,803	\$7,959	\$8,118
Shopify (POS & Analytics) - Fixed	\$360	\$360	\$360	\$360	\$360
Hub Spot (CRM System) - Fixed	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$200

## Marketing Expenses

**Figure 6: Marketing Expenses by Percentage**



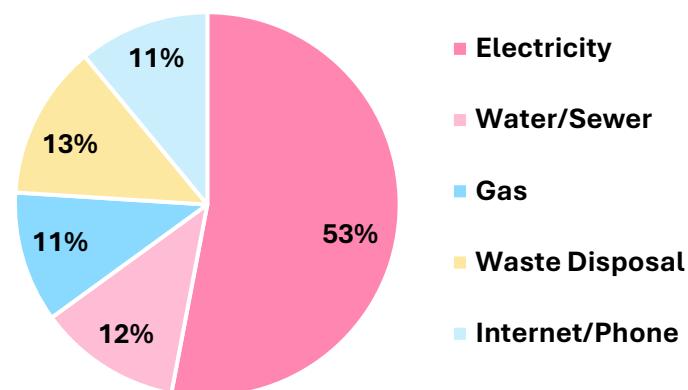
**Local Events** is the biggest marketing expense

Since 8% of revenue is allocated to marketing, this expense rises and falls as the company expands. As sales increase, more can be reinvested into platforms that generate awareness and conversions, such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, influencer partnerships, and website advertisements. This percentage-based structure keeps spending flexible and ensures that the marketing budget grows in line with the customer base. This approach allows Buddy Builder to continually strengthen its visibility and reach families looking for creative and hands-on activities. The yearly increase in marketing costs reflects planned growth rather than overspending, with each rise helping expand reach, improve engagement, and maintain steady sales.

## Utility Expenses

Utility costs are projected to increase by roughly 2% annually and are based on average warehouse expenses in the Austin area. As the company becomes busier, this slight yearly increase accounts for higher production volume, greater equipment usage, and general operational requirements. Planning for gradual growth keeps financial projections realistic and aligned with the daily demands of running a functional production and fulfillment space, even though utilities remain a relatively small portion of total expenses. This steady increase reflects the natural expansion of operations and ensures the company remains prepared as warehouse activity scales over time.

**Figure 7: Utility Expenses by Percentage**



**Electricity** is over half of the overall utility expenses

# Marketing Strategy

## Core Objectives

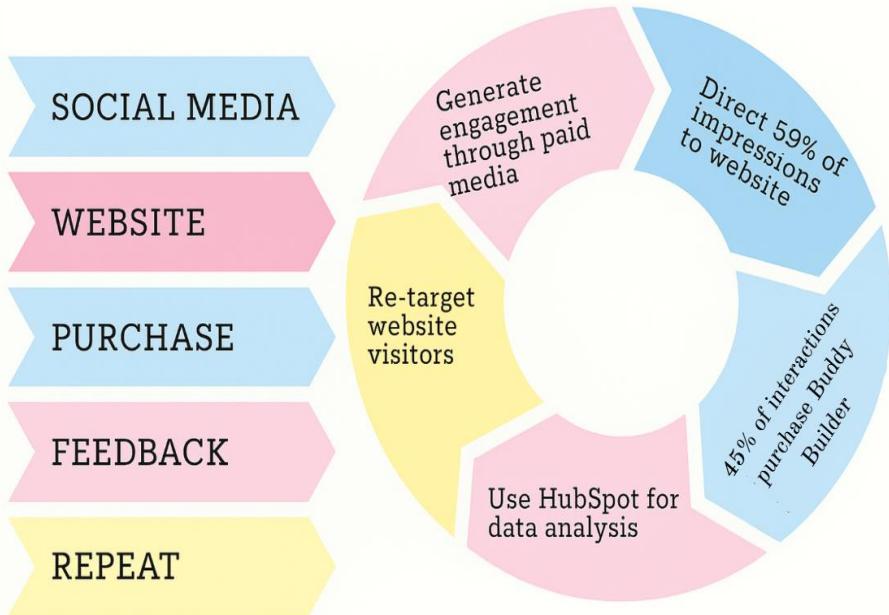
The core strategic goal for Buddy Builder is to establish market presence by directing consumer traffic through social media interactions and local engagement in order to reach a break-even point of 14,850 customers. This involves contacting 73,200 individuals with the aim of converting approximately 10%, increasing gradually until we reach a 60% conversion rate in Year 5. The marketing strategy is primarily centered on community engagement, recurring revenue, and digital growth.

## Target Market

The product addresses the problem that parents are actively seeking ways to engage their kids in off-screen, creative play that fosters family interaction. With the primary target market for Buddy Builder being segmented into two key groups: End Users (Kids ages 4-12, or Gen Alpha) and Primary Purchasers (Parents ages 25-45, or Millennials/Gen Z). Trend and novelty consumers are also viable to adopt this product, as trends on social media encourage purchase decisions.



Figure 8: Marketing Strategy Cycle



Social Media → Website → Purchase → Feedback → Repeat

## Marketing Approach

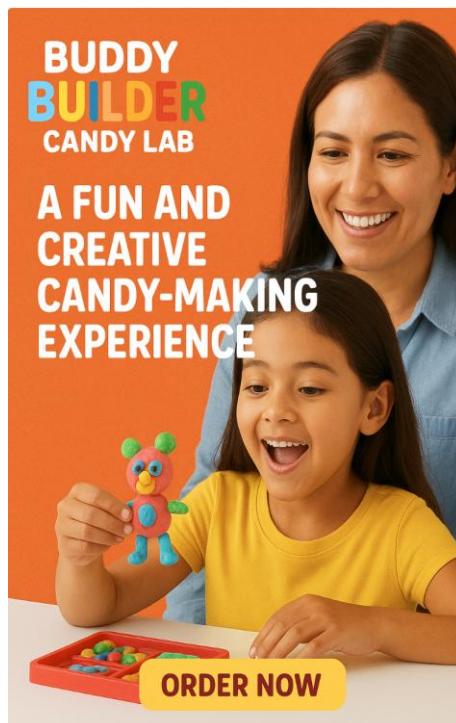
To effectively reach our target market, Buddy Builder will leverage a mix of online and experiential marketing. Through social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube, the brand will launch short-form promotional videos, influencer collaborations, and interactive campaigns that highlight the creativity and family bonding aspects of this product. These efforts will be supported by data driven tools like HubSpot, to schedule, track, and analyze engagement rates.

Community engagement strategies, including pop-up craft stands and school-based activity events will drive local awareness and encourage digital interaction.

By combining consistent online visibility with hands-on engagement, Buddy Builder aims to achieve a steady increase in sale conversions as brand familiarity and consumer loyalty grow.

# Marketing Ads

## Flyer/Instagram Ads



Buddy Builder Candy Lab is highlighted in the flyer and Instagram advertisements with appealing images and positive, straightforward text that is intended to grab attention right away. By displaying the vibrant molds, confectionery supplies, and completed items that children can create, these advertisements emphasize the product as an enjoyable, hands-on activity. The advertisements emphasize on originality, personalization, and the thrill of Austin's debut speaks directly to both parents searching for fun, screen-free activities and children attracted to lively, playful imagery. This strategy presents Buddy Builder as a simple, high-energy product that piques interest and entices families to give it a try.

## Local Event & Tik Tok Ads

These ads showcase how Buddy Builder Candy Lab captures attention both in person and online by highlighting the product's colorful, hands-on experiences. By fostering a warm, family friendly environment, the local event display inspires parents and children to engage directly with the product, fostering excitement and trust. The TikTok style advertisement, on the other hand, highlights genuineness and excitement by showing actual users having a good time while making their own candy buddies. When taken as a whole, these ads show how Buddy Builder uses social media and community involvement to generate interest, increase visibility, and establish a connection with the consumers.



# Key Operational Strategies

## Key Business Processes and Workflow

The Buddy Builder ensures smooth and efficient operations through several key processes. Product development and sourcing builds strong supplier relationships and ensures all materials meet quality and safety standards. Order fulfillment guarantees DIY candy kits are accurately packed and shipped, while inventory management tracks stock levels and keeps the warehouse organized. Sales and marketing promote products on TikTok, partnering with family and parent influencers to boost engagement. Customer service maintains satisfaction by answering questions, resolving issues, and gathering feedback. Financial analysis manages budgets, payroll, and pricing decisions using performance data. Compliance and safety processes ensure a clean and safe workplace.

**Figure 9: Operational Flow**



### Product Development and Sourcing

This process involves connecting with suppliers and building stronger relationships. This ensures reliable production and supplies. This will include outsourced materials such as custom silicone molds, custom plastic spoon and knife combined (spife) tools, dropper tools, colored packs of moldable taffy candy, and powder mix for DIY gummy candy. This process makes sure that all the sourced materials meet quality standards by remaining consistent and reliable.



### Order Fulfillment

This process occurs when a product is correctly picked out from the inventory and packaged together. It ensures the product is of quality and accurate to the order to prepare for shipment. This allows for the customer to receive their orders quick and in good condition.



### Inventory Management

This process monitors stock levels to ensure new materials are ordered when necessary. This prevents items from running low as they can be ordered ahead of time.



### Sales and Marketing

These processes focus on promoting Buddy Builder Candy Lab DIY kits on social media sites like TikTok. This includes potential partnerships with parent and family influencers to boost engagement. This process also includes campaigns to boost brand visibility and attract new customers.



### Customer Service

This process builds a positive experience for customers. This is done by answering emails, answering phone calls, resolving issues, and answering questions. It also collects feedback from customers to improve products for a higher customer satisfaction.



### Financial Analysis

This process manages the business's budget and expenses. It allows for price determining, payroll, and monitoring of key performance indicators to make informed decisions.



### Compliance and Safety Regulations

The compliance and safety regulations process ensures that the workplace is organized, clean and meets health and safety standards. This maintains a safe environment for employees and products.

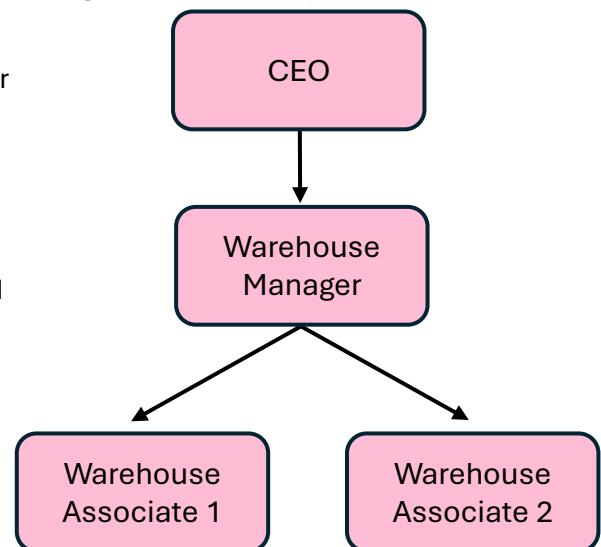
# Roles and Team Structure

The business's team structure works together to provide efficient operations. The CEO sets direction for the business by making strategic decisions and handling finances. The warehouse manager ensures operations run smoothly by managing supplier relationships, inventory stock, marketing and sales, and by taking phone calls. The warehouse associates take care of packing and shipment.

As the revenue grows each year, we will add one new employee and delegate tasks between them. These roles maintain an organized and productive workplace that support the business's growth.

**The operational chart on the right displays the hierarchy of the team. The warehouse associates report to the warehouse manager who reports to the CEO**

Figure 10: Hierarchy Order



## CEO

The CEO sets the direction for all employees and establishes a clear vision for the business's future. They manage finances, make strategic decisions, and identify opportunities to drive growth. The CEO also ensures that all major functions of the business are aligned with the business's goals. They provide leadership, encourage a strong company culture, and make important decisions to drive long term success.

## Manager

The manager will be a full-time employee that ensures efficient and smooth daily operations. They oversee the warehouse associates, manage inventory, building supplier relationships, and handles the sales and marketing. They also provide exceptional customer service by answering calls and responding to emails from customers. The manager is key to the business's success.

## Warehouse Associate 1

The full-time position for warehouse associate 1 includes responsibilities such as packing the DIY candy kits, organizing, and cleaning the store. This employee needs a strong attention to detail, reliability, and good teamwork. They will ensure the products are accurately prepared with consistency.

## Warehouse Associate 2

The full-time position for warehouse associate 2 includes unloading the inventory shipment and properly putting items away. They are also responsible for preparing the orders for shipment. This employee should have strong organizational skills and ensure efficiency and accuracy.

# Information Systems and Technology

The company's information systems keep operations running smoothly and help make smarter business decisions. Shopify handles online orders, tracks inventory, and shipping. Cin7 Core manages stock levels for candy, molds, and supplies. HubSpot CRM organizes customer data, tracks buying habits, and supports marketing campaigns. Shopify Analytics provides insights on sales, repeat purchases, and campaign performance. These help the business stay efficient and connected to its customers.

## POS System (Shopify)

The business uses a point-of-sale system, Shopify, to manage online orders. Shopify tracks sales, inventory, shipping and when the order is completed. This ensures each customer has received the correct order in efficient time. Shopify also connects to inventory applications that can automatically update sales records, print shipping labels, and build the business's website.



# shopify



### **Analytics and Reporting (Shopify Analytics)**

Analytics and reporting will be done through Shopify Analytics, which is a built-in program on Shopify. This system provides insight to sales performance, repeated purchases, campaign effectiveness, and operation efficiency. This will help the business understand trends and where to target promotions. It also allows the business to identify opportunities in growth and improve marketing.

### **Customer Relationship Management (HubSpot CRM)**

HubSpot CRM is used to manage customer data and send targeted marketing messages. It connects to email to reach customers by sending promotions, new product launches, and campaigns. This can help build stronger customer relationships and encourage repeated purchasers.

## Our Website and Online Presence

Our website makes exploring and purchasing Buddy Builder simple, seamless, and enjoyable. With an easy-to-navigate layout, you can quickly browse our products and add-ons and place your order in just a few clicks. The site also connects you directly to all of our social media pages, where you can find updates, exciting content, and community relations. We're committed to providing excellent customer service, so support is always easy to access if customers have questions or need assistance. Our website ensures a smooth shopping experience from start to finish.



## Timeline

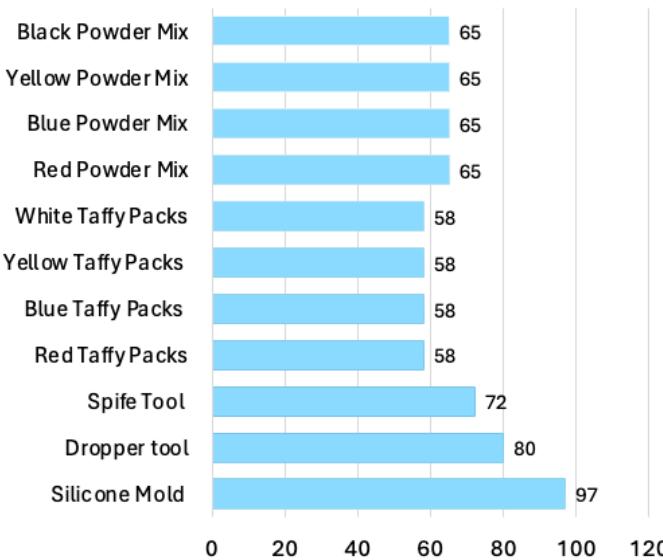
This timeline outlines the development of Buddy Builder Candy Lab, from early product creation and supplier setup, through marketing preparation and soft-launch testing, to the official launch and long-term expansion strategy. It highlights the key phases that move the product concept to market growth.



# KPI Dashboard

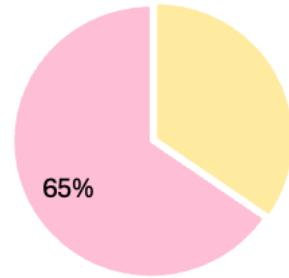
The Dashboard below is an example of KPI's that Buddy Builder Candy Lab will track daily. The Inventory Stock levels track the number of materials there are currently in Inventory. This allows for new materials to be ordered ahead of time. The customer retention rate displays the percent of customers who make repeated purchases, which helps to measure customer loyalty. The Daily Orders processed shows how many orders are processed each day which can be compared to over time. This can be used to analyze trends and predict the business's slow and busy periods. The Daily Social media interactions show which social media sites have the highest engagement. This can help show where to target marketing and promotional strategies.

**Figure 11: Inventory Stock Levels**



**Figure 12:**

**Customer Retention Rate**

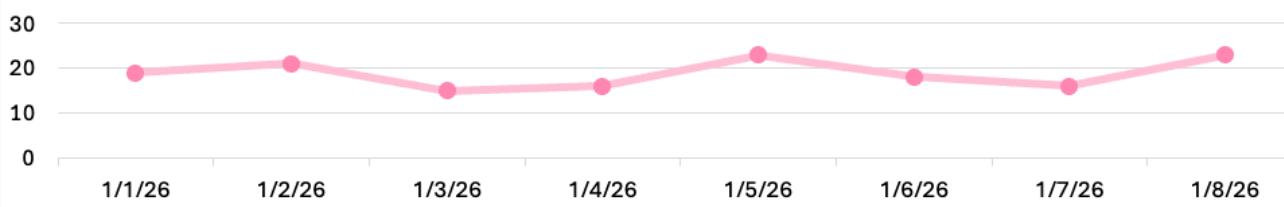


**Figure 13: Orders Processed**

Today's Orders	7
Total Monthly Orders	151

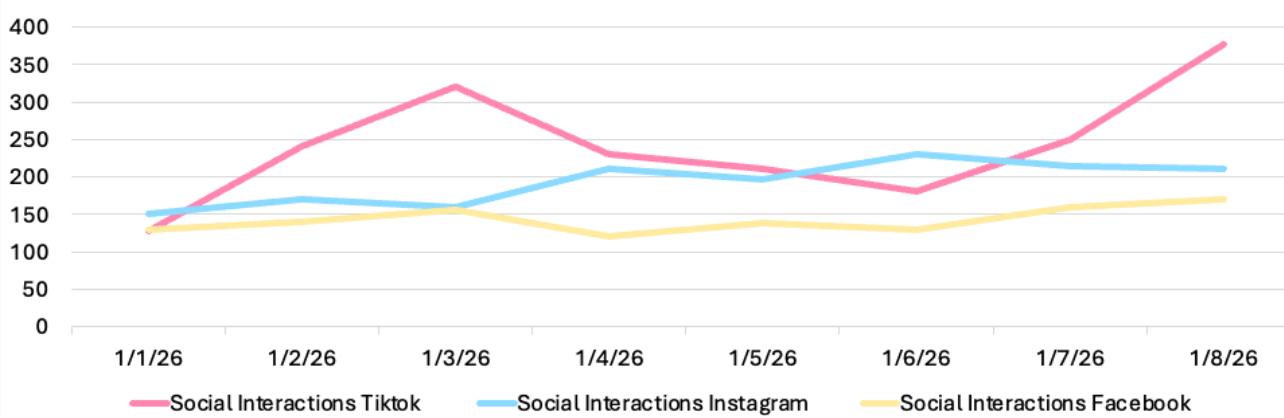
**Figure 14:**

**Daily Orders Processed**



**Figure 15:**

**Daily Social Media Interactions**



# Conclusion

**Buddy Builder Candy Lab** reimagines candy-making as a hands-on, educational, and joyful family experience. It blends creativity, learning, and fun to strengthen family bonds while reducing screen time. Designed for children ages 4 -12, our DIY candy kit lets kids mix, mold, and design their own edible buddy, turning simple play into meaningful learning moments.

## Problem

Families today struggle to find meaningful, screen-free activities that encourage both creativity and connection. Most candy brands focus on instant gratification rather than engagement or education. Buddy Builder Candy Lab solves this issue by combining candy-making, art, and STEM learning into one interactive experience, helping families spend quality time together while encouraging imagination and curiosity.

## Uniqueness

Our concept stands apart by merging two markets: DIY toy kits and novelty candy. Unlike competitors such as *Bazooka* or *Popin' Cookin'*, Buddy Builder offers **customizable characters, clean and ethical ingredients, and reusable molds** that can be enjoyed repeatedly. The product's educational focus, teaching creativity, color mixing, and problem-solving, makes it not only fun but beneficial for child development. This fusion of creativity, learning, and sustainability positions Buddy Builder as the premium choice in the interactive candy segment.

## Market Conditions

The interactive and experiential product market is rapidly expanding. The global candy-toy market, valued at **\$4.62 billion** in 2025, is projected to grow at a **5.7% CAGR** through 2035, while the craft and DIY kit market is expected to nearly **double** by 2033. Parents increasingly seek products that encourage creativity, learning, and bonding, and **Austin, Texas**, known for its family-oriented, innovative culture, provides the perfect launch location. This strong and growing market supports our long-term scalability and brand expansion.

## Profitability

Buddy Builder's financial model is designed for long-term growth and sustainability. With **\$90,000 in total startup costs**, including a **\$40,000 loan**, our projections show **break-even by Year 3** and **profitability by Year 5**. A consistent **\$15.99 unit price** and efficient operations enable scalable growth as demand rises. By Year 5, the business is expected to recover all initial investment, achieve positive cumulative earnings, and maintain strong profit margins.

## Promotional Strategy

Buddy Builder's marketing approach focuses on community connection and digital storytelling. Through engaging short-form videos on **TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube**, we will showcase creativity in action with "Build Your Buddy" tutorials and family challenges. Collaborations with local schools, STEM programs, and parent influencers will build authentic engagement and trust. Pop-up events, school partnerships, and interactive workshops will give families hands-on experiences that drive awareness and repeat purchases.

## Action Plan

To ensure a strong launch and sustained growth, Buddy Builder Candy Lab will be finalizing supplier agreements, securing warehouse operations, and completing all product testing to guarantee quality and safety. Our initial rollout in Austin will use targeted digital campaigns, pop-up events, and school partnerships to build awareness and customer engagement. We will track key details such as conversion rates, customer feedback, and repeat purchases to make data-driven improvements. Later, we will expand our product line to include seasonal offerings. We will then explore retail partnerships and expansion. This phased approach ensures that Buddy Builder grows sustainably while maintaining the creativity and family connection at the heart of our brand.

Buddy Builder Candy Lab does not just make candy; we make creativity, connection, and memories that last a lifetime. We are not only selling candy, we are selling an experience for families to love and enjoy.

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# Appendix A: Triple Bottom Line

## People



We inspire creativity and connection while giving back — 10% of each purchase supports the Children's Miracle Network or other child-focused organizations, helping kids and families thrive.

## Planet



We create fun that lasts — not waste that doesn't. Our reusable molds let kids build and rebuild their buddies over and over again, reducing waste and encouraging creativity through play. Plus, our clean, ethically sourced ingredients make every creation safe, sustainable, and sweet.

## Profit



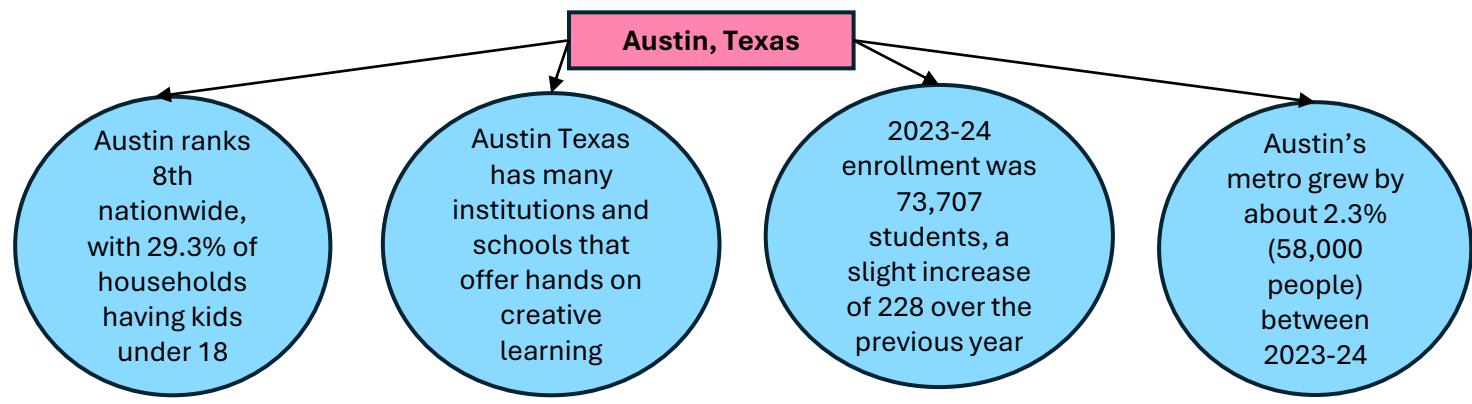
We believe in growing responsibly — achieving profitability while staying true to our values. We deliver high-quality, meaningful products that families love, creating lasting value for our customers, employees, and stakeholders.

**Buddy Builder Candy Lab inspires creativity, gives back to kids in need, and promotes sustainability through reusable products.**

# Appendix B: Location

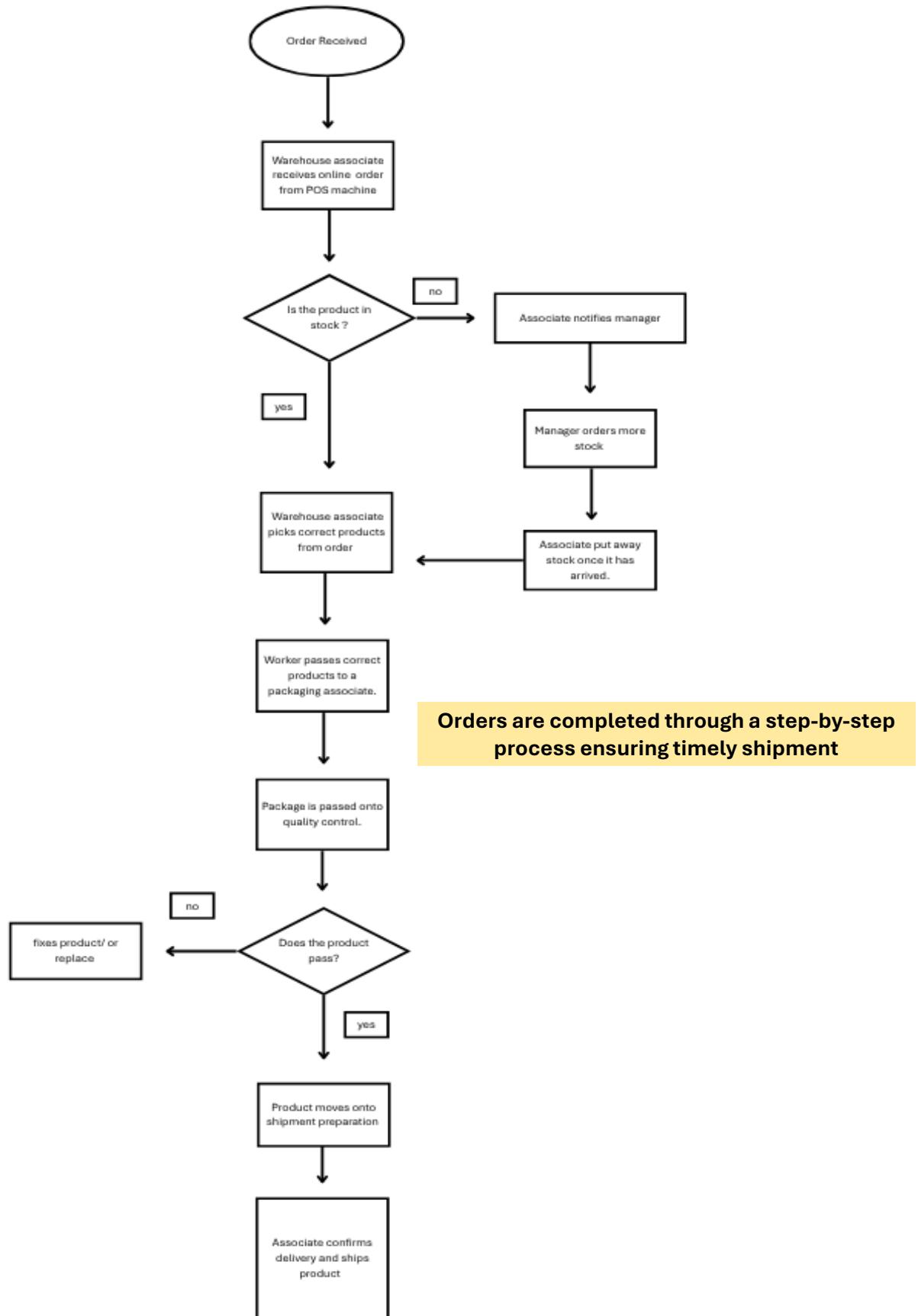
Decision: Austin Tx, maybe migrate to Raleigh NC in future

Criteria	Weight %	Austin, TX		Raleigh, NC		Denver, CO	
		Raw Score	Weighted Score	Raw Score	Weighted Score	Raw Score	Weighted Score
Children Population Density	40%	7	2.8	7	2.8	7	2.8
Growing Family Market	30%	9	2.7	8	2.4	8	2.4
Parents Value Creativity and Education	20%	6	1.2	6	1.2	6	1.2
# of Competitors	10%	8	0.8	9	0.9	7	0.7
Emphasizing hands-on learning	10%	9	0.9	8	0.8	8	0.8
Total Weight =	110%	840%		810%		790%	



(Austin, 2024; Cobler, 2023; Eanes, 2025; May, 2025; Metro, 2020; Neilsburg, 2025; Quintero, 2024)

# Appendix C: Operational Flow Chart



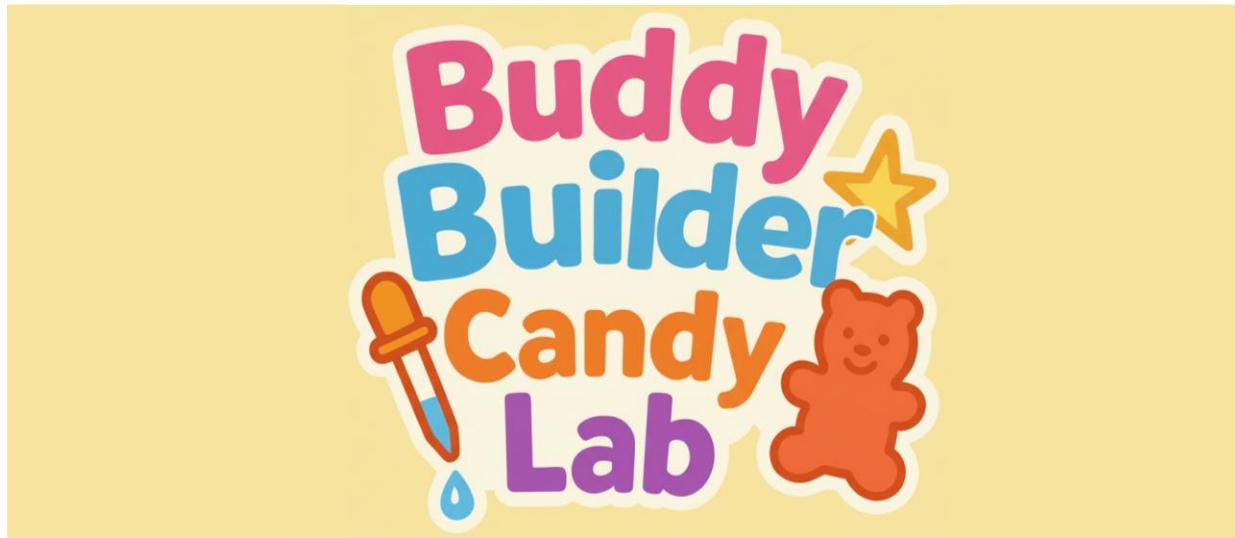
# Appendix D: Lean Canvas

## Lean Canvas

### Buddy Builder Candy Lab

<p><b>Problem</b></p> <p><b>Top 3 Problems</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are looking for ways to get kids off screens and engage them in hands-on play</li> <li>Candy brands rarely combine playtime, creativity, and family bonding</li> <li>Traditional candy offers instant gratification but lacks creativity and interaction</li> </ul> <p><b>Existing Alternatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CandyBlox, Poppin' Cookin', Kool-Aid Gummy Candy Maker</li> </ul>	<p><b>Solution</b></p> <p><b>Top 3 Solutions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>DIY candy-making kits with colorful gummy mixes and themed molds.</li> <li>It is an activity and a treat in one</li> <li>Easy to use packaging that makes family playtime simple and fun</li> </ul> <p><b>Key Metrics</b></p> <p><b>Key Activities You Measure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales and customer surveys</li> <li>Digital and marketing engagement</li> <li>Repeats customer rate and subscriptions</li> <li>Growth in user-generated social media content</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unique Value Proposition</b></p> <p><b>A Clear and Compelling Message</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An interactive, sensory experience where kids can engage with their food, explore flavors, and build confidence through creativity</li> <li>Where creativity in candy meets family time.</li> <li>Hands-on, educational, and delicious – combining the fun of making with the joy of creating something they can eat</li> </ul> <p><b>High Level Concept</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This product fits into the growing trend of interactive, DIY experiences like baking kits and slime kits</li> <li>In a world of growing technology usage, parents are looking for activities that engage their kids and get them off their devices</li> </ul>	<p><b>Unfair Advantage</b></p> <p><b>Your Differentiator</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Combines two markets: DIY toy kits and novelty candy</li> <li>Emotional connection through creativity, learning, and family bonding</li> <li>Play-based learning that promotes sensory engagement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Customer Segments</b></p> <p><b>Target Customers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children (4 – 12)</li> <li>Parents of young children (4 - 12)</li> <li>Holiday and Seasonal Buyers</li> </ul> <p><b>Early Adopters</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consumers who are trend-conscious</li> <li>Seeking interactive, unique, and creative ways to connect family</li> <li>Gain awareness through food innovation trends on social platforms</li> </ul> <p><b>Target Location</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>San Francisco Bay area             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High/Growing population</li> <li>615,000 in past 15 years</li> </ul> </li> <li>Columbus, OH             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large community of young professionals and families</li> </ul> </li> <li>Austin, TX             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing population of young families</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Cost Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Warehouse (10,000 Sq. Ft): \$200,000/year</li> <li>Equipment/Packaging: \$7,500-\$15,000</li> <li>Customer Acquisition costs - \$10-30</li> <li>Distribution costs - \$5 - \$20</li> <li>Licensing: \$1000 - \$5000</li> <li>Materials:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sugary Mold Material:\$0.30-\$0.60</li> <li>Mold template and tools: \$0.50-\$0.80</li> <li>Packaging:\$0.20-\$0.40</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Revenue Streams</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Selling add on molds and gummy refill packs to attract returning customers</li> <li>We can also make revenue from monthly subscription plans</li> </ul>	<pre> graph TD     A[Customer Creating Value] --&gt; B[Marketing]     B --&gt; C[Selling]     C     </pre> <p><b>Customer Creating Value</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Satisfying Needs</li> <li>Brand Solutions</li> <li>Social media</li> <li>Commercials</li> </ul> <p><b>Marketing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Online Store</li> <li>Unit Sales</li> </ul> <p><b>Selling</b></p>		
<p><b>PRODUCT</b></p>	<p><b>MARKET</b></p>			

## Appendix E: Style Guide



**COLOR PALLET:**



**UPBEAT      PLAYFUL      FUN**



**CREATE A BUDDY, SHARE A SMILE!**

Buddy Builder Candy Lab uses a bright and fun style to draw the attention of our audience.

# Appendix F: Project Brief

## Buddy Builder Candy Lab Project Brief

### Background

Build-a-Buddy's goal is to Increase playtime among parents and their kids. It will boost creativity and engagement among children.

### Objective

Bring traffic through our website through social media interactions and local engagement. This will build awareness, drive engagement, and encourage purchases with families, schools, and social media users.

### Target Audience

Our target audience is children (Gen Alpha) and parents of younger children (Millennials). We chose these groups because our product focuses on hands on and creative learning for kids.

### Call to Action

We want the audience to notice that our product is different in multiple aspects. Overall, we want to gain customers using this campaign as well as bring traffic to our social media sites.

### Positioning

For parents and kids who love creativity and hands-on fun, this is the interactive, candy making experience that turns imagination into something sweet, helping the family connect and create.

### Key Message

Build-a-Buddy Candy Lab makes creativity delicious. It is not just candy, it is a hands-on experience that lets kids learn, imagine, and share sweet moments with their families.

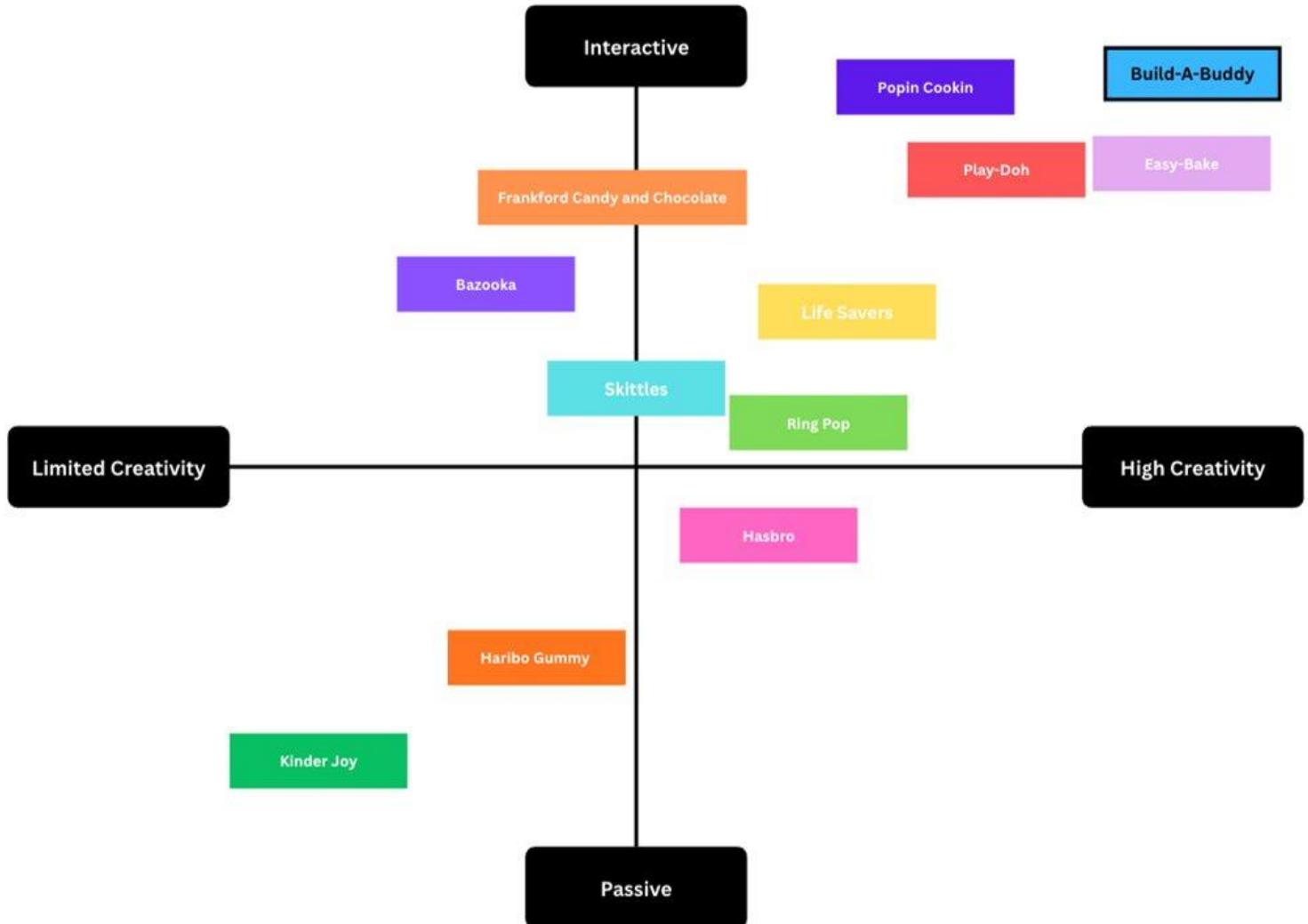
### Media Specs & Deadlines

TikTok  
Instagram  
Youtube

Influencer partnership, DIY tutorials, and short-form videos

Deadlines  
Jan 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026-Before production  
Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, End of year

# Appendix G: Perceptual Map



**Buddy Builder Candy Lab stands out against competitors for its creativity and interactivity.**

# Appendix H: Team Candidate Hiring Packet Page 1

**Role: Manager** (Supervisory experience in operations, scheduling, and quality control

**1. Interview Questions:**

- a. Describe a time you successfully led a team through a new project or major change. What was your approach?
- b. How do you prioritize tasks and delegate responsibilities effectively?
- c. Tell us about a time you had to make a difficult decision as a leader. What was the outcome?
- d. Why do you want to be part of our company, and how do you see yourself contributing to its growth?
- e. What steps would you take to ensure our company values — fun, creativity, and connection — are reflected in everyday work?
- f. How do you balance creativity and structure when managing a team working on a product like ours?
- g. What strategies do you use to motivate and inspire your team to reach their goals?
- h. How do you handle conflicts or disagreements within your team?

**2. A comprehensive hiring matrix, including required KSAOs as well as preferred/ideal KSAOs**

**3. A recruitment plan for attracting applicants - what tools and approaches will you use to get people to apply? Why are you proposing each method over others?**

- Utilizing job posting platforms: Indeed, ZipRecruiter, LinkedIn
  - Allows for broad visibility and a simple application process for entry-level workers
- Provide a recruiting section on our company's website that contains a QR code that links to a digital application
  - Cost-effective and attracts proactive applicants who are looking for work
- Social media recruiting: TikTok "day-in-the-life" style videos showing the ins and outs of our workplace
  - Attracts younger workers who are influenced by social media interactions
- Partner with temporary staffing agencies
  - Provides flexible contribution to aid holiday packaging ramp-ups,
  - Outside firms could handle payroll and worker's comp paperwork
- Online platforms + local partnerships + social content = balanced hiring strategy

# Appendix I: Team Candidate Hiring Packet Page 2

4. A selection plan detailing the steps the organization will take to review and select candidates for the position. Why are you proposing each step?
  - Job Posting & Outreach
    - Post on job boards to attract qualified leadership candidates
  - Application Screening:
    - Use a checklist to identify top applicants
  - Initial Interview:
    - Conduct quick video interviews for basic fit
  - In-Person Interview:
    - Assess leadership, teamwork, and problem-solving skills
  - Skills Assessment:
    - Test decision-making with a scenario-based task
  - Reference & Background Check:
    - Verify work history and reliability
  - Final Review & Offer:
    - Select the best candidate and extend an offer
  - Onboarding & Training:
    - Align the new manager with the company goals and standards

# Appendix J: Hiring Plan and Selection Plan

## Hiring Plan

		Min Requirements	Education	Experience					Excellent	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Poor
	Applicant	Diploma	High School Diploma or GED Equivalent	Years of Relevant experience	Years Leadership experience	Training Experience	Use of technology	Total	5	4	3	2	0
	Last, First	Y or N	Y or N	5	5	5	5	20					
1													
2													
3													
4													
5													
6													
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This hiring matrix provides a score-based system to evaluate applicant's qualifications for hiring decisions

## Selection Plan

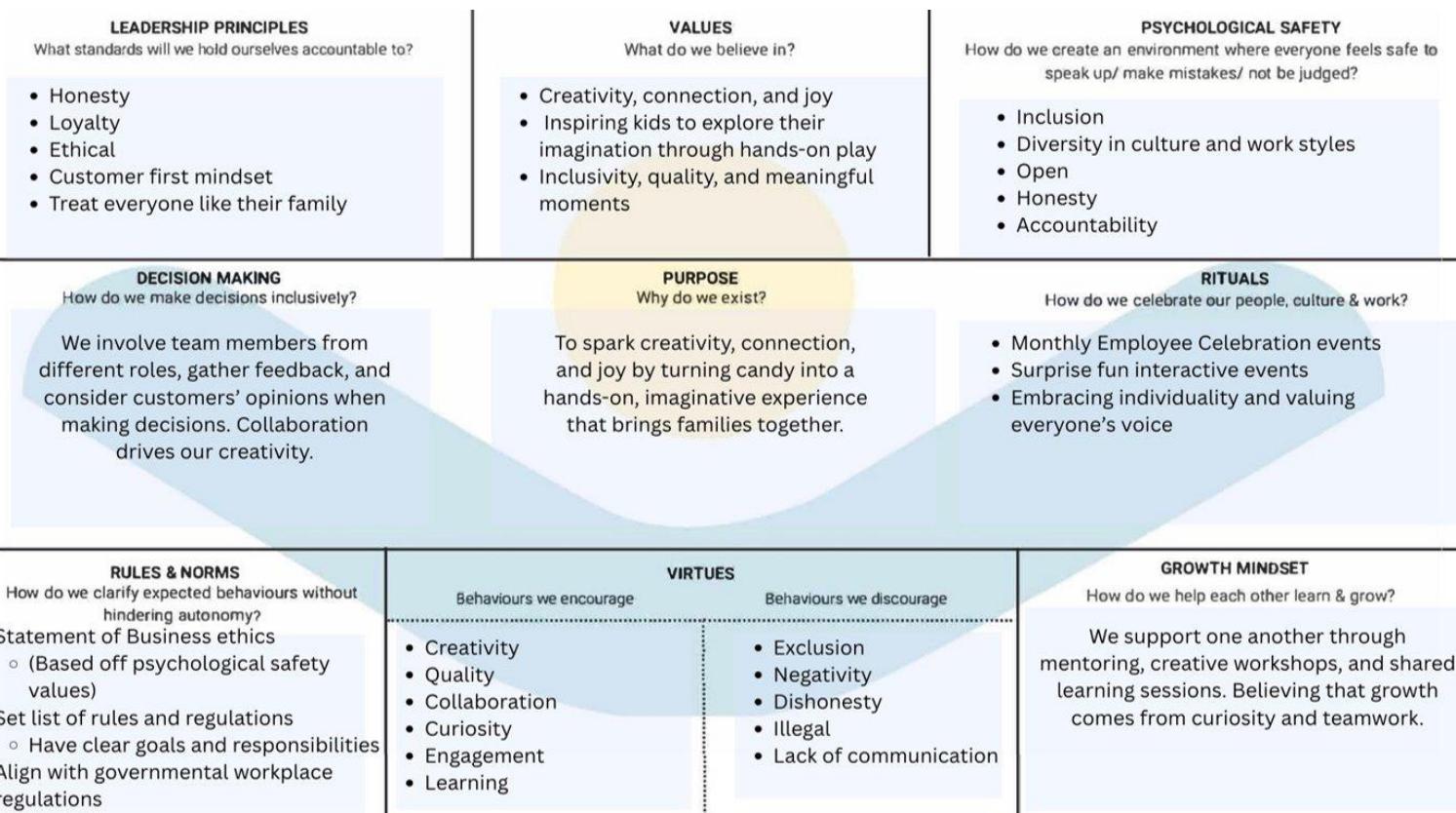
Position	Department	Who do they report to	Who Reports to them	Compensation	Description of Experience	Internal or External	Modality
CEO	N/A	Board	General Manager	N/A	Ensure smooth business operations, manages financials.	Internal	Hybrid
Manager	Operations and Inventory	CEO	Warehouse associates	\$18.00	Supervisory experience in operations, inventory management, Customer Service	Internal	On-Site
Warehouse Associate	Operations	Manager	N/A	\$12.50	Product shipment, product assembly, Cleaning and organization.	Internal	On-Site

This selection plan ensures efficient, on-site operations with clear roles and consistent compensation

## Appendix K: Generations

Generation	Birth Year
Baby Boomers	1946 - 1964
Generation X	1965 - 1980
Millennials	1981 - 1996
Generation Z	1997 - 2012
Generation Alpha	2012 - 2024

# Appendix L: Cultural Blueprint

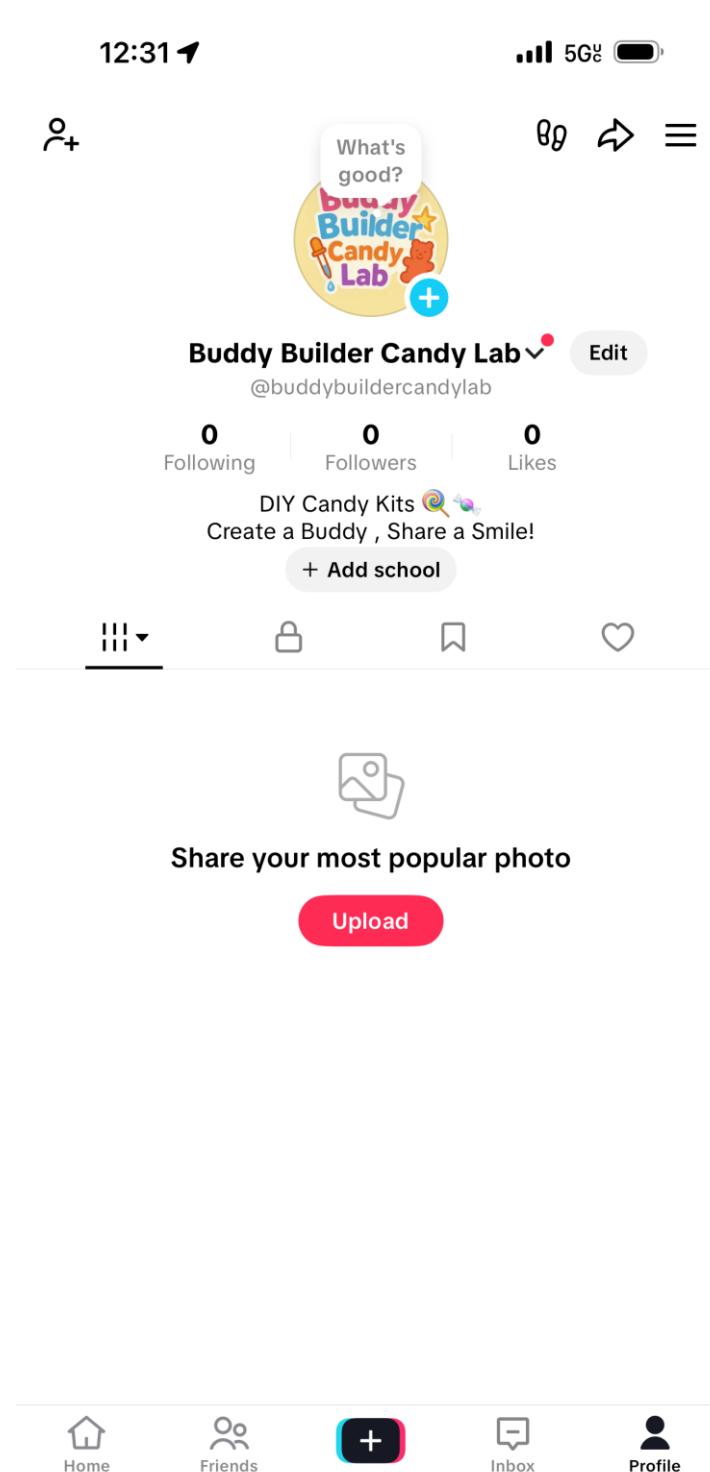


# Appendix M: Profile Table

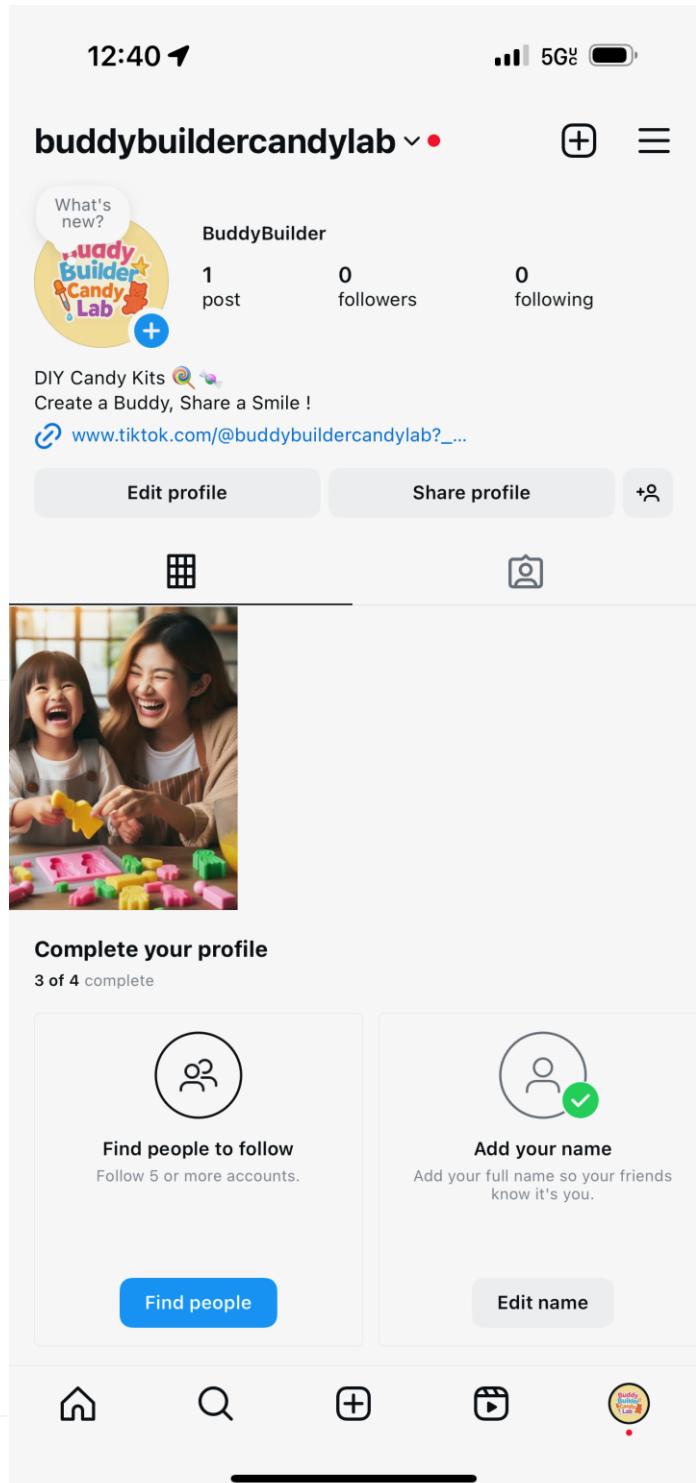
	<b>Demographics</b>	<b>VALS</b>	<b>Behavioral</b>	<b>Preferred Content</b>
<b>Children</b>	Ages (4 – 12) No Income Preschool/ Grade School	Creative Engaged in Play Time Curious and explorative	Hands on Play Curiosity and experimentation Imaginative	Sensory Engagement Excessive Customization
<b>Parents of Children</b>	Ages 25-45 GenZ/Millennials Teachers	Family focused Quality, interactive time Purposeful, planning	Occasion (Holidays, Gift-Giving) Price-Sensitive Wants something that will engage the kids Wants good quality	Family values Hands on activities for kids STEM based Electronic Alternative
<b>Trend-Seeking/ Novelty</b>	Ages 13-32 Trend-driven teens & adults Active on TikTok, Instagram, etc.	Value aesthetic and novelty experiences Enjoy playful nostalgic and DIY fun Trend-savvy and expressive	Follow viral products on TikTok, YouTube, etc. Buys novelty or cute products for fun Enjoys gifting or collecting unique items Shares new experiences online	Impulse buyers Influenced by influencer marketing, online trends, and packaging aesthetics

# Appendix N: Social Media Pages

## TikTok



## Instagram



# Appendix O: Social Media Post

Instagram

12:45 12:45

Posts  
buddybuildercandylab

buddybuildercandylab ...



The image shows a woman and a young girl laughing together while making candy. They are sitting at a table with various colorful candy molds and ingredients. The woman is holding a yellow star-shaped mold, and the girl is holding a yellow flower-shaped mold. There are several other molds on the table, including pink, green, and yellow shapes. A bowl of yellow liquid is also visible on the table.

Heart Comment Share Save

buddybuildercandylab What if candy became a crazy adventure for families to share? introducing Buddy Builder Candy Lab, a DIY Candy-making experience where learning meets playtime 🍬 #fun #creative #candy #DIY #candylab

6 minutes ago

Home Search Create Story Profile

## **Appendix P: Equipment Cost**

Going further in depth on our costs, this is what they consist of:

- 3D Printer: \$2,500
- Plastic Trays: \$350
- Taffy Mixer/Sugar Puller: \$1,080
- Corn Syrup (5 Gal.): \$128
- Sugar (4LB): \$70
- Shipping Boxes: \$35
- Candy Packaging: \$20
- Food Coloring: \$5
- Plastic Cutlery (Spife): \$0.10

**Total Cost: \$4,188.10**

# Appendix Q: Media Schedule

Tactics	Pre-Launch	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Metrics	% of Budget
Paid Social (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok)	Teaser ads showing candy molds, colors & “coming soon” message	Launch ad campaign with influencer videos & family-focused reels	Continue ad push highlighting customer reactions	Re targeting ads featuring challenges & promos	Promote seasonal DIY candy ideas	“Candy Buddy Challenge” push	Maintain engagement through summer challenges	Impressions, Comments, Shares, CTR	35%
Social Posts (Organic)	Account setup & teaser countdowns	Announce launch with daily post, polls, and reels	Showcase candy creations & user content	Run “Candy Buddy of the Month” challenge	Share DIY tutorials & fun facts	Themed weekly challenges	Continue posting customer highlights & contests	Likes, Shares, and Reposts	20%
Website	Launch landing page with preorder option	Launch full e-commerce site	Add “How It Works” video and Q&A	Track analytics and conversion rates	Publish blog posts & candy tips	Post testimonials & family stories		Visits per month, Inquiries	10%
Event Planning	Plan local pop-up demo & family event	Host official launch pop-up demo with families		Finalize logistics and promotion	Plan next seasonal sampling event	Host community sampling event		RSVPs, attendees, brand awareness	15%
Grand Opening Event		Official product reveal and tasting event		Giveaway follow-up and thank-you posts				RSVPs, Attendees, media coverage	10%
Media release	Draft PR content & pitch list	Distribute press release to parenting and lifestyle blogs	Publish brand story and family interviews	Feature in parenting & lifestyle blogs	Share coverage results & new partnerships			Media Placements, reach, engagement	10%