

Possible Issues:

Care should be taken to ensure that confectionery items have fully crystallised in pieces, before hand-coating in chocolate. Unstable centres can give seepage when covered in chocolate which contracts during the setting process.

Centres with a high fat content such as toffee or fudge can be susceptible to fat migration. This will appear as a white bloom on the surface of the chocolate due to incompatibility between the fats in the centres and those in the coating (see Chapter 7). Whilst not unsafe to consume, it can be unsightly and devalue the product. Actions can be taken to minimise fat bloom in these products, such as using a fat-based barrier prior to enrobing in chocolate, as well as taking care to ensure the products are stored at a constant temperature.

18.3.3 Moulded chocolate forms

Chocolate can be moulded and formed into a variety of different shapes, designs and decorations. Working with chocolate moulds can be a simple way of creating a professional looking finished product that can be fitting for key chocolate buying seasons and festivities such as Easter eggs, chocolate hearts for Valentine's day and chocolate snowmen and figurines for Christmas. Simple chocolate shapes such as lollipops and novelties can be an effective way of creating something with a low price. Moulded novelty items like chocolate shoes (Figure 18.3) can offer new retail opportunities by placing along side of complementary products, that is in fashion outlets.

Good quality chocolate moulds can be expensive and take up considerable storage space. Consideration should be given to the amount of product that can be expected to sell. It may be more cost effective to start with a good number of a single shape of mould, whose product can then be adapted by decoration and finishing techniques to give variety.

Figure 18.3 Chocolate shoes.
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of Azra's Chocolates.



18.3.4 Chocolate bars or fragments

Chocolate bars are a simple and consistent product line that can be adapted for a variety of tastes, flavours and markets with a moderate to long shelf life. Chocolate bars provide an effective and efficient range of products that can be created easily with limited space and equipment requirements and are ideal for a chocolate or sweet shop owner to incorporate their own product ranges to complement a wider selection for consumers. As an alternative to standard chocolate moulded bars any of the following processes can be adopted to producing fragments of chocolate that can be retailed in moulded form or by the bag or by weight.

- *Inclusions*
 - Adding ingredients such as dried fruit, nuts and sweets into the chocolate prior to moulding. For long shelf life products it is essential that inclusions used are dried and do not contain high moisture levels. Chocolate should be used in small batches to ensure temperature constancy once it has been tempered. The addition of inclusions will often cool it down.
- *Decorated or studded bars*
 - Similar ingredients to inclusions can be used to decorate chocolate bars once they have been made (Figure 18.4). As before care should be taken to ensure the ingredients used are dried and does not incorporate moisture into the chocolate product. These products can be worked with on a larger scale than products with inclusions as the ingredients are added once the bars have been made, enabling greater efficiencies to be generated.
- *Flavoured*
 - Flavourings such as essential oils, powdered fruits, spices or herbs can be used on their own or together to create unique, signature flavour combinations for products. Essential oils and flavourings must be compatible with oils, rather than water based, to ensure they can mix with the chocolate



Figure 18.4 Hand-made chocolate bar using a single mould shape with a range of additions to create interest. Reproduced with permission of The Chocolate Café.