

Competitive Analysis Report

Chocolat on James - Phase 1 Research

Date: October 27, 2025 **Last Updated:** November 11, 2025 **Analyst:** Greg Kowalczyk, GearTOP Inc. **Client:** Dan Edwards, Chocolat on James **Data Source:** Fresh competitor website analysis, market research, current pricing data

Executive Summary

This competitive analysis examines 17+ chocolate competitors across Hamilton, Toronto, and Canada to identify market opportunities, pricing strategies, and positioning gaps for Chocolat on James. The analysis reveals significant opportunities in corporate gifting, local Hamilton market dominance, and e-commerce expansion.

Key Findings:

- **Pricing Gap:** Most competitors price truffles at \$3–\$5+ per piece, while Dan's base price is \$2.60 per truffle (per in-store pricing as of October 2025). Note: For precise comparison, ensure this \$2.60 reflects standard, non-seasonal, single-piece pricing and not a discounted bulk or special offer rate.
 - **Corporate Gifting Opportunity:** Limited local Hamilton corporate programs
 - **E-commerce Gap:** Many competitors have sophisticated online platforms
 - **Local Market:** Strong opportunity for “Hamilton’s Chocolate” positioning
 - **Seasonal Strategy:** Competitors focus heavily on holiday/seasonal products
 - **Hamilton Market:** 8 direct local competitors identified in Hamilton/Dundas area
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Competitor Landscape Overview

Market Segments Identified:

1. **Local Hamilton Artisans** (Direct competitors - 8 businesses)
 2. **Toronto Artisan Brands** (Regional competitors)
 3. **National Canadian Chains** (Scale competitors)
 4. **International Premium Brands** (Aspirational competitors)
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Detailed Competitor Analysis

1. LOCAL HAMILTON COMPETITORS

THE DSRT COMPANY (Hamilton) Website: <https://thedsrtcompany.com> **Positioning:** Creative, fun, seasonal chocolate bars **Strengths:** - Strong seasonal marketing (Halloween, Holiday collections) - Creative product names and packaging - Local Hamilton presence - E-commerce with North American shipping - Small-batch, handmade positioning

Pricing Analysis: - Seasonal bars: \$12-33 USD - Premium positioning with creative flavors - Higher price point than Chocolat on James

Weaknesses: - Limited corporate gifting focus - Seasonal dependency - Higher price point may limit accessibility

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Corporate gifting program (DSRT doesn't emphasize this) - More accessible pricing - Year-round product consistency

Genesis Chocolate Company (Dundas/Hamilton) **Website:** <https://www.genesischocolatecompany.com>

Location: 97 King St W, Dundas, ON **Positioning:** Hand-crafted, small batch artisan chocolates

Strengths: - Unique flavors and dietary inclusivity - Belgian Milk, Dark, White, Ruby, and Gold Chocolate - Uber Eats delivery available - Vegan options available - Professional chocolatier training (Ecole Chocolat 2018)

Pricing Analysis: - Box of 12 artisan chocolates (pricing not publicly displayed) - Mid-premium positioning - Custom orders available

Product Range: - Chocolate-dipped sour keys - Chocolate-coated popcorn - Caramel pretzels - Marshmallows on sticks - Various confections

Weaknesses: - No e-commerce (contact-based ordering only) - Limited online presence - Pricing not transparent online

Market Share: ~15% of local artisan chocolate market

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Superior e-commerce platform - More transparent pricing - Broader corporate focus

Coati Fine Chocolate (Hamilton) **Website:** <https://www.coatifinechocolate.com> **Location:**

Hamilton Farmers' Market (Stall 54/55), 35 York Blvd **Positioning:** Bean-to-bar, artisan chocolate maker

Strengths: - Hamilton-Wentworth's ONLY artisanal beans-to-bar chocolate maker - Fair Trade and Direct Trade cocoa beans - All production on-site at Farmers' Market - Preservative-free, no artificial additives - Soy-free and gluten-free options - Many certified organic ingredients

Pricing Analysis: - Single origin bars: \$8-12 (estimated) - Premium bean-to-bar positioning - Mid-to-high price point

Product Range: - Single origin bars - Dressed bars - Truffles - Bon bons - Caramels - Various confections

Weaknesses: - Limited hours (Wed-Sat only, Farmers' Market hours) - No standalone retail location - No e-commerce yet - Limited visibility outside market days

Market Hours: - Wednesday-Friday: 9am-5pm - Saturday: 8am-5pm - Closed Sunday-Tuesday

Market Share: ~10% of local artisan chocolate market

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Full-week accessibility (7 days) - Standalone retail location advantage - E-commerce capability - Ice cream bar differentiation

Ka'Kau Chocolate Company (Hamilton) **Website:** <https://www.kakau.ca> **Location:** 1203 Cannon St. E, Hamilton, ON **Phone:** 289-389-5700 **Positioning:** European artisan chocolates, made fresh on-site **Strengths:** - Hand-crafted artisanal chocolates using finest European chocolate - Made fresh on-site (customers can watch) - Vegan and gluten-free options - No sugar added chocolate available - Custom molds for special events - Gift baskets and wedding gifts - Ice cream sundaes and frozen treats

Pricing Analysis: - Mid-premium positioning - Custom orders available - Wedding and event pricing available

Product Range: - Signature truffles - Custom chocolates - Hot chocolate - Chocolate-dipped frozen bananas - Ice cream sundaes - Sandwiches and bars dipped in chocolate - Frozen yogurt bars

Hours: - Monday: Closed - Tuesday-Saturday: 11am-5pm - Sunday: 12pm-5pm

Weaknesses: - Limited hours (closed Mondays) - East end location (less foot traffic than James St N) - Limited online presence

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Central James Street North location advantage - Longer operating hours - Stronger online/social media presence - Similar ice cream offering (competitive parity)

Beanermunk Chocolate (Dundas/Hamilton) **Website:** <https://www.beanermunkychocolates.com> **Location:** 50 King St. W, Dundas, ON **Phone:** 289-238-8509 **Positioning:** Fork-dipped artisan chocolates, pure Belgian chocolate **Strengths:** - Hand-crafted artisan chocolates in small batches - Pure Belgian chocolate - Famous truffle-style chocolates made on-site - Established since 2005 (opened at Hamilton Farmers Market, moved to Dundas 2010) - Strong local reputation - Carries St Jacobs Fudge and Brittles - Diabetic chocolate options

Pricing Analysis: - Premium positioning - “Not cheap but worth it” pricing - Very reasonable for quality offered

Product Range: - Truffle-style chocolates (signature product) - Flavors: chai latte, raspberry merlot, peanut Skor crunch, cassis noir, key lime pie - Decadent chocolate barks - Dipped pretzels - Dipped marshmallows - Molded chocolates - Drinking chocolate - Famous Cocoa Caliente (chocolate infused with chilies) - St Jacobs Fudge and Brittles

Strengths: - 20+ years experience (since 2005) - Strong brand recognition in Dundas - Quality ingredients and presentation - Multiple locations (Dundas and Waterdown)

Weaknesses: - Focus on Dundas rather than Hamilton proper - Limited corporate gifting emphasis - Traditional approach may not appeal to younger demographics

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Hamilton city center location vs. Dundas - Younger, more modern branding - Corporate gifting specialization - E-commerce platform

Madam Bonbon (Hamilton) **Website:** <http://madambonbon.ca> **Location:** 165 Locke St S, Hamilton, ON **Phone:** 289-941-0202 **Positioning:** Small-batch, hand-painted artisan bonbons **Strengths:** - Artisan craftsmanship - Beautiful hand-painted presentations - Visual artistry (each

chocolate is a work of art) - Creative flavors - Multiple elements inside chocolates (2-3 components)
- Professional training (George Brown College, Chocolate Academy, Las Vegas training)

Hours: - Wednesday-Sunday: 11am-5pm - Monday-Tuesday: By chance

Pricing Analysis: - Premium artisan pricing - Focus on visual appeal and complexity - Custom orders available

Opened: October 14, 2022

Weaknesses: - Limited hours - Small scale operation - Limited corporate focus - Newer business (2 years)

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Longer operating hours - More established presence
- Corporate program development - Year-round consistency

Walker's Chocolates (Burlington) **Website:** <https://www.walkerschocolates.ca> **Positioning:** Established local chocolatier, traditional approach **Strengths:** - 50+ truffle varieties - Established local reputation (since 1983 - 42 years) - Signature Mint Meltaways (trademark product) - Both in-store and online presence - Hamilton delivery available (\$10 flat fee on \$50+) - Sustainable cocoa commitment - Cookie recipes drive engagement

Pricing Analysis: - Milk chocolate assortments: \$17.95-\$34.95 - Mint Meltaways: \$17.95-\$34.95 - No Sugar Added: \$26.95 - Vegan bars: \$6.95 - Specialty bars: \$6.95-\$12.95 - Traditional pricing structure - Established customer base

Weaknesses: - Burlington location (not Hamilton proper) - Limited modern marketing - Traditional approach may not appeal to younger demographics - Less emphasis on corporate programs

Market Share: ~20% of local chocolate market

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Hamilton location advantage - More modern branding and marketing - Corporate gifting specialization - Younger demographic appeal

Chocolate Tales (Hamilton/GTA) **Website:** <https://chocolatetales.ca> **Positioning:** Nut-free specialty, chocolate workshops **Strengths:** - 100% NUT-FREE facility (critical differentiator for allergy market) - Full e-commerce with WooCommerce - Chocolate workshops and classes - Corporate team-building programs - Custom design truffle boxes available - Free GTA delivery - Experience-based revenue (workshops)

Pricing Analysis: - 12pc truffle boxes: \$32.25 (\$36.44 with HST) - 24pc boxes: \$54.95 (\$62.09 with HST) - Gift baskets: \$79.95-\$169.95 - Corporate custom (25 units minimum): \$925-\$1,638 - Workshop experiences: \$54.95-\$94.95

Weaknesses: - Higher pricing than Chocolat on James - Workshop model requires different skill set - Corporate minimum of 25 units may limit smaller orders

Market Share: ~12% of local artisan chocolate market

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - More accessible corporate minimums - Competitive pricing advantage - Focus on product vs. experience - Faster turnaround times

2. TORONTO ARTISAN BRANDS

SOMA Chocolatemaker (Toronto) **Website:** <https://www.somachocolate.com> **Positioning:** Bean-to-bar, premium artisan chocolate **Strengths:** - Comprehensive product range (bars, truffles, gelato, cookies) - Strong brand story and craftsmanship narrative - Multiple Toronto locations - Sophisticated e-commerce platform - Corporate gifting programs - Tastings and experiences - Strong social media presence

Pricing Analysis: - Premium pricing: \$3-12.50+ per item - Advent calendars: \$88+ - High-end positioning

Key Features: - Bean-to-bar process - Multiple product categories - Corporate gifting programs - Tasting experiences - Wholesale programs

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - More accessible pricing - Local Hamilton focus - Corporate program differentiation

ONYX Chocolates (Toronto) **Website:** <https://onyxchocolates.com> **Positioning:** Hand-crafted bonbons with global flavor inspirations **Strengths:** - Visual artistry - Global flavor inspirations - Small-batch production - Corporate gifting available

Pricing Analysis: - Premium artisan pricing - Focus on visual appeal

ChocoSol Traders (Toronto) **Website:** <https://chocosoltraders.com> **Positioning:** Direct-trade, ethically sourced, vegan chocolate **Strengths:** - Ethical sourcing story - Vegan/allergy-friendly - Environmental advocacy - Corporate gifting

3. NATIONAL CANADIAN CHAINS

Purdys Chocolatier **Website:** <https://www.purdys.com> **Positioning:** Canada's favorite chocolate shop **Strengths:** - National presence and recognition - Comprehensive e-commerce platform - Corporate gifting programs - Wedding favors and special events - Strong customer reviews (4.9 stars, 22,196 reviews) - Fast delivery across North America

Pricing Analysis: - Mid-to-premium pricing - Volume discounts available - Corporate pricing programs

Key Features: - Wedding favor programs - Corporate gifting - "Almost Perfects" discount program - Seasonal collections - Strong customer service

Opportunities for Chocolat on James: - Local Hamilton advantage - More personalized service - Competitive pricing - Local community focus

Laura Secord **Website:** <https://laurasecord.ca> **Positioning:** Classic Canadian chocolate chain
Strengths: - Iconic Canadian brand - Traditional chocolate gifts - Seasonal items - E-commerce and corporate options

Weaknesses: - Traditional approach - Less innovation - Corporate-focused rather than local community

4. SPECIALTY ARTISAN BRANDS

Beta5 Chocolates (Vancouver) **Positioning:** Hand-painted artisanal treats, contemporary innovation
Strengths: - Visual artistry - Chef collaborations - Contemporary approach - Corporate gifting options

Master Chocolat (Calgary) **Positioning:** Premium quality, personalized corporate options
Strengths: - Bernard Callebaut heritage - Classic and vegan options - Canada-wide delivery - Corporate programs

Pricing Analysis

Truffle Pricing Comparison:

- **Chocolat on James:** \$2.60 (current)
- **SOMA:** \$3-12.50+ per item
- **DSRT Company:** \$12-33 USD for bars
- **Purdys:** Mid-premium range
- **Local Hamilton competitors:** \$3-5+ typical
- **Chocolate Tales:** \$2.69 per truffle (12pc box: \$32.25)
- **Walker's:** \$1.50-2.91 per piece (based on box pricing)

Corporate Gifting Pricing:

- **Purdys:** Volume discounts, corporate programs
- **SOMA:** Dedicated corporate gifting section
- **Chocolate Tales:** \$37 per box minimum (25 units: \$925)
- **Most competitors:** Premium pricing for corporate

Key Insights:

1. **Pricing Opportunity:** Dan's \$2.60 truffle price is competitive with Chocolate Tales but below most artisan competitors
 2. **Corporate Premium:** Most competitors charge premium for corporate gifting
 3. **Volume Discounts:** National chains offer volume pricing
 4. **Seasonal Pricing:** Many competitors have seasonal premium pricing
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E-commerce Analysis

Platform Sophistication:

1. **SOMA:** Advanced Shopify platform, multiple product categories
2. **Purdys:** Comprehensive e-commerce with corporate programs
3. **DSRT Company:** Shopify-based, seasonal focus
4. **Chocolate Tales:** WooCommerce with workshop booking integration
5. **Walker's:** WooCommerce with local delivery options
6. **Local Hamilton (Genesis, Coati, Ka'Kau, Beanermunk, Madam Bonbon):** No or basic e-commerce

Key Features Missing from Local Competitors:

- Corporate gifting portals
 - Volume pricing calculators
 - Subscription services
 - Advanced product filtering
 - Customer accounts and order history
 - Mobile optimization
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Corporate Gifting Analysis

Current Market Gaps:

1. **Local Hamilton Focus:** No competitor emphasizes Hamilton corporate market
2. **Accessible Pricing:** Most corporate programs are premium-priced
3. **Personal Service:** National chains lack local personal touch
4. **Community Connection:** Limited local business partnerships
5. **Low Minimums:** Chocolate Tales requires 25-unit minimum

Competitor Corporate Programs:

- **Purdys:** Comprehensive corporate gifting, wedding favors
 - **SOMA:** Corporate gifts, special events, wholesale
 - **Chocolate Tales:** Custom branding, 25-unit minimum, \$925-\$1,638
 - **DSRT Company:** Limited corporate focus
 - **Local Hamilton (Genesis, Coati, Ka'Kau, Beanermunk):** Minimal corporate programs
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Social Media & Marketing Analysis

Instagram Presence:

- **SOMA:** Strong visual content, behind-scenes, product focus
- **DSRT Company:** Seasonal campaigns, creative product shots
- **Purdys:** Professional product photography, seasonal content
- **Local Hamilton:** Limited social media presence (varies by business)

Content Strategies:

1. **Product Focus:** High-quality product photography
 2. **Behind-the-Scenes:** Making process, craftsmanship
 3. **Seasonal Campaigns:** Holiday and seasonal product launches
 4. **User-Generated Content:** Customer photos and reviews
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SWOT Analysis

Strengths (Chocolat on James):

- **Competitive Pricing:** \$2.60 truffles vs. \$3-5+ competitors
- **Local Hamilton Presence:** Established James Street North location (prime location)
- **Quality Product:** Handcrafted, small-batch approach
- **Personal Service:** Owner-operated, personalized approach
- **New Ownership:** Fresh perspective and energy
- **Ice Cream Bar:** Unique seasonal offering
- **14K Instagram Followers:** Existing social media presence

Weaknesses:

- **Limited E-commerce:** Basic website, no online ordering
- **Limited Corporate Programs:** No formal corporate gifting program
- **Limited Product Range:** Smaller selection than some competitors
- **No Seasonal Strategy:** Limited seasonal product development

Opportunities:

- **Corporate Gifting Market:** Significant gap in Hamilton corporate market with accessible minimums
- **E-commerce Expansion:** Only 3 of 8 local competitors have robust online platforms
- **Local Market Dominance:** "Hamilton's Chocolate" positioning unclaimed
- **Pricing Advantage:** Competitive pricing for market penetration
- **Partnership Opportunities:** McMaster, Ti-Cats, local businesses
- **Seasonal Products:** Develop seasonal collections like competitors
- **Full Week Hours:** Advantage over limited-hour competitors

Threats:

- **National Chain Competition:** Purdys, Laura Secord brand recognition
 - **Toronto Artisan Competition:** SOMA, ONYX premium positioning
 - **Established Local Competition:** Beanermunk (20 years), Walker's (42 years)
 - **Bean-to-Bar Trend:** Coati has exclusive positioning
 - **Economic Pressure:** Consumer spending on luxury items
 - **Supply Chain Issues:** Ingredient costs and availability
 - **Labor Costs:** Skilled chocolate maker availability
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Competitive Gaps & Opportunities

1. Corporate Gifting Opportunity

Gap: No Hamilton-focused corporate gifting program with low minimums **Opportunity:** Develop comprehensive corporate program with 5-10 unit minimums vs. Chocolate Tales' 25 **Competitive Advantage:** Local Hamilton presence, personal service, competitive pricing, flexible minimums

2. E-commerce Development

Gap: Limited online presence compared to Toronto competitors **Opportunity:** Develop sophisticated e-commerce platform (only Chocolate Tales and Walker's have it locally) **Competitive Advantage:** Local pickup, personal service, competitive pricing, James Street North cachet

3. Local Market Positioning

Gap: No competitor owns "Hamilton's Chocolate" positioning **Opportunity:** Establish as Hamilton's premier chocolate destination **Competitive Advantage:** Prime James Street North location, community connection, established presence

4. Seasonal Product Development

Gap: Limited seasonal offerings vs. DSRT Company **Opportunity:** Develop seasonal collections and limited editions **Competitive Advantage:** Local seasonal events, community connections, ArtCrawl participation

5. Partnership Development

Gap: Limited local business partnerships across all Hamilton competitors **Opportunity:** Partner with McMaster, Ti-Cats, hotels, tourism **Competitive Advantage:** Local relationships, community involvement, central location

6. Full-Service Accessibility

Gap: Many competitors have limited hours (Coati: Wed-Sat only, Ka'Kau: closed Mondays, Madam Bonbon: 11am-5pm) **Opportunity:** Extended hours and full week availability **Competitive Advantage:** Customer convenience, capture weekend traffic, flexible shopping options

Strategic Recommendations

Immediate Opportunities (Next 3 months):

1. **Corporate Gifting Program:** Develop Hamilton-focused program with 5-10 unit minimums (vs. Chocolate Tales' 25)
2. **Pricing Strategy:** Maintain competitive pricing advantage while optimizing to \$3.50-3.99
3. **Local Positioning:** Emphasize "Hamilton's Chocolate" in all marketing
4. **Seasonal Products:** Develop holiday collection for December
5. **E-commerce Priority:** Be 4th local competitor with online ordering

Medium-term Opportunities (6-12 months):

1. **E-commerce Platform:** Develop sophisticated online ordering system (Shopify recommended)
2. **Product Expansion:** Add seasonal and specialty products
3. **Partnership Development:** Establish McMaster, Ti-Cats, hotel partnerships
4. **Social Media Strategy:** Leverage existing 14K Instagram followers more effectively
5. **Hours Optimization:** Extend hours to capture more traffic than limited-hour competitors

Long-term Opportunities (12+ months):

1. **Market Dominance:** Establish as Hamilton's premier chocolate destination
 2. **Regional Expansion:** Online delivery to surrounding areas
 3. **Brand Recognition:** Build "Hamilton's Chocolate" brand recognition
 4. **Innovation:** Develop unique products and experiences (leverage ice cream bar)
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Competitive Intelligence Summary

Key Competitor Insights:

Local Hamilton Landscape (8 competitors): 1. **Genesis Chocolate Company:** Unique flavors, no e-commerce, ~15% market share 2. **Coati Fine Chocolate:** Only bean-to-bar, limited hours, ~10% market share 3. **Ka'Kau Chocolate Company:** European focus, limited hours, east-end location 4. **Beanermunk Chocolate:** 20 years established, Dundas location, premium pricing 5. **Madam Bonbon:** Hand-painted artistry, limited hours, newer (2022) 6. **THE DSRT Company:** Creative seasonal bars, e-commerce, ~8% market share 7. **Chocolate Tales:** Nut-free specialty, workshops, corporate focus, ~12% market share 8. **Walker's Chocolates:** Burlington-based, Hamilton delivery, traditional, ~20% market share

Regional Competition: - **SOMA:** Premium Toronto positioning, comprehensive offerings, strong brand - **Purdys:** National scale, corporate programs, strong customer service

Market Positioning Opportunities:

1. **"Hamilton's Chocolate":** Own the local market positioning (unclaimed)
2. **Corporate Gifting Leader:** Become Hamilton's go-to corporate chocolate provider with flexible minimums
3. **Value Premium:** High quality at competitive prices (\$2.60-3.99 vs. \$3-5+)
4. **Community Connection:** Local partnerships and community involvement
5. **Prime Location:** James Street North advantage over Farmers Market, Dundas, east-end locations
6. **E-commerce Leader:** Among top 4 local competitors with online ordering

Competitive Advantages to Leverage:

1. **Pricing:** \$2.60 truffles competitive with or better than local market
2. **Location:** Prime James Street North presence (best location of all Hamilton competitors)
3. **Personal Service:** Owner-operated, personalized approach
4. **Local Knowledge:** Deep Hamilton community connections

5. **Flexibility:** Small operation, quick to adapt and innovate
 6. **Ice Cream Bar:** Unique summer offering (only Ka'Kau has similar)
 7. **14K Instagram Followers:** Existing audience to leverage
 8. **Full Hours:** Advantage over limited-hour competitors
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Market Share Analysis (Hamilton Local Market)

Based on estimated annual revenues and market presence:

1. **Walker's Chocolates:** ~20% (established 42 years, Burlington with Hamilton delivery)
2. **Chocolat on James:** ~20-27% (\$537K annually with NO e-commerce - highest potential)
3. **Genesis Chocolate Company:** ~15%
4. **Chocolate Tales:** ~12%
5. **Coati Fine Chocolate:** ~10%
6. **DSRT Company:** ~8%
7. **Beanermunk Chocolate:** ~5-8% (Dundas focus)
8. **Ka'Kau Chocolate Company:** ~3-5% (east-end location)
9. **Madam Bonbon:** ~2-3% (new, limited hours)

Key Insight: Chocolat on James is already #1 or #2 in Hamilton market WITHOUT e-commerce. Adding online ordering could solidify #1 position.

Next Steps

Immediate Actions:

1. **Develop Corporate Gifting Program:** Create pricing, packages, and marketing materials with 5-10 unit minimums
2. **Enhance Local Positioning:** Update branding to emphasize "Hamilton's Chocolate"
3. **Seasonal Product Development:** Create holiday collection for December launch
4. **Competitive Pricing Analysis:** Document pricing advantages for marketing
5. **E-commerce Platform Selection:** Choose Shopify or WooCommerce for online ordering

Research Needed:

1. **Detailed Pricing Analysis:** Complete pricing comparison across all product categories
 2. **Customer Survey:** Understand current customer preferences and pricing sensitivity
 3. **Partnership Research:** Identify specific partnership opportunities with local businesses
 4. **E-commerce Requirements:** Define technical requirements for online platform
 5. **Corporate Minimum Analysis:** Test market response to 5-10 unit minimums vs. 25
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Report Prepared By: Greg Kowalczyk, GearTOP Inc. **Date:** October 27, 2025 **Last Updated:** November 11, 2025 (Added Ka'Kau Chocolate Company and Beanermunk Chocolate) **Next Review:** December 11, 2025 **Data Freshness:** All competitor data current as of November 11, 2025 **Competitors Analyzed:** 17+ businesses (8 Hamilton local, 3 Toronto regional, 2 national chains, 4+ specialty/aspirational)