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The Flavor of Fair Trade: Divine Chocolate

## **Why Chocolate?**

I have always had a deep appreciation for chocolate. From the years I began separating all of my Halloween candy by brand all the way into my early adulthood when I now must have a piece of dark chocolate at some point in the day in order to maintain equilibrium, chocolate's appeal has only grown stronger. In addition to chocolate's wonderful taste, it also delivers caffeine and antioxidants to the body; not to mention, chocolate is the perfect compliment to a strong cup of coffee—another one of my favorite things.

In 2012, chocolate is no longer just something to physically chew on; rather, it has been increasingly part of the discussion on humanitarian and social issues, providing intellectual food for thought as well. Fair Trade brands are expanding their market share as more consumers realize the working environments that their chocolate comes from matter.

I decided to take a look at one brand I believe to be pioneering the Fair Trade phenomenon: Divine Chocolate. Through the following market analysis and proposed public relations plan, I hope to give insight into Divine Chocolate's mission and how the brand is making great strides as a socially responsible enterprise while also creating a really delicious product.

## I. Introduction

According to an article featured in *World Watch*, around 150 new candy bars come out each year, but 65 percent of U.S. brands have been on shelves for longer than six decades (“Lifecycle Studies”). The year 1912 saw the first composite chocolate bar with the Goo Goo Cluster, which consists of milk chocolate, caramel, marshmallow, and nuts. Candy bars came into extreme popularity by the 1920s, when brands like Three Musketeers, Baby Ruth, and Snickers made their debuts. Mars and Hershey still account for 75 percent of U.S. candy sales while Nestle is the largest chocolate producer in the world (“Lifecycle Studies”).

Even with the vast span of options lining the shelves of convenient stores, groceries, and specialty shops, America’s favorite chocolate candy lies in the tiny colorfully shelled melt-in-your-mouth gems otherwise known as M&Ms (Fox). Along with this staple chocolate candy made by Mars, the average American will consume about eleven pounds of chocolate over the course of a year (McKenzie). To put this figure into perspective, the U.S. is listed eighth on a list of countries consuming the most chocolate (McKenzie). In 2010, the 3.5 billion tons of cocoa beans were produced, and around 50 million people depended on the chocolate related business for their livelihoods (*Fairtrade and Cocoa*, 2). Each year, these numbers will continue to rise. Today, the cocoa industry is undergoing an incredible growth period, as demand for chocolate rises and prices of raw ingredients continue to increase. With demand set to exceed 4.5 billion tons by the year 2020—a reality that would outstrip world supply—the sustainability of the cocoa industry faces significant looming obstacles (*Fairtrade and Cocoa*, 2). One of the big decisions companies and consumers will begin to have to make more often is whether to forfeit a cheaper price for moral soundness and opt for Fair Trade product.

Over the span of the past decade, concerns have risen about the use of child labor in cocoa production (“Lifecycle Studies”). In 2001, the Harkin-Engel protocol, which is an international agreement aimed at ending child labor, intended to make sure that fifty percent of West African cocoa would be free of exploitative child labor by July of 2008. In addition to Fair Trade progress, the organic chocolate market is growing by more than 50 percent each year. Feeling the pressure of a changing market, brands like Mars and Hershey have developed organic and artisan product lines (“Lifecycle Studies”).

As the chocolate industry continues to grow, brands, whether they are emerging or established, niche or mainstream, will be required to develop and adapt to external factors. Divine Chocolate, a specialty Fair Trade brand from the U.K. that launched in the U.S. less than a decade ago, is one company that will require upkeep of a communications strategy through this transitional and dynamic time. With offices based in Washington, D.C., Divine has a unique audience and set of resources at its disposal. The following report will attempt to summarize and outline Divine Chocolate as a brand, setting public relations objectives and strategies applicable to the current and future chocolate market climate in the U.S.

## **II. The Cocoa Industry**

A cocoa industry analysis conducted in June of 2012 by IBIS, an industry market research resource, outlines important chocolate statistics. According to the analysis, per capita disposable income; the price of sugar; demand for confectionary wholesale selling; and per capita sugar and sweetener consumption are the key economic drivers of the cocoa supply chain (Tang). The supply industries comprise of fruit and nut growers, sugarcane harvesters, and syrup and flavor production. The demand industries include confectionary wholesale selling, supermarkets and grocery stores, convenience stores, and specialty food

stores. Within the U.S. cocoa industry, the “Major Players” include: Mars Inc., The Hershey Company, Nestle, and Kraft Foods. Primarily, the industry participates in manufacturing of chocolate candy bars, cocoa drinking powders, chocolate blocks, and cocoa-based candies. Out of these, chocolate bars and block chocolates account for the major products and services in the industry (Tang).

Specialty chocolate sales decreased between 2007 and 2009 due to the recession, and chocolate sales in general experienced a revenue decrease of 0.6 percent as well due to the population’s heightened awareness of health issues related to the overconsumption of sugar (Tang). Forces that have turned the negative trend around include product innovations, revamped marketing and promotional messages, and a renewed consumer demand. In 2012, the chocolate industry experienced a 2.5 percent increase in revenue (Tang). Even with the recent hikes in price for sugar and cocoa, brand-loyal customers prevent industry demise. Production methods are also changing as to cut employees by 2.2 percent over the next five years, which will in turn make up for the rising cost of raw materials (Tang).

Looking into the future, consumer demand for chocolate is projected to grow, namely in the healthy, organic, and Fair Trade chocolate segments (Tang).

### **III. The History of Cocoa**

Cocoa, or *Theobroma cacao*, is a plant indigenous to the Amazon Basin and tropical areas of South and Central America (“From Bean to Bar”). It was first cultivated over 2000 years ago at a time when Mayans believed it to be the food of the gods. The sacred plant was also used as currency in units of nibs (“From Bean to Bar”).

Cocoa did not travel to Europe until the fifteenth century when Christopher Columbus made his way from the 'New World' back to Spain ("From Bean to Bar"). Upon its European debut, cocoa was an exclusive item that went severely taxed. For the next couple of centuries, cocoa remained available only to the elite, being served in specialty chocolate houses where gentry would meet to drink hot chocolate. In 1828, Coenraad van Houten invented the cocoa press, which extracted the cocoa powder from the cocoa butter. The powder was perfect for drinking while the butter, when combined with more cocoa powder and sugar, resulted in the first chocolate. Van Houten's invention revolutionized the cocoa industry, and in 1842, after Cadbury invested in the machine, the first chocolate bar was made. Together, Cadbury and the cocoa press transitioned cocoa from its exclusive existence to a product that the masses could afford. Further innovation came about in 1875 when Daniel Peters added Henri Nestles condensed milk to chocolate. Rise in demand for chocolate along with labor shortages due to short life expectancy of Brazilian cocoa farmers combined to make for expansion of chocolate production into the Caribbean and mainland Africa by the late 1870s ("From Bean to Bar").

#### **IV. History of Cocoa in Ghana**

Ghana was exposed to cocoa beginning in 1895 when Tetteh Quarshie traveled from where is now known as Bioko in Equatorial Guinea back to his farm in the Eastern Region of Ghana with cocoa beans in his pocket ("From Bean to Bar"). Ghana now has six chocolate-producing regions: Western, Central, Brong Ahafo, Eastern, Ashanti, and Volta. The southern regions of Ghana produce Divine Chocolate's cocoa. Today, chocolate exports account for between 35 and 40 percent of Ghana's total foreign exchange ("From Bean to Bar").

Small family farms grow cocoa in Ghana (“From Bean to Bar”). The farms are usually between four and five acres, and other crops such as plantains, maize, and spices are also grown and harvested. The practice of intercropping provides 65 percent of typical families’ personal food supply as well as additional income (“From Bean to Bar”).

Cocoa trees grow to between 12 and 25 meters high (“From Bean to Bar”). It takes between three and four years for flowers to blossom, and even then, pollination proves challenging. Only 20 to 30 flowers out of every ten thousand are successfully pollinated. These pollinated blossoms become cocoa pods that grow as yellow balls straight out of the tree trunks and branches, each one containing about 40 seeds that grow into beans. One tree’s annual crop will make three chocolate bars. Most trees produce two crops per year, as each crop is harvestable five to six months after pollination (“From Bean to Bar”).

Harvesting is an extremely delicate art (“From Bean to Bar”). Pods that are too ripe are susceptible to disease; however, pods that are not ripe enough will produce low quality beans. Farmers cut the pods from the trees, carefully avoiding injuring the trunk and branches. Next, farmers use sharp bladed knives to split the pods and scrape out the bean-containing pulp. The delicate nature of the beans means that using machinery to extract pulp is out of the question (“From Bean to Bar”).

Harvested beans then undergo fermentation and drying processes (“From Bean to Bar”). During fermentation, the cocoa beans are wrapped in plantain leaves for a period of up to eight days in which the pulp combines with banana leaf sugars, acids, and yeasts, leaving a product more closely resembling chocolate. Afterwards, the fermented beans are spread out onto large outdoor tables for up to 12 days during which, the moisture content

is reduced from 60 percent to eight percent. The dried beans are packed into jute bags and stored in ventilated warehouses ("From Bean to Bar").

Each village has a local recorder responsible for collecting, weighing, and ensuring quality of all dried beans ("From Bean to Bar"). The recorder also handles the logistics necessary for transportation and distribution of the beans and payment for the farmers ("From Bean to Bar").

Meanwhile, the bagged beans are transported to warehouses at the Tema port where Cocobod, the government agency responsible for export and international sales of all Ghanaian cocoa beans, purchases the beans from Kuapa Kokoo ("From Bean to Bar").

The beans are then shipped to Europe where they are sorted, cleaned, and roasted ("From Bean to Bar"). Roasting between 120 degrees and 140 degrees Celsius develops color and flavor. Next, the roasted beans are crushed to release the internal nibs from the shells. The crushed beans blow through an air tunnel to separate the nibs from the shells. Nibs are then ground into cocoa mass and pressed until the cocoa butter squeezes out, leaving cocoa powder ("From Bean to Bar").

Cocoa butter and cocoa mass are combined with sugar and milk, stirred, cooled, and finally molded ("From Bean to Bar"). Other ingredients and flavors can be added throughout. A finished chocolate bar is wrapped, packed, transported to a large handling warehouse and then distributed to retail shops where end users purchase the bars and consume ("From Bean to Bar").

## **V. Background of Divine Chocolate**

Chocolate came to Ghana in 1879 when Tetteh Quarshie first brought cocoa to Ghana from Equatorial Guinea ("The Divine Story"). Today, Ghanaian chocolate is known



globally as having superior quality and taste. Chocolate is one of Ghana's main exports, and the country is the second largest exporter of cocoa in the world with most of the cocoa coming from small family farms operating on about five acres of land. Because trees are susceptible to various diseases, and cocoa prices are often below the sustainable amount by which families are able to survive, cocoa farming is no easy business ("The Divine Story").

With the liberalization of the cocoa market in Ghana in the early 1990s, a handful of farmers banded together to establish a licensed buying company that would be farmer owned and operated ("The Divine Story"). The farmers' efforts resulted in a co-op called Kuapa Kokoo, which means good cocoa growers. The co-op would trade its own cocoa and manage the selling process instead of relying on the Ghanaian government to do so. The mission of Kuapa Kokoo started as and remains to "empower farmers in their efforts to gain a dignified livelihood, to increase women's participation in all of Kuapa's activities, and to develop environmentally friendly cultivation of cocoa" ("The Divine Story").

Kuapa Kokoo's reputation for maintaining fair and honest practices led to the establishment of Divine Chocolate as a company ("The Divine Story"). The Body Shop and Twin Trading invested in Divine Chocolate, while Comic Relief and Christian Aid provided more support. The particular set-up of Kuapa Kokoo allows for the co-op to have a say in decisions about how the Divine Chocolate brand is maintained ("The Divine Story").

Today, Divine Chocolate is one of the leading Fair Trade brands in the United Kingdom as well as a respected socially responsible enterprise ("The Divine Story"). From Divine Chocolate's income, the Kuapa Kokoo co-op has been able to aid in "building schools, sinking wells for clean drinking water to villages, providing mobile medical clinics for farmers in remote growing regions, and fostering women's income generation projects to

help women earn additional income for their families when the cocoa season is over” (“The Divine Story”).

In 2006, Divine Chocolate expanded to international status with the opening of its Washington, D.C. office (“The Divine Story”) Kuapa Kokoo owns one-third of Divine Chocolate in the U.S., while Divine Chocolate Ltd. In the U.K., Lutheran World Relief, Oikocredit, and SERRV International own the remainder (“The Divine Story”).

## **VI. Detailed Timeline of Divine Chocolate:**

Divine’s story starts in the 1990s when a structural adjustment program liberalizes the cocoa market in Ghana. Farmer and visionary representative from the Ghana cocoa, Nana Frimpong Abrebrese, joined a group of other Ghanaian farmers in creating a farmers’ organization and company to sell cocoa to the already established and state-run Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) (“About Divine”).

- 1993: Kuapa Kokoo, meaning the ‘good cocoa farmers’ cooperative, was established by the farmers’ organization and Abrebre (“About Divine”).
- 1997: Kuapa Kokoo farmers voted to invest in a chocolate bar of their own to introduce to the United Kingdom. Since the niche market was already saturated with Fair Trade brands, Kuapa Kokoo planned to launch the new chocolate bar into the mainstream market where it would compete with other major U.K. brands. By 1997, Kuapa Kokoo was working with NGO Twin Trading, The Body Shop, Christian Aid, Comic Relief, the Department for International Development, and NatWest to set up The Day Chocolate Company (“About Divine”).
- October, 1998: Divine Fair Trade milk chocolate was launched into the U.K. confectionary market as the first farmer-owned Fair Trade chocolate bar meaning

that the cooperative of cocoa farmers in Ghana was able to own shares in the company that produced the chocolate bar (“About Divine”).

- December, 1998: Divine milk chocolate appeared on supermarket shelves awaiting consumer reaction. The extremely competitive chocolate market in the U.K. presented a challenge for Divine Chocolate as a fledgling brand. The chocolate industry, which is worth nearly four billion British pounds in the U.K. alone, was already nearing saturation with top brands spending up to ten percent of their profit margins on brand positioning strategies to maintain spots within the Chocolate Top Ten. However, the U.K. has one of the highest per capita levels of chocolate consumption in the world, which makes securing even a small portion of the consumer market a significant success (“About Divine”).
- 1999: Divine Chocolate proved its potential when the brand won Millennium Product status (“About Divine”).
- March, 1999: Divine Chocolate received celebrity endorsement from English-Australian comedian and playwright Ben Elton, who aired in a Divine Chocolate commercial on Channel 4. It was the only advertisement Elton has even participated in (“About Divine”).
- November, 1999: Divine Chocolate was stocked in Sainsbury’s stores countrywide as a result of Christian Aid’s ‘Stock the Choc’ campaign in which the network and close ally created the campaign to stimulate support of Divine Chocolate (“About Divine”).
- January, 2000: Divine Chocolate and British charity organization Comic Relief worked with the BBC to launch Dubble: a crunchy Fair Trade chocolate bar that

children could afford to buy with their own pocket money. In March of 2003, Dubble made its online debut to an audience composed of “Dubble Agents” supporting Fair Trade business (“About Divine”).

- 2001: Divine Chocolate and Christian Aid partnered again in 2001 to create a Fair Trade theme competition in which contestants entered verse poems with Divine Chocolate as the subject. High profile literary figures such as English poet Adrian Mitchell, English writer Jacqueline Wilson, and English children’s author Michael Morpurgo helped to choose winners who received chocolate prizes (“About Divine”).
- 2002: Divine Chocolate took the first step in building its product range with the release of Dark Divine. Later in the year, the Kuapa Kokoo decided to convert its entire own-label product supplied by The Day Chocolate Company to Fair Trade. The milestone proved to be newsworthy enough for the BBC. British Prime Minister Tony Blair and MP Clare Short even paid a visit to Kuapa Kokoo.
- 2004: Cardiff, Wales announced that it would be a Fair Trade city, and two Kuapa Kokoo farmers attended to present a Divine Chocolate cake to Prime Minister Gordon Brown. As the Fair Trade movement gained more momentum, Divine Chocolate produced its first national advertising campaign, which featured young women from the Kuapa Kokoo community. As a result of heightened brand awareness and popularity, Kuapa Kokoo farmers received heightened press and celebrity visits to the cooperative (“About Divine”).

- 2005: As a part of Oxfam's Make Trade Fair campaign, lead singer of Coldplay, Chris Martin, visited Ghana and made a requested stop at the Kuapa Kokoo cooperative to meet farmers ("About Divine").
- March, 2005: Kuapa Kokoo farmer Anna Awere visited Parliament to tell Divine Chocolate's story ("About Divine").
- July, 2005: Divine Chocolate fully extended its brand into U.K. government affairs by providing chocolate bars to all attendees of the G8 summit in Gleneagle, Scotland ("About Divine").
- 2006: Scotland welcomed two Kuapa Kokoo farmers as ambassadors of the cooperative. The representatives toured Scotland, spreading the Fair Trade message and Divine Chocolate story, finalizing their time there with a reception at Scottish Parliament. Meanwhile, Dubble, Comic Relief, and Divine Chocolate's own charity, Trading Visions, helped young people to lead their own cocoa trade CHOCOL8 summits across the U.K. supplemented by two sons of Kuapa Kokoo farmers. This movement led to the Chocolate Challenge Manifesto, which features youth opinions about Fair Trade. The first draft was presented to DFID Minister for International Development with 12600 supporters ("About Divine").
- July, 2006: The Body Shop donated its shares in The Day Chocolate Company to Kuapa Kokoo, further growing farmers' stakes in the Divine Chocolate brand ("About Divine").
- 2007: At the start of the New Year, The Day Chocolate Company changed its name to Divine Chocolate Limited, which aligned the company with the leading brand. The name change accompanied a new packaging design that featured

golden traditional West African Adinkra symbols. Divine Chocolate presented the revamped design to coincide with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ghanaian independence and new inclusion of Fair Trade sugar from Malawi into Divine Chocolate bars. Also in 2007, Dubble began a new campaign titled MISSION: POSSIBLE in which Dubble Agents were called to action in gaining support from the local community to promote the Fair Trade message. This move coincided with a series of school conferences focused on Fair Trade. The MISSION: POSSIBLE campaign featured a new interactive online area and a Mission information pack. As a result of its practices, Divine Chocolate was named Best Ethical Business by the Observer (“About Divine”).

- February 14, 2007: On perhaps the most appropriate day of the year, Valentine’s Day, Divine Chocolate launched its product in the U.S. Kuapa Kokoo farmers and national executive member Comfort Kumeah represented the cooperative at press briefings and launch events. The occasion garnered attention from national press and appeared on the front page of the *Washington Times*. Soon following, Divine Chocolate Limited announced its first dividend with Kuapa Kokoo as the largest shareholder with 45 percent of company share in profits (“About Divine”).
- November, 2008: Divine Chocolate and Kuapa Kokoo celebrated a decade of collaboration (“About Divine”).

## **VII. Divine Chocolate Communication Plan**

Currently, Divine Chocolate operates with the mission: “to grow a successful global farmer-owned chocolate company using the amazing power of chocolate to delight and

engage, and bring people together to create dignified trading relations, thereby empowering producers and consumers” (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 1).

According to Chair of Divine Chocolate Ltd, Patrick Fleming, the 2010/2011 fiscal year was successful in terms of finance and strengthening the Divine Chocolate brand (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 2). Through advertising via traditional media, maintaining a social media presence, the production of special events, and publicity, Divine Chocolate has built upon its communication strategy and brand image over the past few years.

### **A) Advertisements**

Divine Chocolate does not have a current print or broadcast advertising campaign; however, in 2010, the brand developed print advertisements around the World Cup Quarter Final that was held in Ghana. Divine’s YouTube Channel also provides a 30 second “Divine Chocolate Story” as an informational video about the way the company operates.

### **B) Events and Publicity:**

The most significant source of publicity for Divine Chocolate is the company’s event schedule throughout the year. Divine Chocolate participates in and chairs several events, annually. One of the biggest events for Divine Chocolate is International Women’s Day (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 3). This event is important to Divine Chocolate, as their stance on human development includes women’s empowerment in Ghana and more specifically, Kuapa Kokoo. At the Women of the World festival, Divine Chocolate gave two female farmers from the cooperative a chance to speak about the benefits of women’s improving status in Ghana. The event was held in London and drew a national audience (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 3).

Divine Chocolate brought the excitement over the centennial of International Women's Day to the U.S. when it arranged a meeting between the president of Café Campesino Fair Trade coffee roaster and former President Jimmy Carter in Georgia (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 7).

Another event put on by Divine Chocolate is the Divine Women Awards, which celebrates women in the U.K. who go above and beyond the call of duty to create positive change in their communities (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 3). This particular event brings the Divine Chocolate brand closer to the local level and displays community investment. While the brand harnesses a global mission, the Divine Women Awards show consumers that the brand's values also apply to the small scale (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 3).

In the U.K., Divine Chocolate was chosen to be the exclusive chocolate provider at the Glastonbury Festival in 2011 with a special edition package dedicated to the event (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4). This sponsorship allowed Divine Chocolate to reach an entirely new audience via the music and entertainment press (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4).

Later, Divine Chocolate partnered with Ben & Jerry's at the annual Sundae Festival, where fans were able to share their 'chocolate confessions' in a Divine Chocolate photo booth. This event lent itself to social media, as the confessions were broadcasted over Divine Chocolate's Facebook page. Confessors could visit and like the Divine Chocolate Facebook page for a chance to see themselves posing with their chocolate confession (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4).



Chocolate Week in the U.K. was an obvious platform for Divine Chocolate, as it allowed the brand to connect with those already in the target market: chocolate lovers and connoisseurs (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4).

Another annual event put on by Divine Chocolate includes the national poetry competition in partnership with Christian Aid in which contestants submit poems inspired by the theme “From Bean to Bar” (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 5). Divine Chocolate’s YouTube Channel allows anyone to watch the winners reciting their poems.

Fair Trade Fortnight presents an opportunity for Divine Chocolate to promote its core motivation, which is supporting the Fair Trade movement (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4). The event brings farmers from Kuapa Kokoo to London to meet with U.K.-based Fair Trade businesspeople in hopes of strengthening the morale between the chocolate buying U.K. and the chocolate producing Ghana. In 2011, Divine Chocolate focused on women’s empowerment, which tied in with the previous events: Women of the World and the Divine Women Awards. The impact of the connections between events gave an extra push to publicity efforts (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 4).

In the 2011/2012 year, Divine Chocolate began work on its film competition with women filmmaker’s association Birds Eye View. The competition invites applicants to produce short videos that “capture the spirit at the heart of Divine” (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 5).

In the U.S., Divine Chocolate partnered with Rock the Vote to raise awareness about the importance of democracy and cooperatives in Fair Trade (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 7). Divine Chocolate used this platform to also encourage young people to exercise their rights to vote (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 7).

In December of 2011, Divine Chocolate was featured on “Live! With Kelly” as part of the “Gifts that Give Back” segment (“News”).

Over all, Divine Chocolate was able to secure significant publicity that covered events, partnerships, sponsorships, product development, and even interviews with Kuapa Kokoo members (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 5).

### **C) Social Media**

In the 2010/2011 year, Divine Chocolate experienced a 106 percent increase in Facebook ‘likes,’ a 69 percent increase in Twitter followers, and a 68 percent growth in newsletter sign ups (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 5). As of December 2012, Divine Chocolate’s U.K. Facebook page had just over 4,400 likes while the U.S. page had more than 12,000. On Twitter, Divine Chocolate U.K. had more than 13,800 followers and Divine Chocolate U.S. had about 1,400. Divine Chocolate also has 132 followers on Pinterest, 111 subscribers on YouTube with more than 64,000 video views, and an active account on Flickr. Divine Chocolate’s Annual Report divulges that the company “is especially focused on growing [its] engagement with audiences via social media” (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 5).

### **D) Brand Expansion**

In 2011, Divine Chocolate introduced a mold for its 100g bars that embosses the Divine Chocolate logo and Adinkra symbols on the actual chocolate (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 6). This step only furthers the brand identity because consumers are now literally eating the distinct Divine Chocolate design. In addition, Divine Chocolate launched the Luxury Divine Milk Easter Egg, Dubble Easter Egg Hunt Kit, and a line of boxed chocolates including chocolate salted fudge, milk chocolate praline hearts, white

chocolate strawberry truffles, and mixed chocolate-covered fruits and nuts. In U.K. grocery stores, these product developments led to an eight percent increase in brand value (*Divine Chocolate Annual Report 2010/11*, 6).

### **E) Looking Forward**

Divine Chocolate's main goals are to expand its social media presence and to enhance its online store and shopping experience.

## **VIII. Divine Chocolate Proposed PR Plan**

### **A) Executive Summary**

Divine Chocolate is one of the top Fair Trade brands in the United Kingdom as well as a shining example of socially responsible capitalism. At the heart of Divine Chocolate is the Kuapa Kokoo farmer's cooperative in Ghana. Profit streams back to the labor source, allowing the producers of the chocolate to have a say in the inner workings of the company and to become empowered. As of now, Divine Chocolate speaks to a niche market of chocolate consumers who believe Fair Trade status to be important.

### **B) Situation**

According to research conducted by the International Cocoa Organization in January of 2012, cocoa products marked with the official Fair Trade label only capture .5 percent of the cocoa market ("The Chocolate Industry") Divine Chocolate was established in the U.K. and has been growing brand awareness and value in that particular market since 1998. However, Divine Chocolate has only been available in the U.S. since its D.C. launch in 2007. Thus, it is important for the brand to gain more awareness, value, and equity in the U.S. Fair Trade cocoa market.

The following communications plan will largely be based on the current seasonal chocolate sales climate. In the U.S., seasonal chocolate sales are growing (Albader). According to a report from data research firm, Mintel, seasonal chocolate showed the highest sales gains in the confectionary industry in 2011 with \$4.4 billion in sales (Albader). Globally, chocolate with seasonal positioning made up for a quarter of cocoa product launches. Seasonal chocolate is much more recession-resistant than the overall market with Easter taking the lead as the biggest chocolate-selling holiday. This is because the holiday is deeply rooted with traditions such as Easter egg hunts and gifting chocolates to friends, family, and co-workers (Albader). Other seasonal opportunities for Divine Chocolate will include Halloween, Valentine's Day, Christmas, Hanukah, Mother's Day, and Father's Day.

### **C) Goal**

Divine Chocolate's overarching goal is to capture the U.S. Fair Trade chocolate market by building awareness of what Fair Trade means, why it is beneficial, and how the Divine Chocolate brand incorporates the principle into its business model all while producing a delicious end product.

### **D) Objectives**

From the following Public Relations plan, Divine Chocolate will hope to gain greater brand awareness in the U.S. Fair Trade chocolate market as a gourmet Fair Trade brand that remains closely tied to the farmers who produce it. First, Divine Chocolate will inform the target market about the product. Through the campaign, it will shape consumer attitudes to be favorable towards Divine Chocolate. And finally, the plan will call for a change in behavior from target market consumers to either start purchasing Divine

Chocolate or to continue purchasing Divine Chocolate because of the brand's social responsibility and high quality.

### **E) Target Audience**

The Divine Chocolate target audience consists of U.S. citizens who enjoy higher-end chocolate. The target audience is informed on world issues and appreciates global corporate citizenship initiatives. Members of the target audience live in urban or suburban areas across the U.S. and shop for groceries at stores carrying a wide variety of organic and natural products such as Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. Target audience will alter slightly based on season. The target audience for Halloween will differ from that of Christmas and Hanukah. With Valentine's Day in February, men with intentions of buying boxed chocolates for a significant other will be targeted. In the spring, focus will shift to mothers and fathers buying Easter candy for children. Though the specific groups targeted will alter in characteristics, the common denominators will always be the consumers' love of chocolate, general issue awareness, and spending power.

### **F) Key Messages:**

Divine Chocolate's key messages for this particular plan will be:

1. Divine Chocolate is a well-known and respected Fair Trade brand in the U.K..
2. Divine Chocolate is committed to producing the best quality from the beginning of the cocoa growing process in Ghana all the way to the minute the consumer takes the first bite.
3. Fair Trade chocolate is hip, trendy, and fashionable in 2012, and Divine Chocolate allows the consumer to "do good" while "eating good."

### **G) Strategies**

Divine Chocolate will impart core messages by targeting key markets and taking proper measures to engage these audiences. Press and media will be the vehicles by which Divine Chocolate will relay its messages to the public. Strategies will be based off of seasonal chocolate sales, as holidays spur chocolate sales.

#### **H) Tactics:**

In order to reach the target audience, Divine Chocolate will pitch to a variety of print and online news publications, blogs, and television stations to promote its core messages. Press releases, media alerts, Op/Ed pieces, event publicity and newsletters will be pitched to relevant press outlets. A developed social media campaign will be implemented, and marketing materials specifically targeted to the U.S. market will be distributed.

Divine Chocolate will enlist Eva Longoria as a celebrity spokesperson for the brand. Longoria is an appropriate endorser because she appeals to a wide audience of both men and women. She is well known from her various film roles—especially in “Desperate Housewives.” Longoria is also a well-respected philanthropist who supports initiatives such as the Hispanic Women’s Corporation and Padres Contra El Cancer (“Character Bio”). In 2006, she founded Eva’s Heroes, a charity for developmentally disabled children (“Character Bio”). Longoria’s charismatic and down-to-earth personality will be a perfect fit for Divine Chocolate.

Divine Chocolate will run a yearlong campaign featuring Longoria as the socially conscious chocolate connoisseur for all seasons. For example, Longoria will admit to only passing out Fair Trade chocolate to trick-or-treaters during Halloween, and she will only give her family and friends the best quality Fair Trade chocolate for Christmas stocking stuffers. When Valentine’s Day rolls around, Longoria will express that unless she gets

Divine Chocolate along with her roses, there will be little romance. For Easter, Longoria will highlight her appreciation for family and Divine Chocolate's important role in the traditional Easter egg hunt. Leading up to Mother's Day, Longoria will explain how much her own mother means to her, and that Divine Chocolate is clearly the only brand worthy of such a treasured relationship. These seasonal campaigns will remind the target audience of Divine Chocolate's relevance year-round.

Longoria will take part in a satellite media tour in which she will speak about Divine Chocolate, its products, and its key messages to a variety of local news programs in 15-minute segments. Longoria will also sit for interviews on national shows.

Print Outlets Divine Chocolate will pitch to include: *New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Miami Herald, Chicago Tribune, NY Daily News, Boston Globe, Atlanta Journal Constitution, San Francisco Chronicle, Baltimore Sun, Kansas City Star, Time, Business Week, Martha Stewart Living, O Magazine, Food, Life & Style, Forbes, Real Simple, Esquire, The New Yorker, Women's Health, Men's Health, Consumer Reports, Business Week, Vogue, More, Marie Claire, Lucky, Gourmet, Washingtonian, Washington Life, Haute Living, Jezebel, Vanity Fair, etc.*

Television programs targeted include: "The Ellen DeGeneres Show", "Wendy Williams Show", "Rachael Ray", "Dr. Oz Show", "Bethenny", "The View", "The Talk", "Live! With Kelly & Michael", "E! News", "Katie", "Fox & Friends", "Morning Express with Robin Meade", "The Today Show", "Good Morning America", as well as a number of local morning shows.

Online news outlets will include: Huffington Post, CNN, New York Times, ABC News, Fox News, Forbes.com, iVillage, Jezebel, Yahoo, MSN, AOL, etc.

Lifestyle and Mommy Blogs will include: Smitten Kitchen, Random Good Stuff, Chocoblog, Mrs. Mommy Product Blogger, Delish.com, Dying for Chocolate, Chocolate Wrap, The Chocolate Life, Chocolate Television, National Confectioners Association, The Little Chocolatiers, Chocolate Obsession, Chocolate Guild, Journey for Fair Trade, Fair Tradeblog, etc.

### **I) Social Media**

Divine Chocolate's U.S. Facebook page currently has over 11,700 likes. In order to increase the number of Facebook likes, Divine Chocolate will continue to post engaging questions to the audience, ask for feedback, and run promotions only available to people who like the page.

Divine Chocolate's U.S. Twitter page currently has over 1400 followers. By tweeting frequently, tweeting at followers and relevant users, and engaging the Twitter community in general, Divine Chocolate intends to grow the U.S. page's follower base. Promotions such as retweeting or following for a chance to win Divine Chocolate products will also be implemented.

### **J) Special Events**

Divine Chocolate will continue to host events that highlight the work of the Kuapa Kokoo farmers and the brand initiative. Since Washington, D.C. is a hub for public policy, government legislation, and lobbying, hosting an event promoting Fair Trade chocolate production as a socially responsible means of capitalism and humanitarian effort will go far with influential community members and journalists. Kuapa Kokoo farmers will give speeches at the event, where, of course, plentiful amounts of Divine Chocolate will be made readily available for all in attendance. Prior to the event, the media will be alerted by every



means possible. Following the event, follow-up interviews with the Kuapa Kokoo farmers and Divine Chocolate team will be coordinated, and an extensive evaluation will be conducted to take into account for the next special event.

### **K) Contests**

Divine Chocolate will launch two contests at the start of 2013. The first will be called “DC in D.C.”. This social media-based contest will have the goal of growing Divine Chocolate’s follower base on Twitter and Instagram, which is a social media photo sharing app. Divine Chocolate fans will post about their experiences with the brand specifically tied in with Washington, D.C. The hashtag #DCinDC will be used for this campaign. An example of a tweet might be something along the lines of, “Just snuck my Divine Chocolate bar into Nutcracker performance at Kennedy Center! #Shh #DCinDC.” The top twenty tweets and photo uploads tagged with #DCinDC will then be chosen by the D.C. Divine Chocolate office, and the winners will receive a basket of free Divine Chocolate products.

Another contest will capitalize on Easter, which is the biggest chocolate candy-selling holiday in the U.S. This contest will target children and will be called “Divine Angels”. Leading up to Easter, Children will submit letters to the Easter Bunny, explaining why it is important to give back to the community. Entrants can specify their own community service initiatives or write about their intentions to start doing so in the spring, as it marks a time of starting fresh. Ten of the best letters will be decided upon by Divine Chocolate’s spokesperson, Eva Longoria. The top prize winner will receive an all-expenses-paid-for vacation to Disney World in Orlando, Florida and an exclusive meet-and-greet with Longoria.

Through both of these contests, Divine Chocolate will leverage its brand with a vital holiday for the chocolate industry and with the growing power of social media platforms.

### **L) Evaluation**

Evaluative measures will be taken at all steps of the communications process to benchmark progress, extract deliverables, and measure return on investment. A conclusive year-end evaluation will be conducted at the close of 2013.

### **IX. Conclusion**

Clearly, the Fair Trade movement is gaining momentum, and Divine Chocolate is one of the frontrunners. How consumers make buying decisions is progressing along with global social consciousness. In the future, having the option to buy Fair Trade will only be more common. By examining the history of cocoa production, assessing today's cocoa industry as a whole, and finally looking at the success that Divine Chocolate has experienced in the U.K., it is apparent that the U.S. cocoa market has room for a brand like Divine Chocolate to carve out a successful place in consumers' minds as a top quality Fair Trade choice. Now that's something to savor.

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