

Chocolate Crocodile Tears

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In Defense of Kraft

Just when you thought you were done reading about Kraft and Cadbury, the saga continues.

The latest news is that Kraft plans to close Cadbury's Somerdale plant, leaving 400 Cadbury employees without jobs. In Kraft's original offer, the company had stated that it would be "in a position to continue to operate the Somerdale facility ... preserving UK manufacturing jobs." However, upon making the purchase, and taking a closer look at the logistics, Kraft decided that keeping the Somerdale facility open would be impossible.

However, this should come as no surprise to the employees at the plant, since Cadbury had already made the decision to close the plant by 2011, in order to move production to a facility in Poland. So much for British tradition.

I think this issue has become less of a debate over economics and employment, and more of an emotional, British-versus-American war. You have to admit, it's an easy target. Cadbury started as small family-owned business over a century ago in Britain. Over the years, the company became firmly imbedded in British history, and its chocolate a matter of national pride.

In steps Kraft. Seemingly, Kraft epitomizes all American stereotypes: huge, impersonal and pushy. Leave it to an American company to buy something that isn't even technically for sale.

But wait. Kraft also has a humble heritage. In the early 1900's James Kraft started selling cheese out of a horse-drawn wagon, which quickly evolved into the opening of the very first Kraft cheese plant. Admittedly, Kraft's rapid evolution into food industry giant might have pushed what the British people call "tradition" out the window. But know what is tradition in America? Making acquisitions and turning profits.

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Speaking of making profits, several news sources are reporting that former Cadbury CEO, Todd Stitzer made close to a \$7M profit on the sale of shares awarded to him during the Kraft deal. I guess that is the going rate for heritage. But, if you still feel bad for Cadbury, you can join the “Keep the Cadbury Tradition Alive” Facebook page and sign the online petition. Or, ease your sorrows American-style, with some [deep-fried Kraft Crème Eggs](#) [1].

To sound off, send an e-mail to karen.langhauser@advantagemedia.com [2]. For a defense of Cadbury, read Associate Editor [Krystal Gabert's take](#) [3].

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