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# MAKING SOAP

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# EDITOR LETTER

If you are just beginning to sell your creations, you might look at successful sellers in the industry and wonder, "How did they get where they are?" That is good because studying successful people is inspiring and instructional.

Of course, business is not a ten-step approach. Each business and owner is unique, and so is their path. Nevertheless, certain principles are universal, and we can learn from others' experiences to create businesses that work.

Not interested in business? That's OK. We have your back with articles about such topics as colorful candles, Brazilian-inspired skincare and essential oil soaps.

Finally, happy holidays from *Making Soap* to you and yours.

Beth Byrne  
Managing Editor



## COMING NEXT

HOW DO THEY DO IT?"  
Catch the second installment

The Basics of bodywashes

Surfactants: What are they and what  
do I do with them?

Dispelling surfactant myths

Surfactant shampoo

# MAKING SOAP

## COSMETICS & CANDLES

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# Soap: Essential Oils and Fatty Acids

By ALICIA GROSSO

I have always been math averse. In fact, mathematically figuring out the volume of my new-to-me soap molds baffles me. I know, I know. I know the formula. But it is nonsensical. What I like to count are my essential oils, fatty oils, and other soaping supplies. Six identical six-inch silicone single-piece spatulas. Two massive culinary plastic containers for big batches. Three tulle scrubby circles crocheted by a colleague. Two new small, but not-too-small rechargeable stick blenders.

This inventory mood has me counting supplies. And with this considerable inventory, I decided to take a detour from counting because math makes me sleepy. Instead, I am working to divine the properties of two of the things I love most in soaping – fatty oils and essential oils. Essential oils are the aromatic volatile organic compounds of plants. Fatty oils are the, well, oils from plants, mostly from the seeds. They are often called “carrier oils.”

If I had to recommend essential oils to soapmakers, this is my list of what I always have on hand for making soap, skincare and other aromatherapeutic applications. I stick to what I like, what sells and what continues to inspire me.

- Black pepper – *Piper nigrum* – spicy, dry, warm
- Cedarwood – *Cedrus virginiana* – sweet, dry, balsamic
- Clary sage – *Salvia sclarea* – fresh, nutty, warm
- Clove bud– *Eugenia caryophyllus* – spicy, sweet, warm
- Eucalyptus – *Eucalyptus globulus* – camphoraceous, green
- Lavender – *Lavendula angustifolia* – floral, sweet, herbaceous





# Soap: Essential Oils and Fatty Acids

By ALICIA GROSSO

- Lemongrass – *Cymbopogon schoenanthus* – lemony, herbaceous
- Lime – *Citrus aurantifolia* – citrusy, spicy, sweet, bracing
- Litsea cubeba – *Litsea cubeba* – lemony, sweet
- Orange, five-fold – *Citrus sinensis* – terpene-free orange oil, sweet intense orange
- Petitgrain – *Citrus aurantium* – citrus, bitter, sweet
- Patchouli – *Pogostemon cabelin* – earthy, sweet, penetrating, tenacious
- Rose geranium *Pelargonium graveolens* – rosy, balsamic, sweet
- Rosemary – *Rosmarinus officinale* – herbal, piney, clean
- Rosewood – *Aniba rosaeodorata* – dry, sweet, woody
- Tea Tree – *Melaleuca alternifolia* – camphoraceous, pungent
- Vetiver – *Vetiveria zizanoides* – earthy, sweet, pungent
- Ylang ylang – *Cananga odorata* – very sweet, slightly spicy

Resource: *Aromatherapy - Essential Oils for Vibrant Health and Beauty* by Roberta Wilson.

Follows are some favorite essential oil blends, called by the name of the soap in which I used

them. Parts can be any measure if the blend adds up to the total amount you want to use in your soap. I start with 0.5 oz of fragrance material per pound of fat, but always check the IFRA recommended amount.

- Andrine – 0.5 part lemongrass, 0.5 part orange, 1 part petitgrain, 1 part rosemary
- Gaia – 1 part clary sage, 1 part lavender, 1 part 5x orange, 0.3 part vetiver
- Green Tea Like – 1 part clary, 1 part lime, 1 part lavender, 1 part petitgrain
- Lavender Lemonade – 1 part lavender, 0.5 part litsea cubeba, 0.25 part clary sage
- Lavender, Lime, Ylang – 1 part lavender, 1 part lime, 0.5 part ylang ylang
- Manly, Yes... - 1 part cedarwood, 1 part lavender, 0.25 part patchouli, 0.25 part black pepper
- Moon – 1 part clary sage, 0.5 part rose geranium, 1 part ylang ylang
- Mr. Grant – 0.5 part black pepper, 1 part cedarwood, 1 part lavender, 1 part patchouli, 1 part petitgrain, 0.5 part vetiver
- Nicole's Choice – 1 part orange, 1 part petitgrain, 1 part rosewood, 1 part ylang ylang, 0.5 part vetiver
- Patchouli Spice – 2 parts patchouli, 1 part rose geranium, 0.25 part clove bud
- Passionate Purple PMS – 1 part clary sage, 1 part lavender, 0.5 part rose geranium, 1 part rosewood



# Soap: Essential Oils and Fatty Acids

By ALICIA GROSSO

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- Sacred Spring – 1 part clary sage, 0.25 part clove, 1 part lavender, 0.5 part orange, 0.5 part patchouli
- Sea Sprite – 1 part lavender, 1 part petitgrain, 1 part rosemary
- There Goes Trouble – 1 part clary sage, 1 part lavender, 1 part tea tree

## Fatty Oils and What They do in Soap

Fatty oils are the heart of soapmaking. Each oil is made up of fatty acids. Fatty acids possess properties that contribute properties when saponified. From my own writing, I find that lauric acid is an extremely effective cleanser, oleic acid is conditioning, palmitic acid creates a hard bar with stable lather and stearic creates a hard bar with stable lather. (Source: *The Everything Soap-making Book*, Third Edition by Alicia Grosso)



# Soap: Essential Oils and Fatty Acids

By ALICIA GROSSO

My current favorite recipe is made up of 2.82 percent castor oil, 5.65 percent cocoa butter, 30.51 percent coconut oil, 48.59 percent olive, and 12.43 percent shea butter. I superfat at about 6 percent. When I created the formula, I wanted a stable, copious lather, hardness, whiteness, with a superfat that would leave skin feeling soft and conditioned rather than tight and dry. I was curious about the value of my choices of fatty oils, which were based on experience. So, I read a wonderful book that is new to me, *The Power of the Seed*, published in 2014. It is an homage and love story of fatty vegetable oils.

Fatty acid profiles of oils used in this formula, summarized from *The Power of the Seed's* oil pages, including the Latin plant name and INCI (International Nomenclature for Cosmetic Ingredients) for soap made from them. These are the “after saponification” names:

Castor oil – *Ricinis communis* – INCI – *Sodium Castorate* - almost all ricinoleic acid at 90 percent, linoleic and oleic between 5 and 7 percent, with small amounts of palmitic, stearic, and alpha-linolenic. Unsaponifiables make up just between 0.5 percent and 1 percent.

Cocoa Butter – *Theobroma cacao* – INCI – *Sodium Cocoa Butterate* - about a third each oleic, stearic, and palmitic at between 25 and 35 percent. It also contains tiny amounts of linoleic and unsaponifiables.

Coconut oil – *Cocos nucifera* – INCI – *Sodium Cocoate* - around half lauric acid, between about 40 and 55 percent. About a quarter myristic, between about 15 and 25 percent. Caprylic, palmitic,

ic, capric and oleic are 5 to 11 percent each, with stearic and linoleic making up no more than 1 – 5 percent. Unsaponifiables make up the rest between 0.5 and 1.5 percent.

Olive Oil – *Olea europaea* – INCI – *Sodium Olivinate* – is around two-thirds to 80 percent oleic. Linoleic, palmitic are close, both between 5 and 15 percent. Stearic, palmitoleic and alpha-linolenic are between 3 and 5 percent. A tiny amount of arachidic at less than 0.7 percent, with 0.5 – 1 percent unsaponifiables.

Shea butter – *Butyrospermum Parkii* – INCI - *Sodium Shea Butterate* - about 50 percent oleic and 1/3 stearic. Palmitic and linoleic are between 3 and 7 percent each. It has a high amount of unsaponifiables at 17 percent.

Shea butter's uncommonly high percentage of unsaponifiables bears looking at more closely. According to Susan M. Parker, “These unsaponifiable elements are rich in vitamins, plant sterols, minerals, and other nourishing compounds for the skin and body.” (*The Power of the Seed*, page 179.)

In my soap, we have a lot of oleic from olive oil, cocoa butter, and shea butter to make a conditioning stable lather. Stearic acid from cocoa and shea butter contribute hardness and stable lather. Lauric acid from coconut oil is a good cleanser and gives a lot of lather. And the unsaponifiables, mainly from the shea butter, contribute skin care benefits as noted above.

You may be asking, “Why not just use a soap making calculator to come up with all this infor-

# Soap: Essential Oils and Fatty Acids

By ALICIA GROSSO

mation?” Indeed, calculators are important in soapmaking. However, I also emphatically believe in the value of direct experience and the discernment that comes from facts combined with intuition and inspiration. So, as you count your essential oils, fatty oils, fatty acids and unsaponifiables, do not forget to count on the discernment gained through experience.

Note: If you have not made cold process soap before, please refer to Alicia’s article in the September 2021 issue (*Cold Process Soapmaking: Tutorial for Beginners*) before making your first batch.

This is the formula for the soap we analyzed. This formula makes a 1-pound batch.

- Castor oil - 0.5 oz
- Cocoa butter – 1 oz
- Coconut oil – 5 oz
- Olive oil – 8 oz
- Shea butter 2 oz
- Water – 4.75 oz
- Lye – 2.3 oz

Since this formula contains cocoa butter and shea butter which do not melt as easily as coconut oil on its own, the energy exchange method will not work. Instead, follow these directions:

Make the lye solution and set aside to cool.

Melt the shea butter, cocoa butter, and coconut oil.

Weigh out the olive and castor in the main mixing vessel and stir in the melted oils.

Wait for the lye solution and oils to come to about the same temperature.

Stir the lye solution into the oils to the trace you prefer.

If you use fragrance material, add it when the mixture just starts to trace.

Add any colorant.

Hint: When trying a new combination, I like to add the fragrance material first because it can alter the colorant. When you know what your scent and color add up to, do the color first in case the scent causes acceleration or other tricky changes.

The difference between essential oils and fatty oils is significant and important to understand. It also behooves us to understand the fatty acids to create balanced soap formulas. Learning from experience is beneficial, as well. Use the information to derive your signature soap. Try these essential oil blends next time you have a hankering to make soap!

*Alicia Grosso is an artist, teacher and author. Her soapmaking books are, *The Everything Soapmaking Book* and *Soapmaking: A Magickal Guide*. She wrote a soapmaking column for *The Essential Herbal* magazine, presented at soapmaking conferences and served as a guest teacher at soap studios. She lives in the beautiful Puget Sound area.*





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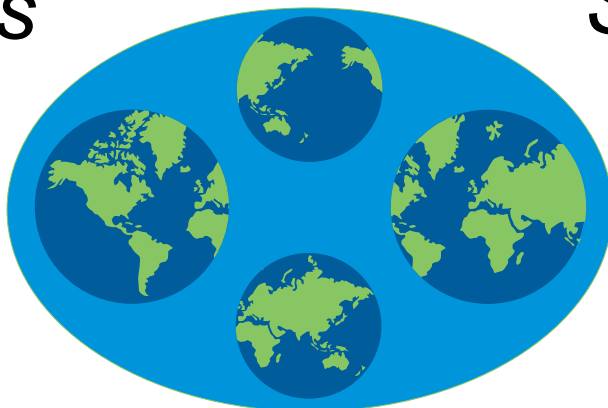
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# What is Your Mission?

By BILL MCCONNELL

One of the fundamental foundations of any business is how it defines its brand. From the mission statement and core philosophies to the product labeling and logo, a business thrives or dies by its branding. Companies with easily definable brands like Starbucks, Lush, Baskin Robbins, and even Yankee Candle Company are consistent in their products and goals because they know how to define the message embedded in what they sell. Defining your business's mission,

motto, and vision will define your business brand and lead to more success.

## Define Your Mission

According to the BigCommerce business advice blog, "A well-crafted mission statement focuses the business for both employees and the target audience. It serves as a framework, giving everyone involved a launching point to build from when establishing the brand." Unfortunately,



# What is Your Mission?

By BILL MCCONNELL

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many businesses focus too much on trends that do not fit their company's core mission.

Think about all the places you may have worked in your lifetime. Did any of them seem disjointed to you in what they hoped to accomplish? I remember in my college years, tending bar for a well-known national restaurant chain. They projected themselves as family-friendly, a place you could take your wife and kids to, even at midnight. One day, the company decided it was losing out on money by not catering to the drinking crowd on weekends or the football crowds on Monday nights. The fun, family environment disappeared over a few months, and the place became just another bar. Regulars stopped coming and employees quit because they did not like the night-club atmosphere. That chain is no longer around, and I am certain that the shift in its mission was partly to blame.

As business owners, we must decide what is important, focus on that, and make it the mission of the company. As a soap maker, my business's mission is *to promote healthier skin by formulating soap and other skincare products using natural or naturally-derived ingredients for an affordable price*. It is a simple but defining mission statement that provides intentional guidance for my business decisions.

## Develop a Slogan that Reflects the Mission

Many businesses do not have a slogan, but I think this is a mistake. Forbes Magazine says that a good slogan will "quickly and efficiently sum up what your company is all about." The slogan condenses the goals of the mission statement into

a bite-sized piece of information that customers easily remember. For example, I have condensed my mission statement into the following slogan: *what you put on your body is as important as what you put into it*. This slogan captures the following elements from my mission statement: *the use of natural materials* and *encouraging people to buy natural alternatives*. The slogan plays psychologically on the idea that consumers are willing to scrutinize what they eat and drink; therefore, they should scrutinize what they slather onto their skin.

Don't be afraid to change a slogan if the mission changes. When I started making skincare products, I was strictly a soap maker. At that time, my motto was *handmade soap for whole life health*. I even took my business's name from it -- Whole Life Soaps. In the last two years, though, I have redefined my mission to align with my greater interest in skin care products, not just soap. As your business needs evolve, don't be afraid of redefining and strengthening the foundations that make up your business.

## Define a Vision

Vision statements define the long-term goals of any company. These goals are rooted in the origin stories of how a product idea came about, which connects customers to you because they have similar experiences.

Let me give you the short version of my vision story. *In 2010, my skin started reacting to name brand products I had been using for decades. My store-bought laundry detergent caused me to break out in hives. My store-bought soap left me feeling itchy. Hair products I had used my en-*



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*tire life caused severe dandruff outbreaks. Simply put, my tried-and-true hygiene regimen was making me miserable. I did some research and discovered that most of my trusted commercial body products contained sulfates, fragrances, parabens, and formaldehydes. I spoke with my dermatologist about these ingredients, and she confirmed that these could be skin irritants in some people. She suggested I start making soap so that I could control what I put on my body.*

This short origin story is like what I hear from my customers, who tell me how certain products they have used for years are no longer working for them. They want to support businesses that provide them more natural options because these options are a better alternative for them. This origin story ties back into my mission of promoting healthier skin. It also ties into my slogan because it acknowledges that what we put on our skin is not always good for us.

Having this vision allows me to set goals, the main one being that I don't make products that I can't align with my core mission. My products are naturally formulated. When I use synthetics, I spend a little extra for ingredients that are generally agreed to be non-irritating. And if I make something that irritates my skin, I do not sell it to the public. If the product is not good enough for me, it does not belong in my brand.

## Evaluate Your Brand

Now, it's time to do the difficult work. Starting today, you need to evaluate your brand. If you do not have a mission statement, write one. Take the best parts of that and create a trustworthy slogan for your customer base. Write your origin story and ensure that what you do is reflected in why you do it.

*Bill McConnell is the owner and soap maker of the successful brick and mortar store Whole life Soaps in Wrightwood, California.*



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# Brazilian Inspired Skincare

By MARLA BOSWORTH

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Brazil boasts some of the most impressive plant butters and oils in the world, rich in vitamins, minerals and healing plant energy. The recipes in this article make beautiful gifts for self-nurturing, which is much needed in the world today. As you learn more about these oils and butters, pay attention to those that beckon you to deepen your knowledge.

When sourcing specialty oils and butters, look for companies that sustainably source ingredi-

ents. Some of them may be smaller businesses who work directly with farmers or cooperatives; a simple internet search will lead to options. Although these ingredients can be found in Brazil, several are also native to other countries, including Central and South America and the Caribbean. Rather than using the outdated take-and-profit business model, consider ways to give back to the communities in which these luxurious plants grow. Include customers in your discoveries about the culture and pay tribute to the



# Brazilian Inspired Skincare

By MARLA BOSWORTH

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indigenous people who have been using these sacred plants for ages. As ethical brands, we grow alongside one another, giving back to the communities with which we partner.

In the following recipes we use five key ingredients: bacuri butter, pracaxi oil, cupuacu butter, pequi oil, and murumuru butter. Keep in mind that most of these oils and butters feature strong, natural scents. As a result, consider making and selling these products unscented, as essential oils and fragrance oils tend to compete with the natural scents. Another suggestion is to scent with a combination of complementary earthy essential oils. Woods such as cedarwood, sandalwood and ho wood, spices like coriander, cardamom, ginger and black pepper or base notes of patchouli, vetiver and other low notes work well.

If you are accustomed to the price of olive oil and shea butter, you may experience sticker shock at the price of these ingredients. However, try not to let the prices deter you from purchasing even a small amount for personal use. Just a simple online search and reading about their properties lured me in. These days, most of us need extra nurturing and these oils and butters are up for the challenge. If you decide to add them to your product line, consider combining them with other less expensive oils also used in Brazil, such as olive and avocado.

Lastly, account for the higher cost of these ingredients in the retail price of your finished product, knowing that the final price of the product will need to attract a customer base that understands and appreciates the benefits of these raw

goods. Although they could be incorporated in wash-off products such as soaps and scrubs, the properties of the oils and butters will have more time to penetrate and absorb into the skin in a leave-on product.

Let's look deeper into each one of these nurturing ingredients.

## Bacuri Butter

Bacuri (*Mauritia flexuosa*) is an emollient butter, derived from the cold-pressed seeds of the fruit that grows on the wild bacuri. Locals use bacuri to help relieve insect bites and other skin problems. It is beautifully silky and golden when applied to the skin.

The soft butter ranges in color from brown to a deep, dark brown and features a rich, distinctive aroma to match. It contains a high amount of palmitic acid and provides non-greasy emollience with a fast absorption rate. Bacuri is also rich in methionine, an essential amino acid, the body's primary source of sulfur. Sulfur is used by the body to promote healthy skincare, hair and nails.

Consider pairing bacuri butter with other butters and oils as it has a strong, characteristic aroma. Its anti-inflammatory properties make it a welcome ingredient in soothing and conditioning soaps, moisturizers, hair products and more. Try it to address skin issues such as acne, eczema, rashes and as an anti-aging ingredient.

## Pracaxi Oil

Pracaxi oil is a nutty oil derived from the seeds

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of the *Pentaclethra macroloba* tree, which also grows across Central America and the Caribbean, specifically, Trinidad and Tobago. The high concentration of behenic acid lends to excellent moisturizing properties. Pracaxi is also rich in omega 9 and 6, both which are known to promote firmness in the skin by balancing collagen production. This oil is great for many skin conditions, including fading scars and stretch marks, as well as fading hyperpigmentation. It is also antibacterial, antiseptic, antifungal, antihemorrhagic and antiparasitic.

## Pequi Oil

Pequi (*Caryocar brasiliense*) is a nutrient-dense fruit known by its common names of Souari Nut or Cerrado's Gold. It is pronounced "pay-kee." Pequi oil is a seed oil. It is highly emollient and excellent to treat dry skin and skin issues such as eczema and psoriasis. Pequi is packed full of minerals such as copper, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus and potassium, as well as vitamin A. Pequi is also a great choice as an ingredient in haircare products.

## Cupuacu Butter

Cupuacu is the national fruit of Brazil. The butter comes from the pulp of the fruit. Pronounced "coo-poo-asso," it is cold pressed from the fruit seeds of the *Theobroma grandiflorum* tree. Cupuacu is a vegan alternative to animal-derived lanolin. It contains a high-water absorption capacity and therefore functions as skin hydrator. Known to "plump" skin, it is an excellent choice for use in creams and anti-aging products.

## Murumuru Butter

Murumuru butter comes from the seeds of the reddish-orange fruits of the murumuru (*Astrocaryum murumuru*) palm tree. Murumuru has a soft texture and is rich in vitamins A and C, omega 3, 6 and 9. It offers antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties. It is non-comedogenic, meaning it does not clog pores, unlike coconut oil and some other butters. Murumuru is known to help skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis, and to heal abrasions. It stimulates collagen and aids in trans-epidermal water loss. It is also excellent for sensitive skin.

Armed with the knowledge of these oils and butters, we can incorporate Amazonian goodness into three products: body and hair oil, solid body butter, and body cream.

## Rejuvenating Pequi Body and Hair Oil

### Equipment and Supplies

- Pyrex or stainless steel bowl
- Scale
- Spoon for mixing
- Funnel
- Packaging containers (bottles)

Batch size 16 oz./ 453.8 grams

- 1.6 oz./45g Olive oil (10%)
- 2.4 oz./68g Pequi oil (15%)
- 2.4 oz. /68g Pracaxi oil (15%)

## Brazilian Inspired Skincare

By MARLA BOSWORTH

- 8.64 oz./245g Avocado oil (54%)
- 0.16 oz./4.5g Vitamin E (1%)
- 0.16 oz. 4.5g Essential Oil (1%)

### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a Pyrex or stainless steel bowl until well combined. Using a funnel, fill bottles and top with lids.

### Pracaxi Body Butter Lotion Bar

#### Equipment and Supplies

- Double boiler
- Pyrex container or stainless steel bowls
- Heat source
- Scale
- Spoon/spatula
- Packaging containers (glass jars, plastic twist-up or tins)

Batch size 16 oz./453.8 grams

- 4 oz./113.4g Pracaxi oil (25%)
- 3.2 oz. /91g Avocado oil (20%)
- 4 oz./113.4g Cupuacu butter (25%)
- 1.6 oz./45g Bacuri butter (10%)
- 3.2 oz./91g Beeswax (20%)

### Directions

Add butters and beeswax to double boiler and

barely melt. Remove from heat. Add liquid oils; stir. You may need to slightly rewarm if the beeswax starts to solidify. When slightly cooling but not yet solidifying, add vitamin E and stir. Pour into containers. When completely cooled, screw on lids. Note: If you want to add essential oil to this recipe, simply reduce the avocado by 1-2 percent and add the essential oil at 1-2 percent.

### Bacuri Face and Body Cream

#### Equipment

- Double Boiler
- Stainless steel or glass bowl
- Immersion or Stick Blender
- Scale
- Heat-proof glass container
- Thermometer
- Heat source
- Spray bottle isopropyl alcohol
- Nitrile Gloves
- Hairnet
- pH strips or pH meter
- Citric acid
- Log for batch numbers that match on your cream or lotion containers.
- Jars and lids



# Brazilian Inspired Skincare

By MARLA BOSWORTH

Batch size 32 oz./907 grams

## Phase A

- 20.5 oz. /581g Distilled water (64%)

## Phase B

- 1.9 oz./54g Paxaci oil (6%)
- 1.6 oz./45.4g Bacuri butter (5%)
- 1.9 oz./53.9g Murumuru butter (6%)
- 2.56 oz./72.6g Avocado oil (8%)
- 1.9 oz./54g Emulsifying wax (6%)
- 0.96 oz./27g Stearic acid (3%)

## Phase C

- 0.32 oz./9g Optiphen Plus (1%)
- 0.32 oz./9g Essential oil (1%)

## Preparation

Put on gloves and hair net. Sanitize workspace, equipment, tools and jars with isopropyl alcohol.

Heat Phase A to 170° F. Keep covered to reduce evaporation.

At the same time, in double boiler, melt butters, emulsifying wax and stearic acid from Phase B. Once melted, remove from heat and add praxaci and avocado oils. If mixture clouds, put back on heat until clear. Keep oils/waxes at between 130-150°F.

When the water phase is 150-160° F and the oil phase is 140-150°F, slowly drizzle oil into the wa-

ter mixture while mixing with immersion blender to thoroughly incorporate all ingredients. Pulsate immersion blender on and off, stopping to stir with the blender occasionally for 10-20 minutes. This mixture will be very runny initially due to its high temperature. To speed up thickening, refrigerate for 15 minutes, stir and use a stick blender to break up and smooth out the film that forms on top, as well as lumps. Refrigerate again until the mixture cools completely. You may have to use the stick blender one more time for a completely smooth consistency.

Add Phase C to the mixture and incorporate with immersion blender. Test with pH strip or meter. If the pH is above 6, with gloves, add a small pinch of citric acid and stir for several minutes until dissolved. Test again and repeat until the pH is 6 or under, the optimal pH for Optiphen Plus.

Transfer cream to sanitary jars and add lids.

*Marla teaches formulating and business workshops for indie beauty entrepreneurs in the U.S. She launched Back Porch Soap Company in 1998 and formulated plant-based, organic and natural skincare products. Marla provides business strategy and product formulation mentorship for beauty business entrepreneurs. [www.backporchsoap.com](http://www.backporchsoap.com)*

# Shine Bright Your Unique Brand

By LA SHONDA TYREE

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You enjoy making natural soaps, lotions, scrubs, candles, bath bombs, lip balms--insert here what you are passionate about making. Thoughts of selling dance in your head, complete with grandiose ideas of packaging and vending at the local farmers market to customers who cannot get enough of your handcrafted goodness. Suddenly, you remember the last craft show where at least three other soap makers were also present. Ugh!

If you were observant enough, in that "secret mystery shopper" mode, you noticed something about each vendor that made him or her different from everyone else. This is called Unique Selling Proposition, or USP for short. This is something to learn and put into practice.

Know your unique selling proposition. Show potential customers what sets you apart from competitors. What is unique that will stand out in the minds of your customer?

First, understand that your customer is bombarded on a regular basis to gain attention by an unending number of brands.

Don't believe me? Did you ever visit a website and then go to Facebook or Instagram afterwards? What shows up? An ad featuring that company you just searched on the web. How in the world did they do that? You were just retargeted, my dear. The company wants another encounter so they can win you over by reiterating what makes them unique and why you should give them a try. They are trying to win over your brain to remember that they offer something unique.

You may feel that the beauty market is saturated.

You are right, it is, but it does not stop a new beauty company from coming on the scene who feels they have something unique you need or have not experienced before.

Look at the food industry. How many hamburger joints can be successful? You know those you are familiar with—McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, White Castle, Smash Burger, Shake Shack, the list goes on and on. That does not prevent a new hamburger joint from opening that feels they offer a burger you need to experience not already available in the marketplace.

McDonald's tells us what makes them special. They crafted a jingle around it to help you remember. You know how it goes, "Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun." Wendy's touts their burgers as "fresh, never frozen." You will also remember Burger King's "flame broiled" burgers and "Have it your way." They all sell burgers, yet they each convey a unique selling proposition in marketing.

One way to create a USP is to look at what your competition is not offering and meet that need. Remember the soap businesses at the craft show? You looked at what they offered and realized that your soaps are in some way different. Perhaps you thought about what sets you apart from your competitor and took pride in it. You did not know what it was called, but now you do.

Your unique selling proposition might be as distinctive as a family lotion passed down for generations from overseas when your great grandma came to the United States. Another possibility is

# Shine Bright Your Unique Brand

By LA SHONDA TYREE

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a standard that your business stands for. For example, Breyers Ice Cream takes pride in the fact that their ice cream is formulated with five ingredients you can easily pronounce.

Look at what you can offer customers that makes you special and unique. Perhaps you source ingredients locally from other businesses. This shows you are committed to supporting your local community and impacting other small businesses in your area, which is unique and attractive to many buyers. Yet another USP is that the ingredients are fair-traded and support a village of women in Africa. These examples demonstrate a social impact connection with customers who care about these things when shopping.

Let's look at packaging. Your unique selling proposition might be that you use recycled packaging or packaging that contains wildflower seeds so when disposed of, they sprout beautiful flowers. Sustainable packaging shows that you care about your environment.

Once you decide your unique selling proposition, what do you do with it? Use this in your messages to customers. Create social posts around your USP to get the message out about what sets you apart from your competitors.

Let us make something clear here, however. You do not have to mention your competitor's name to promote your USP. Continually share the message of your uniqueness without bashing other brands.

When you interact with a potential customer, bring to their attention what sets you apart from another brand. They need to know, so tell it.

Your website should showcase your unique selling proposition. Use imagery to visually portray your unique selling proposition. It does not have to be words. The adage, "Pictures are worth a thousand words," applies here. Find images that project your USP. Hire a lifestyle or product photographer to help capture that imagery.

Think about your unique selling proposition but do not overthink it. Your customers probably already tell you what your unique selling proposition is, so listen. If you are not selling yet, listen to what your test audience says. If you begin to hear the same thing over and over again, take notice. This is your customer telling you what they like about what you made. Use this golden information to help get the message out to others who are looking for what you have to offer. Do not get bogged down over what another business is doing. Use your unique selling proposition to position your business in the minds of potential customers. It may take some time and many touches with your message but keep telling it. Those who need what you have will come.

*La Shonda Tyree is a certified soap maker and owns Nyah Beauty in Kearny, NJ. She teaches entrepreneurship, coaches businesses and loves teaching. Connect with La Shonda: Instagram @nyah\_beauty; Facebook @nyahbeauty. She also hosts a Facebook group called, Level Up and Create.*





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# Conference Service for your Business

by RUTH ROMANO

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Online meetings have grown in popularity over the last year or so, for obvious reasons. Meeting online offers many benefits, including saving on travel time and expenses. Certainly, it is not quite the same as meeting in person, but it looks as if online meetings are here to stay. Many video conferencing services are available, so what should you consider before you choose one?

The best conference service for your business will depend on several factors. Consider the size

of your business, why you need conference services (e.g., one-off meetings or regular training sessions), the level of security required (e.g., confidential meetings) and any additional features such as recording capabilities.

## **Number of Participants**

If you are setting up a conference call with fewer than 10 participants, your requirements will differ greatly from those who need facilities for

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by RUTH ROMANO

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hundreds of participants. Therefore, think about the number of people who will use the service and the reason for the conference. Determine the purpose for the calls to help determine the numbers.

## Security

Security is an important consideration as you will not want just anybody to join the meetings. Look at the security policies of the provider and if and how you can control who can join the call. Think about the confidentiality of your meetings and what will be discussed.

## Mobile Access

If participants can join a meeting using a mobile device, this will give greater flexibility and choice for those who join the call. Make it as easy as possible so that location is not an issue.

## Audio and Video Quality

These can differ greatly between providers, so it is important to choose a provider with excellent video and audio quality. Internet connections of each participant will also play a role but look for HD video and audio capabilities for the best all-around experience.

## Other Features

A whole host of additional features with online meetings may or may not be relevant. Consider whether these features are necessary:

- Call recording
- Hold music

- Auto-assistant
- Custom greetings
- Text messaging
- Waiting rooms

Let's have a look at some popular conference service providers and what they offer.

## GoToMeeting

You may not have heard of it, but GoToMeeting is the easiest software to use. I have been using it for quite a few years now and it is reliable. You can host or join a meeting from your desktop or your mobile device. All it takes is one click to join a meeting, so it is a simple process for participants. The video and audio quality are excellent, and you also get additional features including:

- Screen sharing of your desktop, laptop, smartphone, or tablet
- Face-to-face HD video conferencing
- Intuitive, yet powerful, mobile access
- Meeting recording and transcription
- Internal and external instant messaging

GoToMeeting does not offer a free plan, but you can use the free 14-day trial to see if it is the right choice for you.

## Zoom

If you do not want a paid plan, your best option is Zoom, one of the most popular tools on the market. With the free plan you are limited to 40 min-



# Conference Service for your Business

by RUTH ROMANO

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utes for meetings with multiple participants, up to 100. However, if you are just meeting with one other person, your time is unlimited. In addition, you also get free access to features such as:

- Robust security encryption
- Waiting rooms and password protection
- HD audio and video
- Screen sharing and recording
- Hand raising and in-meeting chat

Zoom also offers paid plans if you want more advanced features.

## Google Meet

Google Meet is a replacement for Google Hangouts. If you are a Google Workspace user, then Google Meet is already part of your plan, so it makes sense to use it. Google Meet is easy to use. When you sign into your email account, cre-

ate a meeting and invite participants. That's it. In addition, the meeting tool offers additional features like:

- Built-in noise cancellation
- Live captioning
- No third-party plug-ins or software required
- Secure Google global infrastructure
- Encrypted video conferencing

As you can see, several options for conference services are available and many of the services offer free plans. Depending on your requirements, choose a service that fits the bill.

*Ruth owns an award-winning soap business based in the UK <http://www.ruthromano.com/> and runs soap classes. Ruth also teaches a cosmetics business and a natural skincare course. She is a nature lover with a special interest in plants and incorporating them in skincare.*

# End of Year Inspirations

By SARA GOLDING

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Another year has come and gone, faster than what many of us would have liked. While we fared better than the trials of 2020, it was not without its challenges. As we do when it is time to change the calendar, now is an opportune time to reflect on the last twelve months. We focus on where sales were soft or the challenges we faced in sourcing out of stock supplies. Even to absorb the ever-fluctuating price increases can easily overwhelm us. Instead, take a moment to find your gratitude and think on the positive. What worked well? What were the unexpected successes? Most importantly, what inspired you?

When I first started this business, I simply wanted to offset the costs of my supplies as I kept my family supplied with luscious soaps, soothing balms and indulgent oils. As time went on and I saw financial success, I realized that I wanted to grow my business. I also wanted this part time gig to provide a missing piece of my income after my divorce. For many years, this business did more than provide necessities, it was my disposable income, the money for vacations, museum memberships and supporting other local makers.

You see, the drive I have for my business changed

# End of Year Inspirations

By SARA GOLDING

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as my financial needs changed. My inspiration for success was redefined, and as a result, my goals changed along the way. I am now wrapping up my seventh year of business, and success has a very different appearance than when I first started out.

Running a small business is fraught with challenges. Daily obstacles are not always balanced out with the reward of completed tasks. Setbacks and underinformed decisions can cause mental stress, anxiety and imposter syndrome. In short, small business ownership is not for the faint hearted! Having goals helps keep you on the right track, plotting a carefully laid out direction. Inspiration, however, will continue forward momentum.

Figuring out what inspires you will push you forward when you feel down, unmotivated, or lost. Your inspiration is the why of it all. Why do you work the long hours? Why do you pull yourself away from your family time or cut into your social life with friends? What are you trying to accomplish by running a business, and what is the return you want to get back?

Every successful soap/bath/candle making business started with an inspiration. What is yours? The inspiration for your business might be like your goals, yet not the same. Your inspiration is generally emotionally based, while your goals are more tangible and specific.

Example: Your inspiration is a fancy, new designer purse. You cannot afford it on your normal budget, but it would be a symbol of your accomplishments. Without a small business to supply

the additional income to purchase the bag, you could not do it. Your goal would be to generate a specific dollar amount in revenue to pay yourself enough money to buy the bag.

Another example would be to create a business that is a household name. You are inspired by the ability for brands to be recognized simply by their logo or packaging, and you want your brand to be recognized, as well. You are inspired by companies whose products appear in holiday guides in major magazines. Your goal would be to create unique packaging solutions for your products and then procure the necessary wholesale contracts with national retailers X, Y and Z to gain valuable visibility and sales channels for the press releases.

The emotion you put behind your inspiration is what your clients will connect with. They want to see who you are, the person behind the product. By sharing your inspiration, they know what they are buying into when they purchase your product.

Success looks different to each of us. I would love to know what inspires you. Tag me @sunnygirlsundries on Instagram and share your inspirations.

Happy Holidays!

*Owner of Sunny Girl Sundries, Sara takes pride in her bath products in sustainable packaging. She uses her 20+ years of business experience to help handcraft soaps and still make time for daughter Isabell, rescue pup Lucy, and a collection of plants and flowers.*



# How Did They Do It?

By VENESSA PHIPPS

This is the first installment of a four-part series to explore successful individuals in our industry and how they got to where they are.

I am always curious about how people do the things they do. Interviewing the ladies for this article and learning how they work has been a fantastic and eye-opening journey for me; so much so, that after the interviews I made decisions concerning my own business. I hope you find gems to apply to your business or hobby to keep moving forward.



**Julie Koenig: Entrepreneur with Two Businesses**

As you will read, Julie is a Wisconsin soap and candle maker who has been in business for many years now. She is also currently the president of the HSCG (Handcrafted Soap & Cosmetic Guild).



**Venessa** - *I noticed that you have two websites. How did you get started with the two?*

**Julie** - I started with Kreative Kraftwerks in 2002. Back then, I was making woodcrafts. My dad was cutting out all the wood for me. I would paint, stain, and screw it together, whatever it took. I realized that I needed something consumable. When people buy woodcrafts, once they buy a few, they have all they need and then they don't buy them anymore. I switched over to making soy candles.

I did research to find out what the next best thing was in the candle industry, and it was soy wax. I made soy candles for several years, I eventually added soaps, lotions and other bath and body products.

How I got the two businesses: Joanna owned Ab-

## How Did They Do It?

By VENESSA PHIPPS

solute Soap. I met her at the HSCG conferences. She was selling her business which had a different following than mine. Her following preferred more of the natural, vegan products using essential oils.

**Venessa** - When you purchased Joanna's business, did her customers follow you? Or did you have to put in the work and build the niche yourself?

**Julie** - No, her target market came with me. They were following Joanna. I began making the exact same products that she was providing. I tweaked some, added more or discontinued others. They followed because it was basically Joanna's recipes that I started with.

**Venessa** - Each business has its own website. How do you keep up with the two?

**Julie** - Product-wise it is not too bad. I've got a



# How Did They Do It?

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system, so I'm able to keep up with the product demand. Keeping up with the websites, Facebook accounts and Instagram is another story. It's just extremely difficult to do both. It's not my strength. The updates do not get done as often as they should.

**Venessa** - *Is it just you? What do you have for staff?*

**Julie** - It's just me. I bring in temporary help as I need it. When I get big orders, I'll gather up my grandkids, neighbors or whoever wants to work for a few hours here and there. Otherwise, it's me. It is hard when you're doing everything.

**Venessa** - *Do you work a full time job outside of your soaping businesses?*

**Julie** - Not anymore. I retired as soon as I could. As soon as they said, "You are of retirement age", I took retirement. I worked for the state in Protected Status for the Department of Corrections. I was able to retire at 54. One of the hurdles to building and growing a business is working full time. I was using vacation days to attend shows and conferences. It's very difficult to do both.

**Venessa.**

*When you were doing both, were there times that you became overwhelmed?*

**Julie** - I was totally overwhelmed. I would go to my job and all I could think about was what I had to get done when I got home, because I might have a show that weekend or something. It was horrible. When going to conferences, I would need a week off. When I returned home, I still had orders to fill and maybe a show coming up, plus my job.

I knew it was time to retire when I found it too hard to focus on my full-time job. I was constantly thinking of the business. I knew one or the other had to give and it had to be done before the next season. I knew if I worked my full-time job, combined with the fall soaping season, I was probably going to have a nervous breakdown or something. I had been doing both since I started my business in 2002, somewhere between 11 to 12 years.

In the beginning, you can't afford to quit your full time job. It pays the benefits and provides you with a steady paycheck.

**Venessa** - *When things got difficult was there anything special that you did to keep your sanity and balance all the activities? You were juggling a lot.*

**Julie** - One of the main things I had to do was cut down on my offerings. I was one of those people, if I had a show and somebody asked for something I didn't have, I thought I had to provide it. That doesn't work because you're making it so that one person can buy it. The rest of the population doesn't want it. I was carrying way too many options. I'm doing that again now. I guess we're all at fault in that category. How do you cut down on your fragrances? You're carrying them because you love them. And now I can't make them anymore? But that's what I did, I cut back when I was working full-time and doing shows.

Unfortunately, I've digressed and I'm offering everything again. It's the nature of the beast.

I basically have one soap formulation for each of the businesses. I may tweak it once in a while,



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but for the most part I stick with the formula. The exception is a salt soap. I don't have hand soap and a face soap and this or that. I stick with my formula.

**Venessa** - *Are you a hot process or cold process soap maker?*

**Julie** - I was doing both, but for the last couple of years I have just made cold process.

**Venessa** - *In balancing all you are doing, did you ever feel like quitting?*

**Julie** - I would tell you, when I was still working my other job, I felt like quitting.

I toyed with it, if I quit my job then what? if I quit my soap making business, then what? I didn't want to quit my soap making business.

**Venessa** - *What are your thoughts on others who copycat your work?*

**Julie** - I haven't found anyone that copies me, and I don't look for it. There's nothing I can do unless they stole photos.

**Venessa** - *Now that you have retired and your business is booming, what were the actions that you put into place to obtain wholesale and private label accounts?*

**Julie** - I used to do anywhere from 12 to 18 craft fairs a year while I was working full time. I got some of my wholesale accounts from business people attending those craft fairs. They would like what they saw and ask, "Do you wholesale?" I got my very first wholesale account at a craft show. After I got that wholesale account, I made

sure I had wholesale information with me at every show. I was prepared in case someone asked.

My wholesale information was very simple, nothing fancy. I had a list of products and my prices and my minimum order, my name, address, phone number and website information.

The other way I get wholesale accounts is from joining online wholesale venues. For example, there used to be Etsy wholesale, Faire, IndieMe and others. The wholesale venues have a commission structure, so you need to pay close attention to the requirements.

What's nice about Faire and IndieMe, you build your own online store on their platform.

**Venessa** - *What is one of the struggles you had when your business started to grow?*

**Julie** - One of the struggles, my soap making business was in my house. I could never sit down without seeing something about the business. Whether I was cutting labels or tying ribbons, I was always doing something because it was always in my face. I had to get it out of my house.

I opened a storefront, in the back is where I had my work area. That didn't last long – only 2 ½ years. I had to decide what do I really want? Did I just want to make the product, or do I want to have a store?

I just wanted to make the product. I had my brother build a two and a half car garage on my property. I have in-floor heat and a window air conditioner. I have double doors in the back so that I can take pallets in and out as needed.



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I had to finance that increase. When you start making money, you can't just put it all back in the business if you plan to grow. You've got to set aside funds for building a shop or buying equipment or whatever required for going big, otherwise you're just going to stop yourself where you are.

**Venessa** - *When you bought the Absolute Soap business, how did you know that you hit the right market?*

**Julie** - I was in a good spot with my Kreative Kraftwerks business where I could take that chance. I had my own following, Absolute Soap offered products that I didn't sell. Absolute Soap was in Florida, I'm in Wisconsin. My customers didn't care if I used fragrance oils or essential oils. They didn't care if I use colorants or natural.

I just wanted to try a different market. It was a gamble. Joanna had some wholesale accounts and whether they were going to stay with me or not, I didn't know. She did a really good job of transitioning me into the business as the new owner. She put out a blog, put out a newsletter, provided me her contacts so that I could personally get ahold of them and introduce myself.

You can't just sell a business to somebody and then just walk away. The seller and the buyer have to work together; keeping customers engaged, letting them know of the process, and let them feel like they know you. By Joanna introducing me to her customers and talking about me, it made the customers feel like they knew me. The only thing that was going to change was that their products were being shipped from Wis-

consin by Julie instead of out of Florida by Joanna. The products stayed the same.

**Venessa** - *Do you think the market is oversaturated?*

**Julie** - I really don't. I think there's room for all of us because we're all doing something different. We all have different personalities. Everybody is selling in different ways.

**Venessa** - *How did you move into the private label market? I think a lot of our readers are curious about that.*

**Julie** - It kind of fell on my lap. I made sure that I was engaged with the Handcrafted Soap and Cosmetic Guild. On the Guild's website members are able to showcase their business. I put my business on the Guild's website with photos of my products. That's how I was found for private label.

I have two very large private label accounts. I had no clue how they found me, so I asked them. They both said they found me on the Guild's website.

It's not only putting your business in a gallery photo out there, because then it comes up under your state. They also have a spot called, "Public Info Requests." Individuals or companies can go in there and add a request and say, "I'm looking for somebody to make handcrafted hot process soap, starting order will be 500, could go to 10,000." If you respond and you meet their criteria, you could end up with some really large accounts.

**Venessa** - *When you were working out of your house, did you ever get one of those accounts?*

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**Julie** - No, I didn't get one of those until I built my shop. Had I gotten an account like that before I got my shop, I never would have been able to fulfill the order, it wasn't doable. I did not have the space.

When I say, it fell in my lap, I wasn't actively out there pursuing private label accounts, but my name was out there. My business was out there. That's how they saw me.

**Venessa** - And you were minding your own business?

**Julie** - Yes. Minding my own business and not everybody else's. You can't possibly grow your own business if you're worried about everyone else.

Also, if you are looking to get rich overnight, you are barking up the wrong tree. It took over 10 years for me to see a profit.

Venessa Phipps is owner of an online business <https://deganyaaromatics.com/>. She is a certified soap maker and teaches soap making and other natural products in Bucks County, PA. Find her online, YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/c/DeGanyaAromatics>, Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/DeGanyaAromatics/>, FaceBook [www.FaceBook.com/DeGanyaAromatics](http://www.FaceBook.com/DeGanyaAromatics) and Twitter <https://twitter.com/soap-makingplus>.



# Painting Candles with Candle Dye

By CINTHIA TUCKER

If you are looking for a fun way to add personality to your candle décor, dipping candles in wax dye is one of the easiest and most rewarding techniques. Some finishes may take practice but follow these instructions to start turning your plain pillars and tapers into artistic decor pieces.

Dipping candles can be a fun way to add color to candles or to add a special effect, such as a marbled look. You can change between colors to make beautiful, twisted ribbon curls up the side of pillars or dip just the bottom of tapers for a simple, modern look. Turn a white candle into a red and white festive candle or fancy them up with a marble pattern. The possibilities are endless when it comes to coloring candles. With a little extra work, you can make beautiful and unique candles to decorate your space or to give to a loved one.

For these techniques, try different types of waxes such as soy, paraffin, or beeswax, but it must be a pillar or taper wax. This means its melting point is at least 135°F. For the cutting and curling technique, use paraffin as soy wax is too brittle.

## Technique 1: Overdipping

Overdipping is the process of dipping candles into melted, dyed wax to give them a layer of color over the white. The more you dip, the thicker the layer of dyed wax will be. Dipping only once will result in a translucent color; dipping a couple of times yields a more solid look. Play with the ratio of dye to wax to achieve the color you like. Keep in mind that paraffin wax will dye more easily than soy, and thus yield more vibrant colors, though soy colors are perfectly acceptable.



## Materials Needed:

- 1 or more colors of dye
- Candle wax with a melting point of at least 135° F (57°C)
- 1 or more block, taper or pillar candles

## EQUIPMENT NEEDED:

- 1 container per dye that is large enough to fit the candle inside and can be used in a double boiler or on a heat source
- Wax melter or double boiler system. A pot of water on the stove is fine if that is all that is available.
- Paper towels or old rags
- Wooden stick or spoon for mixing
- Optional: A container of cold water. This will cool the candle wax between dips
- Optional: Wax paper to protect surfaces

# Painting Candles with Candle Dye

By CINTHIA TUCKER

### INSTRUCTIONS:



Step 1: Using a double boiler or wax melter, melt the wax and add enough dye to reach the desired color. Use a wooden spoon to stir the dye evenly.

Step 2: Holding the candle by the wick, dip the candle into the dye as deeply as desired for 1-2 seconds at a time. Repeat as many times as necessary to reach the desired color. More dips equal a thicker layer of that color.

Step 3: To add layers of colors to the candle, dip it into the container of cold water to cool off the wax. This is optional but makes the cooling-off process quicker. Repeat step two for every color you want to add. Try dipping the candle partial-

ly into the dyed wax to achieve different looks. An example is a candle dipped completely in red and then only the bottom half dipped in green.

### Technique 2: Marble Finish



### Materials Needed:

- A White block, pillar, or taper candle
- 1 to 3 colors of candle dye in block form
- Candle wax with a melting point of 135° F or higher

### Equipment Needed:

- A pot of hot water



## Painting Candles with Candle Dye

By CINTHIA TUCKER

- Newspaper or paper towels
- Toothpick or stick for stirring
- Optional: container of cold water large enough to fit the desired candle.

### Instructions:



Step 1: Bring pot of water hot enough to melt the wax, but not so hot that the candle will melt easily once put inside the water.

Step 2: Cut dye blocks into small shavings and add a little of the first color into the water. The more dye shavings, the fuller the marbling ef-

fect. With too much, however, a full layer of color around the candle will result.

Step 3: Use a toothpick or a stick to stir the melted dye which should be sitting at the top of the hot water.

Step 4: Holding the candle by the wick, give it a slight twist as you dip the candle into the hot water. This should take about a second or two. If you take too long, the candle might begin to melt.

Step 5: This step is optional but dipping the candle in a container of cold water will harden the wax faster.

Step 6: Repeat this process to add another layer to the candle. Be sure it is dry before re-dipping. If a drop of water remains on the candle during a dip, it will leave a bumpy surface.

### Technique 3: Cut and Curl



# Painting Candles with Candle Dye

By CINTHIA TUCKER

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The cut and curl technique is a little more difficult to perfect, but worth it. These unique candles turn out beautifully. They will look as if they were dressed up in ribbons. In this process, use the overdipping technique to create layers of colors. While the wax is still warm, use a sharp knife or clay sculpting tool to slice pieces of the wax and twist them into curls.

## Materials Needed:

- 2 or more colors of dye (If you want to choose white as the second color just use candle wax)
- Candle Wax with a melting point of at least 135° F
- 1 or more block, pillar, or taper candles

## Equipment Needed:

- 1 container per dye large enough to fit a candle inside and that can be used in a double boiler or placed on a heat source.
- Wax melter or double boiler system. It can be a pot of water on the stove, if available.
- Paper towels or old rags
- Wooden stick or spoon for mixing
- Optional: Wax paper for protecting surfaces.

## Instructions:

Step 1: Follow the steps for preparing wax in the colors of choice from the overdipping technique.

Step 2: Dip your candles into one color of wax about 10 times to build up a layer of that color.

Step 3: Dip your candles into the second color of your choice. Do this again about 10 times.

Step 4: Repeat steps 2 and 3 about 2-3 times.

Step 5: While the candle is still warm, use a sharp knife or sculptor's tool to slice a piece of the candle down vertically, leaving only an edge attached to the candle. Twist this piece 1-3 times and press it against the candle to stick it back onto the candle.

Step 6: Repeat step 5 on the other spaces of the candle as many times as desired, up to 4 times. If the candle cools off too much put it in warm water. As you gain experience, try other ways to cut, twist and curl candles.

Try these techniques soon and make your own beautiful, painted candles!

*Cynthia is a mom of three who runs her online candle business from home. She specializes in beautiful, cozy seasonal candles. Cynthia enjoys trying specialty candles and learning new tricks and tips to make unique, high-quality candles.*

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