

Freshly Baked for a Sweet Success

Cinnabon shares winning formula amid pandemic, with location, localisation and quality as key.



Cinnamon roll is a popular pastry and confection with a long history in the west. Recently it has gained a lot of traction in the Hong Kong F&B scene as more and more restaurants and bakeries have included it as their signature product. Cinnabon, one of the most famous cinnamon roll makers in the US with over 1,700 outlets worldwide, came to Hong Kong in February 2020 with its first outlet in Olympic Station, West Kowloon. In less than two years, it has rapidly expanded to three outlets, bringing 30 years history of freshly baked goods and special beverages across Hong Kong.

Steven Yang, Director of Cinnabon Hong Kong, decided to bring the brand to the city after his first bite of its cinnamon roll in the US. "Cinnabon is a well-known brand in the US and has a broad presence worldwide. With so many overseas returnees and travellers in Hong Kong who are familiar with this brand, we knew that the brand would make a success here."

He added, "it was encouraging to see how local consumers adore cinnamon roll, and that they are keen to try new flavours. We are excited to bring new products to the market."

Location and localisation are key

Launching and expanding the business amid COVID-19 lockdown, Yang shared his ingredient for success.

"I believe that choosing our outlet location is a critical factor. Our Olympic Station branch is right next to a supermarket, which attracted high traffic during the pandemic and boosted our take-away sales. While our Tung Chung branch is also located in a large shopping centre in a

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residential area, both branches have helped establish a solid residential customer base. Our latest branch in Causeway Bay has further boosted our presence in this gourmet hotspot, which will broaden our brand recognition in the local market."

To adapt to the likings of the local consumers, Cinnabon Hong Kong also adjusted the sugar proportion of its baking products, as well as created specialty coffee and beverages exclusive for the Hong Kong market. While these strategies successfully attracted new customers, the company also launched a mobile app with membership loyalty programme to retain customers.

Cinnabon's strategy to strive in the competitive F&B market, Yang added, is to

offer pastries that are baked on the spot at an affordable price. This persistence of freshly baked belief not only makes tasty product, but also equips its staff with different and relevant skillsets.

A reliable business companion

Looking forward, with the right timing and location, Yang hopes to continue to expand the numbers of stores in the city. He recalled his experience in opening the second outlet: "At that time, we only had limited market knowledge in the leasing scene in Hong Kong. Fortunately, InvestHK introduced us to one of the major property developers. After a few meetings, they invited us to operate in one of their flagship shopping malls."

Yang appreciates the help from InvestHK to the launching of Cinnabon Hong Kong. "InvestHK has provided a lot of recommendations which help us save time and cost. They have connected us to their network and opened doors for us, which is beneficial to our business expansion," he said.



Cinnabon Hong Kong

- Originated from Seattle, US, Cinnabon was founded in 1985 and specialises in freshly baked cinnamon roll, cinnamon products and frozen drinks
- Its first Hong Kong outlet was opened in February 2020. Currently has three outlets in Olympic Station, Tung Chung and Causeway Bay

 cinnabon.com