

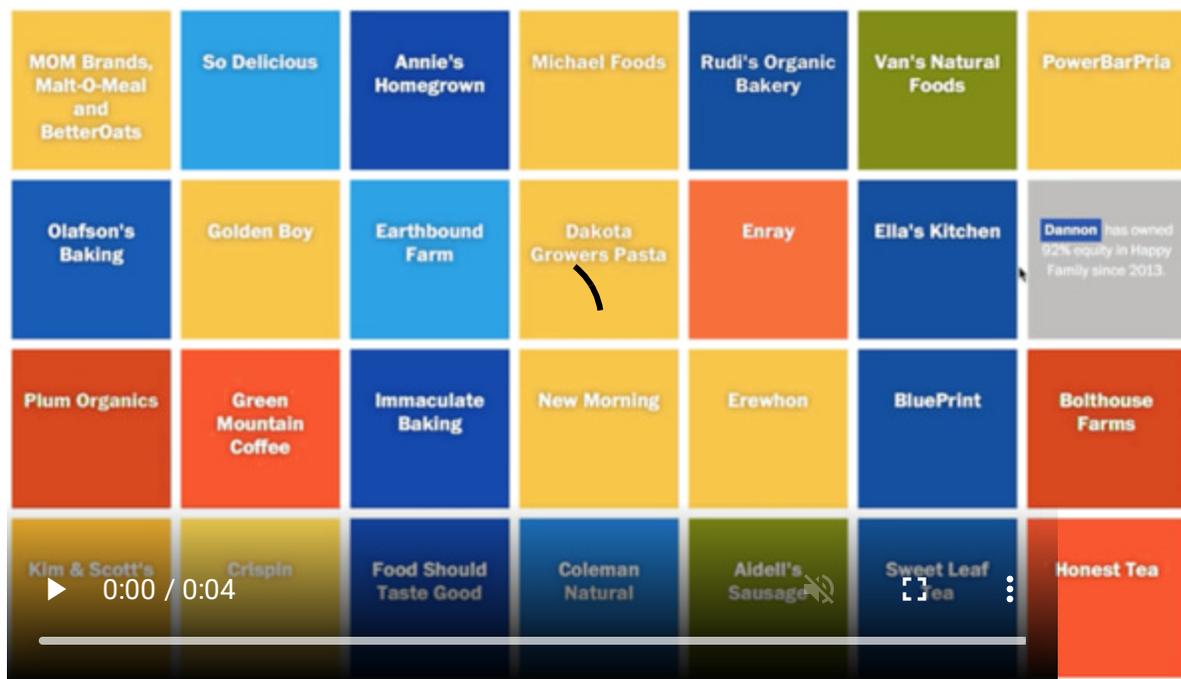
These Are The Giant Corporations That Own Your Favorite Organic, Mom-And-Pop Brands

FC fastcompany.com/3046935/these-are-the-giant-corporations-that-own-your-favorite-organic-mom-and-pop-brands

Odwalla Juice has a classic startup story: Three musicians launched the company from a backyard shed in 1980, using a hand juicer to make fresh juice for restaurants in the Bay Area. A couple of decades later, the company was so successful that its investors voted to sell it to Coca-Cola. The sale prompted one of the founders to quit and say Odwalla had essentially lost the essence of the brand.

Odwalla isn't alone in selling out its hippy roots to be taken under the wing of a large corporation.

Walk down the aisle at Whole Foods, and the chances are good that the independent-looking brand on the label is actually owned by a larger conglomerate. Kellogg owns the Kashi brand of cereals along with Fruit Loops. General Mills owns Cascadian Farms along with Count Chocula. Last year, soon after macaroni and cheese-maker Annie's Homegrown talked about the struggle to stay independent; it ended up selling to General Mills as well.



See the interactive graphic [here](#)The Washington Post

If you're the kind of person who wants to know where your money is actually going when you buy these brands, a recent infographic in the *Washington Post* can help. It tracks 92 popular organic brands that are now owned by food giants like Pepsi and Unilever, based on research

more emphasis on profits for their own sake. Some changes have included less commitment to organic ingredients, sourcing cheaper ingredients from far more distant locations, and pressure to weaken organic standards.”

In a few cases, brands have kept some independence even after acquisition. Ben and Jerry’s managed to become a B Corp—meaning they can consider the community and social impact in business decisions, instead of just the bottom line—long after they were bought by Unilever. They also continue to argue that GMO ingredients should be labeled, even while their parent company fights on the other side of the battle. But they may be the exception rather than the rule.

By mapping out ownership, Howard hopes to help consumers make more informed choices. “Consumers who support organic values, like avoiding transgenic ingredients, may not realize that for some of the organic foods they buy, the money ultimately goes to firms that spent millions to defeat initiatives to label transgenic ingredients in West Coast states,” he says. “By paying attention to ownership they can better support the idealistic firms that continue to refuse enormous buyout offers.”