**TROUBLE SHOOTING**

**COATING CHOCOLATE**

Keep in mind that coating chocolates differ in their chemical makeup from real chocolates and as such must be handled differently. Many people prefer the convenience of working with coating chocolates because the tempering process is eliminated. However, care must still be taken in the handling to ensure satisfactory results. The most common problem encountered in working with coating chocolates is when the chocolate becomes thick and clumpy. This can occur for several reasons:

1. **Chocolate is too hot**

Remember that coating chocolates will not withstand high temperatures. The optimum melting temperature should be between 110 – 120 degrees. **\*Refer to our “How to Melt” section for the best method for you.** Melt slowly; stir recurrently, and at a lower temperature setting. Chocolate is not immune to burning, particularly at moderate or high temperatures. Overheated chocolate will get very thick and most likely harden up and not re-melt. Burned chocolate will taste burnt and is best discarded rather than being used. If you have gotten your chocolate too hot, immediately remove it from the heat source. Allow it to cool and then begin stirring. Depending on how far you have overheated your chocolate, this process of cooling it down and stirring it may get it to a more workable consistency. Alternately, a few *Paramount Crystal* ***(C.C.)*** flakes can also be helpful to achieve proper consistency.

1. **Chocolate is old**

Coating chocolate has a shelf life of 3 – 6 months. However, several factors can influence that time frame such as how the chocolate was stored, the temperature it was stored at, humidity, and simply keeping it beyond its expiration date. All of these nuances can result in a chocolate that is now *“bloomed”* or one that has a somewhat dull, cloudy appearance. If you suspect this is the state your chocolate is in, it is advisable to not try and “salvage” it by incorporating “fresh,” melted chocolate. Instead, try using a few *Paramount Crystal* ***(C.C.)*** flakes to help thin the chocolate as you melt it.

1. **Contact**

Contact with moisture, be it water or steam, should be avoided as it contaminates chocolate and causes it to seize. Any traces, even in the smallest amounts, can affect the consistency. Therefore watch your utensils, especially if they get washed during the melting process that small beads of liquid don’t come in contact with your melted chocolate.