The Grocer

Focus On: Confectionery 2015
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Overview

Britain has the sweetest tooth in Europe, forking out more on confectionery than any other country. What's more, our tastes are getting sweeter: UK confectionery sales have risen to nearly £11.5bn in the past year, 5.6% more than in 2011. What's driving this? What impact is this having on the nation's waistlines? And how long can it continue? We'll be answering these questions and more in three features on 1 October. To get involved, please contact the writers below.

1. **Confectionery: innovation by Natalie Brown (natalie_brown@live.co.uk)**

The war on sugar, retail deflation, cost volatility… confectioners are battling stiff headwinds right now. Yet still, they've managed to grow sales, with one of the most productive NPD pipelines in fmcg going into overdrive. So what have been the biggest confectionery launches of the past five years? Which have stuck and which have begun to fade after a year or two? And what can we expect to see in the future?

Themes:

Brands: This feature will pay close attention to the brand performances and how they are using NPD and marketing and ads to drive sales. Which brands are the strongest performers and why? Who's being left behind?

Retailers: This feature will pay close attention to how different retailers are approaching the confectionery market and who is performing the best and worst. What do retailers say the strongest launches have been and why? And how are they developing their own label lines?

Price, promotions and premiumisation: Despite the ongoing price deflation in the wider grocery market, average prices have risen by 1.1% in the past year. This feature will focus on the factors that have driven this rise in average price.

Top 10 launches from the past five years: We will be crunching the numbers on the markets biggest launches from the past five years. Which have achieved the greatest sales and how? And which have genuine staying power? Have any made a big splash in their first year or two on shelf and then struggled to maintain momentum?

Innovation: Profiles of eight NPD, four from the UK and four from elsewhere in the world. These products can be chocolate, candy, gum or part of the new breed of wholefood inspired, 'healthier' confectionery, including a high res image, launch date, rsp, stockists and any other pertinent information.

2. Confectionery: consumption habits by Natalie Brown (natalie_brown@live.co.uk)

The way we eat confectionery is changing: fewer of us are buying it on impulse and wolfing it down on the go; more are consuming it at home in the evening with friends and family. How is this change in behaviour impacting product and format development and promotional mechanics? What's prompted this change? Has the removal of confectionery from tills played a role? And how are changing formats impacting the average price per kilo paid by consumers?

Themes:

Brands: This feature will pay close attention to the brands that have benefitted and suffered as a result as changing consumption habits. How are brands responding to the sharing trend? What's next in terms of product and format development? How important is hitting specific price points and who has lowered pack sizes in order to hit them?

Retailers: This feature will include insight from retailers on how they are looking to drive the sharing trend and how the removal of confectionery from some retailers' checkouts may have impacted the way people buy and consume chocolate and sweets? How are retailers using price and promotions to cash in on growth of at home consumption?

Launches: We profile four confectionery launches that have been designed to appeal to shoppers who want to consume their confectionery at home in the evening, detailing launch date, RSP and retail channels.

3. Confectionery: the obesity debate, by Beth Gault (beth.gault@thegrocer.co.uk)

The day of reckoning could be approaching for confectioners as the health debate rumbles on. "Expect to see continued attention from health groups," says Kantar, "Expect to see more attempts from manufacturers to present a positive image, through portion control, slightly healthier options and positive messaging." Is there a correlation between national obesity levels and per capita consumption? And what are confectioners doing to answer critics?

Themes

Reformulation/portions: This feature will play close attention to how brands are either reformulating existing products or developing new products with healthier credentials. Another focus will portion sizes. What are brands doing to deter consumers from pigging out and eating several portions in one go? This is particularly pertinent given the growth in 'sharing' packs. Do people really share them?

Pressure from retailers/government: Now the government has imposed a sugar levy on soft drinks, is confectionery next. What are the arguments for and against this? And with most of the big retailers having made pledges regarding health and wellbeing, how influential are retailers when it comes to driving change?

Confectionery alternatives: We are also interested in the growing space whole food alternatives to confectionery are winning as the war on sugar rumbles on. We profile eight confectionery launches (four chocolate; four sugar confectionery) that reflect brands' answer to the health debate. These could be reformulated or fortified products or wholefood confectionery alternatives.