

# The Grocer

**Focus On: Snack bars by James Halliwell (jameshalliwell@gmail.com)**

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## The Story

**Fuelled by more and more NPD targeting the healthy snacking trend, sales are booming with the category gaining an extra 500,000 shoppers and the big boys in confectionery are taking note. So who is winning in this fight for a slice of the healthy snacking market? And what are the ingredients for a successful snack bar?**

## Themes:

**The perfect health bar:** Consumers are going mad for anything with 'healthy' connotations, especially if they have the added 'free from' halo effect. The fruit and granola sub-category has really capitalised on this trend. What is the key to success here? To what extent are consumers influenced by certain health claims e.g. 'raw', 'paleo', 'protein' and 'no added sugar'? And what are the turnoffs?

**Not-so-healthy sales:** Fruit and granola may be flying off the shelves, but other 'healthy' bars are relatively flat. Why is this? Could it be down to more concerns about 'holistic health' i.e. the desire for high nutritional content, rather than simply calorie counting?

**Innovation:** NPD is fuelling the growth of this market. The number of new SKUs in the overall snack bar category shot up by 25% last year, and most of these sit in the growing fruit and granola sub-category. How are these new launches doing? And what do they say about the sector?

**Prices:** The industry has long faced criticism for making sugary confectionery cheaper than healthy options. If the snack bar category is anything to go by, the message seems to have hit home. Snack bar brands and private label are reducing their base price in order to fit with an every-day-low-price model and the £1 price point continues to be the benchmark, with a third of shoppers not paying more per pack.

**Breakfast bars:** They were all the rage a few years ago. Yet this year they are down, despite the growing trend for breakfast on-the-go. What is going on here? Is it down to the rise of other on-the-go options such as porridge, breakfast drinks etc.

**Innovations:** We profile eight innovations that ideally have not been featured in The Grocer before.

## Key questions the feature is likely to address:

- What consumer trends have impacted the category over the past year?
- How have promotional strategies (both in terms of price and marketing) evolved?
- How have individual retailers' strategies impacted the market?
- How has merchandising changed in the market?
- What impact has own-label had on branded players?
- What's next for the category?