

The Grocer

Focus On: Confectionery

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FEATURE ONE:

Chews and gummies

By Megan Tatum wordsbymegantatum@gmail.com

Sour tastes are hot property in sweet confectionery – so much so, that the trend is playing out across wider grocery. Numerous big brands have brought out sour lines that claim to give tastebuds an extreme hit. So why is the flavour so popular now? Despite declining volumes, could this be a bright spot in the category? Which brands are capitalising on the trend? Who is doing it best and who are the core customers: adults or kids?

Sour sweets: There have been several recent launches in this category. Meanwhile, only one brand in the top 10 confectionery has increase volumes (and by double digits), famous for its specialty in sour flavours. Which other brands are launching sour products or ranges? And how much of brand growth do existing sour products account for – are sour classics making a comeback?

Wider grocery: Sour candy is on the rise – but it's just part of a broader trend in grocery. Other examples include sour ice cream and sour jelly. Meanwhile, one brand has partnered with a Manchester drinks brand to sell its sour slushies. Where does sour candy take its inspiration from? Are there interesting examples of category crossover?

Price increases: How are brands navigating the balance between raising prices to keep up with falling volumes and compensate for the soaring inflation (upwards of 20%) hitting sugar? Those that have increased prices slower have performed better – but what's the trick to hitting the right number? And how much control do brands ultimately have over pricing?

Health vs sugar: As consumers keep a closer watch on their sugar consumption, how can confectionery brands keep sales strong? Is reformulation in the cards for many brands? How do sour flavours sit with this – is it more difficult to create sour gummies with less sugar?

HFSS: With less fixture space available in front of store, how are brands maintaining visibility? A couple years on from when it first took effect, how has HFSS continued to affect confectionery products? Do they still have more to do?

Innovation: Who is innovating in the category, and what are they doing? What other new flavours or formats have been particularly successful? We will profile four new products or ranges, ideally ones that have not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each.

FEATURE TWO

Gum and mints

By Stephen Jones Stephen.Jones@TheGrocer.co.uk

Old-fashioned gum just doesn't cut it anymore, it seems. It's all about 'gum plus'. That is, gum that offers more: sugar-free gum, caffeinated gum, plastic-free gum. So what are the most popular added benefits? Which brands are pioneering them? And could this be the start of higher expectations for a product than better breath and a good old chew?

More than gum: Do consumers expect more of gum these days? Or are the gums with added benefits a way for brands to differentiate themselves at a time when discretionary spending is tight? What are the trends? What's driving NPD?

Caffeine: Iceland's caffeinated gum, fronted by boxer Tyson Fury, is one example in this area. Meanwhile, one brand has trademarked its gum in the UK. Is caffeinated gum an alternative to more expensive coffee? Do shoppers see it as a pick-me-up? Does it appeal to the gym-going crowd?

Plastic free: Some brands are going big on plastic-free gum. Who else is going plastic-free? How expensive is reformulation? And do customers even care they're chewing gum?

Countering sweet cravings: Another brand claims to tackle sweets cravings. Is there an opportunity here for other brands?

Mints: How do the trends in mints mimic those in gum? Sugar-free mints are among recent launches in this category, suggesting that here too, lower sugar is an aim.