

The Grocer

Focus On: Confectionery 2015

Publishing: 3 October
Advertising deadline: 17 September
Submissions deadline: 11 September

At the end of 2014, one of the year's fastest growing brands, made a bold statement: The age of confectionery is coming to an end. Was this just a soundbite, hyperbole or a statement of fact? This year's Focus On: Confectionery will explore the state of the British chocolate and sugar confectionery sectors and the burgeoning 'healthy' market, in three distinct articles.

The New Confectionery, by Vince Bamford (vince.bamford@thegrocer.co.uk)

There's been a quiet revolution going on in UK retailers in response to the very noisy backlash against sugar. With many supermarkets banishing chocolate and sweets from their checkouts, a new breed of natural, 'healthy' confectionery (characterised by cold pressed fruit & nut bars and sweets made of 100% fruit) has been moving in. So which brands and retailers are at the forefront of this revolution? And how are the giants of confectionery responding?

Themes:

Brands: This feature will pay close attention to the brands at the forefront of this revolution, exploring how they are using factors such as price, promotions, NPD, marketing and ads to drive sales. Which brand is the best seller in this burgeoning market? How big can the market get? And how are brands looking to sustain growth?

Traditional confectionery: Central to this story will be discussion of how traditional confectionery brands have responded to these new rivals. After being kicked out from the checkouts at many supermarkets, how are they now being merchandised? Are any brands looking to reformulate their products, reduce pack sizes or enter this new field of confectionery?

Retailers: This feature will pay close attention to how different retailers are responding to the sugar debate in terms of the kind of confectionery they're stocking and where they're putting it. Of course we're interested in what the multiples grocers are doing, but we also want to know what convenience, symbol and traditional newsagents are doing. Which retailers are most important to this new breed of confectioners and which channels will be most important to them in the future?

Merchandising: This will explore how merchandising has changed since the removal of so-called guilt lanes in many supermarkets. Have confectioners invested in featured space promotions at other prominent parts of the store as a result? And where are the crucial parts of the store for 'health' brands; specialist health food fixtures, impulse or elsewhere?

Innovation: Profiles of eight NPD inspired by the health debate, listing the rsp, stockists and any pertinent details about the product and could include 'healthier' chocolate and sugar confectionery, so long as the products are explicitly marketed on health grounds, or fruit-based products.

Chocolate, by Emma Sturgess (emma-sturgess@hotmail.co.uk)

Chocolate is struggling: value may be up slightly but volumes have slipped; a year ago it was in much finer fettle, with milk chocolate with added ingredients in double digit growth. Why is this? To what extent has the market been impacted by the healthy living trend? Which brands are in growth? Who is in decline? How important has innovation been to brands' performances in the past year? How will the coming months pan out?

Innovation: Profiles of eight chocolate NPD, detailing launch date, RSP and retail channels.

Online Presence: Online is an increasingly important channel for confectioners. So which brands have the best online presence on retailers' e-commerce sites? We will reveal all with exclusive analysis from Brandview.

Sugar confectionery, by Emma Sturgess (emma-sturgess@hotmail.co.uk)

Sugar confectionery appears to be in better shape than chocolate at the moment, with one measure of the market (Kantar's) putting it in both value and volume growth and another (IRI's) revealing the market's biggest player to have put an extra £11m through the tills in the past year. What's behind this growth? Who are the winners and losers of the past year and why does the market seem to be immune to the furore over sugar?

We will be exploring the factors affecting the market and individual brand performances. Particularly NPD, price and promotions, ads and marketing and retail channels with particular interest in how different retailers are approaching the category. And what about pick n mix?

Innovation: Profiles of eight sugar confectionery NPD, detailing launch date, RSP and retail channels.

Retro Sweets: With retailers such as Spun Candy and Mr Simms doing growing trade by specialising in retro sweets such as rock and bons bons, what potential is there for the craze to transfer into grocer?

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?
- We profile four new products or product ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before, including launch date and RSP.