The Grocer

Focus On: Confectionery

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Feature one: Shrinkflation
By Rob Brown rob_j_a_brown@hotmail.com

It is the mysterious case of the disappearing chocolate bar. All across Britain, household names in chocolate are shrinking. This bar trims from 23g to 20g, that sharing pack goes from 189g to 175g. The cause? Shrinkflation has hit the chocolate category. So just how many grams are likely to be shaved off as suppliers adapt to rising inflation? What will the impact be from supply chain costs over the next year? And what other tactics will suppliers employ to manage costs?

Big brands: Most major chocolate brands have been in decline this year, both in value and volume terms. What can they do to turn things around?

Challengers: Concerns around health, sustainability and ethics provide obvious points for challengers to take market share. How are they faring?

Consumer habits: Shrinking product sizes have been known to cause backlash in the past, so how will shoppers react this time? And how are other factors changing how consumers behave?

Own label and discounters: With the cost of groceries rising, own label and discounter ranges stand to benefit. How can they capitalise on this trend?

Innovations: We will profile 4 new products or ranges that have ideally not appeared in The Grocer before. We need launch date, rsp, and a hi-res picture of each

Feature two: HFSS
By Matt Chittock matt.chittocknew@googlemail.com

The HFSS rules have not been easy on any of the grocery categories affected. But few are as threatened by the restrictions as confectionery. Sugar is a core ingredient in chocolate and sweets alike, often structurally necessary. As such, suppliers and retailers will have to radically rethink once restrictions take effect in October. So how will the category change when it can no longer rely on impulse sales on aisle ends? What innovation is resulting in viable non-HFSS products? And will the HFSS rules ultimately lead to Brits eating fewer chocolates and sweets?

In-store: Many of Britain's most popular chocolates and sweets will no longer be allowed on aisle ends and other promotional locations in store because they are classified as HFSS. How will this affect how they are merchandised in the aisles? And what impact will it have on sales?

Innovation: Non-HFSS products have appeared in soft drinks, morning goods and much besides. Can the same be done for confectionery?

Health: Shoppers say that health is more important to them since the pandemic. How true is this proving in confectionery?

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Feature three: Free from confectionery
By Emma Weinbren Emma.Weinbren@thegrocer.co.uk

When Mars' vegan chocolate range was delisted from Tesco, Sainsbury's and Morrison this year, it highlighted an important issue. A dispute had broken out over whether the products were truly dairy free given that they were made in a factory that handles milk. It shows the challenges facing confectionery as shoppers clamour for more plant-based products while suppliers and retailers fight over a competitive emerging category. So what is the future for vegan confectionery from big brands? How will the dispute over which aisles to display these products on be resolved? And what input are challenger brands having?

Health: While allergies and ethical concerns drive plant-based consumption, health is also a key factor. So what are confectionery suppliers doing to show their plant-based health credentials, especially in light of the HFSS rules due to take effect in October?

Major brands: Many major chocolate brands now offer plant-based ranges. How is this helping to expand the category? And how are consumers responding?

Challengers: New brands claim they are nimbler than established ones, better able to experiment and pivot. How are these advantages playing out in plant-based confectionary?

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Feature four: Gum and mint
By Rob Brown rob_j_a_brown@hotmail.com

After years of lost footfall, gum is showing strong signs of growth. The last couple of weeks have even shown similar sales levels to what was happening before the pandemic. With the top 10 brands in growth, there's plenty of chewing to go around. And while mint has not quite recovered to pre-pandemic levels, it's also seen plenty of growth over the past year. So how has gum and mint changed over the past two years? And what trends are shoppers looking for now that things have opened up again?

Brands: Mentos has made strong gains over the past year and looks to be catching up to some of its nearest rivals. How has the brand done it, and can it keep growing?

Own label: Own label continues to grow behind branded in gum and mint. With rising living costs likely to make cheaper lines more attractive, can own label grow over the next year?

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