

Candy & Snack TODAY

CATEGORY INTELLIGENCE FOR DECISION-MAKERS



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Sweets Candy Catalog in Huntington, NY

Three top marketers from leading candy suppliers offer their take on keeping novelty candy sets fresh and effective.

Respecting Novelty

THERE IS NOTHING CHILDISH about the fierce competition in the novelty market, and smart buyers and merchandisers need to keep up with the myriad of items and retailing trends

Not surprisingly, the best sources for up-to-the-minute and worthwhile information are experts within the segment. Here, top marketers from three leading suppliers explain how to maintain best practices in the novelty market



Auerbach

Answering Three Vital Questions

by Rob Auerbach, CandyRific LLC

There are three major constituents to every successful novelty candy set, revolving around three vital questions

What do the ultimate consumers want, what do their moms want (or will they tolerate) and what do retailers need?

Not all kids, who are the biggest consumers of novelty items, are alike. Different kids want different things from their candy. Some love chocolate, some love sour, some love chewy, some want their candy to last a long time, some want to play with their candy and some want many pieces.

The list of physical attributes of what these consumers want is long and varied, and probably endless.

However, the underlying emotional purchase motivators for younger consumers are much more common.

They want excitement and they want the

taste of their favorite items to be consistent and dependable

They want to try new things that look cool and are fun to eat

They want the novelty candy section to seem larger than life so they can think about what they want for a while, dream about what the candy will taste like and then do the same thing when they come back to the store next time

Ultimately, for kids a well-stocked and merchandised section is like a playground

There is a lot more agreement on what moms want in the novelty candy section

First, they want their kids to make a choice fast. They also want them to be happy with what they pick even though they say 'No, you can't have that' a few times in the process

Moms want the section to be organized in a way that allows them to quickly determine the prices of the products

Of course, they want the candy not to be messy when eaten, depending on where and when it is consumed, and they need to get a reasonable value

Retailers — what do they need? Sales and profits first, and that's common across the board. Generally retailers also want to drive big profit margins from novelty candy sections

They might also want to make a statement with the novelty candy section and this will have a large impact on how big the set is, where it is placed in the store and what products are included

With these parameters met, the ultimate novelty section will probably include:

A. Tried and true winners, such as Topps Baby Bottle Pops, Wonka's top items and Hubba Bubba gum rolls, along with the newest releases from these same suppliers since they are the 'dependable' products that young consumers love to come back to

B. Other "best brands" in key formats that consumers love, such as spray candy, sour candy and chewy candy, with a reasonable range of new exciting flavors

C. A range of licensed candy that is topical and rotates every six to 12 months, keeping it fresh for consumers and current for retailers

D. Novelty candy that is interactive in a way that really engages the imagination. Toys combined with candy and interactive packaging are about the play value as much as they are about the candy. Of course, moms want these products to be safe and retailers want them to be cleanly merchandised

All of this depends on retailers working with the handful of vendors who have a proficient supply chain, while making sure they are driving margins by rotating licensed and novelty items and probably rotating vendors to create a competitive, cost-conscious environment

In addition, smart retailers should look to drive margin through buying bigger on key items and promoting them with off-shelf space as well reducing supply chain costs through FOB shipping programs

Finally, to my mind, the ultimate novelty section should be big — at least eight feet — and in a prominent location in the store. It should be easily identifiable by consumers on sight, with engaging POP materials. And it should be in a location highly trafficked by moms and kids

This will deliver the imaginative candy playground kids want to come back to every week, and mom might not even mind stopping there either. Yes, that would be nice

CONTRIBUTORS

Rob Auerbach is president of CandyRific, LLC, and has been working in the toy and candy industry since 1986. His credits include items for Hasbro, Mattel and Crayola. Today, CandyRific works with major licences, including Disney, Snickers, M&M's and Peeps