

## TEMPORARY TREATS MOVIE MAGIC

Retailers can bring in sweet sales with limited-edition candy that ties into a movie's release

By KELLY GATES

Though their days are numbered, limited-edition sweets with movie themes are building excitement in the candy aisle.

Some retailers create elaborate displays with a wide array of sweets, candy collectibles and licensed products from other departments. Others simply swap out everyday candies for those touting film-focused wrappers.

Whatever the strategy, industry experts note that supermarkets are in a position to cash in on candy during these short-lived promotional periods. Although these treats are temporary, opportunities abound year-round for blockbuster-based promotions.

Dahl's Food Markets, Des Moines, Iowa, is one supermarket that likes to stick to the basics. According to Mark Brase, vice president of marketing there, Dahl's leaves it up to suppliers to mix in movie-focused candy on occasion.

There are a number of factors that retailers should consider when offering additional sales opportunities. Candyrific makes 3-D movie characters. A battery-operated Shrek fan that sits atop a vial of candy is one item in the company's line.

According to Rob Auerbach, president, Candyrific, the Louisville, Ky.-based manufacturer of licensed candy products, whether a movie is gender-specific or gender-neutral also matters. "Kung Fu Panda," for instance, was more of a boy's movie, so Auerbach opted to pass up the opportunity to make candies boasting licensed characters from the film. It didn't make sense to invest in something that only targeted half of all young consumers, he said.

Certain varieties of candy are higher risk than others and should be considered accordingly, added Auerbach.

"When 'Shrek the Third' came out, Mars simply did a wrap with a Shrek label, a change that can only help sales and won't deter anyone from buying the candy," he noted. "It's also a surer thing when a brand like M&M's is involved, because they do a lot of advertising on their own."

Auerbach advises supermarkets that want to boost sales to get more creative

with displays. Instead of stocking each licensed good in its corresponding category, everything should be together in one location — candy bars, lollipops, cereal bowls, plush toys and anything else bearing the brand.

"Retailers can make increased sales by piggybacking off of other licensed products, too," he said. "They can put one set of licensed products on an endcap and another set on an adjacent endcap, making licensing the theme that ties it all together."

Auerbach cited High School Musical and Hannah Montana as a perfect pairing. "High School Musical 3" will be in theaters this October. "Hannah Montana: The Movie" will not be out until May of 2009, but the brand also has a music theme, which connects the two. And, using something like Hannah Montana, which has an ongoing television series on the Disney Channel, creates enough inertia to keep kids interested whether there is a movie out or not, he said.

