Lofty Goals = Strong Sales

The NAS Oceana, Va., main store candy department is a vibrant area that stocks both traditional fare and the newest candy items currently on the market. With 548 SKUs in its everyday candy assortment and many more brought in for holiday seasons, this dynamic department is aiming for even sweeter sales results this year.

SALES, ASSORTMENT

According to Department Manager Eliot Fitzpatrick, the department posted fiscal 2009 sales of $470,008, which trumped the same period in fiscal 2008 sales of $457,953, and 425 more for Christmas, he noted. “For Valentine’s Day, we have 250 additional SKUs, and for Easter, we add 275 items.”

The entire candy assortment is displayed in various configurations for a total of 71 linear feet and seven side wings on endcaps. Godiva fixtures (20 linear feet) and See’s candy cart (6 linear feet) account for nearly 37 percent of that space.

Rounding out the display space are the front lines peg area, with 10 linear feet; front lines fixtures, with three 6 linear feet sections, and the seven endcap side wings.

TOP SELLERS

During fiscal 2009, Fitzpatrick reported that in terms of units sold, the 10 most popular candies in the assortment were Snickers Single Bar, which sold 4,775 units, followed by Reese’s Peanut Butter Cup (1.5 oz.) with 3,693 units sold; Lindor Assorted Truffles (12-count bag) with 1,978 units sold; Lindor Milk Chocolate Truffles (12-count bag) with 1,881 units sold; and M&M’s Peanut King Size, with 1,574 units sold.

Other top unit sellers included M&M’s Peanut Candies Single (1,573 units sold); Kit Kat Single Bar (1,500 units sold); Twix Caramel Single Bar (1,385 units sold); Hershey Chocolate Single Bar (1,383 units sold); and Lindor White Chocolate Truffle (12-count bag) (1,293 units sold).

SALES GROWTH

Health-conscious shoppers have influenced the growth in sugar-free candy sales. “Sugar-free candy has been the most popular consumer request,” Fitzpatrick said. “We recently expanded from five SKUs of sugar-free candy to 32 SKUs, and since then, unit sales have increased more than 200 percent.”

Dark chocolate sales have also taken off in the store. “Sales in 2009 increased by 40 percent in additional units sold,” he added, noting that patrons have requested a wider selection of dark chocolate items in the seasonal candy assortment.

PROMOTIONS

“Our ‘Price-Cut’ program is a month-long promotion that we use to call out special deals or values to our customers,” Fitzpatrick explained. “We typically will have these Price-Cut sale items in their normal selling space with a Price-Cut sign, or have an additional endcap dedicated for the entire month.”

In addition to seasonal flyer promotions, monthly front-end programs “are designed to feature a candy item right next to the cashier to increase the average transaction value,” he noted. “This has definitely caused a positive impact in our candy sales.”

LOFTY GOALS

Fitzpatrick expects that the upward sales trend should continue through fiscal 2010.

To achieve that, Fitzpatrick said, “We have to capitalize and expand upon our strong performers from last year at an even stronger level.” In addition to proper signing and highlighting ad items, he added that “quickly implementing the new assortments when available is also key.”

While the department will continue to capitalize on the popularity of bagged candy, single candy bars and seasonal candy, Fitzpatrick also plans to focus on those areas that did not do well last year, including premium candy, “to explore opportunities we can take advantage of to capture additional sales.”

Since seasonal candy is so popular in the department, Fitzpatrick vowed to set up “visually impactful” displays, “and where appropriate, cross merchandise candy into other departments.”

He believes that this can be accomplished with vendor assistance. “Vendors participate during seasonal events and help stimulate sales by offering tastings, coupons, and raffle giveaways.”

-Source: NEXCOM

NAS Oceana, Va., Candy Department

At-A-Glance

Square Footage: 71 linear feet and seven side wings on endcaps

Sales:
  Fiscal 2008: $457,953
  Fiscal 2009: $470,008
  Fiscal 2010 (projected): $543,000

Key Store Staff:
  Department Manager: Eliot Fitzpatrick
  Department Supervisors: Sue DelTitta and Michelle Glaufier
  Replenishment Technician: Floraida Winari
  Associates: Brett Brant, Jennifer Kahn, Jonathan McCormick and Ellen McClelland

Source: NEXCOM

Although fiscal 2009 premium candy sales were not as sweet as expected, in fiscal 2010, the NAS Oceana candy department plans on exploring opportunities to capture additional sales.

NAS Oceana, Va. Candy Department Profile

Lofty Goals = Strong Sales

Front-lines fixtures show off a wide expanse of the candy assortment at NAS Oceana, Va.