

Assortment Expands, And With It, Sales

Snacks continue to be strong sellers in Marine Corps Exchange (MCX) stores, with “healthier-for you” snacks, snacks used as meal replacements and items with exciting flavor profiles continuing to be among the most influential trends helping to grow the category assortment and its sales.



Davis

fruits and meal entrees that are made from ingredients that you can pronounce and the products are never frozen. The items are also price friendly.”

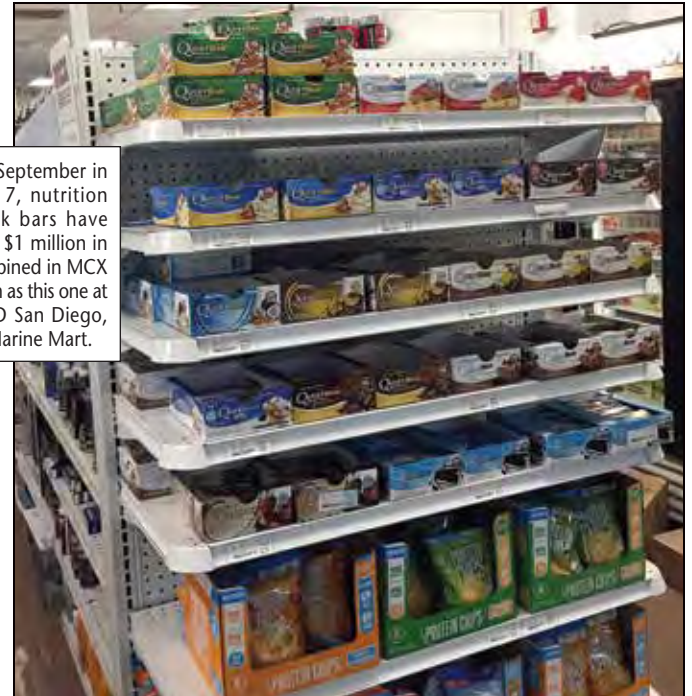
Davis anticipates that the healthy vibe will continue, with emerging trends including items that are protein-based, gluten-free and low calorie.

Meal replacement continues to be a hot trend in MCX snacking. “Certain items in the snack category, such as bars, can be consumed as a meal replacement,” Davis said.

“The majority of the snack categories are used as supplemental items to meals or used as a true snack in between meals. Consumers turn to these products because they contain large amounts of protein, are portable, and price friendly.”

New and exciting flavor profiles also continue to be a major snacking trend. “The combination of sweet and heat is trending, while sweet and salty remains

Through September in fiscal 2017, nutrition and snack bars have produced \$1 million in sales combined in MCX stores such as this one at the MCRD San Diego, Calif., Marine Mart.



SALES PERFORMANCE

Marine Corps Business and Support Services Division (BSSD) Food, Candy and Gourmet Buyer Ashley Davis reported that through September, fiscal 2017 snacks sales in MCX stores were \$17.92 million, close to 1 percent better than they were a year earlier when sales reached \$17.80 million.

Chips was the top-selling subcategory in MCX stores, with Jerky, Meat Snacks in second place. Jerky and Meat Snacks is the snack subcategory of choice for “Core Marines,” and other Marine customers, with 12 of the top-20 best sellers thus far in fiscal 2017 (see charts).

MCX Fiscal YTD 2017 Sales, Selected Snack Subcategories

Snack Subcategory	Sales
1) Chips	\$4,670,634
2) Jerky, Meat Snacks	\$4,108,179
3) Nuts, Seeds, Trail Mix	\$2,260,403
4) Cakes, Donuts, Bakery	\$1,976,049
5) Cookies, Crackers	\$1,392,759
6) Bars	\$1,000,000
Total	\$15,408,024

Notes: Sales in these five categories make up more than 85 percent of total snack category sales for fiscal 2017 through September 2017. Source: MCX

MCX Snack Assortment New Additions

- Jack Link's Breakfast Sausages
- Jack Link's Legend Jerky
- Oberto Smok A Roni
- Duke's Shorty Sausages
- Planters P3 Nuts & Jerky
- Oberto Trail Mix
- Road Crew Crunch

Source: MCX

SNACK TRENDS

Although they may prefer jerky and meat snacks over other snacks, Davis noted that young “Core Marines” also are much like any other group of MCX customers in their snack choices.

“The ‘Core Marine,’ as well as the general MCX consumer, is looking for healthy products with wholesome ingredients,” Davis said. “The MCX assortment has grown through the expansion of our ‘Better for You’ profile. MCX has a wide selection of items that cater to Marines and their families living a healthier lifestyle including sandwiches, fresh fruit, meal entrees, and beverages.

“We recently added fresh sandwiches, salads,

a strong trend, and brands are combining the two popular profiles to create snack mixes,” Davis said. “The hot-and-spicy profile also remains a strong flavor profile in the snack category.

“Consumers are also wanting to test their taste buds with the hot profile, such as purchasing ‘blazing hot’ products to see how much heat they can take.”

NEW ITEMS

To help satisfy these continuing trends and other trends that are hitting the marketplace, the MCX has added numerous snack products to its assortment.

The attributes that Davis says make custom-

MCX Fiscal YTD 2017 Top-Selling Snacks by Dollar Volume

Snack Items	Sales
1) Jack Link's Teriyaki Beef Jerky (16 oz.)	\$274,202
2) Jack Link's Sweet & Hot Beef Jerky (16 oz.)	\$163,140
3) Jack Link's Original Beef Jerky (16 oz.)	\$151,082
4) Jack Link's Teriyaki Beef Jerky (8 oz.)	\$150,409
5) Jack Link's Smokehouse Beef Jerky (16 oz.)	\$126,968
6) Cheetos Crunchy Flamin' Hot (8.5 oz.)	\$124,966
7) Jack Link's Pepper Beef Jerky (16 oz.)	\$114,837
8) Jack Link's Pepperoni Beef Sticks (7.2 oz.)	\$114,748
9) Cheetos Crunchy Flamin' Hot (3.5 oz.)	\$111,137
10) Jack Link's Beef Sticks (9-pack, 7.2 oz.)	\$106,252
11) Doritos XXL Nacho Cheese Tortilla Chips (10 oz.)	\$100,396
12) Doritos Nacho Cheese Tortilla Chips (3.12 oz.)	\$97,887
13) Doritos Scoops (10 oz.)	\$95,930
14) Jack Link's Original Beef Jerky (8 oz.)	\$90,997
15) Old Trapper Old Fashioned Beef Jerky (10 oz.)	\$88,721
16) Ruffles Cheddar & Sour Cream Potato Chips (2.87 oz.)	\$84,037
17) Tostitos Con Queso Dip (15 oz.)	\$83,887
18) Doritos Cool Ranch Tortilla Chips (3.12 oz.)	\$80,840
19) Jack Link's Teriyaki Beef Jerky (3.25 oz.)	\$79,511
20) Jack Link's Bulk Original Sticks	\$79,132

Note: Fiscal 2017 sales figures through September 2017. Source: MCX

ers “gravitate” to these new items are “resealable packaging and the flavor profile, as well as healthier meat options introduced in the jerky category, such as sausage and pepperoni,” she explained. “The consumer has the option to purchase leaner meats with fewer calories and high amounts of protein.”

SALES PROJECTION

With these trends continuing to drive sales, Davis said that the category is projected to continue at its current sales pace through the fourth quarter, with final fiscal 2017 sales expected to reach the \$27.28 million level, again close to 1 percent higher than those of the prior year.

—E and C NEWS