

Lindt eyes category growth with the promise of premium

This is a special feature from *Global Travel Retail Magazine's* [2023 February Confectionery and Fine Foods Report](#), on [page 6](#).



Peter Zehnder, Head of Lindt Global Travel Retail

Lindt Global Travel Retail ([Lindt GTR](#)) is showcasing its focus on growth in the chocolate category through a raft of developments across its business. In an interview with *Global Travel Retail Magazine*, Peter Zehnder, Head of Lindt GTR, highlights the brand's ambitions for the year ahead, including a new category vision and a focus on gifting and premiumization.

"A versatile confectionery portfolio is essential to cover all shopper needs - but this is just one piece of the puzzle," Zehnder says.



The Lindt Global Travel Retail booth at TFWA WE Cannes 2022

New category vision

Underpinning the new category vision aimed at driving growth is Lindt's leading portfolio of premium chocolate. The portfolio will be strengthened for 2023 and beyond with several new formats across its core lines, as well as a strengthened focus on its retail execution.

"People are excited to be back traveling and want to rediscover the iconic brands they love. We have seen consumers gravitating towards trusted brands which deliver premium quality so leveraging this will be key to increasing conversion rates," he explains.

Based on data from its latest study, Lindt GTR has created key travel retail exclusive products for gifting in 2023: The LINDOR Gift Box (287 grams) personalized with the gifting message "FOR YOU," wrapped in lace-embossed packaging, adorned with a golden bow; the Napolitains Destination Sleeves Carrier Box (500 grams) unique to the destination; Gold & Silver Tablets (500 grams) serving as the "fail-safe gift that speaks for itself," and the newly-introduced Nuxor Milk and Assorted (165 grams).

"These novelties fully address the various occasions that lead to a gifting purchase in travel retail. We are looking forward to discussing these dynamics with retailers and how we can work together to capitalize on the opportunities they are creating with shoppers," Zehnder says.

Part of this comes down to brand ambassadors. Zehnder reports that most brand ambassadors are back to work in growing numbers post-pandemic, which he calls a "clear indication" that the brand is committed to supporting its retail partners in delivering excellent customer service and elevating the shopping experience.



The LINDOR Gift Box (287 grams) personalized with the gifting message “FOR YOU,” wrapped in lace-embossed packaging, adorned with a golden bow

Gifting and premiumization as major drivers

According to Zehnder, the brand is certain that gifting and premiumization of the chocolate category will remain major drivers of growth in the first half of the year, expecting them to recover their share of spend.

Finding the right format and delivering engagement at the point of sale during key gifting periods can fuel sales growth, he says, referencing recent Diwali promotions in partnership with [Delhi Duty Free](#) and [Dubai Duty Free](#) which led to double-digit percentage sales growth.

Recent Lindt GTR research confirms that more than 90% of gifting purchases occur outside of key gifting periods. Now the brand is looking at growing premium chocolate year-round as well as during occasions such as Ramadan and Chinese New Year as part of its “Delight” pillar.

Treat, Indulge, Recharge, Connect and Delight are the “Five Demand Pillars” in the brand's globally applicable framework that define the overarching needs of confectionery shoppers. Confectionery being one of the most accessible and impulse driven categories in TR, the pillars help understand triggers, behaviors and occasions to identify the needs and drivers which lead to purchasing decisions.

“Chocolate is an iconic gift to mark any occasion, drawing on its universal appeal, so we are keen to stress the importance of delivering an elevated gifting experience year-round,” Zehnder explains. “Naturally this suffered during the pandemic as gifting occasions were compromised by restrictions, but we do see this recovering now that get-togethers and celebrations are happening again. This pillar includes purchases that show the recipient you care and thought of them, purchases which are a souvenir or deliver a sense of place, as well as kids’ gifts.”

Lindt GTR has also seen a higher average spend-per-passenger in recent months, including an increase in self-consumption, telling a positive story about premiumization in the chocolate category in GTR.

“Shoppers are looking for higher quality, more premium products, for self-consumption and gifting,” Zehnder says. “The ‘Indulge’ pillar remains crucially important.”

Playing into confectionery impulsivity, Lindt will offer activations and sampling to drive conversion this year. Zehnder says the brand believes that sampling led by brand ambassadors plays a key role in increasing conversion and driving category growth by delivering engagement.

✘ Lindt’s Swiss Masterpieces range, launching later this year, has been developed with a focus on cardboard use, recycled materials and reduced plastic

The brand is also looking to drive an increase in smaller touchpoints along the main confectionery aisle to catch shoppers’ attention, maximize impact of product innovations and increase overall store performance.

This merchandizing helps shoppers navigate store shelves and make more conscious buying decisions, transforming browsers into shoppers, Zehnder explains.

“We are working with our retail partners to ensure that premium cues and formats are present in-store, while also continuously investing in our portfolio to ensure that Lindt continues to be a go-to for shoppers looking to show appreciation through gifting,” he says.

Conscious consumerism

Zehnder says Lindt GTR has clearly seen the shift of travelers prioritizing themselves and the planet. Among its overall Sustainability Plan, the company reached an important milestone through its Lindt & Sprüngli Farming Program in 2022; 100% of cocoa beans cultivated through the program are now 100% traceable back to the farmers, which has been externally verified by an independent third party.

“Not only does this ensure we are using the finest quality cocoa beans to craft our premium chocolate, but it is also helping us to give back and improve the livelihoods of our cocoa farmers, their families and their communities,” Zehnder says.

Lindt GTR is examining more ways to communicate its sustainability commitments. Its new Swiss Masterpieces range, launching later this year has been developed with a focus on cardboard use, recycled materials and reduced plastic, as well as clean labeling for the ingredients used in individual pralines.

“Product innovation will always be a pillar of our strategy, making sure that our portfolio aligns with shopper trends in the category,” he says.