

Mars Wrigley ITR aims to drive sales with travelers at heart



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The new Maltesers tin (111g) is new for 2021 in a lower price band

Mars Wrigley International Travel Retail has set out its strategy for the post-pandemic recovery in travel retail, putting the traveler at heart.

In a concise and informative press conference held on September 2, Raghav Rekhi, Category Director Mars Wrigley ITR, and Maud Geerbex, Corporate Affairs Director Global Travel Retail, detailed the fresh approach for 2021.

This means a tight range of power SKUs representing the best-selling products, focusing on hero chocolate brand M&M's.

The company aims to offer consumers great brands at appealing price points underpinned by promotions and communications that are relevant and fun.

Mars Wrigley ITR's category vision continues to address the four key reasons for confectionery purchase: Recharge, Reward, Celebrate and Connect, unlocking the three conversion drivers of value, portfolio and fun.

Connect – covering the importance of social bonding – is seen as more critical than ever, accounting for 50% of purchases to date. Being the most heavily promoted in the confectionery category, this purchase driver is an opportunity for attracting value-conscious buyers, the company believes.

Home-baking has become more popular than ever during COVID-19 and brownies are a regular favorite. The new M&M's Brownie, presented in a 310g bag, has notes of freshly baked brownies in a soft, fudgy, chewy center.

With a colorful candy shell, the bite-size pieces are made for sharing, and the packaging design and size are exclusive to travel retail. Availability is from June 2021.

Expanding the value offer

Celebrate, or gifting, is another key purchasing driver. The Mars Wrigley ITR tin range is already a strong-selling pack in travel retail. For 2021, Mars Wrigley ITR is expanding the offer in the lower price band by adding two more trusted brands in this format: Celebrations (165g) and Maltesers (111g).

In addition, later in the year, the company will be unwrapping a completely new line that brings M&M's into the mid-priced gifting sector alongside Maltesers and Celebrations. This travel retail exclusive gifting format will comprise four bright and colorful gift boxes. No other details were given.

Block chocolate expansion

At the TFWA World Exhibition last year, Mars Wrigley ITR showcased its revamped Mini Bars packaging for Mars, Twix, Milky Way, Bounty and Snickers brands and introduced the M&M's Block for travel retail, following its successful launch on the US and UK domestic markets. The impact of Covid-19 has seen both launches postponed until 2021.

The mini-bars bags from these five chocolate brands feature a new design and come in a 333g bag size to capitalize on the popularity of sharing bags at a value price of €6.50 (US\$7.70). Each individually wrapped bar is designed for portion control with children and adults.

The M&M's Block has proven to be a successful extension to the brand's product portfolio. According to Mars Wrigley ITR's commissioned research, block chocolate makes up 14% of the chocolate category in travel retail, and over 40% globally. Chocolate block-loving consumers have been shown to spend more on chocolate than the average chocolate consumer.

In travel retail the 165g M&M's Block chocolate tablets will be offered in four flavors: Peanut, Crispy (150g), Chocolate, and Hazelnut. Each bar is made with smooth chocolate which encases the sweet, crispy crunch of individual M&M's.

They feature a packaging design exclusively designed for travel retail (with the exception of the US, which will use the established M&M's Block domestic range packaging). Each bar will have an RRP of €4.50/US\$5.30 (price to be set at the retailer's discretion) and there will be discounts on the travel retail price for multi-buys.

Bringing fun into travel retail

“M&M’s remains a key focus for Mars Wrigley ITR in 2021 and there’s a very sound reason for that,” said Raghav Rekhi, Category Director Mars Wrigley ITR. “One of our overriding ambitions at Mars Wrigley ITR has been to bring fun into travel retail and we’ve been very successful in introducing better moments that make people smile. M&M’s, with its globally recognized Red, Yellow and other colorful characters, has played a prime role in creating happy, smiling travelers through engaging high profile promotions, walking acts and impactful media campaigns. We know very well that fun drives sales; happy travelers are more likely to convert into buyers.”

Added Rekhi: “Driving category performance continues to be our overriding strategy for global travel retail, developing new ways of attracting a confectionery consumer base within a very different retail landscape. What we have learned from this period is that we must listen to the consumer more than ever before, focusing on their needs and why they buy within our category. Covid-19 has clearly accelerated some of the trends in consumer behavior that we are identifying and we must respond to that by focusing on key insights to accelerate conversion and drive sales.

“Within that, our Connect and Celebrate strategies in travel retail continue to be a dominant focus, as we know both are significant drivers of sales. We are very aware, however, that the new traveling consumer is more likely to be budget-conscious and we are taking that into account within our new product innovations. However, we still need to appeal to those buyers looking for something new with fresh offers tailored specifically to travel retail.

“Importantly, while we expect the travel retail environment to remain challenging over the next year – perhaps longer – long term we are confident of the confectionery category opportunity. Our aim is to continue providing fresh product offers and opportunities within the airport shopping experience for travelers to find moments to share and enjoy with friends and loved ones. Through this strategy we are confident that the confectionery category can pick up from where we were and continue to gain momentum.”