



Demster

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— AAFES Everyday Candy Category Buyer Randy Demster

\$ales Success Is Sweet

Everyday candy sales at Army and Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) stores for fiscal 2010 totaled \$72.5 million, a 2.16-percent increase over last year, reported Randy Demster, the exchange service's everyday candy category buyer. "The biggest factors that affected our sales growth last year were troop reductions and relocation of forces in contingency areas," he pointed out.

"Our sales goal for 2011 is an increase of 2 percent over last year," Demster noted.

To reach and even surpass this target, he explained, the exchange service has a multi-pronged strategy that will utilize a variety of marketing approaches including social media. "We plan to exceed these sales goals by having a greater presence in our weekly promotions, and building high-impact displays that tie into national programs. We are also planning to do more TV and radio advertising with our major vendors. We have just started exploring mobile marketing opportunities with Facebook and Twitter."

NEW PRODUCTS

Several new candy items have already been launched in AAFES stores in 2011, he noted, with more to follow. "This year, M&M Mars is introducing Snickers Peanut Butter and Twix Coconut Limited Edition. Hershey introduced drops and minis in pouches and king sizes. Nestlé is also planning to introduce Skinny Cow candy in May."

GROWTH POTENTIAL

Demster also sees continued growth potential in several existing candy segments such as dark chocolate and theater box packages.

"The dark chocolate category is doing well with the continued support of the industry, but I believe there is still room for growth," he said. "Our most popular premium dark chocolate item is Lindt's 70-percent chocolate bar. We also added Reese's Peanut Butter Cup Dark and Kit Kat Dark this year to our impulse racks.

"Theater box candies are doing very well at the exchange and are continuing to grow each year," Demster pointed out. "The industry reported that theater box sales are a \$272 million category, and grew at 9.9 percent in 2010.

"Theatre boxes have grown in popularity because it's the perfect packaging for on-the-go shoppers at a good value," he believes. "I expect theater box sales to continue to grow long term."

Other department plans, Demster reported, include plans "to expand our presence in the healthy candy category by offering sugar-free items in more locations this year."

PROMOTIONS

In 2011, he added, "AAFES is planning on run-



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ning major promotions with Hershey and Mars to tie in with their national sweepstakes offerings. Some of these promotions are Hershey College World Series Sweepstakes, the third annual Fisher House promotion, and Mars' Power of One Promotion."

SALES LEADERS

The list of top-selling everyday chocolate candy SKUs in AAFES stores was led by Snickers; Reese's Peanut Butter Cup; M&M's Peanut; Twix and Kit Kat. Next were Hershey's Cookies 'n Creme; M&M's Plain; Hershey's Milk Chocolate; Hershey's Milk Chocolate with Almonds; and Almond Joy.

Among bagged chocolates, the exchanges' top sellers were led by M&M's Peanut (5.3 oz.); followed by two Reese's SKUs, miniatures and pieces (7.4 oz.). These were followed by Snickers Mini (4.4 oz.); two M&M's SKUs, Peanut Butter and Peanut (12.6 oz.); Reese's Peanut Butter Cups Snack (10.5 oz.); another M&M's SKU, Plain (5.3 oz.); Kit Kat Snack Size (10.78 oz.); and Riesen Chocolate Chew (5.5 oz.).

Among bagged non-chocolate candies, the leading sellers were Y&S Strawberry Twizzlers; Swedish Fish, red (5-oz.); Haribo Gold Bears (5-oz.); Sour Patch Kids (5 oz.); and Gummi Savers 5 flavors (7 oz.). These were followed by Patriot's Choice Gummy Bears; Mike and Ike (6 oz.); Patriot's Choice Gummy Worms; Jolly Rancher Assorted Original; and Sour Neon Worms candy.

The tally of top-selling gums at the exchange service was led by Wrigley 5 Cobalt Plentipak Gum, followed by Trident Splash Strawberry with Lime; Wrigley Doublemint Slim and Cadbury Adams Stride Slab Spearmint Gum.

Next were two Extra SKUs, Sweet Watermelon Slim and Polar Ice Slim; followed by Wrigley 5 Rain Plentipak Gum; Trident White Peppermint Single Gum; Dentyne Ice Peppermint; and Wrigley Juicy Fruit Slim.

—E and C NEWS

Top-Selling Gum At AAFES Exchanges

- Wrigley 5 Cobalt Plentipak Gum
- Trident Splash Strawberry with Lime
- Wrigley Doublemint Slim
- Cadbury Adams Stride Slab Spearmint Gum
- Extra Sweet Watermelon Slim
- Extra Polar Ice Slim
- Wrigley 5 Rain Plentipak Gum
- Trident White Peppermint Single Gum
- Dentyne Ice Peppermint
- Wrigley Juicy Fruit Slim