

HOT SPOT

By Art Snyder

Your rink *vibe* — music and lights — is sure to hit high gear when you take care of business throughout your rink. That means your snack, food court and vending areas should stock new, in-demand products, and this holds for your redemption profit center, too. That excitement is contagious, and you'll see the dollars-and-cents results soon enough, from your main floor to your soft-play and kiddie-rides areas. Some "secret keys" to this success are in the details below.

New Kellogg's snacks

Kellogg's means cereal to most consumers, but their sweet and salty snack brands have a winning track record, too. Several new, updated



and revised Kellogg's snacks should prove a hit with rink consumers everywhere during the busy winter skating season and beyond. Among these Kellogg's snack brands that are right for vending, countertop and other



sales and promotions — maybe you should tweak your birthday parties or key a school session to promote

a Kellogg's snack brand — are the Keebler® Fudge Shoppe® Chocolate Fudge Brownie (a product returning to



the fold due to popular demand); the Grab n' Go 3-oz. snack pack, in nine popular varieties (see photo); Special K Protein™ Meal Bars, in luscious flavors like Chocolate Peanut Butter,

vors, as well as SnoBAWLS (a blue, frozen version of the original drink flavor, Guarana). Each offers a lightly carbonated, highly caffeinated experience that targets active, athletically minded consumers. In fact, with its partnership with the American Bicycle Association (ABA) and the National Bicycle League (NBL), Bawls is the official energy drink for BMX racing, and the company also sponsors paintball and videogame events. Clearly, skaters are a great fit with Bawls, so see about stocking company products at your rink. Also, Bawls has just introduced Buzz. It's for consumers who enjoy the Bawls taste experience and want to see it in another format, as fizzy candy. Buzz, too, should be an energy winner at your rink in 2009.

Mars Foodservices merchandising racks

Mars is one of the world's top candy manufacturers, and the ability of Mars to market its products — and help their retail accounts sell taste-tempting Mars candy — has made strong sales and profits synonymous with the company. To boost impulse buying of their several brands, Mars Foodservices offers new candy racks designed for countertop sales. These racks are in several sizes, as needed, and they readily highlight Mars candy brands. Among these top-sellers are M&M'S, Snickers, Skittles, Starburst, Twix, 3 Musketeers and Milky Way. See if your supplier can

Energy Drinks, Mars candies, Kellogg snacks in the spotlight

Double Chocolate and Strawberry; Nutri-Grain™ Fruit & Nut Bars, in two formulations, Cranberry, Raisin & Peanut and Berry & Almond; Soft Batch® Homestyle cookies, in several flavors and sizes; and Special K Bliss™ Bars, a new item in two favors, Chocolatey Raspberry and Chocolatey Orange. Sales prospects like these snacks need to be in your rink *pronto*.

BAWLS beverages

The energy drink beverage category is like the Gold Rush days of the 1800s — it's packed with excitement and the promise of riches. In this crowded energy drink field heading into the new year, Bawls stands out. The Bawls energy drink lineup includes Guarana (berry), Cherry, Exxtra (sugar-free) and G33K B33R (root beer) fla-

Energy drink demand, Monster

The energy drink category has seen new-product introductions going like gangbusters, so look to this column for the latest trends and sales leaders in this high-action beverage niche. Coke's Full Throttle; Pepsi's three brands: SoBe Adrenaline Rush, Amp Energy and No Fear; and Rockstar (an independent, from Hansen) benefit from name recognition and delivery capabilities for strong sales, and one newer brand is looking exceptionally attractive: Monster. Broad marketing and availability are driving sales, so rink consumers are likely to look for Monster, as well. Stock it soon, before the crush and rush of the year-end holidays. Also note that Coca-Cola distributes Rockstar in some markets, and word is that Coca-Cola may deliver Monster to market, too, in some regions of the country. All of this bodes well for rink sales in the energy beverage category. (Already, sales of Monster and Red Bull together represent more than half of the energy segment.)

Crayons Sport

Eye-catching graphics help the Crayons Sport beverage line gain consumer attention, especially that of the targeted demographic: children. The child-friendly colors are intentional, and Crayons Sport is "the only all-natural sports drink for youth," accord-



ing to Ron Lloyd, the CEO of Crayons. He added that the Crayons sports drink group now has three available flavors — Playoff Punch, Leaping Lemon-Lime and Breakaway Berry — that are expected to be available nationwide by the end of the year. Talk to your beverage supplier about stocking Crayons at your rink. Promotions during youth, school and hockey sessions should be nicely profitable.

Nuts from Frito-Lay, Planter's

With the autumn skating seasons upon us, look to new marketing from "biggies" like Frito-Lay and Planter's to help you stock and sell packaged peanuts and other nut snacks, as with trail mixes, trail-mix bars and other sweet-and-salty, candy-and-nut combinations. Frito-Lay, for example, is set to promote nut snacks like Pistachio Crisps and Peanut Crunchers. Your snack vendor should be able to help you with product availability and selection, so get ready to boost your all-important foodservice

arrange for a rack or two for your rink, and for more information, call Mars at (800) 432-2331 or visit them at www.marsfoodservices.com.

M&M'S® set for Hispanic marketing

Mars Snackfood US has announced its new Hispanic advertising effort on behalf of its family of M&M'S candy varieties. The outreach keys on the brand's "Inner M" marketing and includes personalities Wilmer Valderama and Christina Saralegui, and the candy is a sponsor of the 2008 ALMA Awards, which honors Hispanic artistic achievement in the motion picture, television and music industries. Talk with your candy supplier for appropriate M&M'S candy promotional materials and signage, if you have a sizable Hispanic customer base.



Princess and the Frog, *A Christmas Carol* and *Up*. As these films get close to production, look here for ways to tap into their appeal for handsome profits.

Coke testing 100-flavor soda fountains

Your soft drink fountain might look a *lot* more interesting in the future, if testing by Coca-Cola pays off. The company has announced that it is

testing new fountain machines that can dispense 100 different beverages. And, these new fountains are said to take up about the same countertop space as the traditional eight-nozzle fountain of recent generations. Tests will continue into 2009, and then Coca-Cola will make a decision on marketing the new-format fountain. A green light for the fountain would let Coca-Cola sell more of their branded beverages in concentrate form, such as their entire Coke Zero and Fanta brands, and allow them to take on partner brands, such as independent and regional beverages. All of these changes would fortify your beverage menu, and that should improve your bottom line.

Coke Zero

Coca-Cola is prepping to boost sales of Coke Zero, their popular carbonated beverage that was introduced in 2005. With the perennial success of James Bond films (now more than 50 years strong), Coke Zero will get a tie-in to the latest cinematic Bond, *Quantum of Solace*. Thanks to a multimillion-dollar marketing push, and a theme of Zero Zero 7, look for a jump in Coke Zero demand at your rink. Be prepared, and look for new signage and other incentives for a *Bond Night* at your rink.

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and vending sales. Go nuts!

Star Wars: The Clone Wars

The ever-popular appeal of the *Star Wars* franchise with movies and licensing is set to get yet another boost: *Star Wars: The Clone Wars*. From LucasArts, this new Nintendo video-game will sport Wii-controlled light-saber battles. That in itself is grand, and you can expect the game to do well at your rink with a wide-ranging demographic, for redemption sales and session drawings and giveaways. *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* is set to arrive nationwide in November. The companion debut of *Star Wars: The Force Unleashed* should arrive in stores by December. All of this anticipated sci-fi activity should boost any related *Star Wars* fare you offer or will stock, and the news should improve success of any themed *Star Wars* sessions on tap in the months ahead. Think about some publicity, too, by notifying area TV outlets of your rink *Star Wars* events. This will be especially attractive to the media if you run, for example, a charity drive, school fundraiser or food-pantry session or two.

Disney outlook

Disney is a collective marketing genius, and it can pay you handsome dividends to dovetail rink sessions with whatever Disney has under way. Recent years have been good for the Disney studio and its animation partner, Pixar, so heed this: *Wall-E*, *Monsters, Inc.*, *Finding Nemo* and *Cars*, for example, have been No. 1 films and veritable licensing machines, with an array of such products — including videos — suitable for rink use, in several profit centers. On the movie horizon are several first-rate animation features that undoubtedly will be “profit-players” for your rink. Among the most anticipated upcoming releases are *Bolt* (starring Miley Cyrus, another licensing magnet), *The Bear and the Bow*, *Newt*, four *Tinker Bell* films, *Cars 2*, *The*

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