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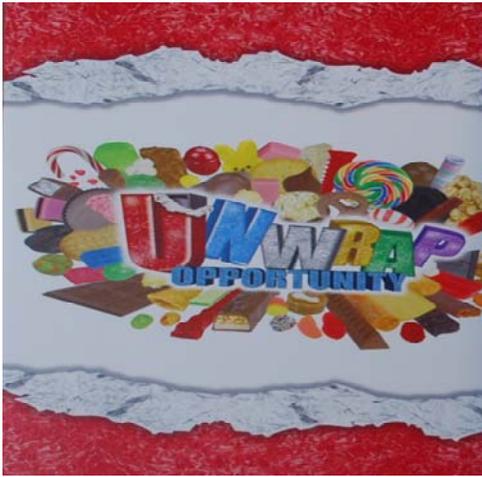
# Unwrap Opportunity

Opportunities for retailers to tap consumer interest with sweets and snacks

By John Miller || Photos by Ray DiSilvestro

**G**reen themes take on various meanings across different industries – conservation, recycling, and sustainability to name a few. In candyland - the 2012 NCA Sweets & Snacks EXPO® (previously known as the All Candy EXPO®) green spanned assorted categories. There was green mint chocolate fudge, green Guacachips, green Aloe Vera drinks, and even green tongue ‘tattoos’. The most significant green theme at this year’s annual expo however, was financial opportunities.

Sponsored by the National Confectioners Association (NCA), the 2012 Sweets & Snacks EXPO® attracted a record attendance with a global audience of an estimated 15,000 industry professionals from 70 countries around the world. The three-day annual trade show at Chicago’s McCormick Place May 8-10 featured over 570 confectionery and snack related exhibitors including 140 new exhibitors this year.



The Sweets & Snacks Expo annually presents the largest confectionery, cookie, and snack show in the Americas. The show brings together executives from leading manufacturers, importers, exporters, brokers and distributors with customers, both current and prospective. According to the NCA, for 2012, more international customers and distributors involved with U.S. global export initiatives attended than ever before.



Confectionery, snack and cookie products generate \$280 billion in retail sales worldwide according to the industry association. Since the inception of the original Candy Expo thirteen years ago, the confectionery industry in the United States has expanded an average of 30 percent. While the emphasis is on candy and snacks (the association notes that cookie and snack categories now make up nearly 40 percent of exhibitors), it's not entirely about the products—the show encompasses diverse educational seminars that help identify the trends in the industry, how seasonal shopping patterns change, how to take

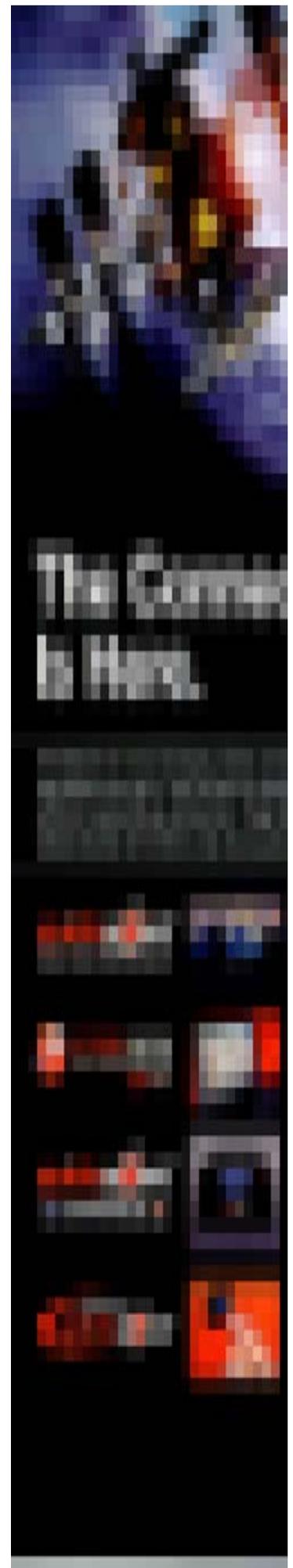
advantage of changes, how changing demographics around the world will impact sales and marketing, and even sessions on commodities pricing. The show itself is an opportunity no other sweets or snacks show can match. Attendees come to find the latest product innovations, meet with new companies, and opportunities to connect face-to-face with other industry professionals. The show truly is a one-stop destination that retailers/owners/operators need to visit every year to identify and take advantage of opportunities.



Sales opportunities don't have to be dull—as demonstrated by the Cincinnati, Ohio based Factory of Fun. Billed as 'Tongue art', TungToos are Flavored, edible temporary tattoo's (and classified as a 'food' product).



Attendees to The Sweets and Snacks Expo have to opportunity to meets all the big players (Nestle, Hershey, Jelly Belly, Cadbury, Mars) along with diverse mix of smaller specialty manufacturers.





Naturally, local Chicago representation is pervasive --Wrigley, Blommer, Tootsie Roll, and Worlds Finest Chocolate to name a few, but local smaller entrants such as Chicago Chewing Gum, G.H. Cretors, and Sahagian Candy had a significant presence as well.



International exhibitors provided some learning opportunities for both their products and their viability. While having all the appearance of an overseas manufacturer, GÜDFÜD is actually Las Vegas based.



Sukoka Candy, an Indonesian producer was drawing attention for it's coffee with milk candies that emphasized 'with bone-building calcium in every wrapper'. The Shanxi Jinli Candy Company brought a large colorful display packed with diverse products, and yet, had trouble attracting visitors. A random sample of passers-by

## At a Glance:

**2012 SWEETS & SNACKS EXPO®**

**Sponsor:** National Confectioners Association

**Location:** McCormick Place - Chicago, IL

**Exhibitors:** 570

**Attendees:** 15,000 (est)

**Demographic:** 70+ countries worldwide

**Show Space:** 142,000 square feet

### Show Objectives:

Meet large and small worldwide manufacturers; Identify trends in the industry; Recognize opportunities that will translate into sales gains

**Next:** May 21 – 23, 2013 at Chicago's McCormick Place

**Contact:** [www.sweetsandsnacks.com](http://www.sweetsandsnacks.com)

indicated that correct or not, the perception is that Chinese manufacturers still harbor quality issues in their manufacturing processes.



While green concepts of conservation, recycling, and sustainability are not (yet) widely promoted by the candy and snack manufacturers, the GREEN that lies in the financial opportunities of their products makes them a viable renewable energy source. And an opportunity waiting to be unwrapped.

*The 2013 SWEETS & SNACKS EXPO® will be held May 21 - 23 at Chicago's McCormick Place and the show floor is already more than 85 percent sold out.*