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STORE OWNERS SCRAMBLE TO CASH IN ON SOARING SUPREME PROTEIN BAR SALES

Every year at the NACS show, one booth emerges as the must-visit destination for store owners looking for the next breakthrough sales leader in snacks, beverages and other merchandise. This year, based on phenomenal first-day traffic, that booth has to be the Supreme Protein bar booth.

It wasn't hard to find the Supreme Protein booth (8036) on Wednesday. It was the booth with the huge crowd milling around it, snapping up free samples of the Supreme Protein bar. Truth be told, it is no real surprise to see plenty of excitement around the SP booth.

Just over a year ago, Supreme Protein was a high-end specialty bar, marketed primarily to serious athletes who valued Supreme Protein's high-quality protein profile as much as its terrific taste. Then Supreme Protein, Inc., rolled out a nationwide ad campaign

aimed at crossing the bar over to a more general (but still health-conscious) consumer base. The results of that campaign, driven in large part by the sheer delectable taste and quality of the bar itself, have been astonishing.

The first convenience store chains to stock the Supreme Protein bar can certainly attest to the bar's swiftly growing popularity. In fact, the biggest of those chains, industry giant 7-Eleven, reports that within weeks of its introduction the Supreme Protein bar rose to the No. 1 seller in the protein/energy bar category. That's an amazing (indeed, literally unprecedented) performance from a company that was entirely off the consumer radar as recently as a year ago.

When we visited the Supreme Protein booth, volunteers were handing

out samples as fast as they could open and empty the boxes. While we waited for our turn, we spoke to Manny Chaudhari, an owner of several 7-Eleven stores in New Jersey. Chaudhari started stocking the Supreme Protein bar at the beginning of this calendar year. The response, he recalls, was immediate.

"Even before I started stocking them, I had people coming in and asking for them," Chaudhari says. "Once I got Supreme Protein in, I noticed right away, they generated a strong repeat business. Right from the beginning, I had to aggressively reorder to keep them in stock."

"When I tried one, I could certainly see why they're so popular," he adds. "They're really delicious. The excellent texture, sweetness, peanuts and protein crisps put it up there with my best tasting candy bars. When you consider that these bars are a healthy alternative to junk-food candy, the taste is even more amazing. Why eat candy when you can have a superior-nutrition bar that tastes even better than candy? That's their appeal. Supreme Protein has been a real sales

winner for me."

With consumers more and more conscious of the health implications of their snacking, clearly a snack bar that combines a superior nutrition profile with great taste is going to have an edge over other bars in the category. That's what Supreme Protein appears to have with their new crossover protein bar hit.

If you're not already stocking the Supreme Protein bar, you can bet your competitors are beating you to the punch on this breakout snack sensation. Our advice? Get over to the Supreme Protein booth (8036) while you can, and see what the buzz is all about.

Editor's Note: Here at the Convenience Daily News we had an opportunity to try out the new Supreme Protein bar before the show. Our opinion is the Supreme Protein bar tastes as good as, if not better than any candy bar we've tested. In addition to the taste, the nutritional profile is far superior to any other protein bars we've seen. This is exactly what the category needed!