

Convenience RETAILER

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Metro Commercial Application's APPEAL SHELVING

**CROSSMARK:
HELPING WHOLESALERS,
RETAILERS FIND
SUCCESS ON THE SHELF**

**CONVENIENCE STORE
SALES REACH NEW HIGHS,
BUT RISING CREDIT CARD
FEES PUMMEL PROFITS**

**CORE-MARK ANNOUNCES
AGREEMENT TO ACQUIRE
AUBURN MERCHANDISE**

**HALL OF FAME BEVERAGES
APPROACHES FINAL
NEGOTIATIONS WITH
PILOT TRAVEL CENTERS**

new products

Anheuser-Busch Companies, Inc. Bud Light Lime

EmberGlo Electric Char Broiler

Gold Medal Products Tastee Topper

Mars Snackfood U.S. DOVE Chocolates

Master-Bilt InterKool

Miller Brewing Company MGD 64

Smart Lid Systems Color Changing Coffee Lids

Taylor Company Slushosity Machines

SUPREME PROTEIN BARS TAKE THE CATEGORY BY STORM, 'PROTEIN/ENERGY BAR OF THE YEAR!'

Kelly Conklin, Vice President of Supreme Protein Inc., outlines his company's plans for convenience stores and beyond in the lead up to the NACS Show.

CR: It seems every time I open a magazine or hop on the Internet I'm seeing some sort of athlete or celebrity talking about your Supreme Protein bars or some sort of award being given to it. This is something you don't typically see in the protein bar/energy bar category. What makes your bar so much different than others on the market?



KC: Supreme Protein bars contain only premium-grade proteins powered by a large amount of whey isolate. Unlike many other protein bars on the market today that include gelatin [a completely

Continued on Page 16

BIC'S CORDLE LEADS COMPANY, NACS SUPPLIER BOARD TO C-STORE SUCCESS

Patrick Cordle is Vice President – Sales and Marketing Lighter/Shaver & Sales Operations, BIC Consumer Products USA, as well as Chairman of the NACS Supplier Board. He began his career at BIC in 1986 as a Retail Sales Representative, located in Seattle, Wash. In recent years, he has served as Sub-Chair for the Exhibitor Advisory Committee and on various committees, including Vice Chair, Chair-Elect and now as Chairman of the Supplier Board.

CR: What is the NACS Supplier Board, and how does it have an impact on both C-store suppliers and C-store merchants alike?

PC: The purpose of the NACS Supplier Board is to assist NACS and its members

Continued on Page 18

Supreme Protein (Con't. from p. 1)

useless source of 'protein'] in their protein profile, we do not. The 30g of protein are all high-grade proteins that assist in growth, recovery and overall health. In addition to the superior quality, the gourmet candy taste rivals the most popular candy bars. Most tout the flavor as actually being better than real candy bars! This is a bold statement, but very easily backed up.

CR: How did you transform Supreme Protein from an elite specialty protein bar, exclusively intended for top athletes, to a widely distributed protein bar at the C-store level?

KC: The Supreme Protein bar is widely

distributed in many major U.S. convenience store chains such as 7-Eleven [where it is currently the No.1 revenue-generating energy bar], Circle K, HESS, Wawa, Cumberland Farms, Chevron, bp, Quick Check, Travel Centers of America and many, many more. This list continues to grow week to week at an unprecedented rate. In addition to convenience stores, it's widely distributed in multiple channels such as gyms, health food stores, grocery stores, drugstores and many specialty outlets. Originally, we tasked a top candy bar maker in the country to take their superior knowledge in candy taste and texture and infuse the highest grade proteins available. After countless hours and hundreds of samples, we came up with a protein bar unlike anything ever

seen in the marketplace. It was amazing how it was literally devoured by a wide spectrum of people from young to old, male to female, athletes to non-athletes and everyone in-between! Word of mouth was so powerful that it exploded out of the starting gate and continues to spread like wildfire fueled by hurricane force winds!

CR: How are you diversifying your products and reaching out to new markets?

KC: In our continuing effort to provide customers with only the highest quality, best tasting products, we recently introduced the Peanut Butter Crunch Supreme Protein bar. With the original Caramel Nut Chocolate flavor breaking countless sales records, the peanut butter flavor is exceeding even what the caramel is doing. The best part is, it's doing it without taking away from the caramel sales! It doesn't stop there though. In the next few months we have some new bars coming out that will continue to appeal to the masses in a big way. You'll have to wait and see what's up our sleeve.

CR: How are you promoting Supreme Protein Bars?

KC: Like I said earlier, word of mouth is one of our strongest marketing tools. It's funny to actually watch someone eat one of our bars for the first time. There is no hiding their excitement, and they feel compelled to spread the word. In addition, we have an ongoing, aggressive national print ad campaign, celebrities and pro athlete endorsements, national radio personality endorsements and many other initiatives I'm not at liberty to discuss at this time, but you will soon see.

It also helps that awards are pouring in from many major publications including everything from 'Protein bar of the Year' to 'Editors Choice Award' to 'Snack Item of the Year,' 'No.1 in Taste' and many others. It's unheard of for such a new item to have so much attention!

CR: More specifically, how are you targeting the C-store market?

KC: We run advertising in C-store trade magazines, and also with our broad marketing initiatives we reach shoppers across all channels, including the C-stores. The fact that the Supreme Protein bar has injected new life into the energy bar set, and is causing a surge in revenue for store owners, sure

helps spread the word through the convenience store world. After all, what store owner/manager doesn't want increased revenue? The truth is, we consider the C-store market very important. On that note, we consider *every* market, *every* store and *every* single customer very important.

CR: What are you doing to bring customers in during the summer months? Can protein bars really be a big seller during the hotter summer months?

KC: They sure can! Today's trend is toward healthy eating, and how great is it to be able to stop into a local convenience store and grab what I believe is a perfect meal? Our Supreme Protein bars are a high-quality meal replacement that tastes like candy. Many people eat them on the way to work with their coffee [what a great combo by the way], take one with them to work to eat for lunch or throw one in a cooler to keep on the work site for a good meal on the run. There are countless ways to carry them around so you are ensured a healthy meal. We also have the snack size bars which are great for in-between meals!

CR: What is the critical differentiator between your C-store outlooks compared to other vendors?

KC: What we have is a very strong passion for what we do. This seems to be a missing element in today's world. We stay focused on providing *only* the best products. You will not see inferior-grade ingredients in our bars. Our bars will not taste anything less than incredibly amazing. Our marketing will continue to grow and stand out from the rest. It's this mindset that governs our decisions in bringing new items to market and plots our course in the marketplace.

CR: What do you have planned through year's end for C-stores?

KC: Increased advertising to continue driving the strong demand and also some new, innovative items.

CR: Can you give us a little tease about what we'll see from the company at the NACS Show?

KC: If the crowd around our booth is anything like last year, you won't be able to see anything.

For more information, visit www.supremeprotein.com.

CROSSMARK (Con't. from p. 14)

across the country manage a combination of C-store wholesaler and C-store chain customers. We manage more than 1,000 customers nationally, including wholesalers and C-store chains of 10 or more stores. Some of the larger wholesaler customers include McLane, Core-Mark, Eby-Brown, HT Hackney, Amcon Distributing, S. Abraham & Sons, GSC, etc. Some of the larger chains include 7-Eleven, Exxon Mobil, The Pantry, Circle K, Speedway SuperAmerica, Casey's General Stores, am/pm, Wawa, Sheetz, Kwik Trip, Quik Trip, Sunoco, etc.

CR: I understand you'll be at NACS 2008. Could you give us a preview of what you intend to do at the show—plans, products, promotions, ect.?

JN: We will feature 12 manufacturer's products in our booth with emphasis on new and on-trend C-store products across all product categories. We will also highlight the top new products in the 'Hot New Products' showcase at the entrance to the show. We will have numerous meetings with key C-store retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers.

CR: What's on the horizon for C-store retailers, and how is CROSSMARK helping during these difficult economic times?

JN: We see food service, beverage, candy/snack and energy products a primary drivers of growth.... [but] this will be a very difficult year as it relates to the economy. The joint effect of the economy and escalating oil prices will place significant pressure on the sales performance of C-store retailers as consumers become more motivated by value. We expect continued implementation of new and better technology. New product development will continue at a similar pace to past years.

We continue to work on new ways to provide services to our constituents. Any area in which we can provide measurable value in the supply chain is open for discussion.

New ways include dedicated retail teams for specific manufacturers and categories, customizing teams for resets while stores are closed, providing measureable results on a daily basis and others....Our success is based on our ability to build customized solutions, provide unparalleled execution and execute proprietary systems. We are not bound to any particular business model. We truly believe clients today are looking for solutions that are built specifically for the point of need.

CR: Speaking of points of need, tell us a little about CROSSMARK for kids.

JN: About four years ago, we made the decision to pick a charitable organization we could support corporately. After an extensive review we decided on the Children's Miracle Network. Helping the kids has become one of the most rewarding endeavors we have embarked on as an organization. Over the past



four years, we are proud to say we have raised more than \$2 million through partnerships with our manufacturer and retailer clients, and the efforts of our CROSSMARK associates.

About CROSSMARK

CROSSMARK has been the way to market by providing professional business services to more than 2,500 manufacturers and retailers in the consumer goods industry for more than 100 years. Headquartered in Plano, Texas, CROSSMARK employs more than 20,000 associates worldwide in over 50 offices in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Australia and New Zealand. They are a nationwide company covering all 50 states focused on scalable, efficient business processes to help their clients increase sales and reduce cost, and they accomplish this by excelling in four key areas—retail merchandising, headquarter selling, store level marketing and streamlining trade practices.

For more information, visit www.crossmark.com.

