

Confectionery Product Development

A research & development perspective

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“Research is ... to see what everyone else sees, but to think what nobody else thinks.” (Albert Szent Gyorgi) This is the essence of innovative new product development. Product development requires more than just good ideas—it must be a carefully executed process that ensures success in the marketplace.

My goal is not to give a clear-cut method for new product development (NPD), but to inspire you to see something in a new light—whether it be an aspect of the NPD process, a specific product or an alternative to your current practices. Contrary to popular belief, NPD is not rocket science. It is careful planning, teamwork, creativity and innovation. A competitive NPD operation is supported by effective leadership from a vision-oriented senior management team and is highly collaborative. The companies that produce the most successful new products may utilize a stage/gate process, or may use more than one process depending on speed to market needed, the complexity of the project and level of risk involved. This process is in constant evolution, meets consumer demands and business requirements, and results in innovative new products that are based on sound science.

Types of new confectionery products range from those that are truly innovative to those that can be classified as equity

transfer products, line extensions, flavor extensions, me toos, seasonal and limited editions. According to Webster, *innovative* comes from *in + novare* and means to renew, to alter, to introduce new methods or devices. Truly innovative products do not happen often so confectionery companies also have to create brand excitement through use of the other types of new products. Some examples of truly innovative products include TV dinners, microwave popcorn, pop rocks and breath strips or capsules. A category of new products that has seen a lot of developments in the past several years is equity transfer products, such as of *Starburst* jelly beans and *Jelly Belly* chewing gum. Line extensions or flavor extensions are simply new flavors or forms of an existing product, such as *Jolly Rancher* Smoothies or Lollipops. Seasonal or limited editions include products such as chocolate bunnies filled with *M&Ms* and *Inside Out Reese* Peanut Butter Cups.

This paper will present the following:

- The new products team.
- The new products funnel.
- The stage/gate development process.
- Discovery—concept development and separation of winning from losing ideas.
- Development—stages 3, 4 and 5 of the stage/gate process.

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