

# Selling Tools Support Seasonal Initiative

## Situation

A major candy manufacturer had successfully captured a large share of the children's novelty candy market. Core elements leading to their success included offering products that kids liked, ensuring that price and availability allowed Moms to purchase the candy as treats and capitalizing on key trends in the children's market. Despite this success, the company had not leveraged any of their product line during the key seasonal periods of Valentine's Day, Easter, Halloween or Christmas (which represent 33-40% of total candy sales for many manufacturers). Research indicated that children and Moms would be receptive to seasonal adaptations of the company's core product line, so the company decided to enter the seasonal candy market.

Since the company had never fielded seasonal initiatives in the past, the sales force did not have experience in selling seasonal programs and the company lacked seasonal selling tools.

## Solution

In order to be adequately prepared for its initial entry into the seasonal candy business, the client asked DHC to assist in four key areas:

1. Develop a presentation for use with seasonal buyers at leading Food, Drug and Mass Merchandiser accounts
2. Develop fact sheets, sell sheets and a seasonal brochure to be used as "leave behinds" with the trade
3. Develop a training module of key seasonal information to educate the sales team and help prepare them for buyer presentations
4. Create a seasonal graphic treatment that could be used with the initial seasonal initiative as well as with future seasonal programs

Utilizing syndicated data and industry research, coupled with DHC analysis and DHC's extensive experience in the sale of seasonal merchandise, DHC developed a fact-based, persuasive, trade-oriented selling story. The selling story was executed in PowerPoint and designed so that sales managers could easily adapt and tailor the presentation to their account's needs. This sales story was supported by a seasonal sales brochure and product specific, hard-copy selling sheets. All materials utilized a creative, graphic "look and feel" designed to create an image that would help "brand" the company's seasonal efforts.

The training module provided sales associates with seasonal sales objectives and included general seasonal information, seasonal buying practices, tips for building effective trade presentations and direction on how to best present the key information. This tool was developed in PowerPoint and was presented in a classroom training session prior to the initiation of trade presentations.

### Results

Seasonal programs are generally presented to the trade with significant lead-time. This company's initial seasonal program was not finalized in time to meet the long lead times of the largest Food, Drug and Mass Merchandiser accounts. Customer feedback indicated that the seasonal sales tools effectively and persuasively presented the seasonal program and that sales associates were highly knowledgeable on seasonal candy. However, while customers felt that the products and programs were strong concepts, they were not able to provide the high level of seasonal merchandizing support that drives significant volume. The company secured holiday feature and display support from the majority of small and medium Food / Drug / Mass accounts and received strong consumer sell through among these important customers.

Initial results were encouraging, and, coupled with commitments to future support by the leading Food / Drug / Mass accounts, have confirmed the company's decision to aggressively pursue ongoing seasonal opportunities.