

When you look in Robyn Metler's kitchen, it is obvious that she is a busy mom. Her countertops are cluttered with crayons and children's homework. She also runs a successful preschool in her home four days a week, so she is also a busy businesswoman who needs a lot of energy throughout the day. Though it is easy to tell that is a busy mom, she is not exactly the stereotypical regular consumer of protein bars. Robyn is a very loyal KIND bar customer and she kindly took time from her busy schedule to discuss KIND bars with me. I gained a lot of great insights by visiting her at home, insights that I think will help KIND understand its customers better, and perhaps find some new customers.

A lot of times when we think of protein bars, we think of gym rats or extreme hikers. However, I learned from Robyn that, though KIND is a great source of protein, what really draws her in is the delicious taste and the quick "pick-me-up" she craves during the day. When Robyn is busy with her preschool children or her own children, she often needs a quick energy boost during her day-- not the type of energy to go run a marathon, but just enough energy to pick up her kids from school and not fall asleep while helping them with homework later that night. We often forget about the different types of energy that we need during the day, not all energy is needed for activities as extreme as climbing a mountain. Robyn needs "Mom Energy," which could arguably be more important than any other type of energy.

KIND bars are not only a great energy snack, but they are also delicious. Repeatedly Robyn mentioned that this is her favorite aspect of KIND bars. As a mom needing a little more energy during the day, Robyn prefers KIND to any other bar. Robyn mentioned that the Z-bars she used to buy were a lot better at making her feel full when she was hungry, but the taste of KIND was so good that it outweighed the importance of feeling full. This could perhaps be something KIND could change by making a more filling bar or make them bigger. Although KIND bars are considered a protein or energy bar, they are lower on the protein scale than other energy bars. While talking to Robyn, she mentioned that she thought that the energy came more from the sugar within the bar than from all the nuts and fruits. Perhaps KIND bars could advertise the source of the bars' energy, and the natural health advantages of the bars better. Robyn also let me know that KIND bars are what she prefers to a candy bar or a bag of chips. I find it interesting that KIND bars are what she chooses while looking for a substitute for these unhealthy snacks. I think that there is functionality in placing these bars in the snack food area of a store, perhaps even more than placing them in the protein bar section. KIND bars are a great snack; more so than a protein bar. Perhaps a lucrative market for KIND bars is the snack consumer.

Though Robyn loves KIND bars, she prefers to keep them to herself and not share them with her children. I think that there is a huge loss of sales in that area. If women are thinking that these are snacks for themselves and not for their family, they are not going through boxes of bars fast enough. There could be a huge increase in sales if KIND bars came across as more family friendly. Instead of being a healthy snack or a "tasty treat", as Robyn puts it, just for moms, these bars could be also be targeted to children as a great lunch box addition or soccer game pick-me-up. What if instead of fruit-by-the-foot, kids were eating Children's KIND bars? As Robyn opened her pantry, she showed me where she had hidden the bars out of reach from her children. It would be much better for the KIND bars to be accessible to Robyn's children since they are a lot better for them than most other after-school snacks available these days.

Robyn's husband is also a potential KIND bar consumer. Many men take their lunches to the work place to save money. Men also need energy snacks to help them get through their busy days. If Robyn's husband started taking a KIND bar every day and perhaps even sharing it with some of his co-workers, there could be a substantial increase in sales and consumption.

Though the packaging is not feminine, the KIND bar is a women's granola bar in the mind of Robyn. If she thinks that I imagine others do as well. Another opportunity for the growth of KIND is perhaps finding a way to market KIND bars to make them more desirable to men.

The last thing I found interesting was the comment Robyn made about how she first was introduced to KIND bars by her sister. She was happy with her Z-bars until she ate a KIND bar. She loved how the KIND bars tasted. I think there is a lot to say about how good these bars taste; if more people could try them once, there could be a great increase in usage. Perhaps KIND could make a box of small bars perfect for Halloween candy or to share with coworkers, friends, or a class. That little taste could lead to a lot more consumers of KIND bars. I think that the main idea is that there is a lot of potential for KIND.