

of *Archives of Internal Medicine*. The research – which focused upon the eating habits of more than 1000 healthy men and women in the USA – found that people who ate chocolate on a more frequent basis had a lower body mass index (BMI) than those whose consumption levels were lower. It was suggested by the researchers that this may be due to the fact that chocolate contains antioxidants, as well as other ingredients that might promote weight loss (see Chapter 22).

More specifically, much of the research carried out in this area has focused upon the health benefits of polyphenols (which are antioxidants and have been shown by studies to improve blood flow), which are found in cocoa. As a result, the link between products with high cocoa levels (such as dark chocolate) and reduced likelihood of cardiovascular disease has been well to the fore within the industry, as illustrated by the launch of the CocoaVia brand by Mars in 2003. Although this was largely unsuccessful and the original range later withdrawn, consumer awareness of the role dark chocolate could potentially play in improving heart health continues to rise.

It is chiefly for this reason that consumption of dark chocolate has grown in parts of the world, often at the expense of more traditional milk chocolate confectionery. In the USA, for example, the percentage of adult consumers who expressed a preference for dark chocolate (rather than milk) rose from 33% to 35% in 2012, according to data from Mintel. Much of this is for health reasons – research from the same source found that over 70% of all USA chocolate consumers felt that dark chocolate is healthier.

Elsewhere, dark chocolate is now the preferred variety for almost a quarter (23%) of UK consumers, with consumption especially high amongst the older age groups. Demand for dark chocolate is also growing in several European markets at present, examples of which include Ireland, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the Benelux countries. As is the case in the UK and the USA, much of this is due to its healthier image.

Chocolate's role as far as nutrition is concerned is described in more detail in Chapter 22.

27.6 The marketing of confectionery

Chocolate and confectionery marketing have come a long way since the early days of the industry, when press and outdoor advertising were usually the favoured ways for manufacturers to communicate with their consumers. One notable example from the UK was Cadbury, which commissioned a local artist named Cecil Aldin to illustrate posters and press advertisements for its chocolate during the early part of the nineteenth century. The images created for these early forms of promotion became iconic and were widespread throughout the UK.

How chocolate is marketed depends very much upon the company concerned. For example, global multinationals whose brands and products are sold

in large quantities devote considerable sums for advertising and promotional purposes, reaching out to their consumers through a variety of different mediums. On the other hand, small artisanal chocolate producers tend to specialise in certain niches of the market, since they do not enjoy the same financial strengths or economies of scale employed by their larger counterparts. As such, these small producers firms tend to compete in sectors such as organic and Fairtrade chocolate, where it is easier to differentiate their products from mass-produced brands.

Advertising budgets within the chocolate industry appear to have held up despite the worldwide economic downturn. Hershey, for example, spent an estimated US\$ 580m on advertising and promotional activity in 2013, a figure which equates to approximately 8% of its sales. These figures compare with US\$ 108m (equivalent to 2% of sales) in 2006. Elsewhere amongst the global giants, for example, Mars spent almost US\$ 87m advertising its Snickers brand in its home USA market during 2012. Many of the chocolate industry's television adverts in particular have become extremely well-known and well-remembered over the years, examples of which have included the *"Work, rest and play"* campaign for the Mars bar and, more recently, Cadbury's drumming gorilla.

Chocolate manufacturers are also making increasing use of new technologies to advertise and promote their brands. One of the most significant examples of this trend is the way social media now features in the marketing strategies of the market's leading suppliers. These companies have been embracing new ways to reach out to their consumer base, and social media has come to represent an increasingly important element within the marketing mix.

To illustrate the extent to which social media can shape marketing strategy, it is worth recollecting the fact that Cadbury UK brought back the Wispa brand in 2007 in the wake of a social media campaign. The brand had been delisted in 2003 two decades after it was first introduced, but returned following an online petition which included Facebook and MySpace. Similar campaigns have since been undertaken for other discontinued chocolate and grocery brands, but thus far Wispa remains the most significant example of this trend.

At the time of writing, Nestlé's KitKat brand is the most popular with social media users, with approximately 23.5 million "likes". This figure compares with around 19 million for Ferrero Rocher, 12.4 million for Hershey's Reese's Peanut Butter Cups and 12 million for M&Ms. The top 10 chocolate brands as far as Facebook "likes" are concerned are listed in Table 27.6.

The majority of the most well-liked chocolate brands on Facebook belong to the industry's leading suppliers, which is perhaps a reflection of their widespread popularity across large parts of the world. In addition to the examples mentioned above, Mondelez International owns brands such as Crème Egg (2.7 million "likes") and Wispa (2 million "likes"), while additional chocolate brands from Mars include Milky Way (2.3 million "likes") and Galaxy (2.1 million "likes").