



Chocolate Goes Snacking: Celebrating Chocolate in Snack Design

Chocolate is a perfect vehicle for meeting snack criteria. Hitting the sweet spot of taste, texture, appearance, shelf life and price is key to successful chocolate snack design.

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Snacking can be more fun when chocolate is involved. After all, the best part of the snack is the chocolate, right? Chocolate can be the best part if given proper consideration when designing the product. Hitting that sweet spot of taste, texture, appearance, shelf life, price and other attributes is challenging. How do confectioners and snack makers work their magic? How do the chocolate makers know what to make? There is much to uncover in bringing these elements together to commercialize a winning product. We will explore chocolate flavor combinations and key attributes of chocolate selection that make snacking both an exciting and rewarding experience.

WHAT IS A SNACK?

A snack can be described as a small meal that provides part of the nutrition, energy requirements and pleasure of the day. Eaten outside of the usual three square meals on any given day, it is implied that a snack requires little or no preparation. Snacks are typically consumed quickly and often with an element of novelty or fun.

According to The Hartman Group's *Future of Snacking 2016* report, "The modern era of 'snackified' eating has fully emerged.

With 91 percent of consumers snacking multiple times throughout the day, snacking is essential to daily eating for most Americans now and accounts for 50 percent of all eatings." One reason cited for snacking is the lack of time for a prepared meal and as such, snacks are typically purchased and eaten by hand rather than created in the home.

Chocolate is a perfect vehicle for meeting many of the criteria of a snack. Chocolate provides nutrition and is often cited for its micronutrients. It provides energy with its robust caloric content, and chocolate is most definitely known for the pleasure it elicits. Chocolate flavor is celebrated for its exciting and nearly addictive character. It is consumed in various physical states such as liquid, solid or powder, and can be shaped into numerous forms such as drops, wafers, chunks or bars. Thus, chocolate functions in a number of ways to fulfill the needs of snackers.

Happily, snack opportunities abound every day. Eating occasions are evolving outside of the traditional morning breakfast, midday lunch and evening dinner. Many more times of day have turned into eating times: before breakfast, mid-morning, afternoon, after dinner and late at night. Being that chocolate is well suited to fulfill the cri- ➤



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