

COULD BE A ROSY FUTURE FOR SNUFF

RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

An encouraging upturn in snuff sales to the younger customer is a feature of the 1983 scene, noted by almost every major manufacturer. Moreover, according to distributors and retailers who've taken the trouble to mount full scale snuff promotions, if you can sell to the under 25s you sell not just one flavour or aroma but a whole range: the idea being that it is now the 'in' thing to produce snuffs at party time and to give guests a choice between 'exotic' fruit or flowery snuffs and the more usual medicated varieties.

USEFUL OPENER

At Joseph and Henry Wilson Mr G W Jones believes that it is the medicated varieties which start most young people on the snuff taking habit and that within his company's range it is the Medicated No 99 which is the most useful opener of new markets.

Wilson's, who celebrate their 150th anniversary as manufacturers at their present premises this year, have also now taken over the famous Fribourg and Treyer range which is being produced and packaged at their Sheffield mill.

One of the recent developments in this sector has been the production of a new compact display fixture which holds a full selection of the perfumed and flavoured varieties and helps to alert the connoisseur and the beginner alike to the very wide choice available within this very traditional range.

'Fribourg and Treyer lines have always sold well on the export front: the Americans especially love the idea of a range which uses 200-year-old recipes,' says Mr Jones. 'However, we are now expanding trade in other areas including the Near East and virtually every European nation.'

As a recruit from the world of conventional tobaccos, before joining Joseph and Henry Wilson at the end of last year, Mr Jones was for over 20 years a member of the Ogden's team with special interests in pipe and handrolling tobaccos. Mr Jones says that working in snuff is fun because of the worldwide appeal of British snuffs.

'It would be hard to find any other

commodity which enjoys such universal success as an export line,' he continues. 'We send our standard ranges to practically every overseas nation. Germany, West Africa, South Africa, Australia and Canada are particularly buoyant.' (Kensington, pictured below, is particularly attractively packed.)

'Sitting as I now do, surrounded by a priceless collection of mementos of snuff's past it would be easy to wax lyrical about the product's history,' he comments. 'However, while respecting the traditions of the snuff trade here at Westbrook Mill, we are also looking forward to what we believe could be a very rosy future for snuffs.'

A shift to younger usage has been the trend of the past couple of years. This has prompted a specific choice of media for the latest Joseph and Henry Wilson advertising campaign. From 14 April they'll be taking spaces in the *New Musical Express*, *Time Out* and in the *National Student*. The ads will carry the tag line 'obtainable from all good tobacconists' plus a clip-out coupon for a free sample direct from the manufacturer.

'And if the response to this pilot advertising campaign proves to be as good as we anticipate we shall certainly follow up with a further burst later in the year which could involve the popular national dailies', adds Mr Jones.

Current advertising puts emphasis on the 19p retail pack size but overall Wilson see the market moving towards interest in the larger size snuff packs and air-tights are now regarded as the most successful presentation by most stockists.

'Although we would obviously like to expand our distribution as well as increase the volume of sales through existing outlets, we still regard the specialist tobacconist as the snuff manufacturers' best friend' says Mr Jones.

'And it doesn't worry us that members of AITS are now offering what is virtually an own-label blend, in the Craftsman range exclusive to their members shops. As far as we are concerned the more snuffs which are on display and sold the more chance there is for each to find an appropriate niche in the market and for the

market as a whole to expand.'

An optimistic view of 1983 is also being taken by Mr D McChrystal of McChrystals of Leicester. 'Throughout 1982 we enjoyed very steady home market sales which are still growing,' he comments. 'But it is on the export side that we have been achieving our best results. Each of the markets in which we've been trading for a number of years seems to be increasing the value of its spend with us and so we are extremely optimistic.'

'Because we've been kept so busy just satisfying demand we've not done any packaging or blend revisions recently nor do we have any plans for such developments in the immediate future,' he explains.

DISASTROUS FIRE

Up in Kendal the long established house of Illingworth's Tobaccos Ltd is now back in business again after a disastrous fire at their factory and offices in February (see *Pointers*).

Mr Robert Cottam retired on 5 April but the disaster meant that the last weeks of his service to Illingworth's were not the peaceful run down that he'd planned to his long career in the snuff trade. 'Although much of the work of re-establishment fell on the shoulders of other directors March was still one of my busiest months ever as we struggled to get going again.'

The fact that Illingworth's will have to re-equip on the processing side and possibly on the packaging front could enable them to make technological steps forward which were not possible while they have been concentrating on working to capacity production.



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In Stoke on Trent the activity at Hedges has been centred around getting a new brand off the ground. Beau Brummell Camphor Snuff has been created to suit the palates of younger consumers, says Dave Whatley. He describes the new line as 'very fluffy, light in colour, delicate to take and smooth in character.'

'We think it also has qualities which can give relief to sufferers from hay-fever, catarrh, head colds and sinus infections,' says Mr Whatley. 'We are using only the finest raw materials in this range and will be packing Beau Brummell in display boxes of one dozen for the stockist. It is twice wrapped to ensure that it reaches the consumer in peak condition, and will retail at 20p.'

STURDY FIGURE

Trade margins on the new line will be comparable with Hedges Medicated and a vinyl window sticker is available for stockists announcing the arrival of Beau Brummell at their store.

On the main Hedges range the sturdy figure of Jeff Capes will continue to sponsor the Medicated L260 range, one of the principal promotional aids being a showcard depicting the burly ex-Olympic champion carrying a box of snuffs on his shoulders (see below).

The distributors are keen to point out that the association with an athlete, who must rank as one of the strongest men in Britain, has served to underline how efficacious the product is at clearing the head — and indeed they add that the tie-up came about originally because Capes always armed himself with a pinch or two to get the adrenalin moving when taking part in Highland style field sports!

Hedges see snuff taking as a healthy habit and are interested in sporting tie-ups generally.

Last year they were promoters of a Butlins holiday camp darts contest. This enabled them to take snuff promotions into the kiosks and retail stores in the camps which, during the course of the 20-week season, are visited by more than a million resident holiday makers plus a further three quarters of a million day visitors.



TOBACCO May 1983

More directly in line with tobacco trade interest during the months ahead, Hedges will be giving full support to snuff clubs and demonstrating the virtues of Beau Brummell at meetings all over the country.

'Clubs are often the route by which younger customers, and especially younger female customers, find out about snuff — and we consider that Beau Brummell is priced to appeal to the beginner, as well as being a good introduction to the art of snuff taking,' says Mr Whatley.

At Samuel Gawith Mr Harris is somewhat less happy with the current tenor of home trade than some of his competitors. 'Although a rising tide of export sales has enabled us to hold steady overall, we have experienced some declines in home sales,' he comments. 'We attribute this to the fact that many regular snuff users take snuff during the working day only, and with unemployment it would follow that sales of this type would dip.'

He sees the most buoyant home sales sector as being 'fancies', especially the perfumed snuffs which sell for 59p per ounce. 'It is the one ounce pack which now has the most consumer appeal,' he comments, 'although we also produce small tins which retail at 22p.'

Although they've no plans for large scale advertising in the immediate future Samuel Gawith will be providing a full range of support material and point-of-sale aids to all stockists in 1983.

Very much the same opinions are expressed by Mr G F Gawith at Gawith Hoggarth & Co Ltd. 'With nearly three million now on the dole it would be surprising if the volume of work-a-day snuff taking had not suffered' he says. However his company has scored over recent months with its imported lines.

Here he feels that the modern look plastic dispenser packs have been a really useful aid in attracting first time snuff takers and that the retail price of these lines (25p and 40p per pack) offers the stockist a 'very respectable' return for the effort he expends in showing snuffs.

'In the past some tobacconists have felt that because snuffs sell at comparatively low cost they weren't worth much attention,' he comments. 'However when one examines the proportionate return on snuff compared to say, cigarettes, the margins afforded look very attractive indeed, and these days the manufacturers provide merchandisers and point-of-sale aids which virtually do the shopkeeper's selling for him.'

'In our opinion, while it is important to offer a comprehensive selection of snuffs in order to maximise sales in most outlets, the overall winning line will be an SP type and ranges should be balanced accord-

ingly.'

Where the emphasis on selling is from a semi-medicinal angle the alert retailer may well benefit from taking a look at some of the long established speciality brands. Typical in this sector of the market is Jip, which is medicated with either menthol or eucalyptus variants. This was originally formulated by a north country chemist to clear the heads of the local coal miners.

Within the John Grant's range from Donegal there's a dry peppermint which would make a sensible 'first snuff' line as well as a speciality flavoured line for the connoisseur which takes its taste and aroma from the addition of 16-year-old Irish whiskey to the blend.

LANCASHIRE FORMULA

Medicated snuff made to a long standing Lancashire formula which is likely to meet particular favour in the Pennine counties, can be obtained from Hames Hargreaves & Sons (Blackburn), while Alfred Preedy can provide a menthol, brown and fine texture which reflects their own Shakespeare country heritage as wholesalers and retailers.

For a cosmopolitan cast the range of Robert McConnell (London) Ltd can scarcely be bettered. Their Gun Room line uses Kentucky leaf tobaccos which are guaranteed mature in cask for three years. They've also a pungent Spanish in Robbie's GP while the title Scotch Roast tells its own story in terms of regional preference.

Meanwhile the taste of an English country garden is built into the James Upshall range of snuffs from the Tilshead company in Wiltshire where lavender and walnut are two of the recommended lines. Walnut in fact refers to colour rather than flavour, while for the spice oriented the collection includes both cinnamon and clove varieties.

CHEWING SNUFF

Fruit, flower and spice variants, as well as perhaps more surprisingly a chewing snuff in the Scandinavian style, are included in the current G Smith range, and now that the Fribourg and Treyer retail shop no longer exists, their premises in the Charing Cross Road must inevitably become the number one UK shrine for the snuff-taking tourist.

All these snuffs are listed in detail in the new booklet on snuffs now published by AITS in association with the Society of Snuff Grinders, Blenders and Purveyors. It has been compiled by Martin McGahey who has ensured that his own West Country retail outlets are centres which attract snuff devotees from across the whole region, and has done much to help develop the snuff club concept. Addresses of five clubs are



listed on the back cover of the book, and retailers who would like to set up clubs for their customers can get all the low down on how to set about such a promotion by writing to Gary Cox of the Wellington, Somerset snuff club at 2, Orchard Villas, High Street, Wellington.

Snuff takers don't live by snuff

alone and that's the philosophy of Mark Chaytor at Wilsons & Co (Sharrow). Mr Chaytor has this year increased his range of tobacco related gift lines and offers what he believes is the finest selection of snuff boxes available in the UK with a trade price span of £2 to £90.

He thinks the new range of pewter boxes will be particularly successful in the '83 gift season, although probably the overall best selling line will be a French made rosewood box which is offered to the trade at £4.

In snuffs Mr Chaytor too is looking to added business from the younger customer and believes that the Celebration range, first introduced for the Queen's Jubilee in 1977 probably provides the most exciting selection.

OLD RECIPE

'Flavours like strawberry are taking on particularly well with the young customer — although in fact the recipe we use for our strawberry line is an extremely old one. Also doing particularly well at the present time is a snuff retailed under the name Strawbourg which has a blend of citrus fruits as its flavour/aroma. It does very well in the West Country and in Central London,' says Mr Chaytor.

As an initial package deal Mr Chaytor recommends retailers new to snuff to take a box of 12 assorted.

although on a re-order the retailer can have his dozens made up anyway he chooses from the three dozen selection of the Celebration collection. These snuffs sell at 54p per tube.

'When you move to the North of England however it is still the SP types which are the winners,' says Mr Chaytor. 'However, even there changes are coming over the market. Loose snuffs are less popular than they were, perhaps not so much because they've fallen out of favour with the consumer, but because sales staff are less keen on weigh-out than they used to be. Also when scales wear out they are very expensive to replace and retailers are reluctant to invest in new at a time when cash is short.'

'To combat this situation we now offer snuff of exactly the same quality as our long established loose lines but in a metal sachet presentation. It first appeared in our range just over two years ago and demand has been building up steadily ever since.'

'Even life long snuff takers who are normally the most conservative of consumers are now beginning to say they prefer this method of purchase to the traditional weigh, and it makes for easier sale and stock control for the retailer too.'

All in all the snuff trade seems to be moving into the Eighties in good heart and there is every prospect of maintaining and ever increasing sales.

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