

Nestlé debuts Rallies Nut Butter Bombs, a snack for world-weary 'slumpers'

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Nestlé has entered the refrigerated snacking set with its line of permissably indulgent Rallies, a three-bite snack of chocolate enrobed nut butters, which is targeting a growing group of consumers who need a pick-me-up to rally themselves out of a slump, shares Michael Darman, innovation manager at Nestlé USA.

"Slumpers' are folks who are pulled in too many directions currently and end up de-prioritizing themselves. And obviously these things get exacerbated during COVID," Darman told FoodNavigator-USA.

And while the daily *"pushes and pulls"* differ from person to person, the need for a pick-me-up (usually in the form of calorie satiation) is universal, said Darman.

According to the Hartman Group's Snacking 2020 report, 74% of consumers surveyed said *"treating oneself"* is their main source of comfort to combat hitting the proverbial wall during the day.

"If consumers are eating a straight wellness product, that's going to give them the satiation they need, but it's not going to do anything to help you with the mental or emotional... you're not giving yourself that sort of pat on the back that you can go tackle the next hour, or maybe just the next 15 minutes," said Darman

Unmet needs in refrigerated snacking

Darman and his team at Nestlé identified an unmet need in the burgeoning refrigerated snacking category.

"We saw that refrigerated snacking is really an area where consumers are focusing more and more attention to get healthier snacks, but we're not seeing a lot of indulgence there," said Darman.

Available in three bite-sized, chocolate-enrobed varieties -- brownie almond butter, salted cashew butter, and raspberry peanut butter -- Rallies Nut Butter Bombs will be rolling out to Hy-Vee stores this Fall with wider retail expansion planned for 2022 for an SRP of \$2.49. The products are also available online through it's the brand's direct-to-consumer site.

Darman noted how some retailers are more committed to the merchandising of chilled snacks than others, but that Rallies can fit in other areas of the store where refrigeration is accessible.

"We're not going to wait until there are more retailers that have that centralized, refrigerated snacking destination. We're going to get the product out there in 2022 at you major grocers in the food channel," said Darman.

"We're interested in looking at the convenience channel as well, and we're seeing more and more beverage converted for food occasions in those locations as well," he said.

'It is an indulgence, for sure'

But is this just a candy bar disguised with better quality ingredients?

"It is an indulgence, for sure. It combines real nut butter with premium chocolate (not a compound coating of palm oil and sugar). So, at its core, it is sort of the tried and true indulgent combination. It's permissible, though, because we are supporting freshness through refrigeration, rather than preservatives," he said.

Darman said the company's use of premium ingredients and the chilled nature of the product meets a different need for consumers.

"It has less sugar (12g of added sugar per 40g serving), less sodium, and other markers of permissibility compared to leading chocolate nut butter treats. So it is right in the middle of the permissibly indulgent spectrum -- we hope perfectly," he said.

Is Nestlé eyeing the snacking category?

The launch of Rallies is a bit of departure for the multi-billion dollar food company which sold its US chocolate business (Butterfinger, Baby Ruth, Nestlé Crunch) to Ferrero in 2018 to focus on its frozen foods and coffee divisions.

"Snacking exists in some of our major legacy brands, but it's not a sort of centralized area of focus. Nestlé is definitely looking for ways, through empathic conversations with our consumers, to meet their snacking needs," said Darman, who leads a "nimble and scrappy" innovation team within Nestlé.

"We are doing stuff that's maybe a little bit more experimental in other categories where Nestle isn't currently playing. You can definitely expect more innovations to come from our team," added Darman.