

NACS Showcases Cool New Products

Retailers gain exclusive access to information and samples of the latest additions to the retail market place.

THE 2009 NACS SHOW in Las Vegas featured a Cool New Products preview room to give retailers a peak at what merchandise and services are on the horizon for convenience stores in the upcoming year.

The exhibit featured products across all key categories, including new concepts and packaging exclusive to the c-store channel, store equipment and technology, product line extensions, health and wellness items and eco-friendly options. Show attendees enjoyed exclusive access to the section during the first two days of the show.

Many retailers noted the scanning system used by NACS was a helpful way to keep track of the products that most interested them. Visitors received a small bar code scanning device and, with a simple point and a click, collected information on the products of their choice. At the end of their visit, retailers returned the scanner and received a printed summary detailing each of the products they scanned and the corresponding booth numbers.

The most scanned item in the room was Dippin' Stix Healthy Snacks, by Reichel Foods Inc., NACS reported. Dippin' Stix Apples & Caramel Cup featured apples and caramel in a three-ounce cup. (View the 10 most popular scans on page 17).

Other interesting finds in the dis-



NACS' Cool New Products showcase offered retailers a glimpse of the innovative products they could expect to see in stores in 2010.

play, included Gerber Graduates Snacks for toddlers and preschoolers that included cereal twists, fruit juice treats granola bars, yogurt melts and puffs. Toddler snacks are a \$153 million category according to Nielsen, yet it's a category few c-store operators are focusing on and one that could build incremental sales.

ENERGY REIGNS

Jerry Scholten, group administrator for The Scholten Group, which operates a chain of 11 stores in New Brunswick, Canada, was surprised by the large number of energy prod-

ucts competing for space in the new products preview room.

"There are a lot of great energy shots—that seems to be the trend," Scholten said. He added he has not seen such a huge influx of energy shot varieties in the Canadian market.

Energy did seem to be an overwhelming theme among the new products section. A wide array of energy drinks, mints, gums and shots filled the room. Among them, 5-Hour Energy was featuring its energy shots in new pomegranate and grape flavors. Go Fast Sports & Beverage Co.

debuted its energy gum with a liquid infused center and a blend of caffeine, B-vitamins, Ribose and white tea.

Perhaps the most unique energy product was Power Hungry Foods Lightening Rods Energy Beef Stick that contains a synergy of protein, guarana and ginseng and is the world's first energy beef stick.

WELLNESS SECTION

Kris Kingsbury, marketing manager with Robinson Oil Corp. and Rotten Robbie's 34 convenience stores throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, said what most stood out to her in the Cool New Products section was the display dedicated to wellness products for convenience stores—especially relevant now with so many consumers concerned about the flu, she noted. Among them were Robitussin To Go, Cough & Chest Congestion DM, which comes in a single-dose spoon; Emergen-C 2.5-ounce shots for energy and focus with an immune booster; and Bayer Quick Release Crystals for pain relief.

Retailers interested in a way to dis-



Highlighted new products included a variety of energy drinks and snacks, foodservice items, POS equipment and even renewable fuels.

play this or other travel-size products, found Cashco Distributors' 24-bin travel/trial-size display rack for health and beauty products useful.

TECHNOLOGY

Food products weren't the only items on display. Also featured were a number of innovative technology products to make life easier for customers and retailers.

PlatinumTel Wireless was presenting ready-to-sell, preactivated

cellphones for c-stores. Cashiers don't need to do anything but scan them at the checkout and customers are ready to go.

The Renewable Fuels Association was showcasing its blend your own (BYO) ethanol program, which allows retailers to provide a wider range of ethanol fuels.

Technology products also were offering solutions for inspiring gas-pumping customers to come inside the c-store. Muzak, for example, was showcasing its branded radio overhead messaging to alert customers to deals inside.

Hamco Manufacturing & Distributing was introducing its Gold Star POS Pump Receipt Rewards program designed especially for gas pump rolls as a way to drive in-store traffic. "You are a winner—come inside for details!" appears every 10 feet on the POS roll and customers can bring the receipt inside to get a free item designated by the store.

One of the more unique items included Spray&Gone from Professional Supply Co., which contains enzymes that remove oil, grease and odor from concrete with no rinsing required.

Greg Parker, president and CEO of The Parker Cos., in Savannah, Ga., which operates 20 c-stores and an oil jobbership, said his team enjoys going to the cool new products section.

"I think it's a very clever thing, especially now that we're having a contest to see which products get the most (attention)," Parker said. "It's something I will not miss and my team will not miss."

Parker added that some members of his staff are charged with bringing back information on which products and services they found most compelling and that they would like to see the company offer. "There is always a robust discussion on what cool new products had to offer," he said.

COOL PRODUCTS UNVEILED

THE TOP NEW ITEMS viewed by retailers at the NACS Show include:

- Dippin' Stix Healthy Snacks, Reichel Foods Inc.
- Pringles Extreme Peggable Bags, Procter & Gamble Distributing Co.
- Eclipse ELS, ElectraLED Inc.
- Stride Gum, Cadbury North America
- Dole Fruit Bowls in a Clear Merchandise Glide, Dole Food Co.
- Viper, IMI Cornelius Inc.
- 5-Hour Pomegranate and Grape Energy Shots, 5-Hour Energy
- 24-Bin Travel/Trial-Size Display Rack, Cashco Distributors Inc.
- MTD-334 (Motorized Lottery Ticket Display), Take-A-Ticket Inc.
- Drizzle Dazzle Snacks, Drizzle Dazzle Snacks
- 4 Basket, Mobile Merchandisers
- Mrs. Fields Cookie Dough Snacks, Richs Product Corp.
- DB650 Ice Pro Automatic Ice Bagging System, Follett Corp.

