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"Lackluster product innovation and expanding bar options from competing categories have challenged cereal/snack bar sales. Attracting the attention of consumers away from competing offerings will require the cereal/snack bar category to enhance nutritional/performance positioning."

- Beth Bloom, Food and Drink Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- How can the category prevent flight to competing bar categories?
- · How can the category increase participation among consumers aged 55+?
- How can the category respond to the interest in health and wellness?

Mintel estimates that sales of cereal bars and snack bars fell slightly in 2012, to rest at \$3.7 billion. This represents a 7% gain since 2007 (a loss of 3% when adjusted for inflation). The category fared well through the recession, with products in the category appearing as an affordable indulgence.

Positive drivers include the category's multipurpose appeal and on-the-go convenience, a growth in the snack culture in the U.S., and broad retail distribution that encourages both planned and impulse purchases. Cereal bars and snack bars meet the needs of today's consumer, interested in health and convenience, and open to a bit of indulgence, all at an affordable price point. However lackluster product innovation and expanding bar options from competing categories have challenged sales.

By capitalizing on consumer trends toward health and developing targeted product positioning, the category has found broad appeal among a consumer base that ranges young men to working mothers. Products in the category are consumed by 79% of households, with similar percentages of consumers eating products across the granola bar and breakfast/snack bar segments. Women, parents, and 18-34 year olds appear as engaged consumers. Future growth will rely on the category's ability to meet the needs of an aging population. Mintel's custom consumer research finds that 82% of consumers aged 18-24 eat products in the category, as compared to a much lower 51% of those aged 65+.

Consumer demand for convenient and healthy food options shows no signs of waning and will drive cereal/snack bar sales in years to come. The category is forecast to grow 13% from 2012-17 (4% when adjusted for inflation). Such an increase can be attributed to a resurgence of relevant product launches in 2012, as well as marketing innovation that shows that category is homing in on its target audience.

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DID YOU KNOW?

This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market



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