

Snack, Nutrition and Performance Bars - US - 2023

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This report looks at the following areas:

- Bar types purchased
- Adult and children bar consumption occasions
- Experience with various bar types and innovation
- Anticipated change in bar purchases
- Concepts, flavors and claims to motivate trial
- Bar attitudes

95% of consumers 25-34 are purchasing bars this year, an increase of 7% over last year. Returning responsibilities, for both self and family members, in addition to stressful inflationary shopping trips that increase the need for valuable, familiar staples, suggests need among this cohort is at an all-time high. This audience does not need to be convinced to browse the bar aisle; rather, the brand challenge is guiding and winning the choice.

Though food and drink prices are weighing heavily on US consumers, bars are well-positioned to weather the storm. 70% of US adults anticipate buying the same or more bars in 2023, and a quarter of those attribute the desire to buy more affordable food as the motivator for increased purchases. Further, over half see bars as affordable as compared to other snacks and meals (see Anticipated Change in Bar Purchases), despite prices for some bars exceeding that of other snacks. Bars are primed to go head-to-head with other categories to encourage switching behavior.

In order to maintain the perception of value, brands will need to consider the evolution of nutritional claims. Even as interest rises in functional benefits across the total food and drink landscape, when connected to bars, those measured receive less than majority interest. This suggests that consumers have a level of doubt surrounding the efficacy of these claims in the bar category or are simply not looking for bars to deliver in that way. Brands must challenge consumers' doubts and perceived bar limitations by finding a balance between proof and simplicity.



"75% of current bar buyers anticipate maintaining or increasing their category purchases in 2023. However, the challenge stems from category crowding that will further intensify competition. Brands that can strike the balance between innovation and familiarity, while maintaining great taste, will come out on top."

– Sydney Olson, Senior Food and Drink Analyst

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40% of working US adults follow a hybrid work schedule, and the challenges that come with hybrid work present a pain point that bars can address. Planning, shopping and preparing different breakfasts, lunches and snacks for different locations, needs and times is a heavy mental burden, exasperated by navigating record-high grocery prices. Bar brands have the opportunity to relieve this mental fatigue by promoting bars as one product, one purchase, that meets many occasions.

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