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Snickers Surging to Top of Global Candy Race

Mars-Owned Candy Bar Set to Pass Sibling M&M's, Kraft's Trident in New Euromonitor Ranking

By: [E.J. Schultz](#) Published: [September 20, 2012](#)

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There is a new candy kingpin.

Snickers will pass M&M's as the top international confectionery brand by the end of the year, giving the 82-year-old candy bar a satisfying victory in the global chocolate wars, according to a projection by Euromonitor International.

Snickers is "definitely on target to surpass M&M's," Lee Linthicum, Euromonitor's global head of food research, told Ad Age . He cited U.S. innovations and strong growth in emerging markets as factors in moving the candy bar from No. 3 to No. 1, also surpassing Trident. Going forward, the race for the top is now a sibling rivalry because Mars Inc. owns Snickers and M&M's, which are separated by a razor-thin margin.

While a win for Mars, the rankings are a loss for Kraft Foods' Trident. The gum brand fell from second to third place as projected 2012 worldwide sales slipped to \$3.32 billion from \$3.35 billion in 2011. Kraft remains the global leader with 14.7% share when all confectionery brands are totaled. But the food giant's share of the category fell from 14.8% in 2011, while No. 2 Mars jumped to 14.4% from 14.1%, according to Euromonitor.

The shift at the top was first reported by Candy & Snack Today, a publication by the National Confectioners Association.

Among individual brands, the worldwide candy battle remains close and fragmented, with only a fraction of a share point separating the top 10.

Snickers is expected to surge from \$3.29 billion in global sales last year to \$3.57 billion for 2012, capturing a 1.8% share, according to Euromonitor projections. The brand, whose ad agency is BBDO, has been backed with major media investments in recent years, [including Super Bowl spots](#) featuring Betty White and Roseanne Barr, who have both stared in the ongoing "You're Not You When You're Hungry" campaign.

But M&M's -- which Mars featured [in this year's Super Bowl spot](#)-- is not far behind, growing from \$3.38 billion to \$3.49 billion in global sales, according to Euromonitor projections.

Mr. Linthicum attributed Snickers' climb to its strong performance in the U.S., which accounts for a huge share of the global candy market. Domestically, the candy bar has aggressively pushed a line extension called [Snickers Peanut Butter Squared](#), which launched last year and features two square-shape bars that adds peanut butter to the familiar mix of peanuts, caramel, nougat and milk chocolate.

Globally, the brand is benefiting from strong growth in Eastern Europe. In Russia, sales have doubled since 2007 to \$300 million, partly as a result of distribution gains Mars has made by acquiring some ex-Soviet chocolate companies, he said. While that should also help M&M's, the bite-size candies face more competition in the region, where smaller candies are more established and familiar, Mr. Linthicum said. By contrast, candy bars like Snickers are more of a novelty, he said.

In the U.S., Hershey Co.'s Reese's is expected to remain the top brand, with a projected \$2.6 billion in sales capturing 7.7% market share for 2012, according to Euromonitor, which uses a variety of sources to track all sales channels, from Walmart to vending machines. M&M's, which is also handled by BBDO, is projected to hold onto the No. 2 slot stateside with 6.8% share, followed by Snicker's (6%) and Hershey's Kit Kat (2.8%).

Still, Reese's remains stuck in fourth place globally with 1.4% share, according to Euromonitor projections. The reasons are twofold: Hershey has less of a global footprint than Mars, Mr. Linthicum said. Also, peanut butter is not as popular in Europe as it is in the States. It is a "very uniquely American thing," he said. "That sweet-savory juxtaposition of flavors is something of an acquired taste."

Mr. Linthicum pinned Trident's struggles on stiff competition from [Wrigley 5](#), the Mars-owned brand that launched in the states in 2007 with slick packaging, innovative flavors and a highly produced ad campaign by Energy BBDO called "Stimulate Your Senses."

The flashy appeal has resonated globally. "It's even gaining share in Greece of all places," Mr. Linthicum said. "Everywhere they release it around the world ... it's worked." In the U.S., Wrigley 5 is now the 4th-largest gum brand with a 7.43% share, according to SymphonyIRI, which excludes Walmart.

Kraft, which on Oct. 1 will split off its candy and snacking business into a company called Mondelez International, is fighting back with its [first global ad campaign for Trident](#) by Saatchi & Saatchi that is more emotional than previous efforts, which had touted functional benefits such as oral health and vitamins. Meanwhile, in the States Kraft recently rolled out "[ID Gum by Stride](#)," featuring artsy packaging and a gimmick-filled campaign by Droga5.

Global Candy Sales

Brand	Company	Market Share		\$ Sales in Millions	
		2011	2012	2011	2012*
Snickers	Mars Inc	1.7	1.8	\$3,286	\$3,572
M&M's	Mars Inc	1.8	1.8	\$3,380	\$3,494
Trident	Kraft Foods Inc	1.8	1.7	\$3,354	\$3,321
Reese's	Hershey Co, The	1.3	1.4	\$2,553	\$2,679
Galaxy/Dove	Mars Inc	1.3	1.3	\$2,407	\$2,597
Milka	Kraft Foods Inc	1.3	1.3	\$2,530	\$2,510
Cadbury Dairy Milk	Kraft Foods Inc	1.3	1.3	\$2,414	\$2,506
Orbit	Mars Inc	1.3	1.3	\$2,441	\$2,501
Extra	Mars Inc	1.1	1.2	\$2,115	\$2,231
Kit Kat	Nestlé SA	1.0	1.0	\$1,933	\$1,979
Mentos	Perfetti Van Melle Group	0.9	0.9	\$1,649	\$1,711

U.S. Candy Sales

Brand	Company	Market Share		\$ Sales in Millions	
		2011	2012	2011	2012*
Reese's	Hershey Co, The	7.6	7.7	\$2,479	\$2,603
M&M's	Mars Inc	6.8	6.8	\$2,238	\$2,300
Snickers	Mars Inc	5.5	6.0	\$1,815	\$2,020
Kit Kat	Hershey Co, The	2.8	2.8	\$917	\$948
Twizzlers	Hershey Co, The	2.3	2.4	\$746	\$801
Trident	Kraft Foods Inc	2.2	2.0	\$732	\$674
Twix	Mars Inc	1.8	1.9	\$598	\$655
Extra	Mars Inc	1.8	1.8	\$598	\$610
Orbit	Mars Inc	1.7	1.6	\$561	\$549
Milky Way	Mars Inc	1.6	1.6	\$516	\$539
Galaxy/Dove	Mars Inc	1.6	1.5	\$523	\$504
Starburst	Mars Inc	1.3	1.4	\$433	\$467
Godiva	Yildiz Holding AS	1.1	1.2	\$373	\$391

*2012 figures are projections. Source: Euromonitor International

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Bill Crandall
New York, NY

1 - Sep 22, 2012 10:02 PM

Putting aside gum brands like Trident, Extra and Orbit, which shouldn't really exist or be measured in the same category or segment of things we actually eat, no surprise to me that Snickers has emerged as the leading global brand.

As a kid I ate Snickers Milk Chocolate bars like there was no tomorrow and one would think that I eventually would outgrow it. And I did. Moved on to Hershey's Kit Kat, Reese's Pieces, et al, for a while.

But then Mars came out with Snickers "Dark" not so long ago, and just when I thought I was out, they "pulled me back" (thank you Godfather, Michael Corleone).

Candy bars are certainly no substitute for nutritious food and all of us should watch our diets, but if you're going to eat something that's truly worth the calories ... Snickers all the way! Refrigerated or frozen is best! BC

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