

20 Years Of The Sweets & Snacks Expo

Promotion In Motion Grows With Expo

Booth 737 — The Sweets & Snacks Expo is celebrating 20 years of showcasing the best of the best in the confectionery and snack categories. Michael Rosenberg, president and CEO of The Promotion In Motion Cos., Inc., was on the team that launched the event and the company is a 20-year exhibitor.

One of the cornerstones of the 2017 Expo, with a 40- by 70-foot booth featuring its brands including Welch's Fruit Snacks, Toggi Wafers, Sunmaid Chocolate-Covered Raisins and Go Organically Fruit Snacks, Rosenberg points out 20 years ago the exhibit was 10 by 30 feet, offering far fewer brands and SKUs.

The company has undergone a total metamorphosis since 1997, explains Rosenberg, from a marketing company that didn't actually make the products it sold to a manufacturer of confections, snacks and other products.

In addition, he tells **CST** that in 1997 the company was focused entirely on domestic business, while today it is building a strong international presence as well.

"For the past 20 years this show has been an important part of our marketing strategy," he says. "Unlike any other show, it gives us an opportunity to showcase our company, our products and our brands to the full spectrum of confection and snack buyers and related professionals. There is no replacement for the one-on-one interaction with customers.

"It is a real privilege to spend time sharing ideas with our industry partners during the course of a few short days; and while often exhausting, it is also always exhilarating," he adds.

While he is always energized by the atmosphere at the Expo, he can't deny the excitement of the first All Candy Expo (the event's original name). "It's hard to beat the memories and electricity from the very first show at Navy

Pier. Seeing it all come together, and getting to experience the enthusiasm, energy and the outpouring of industry support was unforgettable. It didn't just meet our hopes, goals and expectations, it exceeded them by leaps and

bounds — it is a wonderful memory I will never forget."

Recalling what might be the company's most popular promotion over the years — drawings for Welch's Fruit Snacks- and Sour Jacks-branded Smart Cars — Rosenberg says the giveaways led to one of his funniest memories.

An important rule of the Smart Car giveaways, he points out, was that the winner had to be present at the drawing. "Wouldn't you know, we drew a name, called it a few times, but the person wasn't there. Ultimately we had to move on and draw another name," he tells **CST**. "Not 90 seconds after we drew the second name and announced the winner, the first winner arrived, explaining he had been waiting for his wife to get out of the restroom. We are sure she still hasn't lived that one down!"

When it comes to lessons learned from 20 years of participating in the Expo, Rosenberg says: "The most important thing is that you must follow through. You can display anything you want, but unless you follow through after the Expo with your prospects, the work you do at the show won't be effective. It is all about connecting the show experience to future business — and follow up is key."

First timers should keep it simple and focus on networking, he

counsels. "It's not just about what you accomplish on the show floor, it is also about connecting with peers and partners outside the show. Don't take any interaction for granted; you don't know where it can lead." **CST**



Josh Shapiro, senior vice-president of marketing, and Jeff Scudillo, vice-president of sales, on the company's booth circa eight years ago.

The Promotion In Motion Cos., Inc. booth as it looked about 10 years ago.



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The Sweets & Snacks Expo was born 20 years ago with the vision of bringing manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers together to facilitate business opportunities.

Relive some of the significant milestones that have taken us from the All Candy Expo of 1997 to today's event.



1997

The first All Candy Expo is held at Chicago's Navy Pier with 210 exhibitors and retailer attendees from all classes of trade.

NCA announced plans to launch the Expo in 1994, and spent the next three years building what would become the industry's premiere event.

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